SalesAgility

Case Study: Apprentice Quality Assurance Engineer

SalesAgility is a well established open source CRM Consultancy with our HQ in Stirling, and offices in London and Zaragosa Spain. We are the driving force behind SuiteCRM, now generally acknowledged to be the world's leading open source CRM solution.

With over a decade of experience in delivering bespoke open source CRM consulting, continuous company expansion enables us to increase our skilled team on an ongoing basis, and we enjoy growing our own talent!

As a company we are actively engaging with schools and colleges to inspire and get to know students who may be interested in a career in Software Development.

Sean started his Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in March 2017 as Apprentice Quality Assurance Engineer. He has worked to complete his MA in IT whilst learning the QA role with guidance from his mentor within the development team. Further learning and development is in place now for Sean and a future career secured.

Sean tells us below about his apprenticeship journey with SalesAgility:

"Prior to starting my apprenticeship with SalesAgility I was enrolled at Forth Valley College studying for my Higher National Diploma (HND) in Software Development. After completing my course, I weighed up my options and decided that in my case, beginning a modern apprenticeship in a field related to my college qualification was the most sensible.

The first few weeks working at SalesAgility were brilliant. I was fully supported by both my colleagues and assessor, everyone was really friendly and helpful. My role within the team was Quality Assurance (QA) Engineer. This meant

intially most of my time was spent learning the product and testing process. I was involved in the quality assurance stage of software development and deployment, and learning how to create robust test cases and conduct manual tests to ensure the solutions created by developers were fit for purpose.
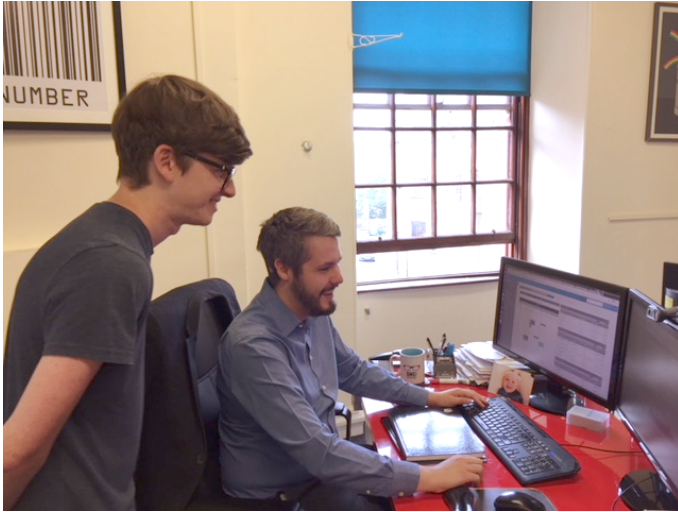
At SalesAgility, "Apprentice" only ever felt like a title, I was one of the team. Since the first month I've been involved in important client projects. My part of the process was to make sure the solution provided to clients complied with their requirements specification so I felt like I was given a reasonable amount of responsibility.

I found working towards my IT qualification an enjoyable experience. John Docherty my Youtrain assessor was fantastic, he was always available if I had any queries and was markedly helpful during the progression to my qualification.

In my case, taking the apprenticeship route was positively the correct decision. After attaining my college qualification I was considering two directions, attend University in the 3rd year of a Computer Science degree or start an apprenticeship in a line of work I found interesting. Having just completed three years at college (NQ, HNC and HND), the apprenticeship route was a refreshing change of scene. I was still undertaking academic work but I was gaining invaluable work experience simultaneously. The apprenticeship route has been a better learning experience for me than jumping into the 3rd year of University. I've always found that my learning style is a combination of visual and

tactile rather than auditory, this made the apprenticeship particularly beneficial as I was able to see how the concepts I was studying applied to real-world working environments and perform them in practice.

I would advise everyone to weigh up their options carefully when leaving school. There seems to be a common assumption that College or University is always the correct path to take but I believe this doesn't apply in every case. For me personally, going the apprenticeship route was ideal. Now that I've completed the Modern Apprenticeship I feel I'll be in a better position than had I gone straight to University. I have a industry recognised vocational qualification, a few years great work experience behind me, no student debt and no worry about finding a job as I already have one!"

SalesAgility have used Youtrain to provide the apprenticeship training and assessment process. John Docherty – IT Manager and Assessor at Youtrain was very complimentary about Sean:

"I have been working with Sean to guide him and assess the evidence that he has been submitting to complete his portfolio and gain his IT professional diploma.

Sean has consistently produced work to an extremely high standard demonstrating that his understanding of the technologies and the skills required to use them effectively is excellent. His explanations are clear and comprehensive and his screenshots supported his knowledge by demonstrating the ability to use the tools in a work environment.

It has been a pleasure working with Sean, if he required some clarity on any of the questions then he always had no hesitation in asking. There were times when work commitments meant he was under pressure but he still produced work to a very high standard."

Dale Murray, CEO of SalesAgility, is a firm supporter of apprenticeships and had this to say about Sean:

"Talent like Sean's is one of the reasons apprenticeships are at the forefront of our recruitment strategy. Contributing from day one Sean threw himself into the Quality Assurance Engineer role. His committed work ethic allowed him to obtain the necessary product knowledge required to accurately plan and execute test strategies for our client projects.

Not only did Sean learn our internal processes but he also contributed to our overall process improvement, generating ideas and executing them within the greater Consultancy and Quality Assurance Team. Pro-active by nature, he has taken on a lead role in the quality assurance of our Outlook Product extension as well as providing input and analysis for the Quality Assurance team management reporting.

At SalesAgility we are invested in our local talent pipeline working with schools to develop pathways into software development and consultancy roles. Our apprentices demonstrate incredible talent but also bring a drive and passion to their work which not only yields great results, it generates new ideas and pushes our own processes forward."

For any further information on **apprenticeship/junior developer opportunities** within SalesAgility, or to organise a career insights session for a group of students, please **contact** Jenni McDonald on +44 01786 585499 or jenni.mcdonald@salesagility.com.