

Barry Durrand EngTech MIGEM

CASE STUDY

Education and qualifications: HNC Mechanical Engineering, NC Electrical Engineering, SVQ Level 3 in Engineering Maintenance, registered Gas Safe engineer and registered OFTEC technician

Which Institution are you a member of: Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM)

Grade of membership: Member

Current job title: Plumbing and Heating Manager

Employer: Sparks Mechanical Services, Aberdeen

Length in current job: Five months

Please briefly describe your current role and a typical working day

I manage an experienced team of plumbers and heating engineers. We provide service, repair, maintenance and installation works for our clients. I plan the team's daily duties and make sure all risk assessments and method statements are in place as health and safety plays a very important part of my work. I carry out site visits of customers' premises and provide cost effective solutions for their needs and as a registered gas engineer I ensure the company is up to date with gas regulations and that all relevant paperwork is completed. I also manage targets and deadlines, ensuring that tasks are completed on time and within budget.

What is the greatest challenge you face in your job?

Keeping up to date with changes in the industry. We need to be aware of new technology and changes to regulations so that the company is able to adapt and deliver a superior service, keeping ahead of competitors.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I enjoy the challenge that our varying projects and tasks offer. Once I have studied the requirements it becomes an obsession for me to engineer the best, most cost-effective solution for our clients and when installation starts, I like to be there throughout the process to make sure it all runs smoothly.

Please provide a brief outline of your career so far

I left school at 15 and attended Aberdeen College in 1996 to start a full time National Certificate (NC) course in Engineering. This helped me to secure a four-year Apprenticeship with Grampian NHS Trust Estates Department as a mechanical maintenance craftsman.



My Apprenticeship gave me sufficient experience to enter the oil and gas industry and I started with Halliburton as an MWD technician (measurement whilst drilling), a post that took me all over the world. In 2004, I joined Richard Irvin as a Commercial Gas Engineer where I gained the necessary training and experience to become Gas Safe and OFTEC registered. In 2013, I joined Sparks Mechanical as a commercial gas engineer, progressing to the manager's role for this department in 2015.

Describe your experience as an apprentice

At school I always wanted to be an engineer and growing up with all the hype of the oil industry on my doorstep it was a teenager's dream to work overseas or on an oil rig. There were a high number of applicants for Apprenticeships and I had to work hard, but it was exciting to be fresh out of school and learning a trade. Each year as I progressed I was set new challenges and goals, helping me to become more self-confident and widening my knowledge of engineering principles.

First, I learned about the basic requirements of engineering including health and safety and achieved my SVQ Level 2 in Engineering Manufacture. I was also on day release to Aberdeen College where I gained a Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering and an NC in Electrical Engineering. After completing my SVQ Level 3, I stayed on with the Trust as a qualified craftsman for two years.

What are the benefits of becoming an apprentice?

I think an Apprenticeship is a great way to start a career in engineering and the benefits are simple. Apprenticeships give you hands-on experience and set you up with the basics of engineering that you can expand and build on. If you work hard you may also receive additional training, a better salary or be able to choose the projects you work on.

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For me, the greatest benefit has been that my Apprenticeship helped me to become professionally registered with the Engineering Council.

What spurred you to work towards professional registration as an EngTech?

After years of experience, I was looking for a way of pulling my qualifications together to give me career progression. I started looking into what I could do to further my career and remembered a former colleague who had told me to look into registration with an engineering institution.

How did you become registered as an EngTech?

Firstly, I spoke with the very helpful membership department at the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM). They said I should be suitable for EngTech and sent me an application pack. I filled in the relevant forms to demonstrate my experience and was lucky that we had an EngTech working within the company who I asked to sign off my qualifications and application. I sent my application to the IGEM membership department for peer assessment and was notified shortly after that I had been successful and that my name had been forwarded to the Engineering Council for inclusion on the national Register.

How has achieving EngTech benefitted your career?

Achieving EngTech registration helped me to become the departmental manager at Sparks Mechanical. It has given me the recognition that comes with being professionally registered and it demonstrates to clients and customers that they are working with a competent person who is suitably qualified.

What is your employer's attitude? Were they supportive while you were working towards professional registration as an EngTech?

My employer was very supportive. They encouraged me to go for registration and provided support including through regular meetings to discuss my performance. The company wanted me to become professionally registered and take the post of plumbing and heating manager.

How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered?

My employer benefits from the professional recognition it brings. Clients and suppliers can see that they are working with an organisation that values training and experience. This in turn shows the quality of workmanship they can expect and the standards that have to be maintained.

What advice would you give someone considering professional registration as an EngTech?

Just go for it. It helps you to become professionally recognised in the industry and shows future employers or potential customers that they are dealing with a committed individual who is complying with the codes of conduct.

What are your future goals?

I am currently working towards Incorporated Engineer status and, if I achieve this, I may consider going for Chartered Engineer status in the future. I also hope to grow our department at Sparks Mechanical so that we can take on larger projects.

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Registered: 2015

