

# Delivering Business Benefits

## Case Study

### Symmetry Medical

semta

The Sector Skills Council  
for Science, Engineering and  
Manufacturing Technologies



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Richard Jagger  
Senior Production Engineer,  
Symmetry Medical

## Semta apprentice aims high at Symmetry Medical

Ask Mathew Challinor what he particularly likes about his apprenticeship and he answers: “Everything: all the help you get – especially from Semta – learning new skills, the experience. There’s not one bit I don’t like.” Mathew did A levels in business studies, economics, accountancy and general studies. But it took him just two weeks in accountancy to discover it didn’t suit him. Engineering does, and he’s determined to work his way up through the company. “I want my manager’s job,” Mathew quips. “But don’t tell him I said that.”

Symmetry Medical Sheffield is a precision forging, casting and machining company which manufactures orthopaedic implants and aerospace components. The company employs over 200 people and has a regular intake of apprentices. “Engineering relies on shopfloor skills so we need to keep those skill levels up,” says Richard Jagger, Senior Production Engineer. “Every time someone leaves that’s more experience gone that you can’t replace – unless you train apprentices.”

Mathew Challinor started his advanced

apprenticeship in September 2006 and is training in the orthopaedic machining area. There he gets involved in everything to do with introducing new parts: finding out customer needs, doing quotations, developing prototypes and passing them on to production. It is an excellent opportunity to learn a lot in a varied but specialist area. “Mat is developing high-precision machining skills as well as product and customer awareness,” Richard says. “He also needs to understand how implants are fitted and have a knowledge of the instruments used.”



Soon Mathew will be handling his own projects. To prepare him Richard has been extending his interface with customers, involving him in project meetings and conference calls. "We plan Mat's workload to give him experience in different areas and not tie him down to a particular job. That way we can get him fully skilled in all areas so he's very versatile. It's worked, as you can give him a job and he just gets on and does it. He's quick to learn and as good as a fully-skilled person."

Mathew has completed an NVQ Level 3 in Mechanical Manufacturing, a BTEC National in Manufacturing, and Key Skills which, he says have all been very relevant. Symmetry Medical will sponsor him on a Foundation degree and he then hopes to do a Bachelor's degree. Winning the Metals Industry Apprentice of the Year

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2008 Career Development award indicates a promising career ahead of him.

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"He helps out in areas where he's stronger than someone else. He's well respected because he's good at his job." Richard concludes: "It's a big commitment when you first take on an apprentice but you can't manage without them – you have to keep passing on skills and experience."