Harvey Nash Future of Engineering Skills Conference Reveals one in Four School Leavers Needed for Engineering Careers

With 2.2 million new engineering employees needed over the next 10 years or so to fuel industry growth and replace people retiring, one of the UK's leading academics has warned that one in four school leavers will need to take up engineering careers.

London, England (PRWEB UK) 25 October 2012 -- Speaking at the Harvey Nash and Semta Future of engineering skills conference, Professor Dame Julia King DBE FREng, Vice-Chancellor of Aston University told business leaders: "It was estimated, last year, that 2.2 million new engineering employees will be needed over the next 10 years. Last month the Royal Academy of Engineering published a study suggesting that this includes 100,000 graduate level engineers each year. We have about 800,000 18 year olds, so a simplistic assessment suggests we need to persuade around 25% of school leavers each year to go into engineering half of them through an engineering degree route. "About 22,000 students per annum graduate in engineering but then 25% of those graduates are from overseas and 40% go into jobs that are not in engineering.

"We need concerted action to stimulate the supply of engineers and engineering employees in the UK if we are to play a leading role in this rapidly growing opportunity of the global, low carbon power system, and to drive the UK's economic growth through infrastructure projects and the growth of our manufacturing economy as envisaged in the Government's developing Industrial Strategy."

Professor King's call to action was echoed by BAE Systems' Group Managing Director of Programmes & Support, Nigel Whitehead, who explained:" There were 460,000 apprenticeship starts in the UK last year, 10% were in manufacturing out of which only 5% were female. We need more companies to offer apprenticeships and we need more high quality male and female applicants.

"To some extent engineering employers have become lazy. They don't bother to foster and develop talent because they think it can be recruited. So only 11% of UK manufacturing companies offer apprenticeships.

"BAE Systems uses science and technology to create products that solve complex problems. So we hire people straight out of school and offer apprenticeships and career progression in a meritocratic company where people coming from these apprenticeships are given the opportunity to sit on boards.

"We need to get the message out to bright young people that engineers attract a 33% premium over their life earnings."

The event, attended by 70 industry senior executives, was organised by recruitment specialists Harvey Nash and sector skills council Semta to highlight the skills issues facing advanced manufacturing and engineering as businesses await details behind the government's new industrial strategy and "world class skills policy".

Said Semta chief executive Sarah Sillars: "Our event really underlined the scale of the skills challenge. The advanced engineering and manufacturing sector is crying out for talent. Semta is working with employers, universities and further education to encourage new entrants into the sector and to upskill existing employees. We urge employers to get in touch with Semta. Employers using our Semta Apprenticeship Service can benefit from funding for apprentice training, Semta can offer grants to smaller companies who hire unemployed graduates, and we are helping employers tackle their skills issues by using our sector expertise."

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Semta is also supporting employers to skill up their workforce through the new Advanced Manufacturing Engineering Higher Apprenticeship, and through its Advanced Skills Accreditation Scheme which provides access to a flexible programme of Master's degree level training for employees without previous qualifications.

Nigel Parslow, MD of Harvey Nash Executive Search UK said: "Engineering, especially hi-tech engineering, has a key role to play in the UK's economic future, and yet Harvey Nash's research suggest over two-thirds of engineering companies are desperately struggling to find the right talent. The good news is that there has never been a better time for talented men and women to become engineers: they can expect to join one of the most exciting and rapidly evolving sectors in the UK, and develop technical and commercial skills that are highly sought after, both from inside and outside the industry. As an ex engineer myself I am delighted through events like these we are raising the profile of this all important sector."

Businesses seeking skills support should contact Semta Customer Services on 0845 643 9001 or customerservices(at)semta(dot)org(dot)uk.

For further information please contact:

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Semta

Semta is the employer-led Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies in the UK. The sectors it represents are: Aerospace, Automotive, Composites, Electrical, Electronics, Maintenance, Marine, Mathematics, Mechanical, Metals and Engineered Metal Products, Renewables and Science. Its role is to raise skills levels and competitiveness in the 132,000 companies and 1.7 million-strong workforce that make up these sectors. Its National Skills Academy for Manufacturing delivers an independent national standard for manufacturing training content, delivery and process by focusing on business return which is typically 6:1. www.semta.org.uk.

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About Harvey Nash:
Established in 1988, Harvey Nash has supported many of the world's leading organisations to recruit, source and manage the highly skilled talent they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive and technology driven world. With 4,000 professionals in 40 offices across the USA, Europe and Asia the Group has the reach and resources of a global organisation, whilst fostering a culture of innovation and agility that empowers its people to respond to constantly changing client needs. We work with clients, both large and small, to deliver a portfolio of services: executive search, professional recruitment and outsourcing.
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Professor Dame Julia King DBE FREng
Following a career as a lecturer in Cambridge and Nottingham universities, Dame Julia held senior executive roles with Rolls-Royce between 1994 and 2002. Following roles as Chief Executive of the Institute of Physics and Principal of the Engineering Faculty at Imperial College London she became Vice-Chancellor of Aston University in 2006. Alongside her academic work, Dame Julia was appointed by the Prime Minister in November 2010 as the UK's Low Carbon Business Ambassador. She is also non-executive director of the
Department for Business Innovation & Skills and has advised the Ministry of Defence as Chair of the Defence Scientific Advisory Council. Dame Julia is also a leading member of a number of other boards relating to engineering and academia.

Nigel Whitehead
Nigel is Group Managing Director of Programmes and Support, one of three Global Operating Groups in BAE Systems, where he has responsibility for a group of businesses delivering a £6bn turnover predominantly in UK defence and also in international markets. Nigel is a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and a Fellow and Council Member of the Royal Academy of Engineering. Nigel is also a Commissioner in the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, Trustee of the Whitehall and Industry Group and Council member of the trade body A|D|S (Aerospace, Defence, Security).
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