

TLI Connect

Wisdom with experience

The idea of supervising high school seniors in a busy truck workshop may send some managers running, but Chris Knijff from Easter Group wouldn't have it any other way.

'Kids need an opportunity to experience the real world. They've got to be taught what industry expects of them, from the resume and interview right through to the everyday values of safety, respect and a honest day's work for a honest day's pay. All of them need to stop and consider the question I ask all my potential staff... Why should I employ you?'



Emmanuel Haber, Chris Knijff and Troy Stone

Chris knows firsthand the opportunities a pathway in transport and logistics can provide. Completing his apprenticeship in the Netherlands, Chris travelled the world with his diesel mechanic trade and worked as a tradesman, leading hand and supervisor in the transport, engineering and resources sectors. 'I always wanted to become a mechanic. My father was a motorcycle mechanic and I found I had an aptitude for it. I could always keep my motorcycles running and worked on friends' cars from a young age.'

When his new boss, Kenny Easter, told him the company was involved in a school-to-work program called GenR8, Chris had his reservations. 'I said to him, I've got my hands full, Kenny. I don't have time to baby-sit kids in the workshop! But once we talked about how different this program was from the work experience I had at school, I was happy to give it a go.'

Now Chris has experienced GenR8 firsthand, he's become one of its biggest supporters in the business. In addition to 20 days of industry placement and a Certificate II in Logistics, Chris set the Year 12s what he considered essential homework. 'How an engine works... braking systems, turbos, suspensions, all the essentials. Once they'd done the research I'd sit them down and say, now put your notes away and explain it to me.'

As Chris nears the completion of GenR8 for 2014 having hosted four students, he has some advice for any supervisor interested in engaging young people, 'Don't assume things about this generation. From my experience, the eagerness is there and the willingness to learn, they just need us to give them the skills and support. Pictured left are Chris, Emmanuel and Troy. Chris said 'both of these young men will be starting apprenticeships with us next year because we've seen their commitment.'

'Kids need an opportunity to experience the real world.'



The GenR8 program is run by the Department of Education and Training. If you are a transport and logistics business interested in finding out more about the GenR8 program, please contact us at TLI.Connect@tmr.qld.gov.au or on (07) 3066 0785.