

EST. 1904

# THATCHERS

— THE FAMILY CIDER MAKERS —



Hi, I'm Rose and I have been studying the level 3 Customer Service Specialist qualification here at Thatchers.

## **My Background:**

I joined the scheme straight from sixth form, it was in the second year that I started thinking about my options. I did debate going to uni, but I was drawn into an apprenticeship because I am much more of a practical hand on worker which is what they're all about. Rather than being spoken to all day long I wanted to get on and learn skills that I could apply in a work-based environment.

It was during a school assembly that I found out about the Thatchers scheme and it really interested me, so I signed up to register for updates. I then kept checking the website for updates and applied once it went live!

## **Application Process:**

To apply I remember answering a few questions via an online form and submitting my CV. It was the assessment day that I found most daunting. But once I arrived and walked around with everyone else, I soon felt at ease. It was great getting to know everyone and despite working hard we all had good fun.

My advice to anyone applying is to just make yourself stand out. Don't hesitate to go for it just do it. Until you go for things you won't know – just have confidence in your own ability.

## **Current Role:**

My role is within the Customer Service Team. Over the course of the scheme I have learnt many things. And whilst the whole team tends to work on a rotational basis with jobs – either calling out, managing orders etc we are given individual tasks/ projects which I really enjoy as it gives me a real sense of autonomy and ownership. I can see the value I am adding and really feel as if I am helping make a difference in the team.

A day in the life typically starts by preparing for the day ahead. The first few hours I clear my inbox and set up my calls for my task sheet. The remainder of the day is mainly spent on the phone liaising with different customers. Which can be challenging yet rewarding. As a team we are also responsible for online sales and the cider shop, which again is good because it brings variety. One day I am in the office the next I am at the shop serving customers.

### **What I've experienced so far:**

Since joining Thatchers I have been fortunate enough to experience quite a bit, more than I expected to be honest which has been great for my development. What I will say is that the programme is more than just what you see on paper.

I had a thorough two-week induction which allowed me to really get a feel for the whole business. I spent a day with different departments. So, I went out with the orcharding team, visiting pubs and shops with the salespeople and even out on the dray delivering cider which I loved! Everyone was so accommodating and really explained the part they play in the cider making journey. I also went out to visit other companies which was insightful as again we could chat to other apprentices about their experiences and gain better knowledge about other businesses and the way they operate.

### **What I'm most proud of:**

The biggest skill I have improved is my confidence. Coming out of sixth form and going out into the world of work felt quite daunting. But Thatchers have really helped with the transition and have helped to bring out the best in me. The thought of being on the phone all day before joining horrified me, but now I don't even think twice it's just part of what I do and I love chatting to new people now, therefore my communication skills have massively improved too. I would say I have also developed my leadership skills too as I am now a lead specialist on a project, and I am helping train and develop new people in the team.

I am most proud in getting on the scheme and nearly finishing my apprenticeship! Especially as there was a lot of candidates at the assessment day. During my apprenticeship I have been fortunate to manage a project which gives me autonomy and a chance to shine. This is something I am proud of as I have learnt to become a specialist in an area within the team.

### **Top Tips:**

My best advice for other students would be to keep your options open. I did go and visit lots of uni's still. But it was upon visiting Thatchers on their open day that I could see myself working there. Although I always knew I wanted to do an apprenticeship it was a worthwhile experience to do the research to be 100% sure.

For me after my apprenticeship I want to gain my qualification and a full-time job in the customer service team. I want to keep growing and developing in the team. As the company continues to grow so does the roles and responsibilities which really excites me.

I would 100% recommend an apprenticeship because I really do feel like a valued member of the company. I am continually learning on the job and developing skills unknowingly. It's a nice environment to feel part of a team. Apprenticeships give you a head start with your career; you don't need to go to uni to necessarily get a job these days!

