

PRESS RELEASE

INVESTING IN SKILLS FUELS GROWTH FOR ENGINEERING BUSINESS

When her father decided to sell A.Fawcett Precision Engineering in Elland, Joanne Thompson decided to take the leap and buy the business.

The decision was a brave one in the depths of the recession in 2008, but Ms Thompson believed in the team and had a strong vision for the business. The company has built a strong reputation for quality and is forecasting a record year with a turnover more than £600,000.

Commenting on the growth, Joanne Thompson said: “It can be tough as a woman in a male-dominated industry, but our customers know that we provide a great service and we’ve built a reputation for quality that has carried us through some tough times.”

The company make precision tools for the automotive, oil and gas, and general engineering sectors. As part of engineering supply chain, the company needs to invest in the high precision machinery constantly.

Ms Thompson said: “We produce a high-value product. More often than not, it will be one or two off of a particular tool, created to an engineer’s drawings. It’s a highly skilled job, and we invest in training to ensure we maintain standards.

“When I took over in 2008, I had no engineering background, but I had great people around me, which allowed me to focus on growing the business. I knew the business and the customers. I saw a fantastic opportunity, with a chance to build a future for my family and vision to take the business forward.”

Ms Thompson’s father, David Peaker, founded the business in 1983, re-mortgaging his house to buy the factory’s first machines.

The company now employs six staff and has seen turnover grow in recent years despite competition from the Far East. The management team work closely with accountants and business advisors, Hentons.



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Commenting on the current economy, Ms Thompson said: “I know the cheap pound is supposed to provide a boost to manufacturing, but China and India are still cheaper. We have to focus on selling a quality product with superior service. The guys on our shop floor are all timed served and take real pride in their jobs.”

The manufacturing sector continues to operate in a challenging environment but is widely recognised as playing a key role in rebuilding the UK economy.

Richard Hayter from Hentons said: “Manufacturing businesses face fierce global competition, and are impacted by a range of factors from interest and currency rates to employment levels and skills. We work closely with Joanne to ensure careful planning can help smooth growth.”

The engineering industry is facing skills shortages, and A Fawcett Precision Engineering argues every business should be training up apprentices to meet future demand.

Ms Thompson said: “As an industry, we need to do more to encourage more boys and girls into engineering. It is a great career, and we need to work with schools to inspire our kids.”

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