



Luke Oates BEng (Hons)

CRL, ARP, IRcat2, UAcad2, VAcad1, MLA1

**Reliability Engineer at DP World
Southampton**

An apprentice at SETA in 2008/09

Employer at the time:

**DP World Southampton (known then as
Southampton Container Terminal)**

Tell us about why you chose the apprenticeship route.

I was very much undecided of what I wanted to do and where to go after secondary school. I had college tours and open evenings; I attended SETA open evening and other company events to ensure I had all the information to make a choice. The main reason I chose an apprenticeship is that I would be getting paid to learn a variety of skills. I felt many of my friends just went down the college route, but I wanted to learn and earn.

What were your most memorable or standout moments at SETA?

I enjoyed many aspects of SETA, from learning Electronics to basic hand tools. Learning how to operate a Lathe was exciting, learning basic electrics and of course welding and fabricating was awesome. These were the hard skills as for soft skills meeting other apprentices, gaining life-long friends, life skills along the way was just as important.

What did you do when you completed your apprenticeship i.e. what was your route to your current position?

On completion of my Apprenticeship, I was fortunate enough to obtain a shift position at the crane department workshop, I honed my skills and continued further education by completing an Engineering with Business Degree. I soon became a shift supervisor, then moved sideways to a cross functional Scheduling Engineer. Here I learned about Reliability and how technology advances can impact machinery reliability. This is my current role where I head up a Global Reliability Program within Southampton.

What have been your greatest challenges and how have you overcome them?

My greatest challenge I feel is people, culture and language. It is fascinating to understand what drives people and how to get the best from them. I am very much a believer in celebrating successes and building a strong team around yourself (to make you look good!). Many people just need the platform and the gentle push to excel! Anything is achievable if you put your mind to it, speak up and create your own path, I love to “manage up”.

What have been your greatest successes?

I feel I have had many successes personally and professionally within DP World. I was one of the first from my friends to secure a house, pass my driving test, purchase a car and I seemed to always be on holidays. Professionally, I managed some exciting innovating projects such as designing, fabricating and wiring two bespoke lifting frames, which are now used in various terminals across the world. More recently I have enjoyed learning and coaching engineers in new cutting-edge technologies such as Thermography, Ultrasound, Oil Analysis and Vibration Analysis.

I have always been a keen advocate of the Apprentice Route and in the past I have spoken at many high profile events, something I would never think I would do! But be bold get outside your comfort zone, it’s the best place for reward.

What advice would you give to anyone trying to find their path to a great career?

Be open, listen to all options, don’t follow the crowd, follow what interests you. Don’t be frightened to say NO or ask for help. Employers invest in the person not the qualifications (skills can be taught). Just do your best, it will soon be noticed!

