

# APPLICATION TIPS WITH TANMAI

Tanmai shares her insight and tips for applying for apprenticeships

Tanmai did a level 3 Business Administration apprenticeship with Heathrow Airport, then a gap year internship with IBM, which led her on to a level 4 apprenticeship in Junior Management Consultancy. She is now a level 6 degree apprentice in Digital Technology and Solutions at IBM.



*“Applying for apprenticeships can feel like riding a rollercoaster, exciting at first, then suddenly terrifying when you realise how competitive it is. I remember applying for multiple apprenticeships in Year 13, feeling hopeful, only to reach the final stage of my ‘dream company’ (or so I thought) and get rejected. It stung. But after a moment (or several) of disappointment, I picked myself up, learned from the feedback and improved my approach. If you’re starting this journey, here are my top tips to help you impress employers and stay resilient.”*

## 1. Research the company like a detective!

Before you even think about clicking ‘apply’, do some digging. Employers always look for candidates who show a genuine interest in their company. One of the best ways to stand out is by finding a personal connection to their values, projects or initiatives. During my applications, I made sure to highlight what resonated with me, whether it was the company’s commitment to sustainability, upskilling the minority in underrepresented regions or their focus in innovation. Doing so by being specific and using the names (if any) of these projects proves that you’ve not just claimed to do your research but actually have done so, thoroughly.

Another great trick is using LinkedIn. Reach out to current apprentices/early professionals with a simple, friendly message like “Hey, I’m applying for this apprenticeship and would love to hear about your experience!”. You’d be surprised how many people are happy to help. These small steps not only deepen your understanding of the company but also showcase your proactiveness and genuine interest.



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## 2. Making your “Tell me about a time when...” answers shine.

When it comes to applications, the key is to be specific. Think of it like baking, anyone can say they make a great cake, but without a recipe or ingredients, it's just words. Employers don't just want to hear that you're a “hard worker” or a “great team player”, they want proof. Did you lead a group project? Organise an event? Plan a multi-destination budget holiday with 5+ people? Show, don't just tell.

The best way to do this is by giving real examples. Instead of saying “I'm good at problem solving”, explain a time when you tackled a challenge, the steps you took, and what the outcome was. Bringing your school, work or personal experiences to life with clear, tangible examples makes your responses stand out, just like presenting a perfectly baked cake instead of just describing it!

## 3. Surviving The Apprentice the Assessment Centre

Assessment centres can feel like a mix of appearing on the BBC's 'The Apprentice' and a group project where everyone is trying to prove themselves. But employers aren't looking for the loudest person in the room. They want to see collaboration, problem-solving, adaptability and how well you work with others.



Instead of treating it like a competition, focus on being a strong team player. Stay engaged, contribute thoughtfully, and listen as much as you speak. Even if you're not leading a discussion, adding value through well-reasoned input and supporting others' ideas, giving your peers a chance to share their thoughts can make a lasting impression. It's less about 'winning' and more about showing you can thrive in a team because that's what really counts in the working world.

## 4. And then there's rejection!

Rejection is something no likes to talk about, but most of us experience. Not every application will be a success, and that's okay. If you don't make it through, ask for feedback. Many companies are happy to provide insights that can help improve for the next time. The key is to keep going. I didn't get every apprenticeship I applied for, but each experience helped me improve, making me more prepared for the one I eventually secured. Rejection isn't failure, it's redirection!!

