

Princeps

Classroom to Career

Building a Talent Pipeline Through School Engagement

- Case Study

Partnering with the Careers Hub, Princeps turned a single teacher encounter into assemblies and work experience placements, building a talent pipeline that filled six roles this year. Explore how the initiative broadened the leader's role shifted hiring toward mentoring young talent, demonstrating how modest CSR can become a strategic growth lever.

 +44 1279 641641

 sales@princeps.co.uk

 www.princeps.co.uk

 6 Astra Centre Harlow CM20 2BN



Background

Princeps, with Andrew Green leading the company's school outreach programme, is a specialist distributor of electronic components for high-reliability industries such as aerospace, defence, and commercial sectors.

Based in Harlow, the company has grown to 25 employees and is planning further expansion, including new premises and an expanded portfolio. Alongside business growth, Princeps has been increasingly focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR), including community engagement and responsible sourcing.



How It Started

The partnership began with a simple LinkedIn message. Princeps had previously supported local initiatives like a local hospice and Harlow Rugby Club but had never engaged with schools.

While the intention was there, the company lacked the connections and pathways to make it happen. The Careers Hub reached out after noticing Princeps' community involvement, and this opened the door to education engagement.

Andrew Green recalls:

"If you think you don't have time for school outreach, start small. A single teacher encounter can lead to long-term benefits."

That first step, a Teacher Encounter, proved transformative.

The Challenge

Before working with the Careers Hub, Princeps faced barriers to school engagement:

- No clear route to connect with the right stakeholders in schools
- Limited internal resource to "knock on doors" and build relationships
- Uncertainty about what activities would be most impactful

The Solution

Through the Careers Hub, Princeps gained access to local schools and began its outreach journey in early 2025. The first activity was a Teacher Encounter, hosting educators from Harlow schools to showcase the electronics industry and career pathways. This was quickly followed by assemblies at BMAT STEM Academy, where Princeps presented on:

- The electronics industry and its career opportunities
- Apprenticeship routes and barriers to entry
- Real-world insights from industry professionals

These sessions led to immediate interest from students, including Arthur, who handed over his CV during the event and later completed a work experience placement.



Impact on the Company



Talent Pipeline Development

Six students completed work experience placements this year, with Arthur now lined up for an apprenticeship. This marks a shift from ad hoc administrative apprenticeships to structured technical pathways, addressing the industry-wide skills gap caused by “people obsolescence.”



Improved Recruitment Strategy

Princeps has adapted its hiring approach to focus on younger talent and moulding them into future roles. Andrew explains: “We’ve identified future leaders within our own team through mentoring students, skills that might never have surfaced otherwise.”



Community and Business Benefits

Engagement strengthened Princeps’ reputation locally and supported tender success. Andrew noted: “Community engagement isn’t just good PR; it opens doors. We’ve won opportunities because of it. It’s one of the first questions asked in many tenders and accreditations now.”

Andrew’s Role Evolution

Andrew has seen his role expand as a result of this work. Initially focused on operational delivery, Andrew now dedicates more time to CSR and education engagement, shaping the company’s long-term talent strategy.

This reflects the growing importance of community involvement and workforce development in Princeps’ business model.

Employer Standards

Princeps has completed the Employer Standards self-assessment tool provided by the Careers Hub. Andrew shared:

“We’ve done the self-assessment and next year we plan to use it as a baseline to take action and improve. Community engagement is coming up a lot more in accreditations and tenders now, so it’s becoming essential.”



Why School Engagement Matters

For Princeps, working with schools is not just a CSR tick-box, it’s a strategic investment in the future of the business and the wider industry. Electronics is a highly specialised sector, and many teachers and students have limited awareness of the career opportunities it offers. Without direct engagement, young people often overlook technical pathways simply because they don’t know they exist.

By going into schools, Princeps is helping to bridge this knowledge gap. Assemblies, teacher encounters, and work experience placements give students a real-world view of the industry, while teachers gain confidence to advise on careers they previously knew little about. This early exposure is critical because students make subject choices as early as Year 9, and those decisions can shape their future career options.

Importantly, Princeps is not looking for students with an electronics background. Andrew explains:

“It’s more about attitude and soft skills; being proactive, turning up on time, communicating well. Technical knowledge can be taught, but those behaviours make the difference.”

School engagement also benefits businesses beyond recruitment. It strengthens community ties, enhances reputation, and increasingly influences tender success. Many contracts now ask about social value and community outreach, making this work a competitive advantage. For Princeps, these activities have opened doors to new opportunities and positioned the company as a forward-thinking employer committed to developing the next generation.

Advice to Other Businesses

Andrew Green sums it up:

“Don’t view school engagement as transactional. It’s a partnership that benefits both sides—students gain insight and opportunities, and businesses secure future talent.”

He adds:

“If you think you don’t have time for school outreach, start small. A single teacher encounter can lead to long-term benefits.”

In Summary

Princeps’ journey shows that school engagement is more than a community gesture, it’s a strategic move that builds talent pipelines, strengthens business reputation, and creates opportunities for growth. Starting small can lead to big results, and for Princeps, one LinkedIn message sparked a programme that is shaping the future of the company and the industry.

