

## Two Hannapak apprentices make state's top six

An intense apprentice recruitment programme is paying off for Australian paperboard-packaging manufacturer Hannapak, which this year had two in the race for the LIA Apprentice of the Year Awards.

James Wesley, graphic prepress apprentice, and Mitchell Brennan, sheet litho apprentice, made it into the top six apprentices for New South Wales – just a couple of marks separating them from Hannanprint's web litho apprentice Carl Weeks in the number one spot.

Ben Knight, marketing manager with Hannapak, says the quality of staff working with the apprentices, as well as the training provided, has helped lift them to the top of their field – but a choosy recruitment process meant the company was working from a high base with that year's applicants.

Knight says Wesley and Brennan were both brought on board in a year when the packaging provider decided to shake up its recruitment programme.

The company reached out to schools in the local Hawkesbury and Penrith areas to advertise printing and prepress as an interesting trade alternative – to try to attract a bigger and broader pool of applicants.

Some 26 apprentices applied at an information evening, which included a factory tour and talks with the sales manager, offset manager and prepress manager. Knight says, "We wanted to make sure the people who put applications in knew what they were actually getting into with the printing trade."

Hannapak then narrowed down a shortlist through further interviews. Knight tells AP, "As prepress and printing are niche trades, the first thing we were looking for was an interest in the work. We considered a multitude of things, from academics and marks they got in school, personality, attitude and ethics."

Three apprentices made it through the process and started work under the guidance of staff who themselves have been former Apprentice of the Year nominees and winners. Knight says they all showed an excellent work ethic and willingness to learn from the company's experienced team.

Knight says, "The years of trade experience we have collectively at Hannapak is quite extensive. There's Bill O'Brien, print manager – many years of experience. Sales manager Dave Hossack was National Apprentice of the Year. I myself have 18 years of experience in the trade."

Hannapak typically takes on one or two apprentices every couple of years, with the majority finding a position with the company at the end of their apprenticeship.

Knight says, "You put a lot of time and effort and resources in training and investing in apprentices, so you do everything in your power to make sure that they are successful, not only for themselves but for the business. We try to recruit the best and hold onto them."



James Wesley, graphic prepress apprentice with Hannapak, with his family at the LIA Graduate of the Year Award presentation dinner



Mitchell Brennan, sheet litho apprentice at Hannapak, with his family at the LIA Graduate of the Year Award presentation dinner