

CAREER SPOTLIGHT

Linda Twidale | Academy Trainer



Tell us about your career at Saint-Gobain so far

I started working for Weber in a telesales role more than 15 years ago. My background in tiling put me in a good position to speak to tilers about the adhesives they used and what they preferred. After six months in this role, a Technical Advisor role came up which involves answering the phone and giving advice, logging complaints and writing reports to solve the issues a customer may have. This was for all Weber products so my knowledge quickly grew to include renders, flooring, and technical mortars as well as tiling. I was in this role for 12 years.

Tell us about your role

In 2018 I moved to the Saint-Gobain Weber Technical Academy in Flitwick as one of the Academy Trainers. I am responsible for training contractors in the Weber product ranges. I absolutely love my role - it's hard work and very physical but the buzz I get from customers is so rewarding. We run at least two courses a week on how to apply our renders, how to fix external wall insulation systems and how to tile and apply our flooring systems. My job never gets boring or stale as it's varied - as well as running the courses I am responsible for ordering the products plus health and safety risk assessments.



My advice to anyone would be to **pursue** the career you want, as doing something you **love** does not feel like a job. **Work hard**, listen to people with a wealth of knowledge and **learn** from them.



What made you want to work in your function and how did you start out?

I left school early to pursue an apprenticeship in tiling but when the three-year course ended I worked for myself. My next role was in a tile showroom as I was a mum by this point and needed some job security. Over the next 15 years I worked for various tile companies, both showroom sales and tiling work. After being made redundant I contacted my Weber representative at the time and he recommended me to the company for the telesales job.

What advice would you give to someone hoping to start a career in your profession?

My advice to anyone would be to pursue the career you want, as doing something you love does not feel like a job. Work hard, listen to people with a wealth of knowledge and learn from them.



What kind of skills and characteristics do you need to succeed in your role?

You need to be able to talk to people at their level, be honest, work hard, be a team player and have a drive to do the best job you can.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Hopefully I will still be doing this role, however I am 54 now so not sure I will be able to lift 25kg bags of cement at 59. I may need to pursue an administrative role.

How has Saint-Gobain supported you to develop in your role?

Thanks to Saint-Gobain I now have a teaching qualification, I can drive a forklift and an elevated work platform - plus I'm a first aider. This year I am taking an NVQ for External Wall Insulation and also Concrete Repair.



Linda - tiling and getting her FLT license

What challenges have you faced during your career and how have you overcome these?

At first my lack of confidence, standing up in front of eight plasterers and telling them how to apply products was very daunting. But seeing the benefit they gain from the information and practical element of the course has given me a real boost. Nothing phases me now.

What's your favourite thing about working for Saint-Gobain?

The people I work with. I have a fantastic boss who is so supportive and genuinely wants me to do my best. The ongoing training within my role means that every day I gain further knowledge. I believe our products are truly the best on the market, so it's a real pleasure to share the message with our customers.



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Do you think there's a stereotype attached to females working in the construction industry?

Yes, perhaps women are considered/masculine due to the attire (builders' trousers and steel toecap boots). It's not for everyone.

Which women inspire you?

So many! Dame Judi Dench, The Queen, Alex Scott, Nicola Adams, Pink, Meryl Streep, Jodie Foster. They seem like very strong women who are doing what they love.

Ahead of International Women's Day, what is the most important message you want to send to women thinking about their careers?

Follow your heart and if you work hard, the rewards are worth it.

How have you found working in a male dominated industry?

I do really enjoy all of the banter and comradery we have as a team so I am very lucky.