**Timpson’s Life-Changing Recruitment Policy**

It all started when James Timpson, the managing director of shoe repair and key-cutting chain Timpson, was so impressed with Matt, an inmate who was showing him round Thorn Cross, a prison near Warrington, that he handed over his business card and asked Matt to get in touch once he was out because he would find him a job. Matt now manages a highly successful Timpson shop and is happily married with two children.

[](https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=Dp88PFQA&id=54EC1CEEE341E899D6A1E9B54AAB870FABF7C3FE&thid=OIP.Dp88PFQA9PYO1tjzYAzLugHaEn&mediaurl=http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02653/timpsons_2653610b.jpg&exph=387&expw=620&q=Timpson+Prison+Pogramme&simid=608037904396715098&selectedIndex=0)Re-offending blights lives and communities, carrying personal, social and economic costs of between £9.5bn and £13bn a year. For about half of all job vacancies, employers are likely to reject most people with a criminal record. There are about 88,000 people in prison. They come in all shapes and sizes, says Timpson chairman (and James’s father) John Timpson, “and among the bad and the tricky are plenty that are fantastic. When interviewing inside prison we use exactly the same standards we use when recruiting on the outside,” [**he writes in his blog**](http://www.timpson.co.uk/blog/article/79/john-timpson-we-are-making-a-difference-to-the-lives-of-ex-offenders-).

Timpson have had so much success, four years ago they opened a training workshop in Liverpool Prison. It is fitted out like a Timpson shop with Timpson’s own trainers going in every day teaching prisoners who wear the Timpson uniform. All trainees who pass their skill tests are offered a job on release.

There have been recruits from other prisons who have started working in the Timpson’s shops whilst still serving their sentence. This “day release” scheme has been staggeringly successful – 90% of these ex-offenders have stayed with Timpson for more than a year.

Timpson identify they have learnt a lot during the last nine years, in particular they now know everyone needs a Dennis. Dennis Phillips, a burly amateur football referee who works in the people support department, took on the role of mentor from day one.

James Timpson had the courage to make employing ex-prisoners a priority but Dennis turned the policy into reality by dealing with the detail. He also helped new colleagues with the big range of problems they face outside work. People leaving prison find it tough to get back on their feet. However Dennis has seen some real success. Out of nearly 300 men and women who have joined Timpson over the last four years Timpson only know of seven who have re-offended.

James Timpson explains it isn’t just the statistics that tell him Timpson are making a difference. He identifies he receives regular evidence during his shop visits whenever one of the Timpson recruits from prison talks about their life-changing experience.

Adapted Source: <http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/timpsons-life-changing-recruitment-policy/>

Tasks

1. Consider the barriers to employment that offenders face.

List the barriers using bullet points.

1. Compare these points with the article on Timpson’s employment opportunities.

How have Timpson helped to reduce the barriers?

Article Questions

1. What does Matt now do?
2. When interviewing within prison, what standards do Timpson use?
3. What percentage of offenders have stayed with Timpson for more than a year?
4. What role did Dennis Phillips take on?
5. What did James Timpson have the courage to do?
6. According to Timpson out of 300 offenders employed by Timpson within the last four years, how many are known to have re offended?

Reflection

1. Has this task helped you to think about employment opportunities on release? Perhaps the task has inspired you and provided hope?
2. Think of an action point you would like to complete, relating to this article. This could be researching employment opportunities for ex-offenders, or perhaps applying for a programme such as the Timpson Academy. Record this action point and when you have completed it, reflect on it.

**Stretch & Challenge Task**

Using a maximum of 250 words, write a magazine article to raise awareness on the Timpson recruitment policy. Use appropriate layout features and perhaps request for this to be published in the Establishment’s next magazine.

**Tutor Guide**

Tasks

1. In pairs discuss the barriers to employment that offenders face. List the barriers using bullet points. Encourage learners to use mini whiteboards, flip chart paper or note paper to capture their bullet points.
2. Compare these points with the article on Timpson’s employment opportunities. How have Timpson helped to reduce the barriers? Encourage learners to write the contrasts in a different coloured pen. Perhaps number 1 could be in red (negatives) and number 2 in a positive colour. Perhaps the ideas could be displayed within the classroom, to help remind learners of the opportunities they have.

Article Questions

1. What does Matt now do? Manage a highly successful Timpson shop.
2. When interviewing within prison, what standards do Timpson use? Exactly the same standards as when recruiting outside of prisons.
3. What percentage of offenders have stayed with Timpson for more than a year? 90%
4. What role did Dennis Phillips take on? A mentor.
5. What did James Timpson have the courage to do? Make employing ex-prisoners a priority.
6. According to Timpson out of 300 offenders employed by Timpson within the last four years, how many are known to have re offended? 7

Daily Learning Log Reflection

1. In your learning log, reflect on what has gone well during this task. Has this task helped you to think about employment opportunities on release? Perhaps the task has inspired you and provided hope? This is about encouraging learners to be reflective. Perhaps their daily target could be based around completing the Timpson activity. For example information retrieval is a key part of most examinations. Does this activity help to develop study skills?
2. Think of an action point you would like to complete, relating to this article. This could be researching employment opportunities for ex-offenders, or perhaps applying for a programme such as the Timpson Academy. Record this action point in your daily learning log and when you have completed it, reflect on it within your course review. This action point could be added to the learner’s long term or short term target and goals (depending on the target). It can then be reviewed within the course review. Encouraging learners to take ownership of a specific action point relating to employment, could relate to not just through the gate employment, but employment within the prison.