



For more info on APL Manufacturing, check out APL.co.nz

APL, a division of the Waikato-based profile group, began in the Waikato in 1971 and the family-run business has grown to become New Zealand's largest manufacturer of aluminium windows and doors.

All their products are designed and tested right here in the Waikato and are made specifically for New Zealand's unique environment.

APL is a future-focused business and has a passion for research and development, driving them to generate new and innovative products and processes.

Graduates of the New Zealand Diploma in Engineering like Kerry have the chance to step into roles as engineering technicians in a range of technical fields—whether it's mechanical, civil, electrical, or electronics.

These positions allow you to build on your skills and grow within businesses like APL, where communication and collaboration are key to keeping things moving smoothly.

KERRY SAYS

"I STARTED OUT AS A PROCESS OPERATOR, RUNNING MACHINES AND PACKING PARTS. BIT BY BIT, I PROVED MY WORK ETHIC AND WORKED MY WAY UP TO A HIGHER POSITION—NOW I'M A MACHINE TECHNICIAN."

To find out more about this sector, profiles of young people like you in the industry, and career tools and tips...

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KERRY WILSON
MACHINE TECHNICIAN



The FutureForce® Crew sat down with Kerry to chat about his role...

TOP CAREER TIP

"IT SOUNDS CLICHÉ BUT I BELIEVE IF YOU PUT IN THE HARD WORK, YOU WILL GET THE REWARDS. IN MY EXPERIENCE THAT HAS PAID OFF IN PROGRESSING MY CAREER."

WHAT DOES A MACHINE TECHNICIAN DO?

Machine Technician is a role that APL developed for me after a few years of working here. In this role I specialise in everything machinery-related, like preventative maintenance, time scheduling, and reporting breakdowns to the maintenance team. I like to view myself as a bit of a project guy and often managers will come to me asking for assistance with planning and designing new products.

HOW DID YOU GET THIS ROLE?

I started working here at APL because my uncle works here as well. I had just completed a three-year Wintec diploma and was on the hunt for jobs. That's when my uncle suggested APL and got me started here right away. That was six or seven years ago now and I am still going strong and loving it.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR JOB?

The biggest thing for me is the flexibility, where I can switch between different tasks. In any one day I might be folding panels, fixing a machine, or working on a new project. The work changes frequently which is what I like. I found out that working by a schedule wasn't really my thing and so I enjoy the variety of tasks and reduced repetition.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO NEXT?

I am wanting to stay within the world of manufacturing and sticking with the hands-on machinery work. This kind of work allows me to be creative and makes it more enjoyable. As of right now with my new role I am happy where I am at, I want to stick at this position and get the skills here. My dream job is working on military tanks, restoring and maintaining quality, as this is a massive interest I have.

KERRY WILSON
MACHINE TECHNICIAN



TIPS & ADVICE

HAVE YOU HAD ANY CHALLENGES YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME?

While being at Wintec I didn't have a job, so I struggled financially and couldn't have a social life. At APL I had to push to get into my Machine Technician role. It has taken me around three years to get into this role, with Covid disruption and staff changes delaying this. My advice again would be to speak up and communicate where you are at, don't let yourself fade into the background.

WHAT DOES SOMEONE NEED TO KNOW WHEN STARTING OUT AT WORK?

From experience at APL, you can get stuck on a "grunt" job. This is standard when you are new, so you just must hold out and work your way up to the area you enjoy. It is important to speak up if you want change or have questions, showing your interest will allow you to progress.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE LEAVING SCHOOL?

How important it is to take opportunities that you get, and that is a slight regret I have from school. I didn't take all the opportunities that I could have and I wished I went out of my way to speak up more often.



WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SCHOOL SUBJECTS?

Maths is a big one, especially general, basic maths. If you are looking more at the design side of engineering, physics and computer science are useful. Metal technology can also be good as it is hands on and a bit of fun. For me metal was my favourite subject, and I found myself passionate about it, which made the work a lot more appealing.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE INTERESTED IN MANUFACTURING?

Manufacturing is a steady career, which usually has set hours. You do have to get used to the early starts, but this doesn't take long. Having good initiative is important. Bosses love good ideas, and want you to show up, show your interest and your willingness to learn.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE DECIDING ON THEIR CAREER?

Aim to do something that correlates with your hobbies. If you have something you are passionate about have a look at what you can do with that. It makes it easier to come to work when you like and are interested in what you are doing. A lot of people get stuck doing something they don't love, and they end up just going through the motions.

