

Real Life Apprentices Discouraged by TV Programme

Popular BBC TV Programme 'The Apprentice' has been strongly criticised in the national press for its focus on unhealthy competition and encouragement of 'blame culture'. A recent survey by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) showed only 4% of 15-16 year olds planned starting their own businesses.

The programme, featuring tough-talking entrepreneur Sir Alan Sugar, sets a weekly challenge to two teams of ambitious young business types. Each week a team member is dramatically 'fired' whilst the ultimate winner goes on to earn a place in Sir Alan's organisation.

Riveting viewing it may be, there's little doubt participants are selected based on their ability to be abrasive, unpleasant, and obnoxious: after all, that's what makes good television. Yes, they are all ambitious and keen to get on – no bad thing – but the programme has certainly made the workplace seem like an uninviting and hostile environment to fledgling entrepreneurs still at school.

In short, it has been claimed that The Apprentice, far from encouraging young entrepreneurs, actually discourages them. A spokesperson from NESTA said "The Apprentice accentuates a blame culture which doesn't inspire young people to see the workplace as a positive and constructive environment but rather a place which fosters dispute, aggression and unhealthy competition."

Sir Alan Sugar himself is an abrasive character that speaks his mind and takes no prisoners. Again it makes for great TV, but does he really represent an acceptable role model? Good question. Still there's something quite satisfying about seeing the latest 'apprentice' given a verbal beating by Sir Alan...

