



worldskills
UK Alumni

Gary Tuddenham: Cabinet Making

Competed in: WorldSkills Shizuoka 2007 – Team UK
Awarded: Gold Medal
Home town: Longtown, near Carlisle
Region: North West
Age at competition: 22
Employer: Silverlining furniture

Qualifications

- 11 GCSE's incl 2 A*s in art & design technology
- Fine Furniture Making Level 2 & 3 (Carlisle & Kendal College) City & Guilds
- 3 year Apprenticeship at Edward Barnsley Workshop



It could be said that Gary has wood work running through his veins. His father is a joiner by trade, and growing up watching him at work soon made Gary want to find his way in the industry too. Little did he know though, that at just 22 he would be competing in the Cabinet Making event at WorldSkills 2007 and bringing back the gold medal for the UK!

So why did Gary decide to compete?

Gary had never thought about competing before he went to college, but while he was studying for his NVQ, his teacher introduced him to SkillBuild competitions. He decided to enter and from that moment on, he never looked back. When he joined bespoke furniture makers, Edward Barnsley Workshop, they were only too happy to support him and set about helping Gary train for regional and national competitions. Gary says:

"It's weird to think that deciding to enter that one competition has really changed my life."

How did he prepare for WorldSkills?

"Training was good but it took a lot of dedication. You don't realise what effect it has on the people around you. I had to take a lot of time off work to go and train and spent a lot of time away from my girlfriend, family and friends, which could be hard at times. But as soon as I landed in Japan I realised quickly that all the training was very necessary."

So how did Gary cope in Japan?

Well the first thing Gary had to deal with was the plane journey. Until then, Gary had never been on a plane and certainly not visited somewhere so different in culture to the UK. But Gary took it all in his stride, and accompanied by his mum and dad, who he sites as his inspiration, Gary got to work.

"WorldSkills is vast, the sheer size of it is amazing and the standards are really high. There's definitely a link between sporting events and WorldSkills. You have to train and practice again and again. The results are the same for both – the more you practice the more your performance improves."

So the hard work paid off?

"Once I calmed down I treated WorldSkills like every other competition I'd done. I had my mum and dad there to support me as well as the rest of the team and the training I'd put in meant I was able to maintain good concentration throughout the competition. I made a silly mistake at one point, but by keeping calm and controlled I was able to see what I'd done and correct it - something perhaps I'd have missed if I hadn't been so prepared."

And it certainly worked for Gary. He not only won the gold medal but was also ranked 3rd in the World overall in the prestigious Albert Vidal Award, which ranks all competitors taking part in WorldSkills.

And has anything changed for Gary since he got home?

Well, Gary is certainly a local hero. He has appeared on TV, radio shows and in newspaper articles. Gary has also moved on from the Edward Barnsley Workshop to Silverlining Furniture, where he is continuing to satisfy his passion for making one-off bespoke pieces of furniture, except now his work is installed on super yachts.

Gary was recently promoted to Assistant Workshop Manager at Silverlining Furniture; he accredits this promotion to his success in Japan but also to the way in which he has been able to bring new knowledge and skills to his job.

"WorldSkills helps you develop personally and professionally. It's given me confidence and skills which I'd never have achieved without competing, but I've still got a long way to go in my career and I'll continue to learn and grow at work. I want to be the best I can and maybe run my own business one day."

What will Gary remember most about WorldSkills?

There are a few things that stick out for Gary about his time with WorldSkills.

"I'll always remember the relationship with my team mates. We gelled like we'd known each

other since nursery and the team spirit was really important to us all. I'll also never forget meeting the Prime Minister! It was really exciting going to Downing Street and to think that the person in charge of the whole country, was also interested in what we had achieved in Japan was amazing."

How has Gary stayed involved with WorldSkills?

Since competing in 2007 Gary has remained keen to stay involved with the competition process. In the build up to WorldSkills Calgary, Gary helped train Luke Griffiths, who was Team UK's competitor in Cabinet Making for 2009.

"Helping Luke train for the competition, passing on my knowledge, experience and skills was a really rewarding experience. It was great to see him competing knowing I had helped him along

the way. I was devastated seeing one mistake cost Luke the top prize, but he valiantly brought back a Medallion of Excellence."

So what would Gary say to prospective competitors?

"Get involved, it is the best thing you could ever, ever, do."

What does Gary think about WorldSkills coming to London in 2011?

"It is a fantastic opportunity for the young people of the UK to showcase some of their world class skills. It is going to be an incredible event and I'm proud to be a part of it as the Workshop Supervisor for Cabinet Making."



For more information about the WorldSkills, UK Alumni, contact the UK Skills communications team:
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