

# Jonathan Bourne

## Skill: Bricklaying

**From:** Stoke On Trent  
**Competed in:** WorldSkills 2007, Shizuoka  
**Employer:** Amos Developments Limited  
**Result:** Medallion for Excellence

### Qualifications

- NVQ Level 3 Bricklaying (Stoke on Trent College) City and Guilds
- Foundation Modern Apprenticeship
- Advanced Modern Apprenticeship



Jonathan was still a young boy when he first started helping his dad on building sites on a Saturday morning. His father, a joiner by trade, inspired him to get into construction, but it was in bricklaying that Jonathan found his future career. Aged just 21, Jonathan became part of the Team UK, competing in the bricklaying competition and winning a Medallion for Excellence for his work at WorldSkills.

### Was competing something Jonathan had always wanted to do?

Jonathan was actually introduced to competitions at the tender age of 16. Sensing his talent, his college lecturer put him forward for his first competition. Excelling in that, Jonathan quickly went for bigger competitions before finally entering the selection competition for WorldSkills. Jonathan says "When I started to compete it was very nerve-wracking, but I enjoyed every minute of it and soon realised that I really liked competing."

***"Competitions helped me develop my skills. I was constantly up against other bricklayers who were all fighting for the same goal. I had to get better than them to win."***

### So was training for WorldSkills different from other competitions?

Right from the start Jonathan was incredibly driven and focused on what he needed to do. And the training programme itself might surprise you. Not only was it based on honing his bricklaying skills it also included rigorous gym sessions! "Training was hard, both mentally and physically. At times I felt like I couldn't do anything right and listening to criticism is tough, but every day I got that little bit better and that little bit nearer to being prepared for WorldSkills."

### What was it like going Japan?

Unsurprisingly, the first thing that Jonathan noticed when he landed in Japan, were the buildings. "There are

so many historical buildings in Japan and it was great to have a look at them first hand." The second thing he noticed was how big the competition stadium was. Undaunted though, and with the support of his mum, dad, brother and girlfriend, who had all decided to make the journey with him, he knuckled down to the job.

***"At WorldSkills there were areas that I did really well in and others I knew I could have done better in, which was frustrating. The wait for the results was horrible because I had no idea what I'd been able to achieve."***

### So what happened?

Jonathan shouldn't have been worried. His hard work and endless training sessions ensured him a Medallion for Excellence for his work.

### And how were things on his return?

Although Jonathan couldn't remember the last time he hadn't had to think about training, he enjoyed spending some quality time with his family and friends. He also had to contend with being a local star, appearing on tv and in newspapers. He's also realised that WorldSkills has had a positive effect at work.

*"The skills I have learnt as part of WorldSkills have given me a better chance of achieving my goals and I am much more driven to do better and achieve perfection in my work."*

### Did Jonathan enjoy his time with WorldSkills?

The answer's a very firm 'yes'. "There's no other experience that gives you the opportunity to do what you love at such a high standard and compete against other World class individuals. Being part of the team meant that I could say I am one of the best. On top of all the skills I've added to my portfolio, I learnt to believe that you can achieve anything that you put your mind to. It's a great feeling."

### And what advice would he give to other competitors?

That's simple. "Carry on throughout your training. Don't give up, no matter how hard it gets because it's worth it in the end."

### So what now for Jonathan?

Jonathan has always loved the diversity of the building trade. Knowing that every day at work will be different and present new challenges just makes it that more exciting for him. He's in a job that he enjoys and now has the confidence and ability to go far.

*"One day I hope to be running my own business, but for the moment I'm very happy where I am and to just continue to improve my skills even further."*

### A word from his employer: Will Thomson, Company Director, Amos

Amos Developments have been involved in competitions for over 12 years and have always recognised the benefits of competitions to their employees.

### Why do Amos give their employees the chance to compete?

"There is always a competitive element between apprentices and because of that they enjoy competing and making a success of themselves. It's also a good way to keep apprentices interested in learning. Apprenticeships take three years. Competing can be a much more fun and exciting way to improve your skills than simply studying it at college."

### But what about the time it takes to train competitors?

Will is happy to admit that it is time consuming and places a lot of demand on companies. Jonathan himself spent 12 weeks away from work preparing for WorldSkills. But he is confident that the benefits always outweigh this and both employer and competitor can gain from the experience.

### So what does Will feel are the benefits? To Will these are clear.

*"New apprentices can see the success and development that's available to them. With the experience and training they go through for WorldSkills we get a better employee and hence a better work force. Our corporate image is also enhanced. We get publicity out of our employees taking part and this helps attract the right sort of candidates for the jobs we offer and proves we are a committed employer. It's a win-win situation."*

### And what is Will's advice for other interested companies?

"Be prepared to support your kid from day one and always be confident that the benefits to your business are well worth it"



For more information, please contact the PR Team, UK Skills: 020 7612 9260