

Gigafactory appoints skills ambassador

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Joint venture West Midlands Gigafactory has announced the appointment of electrical vehicle (EV) recruitment chief executive officer and founder Steve Doyle as the project's skills ambassador.

He will be engaged on a consultancy basis, continuing his role at EVera Recruitment, Europe's only dedicated battery and EV recruiter.

Already an ambassador for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) learning, and PhD careers advisor for The Faraday Institution, he has over 25 years of experience in recruitment and education and will take on leading the skills and recruitment strategy for the joint venture.

Mr Doyle set up the UK's first EV and hybrid recruitment division in 2008 and has become the UK's leading EV recruiter, according to the announcement about his employment.

He is credited with building teams from major OEMs to start-up tech companies. Since turning his attention to the battery sector in 2017, he recognised gigafactory recruitment to be far more complex and challenging and has devised a new recruitment strategy, attracting skills from parallel industries for battery manufacturing.

The UK has access to academic powerhouses and skills, and the gigafactory site in Coventry is situated in the epicentre of the UK's automotive industry where more than 800,000 people are employed in relevant sectors such as EV and battery and chemical engineering and 3.7m people are of working age. The West Midlands has the highest projected growth of the working-age population in the UK.

Mr Doyle said: "The world is being electrified and our workforce needs to be.

"In an industry facing skills shortages, we need to implement new recruitment models that can overcome this and succeed - quickly. The skill sets within the gigafactory space are often transferable from the

automotive, pharmaceutical or food industries.

“For instance, if you break the production line down into stages and look at the lithium powder mixing section, you quickly realise that it’s very similar to what Nestlé is doing with its KitKat line. Coating sections are very similar to processes in the printing industry. And then for the electrolyte-filling section of the production line, I found a company that was putting soya sauce into sachets for sushi restaurants. These are near-neighbour skills that can be usefully applied for batteries.”

Project director Mike Murray said: “Based in the heart of the UK’s manufacturing sector – West Midlands Gigafactory is placed in the Skills Capital of the UK with unrivalled access to current and future automotive talent. The site will create up to 6,000 new highly skilled jobs directly and thousands more in the supply chain, with the potential for 60 GWh per annum.

“It is vital at this stage of our project to assign a leading industry skills ambassador to support the success of our recruitment process in a market facing a skills shortage. We are thrilled to have Steve’s guidance and wealth of knowledge to educate the next phase of the project as we look to secure what is most important – the people.”

Councillor Jim O’Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change at Coventry City Council: “Powered by 100% sustainable, clean, green energy with direct access to a Net Zero transport and logistics infrastructure, we hope to show future employees how advantageous West Midlands Gigafactory is for the UK and with Steve’s experience and guidance, how convenient it is too. Coventry is leading the green industrial revolution and our ambition for a gigafactory is about climate change and about skills and job opportunities.”

The UK’s geography of labour is as powerful as its academia, with most of its manufacturing industry grouped together within The West Midlands.