

ASHLEY'S CAREER TIMELINE

Name: Ashley

Agency: MI6

Time in agencies: 12 years

Current role: Evaluation Engineer

Entry into agencies: Entry-level STEM role

Ashley has worked in engineering for over 20 years and joined MI6 as a Production Engineer. She now works as an Evaluation Engineer testing products before they get deployed in the field. Ashley is also a member of MI6's Women in STEM group where she promotes the work done in this field and celebrates those that choose to do it.

Engineering wasn't a career Ashley planned to undertake; in fact, her career started in a far more creative field! We asked her how a course in creative design led her to a career in STEM at MI6...

1996: University wasn't the right fit for me, so I decided to study a creative design course at college. It was an area that interested me, but I was never sure I wanted to pursue it as a career, so I spent some time working in admin before deciding what to do long term.

1999: I took up a job as a technician in mechanics. I completed a NVQ level 3 in Manufacturing Operations and Engineering, which was sponsored by my employer, and found I really enjoyed understanding how things are made and how they work. This also meant I became pretty handy at fixing things around the house!

2004: I moved into an electronics company, where I did several jobs, eventually becoming qualified as an IPC Certified Inspection Technician in Quality Assurance. I enjoyed this but wanted to work somewhere that aligned more with my personal values; I wanted what I did to have a real impact.

2012: I then joined MI6 as a Production Engineer. It felt a bit surreal to leave my job at

the electronics company for a role at MI6, but I am so glad I did! I felt really valued when the office supported me in becoming professionally recognised with the Institute of Engineering and Technology through a company sponsored scheme. As I was new, I regularly took part in classes at the office gym - it was a great way to meet new people and keep myself fit.

2016: After a few years, I felt the experience I had gained through my role and the learning and development I'd done whilst in the office, meant I was ready to apply for promotion to Senior Production Engineer. It meant taking on more responsibility and leading on various projects, which was nerve-wracking at first but really fulfilling.

2019: I moved into my current position as an Evaluation Engineer. I absolutely love what I do and have had the opportunity to qualify in different disciplines; one of my personal highlights was becoming a qualified mast climber to undertake duties as a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Inspector. It feels worlds away from my college days as a design student!