#9PercentIsNotEnough

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As a Mechanical Engineering student, I have already enjoyed many exciting opportunities that have allowed me to gain invaluable experience. From interning at Rolls-Royce and Siemens, to gaining two scholarships totalling £14,000; my early career in engineering is proving to be more interesting and rewarding than I could ever have imagined. However, I am one of a minority of women that choose engineering as a career.

In the UK, we have a huge skills shortage in our engineering industry; only 9% of all people in our engineering workforce are women.

In my opinion, there are too many false perceptions about what engineers do, and who can be an engineer. This can strongly influence whether somebody chooses to study GCSE and A Level STEM subjects, or if they choose an engineering apprenticeship. To tackle the gender imbalance, engineering companies and charities need to focus their educational outreach efforts towards students who are about make their GCSE and A Level/post-16 choices.

It is important, however, that we engage school pupils of all ages in the broad range of engineering career routes available. Not only that, but young people are also influenced by their parents, teachers, the media and other environmental and social factors. We need to tackle the problem on a large scale, by improving the profile of engineering and removing common misconceptions to reach the public.

To girls considering their career options – As an engineer, you could be working in a variety of environments, in many locations, and be solving some of the world’s biggest problems; engineering is a very fulfilling career. Take advice from a range of sources and consider as many engineering industries and careers as you can, and then decide if engineering is for you.