



# **in-house** **RECRUITMENT** APPRENTICESHIP & GRADUATE **CONFERENCE**

Event Statistics

Roundtable Discussions

Presentations

Videos

# Introduction.

'The Apprenticeship & Graduate Conversation' was our first event of the year and it took place at a new venue for us, The Cumberland Hotel in Marble Arch, London. This event was also our first specialist conference which was a chance for 100 in-house recruiters to gather together to share knowledge and learn more about graduate and apprenticeship recruitment. We spent the day getting an education on a plethora of topics, from innovative graduate assessment competitions to the apprenticeship levy and everything in-between.



Becky McVittie  
Npower



Emma O'Dell  
BPP



David Palmer  
trendence



Claire Ashton  
Teach First



Kate Homer  
Hodes



Craig Barnett  
Hodes



Chris Rea  
Prospects



Simon Wingate  
reed.co.uk



Richard Badley  
SMRS



Richard Charnock  
REC



Matt Jordan  
Ogilvy



Lydia Randall  
reed.co.uk

## Our special guest speakers shared their expertise on the following topics:

- Innovation in Internship Recruitment – Becky McVittie, Group Graduate Recruitment Manager at npower
- Graduate Recruitment Market Trends for 2017 and Beyond – Chris Rea, HE Services Manager at Prospects
- How To Operationalise Your Apprenticeship Programme – Emma O'Dell, Head of Financial Services Apprenticeships and Strategic Programmes at BPP & David Palmer, UK Research Manager at trendence
- Launching a Diverse Early Careers Programme – Matt Jordan, Head of Talent Acquisition (UK) at Ogilvy
- Preparing for the Apprenticeship Levy – Richard Charnock, Head of the Institute of Recruitment Professionals & Qualifications
- Growing numbers in a shrinking market – Claire Ashton, Head of Attraction – Graduate Recruitment at Teach First & Richard Badley, Head of Planning at SMRS
- Attracting student talent: Taking our message to the masses

# Event

# Statistics.

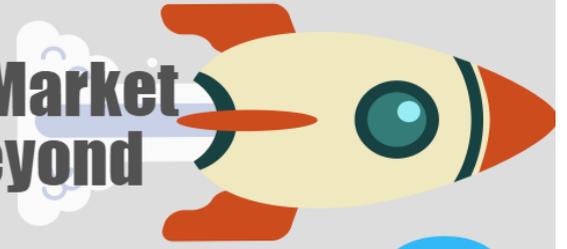
The following pages provide you with some insights on the delegates who attended the event.

Hopefully these statistics provide you with some context for the following discussion notes.

In what order of interest do you rate the conference topics?

1

**Graduate Recruitment Market Trends for 2017 and Beyond**



**How To Operationalise Your Apprenticeship Programme**

2

3

**Preparing for the apprenticeship levy**



**Launching a Diverse Early Careers Programme**

4

5

**Innovation in Internship Recruitment**



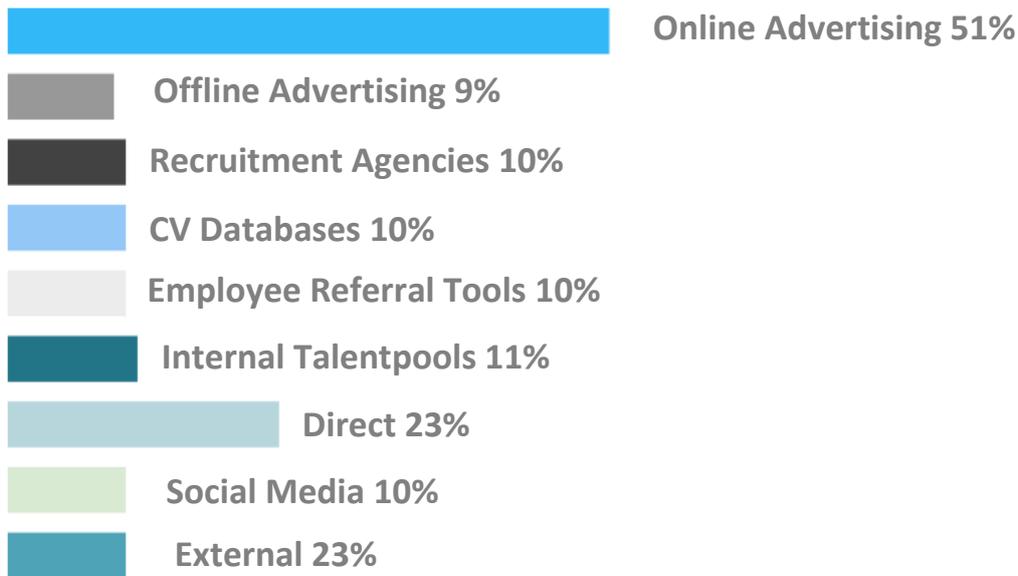
**Utilising Data Insight in your Graduate Attraction Strategy**

6

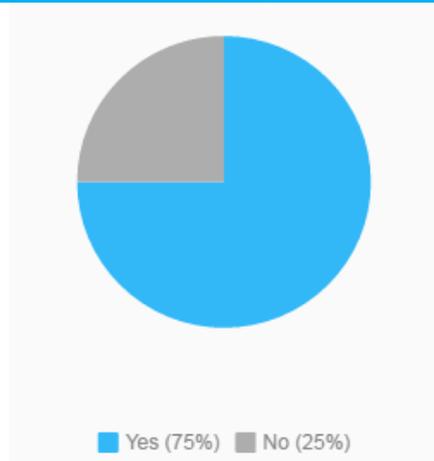
## What would you consider to be your main recruitment challenge in 2017?



## What percentage of candidates come from the following sources (roughly)?



## Do you use media agencies for your annual graduate recruitment campaigns?



What part of your recruitment processes will you mostly be looking to innovate within the next 12 months?

**65%** **Employer Branding**



**Applicant Tracking Systems** **53%**

**77%**

**Social Media**



**Advertising**

**53%**

**55%**

**Careers Site**



**Search**

**19%**

**58%** **Graduate Process**



**Candidate Analytics** **47%**

**34%** **Video Interviewing**



# The Conversation.

**Throughout the course of the day we heard 8 specialist guest speaker presentations and took part in 6 intimate roundtable discussions.**

The following pages provide you with the event notes from the day, allowing you to be privy to multiple conversations and to gain a good understanding of how your peers currently view their graduate and apprenticeship recruitment processes.

## Discuss intern opportunities and challenges within your business

- We have no specific programme. It tends to be more informal than process-driven
- We have lots of interest and requests about internships from employees internally but we aren't sure how to implement. We aren't aware of the protocol surrounding interns
- How to use interns to pipeline for the graduate programme
- Challenging and accommodating interns within the business
- We have no formal selection process for interns
- Diversity challenge; we take too many interns on referrals (family members and friends of existing employees)
- The volume of applications can sometimes be overwhelming for our resources
- Trying to weigh up intern opportunities against the needs of graduate schemes
- Finding interns enough work to do in the business can be a challenge
- Recruiting interns into more technical roles and roles that aren't as exciting i.e. marketing
- Students haven't heard of our umbrella brand
- Finding permanent roles for interns once their internships are complete
- Small budget involved therefore there needs to be 'value for money'
- Buy-in from business is from a financial and time investment point of view
- Strong staff retention of interns and early careers hires when it works well
- Builds relationship with candidates
- Culture both internally and externally. Not sure it accommodates for interns
- Slow ROI and lack of patience from senior stakeholders
- No commitment from interns
- Maintaining relationships with interns once they have completed their placement. It's hard to find the time to keep up with regular communications
- Brand name not recognised for graduate schemes
- Drop off after two years
- Finding people who are creative with communications skills
- Competition from other brands, especially brands who are well known for their internship and graduate programmes
- Finding budget for competitions is a challenge without prior proof of ROI
- Finding candidates that fit the business values
- Lack of communication with graduates who have applied whether they are successful or not
- Lack of resource to accommodate interns
- Ensuring someone/hiring managers champion this internally
- Low numbers of interns generally
- Quality of interns can be hit or miss
- Manpower of the recruitment team to cope with growing numbers within the business, especially temporary headcount such as interns
- Programmes are new so still ironing out the creases. We are still suffering from hiccups throughout all stages of the internship process

## What are the next steps to overcome these and benefit from interns?

- Pipeline for the future
- Try before you buy; taster days, competitions, assessment sessions
- Culture change; more awareness of the internship programme internally and creating a buzz around it
- Requires resource and dedication both from a recruitment/HR perspective and within the wider business
- Engage the right people internally
- Schemes are important and structure is vital for the acquisition of interns
- Moving towards video interviewing with bespoke tasks that appeal to a new generation in early careers
- Company want to portray a good candidate experience to candidates and potential future hires
- Mobile psychometric testing designed for your company and easy to do on the go
- Extending current intern's contracts, especially those who have excelled in their roles. Keep the best talent and nurture it whilst it's mouldable
- Create competitions to make the application process more engaging for candidates, as a good PR exercise and to you give another perspective on assessment
- More structure to turn interns into future graduate hires
- Better internal resources and specialised technology
- Buy-in from peers and decent management for interns
- Ensuring project specific workloads benefit the most from this
- Partnering with charities and specific bodies to help increase diversity
- Utilise students who are on a year in industry. These interns tend to be more motivated and prepared for the challenges of the workplace
- Sponsorship programmes and opportunities
- Competitions and brand awareness
- We want people to come to us
- Use partners like 'my kind of future'
- Partner with universities
- Use a structured internship programme

## Discuss your graduate hiring programme along with any challenges you might have?

- Taking recruitment in-house instead of relying heavily on recruitment agencies
- How to make the graduate application process fun and improve it
- We are currently unsure of the best way to provide feedback to graduates successful and unsuccessful
- How do you test resilience?
- How do you spot a good salesperson in a graduate?
- Managing candidate expectations during and after the interview process including focus on the culture of the business
- How do you get senior management bought-in to the need to change the process for the better?
- Getting buy-in from the business for taking on graduates
- It's difficult to retain graduates in an advertising company like ours
- Flexibility
- Graduate schemes are new – we're not quite there yet
- We can't control the volume of applications versus the speed we need to provide a slick, successful process
- Balance of internships and graduate places
- Office locations
- Low conversion on careers fairs even though we are encouraged to take part in them
- We need the media to promote schemes effectively
- Brexit is a challenge, especially for diversity
- We only target universities with high number of UK nationals, another problem for diversity
- Struggling with graduates who aren't aware of all brands under our business umbrella
- Balancing top talent and diversity
- Location and relocation can be a struggle for some companies for example not every candidate will be comfortable living London life. Equally, not every graduate candidate will desire a remote country location
- We always end up hiring more than we planned/budgeted for
- Number of hires rising annually and can be hard to adapt a programme to larger numbers
- Increasing graduate programme has led to a lack in quality
- Industries that are misunderstood such as IT – how do we make jobs in this space more attractive to graduates especially outside of London?
- We have no specific graduate scheme just entry level roles
- Spreading graduates nationwide
- Lack of loyalty with graduates

## What are the next steps to overcome these and draw benefit?

- Rotational schemes give graduates great exposure to the wider business
- Planning
- Strategy implementation
- Moving towards cultural fit as opposed to experience and qualifications
- To get higher conversion rates using assessment centres
- Orientation days as an opportunity for candidates to decide if the business is right for them
- Using more creative ideas for hiring graduates
- Implementing more video interviewing as the quality is significantly higher
- Assessment to include more on if moving, relocating and adapting will be beneficial to them
- Parental influence – how can we use this to our advantage?
- Increase diversity of applications
- Recruit locally
- Understand that people move every 3-5 years (although with current graduates it is probably more like one year)
- Must look at what works for each country if it's a global initiative

## Describe your apprenticeship programme and if you don't have one discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having one

- Business buy-in and education
- Who has the time to manage the apprentices?
- Who owns the programme in the business?
- Perceptions of apprenticeship schemes from both a candidate and internal point of view
- Many people don't have a 'formal' apprenticeship programme internally
- Not sure where apprentices would sit in the organisation
- How do you apply it to professional services?
- Harder to apply to specific sectors
- An advantage is that you don't need to guarantee a job/role at the end of it
- No expectations from candidates
- Retention could improve
- Levy might not cover cost of training – this needs to be considered right at the beginning
- Struggle to find providers for training purposes
- This is a massive grey area for us
- Apprenticeship levy – business want to see how this will work before they invest
- Where does this sit - learning & development or recruitment?
- Need to get existing workforce on board with apprentices
- Understanding the complicated levels of apprenticeships
- 20% of apprenticeship time has to be offsite which is a lot of time out of the office
- Good to set up apprenticeship programmes for roles that we struggle to recruit for – homegrown talent solutions

- Benefit is the redeeming benefits of the levy
- Management seeing apprentices as 'cheap labour' and not as a serious employee prospect
- Rotation through different teams means it's hard to track progress
- Results are hit and miss with the candidates
- Need the resources to ensure success
- Big opportunity to move beyond just A-level and GCSE school leavers – graduates should have an option too
- Pathway programme
- 'Try before you buy' approach
- Small amount of apprenticeships available

## What are your next steps to create or evolve your apprenticeship programme?

- Thinking about how we can best sell the degree element of apprenticeships more?
- Need to understand how to leverage/convert current programmes
- Strategy
- More understanding needed internally, especially at senior management level
- Workforce planning is required
- Consider an internal role to cover project management of apprenticeship schemes
- Bolster talent attraction
- Co-deliverance of training as a possible solution
- Providing training for existing employees as opposed to new intake of apprentices
- Extend and diversify to more disadvantaged areas
- Use the next levels of apprenticeship levy to include graduates
- Implementation planning and wider business communications
- Gain more education on roles available and where they could fit into the business

## What challenges are you facing within early careers diversity?

- Lack of female engineers
- Internal bite-back
- Long-term planning
- Lack of resource for pushing diversity
- Changing the mindset of hiring managers
- Restraints of ATS systems don't allow for creativity
- Inexperienced management
- Limited schemes
- How do they fit and where?
- Challenges of culture
- Need commitment
- Trying to cast a wider net

- Convincing managers you don't need a finished product or individuals who don't have a degree
- Professional services struggle with diversity as they do need a minimum education requirement
- Hiring managers revert to what they consider a 'risk free' recruit
- Want to be more diverse but then revert to old ways – we can't win
- Hiring managers forget they're hiring for potential employees who do not have the experience. Everyone needs to be able to see what they might be capable of in the future

## What are your short, medium and long term plans to improve this?

- Careers fairs at early stages
- Using current examples of diversity to push branding
- Increase resource to push diversity
- Engage hiring managers
- Need a campaign strategy
- Apprenticeship levy will change things significantly
- Commitment as a business to a new hiring strategy for graduates and apprentices
- Changing company behaviours and attitudes
- Include diversity as part of company values
- Strengths day, ask questions based on live experiences
- Challenge the hiring manager's opinions and views
- Take more risks
- Not to protect the brand quite so much

## How prepared are you for the apprenticeship levy?

- Nobody is completely prepared
- Schemes will be expanding
- Will be using the levy as an opportunity to further train existing employees
- Most people not prepared due to many grey areas
- We have taken direction from Head Office
- Need to train management on it
- Look to see how we can work it out within the two years
- Internal project teams – HRBP, L&D, Recruitment
- Internal teams working in silo
- Reading and attending events but still not ready
- Using it as an opportunity to review the early careers model
- Not very prepared
- A limited understanding of the levy
- Out of date information/lack of information

## What questions remain unanswered to ensure you walk away fully informed?

- How well educated are students about their options?
- What are student's perceptions of apprenticeships?
- What are the timeframes for creating degree equivalent apprenticeships?
- Can apprentices change the course at any point?
- What if you want to take on more than quarter if the allowance is gone?
- Why does the public sector need to have on 2.6%?
- How do we ensure finance are fully informed and can see the impact?
- Which training provider is right for me?
- We align with in-house team?
- Can we use the funding for internal staff? What are the consequences of this?
- More information and consistent information on internet would help
- Where can we attend more workshops and specialised events?

## Discuss your graduate talent attraction. How attractive an employer is you and what differentiates you?

- Difficult to be creative especially if your business is in the public sector
- Lots of hoops to get new ideas signed off
- Smaller company than competition
- Fast interviews
- Quick decisions
- Managing volume applications well
- Not very sexy industry
- Double/triple effort to stand out
- Onboarding for rotational graduate placements is tough
- Top level brand is hard to communicate if parent company is unknown

## How do you onboard and retain the graduate talent you hire?

- Graduates want short term experiences and once they have achieved their shorter-term goal they look to move on
- Retention for long term should be reconsidered
- Designate buddies – not just a senior person but a peer who has understanding
- Integrating apps into the onboarding process to appeal to a new generation
- Senior mentors and graduate 2<sup>nd</sup> year buddy

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# The Videos.

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You can find the links to videos of each of these presentations on the following page.



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**'Innovation in Internship Recruitment'**  
Becky McVittie, nPower



**'How To Operationalise Your Apprenticeship Programmes'**  
Emma O'Dell BPP & David Palmer trendence UK



**'Growing Numbers In A Shrinking Market'**  
Claire Aston, Teach First & Richard Badley, SMRS



**'Attracting student talent: Taking our message to the masses'**  
Kate Homer & Craig Barnett, Hodes



**'Graduate Recruitment Market Trends for 2017 and Beyond'**  
Chris Rea, Prospects



**'Graduate recruitment: no one-size-fits-all approach'**  
Simon Wingate & Lydia Randall, Reed.co.uk



**'Preparing for the Apprenticeship Levy'**  
Richard Charnock, REC



**'Launching a Diverse Early Careers Programme'**  
Matt Jordan, Ogilvy

# Thank You.

The Apprenticeship & Graduate Conversation was the In-house Recruitment Network's inaugural specialist subject conference and the first conference of 2017.

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to our speakers, everyone who attended and our fantastic event partners:



HODES

PROSPECTS

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