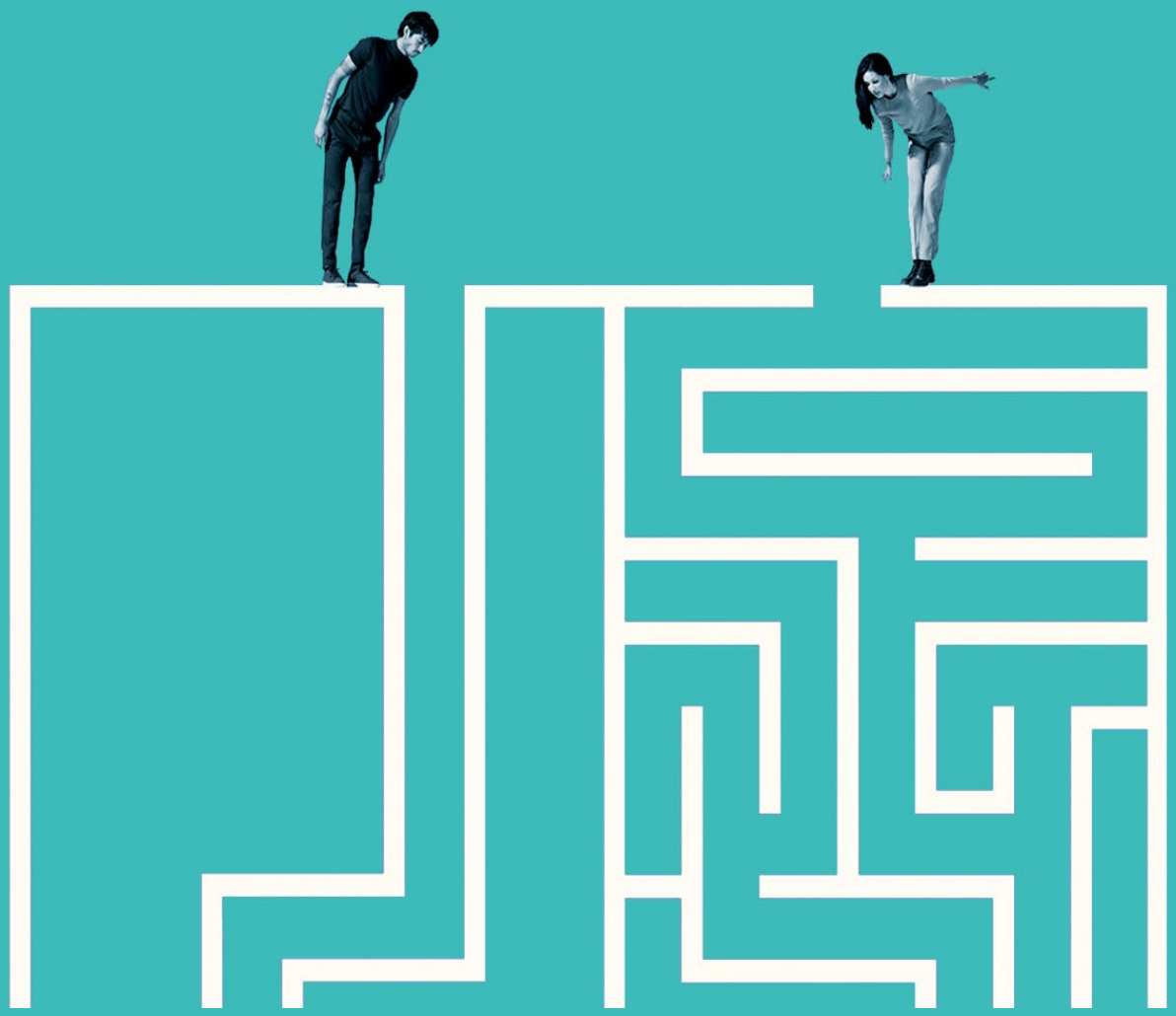


SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Employer Roundtable

Inclusion, Diversity and Social Mobility

TheTalentPeople

thetalentpeople.co.uk

Overview

Inclusion, diversity and social mobility have always been a priority for many employers in the apprenticeship and wider recruitment space. As restrictions open up in the UK and face-to-face interactions increase, however, the question of whether attraction and engagement will continue in a virtual realm persists.

In this roundtable, we revisited the core of hiring for diversity, inclusivity and social mobility, and discussed some of their core elements:

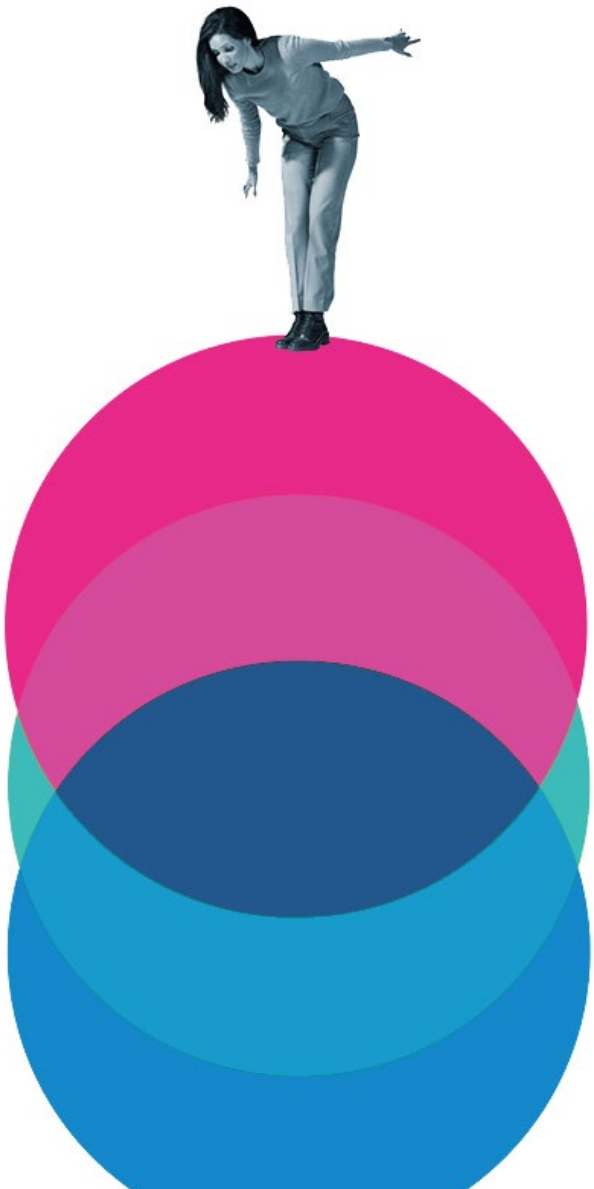
- How do we define and measure inclusion, diversity, and social mobility?
- How do we attract diverse talent and build relationships?

Attendees of the roundtable included:

With many more attending...

Macquarie
Ada National College for Digital Skills
Centrica
Greene King
GKN Automotive
NG Bailey

For many organisations, the process of attracting diverse talent starts with defining what it is. This often means looking inwards to how an organisation appears, acts and operates; understanding the culture of a company and how it differs from others. The roundtable conversation reflected this view and each attending organisation had their own view on how to approach the topic.



The conversation

The conversation started with one attendee stating that all activity on this topic in their organisation starts with inclusion. Social mobility is a thread that runs through their company and so any activity towards candidates must start with inclusion.

When focussing down on this topic, they said that first they must look internally to understand the culture of their own company so that they can use this to shape their attraction strategies.

Other attendees agreed, that profiling current staff members has given them a more holistic view of their organisation. Understanding culture in this way has made it easier to report on and manage, and for some organisations, this has improved buy-in from senior colleagues to conduct candidate recruitment in certain ways.

Attendees who agreed with this route felt that new candidates wouldn't 'stick' unless they matched with the organisations culture.

Another organisation shared that their D&I strategy started with early talent recruitment and worked backwards. This was a way, for them, to alter the culture of the business and create a new direction – a route that they explained was required in some sectors.

Some attendees felt that Apprenticeships, as a route to new talent, enabled greater D&I regardless of approach, simply because they offer paid experience and are more accessible than other career routes. paid experience. This was seen to level the playing field among young people and act as a platform for all.

The conversation then turned to the analysis of D&I, and whether adding numbers and data to the topic actually detracted from a new cultural approach. Whilst for some it provides an opportunity to better measure and understand the organisation, for others it meant risking unconscious bias, with targets to attract certain candidate 'types'.

This was understood around the table as a 'grey area' but acknowledged as a potential risk. Some felt that this dragged the D&I focus into the realm of neuroscience too, adding a new layer of complexity.

Regardless, the general opinion of the community was that all should and would work towards greater D&I and use information and real data to understand it where possible.

Attracting diverse talent

In this part of the roundtable, attendees focussed down on their specific approach to attracting diverse talent. Through sharing these it was evident that small changes in process had significant outcomes to diverse candidate attraction's results. Every organisation and sector, however, requires slightly different changes.

The conversation

One attendee started the conversation by stating that regardless of the approach, nobody can expect D&I results to change overnight. There must be a universal process in collecting datapoints over time and making gradual changes for the best results. This way, historic behaviours can be ironed out and a new culture formed in time.

Agreeing with this statement, another attendee stated that they don't even measure D&I until after recruitment processes have finished. Once this was done, they could measure effectiveness and plan changes for the next intake.

Others, however, felt that by measuring throughout the hiring process, they could make the necessary changes as they went along in order to finish recruitment procedures with a more inclusive cohort. For one organisation, this meant accepting proof of enrolment into educational courses if certain grade criteria couldn't be met.

This opened the door to the discussion of grades as a candidate measurement technique, and the floor was divided on the topic. Some felt that grades were proof that candidates understood a topic area that was required to complete the programme, and therefore essential. Some attendees argued that candidates could learn on the job in some cases and therefore this approach wasn't required. Other attendees had expressed the need for grade requirements in order to work with certain training providers.

Alternative methods to analysing the capabilities of young people had included gamifying assessments, measuring functional skills, and understanding cultural fit.

Regardless of their approach, in general the roundtable understood grades to be a potential barrier for candidates. As such, they agreed that diverse and inclusive hiring starts with using the relatively untapped resources of schools and colleges. It was felt that where relationships could be built in young people's early stages of learning, a greater selection of capable talent would be available later down the line.

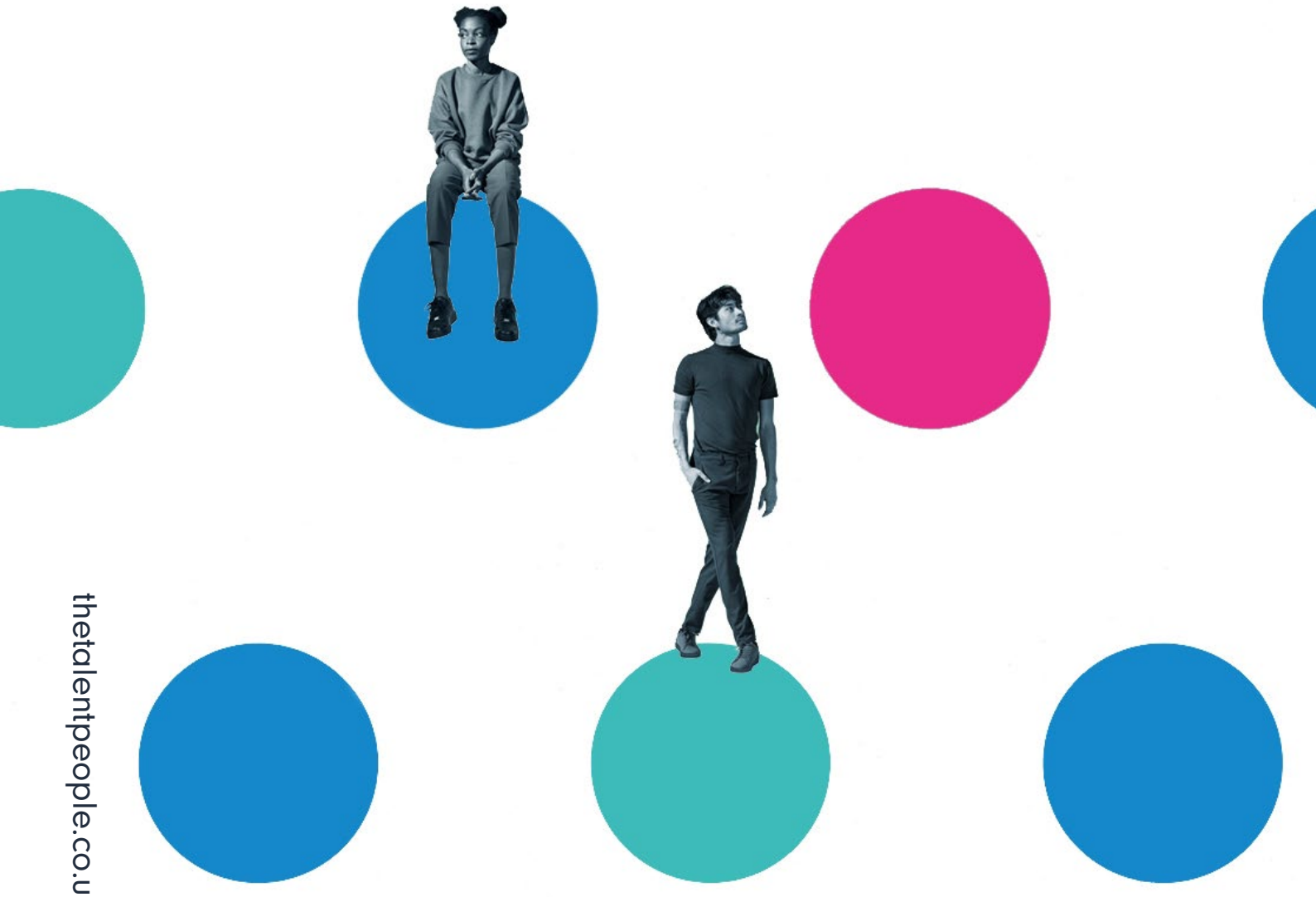
One attendee stated that attraction should start up to three years ahead, as attraction later-on in the candidate's learning journey can put pressure on capable and available talent.

Another organisation agreed by sharing that we can't positively impact D&I in the nation unless we start focussing on the education sector and what types of candidates they are creating. There will continue to be disparities and disappointment until the school system is solved.

Other attendees felt that this same issue was shared in relation to training providers, and the disparities between them and employers in the educational demands of the young people they want to attract.

In addition to the focus on schools, employers at the roundtable shared the view that candidate influencers also needed to be 'brought on side' so that candidates would consider a greater array of careers routes in future.

Whilst some attendees had focussed down on bringing parents into the company and careers conversation through parents evenings, partnered interviews and taster days, others had chosen careers advisors as a route to new talent.



Future Roundtables

If you would like to join the roundtable community and take part in future events, you can sign up on our website here.

To catch up on previous roundtable conversations, check out our online resource library.

For all other queries, please contact Chris as:
chris.othodoxou@thetalentpeople.co.uk

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