



SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Employer Roundtable

Creating High Impact Recruitment Campaigns

No. 17

Wednesday 15th
September 2021
10am - 11:30am

Including
GetMyFirstJob
ambassador network
apprentices



TheTalentPeople

Overview

Record levels of vacancies and low numbers of applicants across the economy and in the emerging talent sector has created a wide range of challenges for hiring organisations. This ranges from applicant numbers through to higher turnover, renege rates and ultimately salaries, and undoubtedly puts candidates in the driving seat.

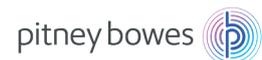
Despite the continued easing of restrictions, government uncertainty is affecting organisational planning around the working environment, which in turn is forcing the hand of short-term hiring.

A year and a half of varying lockdown measures has altered hiring timelines drastically. Now, questions are being asked by employers of what an effective campaign timeline looks like, and how engagement with schools, careers fairs, and other information, advice & guidance (IAG) events will play out.

Attendees of the seventeenth roundtable include:



Morgan Stanley



With many more attending...

MBDA	Investment20/20	Lloyds Banking Group	Meggitt
Sytner	Nationwide Building Society	RPA	Oracle
Motus Commercials	Goodwin	RSM	Kaplan
Culligan	Severn Trent	NG Bailey	MMC
GKN Automotive	Buzzacott	TfL	

Candidate market snapshot

- The latest KPMG and REC research shows candidate availability has dropped to a 26-year low
- Permanent work placements are at a record high
- Permanent placement wages have increased to bolster demand
- Apprenticeship opportunities have grown 200% this year but candidate supply has dropped

Read more on [TheTalentPeople news centre](#)

Key Points

1

All employers are struggling with varying challenges in the current emerging talent market. More questions exist than answers about when to start recruiting and what hiring processes might look like.

2

Employers are finding it difficult to be clear about hiring timeframes and working locations with candidates due to continued uncertainty around restrictions. This is having knock-on effects to hiring.

3

The hybrid working debate is a divided one, with candidate, apprentice/employee, management and organisational preferences differing. The biggest question to come out of this is how support can be offered to prospective and current apprentices, as well as management throughout, to maintain effecting learning and working environments.

4

Restrictions have prevented many face-to-face engagement activities, particularly through universities but the floor is again divided by those that see benefit from these activities versus those who don't.

5

A hybrid approach to attraction, engagement and selection was generally accepted by employers as best practice. Some who saw benefits with in-person attraction then saw improved performance through virtual assessment, however others experienced this the other way round.

6

A templated approach to hiring doesn't seem to exist right now and organisations must balance the preferences of the candidates with the needs of the business.

Timings



With candidates in the driving seat, the question of timings and what pre-live and launch campaigns look like are being asked by employers. Previous restrictions have altered hiring starts for most part and there is a lack of clarity of how recruitment should play out in the last quarter of the year, to maintain and/or grow the yearly influx of talent.

The conversation



For most employers, it seems that the desired to start hiring exists, however, uncertainty around whether or not a conventional process is possible means they are holding back. Lingering government restrictions and the potential threat of another winter lockdown, means that many organisations have set their policies to prioritise a virtual working environment and recruitment practices over the traditional in-person approach. Effective for some, but not for others.

Some employers have even seen hiring timelines impacted by their training providers too, whose process had influenced a need to start later in the year. Additionally, timelines have been hindered by secondary and tertiary education; for one, there was a need to start early in order to prepare for unconfirmed university course requirements and a change in results days. Regardless, the ability to be clear with candidates around timeframes were strained with increased dropout and renege rates labelled as a direct consequence.

The hybrid working model returned to conversation in this roundtable, but the question still remains around what that looks like exactly. It was widely accepted that candidate preferences differ, but there is also a general acknowledgement that in-person onboarding offers direct benefits to candidate learning. Personal contact with managers, support groups and the workplace has also been found to improve candidate understanding of workplace elements such as organisational culture, management structures and feedback loops.

Although some organisations are requiring staff to return to the office, most are maintaining a hybrid approach. Although this is safer, cheaper, and easier for staff, it is putting strain on the support structures in place to progress apprentices and graduates, particularly those in their first year of work. The working culture and structure of organisations is unanimously different to that of two years ago and even individuals with years of experience are experiencing a culture shock in returning to work after this period.

The roundtable group agreed that a combination of clarity on application and workplace expectations alongside a solid support foundation through the likes of senior staff and apprentice ambassadors, would improve candidate retention and hiring.

An [always on approach](#) to hiring would also be an effective tool in creating and maintaining relationships with new talent, making sure an organisation is front of mind for candidates when they come to apply.

What do the apprentice ambassadors think?

Virtual hiring and working practices provide obvious time and money saving benefits, as well as comfort to young talent. In-person assessment, onboarding and working, however, teaches new apprentices the culture and etiquette of working in an organisation. That is more valuable in making them well-rounded employees.

Attraction Engagement



With many schools and campuses closed off to employers last year, there was a real shift to virtual engagement, events and offerings. But are these changes here to last? What are the consequences to candidate intake by only engaging talent on a digital level? The roundtable got into it.

The conversation



The roundtable was yet again divided in the ways each organisation has seen success from engaging with candidates. It seemed each party had seen the positives in either an entirely virtual or entirely in-person approach, particularly when concerning events and careers fairs. What was interesting among attendees, however, was that a successful in-person approach to engagement didn't guarantee a successful in-person approach to assessment or onboarding. A combination of in-person and virtual approaches throughout the candidate hiring process again championed the return of a hybrid approach.

For organisations looking to engage students in-person, they found their attempts are currently mostly dictated by educational institutions, as many colleges and universities are not yet opening their doors to businesses and events.

Many hiring managers and senior recruitment officials also shared organisational policy as a restriction to candidate engagement. Company heads have set in place rules for staff in order to protect them and the business, but these have had knock-on implications for the ways in which recruitment teams have been able to reach new talent.

Regardless of the manner in which organisations intended to reach candidates, there was unanimous intent to engage candidates at all educational levels. In addition to this, organisations across the board were looking to take on more of a partnership style approach with educational institutions to provide a more well-rounded experience for students. There was mutual agreement that engaging candidates prior to their career decision-making stage would help build relationships with many potential employers and offer up alternatives to university routes – a common dilemma in the apprenticeship sector.

The popularity of the partnership approach with educational institutions by roundtable attendees prompted the question of whether careers fairs are effective and necessary anymore, with one employer stating, 'candidate engagement is not a flyer-in-a-pack exercise'. In a partnership approach, an organisation would work with a university to release content and provide experiences to candidates in way that benefited all stakeholders; a method that has seen many positive results.

The success of candidate engagement for many relies on their ability to build relationships; a process found to be difficult for some at previous careers fairs. Candidates are perceived by some to only attend for free gifts and reluctant to spark spontaneous conversation from across a table in front of their friends. To add to this, some attendees explained that the success of a careers fair also

What are your plans this year for attraction?

13%

On Campus /
In School

19%

Virtual

56%

Hybrid

13%

Still unsure

Results from the poll show a majority focus on a hybrid approach to attraction.

depends largely on the size and power of an organisation's brand.

Other employers, however, simply stated that regardless of interaction, if it wasn't for careers fairs, they wouldn't have known that certain organisations and educational routes even existed. Some attendees labelled careers fairs as the primary reason they took an apprenticeship. These organisations explained that careers fairs are an opportunity to set perceptions straight about who organisations are and what they do. Just because an organisation operates within a sector, doesn't mean that all the careers within the company are related to that same sector.

The overwhelming message from candidate engagement was that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and that organisations must do what best suits them and their target candidates to grow their workforce of the future.

What do the apprentice ambassadors think?

Fairs and events still undoubtedly have their place. But to young apprentices, it is their ability to combine personal presence with ambassadorial support that offers the biggest benefits. Candidates need to feel they can ask questions freely without being judged.

More from the roundtable...

If you liked what you read here, why not attend our next roundtable via our [events page](#).

You can also catch up on our previous discussions via our [resource hub](#).

If you're looking for more in-depth insights into candidate behaviour, we're pleased to be able to offer you our own research into the world of early talent – read more [here](#).

For more information about our
apprentice ambassador network,
please email

ambassadors@getmyfirstjob.co.uk