

Essential mid-season guidance for graduate recruiters

Instant solutions for a
successful campaign

BRIGHT
NETWORK

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Foreword

By Kirsten Barnes, CEO of Platform at Bright Network

As we near the end of 2022, it's important we take time to reflect on the year we've had, whilst also resetting and planning for 2023. Exceptional economic impacts and a considerable shift in both the graduate landscape and the workplace in general has changed what success looks like in your hiring strategy compared to this time last year.



With a new generation of workers changing the future of the workplace, a new set of challenges now face early talent recruiters. We are still seeing the effects of the pandemic - The 'Covid Generation' will continue to change the way we approach our hiring processes, so providing them with the right environment to succeed is critical.

I'm pleased to share our solution-focused insights to the top five challenges faced by the UK's leading employers at this time. In this paper, you'll uncover actionable solutions to this year's early talent challenges including how to prove return on investment to your key stakeholders, engaging underrepresented talent and attracting quality, relevant candidates to your roles.

With insights from leading employers and research from our member community of over 800,000 students and graduates, these solutions are ready for you to implement into your strategy now.

I hope you find these solutions useful in supporting your current campaigns for successful graduate hiring in 2023 and beyond.

Challenge 1

Proving return on investment

Measuring your return on investment (ROI) is difficult. Monitoring, tracking and communicating ROI effectively and accurately to key stakeholders in your business is essential for demonstrating the value of early talent hiring - no matter what your role is in the graduate recruitment space. With the added pressure of achieving instant and effective results for diversity hiring, it's never been more important to have an accurate way of tracking candidates through the pipeline.

Applicant tracking systems (ATS) can lack the appropriate reporting metrics to track candidates, and have rigid and limited dashboards to decipher your data. Integrating multiple systems raises further challenges as tracking ROI and data across different platforms becomes challenging and labour intensive.

Solutions

Using campaign performance to write your budget

Confidence in your ROI will support your budget writing for the financial year ahead, as you'll know where to invest more of your budget for the next intake and where to scale back. Investing in initiatives that yield measurable results will prove your ROI and elicit business confidence.

Review your current campaign performance to understand metrics such as email rates, engagement with different demographic groups, as well as how candidates progress through your process from different sources. Identify the trends to understand what worked and what didn't work - this will help you to plan your budget for next season.

Make the most of your data and reporting

Having access to real-time and insightful data is the most effective way to demonstrate valuable ROI, giving you confidence in what's working which can be easily explained to key stakeholders.

You'll be able to:

- *React to campaign performance to dial up what is working and scale back what isn't.*
- *Demonstrate efficiencies by spending marketing and attraction budgets on recruiting the best suited graduates.*
- *Justify spend and maintaining, or increasing, your budget year on year.*



💡 Top tips

From Alissa Garland at Bloomberg on using data to build diverse teams

Alissa, Early Careers Recruiter, joined us at the Bright Network Illuminate Conference 2022, and shared how Bloomberg use data to inform their hiring process. As a recruitment professional in a financial data organisation, ensuring the data is accurate is one of the most important parts of their hiring process. Alissa suggests:

- Comparing data from the previous year to benchmark against your objectives for the current year.
- Utilise third party data, such as Bright Network, to support what's missing at the top of the funnel and target your priority audiences.
- Use data to identify where candidates are dropping off in the process and put schemes or content in place to support them through the pipeline.



How **Bright Network** can help

Talent Tracker

The type of data you collect has an impact on how you communicate your brand and values, the roles you offer and ultimately, the candidates you hire. The Bright Network Talent Tracker provides intuitive analytics that delivers powerful insights to ensure you're making the best campaign decisions informed by real-time data. With demographic deep-dives, continuous access to data and true ROI analysis, you'll be able to target, track and report on all your campaigns effectively.

Declared and behavioural data

With our members' declared data, we're able to easily access information on members' degree, location and sector preferences, and as a result, specifically target groups based on your objectives. Using behavioural data, we can see which members are actively viewing similar roles or are engaged with your competitors.

We can target those most likely to be interested in your organisation, therefore mitigating against

ineffective marketing spend. Even if your budget is limited, all our digital packages offer real-time ROI tracking so you'll be confident in what's working and adjust your budget accordingly.

“ I think this is an excellent tool, super useful as we plan to use data to inform our content creation for our profile page and track ROI ”

Anthea, Graduate recruitment and development assistant, WTW

Want to find out how this could benefit your business? Contact us on employers@brightnetwork.co.uk for a free consultation.



Challenge 2

Quality over quantity

Driving high quality applications in line with your organisation's objectives is essential, with a need for a highly-engaged and relevant pool of applications, rather than high volume. A congested recruitment pipeline takes up more of your time and reduces your chances of hiring the right candidates for your roles.

Solutions

Personalise your candidate touchpoints with targeted communication

Personalised and hyper-targeted content will attract high quality candidates at the top of your funnel. Creating content and marketing strategies that relate to your target audience will keep them engaged throughout your attraction efforts. Use data such as location, ethnicity, or behavioural insights to direct your campaigns.

Signpost right to work eligibility in your messaging

Ensuring eligibility of your candidates can be a challenge in the attraction process, whether this is for roles based in the UK or international roles. A way to mitigate this challenge is to signpost your roles clearly for those

that are eligible, depending on whether your organisation sponsors visas or not.

Showcase opportunities in your organisation

Clearly demonstrate the opportunities for progression and development in your organisation, as well as your commitment to upskilling and supporting graduates throughout their time with you. With your social mobility and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) strategies in mind, highlighting initiatives that show your organisation's commitment to DEIB is also crucial, as applicants will be looking for authentic inclusive activities, and ways they can get involved.

Reduce renege rates with quality candidates

From our latest research, 88% of graduates would consider renegeing on a job offer. Your communication strategy with candidates before and during the application process, as well as engagement after an offer, will have an impact on reducing renege rates. Conducting pre-joining events and offering small gestures such as delivery care packages are effective in keeping your brand top of mind. Ultimately, reaching quality candidates through effective targeting, content and positioning will reduce your renege rates.



How **Bright Network** can help

Partner Success Managers

Our dedicated Partner Success Managers are on hand to give you advice on the best content to share with your audience, how to position your organisation and what activity to channel your efforts through. With this support in place, you'll increase the likelihood of targeting informed and engaged graduates that are less likely to renege on their offer.

Showcase your opportunities

With our digital packages, you have the opportunity to demonstrate what your company has to offer in an effective way. Our Partner Success Managers have the insight to tailor this content to the right audience, ensuring any commitments, initiatives and opportunities resonate with your target audience.

Right to work

All 800,000 Bright Network members are asked if they have unrestricted right to work in the UK after graduation without visa sponsorship. Although we accept students that do require sponsorship onto the network, we can target your campaign specifically to only those eligible to apply. If you're recruiting outside of the UK, you can also use our membership to target international students.

Bright Network's Career Path Test

Our **Career Path Test** supports our members to discover the career best suited to their working style and career preferences. Members that complete the test are provided with advice, and selected roles that match their answers. In your campaigns, we can use hyper-targeted messaging to these members based on their career preferences.





Challenge 3

Attracting underrepresented groups

Championing and attracting diverse graduates begins at hiring, but should continue to be a big part of your values, mission and culture. To be an organisation that is truly diverse, everyone in your organisation must understand their role in bringing about change and champion it vocally. Making changes to your attraction strategy is just the beginning to building a more inclusive workforce.

Solutions

Use diversity first messaging and role models to increase representation in these roles

Building content that's relevant to a variety of audiences and addresses specific concerns is the best way to engage authentically with potential applicants. Create an overarching campaign that's open to all, and focus specific touchpoints and attraction campaigns to those who are underrepresented at your business. Creating content such as 'Day in the Life' accounts or success stories from representative role models, just like our in-house marketing team do, will prepare potential applicants for what they could expect in the role at your company.

According to Jonida, a Bright Network member from Imperial College London, "Role models allow you to see a person from your background in a position you want

Top tip

Of Bright Network's Black heritage members, 38% are more likely to say they are worried about psychometric tests. If you have these tests as part of your process you should provide additional support so that all applicants, but particularly Black heritage applicants, feel more comfortable and confident completing them.

to be in, which boosts confidence and leads to a better application as your end goal becomes more realistic". Building meaningful connections is critical, so attending events - such as the Bright Network Black Heritage Future Leaders - are effective ways to introduce role models at your company to future talent.

Cultural capital

Increasing applicants' cultural capital with advice and guidance fosters a supportive network, which is especially important for those who are underrepresented in your business. We give round the clock support, tips and advice on topics such as core career skills, interviews and sector specific guidance. Targeted efforts to support ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ graduates, as well as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are designed to increase confidence and develop their ability to network with employers.

For ethnic minority members, our research found that 'coaching during hiring' was the most favoured inclusive process, above 'employer unconscious bias training' and 'diverse interview panels'. Offering graduates coaching in the first stages of the application, such as pre-application or video coaching, will support development and increase confidence.

How **Bright Network** can help

Coaching/mentoring

As coaching and mentoring has been ranked as the highest inclusive process that our members want to see, we support our partners to implement coaching into their hiring process. We've supported our partners, such as Aon, to drive continuous engagement and increase conversion in their campaigns.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) employer events

We regularly bring our employers and members together in solution-focused discussions, providing insight straight from graduates themselves on the most pressing topics in early talent recruitment. We recently ran an online event with a focus on converting underrepresented groups through a recruitment process. The key takeaways from this event were:

- Authentically connecting and engaging with the Black community, such as participating in DEIB focused events and engaging in online groups/forums will allow you to better understand the real challenges faced.
- Focus on soft skills in applications - despite a technology revolution, the future of work will focus largely on soft skills. In most industries, communication, decision making and public speaking will be essential and transferable skills for early talent.





High Fliers for brand awareness amongst Black heritage graduates

Bright Network has been voted as the top graduate recruitment company used by Black heritage graduates in the High Fliers Research. Making use of your digital campaign will increase brand awareness with students at the universities included, and will keep your organisation at the forefront.



Data and targeting

With such a diverse membership, we can help you reach the members you need to target based on your organisation. Our 800,000 member community is:

55% Female

24% STEM

12% Black heritage

20% Free school meals

79% State educated

40% First generation to attend university



Challenge 4

Location, lifestyle and hard to fill roles

Finding candidates to fill roles that are based in regional locations or less popular industries can be challenging. As a cost of living crisis impacts the UK, major cities such as London may become less sought after by some graduates, and roles in industries with higher salaries or better job security may become more appealing.

We asked over 14,000 Bright Network members 'In which region would you most like to work in for your first graduate job?'. 40% of members said they'd either prefer to work outside of London or don't mind where they work, so there is interest for opportunities outside of the capital and with the right messaging and targeting our members will be receptive.

Solutions

Highlight the benefits of roles in less desirable locations

With so many roles offering working from home or hybrid options, lean into the benefit of working in a more affordable but enjoyable area without the high living costs. Ensure you're highlighting the culture of the office environment, sharing inclusive initiatives, supportive personal development schemes and social aspects of the team. 36% of our members say an organisation's people and culture is what they look at when choosing a graduate role, above the organisation's reputation or the characteristics of the role.

Target graduates interested in major cities

Share other benefits of regional locations to graduates interested in

specific areas. For those interested in roles in London, sharing messaging such as 'enjoy a city career without the cost of the big city' can entice those who want a role based in a city location but with the option of not being based in the capital, especially if they can work hybrid.

Host events

Campus events or tours are a great way to build relationships with graduates. Host events in regional focus areas with graduates from that university or your graduates who work in that location, to share insights on the roles you're trying to fill - this will be effective and authentic coming from relatable role models.



How **Bright Network** can help

With our support, you'll have access to our bespoke events which take place in your desired locations and target the students you want to reach. Alongside our events, our digital packages allow you to create content with the help of our Partner Success Managers who use tried and tested methods to engage graduates with regional-based roles.

Take a look at how we supported WTW with their Reigate-based roles

Bright Network ran a project for WTW delivering two bespoke insight events for graduates and interns to raise awareness of the Retirement Actuarial opportunities. The key objectives were to increase the appeal of the Reigate location and share the value proposition. Alongside the awareness objective, we delivered hyper-targeted activations to drive applications.

The results:

We secured **18 Bright Network graduates and 6 Bright Network interns** for WTW's Reigate team that season. The demographic breakdown for this campaign was:

- 46% female.
- 50% identify as being from an ethnic minority heritage (35% Asian/Asian British, 10% Black Heritage, 5% Arab).
- 63% state-educated.





Challenge 5

Thinking ahead for 2023/24

With continuous advancements in technology and an even greater need to engage with the 'Covid Generation', being prepared with an effective hiring strategy for 2023/24 is more important than ever. If you're in a good position for the challenges we've covered so far, planning for the future will help you innovate and keep you ahead of the competition.

Solutions

Stay ahead with brand awareness

Taking part in events that provide learning opportunities for graduates will improve your employer brand - 95% of graduates believe employers should support them with upskilling. Educate potential candidates on their career pathway, the onboarding process and other aspects of the role. Several of our employer partners have taken part in our annual Internship Experience UK (IEUK), getting in front of over 140,000 students and graduates and sharing insights of their organisation, with over 10,000 secured roles from the event so far.

The Times Top 100 annual guide to the UK's leading graduate employers is another great way to elevate your employer brand, with students looking to the guide for recommended schemes both digitally and in the physical guide.

Benchmark against your competition

Keeping your finger on the pulse of the competition is important as you plan for next season. Performing an effective competitor analysis and reviewing the marketplace will widen your perspective, help you identify and capitalise on market

opportunities and respond quickly to market changes.

Assessing who your competitors are, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they are positioning themselves to potential candidates is key intelligence to help shape your attraction efforts. Your competitors' online presence will be a good indication of how they are attracting top-quality graduates. Keep a record of their key employer touchpoints including:

- How they communicate their brand values and mission.
- Content and messaging style.
- Social media presence.
- Commitments to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) and Social Mobility.
- Brand positioning.
- Review site ratings such as Glassdoor.



How **Bright Network** can help

Brand awareness

Increase your brand awareness with universities included in the Times Top 100 using our digital packages. Creating an email campaign to final year students studying at the universities taking part in the Times Top 100 interviews will keep your organisation at the forefront for students. Our campaigns are fast and easy solutions ready for you to implement, so you won't need additional budget and the activity can support your campus tours if you're running them.



Make use of our pre-engagement, targeted messaging to further increase your brand awareness. Engaging members in authentic conversations on culture, opportunities and inclusive activities during off-peak seasons, is a softer approach to brand awareness, but still keeping your brand at the forefront for graduates before peak season.



Benchmarking

With our Talent Tracker, you can use our sector benchmarking capability which allows you to compare key demographic performance with other leading firms, on both live and historical campaigns. Understanding the conversion rates, outliers and overall market trends of others in your sector will let you know where you are performing well and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Internship Experience UK

With IEUK, you'll be able to run your own stream and conduct interactive sessions for members most engaged with your industry and roles. Across three-days, the virtual internship programme brings together students and graduates who are both confident in joining a specific industry as well as those who are undecided. IEUK provides the perfect opportunity to give clarity on the roles you have, share the opportunities and culture at your organisation, and engage in an interactive setting.

Use your remaining budget

As our digital campaigns are ready to implement within five working days, you can use your remaining budget to support brand awareness quickly and effectively, as well as our live data and insights to demonstrate ROI to your stakeholders.

*Interested in raising brand awareness with key audience groups?
Contact us on employers@brightnetwork.co.uk for a free consultation.*



Solutions summary

- 1** Make the most of your data and reporting, using insights on what's working and what isn't to build your budget and your strategy for next season. Using tools such as The Bright Network Talent Tracker, will give you insight into your data and will help demonstrate your ROI to key stakeholders.
- 2** Using personalised touchpoints and tailored messaging will increase your likelihood of attracting high quality, engaged candidates. Showcase what your organisation can offer based on the audience you're targeting. Make full use of Bright Network's diverse and highly driven member platform, as well as our Partner Success Managers to support you with creating engaging content.
- 3** Authentically engage with underrepresented groups using targeted content, role models and diversity first messaging. Success stories and 'Day in the Life' accounts are proven to engage audiences, using representation at the centre of your attraction efforts. Bright Network events – such as Black Heritage Future Leaders - will allow you to meet with graduates, both in person and virtually.
- 4** Demonstrate the benefits of roles based in regional-locations. Use content to share the advantages of living outside of major cities, as well as highlighting your organisation's culture and team. Take your campaigns to the locations you're recruiting in and host events with graduates based there to further engage during an in-person setting.
- 5** Use sector benchmarking and competitor analysis to stay ahead of the game in 2023. Identify what your competitors are doing and understand where you offer value. Raising brand awareness through industry initiatives and pre-engagement campaigns will give you a competitive advantage as you'll be in the forefront for graduates as they start thinking about their career options.



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