

Attracting young talent

A guide for employers

Young people have a wealth of untapped potential, new skills and fresh perspectives. However, attracting young talent can sometimes seem like a complex and time-consuming task, especially as there are now more recruitment websites and youth initiatives than ever. This guide will help you think about the key steps you need consider to reach out to and attract young talent from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Key things to consider:

- What is your offer - is it attractive to young people?
- Where are you advertising - are young people looking there?
- Who are you targeting - are you reaching a diverse range of people?
- When are you recruiting - are you missing out because of the academic year?

Step by step

1. What is your offer?

Highlight the aspects of your roles that young people find most attractive

In our 2015 Youth Survey, young people told us that besides pay, the most important things they look for in a job are the opportunity to progress their career and working in a friendly and supportive environment where they feel valued. They also highlighted that the location of jobs can be one of the biggest barriers.

In your job adverts, consider highlighting the career progression options within your organisation, any training opportunities available, the support networks in place and the transport links available.

Feature your existing young employees in your content

Young employees are the best ambassadors for attracting other young people. Look at your website – do you see any young people? On your careers pages, do you include case studies of other young employees who have progressed in the organisation? You can also feature young people in other promotional content. For example, participants in a six month paid work placement at **Wakefield District Housing** featured in a documentary aimed at communicating how much their contribution was valued.

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2. Where are you advertising?

Reach out through multiple engagement channels

While young people have told us that they still rely on job sites and companies' own websites as their first port of call when looking for jobs, there are now more channels to engage with young people than ever, and offline engagement is still more popular than social media.

For example, **livin Housing** uses a multi-channel approach to engage with young people. This includes hosting roadshows in schools using apprentice ambassadors, running local community activities, sending text messages, promoting the website and generating social media campaigns.

In order to engage with as many young people as possible, **Costain** have developed their own 'careers world' using the online careers education site Plotr. This is a highly interactive digital platform that enables young people to explore all the different types of careers available within Costain and the engineering sector.

Establish partnerships with other organisations

If you don't know where to start looking for young talent, then let other organisations bring it to you. JobCentre Plus, charities, social enterprises, local schools, colleges, housing associations and councils are all excellent points of engagement with young people, and working with them can cut out a significant amount of recruitment work as well as often providing pre-employment support.

For example, in a sector that is not normally considered widely accessible to young people, solicitors **Fosters Law** decided to offer apprenticeships to widen access to their opportunities for young talent. To do so, they work with a range of local colleges who provide them with a shortlist of candidates to interview.

3. Who are you targeting?

Maximise the number of entry points for young people

The wider the range of opportunities you have available, the more diverse a pool of candidates you will be able to attract. Traineeships and Apprenticeships are an excellent way to reach bright young people who might not come from a traditional academic background, and support around key functional skills is already built into these qualifications.

For example, 10% of **ISS**' workforce is now aged 16 – 24, and this has been supported by their wide range of programmes suitable for people entering their first job, including apprenticeships, youth employment programmes and sector based skills academy.

4. Commit to recruiting young candidates from targeted groups

Having a diverse workforce gives your organisation a huge advantage in terms of the consumer insight it brings, as well as fostering fresh perspectives and innovation. One way to increase diversity is to create targeted programmes for particular groups of young people.

For example, in 2014, 100% of Apprentices that went through **Barclays**' Traineeship model were previously not in employment, education or training (NEETs). This was achieved by expanding referral pathways from partner organisations such as charities and running 'insight days' for community learners.

5. When are you recruiting?

Exploit the timings of the academic year

Only around a fifth of young people today are earning while learning, compared to 40% thirty years ago, meaning that when they are looking for jobs is much more closely aligned to the academic year. If you run an annual recruitment drive, holding this in the late summer will maximise your chance of attracting education leavers.

Alternatively, with apprenticeships becoming an increasingly popular option, you can align the stages of your recruitment process to conclude before the exam period in early summer and aim for a September start, giving a young person plenty of time to prepare.

Top tip!

Young people are very interested in roles that offer good progression opportunities and a clear training programme. Feature these aspects of your roles prominently in your job descriptions.

Case studies

Read more about how [Costain](#) uses gamification to engage young people through the app [Plotr](#)

Read more about [lavin Housing](#) promotes its roles to young people using multiple channels

Where to go next?

- Attracting young talent is just one way to future proof your business. Use our [Youth Employment Assessment Tool](#) to find out what you're doing well and get some ideas on how to improve in other areas.