School leavers, students and graduates turn to Milkround when they’re looking to take their first steps in the world of work. Why? Because our vision inspires career confidence and empowers candidates to shape their careers in a way that’s right for them.

Around 640,000 eager, talented individuals are in our community, waiting for the right opportunity to come along. Using our tools that can successfully target characteristics, qualifications and role preference, not to mention our highly subscribed events and workshops, you can reach them. And with our knowledge of the marketplace, we can work with you to create a message that’s just right too.

START RECRUITING AT RECRUITERS.MILKROUND.COM
Dear Reader,

Our latest special edition examines the issues surrounding apprentices and graduates in 2017.

This issue includes analysis from Jane Campbell from University of Leeds, who will be chairing at our leading conference on Graduate Recruitment and Development in February; as well as expert commentary from other key individuals in the graduate recruitment industry such as Sam Lee from law firm Bond Dickinson and Andrew Mallery from Mercedes-Benz UK, who recently won the large employer of the year award at the National Apprenticeship awards.

The edition is sponsored by leading graduate career source Milkround. We hope you enjoy the issue.

Rebecca Clarke, Editor at HRreview.

Contents

Elizabeth Hunt: The 'millennial' buzzword and how to recruit them 2

Jane Campbell: Why are degree apprenticeships so important? 4

Mike Thompson: We should be encouraging more young people to do apprenticeships 6

Elizabeth Hunt: 25 before 25 16

Nick Hartley: Do apprenticeships have a community impact? 18

Suresh Gamlath: Ensuring high levels of graduate employability 20

Andrew Mallery: Tapping into the talent of the young workforce 22

Tamir Davies: What are the legalities of working for free when you are a graduate? 24

Sam Lee: The ripple effect of apprenticeship schemes 26

Jess Penny: The new apprenticeship levy will help to close the skills gap in the UK 28

Roland Seiger: The biggest challenges facing 21st century leaders 30

Scott Livingstone: Why it’s important to introduce graduate programmes that offer real responsibility 32

www.HRreview.co.uk
Who are millennials? How do you define a ‘millennial’? How do they differ from previous generations? And how, as employers and business owners, can we reach, target and engage with groups of millennials?

There are many different definitions of ‘millennials’, which perhaps adds to the confusion surrounding this cohort; "The Millennial generation (born between 1982 and 2003) is characterized by Strauss and Howe (1991) as being protected, by both their parents and society, because they are driven to improve the world around them, by their virtue." (1)

And, my personal favourite; 

“Special little snowflake. Born between 1982 and 1994 this generation is something special, cause Mom and Dad and their 5th grade teacher Mrs. Winotsky told them so. Plus they have a whole shelf of participation trophies sitting at home so it has to be true.” (2)

Most millennials will be heading towards the end of their education or are already in the working world and, luckily enough, Milkround has a chatty community that encompasses the various definitions of ‘millennials’. So we put our questions to over 1,100 individuals, looking at some common misconceptions around this generation of young workers and asking for their perspective on themes such as professionalism in the workplace, home ownership, employer loyalty, and their close relationship with social media.

The majority of respondents (57%) were between the ages of 20-25, and most (60%) are at their final stages of university, with 17% already working.

It’s important for employers to understand that the younger generation are looking to stay loyal to their organisation, however will need the pull to stay there. An employee will not stay in a role if there is no opportunity for development, no training, no ‘outside your remit’ opportunities, so ensure these factors are made clear during your recruitment drive.
**Topic number two: Social Media**

Social media is used extensively both by the public and corporations, and it’s having a growing impact on the way we perceive company brands and the way we look for jobs.

Although we often assume social media more often harms careers than helps, most of our audience believes that, if used properly, your social media channels can be an asset to your career development. Some reasoning behind this was that social media is good for networking, self-branding, and finding job opportunities. Therefore, employers should utilise social media in their recruitment drive. Being active on popular platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, is crucial for brand building and consumer correspondence. Top tip: ‘behind the scenes’ or ‘a day in the office’ posts are an engaging way to show potential candidates the role types and culture in your business.

**Topic number 3: Personal Life**

Finally we wanted to get a look into the private lives and ambitions of millennials. An overwhelming majority at 96% are hoping to own their own home at some point in the future, while over 60% believe your career is equally important to your personal relationships. These findings show that work-life balance is important to candidates. In the roles you offer, ensure expectations are clearly stated. It would even be useful to mention any ‘extracurricular’ activities your organisation puts on, for example monthly socials, yearly events- anything that makes your business stand out.

The findings of the first ever Milkround ‘Inside the Minds of Millennials’ research shed some light on the challenges the future workers are facing, such as home ownership, social media impact, and career development. It also gives us an insight on how to approach millennials and ensure that they are getting the support they need to successfully enter the workplace.

Changes in technology and social conduct mean that the workplace may look very different by the time the millennials have taken their place as the majority of the UK workforce. This report shows that due to millennials being ‘digital natives’, the line between their personal and professional selves is getting increasingly blurred. It’s important for employers to stay present on the channels Millennials are using, and offering not just a ‘job role’ but a balanced, opportunity led career.

If you want to find out any more information about our research, or about how Milkround can help you to recruit your early careers talent, get in touch with us today!

**W:** Recruiter.milkround.com  
**E:** Info@milkround.com  
**T:** 020 3003 4000

References used:
(2) By The Witter on Urban Dictionary, 14th July 2010.
I have been to many conferences over the last six months and on the agenda of nearly all of them has been a discussion about degree apprenticeships. Heads of University Careers Services meetings have had a similar focus with attendees eager to know what other universities are doing. Colleagues at these meetings represent a range of institutions, some of whom have been delivering degrees with industry for years and others for whom this whole area is new. Questions have ranged from what exactly are they, to will money now be channeled into apprenticeships rather than traditional graduate schemes?

All of these discussions were on my mind last week when I visited one of our students who is on a year in industry placement. A psychology undergraduate, Grace is working in a small fashion business and she immediately impressed me with her confidence, communication skills and ability to talk about her achievements on her placement so far. Her supervisor confirmed how well she was doing and the positive impact she was having on the business.

I spent some time talking to Grace about her career plans. She explained that she was interested in psychology and loved her academic study but that she was still thinking about the career path she wanted to follow. She had taken full advantage of the University’s placement offer, a key part of the Leeds Curriculum, which gives every student the option of a placement year, and had also done work experience with an educational psychologist. The latter had shown her this wasn’t the path she wanted to take, although the experience had been positive. Working in fashion, however, had given her a whole new experience, and she was loving the marketing aspect of the role.

Grace, like many other students and sixth formers I have spoken to, didn’t know what job she wanted when she was 18, she just knew she wanted to study a subject in depth and experience university life – get involved with new extracurricular activities, develop new skills and develop independence away from home. Now, informed by her university and placement experiences, she was starting to form clearer ideas. For people like Grace, a degree apprenticeship would probably not have been the right choice at 18.

In contrast, Sam, a friend’s son, is worried about taking on debt and feels he would thrive more in a work place than a university environment. He is also very clear about the career path he wants to take and has been for some time. He is ready to commit to his chosen...
area and wants to get started. The thought of being able to get a degree while earning a salary appeals to him and he was excited to explore this route further. He wanted to know if the degree he got would be worth the same as if he had studied full-time.

These conversations have underlined for me the belief that there is room for both the traditional degree and the degree apprenticeship.

On the face of it, degree apprenticeships offer the best of both worlds: a paid training contract and the opportunity to study for a degree, without incurring the debt which so many young people now have to carry well into their working lives. And at a time when experts are predicting a hollowing out of mid-level professional roles as a result of automation, the attractions of a degree apprenticeship might seem all the greater.

Of course, it is no small challenge to work in a demanding job and study at the same time; you only have to look at the experience of trainee nurses and doctors to get a feel for what that might be like. And there is at least as much value in the informal learning which full-time students pursue through the rich co-curriculum offered by universities. It is these aspects of the university experience which are most likely to be transforming for the student, but which may also be the most likely to be denied or simply squeezed out of scope for degree apprentices.

So the challenge for employers, working in partnership with universities, is to design a real alternative for students whose learning styles are best met through a more practice-based approach. It is most definitely not to create a pathway for those who simply cannot afford a conventional higher education. The latter would be deeply divisive and a wholly unintended consequence of the apprenticeship policy, which should promote inclusion and engage employers more actively in the education of the future workforce.

At Leeds we are looking at a range of opportunities in which we have sector-leading expertise. We are excited about building on current partnerships and forging new ones with businesses and in doing so contributing to the regional economy.
Mike Thompson

We should be encouraging more young people to do apprenticeships

It is widely accepted that we are facing a major skills gap in the UK jobs market. The government has suggested that, based on current employer plans, we will need to fill 13.5 million job vacancies in the next ten years, but only seven million young people will leave school and college in that time.

This gap makes it more important than ever that we ensure we are properly preparing school leavers for the workplace and equipping them with the skills needed to thrive in the future economy and world of work. We must recognise that not all of life’s lessons can be learnt in a classroom, and that work experience and learning on the job is incredibly valuable – both to young people and their future employers.

Going to university and gaining a degree remains a brilliant choice for some – but many young people don’t recognise the benefits alternative routes such as apprenticeships can offer and still see it as a back-up option, despite the considerable cost of a university degree.

In fact, research published by Barclays earlier this year found that 61 per cent of young people in the UK applied to university on ‘autopilot’ without considering any other options and more than half made the assumption that university is the only route to a good job, despite research showing that apprentices can earn up to 270 per cent more than graduates across their lifetime in some sectors.

These findings make it more important than ever to communicate that an apprenticeship can be an excellent alternate route to acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. It is simply no longer true that a university degree is the only route to a successful career.

Whether it is finance and management or customer service and hospitality, many employers are actively pursuing apprentices. These companies recognise that apprenticeships schemes can create loyal and sustainable talent within their organisations as well as giving them the chance to target untapped candidate markets, such as NEET and disability, to enrich the diversity of their teams.

I’ve seen first-hand the benefits of apprenticeships to young people and businesses alike, and know that more needs to be done to ease this stigma and increase take up. If this can be done, the benefits to the economy and individual businesses will be vast.

At Barclays, an apprenticeship is not just an interim assignment; we offer a permanent role and career pathway. The on the job experience apprentices can gain is invaluable and will put them in good stead in the job market, equip-
ping them with skills that cross sector and industry. After finishing an apprenticeship, the majority will stay in employment, more than half with the same employer; a level of security many of their peers can’t boast.

In recognition of the benefits of apprenticeships to both employer and employee, the Government last year announced the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, which will be payable by organisations with a pay roll of over £3 million. This is in support of its policy objective to improve the supply of vocational skills, and specifically to see three million apprenticeship starts in England by 2020. This is an important step in finally giving proper recognition to apprenticeships in the UK.

The relatively recent introduction of Degree Apprenticeships is also a fantastic option for those who still want to achieve a degree but want experience of the world of work. These apprenticeships allow participants to learn, earn, and get a degree or equivalent qualification, all in just three to four years – and without the debt associated with tuition fees.

Barclays’ Degree Apprenticeships were specifically designed to spot those with potential – and develop their career. Degree Apprentices receive 100% funding, along with a competitive salary and benefits. Uptake is increasing with the ever-rising financial demands of higher education and are playing a large part in helping reposition apprenticeships for parents, who still generally think of apprenticeships as plumbers and electricians rather than white collar jobs.

We developed our Degree Apprenticeships for several reasons but a core purpose was to foster progression amongst apprentices in terms of salary and career. Whilst still early days, evidence suggests that we are succeeding against both goals with a number of apprentices already moving onto our degree programme and progressing to management positions and more senior roles having joined Barclays with limited to no qualifications. Having an apprenticeship programme provides the opportunity to create pathways for all and, in doing so, help build more diverse organisations and tackle societal issues. I urge other businesses to do the same.

Businesses need to realise the great benefits that apprenticeships can bring, both for the employer and the employee. We’ve seen this at Barclays, and I am very positive for the future with the launch of Degree Apprenticeships and the introduction of the Levy in the Spring. May 2017 be the year we see finally apprenticeships on a level footing with university and other career options – it’s certainly long overdue.
Elizabeth Hunt

25 Before 25

One of Milkround’s candidates, Emma Rosen, has taken a leap of faith leaving a prosperous role at the Civil Service to embark on 25 different careers before turning 25. Read about her ambition here.

How did you decide which sector to work in? What steps did you take to make sure you’d be pursuing a career in an industry that you were passionate about?

Entering the world of work after graduating is daunting, especially when you find yourself in a job that isn’t necessarily going to kick start your career in the direction you desired.

We know there is still discontent in the graduate market – unemployment remains and recruiters are increasingly facing the problem of reneged job offers. Graduates are more than ever looking for a role that gives them purpose, that they are passionate about. But, how is a young person looking for a job expected to know what ticks their boxes without test driving a variety of roles within a variety of sectors?

Well, this is exactly what one of our candidates, Emma Rosen is doing. She is has taken a leap of faith, leaving a pros-

talent pools.

If you would like participate in Emma’s project, or find out more information, please use the links below.

For more information on Emma’s challenge, you can view her website and blog here: www.25before25.co.uk

For more information on Milkround, and how we can help you find the perfect candidates for your apprenticeship and graduate vacancies, contact us.

W: www.milkround.com
T: 020 3003 4000
E: info@milkround.com
Emma Rosen’s case study

“I have just taken a gamble, possibly the biggest career gamble I’ll ever take.

In September, I made the decision to leave my office-based ‘job for life’ with the Civil Service in favour of an experimental and ambitious idea: trying 25 jobs before I turn 25, over the course of a year.

This is not a gap year, but a radical sabbatical that is aimed not only at finding my ideal career, but goes far beyond that. 25before25 promote career fulfilment for those already in the workplace and aims to advocate for more diverse careers education and advice.

Why? Because the routine and inactivity of daily life was something I was completely unable to move past, and trends in millennial behaviour in the workplace shows that the way we work is rapidly changing. Work-life balance and flexibility are the most important factors for millennials and many feel the pressure to get more work experience to make them more competitive in the job market, but also to understand what an industry involves.

I therefore chose to take a gamble and resolved to find out if there was another way of doing things by exploring a huge number of different sectors and to getting understand many of the generalisations about my generation.

So how does someone gain insight into 25 different jobs in one year? I am spending anything from a couple of days to a couple of weeks working with inspirational organisations within each field, which I have contacted through a mixture of networking, cold-calling and my partnership with Milkround.

I would, therefore, be very grateful for any offers of work experience or shadowing in any of the industries I have yet to cover, including:

- International Development
- Homeware/Fashion Buyer
- Primatology
- TV & Film production
- Entrepreneurial start-up (preferably with a social impact focus)
- International Security
- Conservation
- Disaster/Crisis Management
- Marine Biology
- Think Tank
- Hotel Critic

In return I will write about my experiences on my website and through my partnership with Milkround - a great way to promote working with you. It would demonstrate to potential future candidates that you take their career fulfilment and happiness seriously.”
In March, Milkround School Leavers is hosting a school leavers fair alongside UK University Search.

Last year, over 6,000 school leavers attended the fair with their teachers and careers advisers to find out about their alternatives to university. We expect this event to be just as busy, so it’s the perfect opportunity to enhance your brand in the market and build your talent pool.
Conference Preview

Graduate Recruitment and Development Forum 2017

February 22 2017 @ Hilton Hotel London Canary Wharf

Media Partner:

HR Review
Welcome to the Graduate Recruitment and Development Forum preview

I am excited to invite you to come on a learning journey with us as we hear from some of the industry’s best graduate recruitment advocates.

We will hear about the challenges and strategies they developed to best attract, develop and retain graduates to secure their future talent and skill needs.

Join us for a day of learning, benchmarking and networking with your industry colleagues.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Tracy Lee
Head of Conference Production, Symposium Events

---

**Conference programme**

09:30 Chair’s opening remarks – Jane Campbell, Head of Student Careers, The University of Leeds

09:45 Mission critical - Securing the future: Developing a robust graduate recruitment strategy and programme

• The alignment of your graduate programme to your organisation’s talent strategy
• Setting the right frameworks – the role, the support and the development
• Assessing the value of graduates to the business

Jane Clark, Group Head of Graduate Resourcing and Development, Barclays

10:10 Know your target market: Unravelling the needs and wants of graduates

• Understanding your target market – the values, learning preferences and drivers that underpins application decisions
• Knowing where and what graduates look for in a graduate programme
• How to develop a unique graduate programme to get the most out of your graduate recruits

David Palmer, UK Research Manager, Trendence – GTI Group

10:35 Questions and discussion with speakers

10:45 Panel discussion

• Measuring the impact of graduates on business goals

10:50 Key success factors to ensure the success of your graduate programme

• Apprenticeships vs Graduates – impact of the apprenticeship levy and how to rationalise the investment

Milkround and Deloitte

11:15 Refreshments and networking

11:35 Are you Ready for the Challenge? Tackling Graduate Recruitment Head-On

• The Fit Challenge – Does your process match your organisational requirements?
• The EVP Challenge – How are you showcasing your brand and engaging your candidates?
• The Risk Challenge – Are you minimising selection risk with robust assessments?
• The Potential Challenge – Do your hired graduates have leadership potential? Or even need to?

Alastair Frater, Business Psychologist, Saville Assessment
Ami Varden, Commercial Consultant, Saville Assessment

12:00 Current and future trends in graduate talent acquisition and development

• What is new in the world of early stage talent acquisition and development?
• How can you make sense of all this and make good decisions about what will deliver return on investment?
• What are global, leading, innovative organisations
doing in this space?

Howard Grosvenor, Director of Professional Services, cut-e

12:25 Authenticity for Better Assessment

• Understand the concept of authenticity and how to build into assessment and recruitment solutions
• The impact that authenticity and story-telling can have upon candidate experience and employer brand
• Introduction to the recruitment technologies supporting authentic assessment solutions

Nicky Garcea, Chief Customer Officer, Capp
Jamie Betts, Head of Recruitment Solutions, Capp

12:50 Questions and discussion with speakers
13:00 Lunch and networking

Breakout Session 1

14:00 Recruiting the lawyers of 2020 and beyond - the importance of Early Engagement programmes in Law.

• The importance of early engagement to raising awareness of careers in law and delivering a diverse pipeline
• Creating a winning internship programme to ensure high conversion rates into graduate roles
• Utilising early engagement programmes to support your talent acquisition and development agenda

Sarah Cockburn, Senior Graduate Recruitment Manager, Allen & Overy LLP

14:25 Social mobility, diversity and inclusion

• Understanding diversity and its impact on how diverse groups engage
• The value and impact of a diverse graduate talent pool on your business
• The value of diversity and inclusion to your brand
• Driving innovation and growth through diverse perspectives and experiences

Phil Wilson, Fast Stream Chief Psychologist and Assessor, Civil Service Human Resources

14:50 Questions and discussion with speakers

Breakout Session 2

Building a Gen Z pipeline in a baby boomer business

• Our vision for Early careers and why this is important
• Key challenges to deliver this for HR and the baby boomers in the business
• The selection and development priorities for the AWE Graduate Programme
• Overview of the progress and learnings from the delivery of the AWE Graduate Programme

Victoria Butt, Organisational Capability Manager, AWE

14:25 Managing a global graduate recruitment strategy in the current VUCA climate

• Navigating through the complexities of setting up global frameworks and systems
• Building connections with international universities and institutions
• Managing cultural differences and values to create a collaborative graduate cohort

Tapuwa Mtutu, Talent Acquisition and Campus Hiring Specialist UKI, Dell

14:50 Questions and discussion with speakers
15:20 Knowledge share networking session

Roundtable discussions with your peers to share solutions to your graduate recruitment and development challenges

15:45 Linking it all together: building a coherent talent strategy through early engagement

• Connecting early identification programmes with more established graduate schemes
• Exploring internships, work experience, open days and apprenticeships
• Measuring and monitoring the performance of your programmes and determining the success of your overall Talent Strategy

Benjamin Jackson, Head of Student Recruitment, Deloitte

16:10 Questions and discussion with speakers
16:20 Chair’s closing remarks and end of conference
Our expert speakers include:

Ben Jackson, Head of Student Recruitment, Deloitte

Benjamin has worked in recruitment for 17 years. He was a board director of one of the UK’s leading student recruitment outsourcing businesses for six years, before setting up his own consultancy business, TalentPunk, in 2014.

He has helped more than 40 businesses set up, run and optimise their student recruitment functions, and is currently Interim Head of Student Recruitment for Deloitte, where his team is responsible for hiring more than 1,800 students and graduates every year for multiple programmes across the UK.

Tapuwa Mtutu, Talent Acquisition and Campus Hiring Specialist, Dell

Tapuwa Mtutu has been with Dell EMC for 4 and a half years, where she came to head up the Graduate Recruiting function in EMEA. This included launching Dell EMC’s brand at target universities across EMEA and bringing the international graduate schemes into the region.

Howard Grosvenor, Director of Professional Services, cut-e

Howard Grosvenor is the Director of Professional Services for cut-e. He develops the infrastructure for the consulting team, ensuring projects are delivered to the highest standards of professional practice. Some of his recent projects include: the design and implementation of an online assessment process for a national retail group, a business research project to understand key drivers of sales success in a pan-European technology company and the re-accreditation of cut-e client training packages to new European professional standards.

David Palmer, UK Research Manager, Trendence UK (Group GTI)

David Palmer is the UK Research Manager at Trendence UK, a specialist market research company that focuses on helping organisations to effectively reach and recruit university and school students. Prior to joining Trendence UK in 2013, David read English at Exeter College, Oxford.

Jane Clark, Group Head of Graduate Resourcing and Development, Barclays

Jane is the Group Head of Graduate Resourcing and Development at Barclays. She is responsible for driving strategic plans to attract, develop and retain best-in-class junior talent. This involves developing and driving change on specific objectives to include candidate relationship management, strategy development, workforce planning, talent management, employer brand strategies and diversity.
Profile of the Chair

Jane Campbell is the Head of Student Careers at the University of Leeds, a post she has held for the last two and a half years. She is a careers guidance professional with over 25 years’ experience in various sectors including higher education, further education, adult education and schools. She is currently working with local employers to encourage students to think about the opportunities available in the region after graduation.
GRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2017

Wednesday 22nd February 2017
Hilton Hotel, Canary Wharf, London

The 10th Annual Graduate Recruitment and Development Forum is an opportunity to hear about best practice strategies from industry leaders across many sectors. It is designed to offer HR and Recruitment professionals responsible for hiring and developing graduates a chance to uncover both the strategic and practical elements of implementing a successful and innovative graduate programme.

Why you should attend this event:

• Understand the value and contribution of graduates to your organisation - your bottomline, innovation and talent pipeline
• Hear about the latest studies on the needs and wants of graduates to be able to develop an attractive, engaging and robust graduate recruitment programme
• Develop a strong, authentic and appealing graduate employer brand to improve attraction, alignment and retention
• Discover innovative approaches to developing graduates
• Hear from best practice organisations on their successful graduate programmes: their challenges, the strategy and outcomes

Exclusive offer
£50 OFF
Voucher code: grad2017

To redeem your voucher for the Graduate Recruitment and Development Forum 2017, quote the voucher code “grad2017” when calling or booking online.

Book online
www.symposium.co.uk/event/graduate-recruitment-and-development-forum-2017
or call our customer hotline on 020 7231 5100
In-house training for your HR team

Dozens of in-house courses for HR from £150/person

- Excellence in Apprentice Recruitment
- Employer Branding
- HR and Innovation
- Moving from Recruitment to Strategic Talent Acquisition
- An Introduction to Assessment and Selection
- Essential Guide to Graduate Recruitment
- Social Media Skills for HR Professionals
- And many more...

For more information visit our website www.symposium-events.co.uk
or call our customer hotline 020 7231 5100
Nick Hartley

Do apprenticeships have a community impact?

Ebsford, founded in 2011, say offering apprenticeships has enabled their company to rapidly grow a turnover of £50,000 in the first year to £3 million now. Nick Hartley discusses apprentice retention and community impact.

Ebsford Environmental Ltd, an environmental contractor and consultancy based in Wakefield was recently crowned Unilever Small Employer of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards 2016 and named one of the National Apprenticeship Service Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers. The business, founded in 2011 first introduced apprenticeships in 2012 and since then the business has boomed, as has the company’s apprenticeship programme, with 100% retention of apprentice’s. Managing Director, Nick Hartley, attributes this to the strong mentoring culture and family ethos fostered by the business.

Here, Nick explains the company’s success as an award-winning apprenticeship employer and why he is committed to developing the company’s apprenticeship offering even further:

**Apprentice retention**

Ebsford Environmental Ltd was set up in 2011, with the aim of offering low impact environmental solutions and it continues to grow rapidly – we currently employ 29 staff. At Ebsford we work with organisations including Internal Drainage Boards, Local Authorities, Housing Developers, National Trusts and Framework Contractors. We’re committed to maintaining an employment strategy that ensures 20% of our staff are currently on, or have completed an apprenticeship with us.

We offer apprenticeships in Horticulture, Business and Professional Administration, Marketing and Customer Service. We employ six apprentices across this range of frameworks and we plan to recruit two more in the coming months.

Wakefield is an area with high levels of economic deprivation and as a business we are committed to enabling social mobility in the area. Our candidates come from a range of backgrounds and levels; from school leavers to one apprentice who joined us at 22 after having a baby.

**Community impact**

As a family business we are keen to create an atmosphere of mentoring, which also underpins our 'whole of life approach’ to our work. As an environmental business we want to show we are committed to the local community and ensure our workforce is sustainable. Through offering structured training we can ensure sustainable growth of the business whilst simultaneously improving youth unemployment.
We launched our apprenticeship programme just one year after the company was founded and since 2012 the business has gone from turning over £50,000 a year to £3 million in the last year.

When we first set up we were committed to being an exceptional employer and our aim was to maximise retention. We have a strict financial and leadership plan for apprentices, which ensures they are always working towards something, which helps keep them motivated. Additionally our mentoring and development process means that once people have moved into management they are given the chance to manage people’s training, which we believe leads to high levels of job satisfaction.

Additionally, training apprentices and seeing them flourish into successful young professionals is rewarding to see as an employer. Especially if they’ve come from difficult family backgrounds or from areas of high levels of unemployment. We now have former apprentices in leadership roles, working as site managers and supervisors.

At Ebsford we’re keen to expound the benefits of apprenticeship to other businesses and we work with the local council and attend apprenticeship open days as ambassadors and set up links with local businesses, to promote apprenticeships. In addition we talk to educational bodies in Leeds and Sheffield, attend workshops and talk to students in sixth form who aren’t attending university about the opportunities apprenticeships can deliver.

Apprenticeships are one of the best and most rewarding ways of finding staff; you are changing people’s lives in a way that you don’t get just by giving someone a job. As a business owner you have the opportunity to help young people at a crucial stage in their development, especially in socially deprived areas and using doing this is a fascinating way to grow the business.

Those looking to take on apprentices can find out more by searching ‘apprenticeships’ on GOV.UK.
Ensuring high levels of graduate employability

At the University of West London, 96 per cent of graduates are in employment within 6 months of graduation. The Dean of the Claude Littner Business School talks to us about how the University best readies its graduates for employment.

Employers rely on graduate talent to keep their businesses competitive and growing, so it is not surprising that they are in demand even in times of economic uncertainty – in fact, especially in such times - as talented people can help find creative and innovative solutions to business challenges. In order to serve the expectations of employers and to achieve high levels of graduate employability, universities should consider employers’ needs, be student-centric and driven by their needs and aspirations and not confined by discipline or subject.

Having been an employer myself, I know how important recruiting the right people is for an organisation’s competitive strength. Getting the recruitment and selection process right is vital. Technical skills and up-to-date knowledge on the core subject fields are key for graduates. But critically, there are additional important attributes such as being a team player, leadership, creativity, critical thinking, ethical social awareness and independent problem solving which all boost employability.

At the University of West London, 96 percent of our graduates are in employment within six months of graduation.* In order to deliver high graduate employability year on year like this, all of our courses are developed with the needs of the job market in mind which we believe gives graduates an ‘edge’.

So, specifically, how does The Claude Littner Business School (CLBS) help students to become employable graduates?

Good course design is essential and using a repertoire of assessment approaches and techniques to achieve meaningful learning outcomes that reflect the reality of what employers need from graduates. Students will benefit from excellent industry links which is experienced through masterclasses, expert talks, site visits, and work placements.

With the aid of online technology, students can now interact with real world scenarios. For example, at CLBS we focus on developing an advanced understanding of the complexity of real world problems by using technological simulations which replicate ‘live’ scenarios and with which students can interact in the risk-free setting of the classroom. This helps them acquire professional attitudes and perspectives.

Tutors often witness a transformation when their students are exposed to these learning environments.

We have also introduced ‘student-led’ consultancy, where small business owners, who may not be able to afford expensive consultancy services, come to us for help on specific projects – such as marketing a new product. In some cases our students’ coursework assignment is based on a real-world consultancy project like this. Combining theory and practice in this way leads to strong
outcomes and builds knowledge, confidence and a range of skills in the student.

Meanwhile, entrepreneurial thinking is no longer confined to those willing to take risks on new ventures which may or may not one day earn them a fortune; increasingly employers are showing a preference for graduates who are entrepreneurial as it adds value to an organisation. In order to foster this entrepreneurship, CLBS founded the annual Brentford Dragons competition, supported by the local Chamber of Commerce, which challenges students to think entrepreneurially in an engaging ‘Dragon’s Den’ format.

Becoming highly employable means that a student’s preparation for their first job interview begins on the day they start a course. This means helping students to plan ahead and encouraging them to be proactive and develop a professional mindset. Work placements and internships are a very effective way of creating future graduates with the right skills and attitude for meeting the expectations of employers and is something we put a lot of emphasis on at CLBS.

Additionally, many of our students take on part-time jobs while they study, and we have rationalised the class timetable to facilitate this. This is because part-time work can help students develop a degree of maturity quickly which benefits them in many ways. Many students underestimate the importance and power of networking and what their profile on social media says about them to prospective employers. We have designed assessments that train and educate students to develop their networking skills and we recently hosted a talk by the networking website Linkedin for students about using the platform effectively.

So, creating highly employable graduates means being aware of what employers need and creating an environment and culture that is conducive to delivering to these expectations. This will involve investing in innovative teaching, learning and assessment methods, encouraging proactive engagement with the world of work and effectively linking students to businesses so that they experience a smooth path from the world of education to the world of work.


---

**Employer Branding**

**Training course**

28th April 2017 @ 9:30am - 4:00pm
Jumeirah Lowndes Hotel, London

Find out why your employer brand matters and how you can improve it at this expert lead training workshop.

Understanding and managing your employer brand is a key tool to rapidly and sustainably improve HR, recruitment and other key operations within your business.

During this course, you will explore the importance of a clear employer brand, how you can improve it for your organisation and the positive effects it will have including how your brand is seen by graduates seeking employment.

- Learn the power of employer branding
- Match the external perception of your brand with internal staff experiences
- Understand your brand proposition and responsibility in delivering brand promises

Book your place at
www.symposium.co.uk/event/employer-branding-brs2017/

The training events on this website are led by skilled tutors and experts. Events are highly interactive and focus on practical skills, technical knowledge, and where required, offer some theoretical background.
Picture the scene. You have just spent three to four years studying at university, spending thousands of pounds for your degree and now you’re to enter the world of work, with a degree that a million and one other graduates also have. Being a graduate is a fantastic position to be in, but unfortunately the value of a degree has somewhat de-valued, and everyone is now achieving the highest grades possible.

When looking for a job, unfortunately the reality is you need experience to get a job, but nowhere will give you that experience. So you’re stuck in a catch-22 situation. The nature of the beast is you will most likely have to work for free, despite working as tirelessly as the permanent employee who sits next to you. Sutton Trust recently found that there are approximately 21,000 unpaid interns currently working in the UK, whilst Crime Stoppers UK found that annually 850,000 people are victims of online job fraud.

Unpaid internships and placements is a particularly grey area for legal proceedings. In an effort to uncover some of the legalities of working for free, commercial estate agents, savoystewart.co.uk spoke to a number of graduates regarding their post-graduate experiences and potential exploitation working for free or being made to work for less money than legally allowed.

Was this legal? Unclear

According to governmental law:

- If a trial is agreed, the duration was must also be agreed upon
- The person who is looking for a job, must meet the eligibility conditions to work and therefore volunteer to work
- Once the trial is completed, the employer must pay the employee minimum wage at the least

Job: Runner at a film studio

I had just graduated and needed some experience and money, whilst applying for full time jobs. I always enjoyed the idea of working for a production or film company, so I applied to be a runner. They asked me to come in for one week, which was absolutely fine. However, after the week was over, I asked if I would get paid and could extend my experience and they said no. I was back to square one.'
Job: Editorial intern

‘After graduating, I was desperate to gain some experience as an editorial assistant at a high-profile magazine. I was not paid, but merely given £15 a day for lunch and travel expenses. I was a full-time member of staff for nearly six months, and carried out my own interviews, wrote articles and attended regular meetings with clients.’

Was this legal? Yes

The legality of this type of internship is problematic. But in the first instance, it would appear to be entirely legitimate as according to Gov.uk ‘an intern is classed as a worker and is due the National Minimum Wage if they’re promised a contract of future work.’ In this case, no verbal or written contract was promised, so the individual qualified under voluntary work / unpaid internship guidelines. However, if an intern demonstrates they are personally providing a service, and working under a contract, whether implied or expressed, they are within their rights to ask to be paid. So when undertaking a lengthy period of work experience, be sure to know your rights.

Job: Marketing assistant

‘The role was advertised as an assistant, however when I arrived to the interview, the role turned out to be more sales related and door-to-door, which would only be paid based on commission. Despite being advertised as a job and at an assistant level, they often referred to me as the intern and would use every excuse not to pay me. The hours were very long and we never given a formal break. Even if we made a sale, we were never paid commission’.

Was this legal? No

UK Jobs Guide stipulates that ‘commission-only jobs are legal, as long as employers pay National Minimum Wage, or it is made up in the commission.’ The hours also exceeded six hours, which in legal terms, entitles every employee no matter the status to a break of at least 20 minutes. Even if you do not make a sale, this type of employment is known as ‘output work’, and UK Jobs Guide goes on to explain that the employers would be ‘legally obliged to ensure you receive at least the Minimum Wage for every hour you work.’

Commonly asked questions:

Is it ever legal to work for free? Yes – working for free is only applicable when the job role is advertised as voluntary work

How and when should internships be paid?

If you are doing an internship and you have been promised a contract for future work or employment, then your employer is legally obliged to pay you at least the National Minimum Wage. You will also be entitled to pay if you have worked for longer than one year at the same company.

What is a pyramid scheme?

A pyramid scheme will require you to join with an initial fee, and the only way you will ever receive your money back is to persuade other people to join the same scheme and for you to take their fee. Each member is asked to sell products or a service through other members and the people at the top of the scheme are the only ones to benefit and make money off those lower down. It is an unsustainable model and is entirely illegal. According to actionfraud.police.uk, you should report your case immediately and terminate your contract with those who have committed fraud.
Mercedes-Benz made the decision to recruit apprentices as a way to combat their ageing workforce and have since grown their apprentice intake by 98% in the last four years and almost two-thirds of Mercedes-Benz apprentices are still with the business a decade later.

Mercedes-Benz has been offering apprenticeships for over twenty years and now attracts up to 10,000 applicants each year. Through its Apprentice Academy, the company provides a learning experience for apprentices, which ensures brand loyalty, and a highly skilled workforce, safeguarding the future of their business. The success of the organisation’s apprenticeship programme is demonstrated in its recent crowning as BAE Systems Large Employer of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards 2016.

Here Training Operations Director, Andrew Mallery discusses the business’s long-standing commitment to apprenticeships.

Early adoption

As a business we are committed to boosting our apprenticeship offering. We first began offering apprenticeships in 1995 and last year we recruited 253 apprentices into a range of roles within the business. Over the last four years we’ve grown our apprentice intake by 98%.

We see apprenticeships as a route to tap into the talents of young people in order to support succession planning and growth aspirations. We offer apprenticeships across the business across both levels 2 and 3; including light vehicle technician, heavy vehicle technician and parts and operations apprenticeships.

We’re outperforming other companies in the industry when it comes to attracting diverse talent. We’ve been working to increase the number of female apprentices entering the business and have certainly felt the benefits. Our apprentice programme attracts a high proportion of females compared to the national average. Women make up 6% of our apprentice intake, in comparison to the UK average of 2.5% for the automotive sector.

Brand loyalty

In 2008 we decided to bring all apprenticeship training in-house, through offering in-house training for our apprentices we are able to ensure it is tailored to our network and encapsulates our mantra; ‘the best or nothing’.

In 2012 the company invested in a purpose built Academy, on site, to train our apprentices. Alongside qualifications and on-the-job experience, while working at the Academy, the apprentices can make use of a range of facilities, including a gym and games room as well as dedicated cinema nights and a student liaison officer available for 24 hour...
support. All the activities are aimed at ensuring the young recruits develop into confident, capable and well-rounded employees.

The Academy is also located alongside our company training centre which is a testament to our philosophy of lifelong learning. It enables the apprentices to mix with experienced employees who continue to train and grow as they progress through the business.

Developing our own apprentices has resulted in a range of business benefits for the Mercedes-Benz brand. For example in 2016 we came first in a national customer satisfaction survey, with 90% of customers happy with their experience at our dealership. Offering our own training means we can ensure it’s of the quality befitting a premium brand. Moreover our in-house approach means the apprentices are immersed in the Mercedes-Benz ethos from the start which ensures we can continue to deliver an excellent customer service experience.

In addition this method of training ensures brand loyalty. Almost two-thirds of our apprentices are still with the business a decade later and 91% of apprentices have been promoted or have gone on to gain additional qualifications, supported by the business.

### Award-winning

The lure of working for Mercedes-Benz means we attract between 6,000 and 10,000 apprenticeship applications each year. With only 250 places available, the competition is fierce as this translates to one place for every 35 applicants. The apprentice graduation rate is high with 91% rate of apprentices retained by the business.

Our apprentice programme has received a number of accolades, including the Ofsted accreditation for best practice recognising rapid return on investment within the first six months. Most recently we were named Large Employer of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards 2016 and one of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers. The apprentices themselves are also making waves in the industry: last year one of the group was awarded the ‘Outstanding Achiever of the Year’ by the Institute of Motor Industry. Additionally we have an internal awards scheme for our apprentices. Each year, the top four apprentices are recognised and rewarded with a week working at Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One team.

With 3,000 graduate apprentices now in our network, and a thousand joining in the last five years alone, the rapid growth of apprenticeships shows no sign of stopping.

Those looking to take on apprentices can find out more by searching ‘apprenticeships’ on GOV.UK.
In the legal profession we perhaps have a reputation for the traditional. Is it right? Maybe. Is it fair? Possibly. Is it changing? Definitely! As an HR professional, one of the most exciting developments in recent years has been around entry to the profession and, in particular, routes to qualification. Aspiring lawyers have traditionally had to contend with a highly competitive graduate recruitment process following university and postgraduate education. The widening of access to the profession through the introduction of apprenticeships has been welcome news for many, and at Bond Dickinson we were only too happy to embrace the change. The first legal apprenticeship was introduced in 2013 and we launched our scheme 12 months later, in September 2014. It was the result of a year-long project which involved significant consultation, development and education of mentors and supervisors. Whilst we’ve a very established graduate programme in place, convincing the business that we should be investing in a school leaver programme took a little time. But, our business case was solid. We’d recognised the importance of creating alternative routes to the profession, not only to address social mobility in the profession, but also to give access to those who wanted to start their career sooner rather than later. University isn’t for everyone but that shouldn’t be a barrier to those who want, and are able, to pursue a career in law. We also had some retention issues at the time within our paralegal team. We have up to 80 paralegals within this team, many of whom are graduates looking to gain experience to help support their applications for training contracts. We’re able to give them some fantastic experience, help develop the skills they need to be successful as lawyers and, inevitably, that means that we lose many of them when their applications for training contracts are successful. That was a big challenge for the business and we saw the apprenticeship scheme as a way of ensuring that we had continued pipeline of paralegals into this team.

So, has it worked?

Absolutely. We’ve been so impressed with all of our apprentices. They’re bright, motivated, ambitious and willing to learn. They’ve integrated into the team very quickly and have contributed to its success from a very early stage. It’s been such a pleasure to watch them grow in confidence every day. We’re seeing some great quality candidates from previously untapped and under-represented pools...
of talent and whilst that’s great for our social mobility strategy, more importantly, we’re reaping the benefits of a more diverse team. Although it’s still early days for us, we are now starting to see that pipeline of paralegals coming through. We’re now recruiting for our fourth cohort of apprentices so time will tell on that point, but we’re optimistic.

In the three years that we’ve been running the programme we’ve certainly achieved our intended aims but there have been a number of other positives that we didn’t anticipate. It’s given others in the team some great development opportunities. We elected to use paralegals, rather than lawyers, to supervise and mentor the apprentices, which has given them experience that they might not ordinarily have gained. It’s also been a really good news story for the business. The hard work that has been put into making this programme the success that it is, has been recognised in the last twelve months in two awards. We were recognised by the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (our apprenticeship provider) as their Employer of the Year in October 2016. In November, at the National Apprenticeship Awards, we were the South West Regional Winner of the Newcomer Large Employer of the Year and we’re now through to the national finals which are held later this month. We’re really proud of the programme so this is great validation of all that we’re doing and the hard work that everyone has put in.

But we haven’t stopped there. We’re committed to developing our early careers strategy and last year saw the launch of our formal programme. It’s been designed to give opportunities to students who want to gain an insight into a career in the legal profession, whether that’s as a lawyer or business support professional, and involves a variety of work experience placements, insight days, skills workshops, mentoring schemes and school visits. We’re very much hoping that this will support our recruitment strategy for the various apprenticeship schemes we’re now running.

All of this has served to put apprenticeships firmly on the map at Bond Dickinson. So much so that we’re now taking requests to design and deliver apprenticeship programmes for other areas of the business. In the last 12 months we’ve recruited apprentices into HR, Facilities and we’re just rolling something out for our IT team.

**So what’s next?**

The Apprenticeship Levy has presented us with a fantastic opportunity to invest further in apprenticeships. We’re talking to a number of teams at the moment about the opportunities available to them, for both new and existing employees. But most exciting for us is our new Solicitor Apprenticeship. We’re currently designing a programme that will see school leavers through to qualification in 6 years. Our first apprentices will join us in September this year. This is a huge development for our profession and we’re delighted to be there right at the beginning.

Our focus most definitely is not shifting entirely to apprenticeships, rather this is about creating new routes to the profession which might ordinarily have been closed to some very talented candidates. Home-grown talent has always been at the heart of our recruitment strategy, and our apprenticeship programme is now firmly embedded within that strategy, alongside our very established graduate programme.
Jess Penny is the General Manager at Penny Hydraulics, a manufacturing and engineering business that specialises in designing, building, and selling hydraulic lifting solutions for a range of industries. The company is family-run and was founded by her grandfather in 1978. With more than nine years’ industry experience, Jess is a qualified and experienced marketing and public relations practitioner. As part of her current role as General Manager, she liaises with the likes of apprentices, board members, and government workers on a daily basis.

Jess Penny is General Manager at Penny Hydraulics, a manufacturing and engineering company who specialise in designing, building, and selling hydraulic lifting solutions for a range of industries. In this article, she takes a closer look at how the new apprenticeship levy introduced by the government will help to address the skills gap in this country.

For anyone who works within the engineering and manufacturing industry, there’s a good chance that you will be aware of the skills shortage that has gripped the UK sector in recent years. There has only been a thin stream of talent making its way to this area of the market, meaning that firms have not been able to find the right people they need to expand their operations and grow.

With the prospect of the free movement of labour across the EU coming to an end with an eventual agreement on Brexit, it’s possible that these companies will no longer be able to look to other European job markets to bring in the expertise that they need. Therefore, there has never been a more important moment for the country to invest in developing some homegrown talent.

The UK skills shortage

The huge skills shortage that employers have been facing is not just limited to the engineering and manufacturing industries — sectors like accounting and construction have also faced tough times recently. But just where did this problem come from?

Part of the issue can be traced back to the way STEM subjects are taught and perceived in schools up and down the UK. Although students tend to realise that maths and science are essential subjects for getting a good job, many don’t realise just how varied and fascinating their career opportunities can be if they develop an expertise in these areas.

Furthermore, Britain also faces issues with diversity when it comes to STEM subjects. Women, ethnic minorities, and working class youngsters tend to shy away from pursuing them, leading to eventual underrepresentation in the industries that rely on skilled employees from these fields. Not only do companies in these sectors miss out on skilled workers, but they also lose the advantages that a diverse workforce can bring to their business. Another problem that school-taught STEM subjects suffer from is that much of their curriculum ends up being out of date by the time that students reach degree level. This is not down to a fault with the teaching, but the simple fact that the pace at which the industry evolves...
at is so fast, education cannot keep up. Because of this, students are often confronted with problems they aren’t prepared for and unfamiliar new technologies, which can affect their employability further down the line.

**How the apprenticeship levy will help**

There are certain skills young people need to pursue a successful career in manufacturing, and these can be difficult to hone properly in a college or university environment. Apprenticeships offer the chance to gain on-the-job experience under an experienced mentor, which is invaluable. They’re arguably the best way to learn the necessary skills for thriving within the sector.

The UK government will be introducing an apprenticeship levy in April of 2017. From then on, UK companies with a payroll of more than £3 million per year will be required to spend 0.5% of their wage bills on apprenticeships. This is bound to increase the number of apprenticeships available, and it’s likely that those on offer will be of a higher quality.

This levy will encourage employers to take on fresh talent and could well help to close the current skill gap, which, hopefully, will aide our manufacturing industry in competing with those of other nations. Of course, this won’t fix all of the problems our sector faces, but growing our workforces is guaranteed to have a positive effect.

**The last part of the equation: Making the sector more inviting**

While the apprenticeship levy is sure to lead to more young people joining industries with skill shortages, companies shouldn’t use this as an excuse to rest on their laurels. If they don’t put in the effort to make their industries appealing to the next generation of talent, the levy alone won’t be enough to turn the UK crisis around.

Companies of all sizes should do everything they can to affect the way their industry is portrayed in the media, as this is going to have a huge impact on the future. It’s crucial that we educate the next generation on the range of diverse roles that a STEM-related career path can lead to through partnerships with local schools, colleges, and universities. If we can use these to change opinions, we can ensure the UK can compete on the international stage for years to come.
Recently we asked hundreds of graduates from the CEMS Master in International Management programme - likely to be future business leaders - to provide us with insights into trends they believe will affect them over the next few years; in particular, the biggest challenges facing them as 21st century leaders.

Interestingly the rapid rate of technological and digital advancement came out as the top challenge (68%), above shifts in world economic and political powers (60%) and environmental challenges such as global warming and energy consumption (59%).

At the same time, almost a quarter (24%) considered Tesla/SpaceX Founder Elon Musk as the world’s most effective leader, followed by Virgin boss Sir Richard Branson (10%).

So, it is clear that while these graduates see technological/digital advancement as a challenge, they also see innovative and positive mastery of technology as a key business driver and the mark of a successful future business leader. After all, these global figures are successful because they are able to harness rapid technological change and use it for social development, rather than seeing it as a hurdle.

**Technology – an opportunity for future leaders**

To expand on these findings we further consulted our graduates and corporate partners (global multinational companies) to gain more of an insight into what some of these technology challenges might involve and how young professionals aspiring for leadership can take advantage of them.

Keeping up with the rate of digital advancement will be a huge issue for 21st century business leaders, adding a whole new layer of complexity as they try to innovate within a crowded market place. Technological advancements on a scale matching that of the industrial revolution of the late 19th century – Networked Production, 3D printing, artificial intelligence automation, Big Data, the influence of social media - are sure to disrupt many industries and see new ones thrive at a rapid rate.

Recent CEMS graduate Florian Smeritschnig, who now works for management consultancy McKinsey, told us that he believes “The increasingly rapid rate of technological and digital advancement means that 21st century business leaders will need to reinvent their companies at much faster pace than their predecessors. "Technology and new
markets have the power to create completely new business models (potentially making existing businesses irrelevant) and operating models (either improving the value proposition to the customer and/or reducing cost of the offering drastically), meaning leaders will have to work even harder to keep up with competitors.

“Business and political leaders also face a huge social responsibility to soften the detrimental impact of technological advancements which could make many job positions of today obsolete in the near future.”

However, Christoph Fellinger, Talent Development Manager for international skin care company Beiersdorf, a CEMS corporate partner, was positive about these changes for the next generation of business leaders, explaining that “although they may see digitalization as a challenge, graduates today are also the best ambassadors and engineers for this within business and the rapid rate of technological advancement presents a great opportunity for them.

“If graduates can demonstrate sound business understanding and combine this with technological innovation they will be able to help move their business the next level.”

“Leaders must constantly reinvent themselves”

In 2016 one of our corporate partners, A.T. Kearney, worked with CEMS students from the University of St. Gallen on a student consulting project centred on the future of retail and digital disruption, examining which technological and digital advancements and influential trends will impact retail over the next few years. The project was voted “CEMS Business Project of the Year.”

Frederic Fernandez, Senior Manager of the Goods and Retail Practice at A.T. Kearney told us, “these days digital enhancement is at the core of any business model; this is the key thing that future business leaders need to grasp. If everybody agrees that the digital revolution is changing the way we are doing business, very few leaders today understand fully the scale of this change. Leaders also need to react quickly and constantly reinvent themselves as they often work far too slowly, with a piecemeal approach, losing ground to competitors and doing far too little too late.

A.T. Kearney, which works with a number of clients to help them digitally transform their business, has found that starting at the top of organisations to educate leaders and help them understand why this digital change is so important is key. “You can have right strategy but still fail because your leaders and workforce don’t share or understand the vision,” Fernandez added.

In the same way, we know from conversations with our CEMS graduates about where they hope to work, that they name different companies now than they would have done even five years ago. They want to work for employers who can make a genuine change to the world and tackle international challenges through truly understanding and harnessing digital as well as other major business trends.

International education is key

Clearly millennials will face very different business challenges to graduates of yesteryear and they see technological change as one of the most pertinent. However, it is the ones who can take advantage of these changes, innovate, and importantly looking beyond profit maximization towards creating long term value for an inter-connected society, who will ultimately benefit and become the successful business leaders of tomorrow.

Our best hope to make the most of this, as is confirmed by the history of human development, is to invest in the international education of future leaders. At CEMS, we emphasise both ‘the big picture’, looking at global strategies of multi-national companies, as well as the ‘micro’ aspects of what it means to be a leader, in an intercultural, rapidly developing environment, through both theory and practice. Through this approach we hope to ensure that our graduates can thrive in this age of dynamism and disruption and get ahead as leaders in a world of massive technological change.

Competing for talent

The rapid pace of technological advancement certainly also means that the intensity of the competition for talent will increase, with the goal to attract, retain and heavily invest in employees who can take advantage of these changes. This provides a huge opportunity for savvy, forward-thinking graduates.

Companies will need employees who can work in big corporations but who are also entrepreneurial, tech savvy knowledgeable disruptors. They need future leaders who are great at scaling up big tech ideas whilst understanding the smallest details; people who can be creative, innovative and shape the future.
Scott Livingstone
Why it’s important to introduce graduate programmes that offer real responsibility

Scott Livingstone, HR Director at Chivas Brothers, discusses the need to introduce graduate programmes which offer real responsibility from day one.

Graduate programmes are a great way to start full-time employment as they provide a strong level of support as candidates embark on their careers, while also equipping them with the necessary skills for the future.

At the same time there are many benefits for employers too. Introducing a robust graduate programme can really add value to a business. Not only do they help to attract new talent, graduates start to learn sector specific skills from day one and can often bring new ideas and a fresh outlook which can inject energy into the existing workforce.

This is especially beneficial for the spirits industry. Our Scotch whisky and premium gin portfolio has such a long-standing history and we are always on the lookout for new ideas to help connect and inspire our customers. That’s why, every year, we seek passionate, enthusiastic and entrepreneurial graduates to join our International Graduate Brand Ambassador programme. Our two-year course sets graduates off on an international career where they will promote our portfolio of Scotch whisky and premium gin brands in some of the most dynamic countries in the world.

**Graduates overseas**

We believe there is real value in starting a career overseas. Graduates are able to finesse their language skills, create an international network of contacts, and gain a diverse range of skills by understanding how the business operates from a global perspective. On top of that, there are often opportunities to travel and become fully immersed in a new culture and business. We currently have 45 ambassadors based in 25 countries around the world and each of them will learn the key skills needed to develop a long-term career in the drinks industry.

We believe all businesses should make sure their graduates become a key part of their team. At Chivas Brothers, we rely on them to inspire and engage people about our brands including the renowned Chivas Regal, Ballantine’s, The Glenlivet and Beefeater Gin. Our graduates play a vital role in continuing to increase visibility amongst both consumers and the trade, by hosting education and tasting sessions and by delivering innovative marketing and PR campaigns which bring our brand stories to life.

The key to success in any graduate programme is being able to offer the candidates real responsibility from day one. The global drinks industry is dynamic and fast-paced, and candidates should be...
challenged to deliver right from the start, while also being given the right support and training to thrive in their roles. In this way, they can create their own ‘defining moments’ – whether it’s delivering a presentation in Spanish to local whisky experts or watching their product take pride of place in a top bar in New York.

**Case studies**

For example, one of our graduates, Alan Clark, recently joined our team in India and is responsible for helping to promote Ballantine’s to both consumers and the trade. In his second week, he helped to run a tasting event in front of a large group of whisky enthusiasts. It was a great success and a real defining moment for him, as he was able to put all of the knowledge and skills he had learned during training into practice.

Another of our graduates, Claire McEvinney, spent two years as a Graduate Brand Ambassador for Beefeater in Madrid, Spain. There she helped to attract bartenders to enter Beefeater’s global competition MIXLDN. Now she’s based in London as part of the global Beefeater Marketing team and has been able to use her international knowledge and experience to add value to the team.

All of these experiences are designed to help graduates develop both personally and professionally, and many become more confident and more accomplished as a result. Equally, as an employer, it provides an opportunity to develop a skilled workforce for the future and we find our International Graduate Programme offers a great stepping-stone for those looking to develop a lifelong career in the drinks industry.

There are many benefits to offering a graduate programme but it’s important for employers to establish these with both the graduates and their future workforce needs in mind. Introducing a graduate programme is not enough. These programmes need to offer real value for both the graduates and the company by providing the right skills and experience to develop into a long-term career.