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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

# Early Careers Virtual Roundtable

**No. 6**

Wednesday 9th  
September 2020  
10am - 11:30am

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## Overview

Intelligent hiring is about hiring the right candidate, for the right role, at the right time, and that means hiring fairly and equally too. A diverse and inclusive recruitment strategy is a key focus for many organisations and considered essential in finding their best-fit candidates. The approach, however, does present many challenges.

Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to diverse and inclusive hiring, it is clear that steps can be taken pre, during and post-campaign to improve successes.

The 6th roundtable in the series looked to explore the table's experience of attracting, engaging, hiring and onboarding in this space and discuss the challenges, as well as the successes, in doing so.

# MAJIC

**Diversity and Inclusion**

Pre – During – Post Campaign With MAJIC

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## Attendees of the fifth roundtable included:



**With many more attending...**  
UKRI | Skanska  
John Lewis | Police Now  
Grant Thornton | ITV

Sparks Careers  
BP | Marsh & McLennan  
Transport for Wales  
Nesta Impact Investments

Motability Operations | Transport for London  
Bidfood UK | Frontline  
First Response Finance | Investment 2020  
Danone | National Grid

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# Pre-Campaign



Traditional and broad routes to candidate attraction, recruitment and onboarding are not adequate for achieving objectives in diverse and inclusive hiring. Many organisations are often lacking the capabilities for supporting such individuals too. Social mobility is also often restricted and changes in topics like innovation of technology are only exacerbating chances for diverse talent to access their ideal careers.

Breaking down the challenge starts pre-campaign with the focus on which groups to target and how to reach them.

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## The conversation



For one attendee, changes could be easily made to the candidates which they recruit but ingraining a culture of inclusion in the business presents a bigger issue. Continuous improvement can and is being made but progress is naturally slow. Disregard for levels and grades attained by the candidate has had drastic and positive improvements to the company's steps towards total diversity and inclusion. Identifying candidate behaviours and 'fit' has only improved that. This journey which has taken almost two years to complete is now allowing the organisation to focus on changes in social mobility and the support of areas with lower index scores.

For another attendee, success has been found through the utilisation of phone calls as a means of engagement, which has fed a robust selection process into attracting the right candidates. Early diagnostics of this process was a key part in measuring its effectiveness whilst also giving the organisation a chance to position themselves in a friendly and accessible light, managing the candidate's expectations and setting them up to succeed.

This process was supported by another attendee, agreeing that setting expectations was important, particularly through the use of candidate coaching phone calls. Personal contact supported closer relationships with candidates of less experience and also permitted better measurement of diversity throughout the process. Communicating what was expected of the candidate, what the role entailed, what the recruitment process and work-day looked like, all had positive effects on the candidate.

This point was supported by TheTalentPeople who said a touch point before assessment-centre is critical. Especially when concerning females going into assessment centres in male-dominated industries.

Many attendees agreed that open communication in the early stages of talent attraction and engagement can solve many problems. Specifically, it identifies the turn-offs and enticements for the candidates within the process. This is particularly important for diverse and inclusive hiring where candidate's successors can be used as role models to convey messages that might not have been taken onboard, if another member of staff had conveyed the same message.

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# During Campaign



Engaging candidates from attraction, all the way to onboarding is a journey. Constant and careful attention to the wellbeing of the subject is imperative. But what exactly are the biggest pitfalls on the way to offer acceptance and how can companies improve the positive triggers? Recognising what 'safety' means to each culture and providing for those needs started the conversation...

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## The conversation



One attendee started the conversation by saying they believed early careers holds the key to breaking down the barriers to a diverse and inclusive culture. This is often more visible as the process of hiring goes on, but this is also the case for changing a generational culture. Campaign progress has identified that breaking down regions is essential but the need to consider individual requirements creates a necessity to delve further into even each candidate. These difficulties often elude top business hierarchies.

For one attendee, giving the chance for candidates to fail, learn and experience new situations through mock assessment centres forms an important part of their engagement process. Many candidates had not been to an assessment centre and making them comfortable with the scenario allowed their true potential to show through when it counted.

Other attendees have used an 'always on' approach to make their brand more accessible to wide audiences consistently, building familiarity and relationships through being there to help. For companies like Hitachi Rail, this has made it possible to increase good-fit candidates by four times the usual amount.

For another attendee an agile approach to campaign measurement, in tandem with TheTalentPeople's reporting capabilities, has allowed them to pivot throughout the recruitment process and make changes where necessary to reach the desired outcome. This has resulted in them achieving an almost perfect 50% gender split and a 30% BAME figure; although, challenges still existed in diversity vs social mobility.

One attendee said that informing the candidate at every stage is also a must, letting them know exactly the opportunity at stake and what it means for the candidate. Experiences have occurred where the candidate has been offered the job yet still hadn't completely understood what their duties would entail. This is particularly the case for those considered disadvantaged, who might not have as strong a knowledge of a sector or business.

One more attendee agreed saying that it has been very important to include a stage before 'offer' which involves nothing more than explaining the elements and aspects of the role in hand.

Another topic, for this same attendee, that has been of massive importance to communicate is living and accommodation too. With many candidates travelling large distances to begin a career with them, expectations needed to be set around the business' location. Extra consideration is needed for those without the means to travel such distances too.

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# Post Campaign



The focus on diverse and inclusive hiring cannot stop at any stage. With many of the attendees having experienced dropout, even after candidate job acceptance, efforts to include and support early talent must always be maintained throughout the journey. Even with considerable candidate engagement efforts, major challenges were still present in the attendees' efforts to hire more diversely and inclusively.

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## The conversation



Post-campaign is a chance for reflection for many attendees. One in particular, over years of hiring, had identified that efforts to hire inclusively need to start 6 months prior to the apprenticeship start. This allows for 'handholding' time – the gradual education of candidates in the process. University often pulls candidates away from this process, meaning monthly and quarterly social events needed to be introduced to keep hold of new talent.

For another attendee, onboarding candidates post-campaign only revealed that they didn't have suitable home working environments, saying that assumptions were made. Creating a safe space to discuss these topics brings the issues to the surface earlier. The attendee said that from a space of privilege we all need to take a step back.

Another attendee agreed, saying that their company was able to adapt when catching the difficulty of securing required technology for the candidate, early. Piloting a home working environment ahead of time has been found to coax the issues out early where conversation can sometimes lack.

Similarly, one more attendee agreed saying that pastoral care should be a real focal point. Where some individuals and teams thrive, others do not. A curriculum was introduced in their organisation, much like a school subject, to introduce more disadvantaged hires to basic business knowledge, like company hierarchies and departments.

Relationship building breaks down barriers, for this attendee, creating feelings of comfort and happiness which open up insights to the diversity of recent hires. In some cases, office space hiring has become a necessity in order to provide adequate work environments for new starters.

Despite the variety of methods tested for inclusive onboarding, many of the attendees agreed that an employer network was one of the most effective for new starters. Whilst it's not possible, or effective, for one individual to supervise the candidate the whole day, having a selection of other employees do it, is. Including staff that are both similar and not similar to the new employee will naturally offer diverse insight into the role, company and culture. This method also creates a culture of reverse mentoring, where long term employees can learn from the new starter.

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## In conclusion

Candidate attraction, engagement, hiring and onboarding is not a one-size-fits-all approach. This is particularly the case when considering candidates from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Diverse and inclusive hiring must start with the careful consideration of the candidate's lack of knowledge, experience and their fears of something as new and intimidating as beginning a career.

Relationship building, pastoral care and peer support can break down barriers to new, diverse and inclusive hires but in many cases organisations will need to go further to provide a safe and useable working environment.