

# Notes and news

## Small businesses opting for apprentices over graduates

More than half of the small business owners would rather recruit an apprentice for an entry-level role than a graduate, according to a survey of 2,000 small business owners.

Almost 80 per cent of small business owners think that a degree is less valuable now than it was ten years ago. Only 15 per cent said that they would consider hiring more graduates in five years time, compared to 40 per cent who said they would be looking to hire more apprentices.

Sandler Training (UK), a business development consultancy, commissioned the research to get insight into how UK small businesses feel about youth unemployment and hiring 16-24-year olds for their entry-level roles.

Despite 86 per cent of small business owners saying that they were worried about youth unemployment, when asked who had the biggest responsibility to solve it, the government topped their list and UK businesses came last. Over a third (38 per cent) of small business owners thought solving youth unemployment was the government's responsibility, followed by education establishments (25 per cent), young people themselves (20 per cent) and UK businesses (17 per cent).

Less than a quarter (23 per cent) of small businesses say that they have hired an 18-24-year-old school or university leaver in the last two years. For those that did, over half (59 per cent) said that they had a poor experience. The main reasons were that they did not have the right skills (42 per cent) and they did not feel that they had the right attitude (36 per cent).

Shaun Thomson, the Chief Executive of Sandler Training (UK), commented: "Small businesses account for 60 percent of all private-sector employment in the UK. They cannot simply turn their backs on the over a half a million unemployed 16-24 year-olds in the UK and pass the buck to the Government. Because some have had a poor experience with school-leavers, for many small businesses the standard practice is to put in place barriers for even the most basic of entry-level roles to dissuade school and university leavers, such as 'minimum two years' work experience. This only exacerbates the issue of youth unemployment as the school leavers cannot even get on to the job ladder and they become desperate to take any job they can, which just fuels a vicious cycle".

Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of small business owners believe that the majority of 16-24-year-old school and university leavers are motivated by the salary. Only 20 per cent believe that they are motivated by the value that they can bring to the company.

Shaun Thomson continued: "There are many talented, high-quality young candidates entering the job market. To find them, small businesses must put processes in place to identify the applicants who have the right attitude, who would fit in well with the company culture and then be developed over time. People stay at companies where they respect their values, and where the business values them. By taking on a young person based on attitude, they can be developed and taught the right skills to start a career in the organization".

Of the 2,000 small business owners that were surveyed, only 38 per cent had an individual development plan for their employees and over three quarters (76 per cent) do not meet their employees more than once a month. Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) have never run individual meetings for their employees.

## Business coaches key to Penmex success

Success is rarely a solo effort, claims event marketing firm Penmex, which recognizes the role a business coach can play in someone's journey to success.

Managing Director Kirsty Pennal has a number of business coaches that she has amassed over the years. “The role of a business coach should not be underestimated. It is extremely beneficial to have people to turn to for advice and guidance, and they have played an integral role in the success of Penmex”, said Kirsty Pennal.

She believes that the main advantages of having a business coach are:

- **Mentorship.** “For me, the most important role of a business coach is that of a mentor. A business coach will be there to listen to any ideas or problems and offer actionable solutions as well as asking powerful questions to challenge thinking”.
- **Success management.** “It is important to have a business coach who has already achieved the level of success you aspire to. A good business coach has quality experiences that can help their mentee successfully navigate through different situations and scenarios”.
- **Brainstorming.** “The key to business success is never to innovate constantly. A business coach will cultivate ideas, offer a fresh perspective, and help to action those ideas to get results”.
- **Prioritization.** “For most entrepreneurs and business owners, there comes a time when they find themselves struggling to keep up, and prioritization is necessary. Business coaches help to determine the high-priority tasks and act like a co-captain to help to steer the ship”.
- **Reignite your passion.** “The road to success is full of ups and downs, and at some point, people experience frustration and burnout and forget why they started. A business coach can help someone to reignite the passion and overcome any issues that led to the frustration”.
- **Accountability.** “When goals are kept private it can be easy not to follow through. Involving someone else creates accountability. A good business coach will hold you to your goals and help you to maintain motivation to achieve them”.

### **Lammas Incrementum makes the most of its millennials**

Lammas Incrementum has spoken up about how to get the best from millennials and why it favours this generation in the sales and marketing sector.

It is estimated that by 2020, millennials will make up 50 per cent of the global workforce. While some have cited this generation as lazy, self-entitled and lacking a strong work ethic, Lammas Incrementum believes that attracting a millennial workforce is crucial to building a bright business future.

The firm is adamant that workers in this age bracket bring with them desirable skills and a more positive and open mindset. “Millennials grew up during significant technological change; they have had to adapt to these advances all their lives, so change has become second nature to them,” said a company spokesman.

“Millennials are also more aware of the role learning plays in success. Whereas their parents may have landed a role in their chosen field straight out of university, today’s business world is inherently competitive and opportunities are harder to come by. Millennials understand this and are more willing to better themselves and invest in education and skills development”.

With millennials bringing such desirable skills to the workplace, Lammas Incrementum believes now is the time for companies to ensure they are not only attracting millennials but offering management structures and workplace cultures that appeal to this generation. In a recent statement, the firm spoke about some of the ways it maintains morale among its millennial workforce and outlined the following ways it believes it has become a millennial-friendly workforce:

- **Stop being condescending.** “Playing into negative stereotypes about millennials not only feeds a bigger problem, but it also creates an environment where millennials do not feel comfortable sharing ideas, meaning that businesses could be missing out on innovation because of their closed-mindedness”, said the Lammas Incrementum spokesman.

- Get active. Millennials do not want to be stuck in a dead-end job. Many may have seen their parents in a similar situation and now are keen to create something better for themselves, so Lammas Incrementum stresses the importance of ingraining staying active and trying new things into the company culture.
- Involve everyone. Millennials do not want to be treated as a number. When working for a business, they want to participate in as many processes as possible and break down the corporate hierarchy. “Working with millennials has taught us that hierarchy causes tension, and everyone deserves the chance to prove themselves no matter how long they have been with the company. This has such an impact on morale and gives everyone a boost knowing that they could really make a difference to the business at any time”, the Lammas Incrementum spokesman concluded.

### Sunny disposition helps Rego to shine

In a recent motivational workshop with its contractors, sales and marketing firm Rego Interactions recently investigated the importance of adopting a positive attitude and how having an optimistic outlook can contribute to success.

During the workshop, the firm’s Managing Director, Alexander Davies, outlined some of the key tools his workforce can use to improve their attitude and help them to achieve their desired level of success:

- Self-coaching through affirmations. Studies have shown that self-affirmation can help to improve an individual’s performance and increase confidence and self-esteem. By repeating a few affirmations each day that include positive keywords, Rego Interactions believes that people will be able to train their subconscious to help them to make positive decisions that will aid their success.
- Self-motivation through discovering your motives. Individuals who have a clear understanding of what motivates them are more likely to have a positive outlook on life and therefore be more likely to achieve their goals. Rego Interactions is committed to helping its workforce to understand what motivates them and aims to support them to use these motivations to aid their personal and professional development.
- The power of visualization. Some of the world’s most successful figures, including athletes and surgeons, use visualization to envisage themselves being awarded the gold medal or successfully completing a complex piece of surgery. Rego Interactions encourages its contractors to visualize themselves living their most successful life to help them to reach their goals.

Alexander Davies said: “Every entrepreneur needs to understand the importance of adopting a positive attitude and how this contributes to success. I hope that by outlining some of these essential tools, our contractors will not only be able to see the benefits of positive thinking but also use these tools to propel their own development.”

### Deutsche Bank wins award for business continuity training

Deutsche Bank has won a 2017 CIR Business Continuity Award for business continuity training to help the bank’s information and resilience risk management team to maintain the safety of the bank’s staff and the smooth running of its operations in the event of an external disaster.

The programme had to be direct, hands-on training that would cement the team’s understanding of the business continuity programme and which could be applied to any hazard, irrespective of the cause.

Despite the course initially only being written for information and resilience risk management experts, it has also been made available to all the bank’s employees.

The program was designed with the help of Saffron Interactive Learning. “This award is testament to Saffron’s ongoing innovation and creativity,” said Karim Ladak, the firm’s Chief Operating Officer. “What was requested was a rudimentary e-learning course. What we delivered is a

30-minute experience that assesses learners against three core competencies required in a crisis. Game mechanics underpin the learning design and provide personalized feedback that encourages the learner to practise and improve responsiveness to make a difference in a real situation”.

### **Lovehoney pioneers sexual happiness qualification**

Lovehoney, a UK online sex toy retailer, has worked with Bath College to develop a sexual happiness qualification for Lovehoney staff.

The qualification covers a wide range of subjects, from in-depth product knowledge to sexual health issues, sexual identity and more. Topics are taught by Lovehoney staff alongside Guest Lecturers Dr Jamie Lawson, of Bristol University, and Victoria Lehmann, a Sexual and Relationships Therapist.

Those that complete the course and accompanying workbook gain a Level 2 in sexual happiness, accredited by Bath College and awarding body ABMA Education.

The first round of ten to complete the course were from customer care, HR, marketing, online trade, sales, buying and content.

Richard Longhurst, Lovehoney Co-founder, commented: “We are delighted that we are able to offer our staff the first nationally recognized qualification in this field, to help our customers to find the perfect products for better sex”.

Jenny Shipton, HR Advisor at Lovehoney, said: “Our aim is that all members of staff will take the course while they are here. The content thus far has proved invaluable so far for our customer-services team, content team, marketing specialists and more. We are delighted to be able to say we are the first company in the world to make sexual happiness a legitimate qualification”.

Kate Hobbs, the Head of the Department for Sport, Leisure and Care at Bath College, commented: “Bath College is keen to support local companies to develop their workforce so they can continue to innovate and grow. We clearly see the value in this for Lovehoney and its staff and we are proud to be associated with such a ground-breaking company”.

Victoria Lehmann, Sexual Therapist and Course Lecturer, said: “Who would have thought that 25 years after I trained as a sex therapist, I would be teaching on the first-ever accredited course in sexual happiness? I recently finished teaching the first course and it was such a joy to have a group of individuals who were enthusiastic and prepared to learn how health issues affect relationships. I am convinced that their understanding and commitment will ensure that this qualification will enhance the experience of every Lovehoney customer”.

### **Barclays offers the best of both worlds**

Until recently, graduates wanting to serve in the armed forces often had to put a civilian career on hold while they pursued their military career. Now Barclays Armed Forces Transition, Employment and Resettlement (AFTER) programme is championing the option of doing both, with a bespoke entry process for university students who want to apply to the Barclays graduate programme and at the same time be part of the Reserves.

Under the streamlined process, any graduate with a pass at army officer selection board can fast-track to the final interview round for the graduate programme. This means they avoid duplication between the Reserve and graduate programme assessment days, leapfrogging three rounds of assessments and significantly speeding up their application.

Last year, more than 300 students successfully secured a place on the Barclays graduate programme. Entrants are able to undertake placements across the business and benefit from dedicated mentoring before securing a full-time role.

Should Reservist applicants be successful in gaining a role in the bank, they will benefit from Barclays bespoke military-Reservist policy which has been put in place to ensure Reservists

receive the support they need to balance the significant commitment of their parallel career. This includes an extra ten continuous working days' paid leave a year for Reservist training. If they are mobilized, Barclays will also continue to pay full salary and will conduct pay reviews and performance bonuses as normal with a role held for the course of the mobilization.

Additionally, they can join the Barclays Military Network (BMN) and meet other Reservists and ex-military colleagues. BMN has more than 350 members. As well as offering networking, it offers mentoring and career-support advice.

Stuart Tootal, the Head of the AFTER programme, said: "Reservists play a vital role in supporting our country, but they also play a vital role within our workforce as the skills they learn not only complement but enhance their civilian careers. While we attract superb graduate candidates, we do not want to miss out on the top talent from the armed forces. That is why we are now accepting their military selection as the mark of quality we recognize for accessing our fast-track graduate program".

Eliot Goward, a Graduate at Barclays and Army Reserve, said: "Deciding what to do after university is difficult, particularly if you are caught between choosing a military or civilian career. Too many graduates think it needs to be one or the other, but this initiative enables you to have the best of both worlds. You not only enjoy the benefits each career brings individually, but also build a number of transferrable skills between the two".

Since its inception in 2010, AFTER has supported more than 5,000 service leavers and hired almost 500 ex-military service personnel into a range of jobs across the company.

In addition to offering support to employees who are part of the Reserves, the Barclays AFTER programme hosts a number of initiatives designed to support veterans with their transition into the civilian workplace including CV and interview workshops, military talent days, internships and placements.

Barclays was also one of the first companies to obtain the military-covenant gold standard in recognition for its support to veterans and Reservists.

## **Jaguar Land Rover lays down code-breaking challenge**

Jaguar Land Rover and Gorillaz are working together to recruit the next generation of electronics and software engineering talent with a code-breaking challenge found in the virtual band's app.

The best performers will be fast-tracked through the recruitment process, helping to meet Jaguar Land Rover's ambition to employ thousands of bright new talents over the next year. It is a major change in the way the business looks for candidates, aiming to tackle the engineering skills gap and inspire and attract a diverse range of talent and new thinking.

Noodle, the band's Guitarist and a Jaguar Land Rover ambassador, said: "Can you crack the code? Put your skills to the test. Hey, maybe you will land yourself the most badass job you can imagine. Dare to win!"

The Gorillaz App has launched a new Jaguar Land Rover recruitment area in the form of a 360-degree environment situated in the garage of the band's home which also features all the iconic vehicles from Gorillaz' past. Here, applicants can explore and take a two-part challenge. The first part, designed to educate users about the benefits of electric vehicles, involves assembling the Jaguar I-PACE concept, Jaguar's first all-electric five-seat sports car. Users can learn about the vehicle's performance, battery technology, space, charging and range.

The second and more demanding part of the game, developed to engage and recruit budding electronic wizards and coders, will focus on cracking code. There are more than 4,000 combinations, as well as cipher in an alternative reality format. The challenges put a stronger focus on skills and talents than on qualifications.

Alex Heslop, the Head of Electrical Engineering at Jaguar Land Rover, said: "As the automotive industry transforms over the next decade, fuelled by software innovation, we have to attract the best talent. That requires a radical rethink of how we recruit. Here we have found an engaging

way to recruit a diverse talent pool in software systems, cyber systems, app development and graphics performance. It will be the first of its kind”.

The Jaguar I-Type, Panasonic Jaguar Racing’s all-electric Formula E race car, appears in the garage. Users can click on a poster of Noodle with the I-Type and FanBoost which enables them to vote for the @JaguarRacing team drivers to gain a power boost during their next race or to follow @JaguarRacing Twitter channels.

The project follows on from Jaguar Land Rover’s “science, technology, engineering and maths” initiative with Gorillaz in 2016, where Founder Member and female Guitarist Noodle became Jaguar’s Formula E Racing Ambassador.