

Case Study // Ernst & Young - Strengths-based Graduate Recruitment



Ernst & Young is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. They employ 141,000 people in 140 countries around the world. In the UK, Ernst & Young are a major graduate recruiter and one of the 'Big Four' professional service firms, widely recognised as being a destination of choice for many top graduates.

The Challenge

Ernst & Young reviewed their graduate recruitment process in 2007 and discovered a number of challenges including:

- Many suitable candidates for the roles, at least on the basis of their existing criteria...
- ...But only 11% were interested in a career in accountancy
- Candidates were well-rehearsed in the traditional competency interview, making it extremely difficult to distinguish talent from good interview practice
- Lack of differentiation between the graduate offerings of the 'Big Four' professional services firms, leading Ernst & Young to want to develop a distinct graduate employer brand and offer.

Capp's Approach

We supported Ernst & Young, working in partnership with our colleagues at Work Positive, by:

- Running interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with key stakeholders to identify the graduate strategy and the strengths of high performing graduates
- Designing and validating bespoke strengths-based interviews and assessment centres
- Designing innovative campus events and activities to differentiate Ernst & Young's graduate offer
- Designing and delivering interviewer and assessor training and train-the-trainer programmes to build internal capability and embed strengths-based graduate recruitment within the organisation.

In addition, Capp designed and delivered a bespoke strengths online assessment tool, Realise2 Lite, to support graduate attraction and to be used as a core differentiating feature of Ernst & Young's distinctive strengths-based recruitment offer in the graduate marketplace.

: Stephen Isherwood,
: Head of Graduate
: Recruitment, UK &
: Ireland said "*The
: Strengths Methodology
: has revolutionised our
: approach to recruiting
: graduates. Candidates
: tell us our selection
: process is more
: authentic and personal.
: Recruiters in the
: business are also seeing
: better candidates who
: are more aligned to the
: roles they are taking.
: Strengths has helped us
: recruit better people
: more efficiently.*"

Outcomes

Evaluation data from the project showed:

- 15% more graduates de-selected at first interview compared to the previous competency approach, showing increased differentiation through recruitment process
- 12% more graduates accepted at assessment centre compared to the previous competency approach, showing increased quality of recruitment process
- 33% increase in positive candidate perceptions of the recruitment compared to the previous competency approach, enhancing employer brand and perception of graduate offer



Outcomes cont'd

- In the first 18 months following the launch of Realise2 Lite as a strengths attraction tool for graduate recruitment and marketing, the tool had been completed by more than 18,000 graduates - an average of 1,000 completions per month.

Published case studies of this project have also been featured in:

- *Financial Times*
- *Strategic HR Review*
- *The Recruiter*.

