



# Degree apprenticeship programmes for Morrisons

Targeted attraction to help discover future leaders

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## Background

Morrisons is the fourth largest chain of supermarkets in the UK. They began life as an egg and butter stall in Bradford before evolving into a business with almost 500 stores across the country.

Uniquely, Morrisons source and process their fresh produce through their own manufacturing facilities and have it prepared in-store. With a workforce of around 97,000 – serving 11 million customers each week – the organisation is committed to finding future leaders.

## Objective

Morrisons recognised that the future talent market was shaping their business. They understood that nurturing early careers would help grow the next generation of leaders – over 33% of senior management start their careers on the shop floor.

We have a lasting relationship with Morrisons who trust us to discover their future talent. They wanted us to create a new degree apprenticeship programme to accompany their existing graduate scheme, using a different approach to ingrain their 'Ways of Working' at an early stage.

They wanted us to develop tailor-made recruitment programmes for Manufacturing, Corporate, Logistics and Retail roles in partnership with the University of Bradford and Sheffield Hallam University. The purpose of these programmes was to identify candidates with the potential to improve Morrisons' performance, culture and future direction.

Each programme needed to be customised to the organisation's exact needs. Morrisons wanted to target candidates in an engaging way that aligned their talent with the roles, while also changing perceptions and educating them on the diversity of their business.

Morrisons were determined to improve the quality of their candidates before providing the skills and experience for them to enter a management role, with CMI chartered membership, after three years.

## Solution

By interviewing 50 business leaders, we identified core leadership behaviours for success across Morrisons' four business streams – recognising a need to assess resilience and motivation in particular.

These insights helped us design an attraction strategy that targeted the right candidates. This included paid media, social media, online content with video that resonated with both students and influencers, and direct engagement with over 200 schools.

Our innovative recruitment programme included a short registration, Situational Judgement Tests (SJT) and video interviews that introduced case studies specific to the role. Existing employees featured in the videos to provide an interactive and authentic experience.

Finally, candidates were highly engaged by a series of assessment centre exercises that were tailor-made for the business roles they applied for. These included defamiliarisation exercises that took candidates out of their comfort zone and helped differentiate potential from experience.

Our digital recruitment programme featured cutting-edge technology, without sacrificing a human experience for candidates. The automated, time-saving process was accompanied by personal feedback to coach, support and build trusted relationships that enhanced candidate experience.

## Results

Our partnership with Morrisons made all hires into all their programmes in 2019, selecting 58 graduates and 62 degree apprenticeships from over 4,000 applications. Aligning our recruitment strategy to their business by assessing role-specific behaviours for success proved to be supremely effective.

Targeted attraction also reduced the number of applications by 38% while raising the overall calibre of candidates – a result that was recognised by Morrisons' CEO and other senior executives who carried out some assessments personally at our centres.

Retention is the ultimate measure of success and quality, especially in early career recruitment results. Our programme increased retention to 90% across all Morrisons' future talent streams – and achieved an incredible 100% retention among degree apprenticeships. Only 3% of degree apprenticeship candidates declined offers, which is 45% lower than the ISE average.



90% Retention across all future talent streams



100% Retention for graduate apprenticeship roles



38% Reduction in applications due to targeted attraction



Declined graduate apprenticeship offers (45% fewer than ISE average)

## Client quote

"Amberjack has done us proud over our three-year partnership. Early Careers is a massive part of Morrisons – it is who we are, nurturing young talent as our sustainability in this company."

Senior People Manager, Morrisons

## Candidate quote

"Overall, it's been an excellent process. There have been a wide variety of tasks and the process has been easy to follow. My favourite exercise was the unexpected activity at the discovery centre. It was modern and innovative and not something I've ever done before."

Candidate, Logistics Graduate Scheme

