

RedEye – establishing a talent pipeline through apprenticeships and workforce development

RedEye is a fast-growing Marketing Tech business with 170 employees spread across three UK offices. They specialise in Marketing Automation, Predictive Analytics and Conversion services. To address the challenges of hiring in the IT and Digital sectors where there are significant skill shortages, RedEye have invested in apprenticeships and employee development. Not only has this helped with recruitment and upskilling of teams, it has helped save the business a significant amount of money by enabling a previously outsourced service to be brought back in house.



Apprenticeships

RedEye started hiring apprentices in autumn 2015. They currently have seven apprentices, and a further eight who now have full-time roles in the business. Their apprentices range from Level 3 to Degree-level studying at university. Two of the apprentices are in the Milton Keynes office.



Elijah Cooper - Junior Marketing Executive

Prior to starting at RedEye, Elijah had completed an internship with a Lincoln based media agency before working briefly with a design and brand

agency that unfortunately closed:

“As I was in my previous job for a very short time before the company folded I wasn’t there long enough for it to have any weight on my CV. Starting an apprenticeship seemed like the most sustainable way to put my feet on a proper career ladder, as well as to learn new skills and to gain an extra qualification whilst getting a regular salary.

Doing an apprenticeship taught me a lot about marketing. With no previous experience in marketing at all, the classes in the academy have taught me valuable skills that have helped me be effective within my current role at RedEye as well as skills that I can take forward to any other jobs in the future.

The best thing about the apprenticeship has been the work experience. Whenever I applied for a job, I would often get turned down for a lack of experience. When you apply for an apprenticeship, the employer is well aware that you have little to no experience in that role. A lack of experience isn’t going to hold you back and RedEye has been really good at helping me learn on the job as well as supporting me.

I would strongly recommend apprenticeships to others. If you’re not interested in going to university, but want a long-term career, an apprenticeship is the most effective way of gaining work experience and an extra qualification whilst getting paid for it.”

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RedEye





Jack Bennett – Campaign Executive

Describing himself as an 'IT geek', Jack worked in retail for a couple of years but knew that working in IT was always going to be his future. With success in IT

qualifications at school and college, university seemed the only way to pursue a career in IT. That was until Jack saw some of his friends undertaking and enjoying apprenticeships:

"I never really thought about the idea of an apprenticeship until a couple of my friends started to get into them. From talking with them I knew that an apprenticeship was going to be the way forward for me. I would be able to get some great experience working in an IT job role, while also being educated on that role every single day.

The apprenticeship turned out better than I expected. The expectations of my apprenticeship were always positive and I knew I was going to be learning a lot, but I was able to better myself in a lot of other ways as well. My confidence has massively increased and I am also becoming increasingly efficient with larger workloads. With this being my first official job, taking on larger workloads and meeting deadlines was something new to me, but I feel I have taken on the challenge well. I feel like I'm bettering myself everyday with this apprenticeship and I look forward to the next few months.

I would recommend anyone to consider an apprenticeship, regardless of the career you are aiming to pursue. There are apprentices in just about any role and businesses are always looking to take on new people. Even if you have your sights set on university, I would still recommend having a look. I did and I'm very happy with how things are going. Getting that real working experience at a young age will be a great benefit to you and can really help with future prospects."

The decision to employ apprentices was driven, to a large extent, by challenges in finding potential employees with the skills a business in the IT and Digital sector needs. The apprenticeship programme offered the opportunity to develop a talent pipeline,

bringing in individuals and training and developing them in line with the needs of the business. There was, and continues to be, a real desire to grow employees from within the business.

The IT and Digital sectors are forever changing. New apprentices, particularly young people, are accustomed to using new IT and new technologies and can share their knowledge with others. Apprentices also bring with them fresh and new ideas.

The apprenticeships have helped managers and aspiring managers by providing an opportunity for them to gain skills through supporting and mentoring apprentices and becoming accustomed to managing new and different people.

Furthermore, the apprenticeship programme and the training and upskilling of employees that accompanies this, has enabled the company to bring back in house services that were once out-sourced, saving money and improving output quality.

With the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, RedEye has also started to consider how apprenticeships can be utilised for the career development and progression of existing employees. A number of employees from across the business' offices are now undertaking an apprenticeship in Business Improvement at level 2 or 3. There was significant interest from employees in undertaking the apprenticeship and each was given the opportunity to apply, outlining why they wanted to do the apprenticeship and how the learning would be applied to their current role and would support their future development.

Investing in managers

As an approved ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) centre, RedEye is able to offer a range of management training and tailored units to their managers. On completion of the training, managers have a nationally recognised ILM qualification.

Courses are also offered for aspiring managers and apprentice mentors. This way, all tiers of the business benefit from the introduction of apprenticeships.

Workforce Development

Developing their employees is a priority for RedEye.

Annually, a careers week is held, featuring workshops and opportunities for employees from across the business to talk about their role and how they have progressed within the company.

Monthly Love to Learn emails are circulated to all employees to encourage self-learning. Employees have access to online learning via Lynda.com and relevant external training is also provided. All employees are also required to successfully complete an accredited course on the business' own software system.

Regular six weekly meetings are held between the HR Team and managers to look at the skills different teams need and to evaluate how training is going.

The availability of training, and willingness to invest in people, is strongly promoted to potential employees. In a sector with fierce competition for employees, it is important for RedEye to differentiate itself from other Tech and Digital businesses. The availability of training, especially ILM qualifications, is one way of doing this.

And this approach is definitely paying off, with RedEye being ranked as outstanding in The Times Best Companies list.