

Tarmac – Apprentice Recruitment

Tarmac, a CRH Company, is the UK's leading sustainable building materials and construction solutions business.

They approached Cohesion in 2015, to discuss the implementation of a centralised Apprenticeship programme.

The Solution

Due to the scale of the programme – Tarmac required a recruitment partner who could help with dealing with the volume of applications, and maintain the positive candidate experience for all candidates.

The constraints on internal resource had been proving detrimental to the overall candidate journey and experience, which was weakening Tarmac's reputation as an Early Talent employer.

From the end of 2015 – Cohesion and Tarmac have been working in partnership to inform the business, and provide invaluable market insight and expertise during the recruitment process.

Cohesion's Relationship with Tarmac

Towards the end of the campaign, we caught up with Emma Whitehouse, Senior Manager of Organisational Development, to get her take on the service Tarmac received from Cohesion:

"We decided to outsource out Early Talent recruitment last year due to a lack of internal resource and, after working on a number of roles ourselves, went to an external provider to fill the rest. For this campaign, we were looking for an expert recruitment partner with a track record of delivering excellent results.

There is willingness, on Cohesion's part, to meet with us frequently and work in partnership with us. They've been to one of our sites and seen first-hand what we do – this was great to see and shows their commitment to understanding our business.

Late last year, we began working with Cohesion to recruit 70 Apprentices and 35 Graduates and, after seeing such great results so early on, my expectations were high when it came to the assessment centre. Our previous assessment centre relied on our Learning and Development and HR teams being heavily involved and they organised the entire thing; this year was very different and very structured – Cohesion absolutely delivered.

Amongst other things, having a proper recruitment campaign has meant that a lot of poor quality candidates were filtered out. The quality and calibre of candidates appears much higher this year. Everyone has been thoroughly pre-screened and prepared by the recruitment team at Cohesion. Last year, some of our candidates turned up without the relevant documents and should have been eliminated from the process. I've been impressed by what I've seen this year – in some cases, we've had too many great candidates and not enough roles to offer!

A couple of the managers have emailed to say how impressed they were with the professionalism and general structure – they couldn't fault it.

Working with Cohesion has been a pleasure. The best thing about working with them is their people. The people I've been working with have made this a really enjoyable experience.

Working with them has taken the pain out of the recruitment process – I haven't had to worry so much about the schedule or where everyone needs to be. It's been great to be able to step back – I've been able to talk to last years' cohort, this years' candidates and line managers, which I couldn't have otherwise done. The attention to detail, structure and overall efficiency has been something to behold."

Results

- Over 1600 applications were received for all vacancies, with 50% of candidates being shortlisted at each stage of the process
- Almost 100 high-quality applicants remained in the Apprentice talent pool following the 'register your interest' functionality
- A diverse group of Apprentices was recruited
- 100% of vacancies were filled at assessment centres

Tarmac's reputation as an Apprentice employer increased significantly – so much so, that the "Register your Interest" functionality was implemented early to enable development of a strong pool of applicants that could be contacted prior to going live the following year.

Cohesion also provided Tarmac with a number of recommendations and changes that could easily be implemented for the following Apprentice recruitment campaign.

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