

Best *youth employment* strategy

Winner

Capgemini

As a global consulting, technology services and digital transformation business, Capgemini is acutely aware that to continue to service its broad client list it needs to recruit, retain and motivate the best talent.

Which is why during times of accelerating change in business and society, the nation's growing digital talent gap, and an education system facing numerous challenges, it saw a need to broaden its recruitment strategy from its safety net of graduates and seasoned professionals to a more diverse talent pool. What happened next was the development of a youth employment strategy that would invest in school-leavers who are looking for an alternative to the traditional university route.

The first step was to find a way to increase Capgemini's visibility among the school-leaver population and engage them around learning digital skills and the exciting career opportunities available. The organisation began a school outreach programme, developing relationships with individual schools and later with educational charity Ark Schools, and supporting the world's largest STEM schools competition First Lego League.

This commitment to developing young talent accelerated when the government launched degree apprenticeships in 2015. Capgemini grabbed the chance to ramp up investment, building the Capgemini Degree Apprenticeship programme in partnership with Aston University, one of the first of its type in the UK. In 2017 Capgemini became the first UK employer in the technology industry to deliver degree apprenticeship graduates. The



No such progress could ever be possible, of course, without commitment from the top. Capgemini is no different, with UK chairman Christine Hodgson and UK managing director Paul Margetts both taking an active role in initiatives.

programme is a fully sponsored BSc (Honours) degree in digital and technology solutions or leadership and business management, providing a debt-free, accelerated path into the tech sector and helping build a pipeline of future technologists for the company.

But this commitment doesn't end there. In 2018 the Coding Academy was launched, a six-month blended learning experience for disadvantaged and refugee students. And strides are being made to address the gender imbalance in tech, with more than 2,250 interactions between the organisation and girls in schools and colleges to inspire them to consider such a career.

As would be expected Capgemini's efforts have caused quite a stir among its clients too, with Capgemini and Anglian Water degree apprentices now working and studying together on projects that will benefit the UK water sector.

Shortlisted

Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner

Lancaster University

Network Rail

The wider workforce has also gotten behind it, with around 2% of employees volunteering in schools, giving career talks, showcasing apprenticeships, interviewing, and holding workshops on the digital world.

The strategy did what it set out to do: to create the organisation's own industry-leading technologists, help close the digital skills gap, raise the profile of digital skills in society and open up career opportunities for talented young people who otherwise may not have had the chance.

And there are no signs of the strategy slowing down. Seventy-six graduates have come out of the degree apprenticeship scheme so far, with 88% achieving a 2:1 or above and 39% achieving a first. The schools outreach team is now three-strong, with a senior leader, a tech graduate and a graduate apprentice, with plans to continue expansion across the UK. Geographic expansion is also in fruition, with 2019 seeing an intake of apprentices in Wales, where they are attending a Welsh university.

The judges were particularly impressed with the coherence of the strategy, with one commenting: "You can see why they were doing it, it's working as you can see the tangible benefits and they know what they're doing next."