



# GRADUATE RECRUITMENT

## IS THE FUTURE BRIGHTER FOR THE CLASS OF 2010?

By Lauren Mackelden, UK Features Editor, onrec Magazine

**T**his is the time of year when new graduates are released into the wild – the wild world of work - but will there be any jobs for them to hunt down? Graduate schemes have been pared down if not cancelled in the last few years, and the spectre of public sector job cuts looms large....

Dan Hawes, co-founder of the Graduate Recruitment Bureau says

that thankfully in the first quarter of 2010 the market has sparked back into life. He says that: "This time recruiters are super-picky and relying more on recruitment agencies to identify talent as opposed to trawling through thousands of responses generated by job boards. With HR departments being cut within large recruiters they now want response handling and screening so they only have to spend their time arranging interviews and assessment days. Niche job boards

still have a part to play especially to raise the profile of smaller recruiters."

Graduate Prospects also had a good first quarter of the year, reporting a 50% year-on-year increase in advertising from recruiters, and demonstrating that companies are taking on more graduates as the economy improves. However, chief executive Mike Hill warns that public sector cuts could put the early signs of recovery into reverse. Charlie Ball, deputy research director at the



or July show further cuts to graduate vacancies (estimated 6.9% drop) this year so far, with the increased competition for jobs leading to 78% of employers now insisting on a minimum 2.1 degree. They also report the average graduate salary has been frozen at £25,000 since 2008.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. BT is an employer that scrapped its graduate recruitment altogether, but, says Edward Mellett, Director at WikiJob, their position on graduates has reversed a full 180 degrees - they'll be running a graduate scheme as normal over 2010/11. It seems to Ed that the recession may not have been too bad for online recruitment overall. He says: "As employers make a return to recruiting

graduates, their mentality seems to have changed dramatically. Employers' overall budgets are definitely smaller this year, and so maximising return on investment is key. Consequently, it seems as though budgets are being withdrawn from print media publications in favour of web media, products with which ROI can be very accurately measured by page impression, candidate click or even per application. This means that in some instances there is actually more budget available for online recruitment media and as we move out of recession things are looking up for online recruitment - although for print, it may be another story." Ed has an optimistic outlook, reminding us that graduates will always be a cheap, hard-working pool of talent and everyone knows this. This was certainly echoed by the new graduate Onrec recently spoke to - she had uploaded her CV to a generalist website and had a rapid response from an interested recruitment agency with a suitable vacancy in mind for her, despite her pass degree qualification.

For some though, the impression that there are no graduate jobs, especially for the lower classifications is not helping matters. Mike Hill says: "One of our concerns is that there is a lot of pessimism amongst students and graduates towards their employment prospects. It seems that while the market is recovering, this group remains quite negative, which is having a knock on effect on the numbers actively seeking careers advice and applying for jobs. We're reassuring graduates that there are not only jobs out there, but that there are an increasing number of them."

So, graduates this year need to stay focused and maybe ensure they go for quality not quantity when it comes to applications. When graduate vacancies reduced last year, Ben Jackson, Head of Business Development at GradWeb says the behaviours of panicked graduates morphed from controlled and targeted applications to the 'spray and pray' mode. Ben continues: "Interestingly, some businesses, amongst them some highly attractive household names, are still trying to find good people to join their graduate schemes, and this seems increasingly to be the result of graduates failing to spend enough time and effort on selling themselves during the application process. One of our clients received over

## TIPS

Janet Davies, Director,  
[mygraduatecareer.com](http://mygraduatecareer.com)

Janet Davies, Director of [mygraduatecareer.com](http://mygraduatecareer.com) provides some tips for employers who want to attract graduate talent:

- *Is the graduate career part of an employer's website easy to find or tucked away somewhere?*
- *Is the information on it regularly updated? How many are places available?*
- *When are the open dates? (Can interested grads set up an alert so they don't miss the slot?)*
- *When are the closing, interview, feedback, and intake dates?*
- *Are the application forms bespoke for new grads, recognising that they are unlikely to have much work experience?*
- *What is the interview process? How, if at all, can they prepare?*

4,000 applications for just 40 vacancies this year, and has 5 vacancies still outstanding. Poor quality grads, or poor quality applications?"

### Use tools that graduates use

The expectations of today's graduates are very different from earlier generations. With technology constantly evolving, rather than using traditional methods, many graduates expect to find their ideal job on the web, suggests Dean Harte from Redrock Consulting. He says: "For employers, jobs boards and careers advisors to engage and recruit graduates more effectively, they need to target those tools that graduates frequently turn to when looking for information. By using social media, iPhone apps and search