



Network Rail works with GradWeb to identify the right candidates for its graduate recruitment schemes...



GradWeb is a proud member of **agr**
The collective voice of graduate recruiters

Overview

About GradWeb:

GradWeb offers an extensive and flexible range of services to help you manage your graduate recruitment campaign. Whether your requirement is large or small, we can provide you with a combination of services to create a tailored solution that meets your requirements exactly.

About Network Rail:

Network Rail's task is to deliver a reliable and safe rail network. Safety is the company's primary concern and it is spending more than £6 billion to maintain, renew and improve Britain's railway infrastructure including the signals, stations and structures.

Objectives:

To look after and run 20,000 miles of track across Britain. The company's main customers are the train and freight operating companies who run the nation's train services. Network Rail provides access to the tracks for all passenger and freight trains. Current engineering plans for the National Rail Network will improve more than 45 strategic routes. This requires succession planning and the recruitment of the next generation of the company's senior managers.

Strategy:

Work with GradWeb to recruit talented graduates into the General Management, Finance, Commercial Property and the Specialist Engineering schemes each year, and in particular attract candidates that are looking for a long term career opportunity.

History of Network Rail graduate scheme

Having gone through a huge period of change, it's now a very exciting time for Britain's railways. In a fresh start for the industry, Network Rail has been given a mandate by Government to improve our rail network. Their goals are clear – to deliver a railway that is safe, reliable and efficient. They are looking for the right people to ultimately deliver the rail service for the future.

"To find the potential senior managers of tomorrow, Network Rail needs to find the right graduates today." Network Rail's philosophy is to ensure each person develops a good understanding of both the commercial and engineering elements of the business through first class training and development.

In 2001, the decision was made to go out to tender to find a strategic graduate recruitment partner, as they were unhappy with their incumbent response handling agency.

Said Linsey Perry, Head of Graduate Recruitment, Network Rail: "We carried out a thorough evaluation of the potential suppliers on the market and GradWeb was clearly the most advanced and sophisticated in its approach and systems." "The 'can do' attitude really appealed to me, as I wanted a partner

who would be flexible and easy to work with. GradWeb have proved to be just that and more."

GradWeb's original brief was to handle the applications via telephone, online and post throughout October 2001 to April 2002.

A few months into the recruitment process an aggressive advertising campaign was launched, to overcome any concerns candidates may have had regarding the rail industry, which boldly stated: Would you rather criticise or be part of the solution? The ads explained how the rail industry was transforming itself and that there were many opportunities to be part of the future.

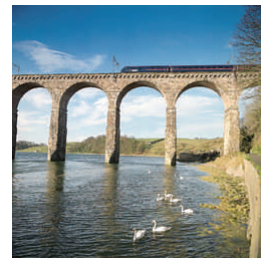
Said Katrina Rostrup, Director, GradWeb: "One of the key factors was to maintain a very positive attitude in all correspondence with candidates, to ensure that the project's success was not impacted in any way."

This approach proved successful with over 1000 applications received and some 35 offers made in the 2001/2002 recruitment drive.

"After the campaign, GradWeb carried out a thorough analysis and provided good recommendations on how we

could improve the overall programme," said Linsey.

GradWeb has continued to work in partnership with Network Rail over the past few recruitment seasons and has increased its involvement in managing the process up to the assessment centres.



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Linsey Perry, Head of Graduate Recruitment, Network Rail & Vice Chair of the AGR

Network Rail results and feedback

The two companies have formed a very good relationship over time, working closely to identify areas of improvement and ways in which the process can be streamlined. For the 2003/2004 campaign, GradWeb introduced an online interview booking system which has simplified this potentially complicated and time consuming element. Now, candidates can book themselves in for interviews and assessment centres online in a matter of seconds, picking a time and location to suit them perfectly.

A new development for the 2005/2006 season was the introduction of SMS text messaging as a means of communicating with candidates. Linsey commented: "We have found text messaging to be particularly effective when

encouraging candidates to complete their saved application form and submit it prior to the closing date. The technology is amazing – in the click of a button I can send thousands of text messages and the reaction from candidates is immediate, prompting many of them to log back into the system and complete their application online."

The success of the programme can be measured by the number of applicants which is continuing to grow every year - over 1700 applications were received in 2006. From the 280 candidates who attended an assessment centre, 115 were offered positions.

Customer's Conclusion
"GradWeb understands our business and through their 'can do' attitude have become an extension of my own team."

They have taken on the hallmark of our recruitment process, whilst advising on how to tailor and improve the process as we move through the stages."

"The access to real time information has made a huge difference; I am able to track progress along the way. Outsourcing the response handling has made my life so much easier."

