



## WELCOME

Welcome to the third issue of Grad/Focus, the GradWeb newsletter designed to keep you up to date with all our company news and relevant industry developments. In this edition, we have introduced a new Industry Focus section and GradWeb is delighted that Carl Gilleard, Chief Executive of the AGR, kindly agreed to participate. For those of our readers who are not members, we hope that you will be interested to learn of the activities currently being undertaken by the AGR and the benefits of joining.

Many of you will now be reviewing your recruitment processes and planning for your 2005 intake. To find out more about how we can help, don't hesitate to give us a call or drop by our stand at the 2004 AGR Annual Conference.

We hope you enjoy Grad/Focus and look forward to your comments and feedback



Katrina Rostrup,  
Jonathan Butler &  
Julie Pratt

## Industry Focus: Carl Gilleard

*Carl Gilleard, Chief Executive, Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) spoke to Grad/Focus in June as he returned from the National Association of College and Employers (NACE) conference in Orlando, USA, where he was discussing global trends in recruitment with colleagues from around the world*

In June Carl celebrates his sixth year as Chief Executive of the AGR – a role he describes as “delivering what the members want.”

Carl Gilleard was appointed Chief Executive of the AGR in June 1998 following nine years as Executive Director of METRA Services Ltd, a national human resource agency charged with, among other things, improving the recruitment and retention of graduates into local government. He was also part-time director of the West Midlands Employers' Organisation.

During his six years at the helm of an organisation he describes as “the voice of the industry” Carl has seen many changes. “It is an ever changing market,” he explained. “No two months, let alone years are the same.”

One current challenge is the government's expanding focus on Higher Education and the question of who will pay for university fees. “This is becoming a political issue,” said Carl. “Graduates want to see the return a degree will offer them and this must be addressed by the industry.”

Carl believes the AGR has managed to hold onto its 600 members because of the organisation's ability to respond to such changes in the market and constantly review what it has to offer. Carl explained: “Two years ago the AGR carried out a detailed review of its offerings and as a result has introduced a number of new initiatives. Firstly it was decided that the 14 board directors, who come from both the industry and suppliers to the industry, needed to be more involved in the direction of the organisation.”

The first step was to set up a number of task groups, each led by a director, to look at various aspects of the AGR's work including membership and research services as well as the Education, Training and Development Task Group, which Carl co-ordinates. The eight members of the task group come from all aspects of the recruitment industry and are tasked with looking at ways they can better support the graduate recruiter in today's environment. “We want to ensure that recruiters are better informed and aware of best practices in their industry. The plan is to develop a competency framework which will be the first time this has ever been addressed.”

## agr

The collective voice  
of graduate recruiters

This ground breaking step is vital, said Carl. “HR Directors and MD's of companies are asking what should they look for when hiring a graduate recruiter and we need to advise on the core competencies required for such a role.”

“We plan to develop a range of training to help the graduate recruiter in their job, provide them with a qualification and structure to their career. This in turn will help raise their profile within their own organisations and ultimately reduce the level of churn in the profession,” he explained.

Another new initiative introduced



last year was AGR Live Master Class – a series of seminars aimed at sharing best practices in the industry. Over 70 delegates attended each of the half day sessions which included real life case studies from organisations such as Unilever and BUPA.

So where is the graduate recruitment industry going next? “There are numerous topics such as diversity, the increase in the number of applications and how recruiters can identify the best candidates for their organisations as well as the issue of measurement,” he said.

There is also an increased pressure from the board to have recruiters justify the Return on Investment (ROI) from graduate programmes and the AGR wants to help AGR members feel more confident in putting their case forward, Carl concluded. •

The 2004 AGR Annual Conference - Where's it going? Takes place at the Celtic Manor, Newport, South Wales, on July 12, 13. To find out more and be part of the debate, visit [www.agr.org.uk](http://www.agr.org.uk)

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# GRADWEB

GRAD/RECRUITMENT COVERED

# AGR Task Group



**Katrina Rostrup, Director, GradWeb is a member of the AGR Education, Training and Development Task Group that Carl Gilleard co-ordinates.**

## New Recruit

Tom Hanson (pictured) has joined GradWeb as a Sales Development Executive. Based in the Newbury office, Tom is responsible for generating new business for GradWeb as part of the company's expansion plans.

A graduate in Business Studies from Plymouth University, Tom previously worked for a leading document solutions company, Kyocera Mita UK, where he was a member of the account management team. He was promoted shortly after joining to manage the company's bid and tender responses.

Said Tom: "I am looking forward to helping grow the business and increasing the brand awareness of GradWeb to graduate employers. It is an interesting market in which to operate and GradWeb has a fantastic track record with it's clients. We now need to build on this with potential customers."



# Bespoke vs Off-the-shelf



## Candidate Management Systems

*Choosing between an off-the-shelf and bespoke graduate recruitment software package can be a tough decision.*

GradWeb Director Jonathan Butler, who heads up the company's technical division, looks at the pros and cons of both options and provides some practical advice on how to decide what is right for you.

Said Jonathan: "Historically, with the growth in the use of the Internet in the recruitment process, clients were keen to use online candidate application systems so they could track applications and automate some of these basic time consuming processes.

"Since then, a combination of the increasing demands from clients and the evolution of technology has resulted in systems

being developed that today can replace much more than just online application management," he said.

Choosing a system to suit your organisation, needs much consideration, he advised. Generally an off the shelf software package is built around a core set of processes which means that often you will have to fit your own processes to the package.

An off-the-shelf solution should provide you with fast implementation at a reasonable cost, ideally suited to short one-off campaigns or organisations with simple straight forward processes that do not require a high level of functionality.

Organisations that require a more sophisticated approach would benefit from a customised solution which can be tailored to their needs. Firstly the supplier should have much experience in recruiting graduates and understand the

process thoroughly. Secondly they need a team of technical experts who can incorporate all of your requirements into the system from day one.

"Graduate recruiters have previously been put off bespoke systems as initially they were quite expensive, but prices have come tumbling down over the past few years and adopting a modular approach brings the best of both worlds – best practices inherently built into the system already - but fully flexible

which clearly stipulates timescales and also ensures that all ongoing changes are included in the price, as well as staff training and support.

"At the end of the day, the technology should simply deliver a service; software is the enabler," concluded Jonathan

GradWeb has developed a number of modules which can be customised to automate interview and

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to suit individual company requirements.

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*Don't be restrained by off-the-shelf packages – build a system for your process, not a process for your system.*

Another fear of clients, explained Jonathan was how long a customised solution would take to get up and running.

"I would encourage graduate recruiters to develop a Service Level Agreement between themselves and their supplier,

assessment centre booking, including allowing the candidates to select preferred meeting times, and interrogative functionality that allows searches to be carried out showing key data in summary formats.

Communication with the candidate can be streamlined too; the system can generate correspondence with a candidate via email, post or SMS, either on an ad hoc basis or en masse.

The tracking module provides graduate recruiters with the capability to monitor candidates' applications through the key stages of the recruitment process and as access to management information is so vital to the success of any campaign, GradWeb has built a range of reporting options into the solution which provide a 'real time' view on progress.

For more information about how GradWeb can help build your graduate recruitment systems please contact Tom Hanson on 01635 584130 •

# Recruiting Through a Recession

*Some industry sectors have certainly been hit harder than others over the past few years, with IT probably suffering the most, as many customers cut their IT budgets in line with their own declining sales revenues.*

BT Syntegra, the experts in business transformation and change management whose key role is supporting British Telecom's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has weathered the storm well and in the financial year ending March 2004 BT Syntegra reported revenues were £721 million.

Throughout such challenging times, the company has remained committed to its graduate recruitment programme, and is the only IT company that has consistently recruited through the recession, explained Jo Stamp, Graduate Recruitment Manager at BT Syntegra.

Jo (pictured) joined the company in November 2003, after spending six years with National Australia Bank where in her last role she was responsible for launching a graduate recruitment campaign across the Group.

BT Syntegra has run a graduate recruitment programme for the last 14 years. On joining, Jo's first task was to streamline the existing recruitment process to ensure a speedy and seamless experience for applicants, and reduce the amount of administration in-house.

"Competition is fierce for high calibre candidates and therefore we needed to make the process as easy as possible for the applicants, so as not to lose them at the outset."

Working in a busy core recruitment team, Jo knew that to succeed she would have to outsource key elements of the process to meet the requirements of the business.

Said Jo: "Our graduate programme actually consists of two distinct streams. One focuses squarely on

the technology we use. And to join this, a technical degree is essential. The other concentrates more on the business functions. So to join this stream, while a graduate needs to be interested in technology, they don't necessarily need a technical degree."

"Though quite different, our business and technology streams share some things in common. Both start in the autumn and take two years to complete. Both offer the chance to work with big-name customers on a wide range of high-profile projects. Graduates are based out of one of our sites in Fleet, Leeds or Newcastle however, all graduates must be mobile as some projects may require work completed on customer sites."

For the 2004/2005 programme, some 20 business and 20 technology graduates are being recruited.

*"GradWeb's remit was to work in partnership with us throughout the whole process,"* said Jo.

So GradWeb worked closely with BT Syntegra to develop and implement the solutions. The online system was quickly adapted to meet the needs of the changes to the recruitment process, providing the tools necessary to everyone involved in delivering the programme. GradWeb has also taken on much more candidate management responsibility by arranging, coordinating and managing all of the candidates for the first round interview and final assessment centre phases. This has greatly reduced the amount of in-house administration allowing Jo and her team of recruiters to concentrate fully on the selection of candidates.



Some 1700 applications have been received so far and 17 offers have been made. So BT Syntegra is on track for another successful year of graduate recruitment

Concluded Jo: *"GradWeb is not only very client focused but we have had very positive feedback from the applicants."*



*Jo Stamp, Graduate Recruitment Manager at BT Syntegra*

*GradWeb has been working with BT Syntegra since 2001 providing an online application and candidate management system for both the technology and business streams of the graduate programme. This has been supported by the provision of front-end response handling, dealing with candidate enquiries and handling the correspondence to candidates in the early stages of the recruitment process.*

## Business Stream

*The business stream aims to ensure each graduate has a good understanding of how the business is run through working on a rich variety of projects and gain exposure to many aspects of the work including*

- Sales / Business development
- Business analysis
- Marketing
- Finance
- Commercial management

## Technology Stream

*For the technology stream candidates need practical experience or a demonstrable interest in at least one of the key project areas identified for the 2004/2005 programme.*

- Security
- Java / Microsoft
- Networks / Systems platforms
- GIS
- CRM
- Databases

*As with the business stream, the emphasis is on self managed learning. Graduates get heavily involved on the practical side of things, with programming, coding and systems design. Once graduates complete the programme they can then decide whether to forge a career around the practical aspects of the work or diversify into more strategic consultancy and project management.*

## About BT Syntegra

**BT Syntegra helps organisations transform the way that they operate by applying business knowledge and technology to make possible new and better ways of working.**

**Its primary activity is the provision of consultancy and systems integration services including business consultancy, complex programme management and custom systems design, development and operation.**

# A Testing Time for Graduates

*At GradWeb we frequently advise organisations on graduate selection process design and many projects we manage involve the use of ability tests and personality profiling.*

Most of these tests are now available for candidates to complete online and are being used increasingly by recruiters as a means of identifying the strongest graduates. It is a fast and objective method of reducing the candidate pool to a more manageable number to progress to interview.

The key to using online testing in the recruitment process is that your tools and technology help identify candidate quality, rather than manage quantity. If not properly planned and managed, online testing can screen out large numbers of candidates who could offer much to an organisation.

If you are thinking about introducing online testing into your selection process, our associate Occupational Psychologist, Emma Greggains has drawn up this checklist of things you may wish to consider:

**1** *If your selection process does not currently include testing, ask yourself why you are introducing this into the online process now. If it is not necessary for successful graduates in your organisation to demonstrate high*

*levels of numeracy for example, is it appropriate to use numerical testing as a filter?*

**2** *If you do decide to use online ability testing as a stand alone stage in your selection process what will your cut off score be? Is there evidence that candidates who failed to achieve a certain percentile score in an ability test will not perform well in your organisation?*

**3** *Ability tests are timed exercises and when they are completed remotely rather than under controlled conditions there is always a risk that the test may not be completed by the actual candidate. How would you propose to manage this as part of your recruitment campaign? One answer is to retest candidates at a later stage in the selection process.*

**4** *On-line testing can be extremely effective when used as part of a global graduate recruitment programme. If this is a consideration for you, select tests that have the capacity to reflect cultural differences; eg through the use of appropriate*

*norm groups. Are the candidates coming through the selection process of a consistent standard internationally?*

**5** *How will the candidate feel as part of the on-line selection process. What facility for feedback have you put in place? Rather than an email simply saying a candidate has passed or failed, it is equally as important for a graduate to know why they have progressed to the next stage, as it is if they failed.*

Overall many companies seem to have realised the benefits of online testing as part of the application process, as a recent survey by The Association of International Recruiters showed. Some 51% of companies surveyed were in favour of online testing.

Our conclusion is that there is certainly a place for online testing in graduate recruiting, the big test is knowing when and how to use it, to ensure you get the right candidates for your organisation. •



Emma Greggains,  
Occupational Psychologist

## www.gradweb.co.uk

GradWeb has revamped its website, with a new funky, fresh feel. Visitors to the site can easily locate information on the company, services, and the team plus there is a new section dedicated to customer testimonials and case studies.

*"We wanted to showcase our customers' success,"* said Tom Hanson, who was responsible for the overhaul. *"And ensure that the GradWeb corporate look and feel followed through all our communication."*

Feedback from customers has been very positive so far, explained Tom. Take a look yourself, visit: [www.gradweb.co.uk](http://www.gradweb.co.uk)



*If you have any comments, questions or feel you have something to contribute to our newsletter, we will be delighted to hear from you*

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