



amberjack

Attraction Insights 2023

Introduction



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In the last 15 years, perhaps the greatest instigator of change in Early Careers Attraction has been the global Covid-19 pandemic. Large numbers of employers withdrew their Early Careers programmes, we saw student application volumes for those remaining schemes increase substantially, but with it came an increased number of declined and reneged offers as the mood of students changed too.

Consequently in 2021/22, our Insights Research showed Attraction as a top two concern for employers - this year it is only joint 7th. So, what's changed post-pandemic?

Attraction has moved into a new era. Students are challenging employers for more insight into their company ethos and early talent EVP's, demanding greater transparency and an increasing desire, and expectation, to be supported by employers with opportunities to network and upskill before, during, and after application.

With student expectations higher than they've ever been, what should employers be doing to seek out the best candidates and truly engage students 'on their turf'?

Step up our game when it comes to student recruitment events; provide more in-depth insight not typically available through a student's own research, and deliver it in different formats, at different times and in different places.

Follow the data to guide your selection of recruitment channels. There is a fine line between being an early adopter and throwing the old out to welcome the new. TikTok and Snapchat aren't engaging students on their recruitment journey as much as LinkedIn.

Make sure you're **listening to student wants and needs**, as there is increasing evidence that students are demanding flexible working conditions and feel they need greater upskilling and networking to be competitive in the application process.

Widening participation in early-careers schemes is still a challenge for many – striking a balance to demonstrate where you are as an organisation now and where you want to be is key. Be transparent to garner the respect and recognition of today's students.

And what's next? As the debate rages on about AI in recruitment, lots of airtime has already been given to discussing the risks of students using AI in their application process, but we should take a minute to understand how employers might use it to their benefit in other areas, like Attraction.

How can we elevate our Attraction campaigns, leveraging AI, and matching the curiosity of this generation? The creative and content benefits of AI are plentiful, and surely an opportunity for improved efficiency? By the time you're reading this, we're sure the dial on AI will have moved again, and much much more is possible!

Let's embrace the challenge of keeping up with the digitally native Gen Z we are all seeking to recruit, let us drive change - let's not leave market altering conditions for Attraction to another external force like a global pandemic.

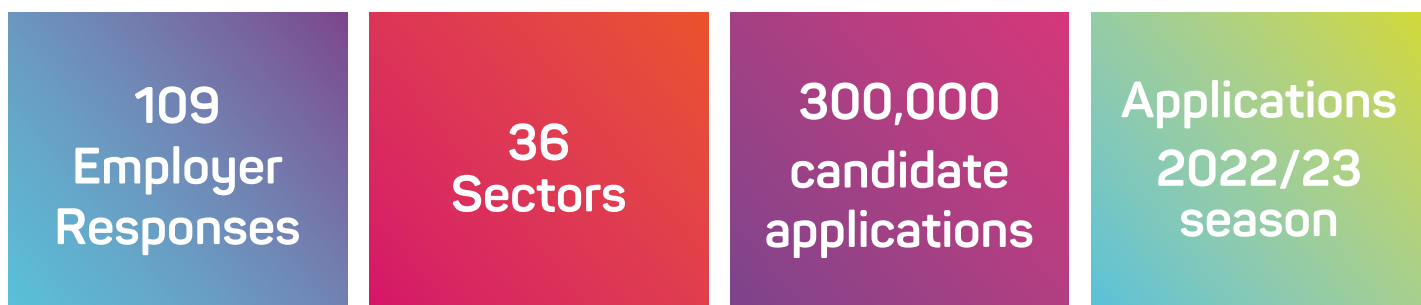
Welcome to our Insights Reports for 2023!

For the last 12 years, we have been running our Annual Insights Research Reports to provide the Early Talent industry with insights into employer considerations and candidate behaviour. This year's reports have been split into three main categories to help organisations plan the 2023/24 recruitment season more strategically.

- Attraction Insights
- Diversity and Inclusion Insights
- Assessment and Candidate Experience Insights

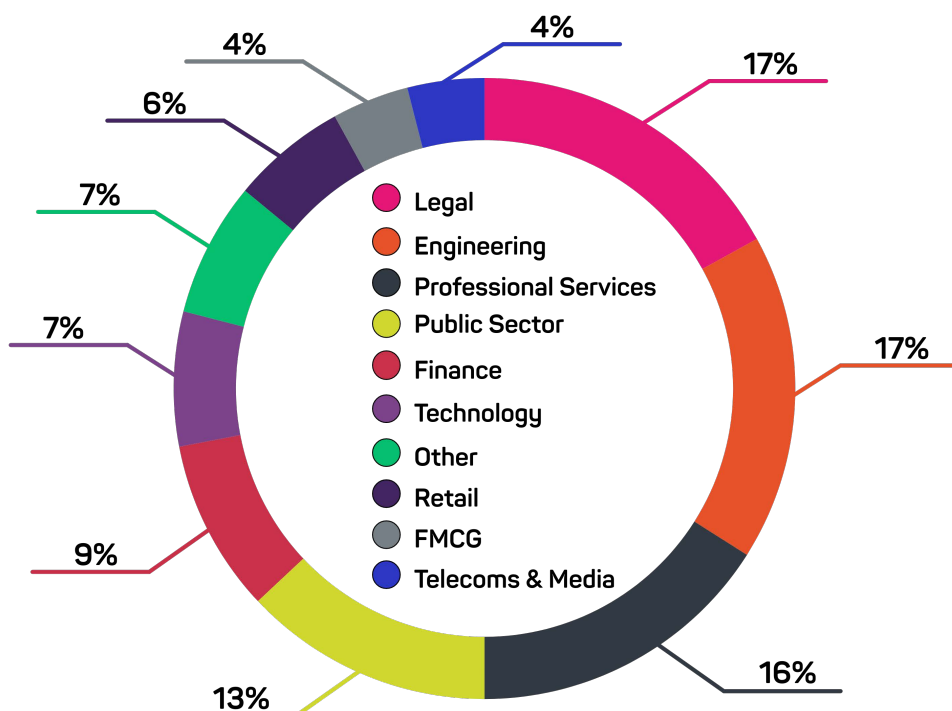
Data Overview

The 2023 reports are curated using data from the 2022/23 recruitment season, with 109 Employer Survey responses, across 36 sectors, and over 300,000 candidate applications.



The data has been collated from Graduate and Apprentice populations to provide a sweeping look at the Early Careers market and the differences between the subsets. Where these differences are significant, the data points have been separated to show each individually.

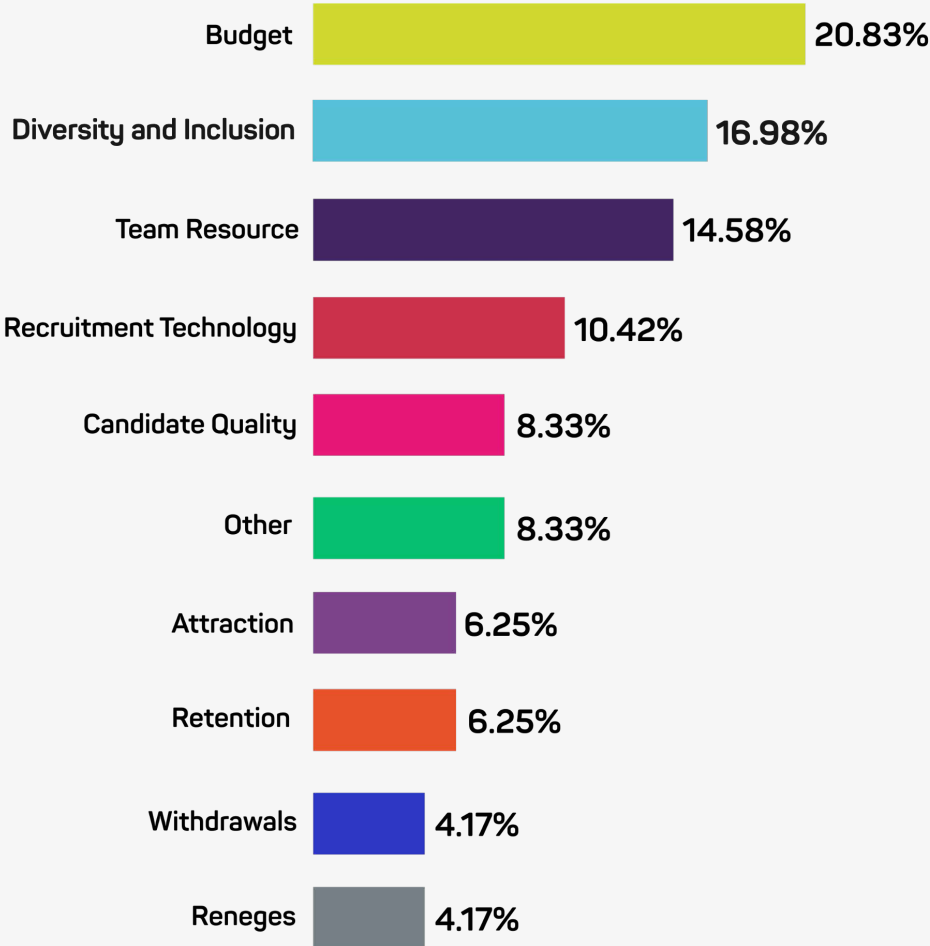
Our 109 employer responses came from these sectors:



Section 1: Recruitment Challenges

Each year, Amberjack looks at key recruitment challenges to not only help us understand the state of the market at large, but also to support organisations to find effective and innovative solutions.

What are your key recruitment challenges?



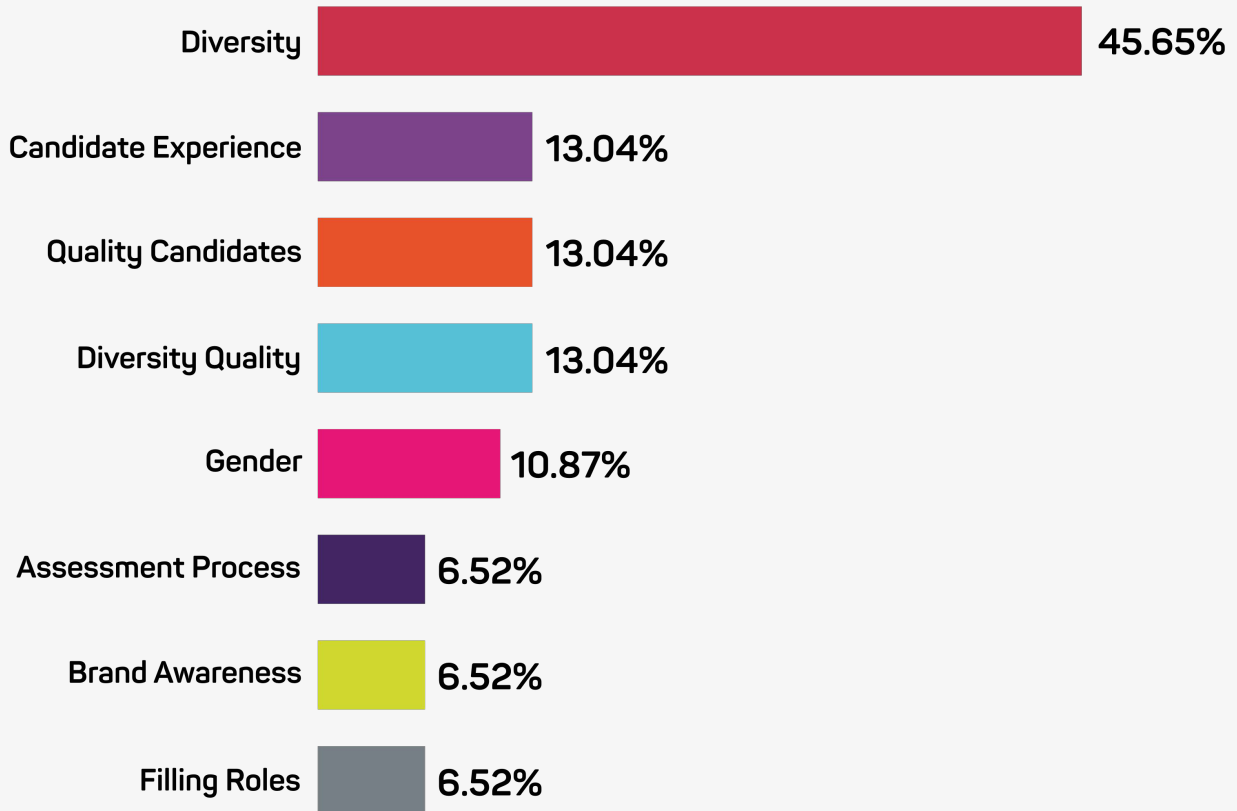
There have been some significant changes in the perceived challenges by employers this year. Perhaps unsurprisingly with the current Cost-of-Living Crisis, Budget has moved into the top spot and Team Resource has entered the top five.

With recent discussions in the industry focusing on ChatGPT, Artificial Intelligence, and anti-cheating, it's also not surprising to see that Recruitment Technology has ranked as the 4th biggest concern for employers right now.

As always, Diversity and Inclusion remains a challenge for employers looking to improve the diversity of their workforce with incoming Early Talent. Attracting this talent, and then making sure they make it through the Assessment process is still pulling a lot of effort and attention.

With an eye on the future, Amberjack also asked Employer Survey participants what their top three priorities for the rest of 2023 were.

What are your top priorities for 2023?



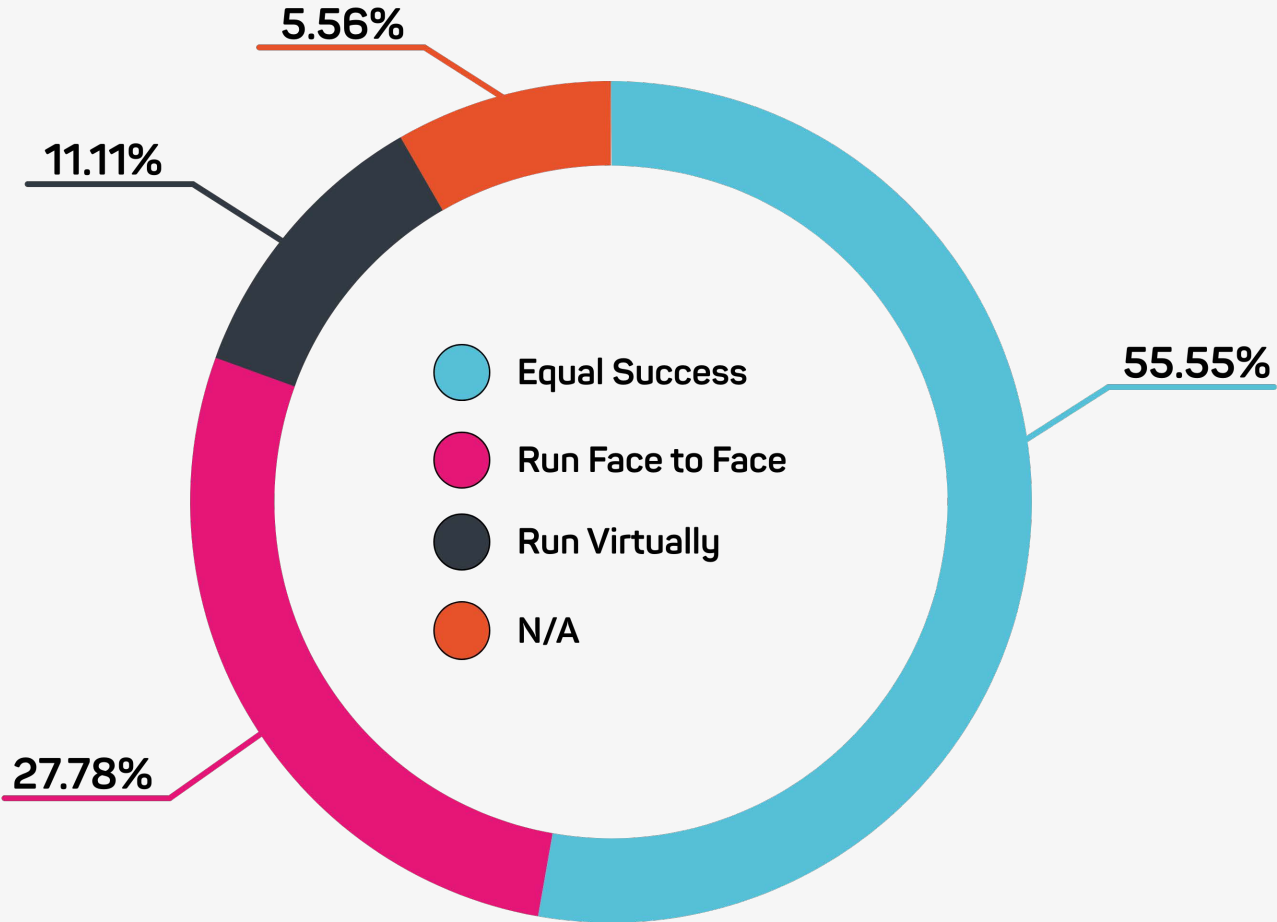
In line with the perceived challenges by employers, Diversity is reported as their number one priority, with 46% of employers considering it a key focus. In addition, with Diversity Quality and Gender also appearing in the top eight priorities for 2023, it is clear to see that this recurring topic is here for the foreseeable future.

As always, Candidate Experience and the Quality of Candidates are also key priorities, foreseeable given the fierce competition for the best candidates.

Section 2: Employer Attraction Challenges

As we move further away from the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are a number of challenges within Attraction which have come to the forefront of our research and the Early Careers market in general. Namely, the debate between face-to-face vs. virtual activity, struggles with student engagement, and the use of AI by both employers and candidates. We were keen to understand how these prominent issues, as well as other employer concerns, are currently impacting the market.

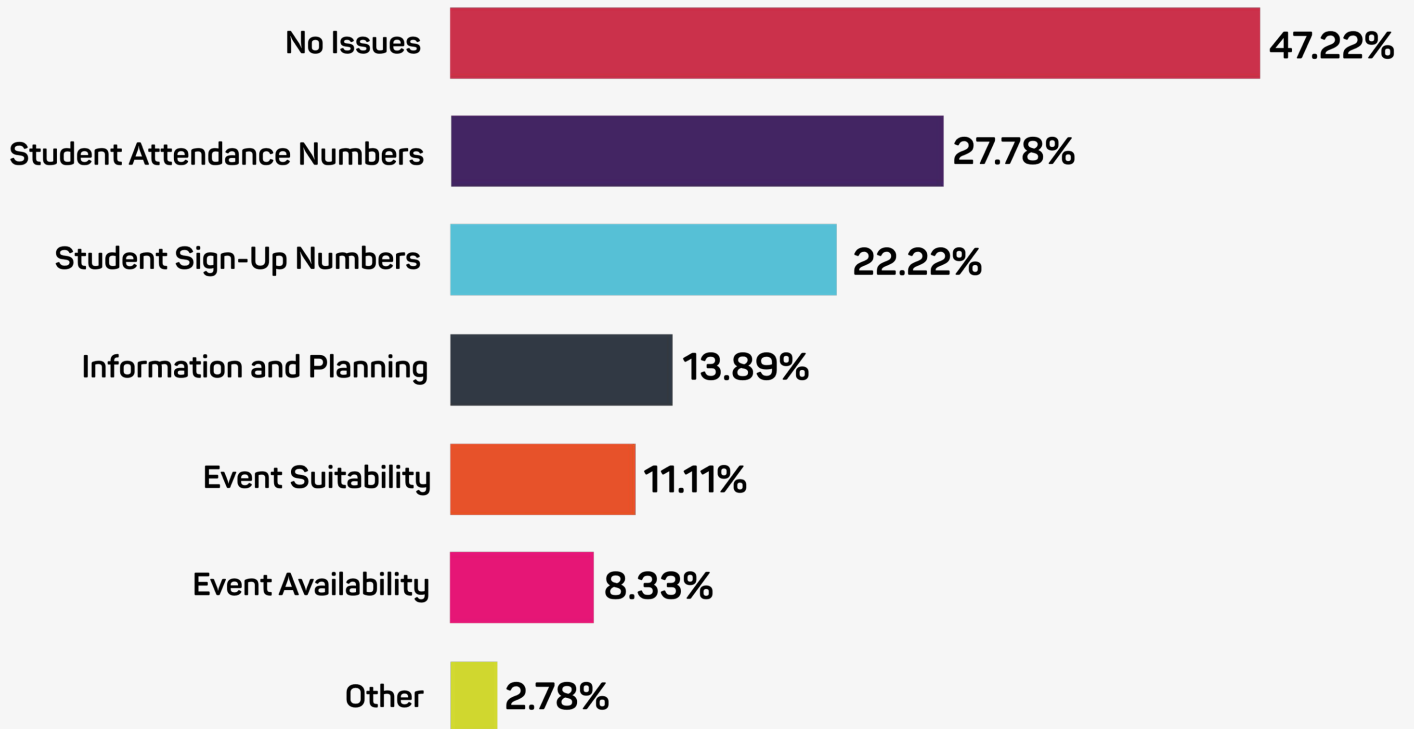
If you attended or ran events for Early Careers candidates this year, which method of hosting the events worked best?



As part of this year's Employer Survey, we asked about the differences between face-to-face and virtual events. While 56% of employers reported equal success between the two, 28% of employers experienced more success with face-to-face events, aligning with the general trend back towards in-person activity. This is significant, as just last year (2021/22 season), 67% of surveyed employers reported that they intended to continue with a hybrid approach to events.

We also asked about the most prominent challenges our employer respondents experienced when planning their events for the latest recruitment season.

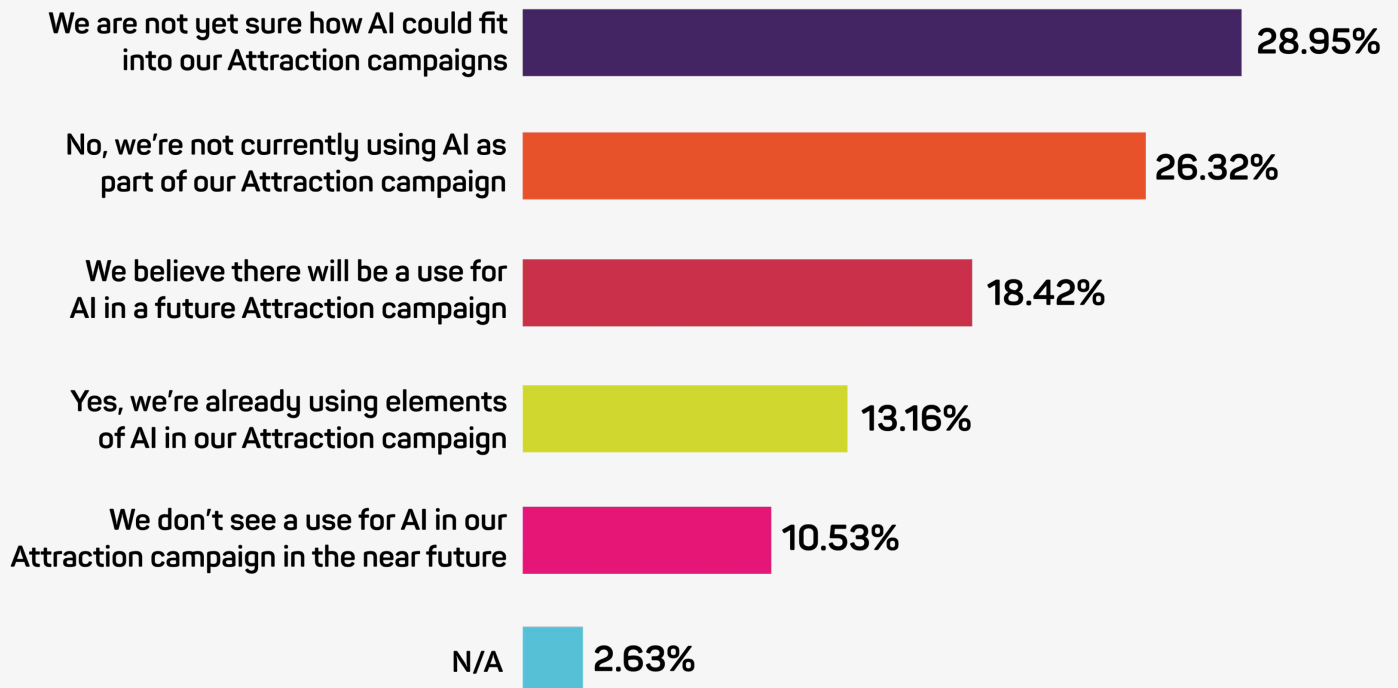
What challenges did you experience when planning your event schedule?



When considering new challenges facing the Early Talent recruitment industry, Artificial Intelligence is a topic of much contention and rapid development. We asked employers about the place of AI in their Attraction campaigns, and whether or not they saw a place for it moving forward.



As a Future Careers Team, have you considered where AI fits (or could fit) into your Attraction campaigns?



Face-to-face activity is seeing a resurgence, with many employers reporting equal or more success with in-person activity. Using this to plan upcoming Attraction campaigns strategically is key, but it is also important to remember virtual activity and direct attention that way, especially when considering disabled and/or low socioeconomic students who might not be able to travel onto campus or attend physical events in person.

AI doesn't have to be an entirely negative presence in the Early Talent space. 32% of employers are already using AI or believe there will be a use for it in future Attraction campaigns.

Student sign-up and attendance are some of the biggest challenges facing employer Attraction campaigns right now. Careful consideration of the value your events offer is needed. What insight does your event provide that can't be found online or on your company website?



Section 3:

Candidate Attraction - The Data

In a similar vein to last year, we have seen that employers are still finding it difficult to attract the right talent for their workforce. From March to May 2023, the UK Government reported that the number of unemployed people per vacancy was at 1.3, up from 1.1 during the previous quarter. Despite the small increase, this ratio is low by historical standards, and indicates the tight conditions in the labour market. Under these conditions, employers are forced to engage in the battle for talent in an increasingly competitive environment.

Media Sources

With employers keen to make the most of their budget, what tactics are having the most impact? What trends are we seeing? And where should employers focus their resources?

Applications by Media Source

Source Type	Offer %	
Public Sector	15.2%	51
Recruiter	12.1%	40
Charity or Social Enterprise	10.3%	235
Internet Search	9.6%	1,050
Job Guide	8.2%	12
Word of Mouth	8.1%	631
Company	6.5%	2,412
Other	6.2%	445
Education	6.0%	656
Social Media	6.0%	215
Events	5.8%	382
Job Board	3.7%	1,512
N/A	7.0%	2,621

Average

Table 1:
Applications by Media Source for Graduates and Apprentices

Media Source data should always be taken with a pinch of salt. This data is often self-reported and relies on candidates providing accurate source information, but it can be useful to provide an indication of where employers could be utilising budgets and where they can expect to see the best conversion rates.

Top 20 Graduate Media Sources

Media Source	Apps	% of Apps	Offers	% of Offers	Conversion %
Company Website	33411	21.53	1998	21.29	6
Bright Network	13398	8.63	520	5.54	4
Gradcracker	11118	7.17	318	3.39	3
Internet Search	10141	6.54	988	10.53	10
University	9824	6.33	574	6.12	6
Job Board (various)	7361	4.74	346	3.69	5
Word of Mouth	7040	4.54	377	4.02	5
Other	6595	4.25	399	4.25	6
Events	3891	2.51	244	2.60	6
LinkedIn	3153	2.03	44	0.47	1
Social Media (various)	2804	1.81	150	1.60	5
Indeed	1501	0.97	110	1.17	7
TARGETjobs	1499	0.97	34	0.36	2
Careers Fair	1257	0.81	45	0.48	4
Personal Connection	1204	0.78	98	1.04	8
School	863	0.56	71	0.76	8
Charity or Social Enterprise	652	0.42	85	0.91	13
Employability Workshop	579	0.37	18	0.19	3
Partnership Events	524	0.34	44	0.47	8
RateMyPlacement	512	0.33	10	0.11	2
N/A	32532	20.97	2351	25.05	7

Table 2:
Applications and Offers by Media Source for Graduates

Top 20 Apprentice Media Sources

Media Source	Apps	% of Apps	Offers	% of Offers	Conversion %
Indeed	15133	26.46	141	20.83	0.93
Google	5094	8.91	59	8.71	1.16
Company Website	2975	5.20	65	9.60	2.18
Apprenticeships.gov.uk	2586	4.52	18	2.66	0.70
Family Recommendation	2395	4.19	37	5.47	1.54
Other	1609	2.81	22	3.25	1.37
Careermap	899	1.57	1	0.15	0.11
Company	898	1.57	71	10.49	7.91
Word of Mouth	801	1.40	24	3.55	3.00
UCAS	656	1.15	9	1.33	1.37
Family/Friend Referral	601	1.05	6	0.89	1.00
Friend/Family Employee	513	0.90	11	1.62	2.14
Social Media	487	0.85	10	1.48	2.05
Uni Careers Fair	398	0.70	2	0.30	0.50
Amazing Apprenticeships	323	0.56	1	0.15	0.31
Job Centre	205	0.36	1	0.15	0.49
Advertising in Train Station	205	0.36	0	0.00	0.00
Rate My Placement	174	0.30	1	0.15	0.57
Education - School	170	0.30	2	0.30	1.18
NULL, Blank or N/A	19816	34.65	166	24.52	0.84

Table 3:
Applications and Offers by Media Source for Apprentices

When comparing the Graduate and Apprentice populations as individual subsets, the differences become more obvious.

Firstly, there are additional sources which make an appearance in the top 20 sources of candidates for Apprentices. This includes the National Apprenticeship Service, the influence of Family and Friends, Amazing Apprenticeships, Job Centres, and Schools Advisors. Generally, these highlight the importance of guidance and support for Apprentices when deciding their career path and reiterates a trend that the industry has been seeing for years: Apprentices are more strongly influenced by the people around them, and this should be a key consideration for your Apprentice Attraction Strategy.

For Apprentices, further noteworthy data points include the increase in Job Board applications. Last year, job boards contributed to 3.3% of Apprentice applications. With such a significant increase, it's clear that employers should not be using job boards purely for Graduates, but also for Apprentices.

It's also interesting to note that 'Word of Mouth' saw an increase in the overall percentage of applications for the Graduate population and is perhaps indicative of the growing trend of university students wanting more insider information. In our recent Student Engagement webinar with a panel of expert guests, our university and student representatives highlighted that students are keen to speak to employees from within your organization (particularly Alumni), talk to people like themselves, and see case studies. The students that make up your upcoming Graduate population want a closer look inside your organisation and an accurate picture of your culture, all information they are unlikely to be able to find online, and this is a potential motivator for the increase in Word-of-Mouth applications.

University Rankings: Applications and Offers

Year on year, Amberjack completes an analysis of which universities are performing well for application numbers and offers.

This year, we have examined the top 30 universities for application and offers. Generally, this data tends to trigger discussion, but the factors influencing the performance of universities is complex, and it is difficult to pinpoint individual reasons for the standings.

That being said, our analysis shows that Russell Group universities overwhelm the top positions, holding 23 of the 30 highest ranking places. This appears to be a continuation of trends which have been in play for a couple of years and is generally disappointing to see. Across all candidate applications measured this year, 24% of applications and 67% of offers were from Russell Group universities. Candidates who graduated from a Russell Group university were 2.52x more likely to get an offer than those who did not.

Another story to note, which has continued to be seen over the last few years, is the disappearance of EU universities from the top positions. These have not reentered the top positions this year and seems to be a prolonged effect of Brexit.

University	Offer count	Offer conversion %	Offer proportion %	Applications	Application proportion %	Russell Group?
University of Oxford	212	16.0	0.1	1328	0.9	Yes
London School of Economics and Political Science	399	13.6	0.3	2931	1.9	Yes
University of Cambridge	217	13.5	0.1	1605	1.1	Yes
University of Warwick	637	11.1	0.4	5737	3.8	Yes
Durham University	399	10.6	0.3	3768	2.5	Yes
University of Edinburgh	218	9.4	0.1	2317	1.5	Yes
University of Bristol	342	9.2	0.2	3707	2.5	Yes
University College London	455	9.1	0.3	4984	3.3	Yes
University of Bath	227	8.9	0.2	2550	1.7	No
Imperial College London	222	8.5	0.2	2607	1.7	Yes
University of York	119	8.2	0.1	1457	1.0	Yes
University of Birmingham	304	8.1	0.2	3756	2.5	Yes
University of Leeds	322	7.9	0.2	4068	2.7	Yes
University of Sheffield	168	7.4	0.1	2257	1.5	Yes
University of Nottingham	306	7.4	0.2	4118	2.7	Yes
King's College London	252	7.4	0.2	3401	2.3	Yes
University of Exeter	234	7.2	0.2	3239	2.2	Yes
University of Manchester	366	7.2	0.2	5076	3.4	Yes
University of Glasgow	132	7.0	0.1	1894	1.3	Yes
Newcastle University	130	6.8	0.1	1921	1.3	Yes
Loughborough University	167	6.6	0.1	2548	1.7	No
Lancaster University	82	6.3	0.1	1312	0.9	No
University of Southampton	112	6.1	0.1	1835	1.2	Yes
Cardiff University	104	5.8	0.1	1806	1.2	Yes
University of Strathclyde	76	5.2	0.1	1470	1.0	No
University of Liverpool	106	4.9	0.1	2159	1.4	Yes
Queen Mary University of London	137	4.7	0.1	2948	2.0	Yes
University of Reading	54	4.5	0.0	1195	0.8	No
Royal Holloway	43	4.3	0.0	1004	0.7	No
University of Surrey	57	4.2	0.0	1346	0.9	No

Table 4: University Rankings - Applications and Offers



Considerations for Employers



We hope that this year's research has provided interesting insights into the Early Careers market and helps you plan more effectively ahead of the next recruitment season. Here are our top tips and considerations for your team as Attraction campaigns for 2023/24 are finalised:

- Listen to the wants and needs of students and other Early Careers candidates when planning and running your campaigns. For virtual and online activities, as well as in-person events, they want employers to be authentic, open, and transparent. Sometimes this can mean admitting to your faults and struggles, particularly in regard to your company's current state of ED&I and emphasising your goals (and how your organisation plans to achieve them) instead.
- Strike a balance between your in-person and online events. Face-to-face activity has seen a dramatic return (although students want more value from the sessions than before), in comparison to online events which have faced difficulties. However, the situation isn't simple, this doesn't mean you should get rid of your online activity altogether. These events still have their purposes, especially for specific populations of students – it's all about striking a balance and ensuring all your events offer value to increase engagement.

Attraction remains a significant challenge for the Early Talent industry. With the last few years exhibiting one upheaval after another, rapid changes by Attraction teams have been required in order to keep up.

Discover more information on Amberjack's products and services, including our Attraction offerings, or request a chat with a member of our team, by getting in contact, today.

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