

Social Mobility: Key Takeaways

Introduction

In September 2022, Amberjack hosted a virtual Social Mobility Workshop, in partnership with the ISE, to help employers gain insight into barriers to Social Mobility and discuss solutions.

The Social Mobility Workshop featured a panel of guests who shared their expertise with attendees.

- **Jasmine Barrett;** Marketing Executive; Amberjack
- **Tonia Galati;** Founder and Owner; TG Consulting
- **Ben Triggs;** International Expansion Director; Bright Network
- **Jamie Wharf;** Senior Recruiter; Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- **Sarah Cleveley;** National Engagement Director; Speakers for Schools

Below are top tips and takeaways from each member of the panel!

Jasmine Barrett, 2020 Graduate & Marketing Executive, Amberjack

For employers looking to not only attract applications from a wider variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, but also to help them through your process, there are many things to consider, but as an individual with a low socioeconomic background myself, my top three recommendations are:

- Make it easy for potential candidates to find information about how you can help them. Candidates may deselect themselves from your process before even applying if they assume the role isn't for them. Shout about the ways you can help and the benefits of your process...
 - If you offer transport help to your offices, shout about it!
 - If you don't require certain grades, put this in your adverts!
 - If you offer hybrid / flexible working, let students know before they apply to prevent them from not considering the role in the first place!
- Offer mentoring and coaching calls. Having a place to go for advice with someone who won't judge is key to helping students who might not know where to go for answers to their questions.

From application through to onboarding, the ability to ask questions and check things over helps to settle nerves, and sets your process apart from the crowd.

- Get your communications into schools. While students might not have access to technology and social media at home, they do all have to go to school. From tutor groups, and PSHE days, to Career days, and assemblies, there are many avenues for your opportunities to be seen in school. Ask schools if you can give a talk in an assembly, provide guidance to students with low socioeconomic backgrounds, have a member of your team with first-hand experience give a presentation, or provide slides to teachers. Utilise educational institutions and their access to students.

Tonia Galati, Founder and Owner of TG Consulting

Tonia discusses her recommendations on how best to work with universities;

- Consider communicating to unis and their students, the pastoral care you have in place as an organisation to support individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Universities go to town with support to help students progress as part of their student journey. Let students know what you will provide to help them progress in their career and reassure them they will be looked after.
- Consider doing this differently – i.e. so many universities are keen to do innovative things for their students, go with the flow!
- Ensure your on campus teams, recruitment teams, and in-house teams are joined up and consistent. I.e. there is no point trying to engage with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, only for them to engage with your company's recruitment process and find that there are barriers to them getting through the door!

Ben Triggs, International Expansion Director, Bright Network

There aren't many silver bullets when trying to improve social mobility, it's about trial and error; finding what works for your company. Bright Network completed research to try and bring out the challenges and came up with tangible starting points.

An important point to note is that collecting data to identify and determine those that need help before, during, or after their application, can be difficult. Subsequently, it's key that you work out what exactly you want to measure and be consistent over the seasons. We also recommend that you measure more than one factor identifying social mobility, and establish where your company is at currently, to work out your baseline / starting point.

When looking at your recruitment process, the application stage is key to look at. Determine what exactly it is that you want from candidates and whether or not grades matter or are as important as is currently stressed.

Next, when it comes to testing, people from backgrounds with means are more likely to perform better, potentially due to greater access to materials and tutoring. To help with this, consider if there is anything that can be done or can be put in before or during the process, not to provide an

advantage to those with lower socioeconomic backgrounds, but to make sure that those who feel less confident can give their best self.

Finally, by the end of university, Bright Network data suggests that 23% of students from a non-selective state school will have completed a formal internship, vs 35% from a private school. So, if an internship is part of your requirements, you're more likely to be hiring someone from a private school.

Jamie Wharf, Senior Recruiter, Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Enterprise have always been proud to be a part of the Top 10 on the Social Mobility Index, but the Covid-19 pandemic did make us realise that there is always more to learn.

Prior to the pandemic, Enterprise used to place a lot of emphasis on face-to-face interviews, with 80% of our recruitment process taking place in person. We came to realise that this was a people and cost heavy process, especially for candidates from a lower socioeconomic background.

The face-to-face process obviously required change during the pandemic. Enterprise had to upscale and educate our recruitment team, and learned that you can find out the same information virtually as you would face-to-face. Since then, we have switched to an 80% virtual process, and moved forward with the concept of equity.

This is important as not everyone has the funds for a laptop, or has been coached on how to do a video interview and get good lighting. So, when running our process, it is okay if a student completes an interview via mobile phone or doesn't have quite the right environment. We have been hiring record numbers and so wanted to put a spotlight on the fact that we are open to hiring people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Enterprise have learned a lot from recent initiatives.

Enterprise steer away from which university people have been to, we only require a degree of some description, so it's not about whether or not the school was prestigious or Russell group. It's about upskilling our teams to recognise this, and that different candidates are confident in different places. We're not looking for a particular person, but rather that a person fits in with our values.

Sarah Cleveley, National Engagement Director, Speakers for Schools

Amberjack asked Sarah; 'what are your top tips for employers trying to engage students with lower socioeconomic backgrounds?'. She details the ways they ensure and support their placements.

- Free Placements
- Ensuring all placements can be accessed by every type of device, including a phone
- Ensure feedback is always given on a placement
- Work with schools to identify those young people who need it most
- Ensure all roles within an organisation are shared, to ensure all levels of entry are shared
- Make placements shorter with plenty of breaks
- Ensure any financial loss is paid for the young person
- Make it clear that your placement is available for everyone
- Share examples of different career journeys

Resources

To hear more from our panel and view the Social Mobility Workshop in full, you can find the recording on YouTube.

[Watch the Recording!](#)

To discuss the outputs of this session or any questions you may have with a member of our team, you can contact us via our website.

[Get in Touch!](#)