

**Sainsbury's was looking for a graduates recruitment partner that would deliver process efficiencies and cost benefits without compromising on the candidate experience.**

“Reed's experience and knowledge of the graduate market has been invaluable in helping us recruit talented candidates over the last five years. They continuously seek to go the extra mile when delivering their services and represent our brand with the highest standards”

Stephen Mulvenna,  
Graduate Recruitment Manager

## The Client

J Sainsbury plc is a leading supermarket retailer, serving 16 million customers a week and employing around 150,000 people at over 750 sites across the UK. Operating in a highly competitive market, the business has faced strong challenges in recent years and seeks talented graduates to be part of "Making Sainsbury's Great Again".

## The Requirement

Sainsbury's graduate scheme takes on 60-70 graduates per year within the following areas:

- Marketing
- Finance
- HR
- IT
- Property
- Buying
- Supply Chain
- Product development/Technology

The business has a long history of graduate recruitment and has developed a diverse and challenging scheme with a strong reputation. As a result, and because of the strong brand recognition, the company attracts a very high volume of applicants from a wide range of candidates.

The scale of the programme meant that Sainsbury's was looking for a partner that would deliver process efficiencies and cost benefits without compromising on the candidate experience.

## The Solution

### Insight

From the initial engagement, Reed has worked with Sainsbury's to truly understand and develop the critical success factors for their programme in light of a rapidly changing competitive landscape.

A detailed start-up audit at the beginning of each campaign is supported by ongoing analysis of management information gathered throughout every stage of the programme. The result is that each year, Sainsbury's and Reed create the ideal candidate profile, develop an employer brand proposition that attracts quality candidates and can cost-effectively target and manage applicants through a process to bring the required graduates into the business.

## The Impact

- 100% fulfilment rate, ensuring talent is available to "Make Sainsbury's Great Again"
- Over 7,000 applications processed for each campaign, with improved response times against previous approach
- The flexible resourcing programme is capable of effectively handling more than 400 applicants per day
- Reduced management costs by ensuring only the highest calibre of candidates attend assessment centres
- Candidate feedback exceeds 8 out of 10 score in ongoing service evaluation
- The scheme has been listed in The Times Top 100 graduate programmes
- Year on year cost savings achieved through efficiency improvements.

Each year, management information is used to interrogate the effectiveness of every attraction channel to ensure that it is optimised in light of experience in real time. This ensures that resources are focused where they achieve the greatest impact. The business now has substantial experience from previous campaigns and as the process becomes ever more effective, Sainsbury's is able to realise substantial savings in advertising spend.

### Design

Sainsbury's and Reed review the process and systems that support each year's campaign on an annual basis as part of a commitment to continuous improvement. This includes:

- Improvement, design and build of the graduate microsite on Sainsburys.co.uk
- Improvement and development of online application forms and the candidate management system
- Improvement, design and delivery of a competency-based interview approach for all roles in order to enhance the selection process.

### Delivery

Sainsbury's actively pursues a high volume attraction strategy, with the objective of selecting fewer than 1 in 100 of the total applicants. With more than 7,000 candidates moving through the process in such a short period of time, it is very cost-effective for the business to outsource the operation of the scheme.

Sainsbury's partners with Reed to deliver a flexible, efficient and cost effective recruitment programme.

Sainsbury's leverages its high visibility as a consumer business with a strong brand in attracting talent. It is therefore essential that the outsourced service delivery be consistent with those brand values and enhance the candidates perception of the business. Early and positive engagement with the Sainsbury's brand helps to ensure sustained interest and minimise drop-out.

Reed manages the logistics of the recruitment process:

### Delivery

- Provide the initial response to candidates across all channels within a stringent Service Level Agreement
- Manage candidates from initial contact, through sifting, competency interview, online psychometric testing and onto the final stage assessment centre
- Maintain ongoing communication with all candidates at all stages of the recruitment programme to deliver an enhanced candidate experience, resulting in high levels of candidate satisfaction
- Operate a candidate helpline giving personalised feedback
- Provide regular and detailed Management Information tailored to Sainsburys' specific requirements and including performance against agreed targets including volume, quality, diversity and cost.