

## **Associated British Foods – Graduates**

Associated British Foods (ABF) is an international food, ingredients and retail group, operating in 47 countries.

They first approached Cohesion in June 2015, to discuss outsourcing their Graduate Recruitment Programme.

## Our Objectives

Having previously worked with a different provider, ABF were looking for a partner who could offer a consultative approach with a personal touch.

There were 25 Graduate vacancies, over 6 Graduate schemes – Marketing, Engineering, Supply Chain, Customer Development, Procurement and Technical.

## Cohesion's Relationship with ABF

The campaign kicked off on 1st September 2015, and we received over 400 applications within the first fortnight. Given the early success of the campaign, we caught up with Holly Maiden, Graduate Talent Manager, to get her take on the implementation, the opening weeks of the campaign and working with Cohesion:

“Throughout the implementation period, the team have engaged with all of our stakeholders – including previous graduates, They've visited the sites and really got to grips with what it's like to work with us. Cohesion really do feel like an extension of our HR team.

The willingness to understand our business and our people has also meant that there are increased levels of visibility – everyone knows what's going on, and have met or heard from the team at Cohesion.

The implementation was great, and very smooth. It's been a nice experience for me because I've been so relaxed. Cohesion are in control and I'm very comfortable with that – the trust element is really important to us, it's a key part of our relationship – it's definitely there.

A social media strategy has also been developed by Cohesion, which is amazing. We always start a social media campaign with good intentions but they seem to tail off, mostly due to time constraints. Having a social media presence is really important, Cohesion are managing this for us and it's already making a huge difference this year – I think this is our biggest year yet in terms of applications.

Above all I have been very impressed with the personal approach – we're working on the same level and there's a real connection there. Cohesion probe and go under the surface, there's a real consultative approach and it's good to be questioned on what we're doing – it means we are pushing ourselves to build a very robust process.

I'm really excited about our partnership and can't wait to see the results of the campaign when it comes to meeting our shortlisted graduates in January.”

## Results

In total, we received almost 2800 applications. A large proportion of the applications were for the Customer Development and Marketing vacancies, which had proven challenging to attract for in the past.

The applications we received came from an extremely diverse talent pool – there were a variety of candidates of different genders, ethnicities and religious backgrounds.

We filled 100% of the Graduate roles – 5 were declined shortly after the offer had been made but, due to the size of the talent pool, we were able to make 5 more offers immediately. On top of the Graduate roles, 11 candidates were identified for direct roles within ABF.

We achieved 100% attendance at assessment centre – with 83% of candidates going on to be offered roles.

We also made a number of recommendations to ABF to help improve their Graduate Recruitment Process. For example, we suggested they make their website more user-friendly – which resulted in a devoted Graduate Community page being added.

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