

Interaction learning and development



In the past ten years we've had some fantastic opportunities to work with clients on their graduate programmes. As a result, we've gained considerable insight into the type of support graduates need as they make the transition from university to work. Our approach has evolved to balance the challenges facing graduates and our clients' need to accelerate the pace at which they contribute to the business.

Key challenges

The difficulties graduates face at work are:

A change in learning

Graduates need to make the transition from academic learning to learning at work. Throughout school and university, they learn in a way that is fundamentally different to how successful people develop and learn in the workplace – through experience.

Self-sufficiency

University doesn't adequately prepare graduates for the level of self-sufficiency they need at work. Often they expect to be provided with unrealistic levels of support and structure. Many organisations complain of graduates' inability to show initiative and handle ambiguity.

Interpersonal skills

In order to operate effectively at work graduates need to develop their self-awareness and ability to influence. Intellectual ability alone is not sufficient: academic intelligence needs to be balanced with emotional intelligence.

Client objectives

Clients want programmes that:

- attract quality graduates
- accelerate the pace at which graduates contribute to the business
- help graduates learn about the business
- develop interpersonal skills
- provide an opportunity to learn about managing projects and people
- ensure graduates recognise the importance of teamwork
- motivate graduates to take responsibility for their own development.

Our approach

The principles we apply in response to these issues are:

Relevance

We work closely with our clients to identify the key skills and behaviours that the programmes must cover. If organisations have competency frameworks, we can use these to form the basis for our design.

Learning from experience

Learning at work is about reflecting on real experiences. So that's how we run our programmes. We encourage graduates to take control of their learning; facilitators support them, but do not provide all the answers.

Realism

Effective graduate development demands programmes that accurately reflect what they experience in work. We use inventive methods to ensure this happens, such as business simulation, actors, community projects, mystery shopping, and interviewing senior and line management.

Challenge

We design complex and multi-faceted exercises with high stakes that reflect the realities of the workplace. This appeals to the graduates' intelligence and wins their commitment.

Team-working

We get graduates to complete tasks in teams. Through working together to meet challenging objectives, they begin to experience what working in teams is really about.

Integration

We work best in partnership with our clients to both design and deliver programmes. Our belief is that learning can only be properly implemented if the business is fully engaged.

Outcomes

Our clients tell us that as a result of our programmes, graduates:

- take responsibility for their learning and development
- increase their knowledge of the business
- improve their team working skills
- contribute more quickly to the organisation.

The professional, high-profile nature of our programmes helps clients to generate valuable internal support and attract the best graduates in the market.

There are important long term benefits too; our clients report improved retention rates.