

Filming graduate jobseekers helps FSA win recruitment award

LONDON: 9 July, 2008 The UK's financial services industry regulator, the Financial Services Authority (FSA), has been rewarded by the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) for its innovative approach to selecting graduates. The winning project, which included filming candidates using remote cameras, was for work undertaken by the FSA with its occupational psychology partner, Mendas.

The award was announced at the annual AGR conference on July 7.

The FSA runs a three year graduate development programme which includes a year in a relevant financial organisation. As a result of its reputation for thorough training in the financial services industry, its 40 graduate places are over-subscribed each year, making selection of the very best candidates key.

Mendas was appointed to work with the FSA to ensure the best candidates were identified whilst also providing them with a fair opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities and potential whilst setting high standards in best practice in recruitment.

Working with the FSA, Mendas designed and delivered an innovative campaign which also closely matched the FSA's new competency framework which was designed to appoint candidates who could be client-facing almost immediately after joining.

The recruitment process followed key stages comprising:

- A structured competency-based telephone interview designed to engage quickly with interested candidates
- An assessment centre with trained assessors and occupational psychologists combining two interactive exercises, a psychometric test and interview
- In-depth candidate feedback from a Mendas occupational psychologist

An innovative approach to a group exercise in the assessment centre was to have it viewed remotely. This meant that candidates did not have a facilitator in the room but discreet video cameras so that assessors could observe from an adjacent room.

Hannah Longden, who is responsible for graduate recruiting and marketing at the FSA, said: "We took this unusual approach because we wanted to see how candidates behaved without the distraction of an assessor. Before adopting this approach we undertook research which showed that assessors found it useful in being able to spot more behaviours and also to view the recording again at a later stage. Candidates also welcomed the videoing approach saying they behaved more naturally with cameras instead of a person."

Justin Spray, Founder of Mendas, said: "Mendas is a strong advocate of the use of filming. Far from being 'Big Brother' like, the use of cameras allows candidates to relax and therefore assessors to see their real behaviour and motivation. Candidates are always told about them but seem to forget them straight away and concentrate on the exercise in hand. It certainly added value to the FSA group exercise."

The FSA's Longden added: "Our approach was innovative and thorough whilst also ensuring speed to hire so as not to lose out on good candidates. Mendas was instrumental in helping to form our new recruitment process and ensure best practice at every stage whilst also making candidates feel like valued participants in the process and not, as it is usually the case, an identification number in an automated system."

The FSA believes the new recruitment process has been successful with dramatic reductions in time to hire, the absence of any complaints and colleagues dealing with experienced hires adopting the same methodology. It is also expecting the continual tracking of its graduates' performance to confirm that the assessment process selects the right graduates for the FSA.

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