

# CASE STUDY

# VODAFONE



## OVERCOMING A POWERFUL CONSUMER BRAND

Counterintuitive as it sounds, strong consumer brands often actively hinder recruitment. Applicants have an idea of what to expect that usually doesn't match the reality of the careers experience being offered. This was the case with Vodafone – for consumers, a high-profile mobile phone retailer. But, behind that perception sits a multifaceted tech innovator with a mission to make the future world a better place.

This organization is a very different beast to the way it seems from the outside.

For this campaign to work, Vodafone needed to become a youth employer of choice. Because changing the future needed the buy-in of those who would be influential within it for years to come.

### RESEARCH

As part of our research phase, we took a deep dive into Vodafone's future jobs strategy. This involved challenging high levels of youth unemployment by providing up to 100,000 young people with a digital workplace experience at Vodafone. Side-by-side, the business set another ambitious goal: to support 10 million young people with access to digital skills, learning and employment opportunities, given that one-in-five young people say they feel underprepared for the digital economy.

Bringing in the world-changers was a multigenerational challenge. How to attract those who are Millennial, Gen Z and beyond? These generations are big achievers whose ambitions soared higher than just working in mobile phone retail. We needed an attraction strategy and a marketing campaign that flat out changed the audiences' perceptions about who Vodafone is and all the different kinds of careers you can have – and impacts you can make – there.

### THE BRIEF

Create a campaign that will spark conversations and stand out as part of an instantly recognizable brand. Generate 10,000 applications to fill 150 graduates and 100 interns/industrial placement students across the business – in the first instance. Change misperceptions of Vodafone, showing it as a major tech company, not a retailer, and build its reputation as a youth employer of choice. Importantly, we were asked to reach a more diverse audience and increase female applications.

### AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

Of our target audience, 90.4% regularly used social media. On top of this, 91% of all social media users access channels via mobile. So, we developed a mobile-first, social media-friendly campaign. Further research had shown us that many students with the right background and personal qualifications were put off from applying due to a lack of confidence. So, we needed a message that was bold, relatable and empowering.

Just as important as the audience insights were the strategic considerations. Candidates are also customers. When buying products, they expect a streamlined, user-friendly, friction-free process. And now, they have the same expectation when making career decisions. So, we made every touchpoint (especially applying) as slick and easy as possible.

No contemporary attraction approach can be just about advertising. Long-term connections are far more powerful. So, central to our strategy was Vodafone engaging in conversations, initiatives and support with high-potential university students throughout their full university lifecycle. In short, the strategy was to start on day one, not year three.

### THE CORE MESSAGE

#### #GenerationPossible

Our message aimed to capture the spirit of change and possibility and draw on the opportunity young people have to make an impact on the world for the better. Our visual approach used photography that reflected our target audience combined with bold headline statements. Social and site content featured current grads and interns sharing their advice for the next generation of Vodafone employees.

### FLAGSHIP EXECUTIONS

- A six-month social media strategy for mobile.
- A #GenerationPossible video at the heart of this campaign.
- A campaign matrix of 104 social posts with 20 mini-videos/GIFs.

We used an innovation social platform to post, track and analyze our posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

### SUPPORTING EXECUTIONS

#### Get to know us videos

Our research had identified that our target audience felt like they weren't good enough, or lacked the skills, to take on these roles. So, we created a series of videos featuring current Vodafone graduate recruits and interns. These videos explored Vodafone life, wellbeing, social responsibility, innovation, assessment center and other advice to help prepare candidates for the interview process.

### SPREADING THE MESSAGE IRL

Away from social media, we built a series of 41 on-campus events to connect students directly with Vodafone employees. We carefully targeted our campuses based on those with the highest female-to-male ratios for tech degrees, as a way to help us drive up female applications.

**THE RESULTS**

The campaign comfortably exceeded Vodafone's expectations.

- We generated over 16,000 applications – beating our target by 60%.
- We increased the number of female candidates by 23%.
- We increased Instagram post impressions by 89.3% (post-campaign vs. pre-campaign).
- We saw 1.5 million Facebook impressions.
- We gained 6.8 million impressions on organic posts on LinkedIn.

- We created a hyper-targeted paid Facebook campaign which produced 390,510 impressions and 2,541 clicks – all from the audience we wanted to target.

These numbers are backed up by audience sentiment – we improved Vodafone's reputation as an employer significantly, jumping 27 places in the TT100 rankings. As a result of its success, Vodafone asked us to develop the concept for their apprentice campaign audience and roll it out through a new assessment process design.

