

# Making diversity take off for Heathrow

New selection and recruitment delivers exceptional results.



amberjack



**“Amberjack had answers to our challenges and a plan for our vision. Working as a ‘one team’ partnership we achieved outstanding results together.”**

Emerging Talent Manager,  
Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited

## Background

Heathrow is the second busiest airport in the world, and the busiest in Europe. It's also the UK's largest single-site employer with more than 76,000 people supporting the airport's 78 million annual passengers.

## Objectives

Heathrow is committed to a progressive and inclusive culture that values diversity and empowers everyone to fulfil his or her potential. But something was missing. The Future Leaders Programme that had been established over the past four years had continually delivered the same type of recruits into the business. Without representation from BAME or women, the future leaders were not diverse and hardly representative of the Heathrow workforce. Progress was needed.

Heathrow also suffered from not having the data or visibility to make strategic decisions. Worse still, when offers were made to candidates they suffered from withdrawals. And as a business that prides itself on working closely with communities they received no applications from local universities.

It was clear Heathrow needed change, so they partnered with us to redesign their selection process and manage recruitment from attraction through to offers. Together we built what Heathrow call a 'one-team' partnership that transcends the typical client-supplier relationship, to drive diversity and provide the support needed to make the strategic programme a success for the first time.



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## Our Awards



**APPRENTICESHIPS  
4 ENGLAND  
Gold Award Winner**

## Solution

From the start Heathrow knew they had found a partner that could deliver the expertise that was missing and make their vision a reality. Starting with Job Analysis we interviewed stakeholders to understand the behaviours required for success. Once validated it was clear that recruitment needed radical transformation. Our ‘one-team’ partnership, was totally aligned as we designed a new process that reduced bias and assessed future potential rather than past performance. We developed new immersive cutting-edge selection tools including an SJT, video interviews, and assessment centres that provided an engaging and realistic job preview. Then to ensure success, we thoroughly tested the new process with the stakeholder community.

An effective attraction strategy was essential to engage the minority groups Heathrow needed. We call our approach Intelligent Attraction; underpinned by insights, research, and blending assessment expertise with proven attraction techniques. This delivered the desperately needed diversity into the top of the pipeline. Then our dedicated campaign management team delivered an exceptional candidate experience by supporting candidates through application, selection tests, assessment centres, and offers. Underpinned by the Ambertrack ATS and utilising a block approach our partnership ensured that Heathrow had complete visibility of the pipeline at all times to ensure the campaign was supremely effective.

## Results

The outcomes of the project are impressive: Heathrow now has a streamlined selection process that efficiently identifies future potential without bias and boasts the latest highly effective selection tools. We established relationships with local universities and the targeted attraction campaign delivered the diverse candidates Heathrow craved into the pipeline. Results exceeded expectations, 73% of offers were made to females, and 27% to candidates from BAME backgrounds.

Our high-touch candidate management ensured all candidates received exceptional levels of care. Diogene De Souza (Future Leader) commented, “I liked that the interviews were situation-based, and that we were told in advance what was expected of us in terms of competencies and skills. It was also a relief to have a process that sought to bring out the best in us as candidates – and not to trip us up or trick us.” This has all been achieved on a comparatively limited budget that is reflected in a cost per hire significantly below the market average. The solution will pay for itself thanks to the cost-efficiencies we created and the effectiveness of the new selection process that will only improve in the future.