



TfL

In 2007-8 Transport for London failed to recruit its target number of graduates. The budget was significantly stretched. Stakeholders had lost confidence. And, worryingly, graduates had little recognition of the business or the opportunities within it. In just nine months, there has been a dramatic turnaround. Already one third of hires have been made this year. Applications are at an all-time high. Stakeholders are engaged. And Transport for London was nominated (by students) for Best Brochure, Best Ad and Best Website in the High Flyers awards 2009. It went on to win Best Website and Best Brochure. No other employer was nominated in all three categories.

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# CASE STUDY TFL

## Background and objectives

In 2007-8 Transport for London (TfL) had severely struggled recruiting graduates – and eventually had to close the hiring cycle in June, falling woefully short of their target hires. Immediately afterwards, we started work with them to build a campaign and process that would deliver the right quality and quantity of hires. The objectives were to recruit for all 25 different schemes, to build awareness across a range of campuses and to position TfL as the destination employer for a wide range of disciplines. We needed to build a three-year strategy that would drive hires and recognition, and ultimately reduce costs.

## Research

Thorough, in-depth research (including focus groups with recent joiners and creative strategy testing), concluded that the two key reasons for joining TfL were:

- The chance to make a difference to millions of people's lives;
- The chance to work in and help shape London.

Our research showed that 50% of hires applied after they'd left university – showing TfL had little or no on-campus presence. And we learnt the true extent of our audience's lack of understanding of TfL.

## All-year marketing

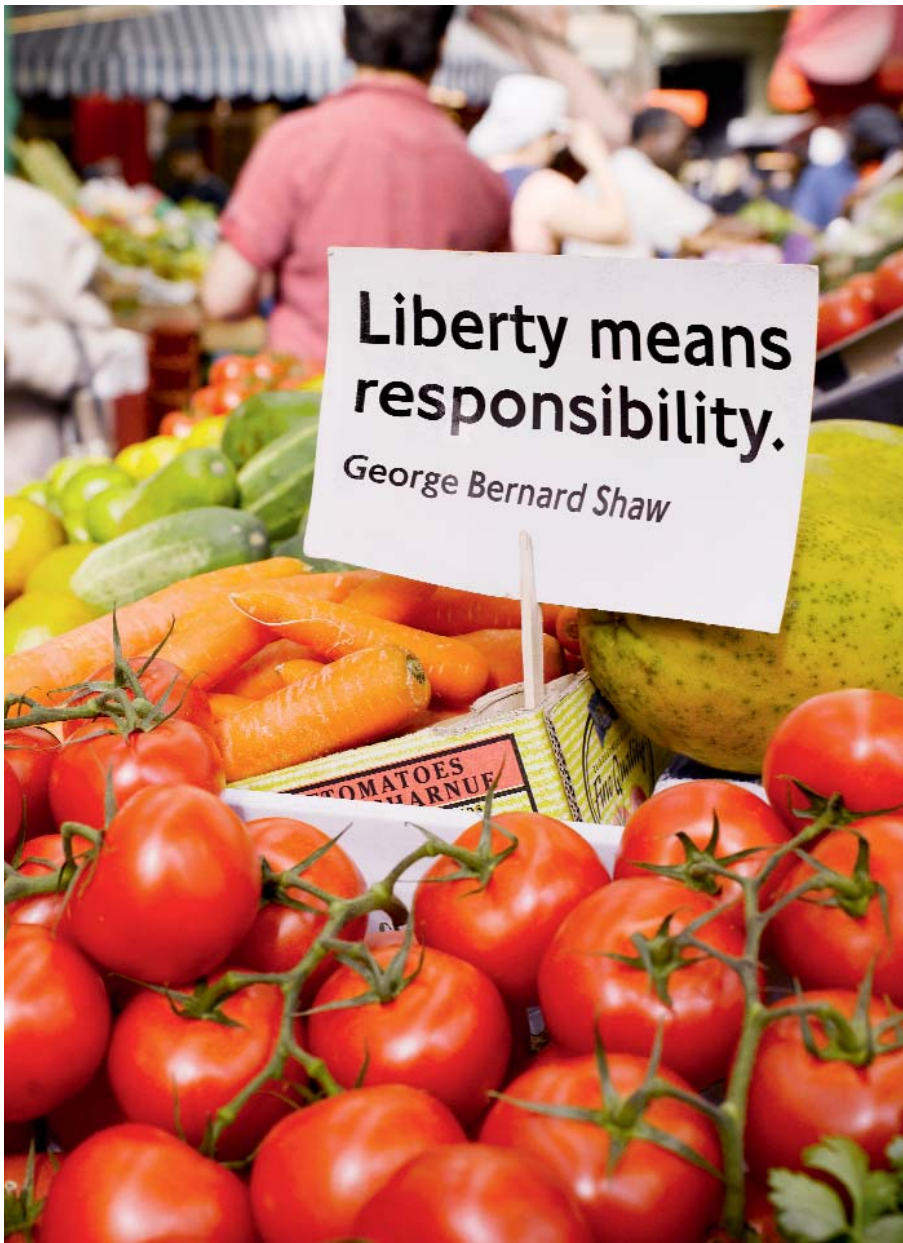
Facing those challenges, we developed a strategy focusing on core graduate media – Graduate-jobs.co.uk; Prospects; Times Top 100 directory; Milkround; Target etc., using company profiles, listings and targeted emails. We bought packages that enabled us to build year-round presence and we've used Itchy London to create greater brand awareness. We intentionally phased our budget over the year enabling us to develop reputation throughout each term.

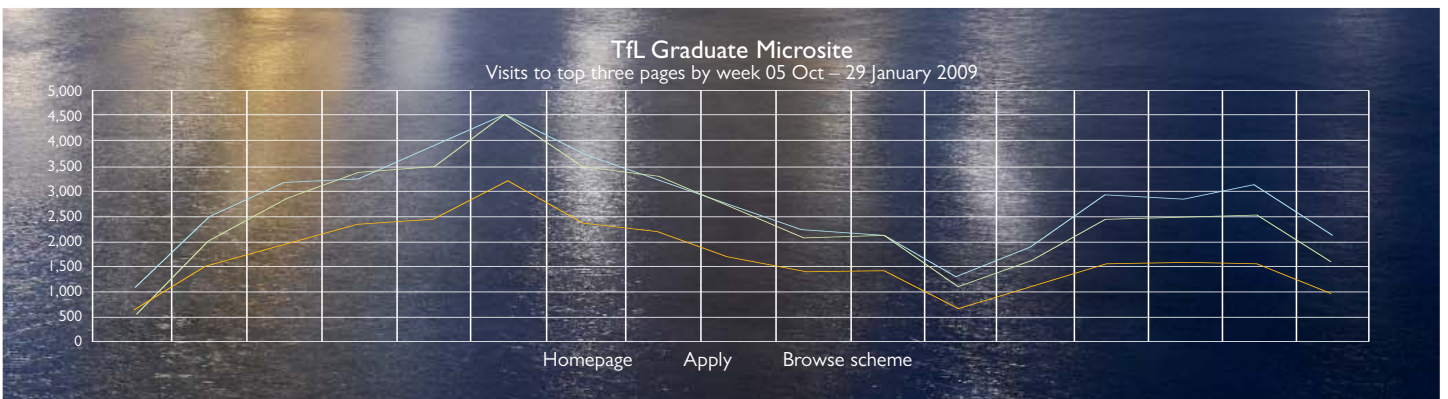
## Building presence and reputation

We encouraged TfL to attend over 25 different universities – an unprecedented number for them – and sent out packs to careers advisers across the country. While budget and resources dictated that we couldn't do everything in year one, we planned a strategy that focused in year two moving towards presentations and skills sessions.

## Impact on the web

A new site was built that provided information on the schemes, training and benefits and more fully communicated the range of projects and experiences across the business. The key innovation here was a Google map of projects, which allowed users to see the number of innovations and operations across the capital. The website consistently had a high level of traffic driven by marketing and attendance at various universities and careers fairs.





### Innovation in print

Like the website, the brochure was vital and provided more than just information. We needed to substantiate our messages in a powerful way. Bold imagery helped us to do this, but we also included a pullout Google map. It gave a striking picture of the scale of London, and TfL's work within it.

### Maintaining the candidate experience

TfL is a complex business and for graduate recruitment, there are a huge number of stakeholders. Previously, the process had been slowed down by a number of elements, which was turning off good quality candidates. With such a range of schemes, there was a tendency to follow different assessment processes, even for those schemes that shared competencies and requirements. Working closely with stakeholders we

created a more streamlined, candidate-friendly approach, the key improvements being:

Traditionally candidates visited two assessment centres over two days. This meant candidates and assessors had to come back twice, which was obviously expensive. By condensing content we managed to help managers and recruiters develop a one-day assessment centre – providing candidates with a much more positive experience.

The use of telephone interviews helped to assess the quality of candidates much earlier in the process – generating better ratios at assessment centre and so providing a much stronger and more cost-effective experience for everyone. This took wide consultation with the business to help everyone understand the benefits.

## Results

The results have vindicated our approach. There were 12,995 registrations, 5,562 auto-regrets, 2,604 submitted applications, 1,286 (50%) successful at applications screen, 893 (69%) successful at SJQ and 441 (49%) successful at TIV. So far, 28 offers have been made, and we've received very positive feedback about results from stakeholders. The whole programme was filled in time, on budget and with a significant improvement in the reputation of the business. Student and graduate reaction has been fantastic, both at interview and at careers fairs. And to be nominated in all three student-judged categories at High Flyers and winning two is testament to the quality and success of the approach.

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