

Q Search

Turn young graduates into long-term talent





In today's competitive job market, in which companies struggle to attract and <u>retain young professionals</u>, graduate programmes have become a powerful tool.

They offer graduates a structured, accelerated entry into the workforce while helping companies secure the

generation of talent.

According to EDHEC NewGen Talent Centre research, 98% of participants see graduate programmes as an excellent start to their professional life; three out of four stay, or plan to stay, with their employer once th programme ends. The question is no longer whether to launch a graduate programmes, but how to make effective for both graduates and bus

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Communicate widely. Many students still know little about graduate programmes. To attract top tale companies must actively promote them – especially on campuses – and make recruitment timelines

From a business perspective, five practices stand out:

- Clarify what makes your graduate programme unique. Misconceptions persist: some see graduate
 programmes as inaccessible; others underestimate the support provided. Companies should highlight how their programme differs, through rotations, coaching, and career opportunities.
- Offer at least one international rotation. Only 24% of graduate programmes currently do, yet global expos
 remains one of the most attractive features for graduates and aligns with Gen Z's international mindset. 4. Emphasise development opportunities. Skill-building, especially soft skills like agility and resilience, is the top
- benefit valued by participants. Communicating this clearly ensures that graduate programmes align with
- young professionals' desire to learn and grow quickly.
- Showcase success stories. Graduates are inspired by leaders who began through a graduate programme.
 Sharing these journeys and connecting alumni with participants through mentoring boosts motivation and credibility.

From a graduate perspective, success requires a proactive mindset:

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Recognise both benefits and challenges. Rotations accelerate learning but demand adaptability and curiosity.
 Each new role tests your ability to thrive in unfamiliar environments.

- Be proactive and hands-on. Companies expect graduate programme participants to take initiative and del results fast, even while learning.
- Seize every learning opportunity. Each assignment offers new skills, bo skills like communication and adaptability matter as much as expertise.
- 4. Build your network early. Relationships with peers, HR, and leaders form a support system that can shape
- tay humble and committed. Being selected for a graduate programme is a privilege, not a ticket to elitis ompleting all rotations, even the less exciting ones, demonstrates resilience and provides a 360° view o
- organisation. Why graduate programmes work

Graduate programmes succeed because they benefit both sides. Young professionals fast-track the

understanding of the business through rotations, mentoring, and access to networks that support long-term careers. International exposure adds appeal, satisfying Gen Z's appetite for mobility while building loyalty. It's no surprise that 75% of graduates who complete a graduate programme stay with their employer.

For companies, graduate programmes are a strategic investment in future leadership. They strengthen employe branding, attract high-potential profiles and build a reliable talent pipeline. Two thirds of firms retain more than 75% of graduate programme participants; a success that few other HR initiatives can match.

Read more: Training is the answer to skills and retention fears, businesses decided

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systems - but the payoff is clear. With 95% of participants recommending them to peers, graduate programmes reate a powerful cycle of attracti For HR leaders, the challenge is to design programmes that are <u>ambitious yet realistic</u>: ambitious enoug graduates' aspirations, and realistic enough to deliver business value and loyalty. Done right, a graduate

programme isn't just a first job, it's a launchpad for the next generation of leaders. By Geneviève Houriet Segard, associate and scientific director of the EDHEC Business School NewGen Talent

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