



Case Study

How MBDA created a complete, personalised, online onboarding journey that's engaging for both experienced and early career hires

Meet &
Engage

The Meet & Engage technology used by MBDA includes:

Inspire & Nurture

- Live virtual recruiting events couple with a fully-branded, social network style nurture journey
- Take advantage of features like live streaming, content sharing and polling
- Fully-concierge service by our team of experts
- Fully-branded pre- and post-event comms and in-depth data including NPS

Timeline for Onboarding

- Automated candidate journey in a personalised social media style interface
- Content shared by wall posts, videos and articles
- Email and SMS nudges to see fresh content
- Candidate experience pulse checks

Introduction

In a time of skills shortages in core STEM specialisms and fierce competition from other employers, candidate experience during the onboarding stage is a key priority!

How can you ensure that candidates feel supported and begin to align themselves to the brand values, providing a tailored experience when operating at scale? That was the challenge MBDA faced.

They understood the clear correlation between providing a great experience during the onboarding journey and the number of engaged hires who turned up on day one.

They also understood that different audiences potentially have very different needs as they move through the process, and wanted to adopt a solution that would retain a strong element of personalisation in the candidate experience, whether candidates were fresh grads or niche hires.

MBDA also wanted to be able to measure quantitative and qualitative candidate sentiment and capture a dataset that could be used to review and refresh their offering on an ongoing basis.

Students joining MBDA as a Summer Interns or on a Placement need a different type of information and support during the onboarding phase than recent graduates who may have previously spent a summer at MBDA.

Experienced Hires are traditionally more interested in hearing about opportunities to develop their career with MBDA, or in understanding the models of working.

All candidates undergo the lengthy vetting process, which can be a risk-point in the hiring process. MBDA needed to be able to offer an onboarding experience which went beyond the necessary paperwork.

The Challenge

MBDA pride themselves on providing an excellent candidate experience, which can be a challenging task when accounting for barriers imposed on defence industry hiring processes.

In addition to skills shortages in core STEM specialisms and fierce competition from other employers, MBDA must also tackle:

Brand perceptions

As a defence organisation, MBDA can fall prey to stereotypes about their culture and the type of candidates who will succeed in hiring processes. MBDA is making conscious efforts to tackle these misconceptions throughout their attraction and hiring journeys.

Support & preparation

It was important that, whatever their background or experience, all candidates were empowered to thrive in selection and leave the process with a consistent, positive view of MBDA's brand values and a better understanding of what is a complex matrix organisation.

Engagement

Security restrictions imposed by the MOD mean all candidates must undergo vetting. This both limits the candidate pool (nationality), but also increases the time to hire significantly. This added time increases the risk of losing candidates in-process through lack of engagement, as recruiters do not have the resource to interact with all candidates as often as they would like.

The Solution

To combat these issues, MBDA looked for a solution that would:

- Offer moments of brand inspiration for candidates
- Implement a dynamic solution to maintain engagement
- Provide opportunities to chat with recruiters in real time
- Capture feedback and measurable candidate experience data
- Offer a safe, moderated candidate-to-candidate chat option to foster early brand loyalty

Enter MBDA's Onboarding Portal.

Once an offer has been accepted, candidates are invited via an integration between Meet & Engage and Workday (MBDA's ATS) to register for their Onboarding Portal, through which automated yet tailored and timely content is served up, via a social-style platform. Content was designed to be shared over a series of weeks and months to match the candidate's stage of their onboarding journey.

The content themes include guidance and reminders about the induction process, videos about the business, employee testimonials, as well as scheduled messages to wish people a happy Diwali/Christmas/New Year.

Through the Onboarding Portal, we also serve up Channels. These enable candidates to chat amongst themselves within the professional, branded environment – to arrange house shares per location, for example.

The portal was backed up by group and 121 chat events, where candidates could get answers to questions in real time and hear from a diverse range of employees about life at MBDA.

Inspire (events)

Meet & Engage supported three 'Life at MBDA' online panel events, used to showcase authentic aspects of culture in the company. The series addressed key topics to appeal to Early and Experienced candidates:

How I've grown at MBDA:

Showcasing the business's commitment to career and personal development.

Why I switched to a career in defence:

Helping break down industry misconceptions and highlight the benefits through stories from individuals who switched from other industries.

Opportunities beyond engineering:

To highlight the range of support roles on offer through colleagues sharing their background and experiences.

The events were promoted to all candidates, and to potential candidates via paid social – and were hosted on three consecutive weeks in a fully branded environment.

The team shared inspirational corporate video content, with a diverse panel of colleagues from across the business to share their experiences via livestream, plus interactive polls and candidate Q&A.

All three events were great for brand awareness and demonstrated incredible teamwork as employees from across the business described very different roles, with a common thread of passion for MBDA as the best employer they'd ever had.

Onboarding portals

Underpinning the post-offer experience is the onboarding portal which looks and feels like an MBDA social feed, with a focus on everything a candidate may need between offer and start.

An integration with Workday (MBDA's ATS) automates a registration invitation to candidates at point of offer. Once in, the portals are bespoke to the candidate's entry route, with content either tailored to experienced hires or early careers. Further tailoring within that includes, for example, content specifically for graduates returning to employment at MBDA after completing their degree which included a placement with the company.

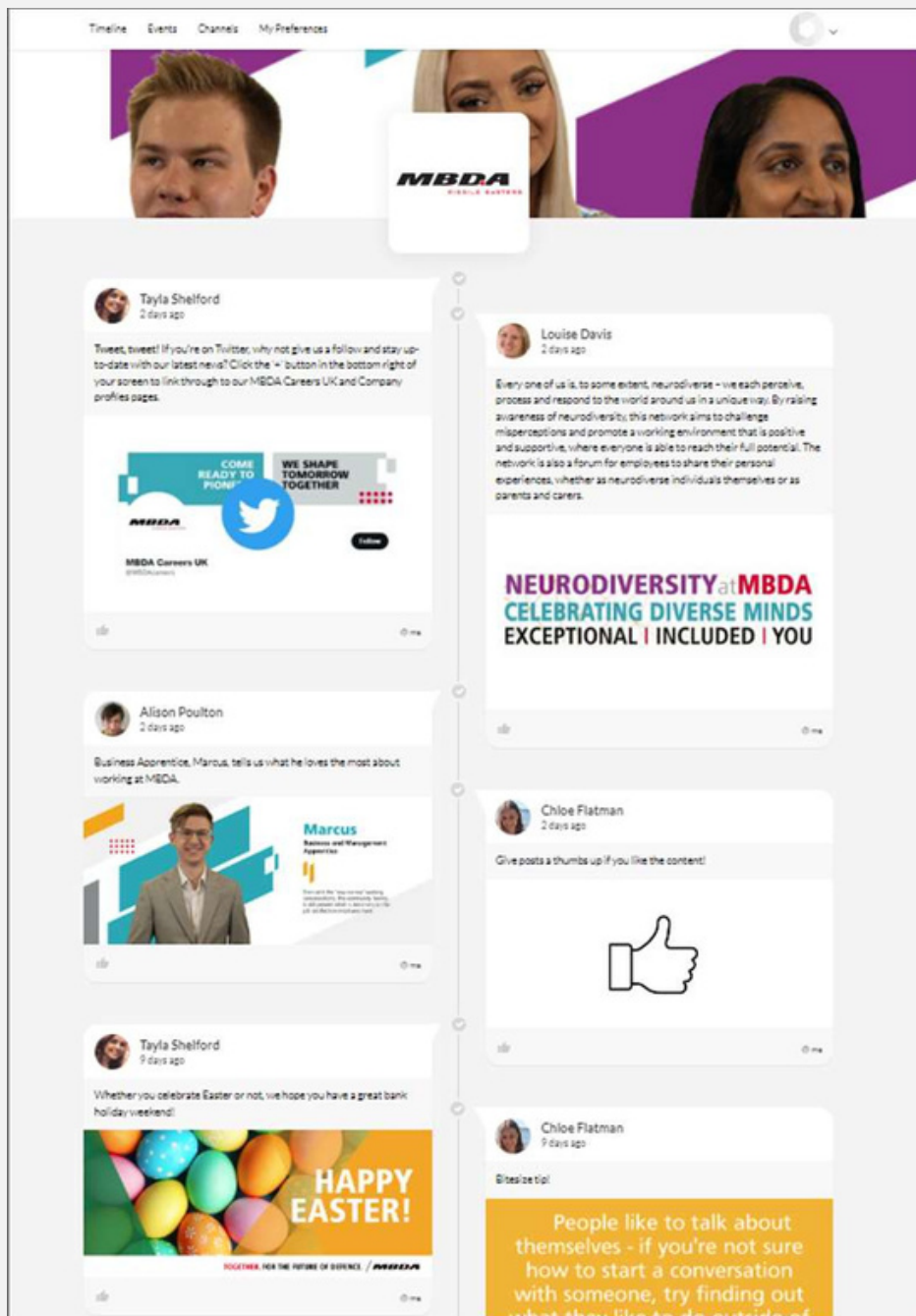
Each feed shares videos, wall posts, images, social links and captures feedback. Each post on the feed is nominally posted by someone in the business, and hovering over their picture reveals their bio. Introducing colleagues-to-be in this way, MBDA provides rich insight into aspects of MBDA that candidates may not have appreciated, demystifies the organisation, supports D&I representation and brand values and draws candidates into the MBDA family early.

The in-built feedback chatbot provides a chance to capture candidate sentiment at each stage and gives candidates a real say in the shape of the future process.

The Chat Channels in the portal are set up for each MBDA UK site location (Bolton, Bristol, Stevenage) and offer a space for candidates to chat online with future colleagues. Examples include graduates arranging house-shares or asking about parking and facilities. Recruiters and MBDA ambassadors use Channels to post updates, photos and to get light-hearted conversations started, to begin fostering warm, professional relationships early.

Onboarding portals

The MBDA team worked closely with the Meet & Engage team to plot out the content over the relevant time-period for each entry route. Experienced hire candidates have content fed over a few months while they go through security checks and notice periods, while Early Careers feeds include content tied to specific dates aligned with the annual recruitment cycles. The content is pre-defined, but released slowly to the candidate over their onboarding journey, with nudges by email/SMS when new content is released. This maximises candidate engagement and ensures that actionable content is highlighted in the feed for their attention the next time a candidate logs in.



Content to support
MBDA's commitment to
DE&I

Employee stories and
testimonials

Opportunities for
candidates to
provide feedback on their
experience

Timed posts to
celebrate festivals
and events

A key challenge was the disparity of candidates' onboarding timescales. Offers were being made from mid-September all the way through to early Spring for Early Careers and year-round for Experienced Hires; and a person's onboarding period could range anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. We wanted to ensure everyone had the same positive candidate experience of seeing all the Onboarding Portal's content.

MBDA structured their Onboarding Portal content to go live in the autumn for Early Careers, with content being shared all the way through to the following summer. We cloned the content and reduced the automated time delays between the posts to shorten its overall length for those with shorter journeys and adapted the content to suit interns or returners, who would have seen the core content previously. For Experienced Hires, we frontloaded the content so that candidates would see all of the important content initially, and then drip fed the less critical content over the course of their onboarding period.

This meant that anyone registering after a specified date would still experience the same content but in a shorter time frame.

1-2-1 Live Chat

Throughout the process, recruiters hosted group and 1-2-1 live virtual chats for candidates, to help them feel comfortable about what was ahead as they went through the selection process and waited, sometimes many months, to join the business. This maximised every touch point, averting the risk of candidates being tempted by counter-offers from other employers, by providing real-time routes to get answers to any questions or allay fears, enabling candidates to continually see the full benefit of a career with MBDA.

All elements of the solution capture light-touch candidate feedback after each encounter - whether that's automated, via feedback faces, the in-built feedback capture or by the Net Promoter Score survey after live events. This means that the team have an ever-growing bank of candidate sentiment to use for review of their processes and candidate experience.


Results:

The results of implementing solutions to strengthen MBDA's candidate experience exceeded all expectations and have had a hugely positive impact on candidates.



Overall, introducing the Meet & Engage platform has helped MBDA to keep candidates engaged in a number of ways that were previously unavailable.

- **32 virtual events, with an average Net Promoter Score of 90 ("World Class!")**
- **94% registration for Onboarding portal**
- **97% of Early Careers candidates say that the portal is easy to use**
- **100% of candidates say that their recruitment experience has been good**
- **100% of early career candidates felt more confident about joining**
- **Hiring managers report that new starters are better prepared for work**



Participant Feedback




As it is such a long time between being offered the role & starting, the timeline has been brilliant for making me feel that I've not been forgotten about!



This was a fantastic way to introduce me to MBDA - people, values, benefits. It was so helpful to learn about the company, and it made me feel included while I worked my notice in my current role. I am so looking forward to my first day.



I found it all very welcoming and comforting, and, although I don't feel 100% prepared (just my general anxieties!), I am excited about starting. Best 'onboarding' experience I've ever had, thank you.



Conclusion

The MBDA team have already conducted in-depth analysis of the data emerging from the different onboarding journeys and tweaked the journey for returners, to include more fresh content in response to lower time-spent-engaging data.

They will undertake a review of the content by type (video, wall posts, images, etc.) and by candidate engagement levels with individual pieces of content, as well as refreshing the Timeline with newly branded-elements and new polling tools.

Candidate sentiment continues to be captured as they move through the portal and candidates are signposted towards the feedback chatbot, Debbie, to submit any feedback they'd like to provide. This feedback is regularly reported and provides opportunity for continuous improvements to the candidate experience at MBDA.



To find out more about Meet & Engage and our
suite of candidate engagement technology,

[Book a Consultation](#)

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