



How to achieve a personalised candidate journey through automation

Meet &
Engage

Contents

Introduction	1
The power of positive personalisation: it's more than getting the name right!	4
Personalisation in practice	10
Case Study: Yodel	12
Case Study: Royal Mail	18
Conclusion	20

Introduction

Candidate experience has a lot to learn from customer experience. While in the consumer space personalisation has become an expectation, in the recruitment space, the hiring journey is often still designed to be convenient to the business, with the experience of the candidate coming second.

Typically, recruitment teams will set a multi-stage hiring journey which will take several hours to complete over a period of weeks or potentially months. You'll have designed your hiring journey to achieve the best outcomes for your business, but each of these stages - and all the micro-moments in between - will also be helping to form a decision in the candidates' mind. That's why we call them the 'moments that matter'. They are moments when the candidate is full of intent, their preferences are shaped, and their decisions made.

Once you identify your moments that matter, each stage of your process becomes a lever you can adjust and pull to achieve success in your hiring. They are also the points at which you can personalise the experience, add value and give something back to the candidate.

The digitally savvy consumer—in our case the candidate—expects a helpful, personal, and frictionless experience. They are expecting relevant and super-useful information: they're curious, demanding, and impatient. They're so used to personalisation in the other spaces they occupy online, from entertainment, to shopping, and even wellbeing, so it goes without saying they'll be expecting it when they're job-hunting, too.

Making the moments they spend with you feel personalised to your candidates' needs vastly improves their engagement with the process.

So how can you make micro-moments within the hiring journey helpful, relevant, and impactful?



The digitally savvy consumer—in our case the candidate—expects a helpful, personal, and frictionless experience.

They are expecting relevant and super-useful information: they're curious, demanding, and impatient.



Effective personalisation is only managed through automation – or a significant amount of human effort! Automation reduces effort (and operational cost) and allows personalisation at scale.

In this guide, we'll explore the moments that matter in the hiring journey, and explain how you can apply personalisation within an automated process to enhance the candidate experience, with case studies showing the results achieved by companies who have done just that.



Nicola Sullivan
Solutions Director

Hannah Ryder
Implementation Consultant



The power of positive personalisation: it's more than getting the name right!

Personalisation is something we take for granted in almost all aspects of our lives, to the point it stands out when we're treated in an untailored way. It feels clumsy, out of sync and off-putting. You know the sort of thing; the email arriving saying 'Dear First Name' rather than your actual first name. It's not the worst thing to happen, but it grates because it feels lazy, and you feel the lack of consideration.

A survey by IBM found that personalised communication can improve candidate engagement by 150% - so it's not something you should be ignoring!



**Personalised communication
can improve candidate
engagement by 150%**



So what is personalisation? In basic terms, it's the action of designing or producing something to meet someone's individual requirements, and it's arguably the most important tenet of successful marketing today.

Evidence of the importance of personalisation includes:

- 78% of consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases from brands that personalise
- Nearly 80% are also more likely to refer their family and friends to these companies
- Over 70% of consumers now expect personalisation and are frustrated when they don't find it - making personalisation a must-have for today's brands

Your candidates are consumers

Viewing your candidates as consumers can be a useful way to test the experience you're providing during the hiring journey. When it comes to personalisation, that's critical for two main reasons:

Firstly, many of you will be engaging with thousands of candidates a year - that makes the stats we shared earlier representative of a very large number of potential brand advocates or detractors. We work with one of the large global banking brands; they get over 90,000 applications to their early careers programmes every year, but they hire fewer than 2% of that number. They set themselves a clear goal; whether someone joins the business or not, they will have gained some personal or professional value from their time in the hiring journey.

Secondly, despite the economic cross winds, it's still a competitive market for candidates - so a positive hiring journey can provide an ideal differentiator. Whether it's reducing attrition during the hiring journey, declines at offer stage, renege rates, or levelling-up for underserved groups, ensuring people get what they need through useful, relevant, and helpful information is key.

Living in the (micro) moment

We deliberately used the words "power of positive personalisation" in the title of this chapter.

Personalisation should be relevant, helpful, but non-intrusive. The goal is to reach the highest point of relevance, at the lowest sense of intrusion. The balance is key. We've probably all had that sense that you've named a product in the presence of your smart phone and within 24hrs are bombarded with ads that leave you questioning who/how/what was listening. That's simply annoying at best, and unnerving at worst.

Today's candidates are expecting highly relevant and useful information tailored to them: according to a survey by CareerBuilder, 68% of job seekers believe that a personalised approach to recruitment would improve the overall candidate experience, so getting the balance right is essential in the current market.



68% of job seekers believe that a personalised approach to recruitment would improve the overall candidate experience



An area which needs focus is how information is now delivered. Online behaviour is now far less about the predictable daily online sessions, and now much more a rapid series of fragmented interactions – or micro-moments – in the main using a smart phone.

A micro-moment occurs when you automatically turn to your device to act on a need to learn something, do something, discover something, watch something, buy something, or apply for something. They are moments when you're most full of intent; it's when your decisions are made, and your preferences shaped.

Making micro-moments memorable

So how can you make micro-moments within the hiring journey helpful, relevant, and impactful?

Firstly, we'd recommend looking at the information you have which would help you create the level of personalisation we suggest you strive for.

A quick reminder of what first-party data you probably have access to: demographic information (beyond a name), behaviours or actions taken across your website/ATS, data in your CRM, social media conversations, survey data, candidate feedback, candidate application history, and potentially, online chat or chatbot transcripts.

All of which can give insight into a candidate's preferences, but just as importantly, their needs and aspirations. And remember, personalisation can be realised through a combination of process, experience, and medium of content.

Tailoring the experience

Let's give you a few examples based on our nurture journey technology which allows you to automatically serve pre-configured content to your audience based on first party data and importantly, their behaviours.

Take your undergraduate who just watched and liked the Cyber Security video you posted – you could now invite them to a Live Chat event with the Head of Cyber Security.

Or you could ask the question ‘how do you feel about the virtual assessment centre?’ and offer those who are less than 100% confident to an online recruiter Q&A session or highlight how to access practice videos and tests.

We mentioned our global banking client earlier; they serve tailored content dependent on status in the hiring journey and the programme the candidate has applied for. They are also looking at giving candidates options for the format they view the content in to suit their learning style (in the main to remove barriers for neurodiverse candidates). They even have a journey of content for candidates who have been deselected from, or who have left, the hiring journey (incidentally, that’s getting an 84% satisfaction rate – that’s brand advocacy in action!).

Automation to achieve personalisation

Effective personalisation is only managed through automation – or a significant amount of human effort! Automation reduces effort (and operational cost) and allows personalisation at scale.

Platforms exist to help you achieve this: among them are your CRM, ATS and Meet & Engage.

Our nurture technology allows you personalise the experience your candidates/employees have in several ways.

Integration with your ATS or HRIS will allow us to tailor the blend and timing of content served, for example by role, region, programme, status in the journey – in fact, by any data point provided to us by your ATS. And of course, all content and messages can be tailored through ‘mail merge’-style adjustment of content to reflect basics like name etc.



Companies that personalised their recruitment process experienced a 36% increase in applicant engagement and a 29% increase in the acceptance of job offers



There are also tools which you can include in the nurture or onboarding journey which give a sense of personalisation based on your candidate/employees' interaction with our technology. These tools can be used to determine the next set of content depending on the candidate's interaction with previous content (see the Cyber Security example above).

Chatbots can be used to capture additional information which can in turn be used to tailor the journey. For example, asking a candidate early on how they like to consume information (video, reading, infographic, audio) could then be used to take the candidate on the journey that serves most, or all, of the content in that format.

It's clear that a process without personalisation will cost you in terms of both engagement and outcomes. Candidates want to feel like they are more than just a CV or a number, and they want to feel like their unique skills and experiences are being considered.

A final stat to leave you with from The Aberdeen Group, in case you weren't already convinced: companies that personalised their recruitment process experienced a 36% increase in applicant engagement and a 29% increase in the acceptance of job offers.

Personalisation in practice

At Meet & Engage, we often use the lens of viewing candidates as consumers as a useful litmus test of how you are treating your potential employees during the hiring journey. When it comes to brand advocacy, the effect a positive – or indeed negative – candidate experience can have on your successful hiring is enormous.

With this in mind, seeing the hiring journey from start to finish as a fundamental set of levers to help you achieve your aims is key (we're not ignoring the need for cultural experience on joining to match the pre-hiring experience, but that's a whole thing in its own right).

You'll all have taken a good look at your assessment and selection processes for adverse impact, but what else can you be doing to create a sense of belonging and familiarity? Can you share role models' stories? Can you run practice sessions or online recruiter Q&As ahead of key points in the selection process? And do you have a check point in place to test confidence levels ahead of video interview for example? A quick check for engagement can allow you to focus your human energies where someone might be struggling.

And why is this so important? Well, it can lead to in-process attrition as candidates decide that the process is complicated and unfamiliar – this can prove costly and frustrating for you. But also, applying a bit of lay-persons' psychology for a moment: whatever our background, we all perform better if we feel confident. And confidence is strongly linked to a sense of belonging, which in turn breeds familiarity. It's a simple equation but if you can create that sense of belonging and familiarity, the rest is much more likely to follow.

Reciprocity in marketing terms is providing value upfront to motivate customers to give something in return. So how can we usefully apply this to the candidate's hiring journey? Simple! You can ensure that you are adding value every step of the way, whether a candidate joins you or not.



Whatever our background, we all perform better if we feel confident



Let's face it: only a small percentage of those who've invested their time in the journey will end up with an offer, but why not ensure they gain professional or personal development in their time with you?

So, if at each stage you're asking for an application form to be completed, a video interview to be sat, an assessment centre to be attended - then what can you give back in return for the hours invested by the candidate?

Pre-skilling and upskilling are something Gen Z are asking for, and the good news is, providing it benefits all sides: professional and personal development for candidates, reduced attrition and time to productivity for your business. So, what are you sharing at induction stage and beyond that you could bring forward to the hiring journey? What information and insights could benefit the audience whether they join you or not?

To sum-up, each stage of the hiring journey is a lever you can pull to achieve a balance of successful hiring for your business and valuable experience for your potential new hires - making it a win-win.

Case Study: Yodel

Yodel deliver millions of parcels a year, across 60 sites, to every UK postcode. The Yodel Resourcing team recruit over 4,500 Drivers annually and receive over 1,200 applications per week. This number increases to 5,500 applications per week as they hire additional resource for their peak delivery season covering Black Friday, Cyber Monday and Christmas.

This means that the team need to hire 3,500 new Drivers in just a few months. Yodel offer several different types of opportunity to those who want to become Drivers, including self-employed and employed roles. To attract the right numbers, Yodel also offer fulltime and part-time opportunities. Whilst this means that all needs are catered for, those new to a Driver role could find the options overwhelming.

The challenges

1. Provide an excellent candidate experience for every candidate.
2. Better understand the wants and needs of their candidates.
3. Use a flexible system that can easily and quickly be aligned to candidate feedback at any point in the process.
4. Engage candidates digitally in a compelling manner.
5. Allow candidates to provide feedback in order to continuously improve the candidate experience.
6. Reduce average time to hire.
7. Easily manage a high volume of applications.

Our solution

Meet & Engage ran a collaborative workshop with Yodel's resourcing team with the purpose to:

- Demystify which Driver opportunity was the best fit for each candidate
- Measure candidate experience at several points and gather feedback to allow continuous improvement
- Automate elements of the recruitment process.

During the workshop the resourcing team mapped out the dream Driver candidate journey from attraction to offer. It was agreed the focus would be on two parts of the process – A 'match-me' solution to signpost candidates to the relevant roles and a screening automation solution to augment and improve the screening process.

The first initiative was to create three Candidate Experience Bots for each of the three key Driving opportunities that would sit on the relevant pages of the career's website. These consisted of Neighbourhood Courier, Owner Driver and Employed Driver roles. Each Bot can have a dialogue with a candidate about that specific opportunity and serve them the relevant roles available.

The second part of the plan included producing three Candidate Experience Bots that would be deployed to screen candidates (instead of a telephone screen) once they had completed their online application via the ATS. The team believed that this would give candidates the flexibility to complete this stage of the process at a time to suit them and in a format they were familiar with. In addition, this would give the Resourcing Team more scope to focus on other candidate experience initiatives.

Having mapped out these processes, Meet & Engage and the Yodel team worked on the Bot dialogue and assets required to create rich and relevant conversations with candidates. Meet & Engage worked closely with the Yodel ATS and creative partner (responsible for the careers website) to ensure relevant integrations could be put in place.

Careers site bot

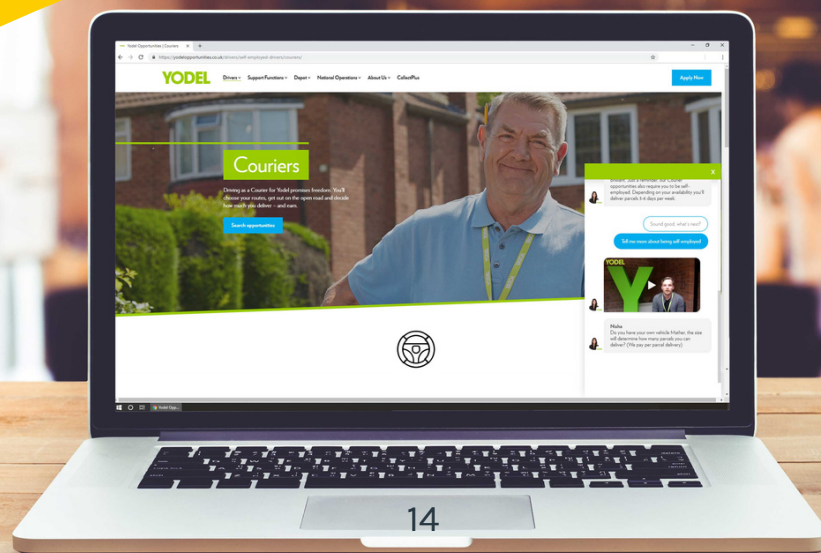
The Bot dialogue is the culmination of the collective input of the recruitment team, who deal with Driver candidates and their queries on a daily basis.

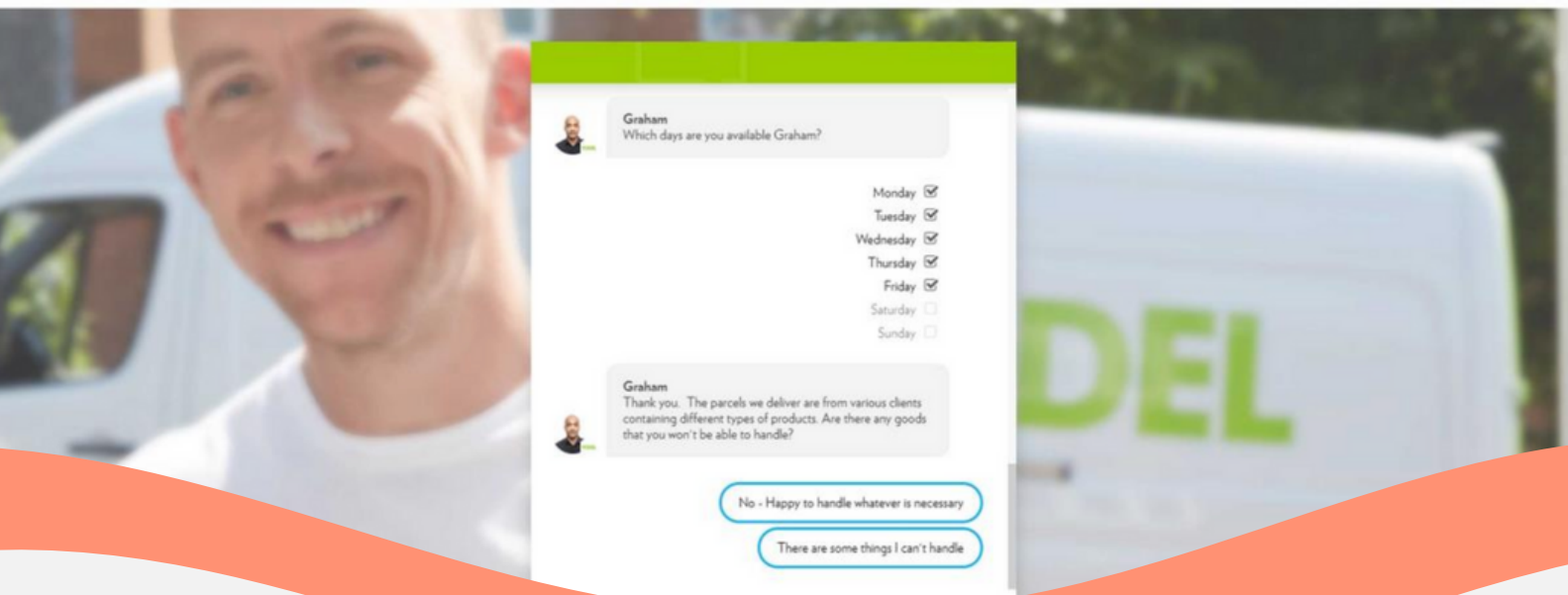
The Bot design process provided an opportunity to really consider what information candidates would find useful and think about the best way to share it. For instance, applicants who are new to a driving role might not be sure what size van they need and so the Bot shares a picture of the correct van type.

Likewise, candidates might be unsure of the process of setting up a limited company for self-employed opportunities, so the Bot can share short educational videos produced by the recruitment team.

This provides an engaging and valuable experience for the candidates and supports self-selection. The candidates are asked how they're finding the process and can give feedback via smiley faces, as well as individual / free text feedback.

The Bot goes on to serve up relevant roles, based on a postcode search as part of the dialogue, leading candidates to the point of apply.





Screening bot

This Bot is deployed post-apply after the successful completion of an application form and shared to candidates via text and email.

Crucially, the supporting email / text tells the candidate that they've been successful so far and they now need to take part in a Q&A with a friendly recruiter Bot. Each Bot screen is based around the criteria of the specific role.

The Bot reiterates some of the important role requirements and probes around the motivation candidates have for a Driving role. Towards the end of the conversation the Bot explains what will happen next and to look out for a call from the team (they call from an 0151 number, so the Bot asks them to look out for the call).

By asking candidates how they're finding the process, the Bot can gather real-time feedback. This information is injected back into the ATS for the recruiters to pick up.

The Candidate Experience Bots were first deployed during the Yodel peak season, at a time when around 5,000 candidates were waiting for their telephone screen. Meet & Engage, Yodel and their ATS partner, Lumesse, agreed the frequency of releasing the screening bot to candidates in batches to ensure candidates were responding well to the new process and to act on any feedback.

Results

The data shows candidates moved through the screening process outside office hours across the first year of launch, at a time that suited them.

97% of candidates rated their experience as highly positive and this experience is still being seen after a year of being live, with candidate feedback indicating a net promotor score of 95-98.

Key data:

- **197,700 chatbot conversations in the first 2 years**
- **42% of bot conversations took place outside of office hours, when recruiters would otherwise be unable to respond with a personalised candidate experience**
- **97% positive feedback from candidates undergoing the screening process delivered by the screening bot**
- **82% positive feedback from candidates chatting with the careers site bot**
- **5.7% average drop out rate from candidates chatting with Yodel's chatbots**
- **38% reduction in the average time to hire**
- **68,983 candidates screened by the screening bot**
- **9 & 10pm are the peak times for candidates to chat with careers site bot – almost quadruple the amount of peak conversations during regular office hours**
- **A quarter of all conversations took place during weekends**



The exercise reminded us of the sheer amount of information candidates don't know, that we assume they do know; we've now created a more thoughtful, richer candidate experience that we can build on and constantly improve.



Case Study: Royal Mail Group

How Royal Mail created an exciting and inclusive online onboarding experience for their Christmas seasonal workers

Summary

The Challenge

Create an outstanding candidate experience whereby candidates received the information they needed in a timely manner, while reducing the people-hours required to answer their enquiries. Increase engagement and reduce renege and attrition rates. Hire a workforce who were invested in 'delivering Christmas' using a 100% digital process.

The Solution

Three chatbots, to help match candidates to positions, and answer questions at all hours. A Timeline for Onboarding that provided a social media style platform taking candidates from offer to their first week.

The Results

87,000 chatbot conversations, reducing email enquiries by 69%, and answering 80% of candidate questions. 94% of candidates registered for Timeline, with 83% feeling more prepared for day one. Attrition down 50%.

The Challenge

Royal Mail had always held large-scale, face-to-face recruitment events for their Christmas Flexible Worker roles, but in 2020 they moved to an entirely digital recruitment process. This meant that candidates were being asked to do everything online – from applying and having their documents verified to accessing support and completing their induction process.

Whilst the process in 2020 had been a success in terms of attracting, processing, and hiring the numbers needed, the pandemic and uncertainty around jobs and furlough had undoubtedly helped Royal Mail meet their quotes: a situation that was unlikely to be repeated the following year.

A knock-on effect of going completely digital was also the sheer volume of enquiries candidates had during the different stages of the journey, resulting in the Advice & Support team being overwhelmed by incoming emails, hitting 1,000 per day at its peak. This meant delays in getting back to candidates to resolve their queries, which in turn led to a poor candidate experience and a longer time to hire.

Attrition was also proving a concern. Coupled with the increase in consumer online spending and subsequent competition for temporary Christmas workers across the logistics and retail sectors, ensuring candidates were kept warm and engaged once they'd accepted an offer was going to be key. In 2020, a 'Countdown to Christmas' email campaign had been implemented, but it required the team to manually input candidate details, something that was hugely labour intensive for an already over-stretched team.

Objectives

Going into the 2021 Christmas season, the key areas of focus were to:

- Reduce email enquiries to the Advice & Support team
- Provide 24/7 access to FAQs
- Reduce the people-hours required to input candidate details into current Countdown to Christmas keep warm initiative
- Reduce renege/no show rates from point of offer to day one
- Reduce attrition in first few weeks from day one
- Provide a better candidate experience throughout the process

Working with the Royal Mail Group's Christmas Project Team, Meet & Engage looked at how we could implement our chatbot and onboarding technology to meet these objectives, focusing on each stage of the process to ensure maximum impact for both Royal Mail Group and the candidate.

Breaking the project down, we looked at each stage of the recruitment journey separately. How could we create a positive candidate experience and at the same time reduce the burden on the team?



Solution

It was agreed that we would introduce the use of chatbots at each stage of the process, and introduce an onboarding platform to replace the Countdown to Christmas keep-warm initiative. Meet and Engage worked with Royal Mail to create:

Holly, the match-me chatbot

- shared key aspects of the role including a 'day in the life' video at the pre-apply stage
- served up via a plugin on the Royal Mail Careers website's Christmas recruitment pages

Robin, the in-process FAQ chatbot

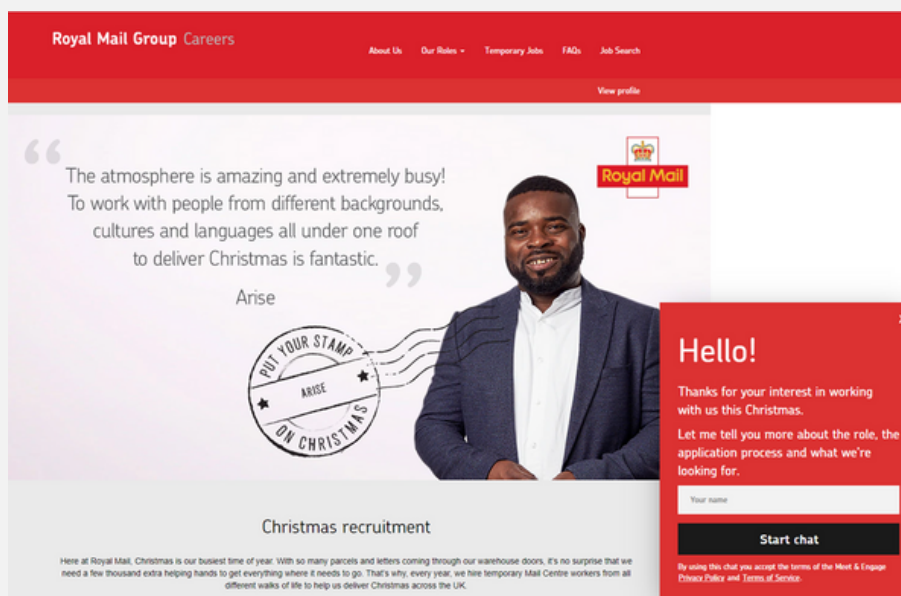
- for anyone at the in-process stage of the recruitment journey
- served up as a full-page plugin via a link within ATS email comms

Nick, the onboarding FAQ chatbot

- for anyone at the post-offer stage of the recruitment journey
- served up within the Timeline platform as well as a full-page plugin

Timeline for Onboarding

- onboarding platform for all those from point of offer accept
- candidates were invited to register via link within ATS email comms



Holly was designed to explain the role of a Christmas Flexible Worker.

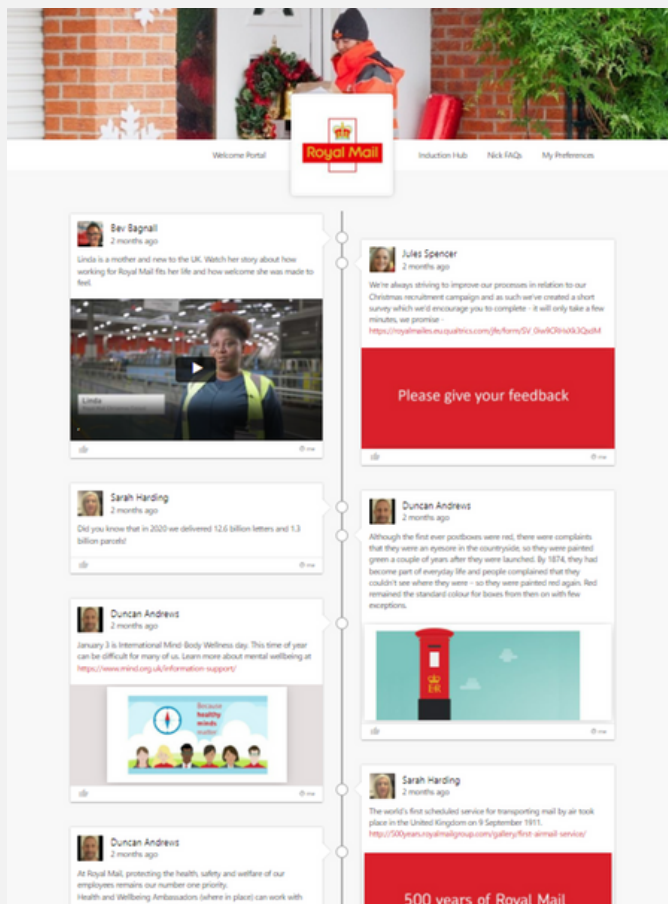
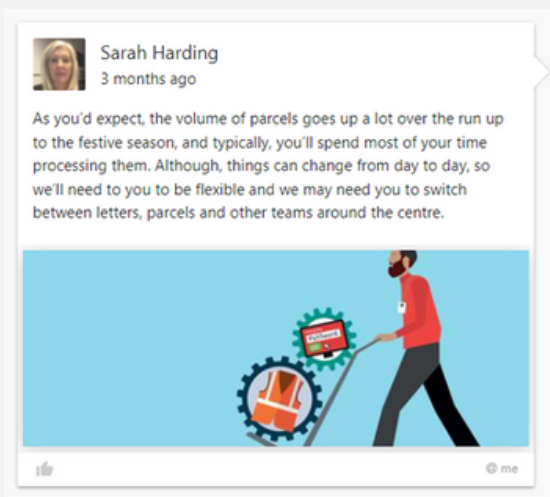
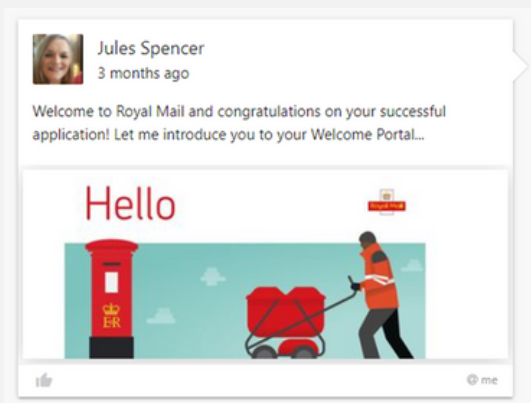
Robin and Nick were designed to help answer frequently asked questions.

Robin and Nick both handed over to an email if the user couldn't find the answer to their question through the chatbot.

Timeline had two distinct flows of content.

The 'Pre-start' flow shared content aimed at supporting the candidate through the induction stage of the recruitment journey – sharing links to the Induction Hub, reminding them to watch the videos and complete the survey.

The 'Post-start' flow had more general content aimed at informing and engaging users once they'd joined Royal Mail.



Results: Chatbots

42% of chatbot queries
were answered
out of hours

87,000 chatbot
conversations

80% of candidate
questions answered by
Robin and Nick

79% positive
smiley face
feedback

69% reduction in
email traffic



Results:
Welcome Portal

94% registration uptake

83% felt more prepared for day one

90% enjoyed their welcome portal content



2mins40sec
average time spent
engaging

x7 average
number of visits

50% reduction in
attrition



Participant Feedback

“Super, loved it, hope to join next year.”

“The chatbot was excellent.”

“Was a great experience to work at Royal Mail, I will do again if I have the opportunity. Thank you.”



Conclusion

The essence of a great candidate experience is about being responsive, informative and communicative to support a candidate throughout their recruitment journey.

It's about educating on the realities of the role, providing answers to questions when they're needed, and sharing relevant, helpful and fun content to help them feel engaged and connected.

It's about making them feel part of the team before they've joined and making them feel they're valued from the start.

For us, this campaign has been a real joy to be part of. It was a true collaboration between a client and supplier, working together to achieve results that at the outset we could only have dreamt of.

Conclusion

It's clear that personalisation at every stage of the hiring journey is fast becoming an expectation on the part of the candidate, and that the employers who successfully employ the principles of positive personalisation will stand out as employers of choice.

It's equally clear that without automation, the level of personalisation expected by the candidate is impossible at scale. At Meet & Engage we support clients to maximise the candidate information they already have, and to create journeys that enable candidates to access personalised support, information, and encouragement in the ways that suit them. There's no one-size fits all approach, which is why we consult with our clients to create a blend of technologies that suit both their business needs and their candidates' requirements.

90% of jobseekers say a single negative candidate experience will change their mind about a role or company. Clearly, the stakes have never been higher. The Meet & Engage platform can help you to inspire, influence and inform candidates, enabling them to navigate the recruitment process. Our solutions are carefully crafted to take your candidate experience to the next level – bring recruitment marketing content to life, elevate your candidate experience and deliver on the promise of your employer brand.

If you'd like to discuss your hiring journey, why not [book a consultation](#) with our expert team.



More information

Meet & Engage is a platform to inspire, influence and inform candidates, helping them to navigate the recruitment process. Our products build confidence through connection and engagement.

Our mission is to make it easier for employers to connect with candidates at every stage of the hiring process – from attraction, to selection, to onboarding, and beyond.

Inspire & Nurture

A suite of inspiring live virtual events and automated talent nurture comms.

Recruitment Process Nurture

Support and inspire candidates from the point of application and onwards – all delivered through a fully automated social-style interface.

Campus Engager

A single solution to automate an engaging keep in touch experience for your student audiences.

Timeline for Onboarding

Create personalised workflows to keep offered candidates warm; to engage, support and gather vital feedback.

Candidate Experience Chatbots

Deliver consistent, on-brand support, 24/7.

To find out more about how our technology could help you achieve your personalisation and automation goals, [book a consultation](#) with our solutions team.

**Book a
Consultation**

meetandengage.com

@meetandengage

