

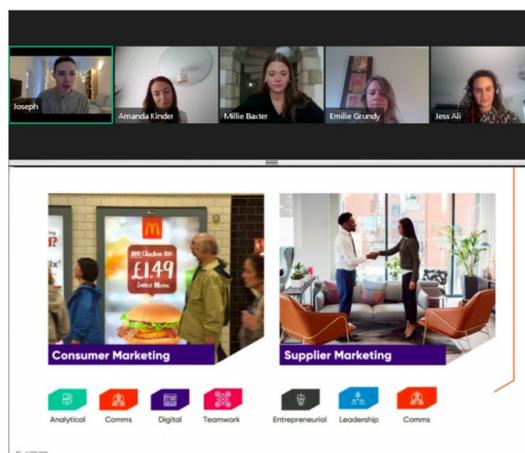
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By Fred  
Searle

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# IGD work experience programme tackles unemployment



Virtual event connects job seekers with food professionals, developing employability skills and boosting candidates' confidence

**I**GD has delivered employability training to more than 500 young people interested in working in the food and grocery sector amid a growing unemployment crisis.

The 'virtual work experience programme', which ran from 1 to 5 February, aimed to kickstart young, unemployed people's hunt for work at a time when they have been disproportionately affected by the economic impact of Covid-19.

IGD is working with the Department for Work and Pensions, and some of the biggest companies in the food and consumer goods industry, to scale up its work experience programme, running four virtual events in 2021.

Fiona Miller, director of people

programmes at IGD, said: "In National Apprenticeship Week (8-14 February 2021), there has never been a better time to focus on the employability skills that young people need to get their foot on the first rung of the career ladder.

"Furthermore, the Government's recent white paper, Skills for Jobs, highlights the importance of engagement between employers and young people and our February work experience programme was supported by some incredible retailers and manufacturers in our industry.

"These passionate volunteers bring the industry to life and provide much-needed contact between professionals and young, unemployed people."

IGD's week-long work experience programme develops essential

employability skills and boosts confidence. Participants in the February programme heard from 18 industry professionals, ranging from CEOs to apprentices, providing expert advice and insight into the food and consumer goods industries.

Experts focused on specific topics including engineering, sales and marketing, sustainability, and technology, highlighting key areas where there are known skills gaps for the industry.

"Our virtual work experience programme is a key part of our mission to train 25,000 young people by 2023, providing invaluable opportunities for participants to develop their employability and life skills," Miller said.

"The feedback we get from young people

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– with 91 per cent saying that the programme helped them to develop their understanding of the skills used in the world of work – coupled with anecdotal feedback from industry volunteers, highlights how much both groups value this experience and the tangible impact it has.

“Some 86 per cent of participants told us they feel more confident about their employment prospects as a result of attending the programme.”

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