

# Graduate Campaign

## Challenge

Having won the Thales graduate account following a competitive pitch, we were asked to develop our work. We were given two key objectives: firstly, to help recruit 100 graduates for their training scheme; secondly, to raise awareness of Thales as an employer. Furthermore, we were asked to achieve this by interpreting their existing brand identity for the UK market.

To begin with, despite being an established global organization, Thales was a relatively unknown quantity among graduates in the UK – particularly outside of engineering circles. So, consequently, there was a lack of understanding not only of them as an employer but what they did as a business. This was, perhaps, our biggest challenge. Their restrictive brand guidelines, which had been developed with a more receptive and well-informed audience in mind, were also a key issue. They were also entering a highly competitive marketplace with established players, such as QinetiQ and BAe Systems to contend with. Our final challenge was time. Having won the business in May, the first materials needed to be delivered by September.

## Solution

Our first task was to build on what we had learned about Thales during the course of the pitch process. In exercises such as these getting to know the client is crucial. So we set about holding internal focus groups to develop a deeper understanding of the organization, its selling points, its strengths; in short what makes Thales, Thales. At the same time, we began to develop the all-important relationship with our key HR and brand contacts to understand their needs, concerns, goals, etc.

A key objective of ours was to establish how far we could push the brand guidelines. Having identified the elements of the brand we believed would work for a UK audience, we set about creating work that accentuated the positives of the existing brand while transforming it into materials that would have resonance with graduates.

Next, we looked at their media inventory. From our experience of the graduate recruitment marketplace, we knew it was important to challenge the client on their past/current media selections and place more emphasis on online inventory. The result was a purely online schedule, with Google at its heart, which featured banners, MPUs, online sponsorship opportunities etc.

Having evolved the brand so it would make an impact in its crowded and sophisticated audience and migrated their media schedule online, we turned our attention to on-campus activity. This centered on a helicopter simulator which, at once, created the buzz we needed to attract attention and engage interest and also communicated a key aspect of Thales work as a leading technology provider. This was a truly end-to-end project. Having drawn on our research, client service, creative and media planning capabilities, we rounded it all off my handling response, managing candidates, introducing an aia-designed ATS and, finally, running assessment centers.

## Results

We were delighted to receive over 200 applications in the first 10 days of the campaign and anecdotal on-campus feedback has been extremely encouraging too.



# Creative Samples

