



Employers have a significant role to play in ensuring that internal processes and policies allow for a diverse pipeline of talent to come through and flourish. Not all creative sector employers are currently in a place to invest in outreach, recruitment and progression practices. Covid-19 restrictions further complicate matters for the foreseeable future. However, research has clearly identified that diverse companies do outperform those who are not.

Where funding and resources are an issue, employers should consider supporting schemes like the Mayor's Fund for London [Creativity Works programme](#) (delivered by Media Trust and A New Direction) that leverage funding and other support from multiple employers. Employers should also consider non-capital intensive contributions like providing staff volunteers to run training or serve as mentors for diverse young talent.

Here, as part of our spotlight on the creative sector, we take a look at how one of the recommendations in our [Manifesto for Change](#) was brought to life for one organisation.

Recommendation 4

Invest in more diverse recruitment and progression pathways to ensure opportunities are accessible and aspirational for all young people who wish to embark on a career in the industry

RESPONSE BY: HAVAS KINGS CROSS, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

What is the HKX Platform?

The HKX Platform is our 3-month placement programme and its aim is to create routes into our industry amongst underrepresented talent. The programme focuses on skills versus qualifications removing barriers to entry. The Platform Alumni are given first refusal on entry level roles within the Havas network.

How does it help to promote social mobility in the industry?

The programme helps to promote inequality in the industry as the focus is on skills-based recruitment which removes the barrier to entry many people experience due to the focus on qualifications, particularly from homogenous educational institutions. The programme recognises the value of diverse perspectives that are needed for our industry to remain relevant. Even through the informal application process, we aim to create a positive experience, inviting candidates to share their stories and experiences using different forms of communication from spoken and written to visual, making the process as accessible as possible.

With regards to social mobility, we pay all candidates the London Living Wage which is above the standard internship salary and support candidates in relocating to London if necessary. Moving forward, we will also leverage our UK network through offices in Manchester, Cirencester and Dublin, encouraging more regional access.

Why does the industry need to invest in initiatives like this?

The industry should continue to invest in these initiatives as there is far too much amazing talent being missed. Being part of the advertising, creative and communications industry, we have a responsibility to craft work that speaks to all of our consumers and their experiences. However, what we lack is the ability to do this authentically due to the lack of representation within our workplaces. The more diverse our talent becomes, the more diverse the work, the more opportunities for creativity and innovation and the more we stay relevant as an industry.

The industry is on a journey of learning and with diversity and inclusion being the focus over the past few years, we need to remain consistent and committed to be the change we want to see. Even during this pandemic, we have to keep the momentum going as the gaps in access and opportunities for marginalised communities are more evident now.

One of the ways we have maintained our energy and focus is through our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 10-point commitments. By writing down our commitments, we are holding ourselves accountable as well as being transparent of the changes we need to make. We are also clear on what actions we need to take to move forward. Part of this work means we are able to build partnerships within the community and support organisations to raise awareness and create opportunities for new industry talent.



What our past HKX Platform interns say:

“The HKX Platform was a great experience as it gave me great exposure to how a global advertising agency operates. Firstly, what was great about this opportunity was the application process, I really got the opportunity to showcase my personality, experience and career motivations, being chosen on these values was really encouraging and confidence building. When applying to large organisations, the process can make you feel as if being your authentic self won't be appreciated, especially as I didn't know many people who looked like me that worked in advertising.

Another great part of HKX Platform was the immediate exposure to working on real briefs and having the opportunity to add value straight away. I believe being supported by my team of experts that I could bounce ideas off of and get advice from was so important in my development. At Havas, I really got to understand how all the individual disciplines worked hand in hand to achieve an overall objective and it was amazing to see. Although it was only three months, it gave me enough insight to know I can build a career in the advertising industry and be successful.”

About Havas:

Our mission at Havas is to make a meaningful difference to the brands, the businesses and the lives of the people we work with. Havas is the only truly integrated marketing and communications company in the UK. Based in London's Kings Cross, the group operates a unique 'Village' concept: 26 agencies – spanning disciplines including advertising, media, data and technology, social, digital, PR and sports and entertainment – all in one building, united under one leadership and with one P&L. It is part of integrated media, content and communications group Vivendi, which also includes Universal Music Group, Canal+, Studiocanal, Gameloft and Dailymotion.

Take a look at the [HKX Platform site here](#)

For general enquiries, [contact us](#)

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