

CASE STUDY

Budgens stocks up with Amris™

NAME: _____

Budgens Limited

INDUSTRY SECTOR: _____

Supermarket / FMCG

Overview

Realising its recruitment practices had become decentralised and fragmented, Budgens, one of the UK's most distinctive supermarket brands, decided to take advantage of the emerging benefits of Internet-based recruitment and develop its own e-recruitment platform.

This culminated in the development of budgenscareers.com – a dedicated recruitment portal powered by Amris technology from the Internet Corporation.

The new site has affected the end-to-end automation of the company's recruitment processes and is set to become a huge success.

“From the very outset, Amris came in and talked not just our language, but our budget too”, says Duncan Turner, HR Manager at Budgens.

“The final solution precisely matches the requirement, the desired look and feel, and all our expectations of quality. In fact, had we drawn up an exact blueprint of what we wanted before the development began, we could hardly have got closer to it than the solution we've ended up with.”

Focus on efficiencies

A familiar name in high street retail since its foundation in 1872, Budgens differentiates itself by designing and stocking its stores to meet the specific and often very different shopping needs of its customers in each of its 200+ locations across the UK.

As an extension of this philosophy, Budgens takes pride in fostering a genuine involvement with the community, right through to its staffing and recruitment policies. For customers, it says, this means optimum choice and a friendly, welcoming environment; for team members, wide variety and huge scope for those with ambition.

Having decided that its recruitment process had become outdated and needed revising, Budgens charged its HR Manager Duncan Turner with researching and implementing a solution.

“Before the project began, it had become apparent that we'd not been focusing enough on underlying efficiencies where recruitment was concerned. Over time, policy had become fragmented, there was no central recruitment hub to speak of, and consequently individual stores had been left very much to fight their own recruitment battles.”

Something, says Turner, had to be done.

“Our HR operation is very streamlined and lean and mean.

“Historically, this has meant that our regional HR managers and officers have been left to manage recruitment under their own steam. Upon further investigation however, we began to realise that these existing processes were both inconsistent and inefficient and were not conducive to making best use of management's limited time.”

Alternatives

Two potential remedies were mooted.

The first was the construction of a dedicated Budgens recruitment team. This option however, says Turner, for reasons including cost, complexity and time, was never really a realistic choice. The second alternative was to go down a technological route – a decision which itself was not taken without hesitation.

“Initially we were nervous about opting straight for a technology based recruitment platform. It was felt that many of the solutions available were relatively untried and untested, and were therefore something of a risk for a company our size.”

In the end however, the company decided that technology was the most suitable course. The search began for an appropriate platform and Turner began trawling the market for a viable Internet-based solution.

It wasn't long before the benefits became apparent.

“Even aside from the compelling nature of e-recruitment as a technology, more and more people are now using the Internet when job-hunting. In fact, it’s become one of the top five uses of the web. That means there’s a massive pool of potential employees out there, all looking for work in the same place – we felt it was important not to get behind the pace of that.”

Backing

Coming to the conclusion that the company should develop its own dedicated e-recruitment site, Turner began reviewing potential solutions.

Among the first was the e-recruitment platform being employed at Tesco’s Peoplebank.

“We liked Peoplebank (the Tesco’s platform) but this immediately became a huge frustration as we simply didn’t have anywhere near the budget to cover it. Of the other potentials we looked at, none really fitted the bill in the way we would have liked either in terms of functionality, budget or both. We had to go back to the drawing board and look at what other avenues were open to us.”

It was then, around a year after Turner’s search began, that Budgens began discussions with The Internet Corporation.

“From the very beginning, The Internet Corporation came in and talked not just our language, but our budget too. We liked the look of the product right away. It worked. And most importantly, it offered an extremely affordable and cost effective package. It was exactly what we were looking for.”

Exact Blueprint

The outcome has been overwhelmingly positive. “We’re simply over the moon with the end result”, says Turner.

“The final solution precisely matches the requirement, the desired look and feel and all our expectations of quality. In fact, had we drawn up an exact blueprint of what we wanted before the development began, we could hardly have got closer to it than the solution we have ended up with.”

“The Amris solution has also proven extremely good value for money and we’re convinced that it will save both time and expense in the short, medium and long terms – especially in the area of graduate recruitment. It’s made the whole process feel almost like we’re running our own recruitment company internally.”

This, he explains, will help reduce the need for the company to use expensive recruitment agencies. “It’s not that we want to cut them out of the loop altogether – agencies can form an essential part of recruitment activity – it’s just about cutting down the need, and Amris does that.”

Turner also believes that its adoption of the new e-recruitment site may help elsewhere – that it could give Budgens greater profile, credibility and professional edge in the recruitment stakes; helping the company take on the biggest names in retail as regards attracting the best people.

There could even be a knock-on effect through leveraging the site to serve a wider purpose.

“Beyond the borders of the recruitment process, the new site could – indirectly – be a useful tool in helping enhance our outward public image, our credibility in the marketplace and, as a result, even our in-store footfall – raising the profile and presence of the company.”

Overall then, the involvement of The Internet Corporation and the adoption of the new technology have paid off?

“Definitely. At Budgens we don’t throw money away on whims. And although the process has been draining and frustrating at times – it’s been incredibly rewarding and worthwhile in the end. I believe that the final result could be one of the best recruitment sites out there and I’m convinced that my faith in the project will be returned with interest.”

In the end, he says, it’s quite simple.

“Before too much longer, if you don’t have an online recruitment platform, you’ll be dead in the water.”

Meeting objectives

From the outset it was clear that both the new site and the recruitment management functionality sitting behind it would need to map carefully to the Budgens group look and feel. To achieve this the company brought in its marketing and design partner, AND Advertising, to work alongside The Internet Corporation in the development of the site.

Says Turner: “It was important that we could meet our recruitment objectives whilst adhering to the company’s wider look and feel – to map the aims of the recruitment site onto those of the Budgens corporate brand without losing the essence or compromising either.”

Collaborating closely, the three companies soon formulated the visuals, the navigation and the functionality of the platform, building a valuable partnership in the process.

In this regard, led by The Internet Corporation the three way partnership that developed between the companies was invaluable according to Turner. The Internet Corporation were incredibly supportive and professional, he says, slotting brilliantly into the relationship between Budgens and AND Advertising.

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