

Social Impact from



IGD is an organisation of two interconnected communities. The profits from Commercial Insight are reinvested into Social Impact, which together work to drive change that makes a tangible difference for society, business and the individual.

We strive to make a positive difference to society by working in partnership with our industry to address the economic, social and environmental issues that matter to us all. We are the catalyst for collective action; trusted and supported by our industry. We work collaboratively, sharing learnings and best practice across our four crucial areas of focus: People, Health, Sustainability and Economics.

Our People programmes focus on giving young people opportunities to develop their employability and life skills, and on building the knowledge and capability of food and consumer goods industry colleagues, so that we foster an inclusive and productive workforce.

Food and consumer goods industry unites to support young people amid employability crisis

The food and consumer goods industry has always been a fast-paced and exciting place to work but the onset of COVID-19 at the start of 2020 thrust the industry well and truly into the national spotlight with the industry working tirelessly to keep the nation fed in a time of a crisis.

As the pandemic has evolved the industry has continually innovated and adapted, from expanding capacity in online shopping to implementing a raft of safety measures in stores so we can continue to shop safely; the speed of change has been incredible.

And as well as responding to the very critical elements of a global pandemic, the industry has come together with IGD to help tackle the UK's burgeoning unemployability crisis created by the pandemic by supporting our virtual work experience programme which provides vital employability skills training to young, unemployed people.

Delivering meaningful interactions in an online world

IGD has a long heritage of providing people with opportunities to develop their employability and life skills and our employability programmes have trained over 50,000 young people to date. In the pre-COVID world, through our Feeding Britain's Future programme, we created structured opportunities for students to spend quality time with industry professionals in workshops held in schools. Of course, as school closed and the country in and out of lockdown, we had to create a new way to reach young people, while also responding to rising levels of unemployment.

We heard from schools that they were still keen to help students prepare for the world of work and so we devised a digital version of the programme that combines our online resources with live webinar events and allows students to access our schools programme from home.

Furthermore, to help tackle rising unemployment, we launched our virtual work experience programme in August 2020. The programme harnesses our industry's huge amount of energy and enthusiasm for people development and equips young people with the capability and potential to thrive in the workplace. Overall, we helped 6,000 young people in 2020, with the support of 500 volunteers from 50 companies in the food and consumer goods industry. By working together, we can build employability and workplace skills to create better opportunities and drive productivity.

Creating impactful interventions to connect employers with young people

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. The Government's recent whitepaper, Skills for Jobs, highlights the importance of engagement between employers and young people.

Virtual work experience programme

"The programme was a fantastic opportunity. The experts answered queries in great detail and had wonderful advice. I learnt a lot and the project I chose was exciting and engaging. I now feel more confident re-entering the working world."

Elsie Davies, course participant



Virtual work experience programme

"Being able to ask questions directly to the experts and hearing about their professional experiences really helps you understand and gain insights of your desired positions and future jobs."

Course participant



Through our partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions and by holding sessions online we can reach hundreds of young people, providing them with vital support and training in a time they need it most.

The week-long work experience programme develops essential employability skills and boosts confidence in a bid to kickstart young peoples' job search. It also highlights the fantastic opportunities in the food and consumer goods industry, which is the UK's biggest private sector employer. Participants hear from industry professionals, ranging from CEO to apprentice, providing unrivalled advice and insight into the world of work. Industry experts focus on specific topics including engineering, sales and marketing, sustainability, and technology, highlighting key areas where there are known skills gaps for the industry.

These passionate volunteers bring the industry to life, providing much-needed contact between professionals and young, unemployed people and deliver essential employability skills training to boost confidence and help people kick start their career.

Johanna Dickinson, HR Director at KP Snacks, said: "KP Snacks has worked with IGD to support various employability programmes over the years. Historically these have been through physical career events or visiting schools. Every colleague at KP Snacks has a Community Hero Day which is an annual paid day off to do something in the community. Many have taken half a day to visit schools and, whilst some were a little apprehensive at first, all return buzzing about their experience. It's clear that our colleagues benefit from these experiences. You can almost see the attitudes change in the faces of students as they learn how interesting a career in food manufacturing is from those on the inside.

"Over the last year, due to the pandemic, IGD adapted their model to be fully online and the Work Experience Weeks have been so successful reaching so many more students. This format also benefited us, with less time needed to be out of the office, more of our team were able to give their time.

"Our CEO Mark Thorpe joined the opening panel on day one of the February week to share with students why Inclusion and Diversity matters to our business and what we are doing to improve our culture. This was a great opportunity for Mark to express our aims and why he is so passionate to bring about change thus further validating our internal strategy and giving us a great internal story we could share.

"We know these events provide valuable help to students in obtaining employment. We also know we can make a great impression on students to help them see our business and our brands positively, further helping us develop our employer brand - and LinkedIn followers! Those from KP who get involved come away inspired by the experience, and whilst you can't see the face of students (due to the format of online events), their questions are always brilliant!"

Generating measurable impact through programmes delivered at scale

Through our latest work experience week in February, we helped to train over 500 young, unemployed people. Our upcoming weeks in May and July are also open to students in Year 10 through to Year 13. In this way, we can help provide experiences of the working world to students who would normally be undertaking physical work placements.

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. The feedback we get from young people – with 91% 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% of participants told us they feel more confident about their employment prospects as a result of attending the programme.

Dionne Lai, a participant of IGD's work experience programme in November, comments on the benefits of the programme.

"The daily sessions with experts were extremely interesting and the deep dive project was such a fantastic opportunity.

"I'm really interested in marketing but had no experience, so hearing directly from industry experts, coupled with my own independent research, meant I could translate everything I learnt into the project and had something tangible to share in interviews.

"The week was an incredible confidence boost; it helped me see I can do anything I set my mind to. This confidence has helped me land my dream job – there were 600 applicants for one role, so I'm feeling incredibly chuffed and happy!"