

Weirdly + John Holland

John Holland boosts grad diversity (and makes hiring managers deliriously happy)

**JOHN
HOLLAND**

Time to hire

90 days ▼50%

Average volume

5000 ▲90%

NXS (cNPS) rating

9.1

Total hires

63

Diversity achieved

48% female in engineering roles

John Holland in Australia is pretty important – an engineering company that comes up with big deals, helps get finance across the line, delivers the projects and then looks after them after they're built. They build airports, universities, stadiums, residential developments, water and wastewater infrastructure, roads and rail and pretty much anything else you can see when you're walking around your city.

Like any big firm, getting the best fresh talent in the door is crucial to their future. Steph Havard, the firm's resourcing advisor, explains that their grad recruitment programme creates the future of the business.

"They become our leaders, so we need the right people and ones who'll stay."

Back before Weirdly came on board, their grad programme wasn't really delivering that.

"We were spending quite a bit of money on an external recruitment agency, and management wasn't overly happy with the quality of the grads who were coming out of it."

There wasn't enough diversity, and hiring managers were left out of the loop. It also took far too long.

"Everyone's going after the same pool of candidates, so time is of the essence to get those offers out."



Want more?

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And, as Steph says, John Holland already had an internal marketing function – they just needed to figure out how to manage the workload in-house, while still securing the best candidates. That’s when we slid into the picture.

Weirdly shook things up

Like we tend to do, Weirdly threw everything into the air. We designed John Holland’s grad campaign so that candidates would move through two phases of assessment before Steph even saw their profiles. The first phase assessed their values alignment.

“If the quiz shows they align with our values to a certain percentage, the candidate could move on to the second quiz, which assessed leadership.” explains Steph.

Instead of piles of CVs, Steph and her team would be looking through profiles, already ranked by ‘fit’ to the company’s most important criteria.

“At first, hiring managers really wanted to see a CV, but Weirdly helped us take them through a journey to see that maybe that wasn’t the right way to recruit.”

A free text field meant the team could still hear about any relevant experience, while a video submission gave candidates a chance to show their creativity and personality.

“The video question was really fun. That made it fun for me when I was shortlisting and made it fun for the grads – it wasn’t just, ‘Upload your CV and hope for the best’”

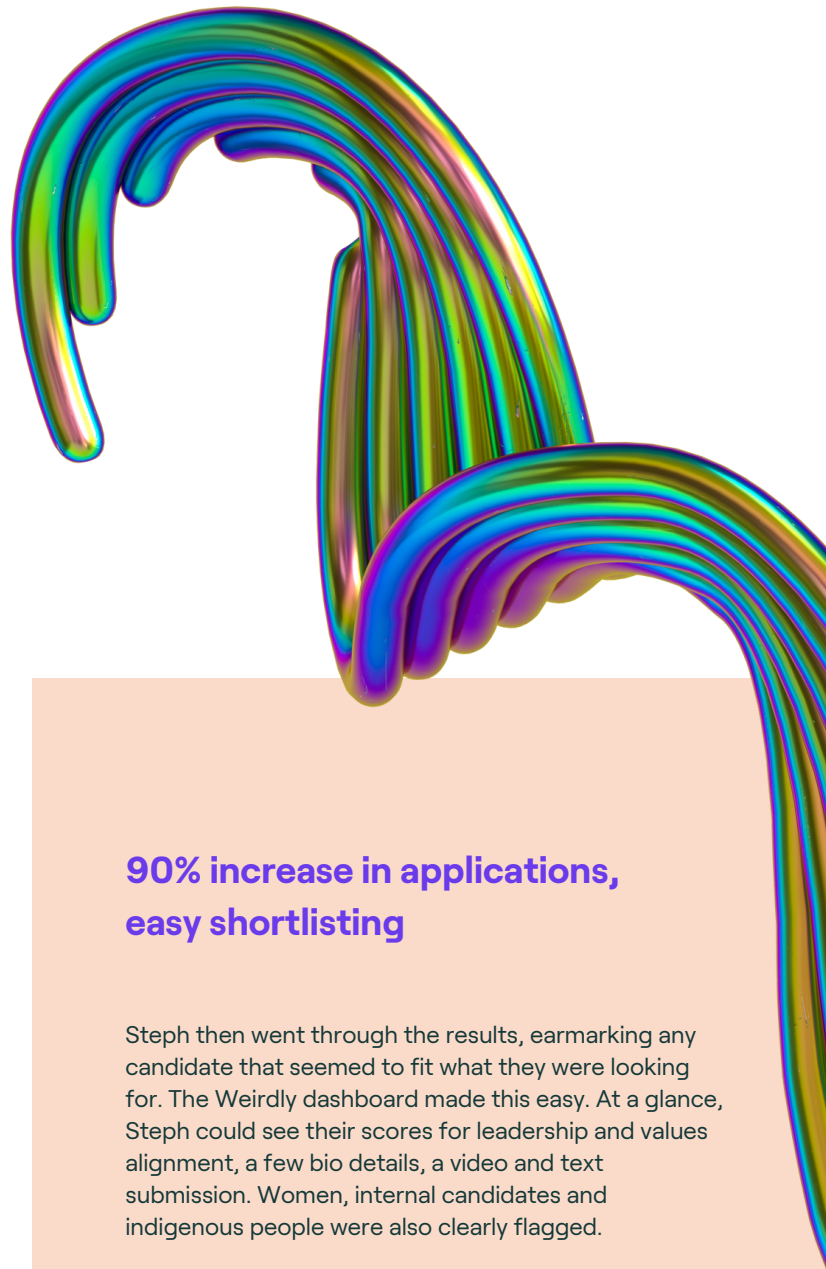
This new way of working didn’t only make things easier for the recruitment team – it also created an exceptional candidate experience.

“That’s their first look at what it would be like to work for John Holland, so we wanted it to relate to what our company culture feels like.

Throughout the process, candidates were also hearing from the company through emails powered by Weirdly – information about next steps or kind and constructive rejection letters.

“Grads feel like they apply to places and then they hear nothing. All the same companies are doing grad recruitment at the same time, so this helped us stand out.

“I always like to ask for feedback from candidates and it was all super-positive.”



90% increase in applications, easy shortlisting

Steph then went through the results, earmarking any candidate that seemed to fit what they were looking for. The Weirdly dashboard made this easy. At a glance, Steph could see their scores for leadership and values alignment, a few bio details, a video and text submission. Women, internal candidates and indigenous people were also clearly flagged.

“We had a 90% increase in applications – over five thousand. That was a massive increase but Weirdly made it so much easier, because only the candidates we wanted to see were in that job posting. I can just imagine the numbers of hours it would have taken in previous years.”

It was at this point that hiring managers got their first look at candidates. This was a massive improvement on earlier years, when hiring managers often hadn’t even seen CVs for the candidates placed in assessment centres. This year, hiring managers were all over it, making their shortlists through a private browsing link.

“The link only lasted a short time – that was music to our security team’s ears.”

Once numbers had been finalised, candidates were sent zoom links, invites to assessment centres and briefed on what to expect – all through Weirdly.

COVID-19 delays turned into a nurturing opportunity

Then, as most 2020 stories go, COVID-19 hit. Some of John Holland's competitors continued with their grad programme, some pushed them out and some cancelled altogether.

"For us, grads are so important, so there was no question of pulling the pin."

Using Weirdly, John Holland only had to push the timelines out by two weeks.

"That's just crazy," says Steph.

Even so, a two-week delay could mean some candidates would lose interest or be snapped up by competitors, so we sprang into action. We created a bunch of emails to keep candidates warm – some were informative about the new timelines or prompting any eligible candidates to complete quiz two. Others were designed to keep the lines of communication open.

"We did a couple of emails that were just lists of cool resources – things to keep yourself busy during lockdown."

One final pat on the back

"I can't recommend Weirdly enough. Overall, it's been amazing. Everyone's loved it – the quality of the candidates is the biggest piece of feedback. It was a really streamlined process and it wouldn't have happened without Weirdly.

"We're now starting to use Weirdly for our apprentice recruitment and looking at running it for interns and undergrads. Weirdly is going to be the way we do things from now on."

Happy to be onboard Steph – look forward to building Australia with you.

John Holland got the results

But yes, it's all down to the results really – and we have them!

Ladies welcome – 48% female grads

John Holland focuses on making sure the workplace supports women, and the Weirdly approach backed up that effort. Instead of judging people on resumes, which can carry over and reinforce societal inequalities, Steph and her team could look at only those who really fit the company. The results?

"Awesome. When we said internally that we'd hired almost 50% female grads, people were like, 'Where did you get them from?!'"

77% of eligible candidates completed quiz two

When you're competing for the best candidates, drop-off rates are a good indicator of the success of a recruitment drive. In this case, a whopping 77% of those candidates with close-enough values alignment went on to complete quiz two.

"That comes down to the Weirdly app being so engaging. People enjoyed the process and found it user-friendly. It also shows there was the right communication to keep them coming through."

Candidates were "too good"

Yes, but did they get any good people? Uh... yeah, we think you could say that. Some streams had planned to hire only one grad, but when they saw the quality of the people in the shortlist, they hired all four.

"They loved them so much. They said, 'It's too hard to choose. Let's take them all!' We made it hard for the hiring managers – that was the feedback overall. The quality of the candidates coming through was so good."

Really happy hiring managers

And how did the hiring managers go without their beloved CVs?

"We thought getting these not-very-tech-savvy people onboard was going to be such a hassle and then they came out of it saying they loved it. They all want to do virtual assessment centres now, which is crazy."