Opencast

Opencast needed to double its team. Job adverts weren't going to do it.

How treating recruitment like a customer campaign, and rebuilding a marketing team's confidence to run it, helped one of the UK's fastest-growing tech consultancies double its consulting team in six months.

CLIENT
Opencast, Newcastle-founded tech consultancy

THE BRIEF
"Marketing doesn't seem to be working. Can you spend time with the team and tell us why?"

ROLE
Interim marketing lead

TIME
Six-month contract, February to August 2022

100 to 200
consulting team doubled in six months

4 UK cities
where Opencast became a visible employer

1 team
rebuilt, and handed to a new Head of Marketing

WHAT I FOUND

Opencast needed to almost double in size to keep up with client demand, competing with the Big 4 for talent. Its work was UK-wide, but its reputation as an employer stopped at the North East.

It had a strong, purpose-led culture that nobody outside could see, and recruitment meant posting job adverts. The marketing team was busy, but the activity wasn't moving the needle, and nobody felt safe to try something new. Highly ambitious goals needed creativity. It wasn't time for timid.

MY APPROACH

I was asked to spend time with the team and find out why marketing wasn't working. My diagnosis was that this was as much a change programme as a marketing problem: the team needed fire in its belly and a clear direction. It had to stop thinking of candidate attraction as more job adverts, and be bolder.

When the Marketing Director moved on, I took the reins with three priorities: **rebuild the team's confidence**, **treat candidates as customers** and **make Opencast's people the attraction story**.

1

LEAD THE TEAM
SPRING 2022

BUILDING BRAVE

DIAGNOSIS A team with the wrong leader helps no one. After the difficult but necessary decision to part ways with the Director of Marketing, the team was understandably shaken, and was keeping its head down at exactly the time the business needed it to be bold.

ACTION I moved quickly to give the team clear direction and security, and replaced busy work with a test-and-learn approach: fewer things, done better and bolder, where trying new things was expected rather than risky. The team had seen itself as internal comms and recruitment helpers. I wanted them to see themselves as brand marketers and campaign creators, so I changed the pace to match.



Candid photography: letting people feel the culture

RESULT: a team with the confidence and enthusiasm to try new ideas, and a wider business ready to tell its own story. That shift in mindset made everything that followed possible.

2

WIN CANDIDATES SPRING TO SUMMER 2022

RECRUITMENT AS A CUSTOMER CAMPAIGN

DIAGNOSIS In a tight market, candidates compare culture as much as salary. Job adverts alone would never find 100 people. Recruitment needed what any customer campaign needs: an identity, a point of view, distinctiveness in the market and some welly behind it.

ACTION I walked the business through the case for a media agency, then pitched and appointed one to run a multi-level content campaign, testing and learning across digital channels, including more science behind LinkedIn. To feed it, I developed Opencast's employer value proposition from team interviews. Opencast's people were its biggest selling point, so they became the content: striking films and photography, distinct from competitors' styling, with candid stories and quick-cut footage of the newly refurbished offices to show the culture and environment. I levelled up skills too, with a LinkedIn playbook for the team and training for the leadership team to become social media ambassadors.



The new candid style

RESULT: a faceless tech brand became one candidates could see and feel before they applied. In three months, LinkedIn followers grew 20%, with 208,000 impressions and an engagement rate of 3.1%. The quality of candidates coming through the door improved, and Opencast moved quickly towards the extra 100 people it needed.

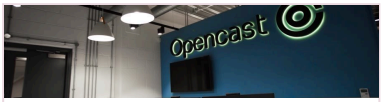
3

ENERGISE THE TEAM APRIL TO JULY 2022

ENERGISING THE EXISTING TEAM

DIAGNOSIS The existing team was Opencast's best asset. While recruitment was national and hubs were popping up in key cities, the core local team needed to feel part of the growth, in a positive way.

ACTION I positioned the new city hubs as proof of new jobs in each city, with open house events, trade press and social content. I bought distressed bus stop space on the walk to the Edinburgh launch: out-of-home is an unusual way to drive recruitment, but the existing team's pride at seeing it created shareable content. To keep the Newcastle roots while going national, I secured Opencast a Shaun the Sheep on the Tyne sculpture, a moment of levity for the local team to get behind, and more content for social. I also helped shape the annual conference, bringing the remote and local teams together.



The new Newcastle HQ



Shaun on the Tyne



Room to meet

RESULT: coverage in Prolific North, Scottish Business News, the Edinburgh Evening News and Insider, positioning Opencast as one of the UK's fastest-growing tech consultancies and a UK-wide employer. The Shaun sculpture went live in 2023, seen by up to 25,000 people a day.

WHAT CHANGED

In six months, Opencast doubled its consulting team and became a visible employer in four UK cities. Just as importantly, its marketing team changed how it thought: from busy and cautious to confident, creative and bold.

I was asked to take the role on permanently. Instead, I recruited a new Head of Marketing and handed over a structured, motivated team, ready for the next phase of growth.

> “Jayne was a fantastic collaborator on our goal to raise awareness of Opencast as a UK-wide employer, building on our strong North East regional reputation. She brought energy, creativity and real impact that enabled us to double our consulting headcount from 100-200 people over 6 months. We attracted high calibre direct applications and communicated our culture externally in a compelling way to support candidates choosing us in a tight talent market.
>
> **Cate Kalson, Chief People Officer, Opencast**

LinkedIn figures from Opencast's channel reporting, March to May 2022. Headcount figures from Opencast.

Jayne Andrews

Jayne Andrews FCIM

Fractional Marketing Director. 30 years' experience, agency and client side. Global campaigns, with experience working in the UK, Australia and the USA.

Need an interim senior marketer?

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