



Examples
of our work

A new corporate brand

In April 2021, Vodafone launched their new brand positioning 'Together we can', which celebrates the power of the human spirit working together with technology. It reflects Vodafone's vision of being a tech comms company, rather than a telecommunications one, and strengthens the business's purpose-led approach to create stronger relationships with their customers.

At the same time, Vodafone was carrying out research into what candidates prioritise when looking for a new job, as well as the main reasons people value working at Vodafone. Internally, this research was conducted via a series of surveys, whilst externally Vodafone drew on extensive data from Universum, LinkedIn and Link Human's Employer Brand Index.

Creating a new employer brand

Now that Vodafone had a new corporate brand, new messaging around being a purpose-led tech company and lots of insights into what candidates look for and why existing employees enjoy working at Vodafone, we needed to pull it all together into a new global employer brand.

The new employer brand needed to capture the collective drive, passion and restlessness that defines the business and makes it an ideal place to build a career. It also needed to communicate what the business stands for, help people understand its behaviours and beliefs, and celebrate all that's great about life and work at Vodafone.

Thus, before we could start creating attraction and engagement materials for our different audiences, we first had to take a step back and clarify exactly what 'Together we can' meant in the context of a global EVP.

Built on solid foundations

On the back of extensive internal and external research, we supported Vodafone's Global EVP Working Group to co-create a positioning statement that underpinned the employer brand promise. This was supported by four key principles – or EVP pillars – each with its own individual narrative and a clear set of proof points.

Considered as a whole, this framework captured the most compelling reasons to work at Vodafone. And provided a solid foundation on which we could build our employer brand.



EVP Brand Model

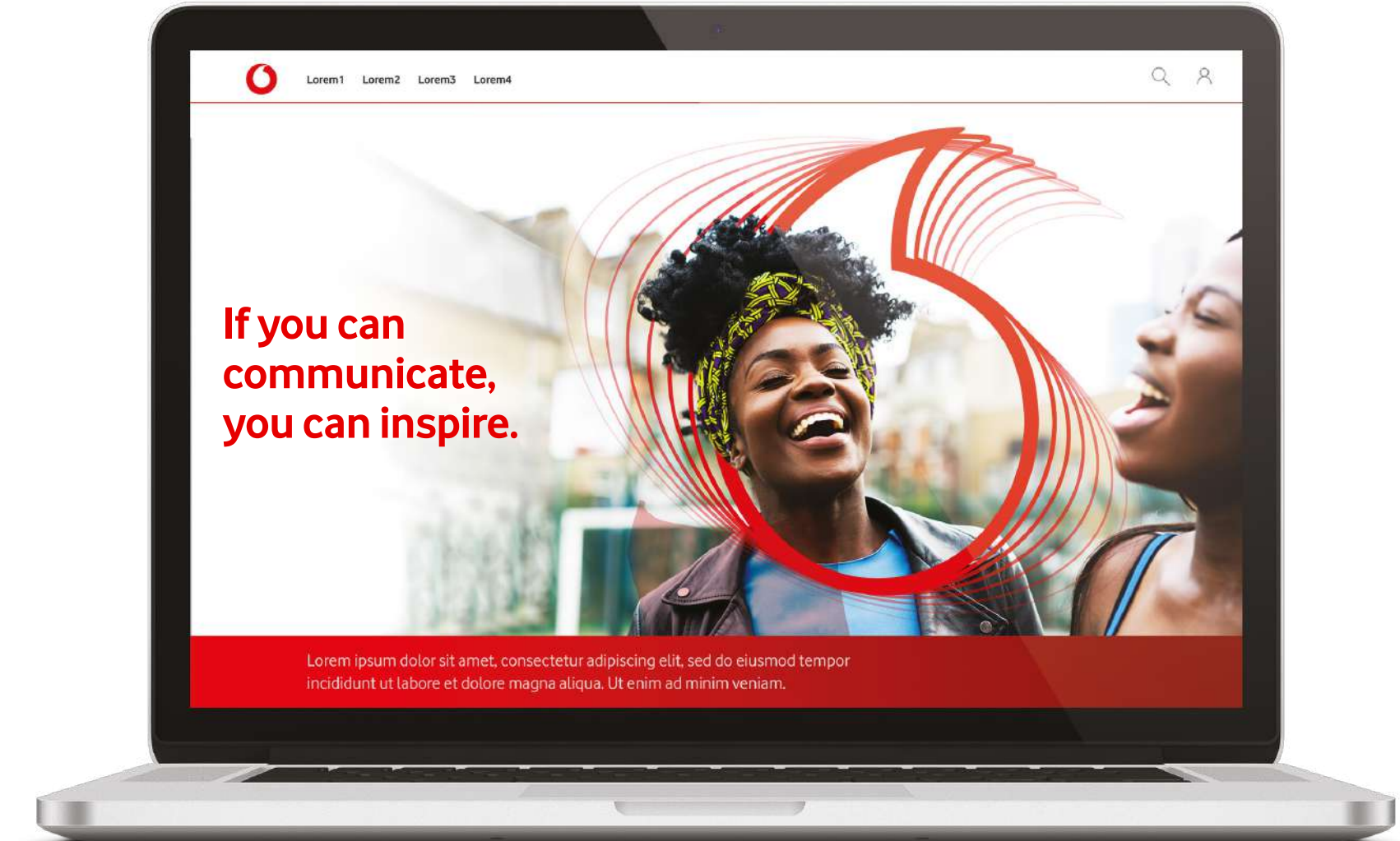
Bringing the brand to life

Once our EVP was in place, we were able to start exploring how the new brand would look and feel. We defined imagery styles, developed headline structures and created a comprehensive set of guidelines on how the new employer brand worked.

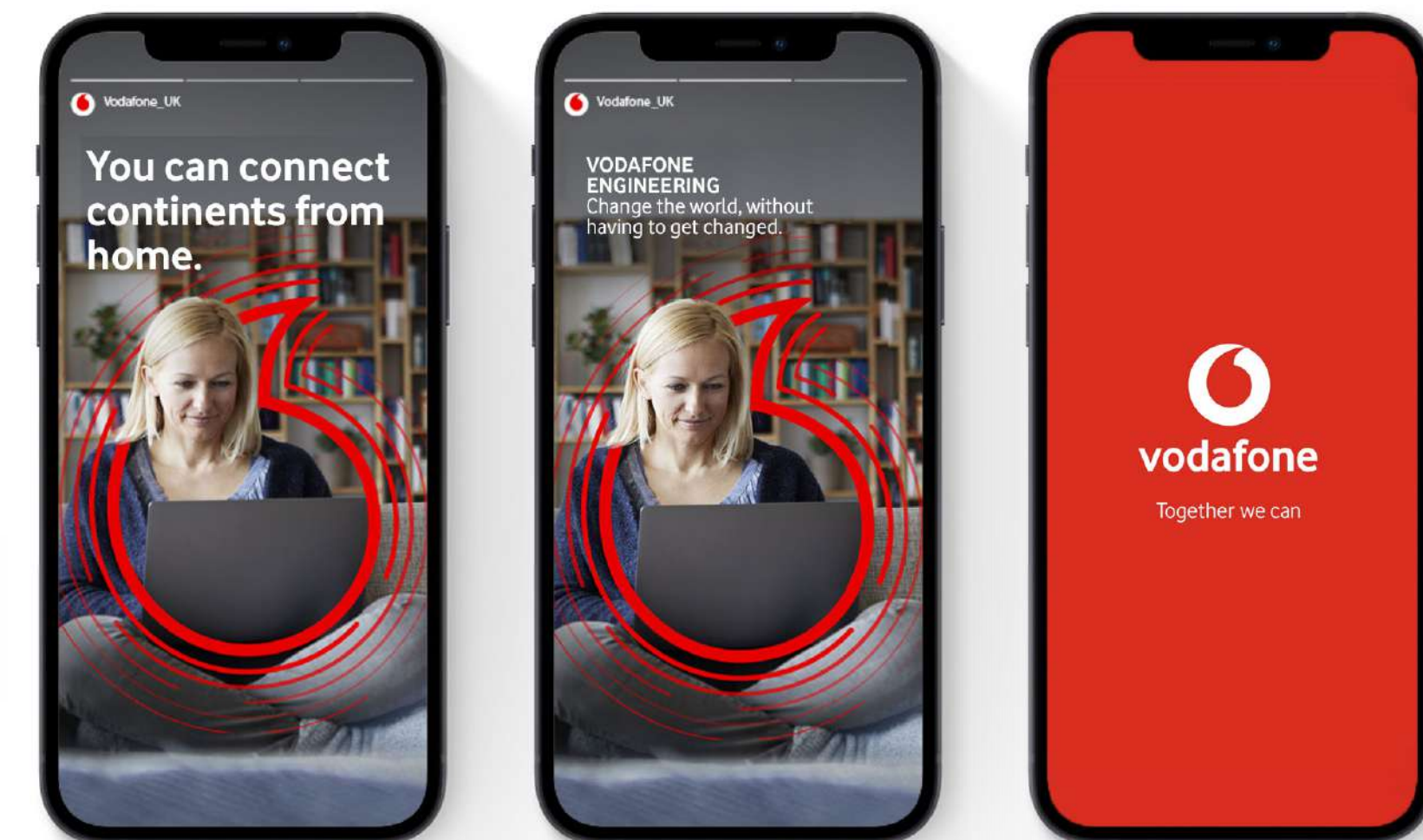
Vodafone even ran a photography competition, which we judged. The competition encouraged employees around the world to capture photos of themselves while working from home. The results were amazing too, allowing us to capture the authentic and dynamic people shots we needed, at a time when photoshoots were out of the question.



Poster
Facebook post



Microsite
Instagram story



Collaborate to create

Whether we were articulating the EVP or developing new assets, our approach to creating the employer brand was clear from the start: collaborate as much as possible and empower people throughout the business to champion the new brand. This involved near-daily WiP calls between us and the client, weekly or bi-weekly working group sessions involving stakeholders from different markets and presentations of the work to HR partners around the world.

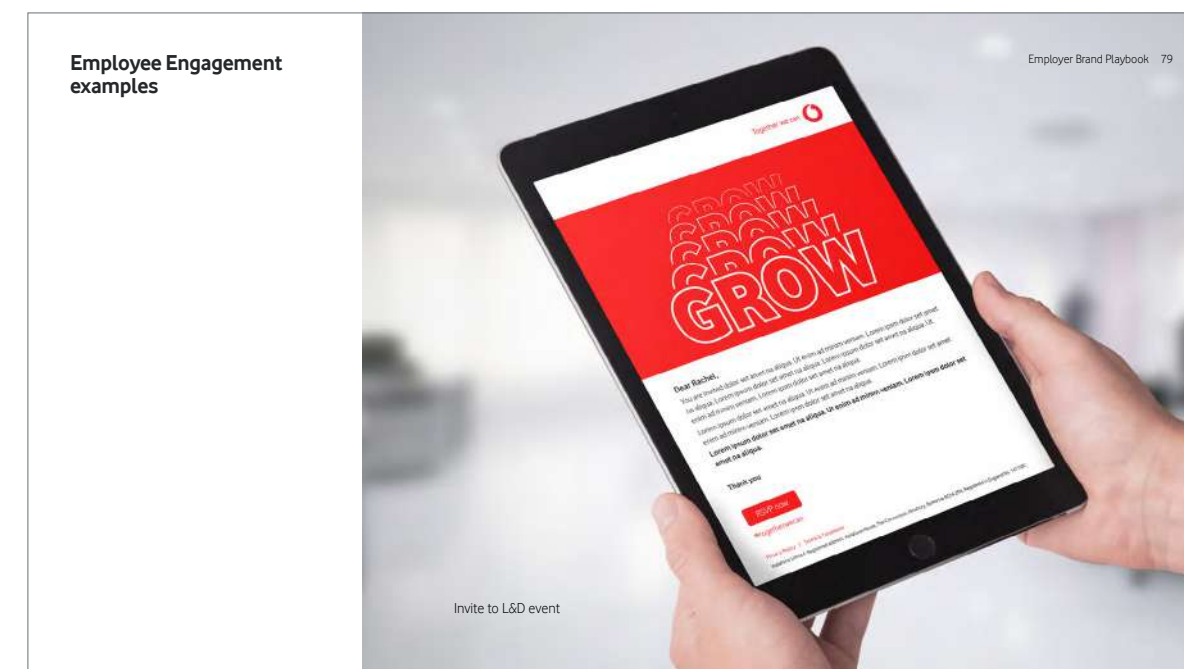
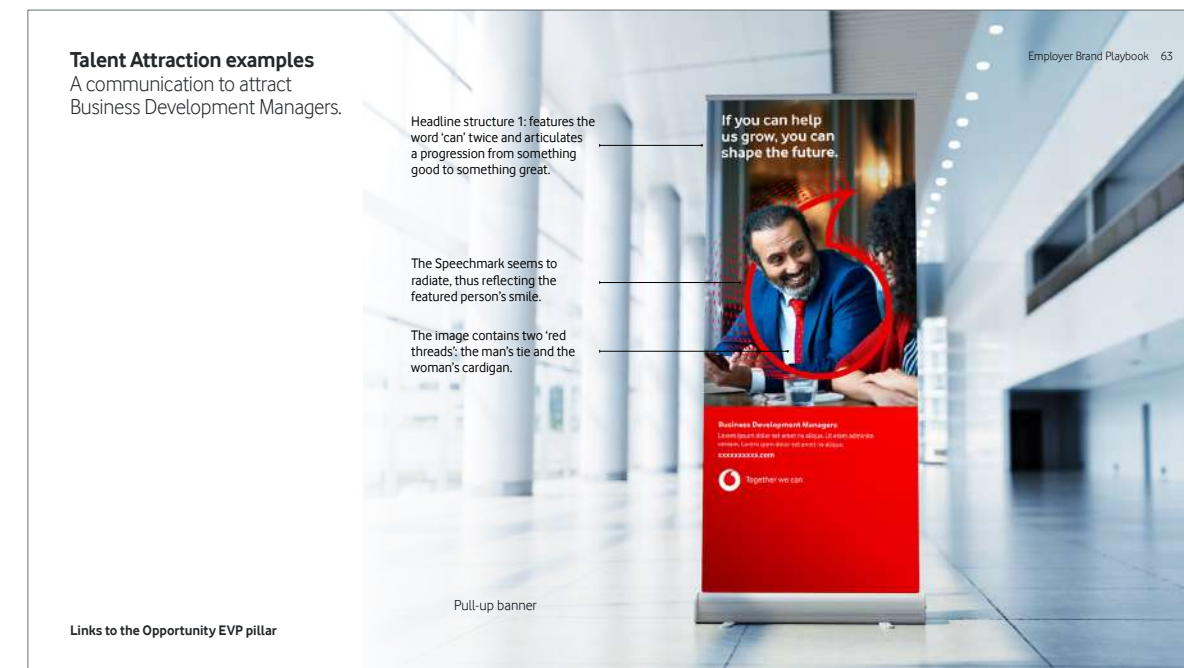
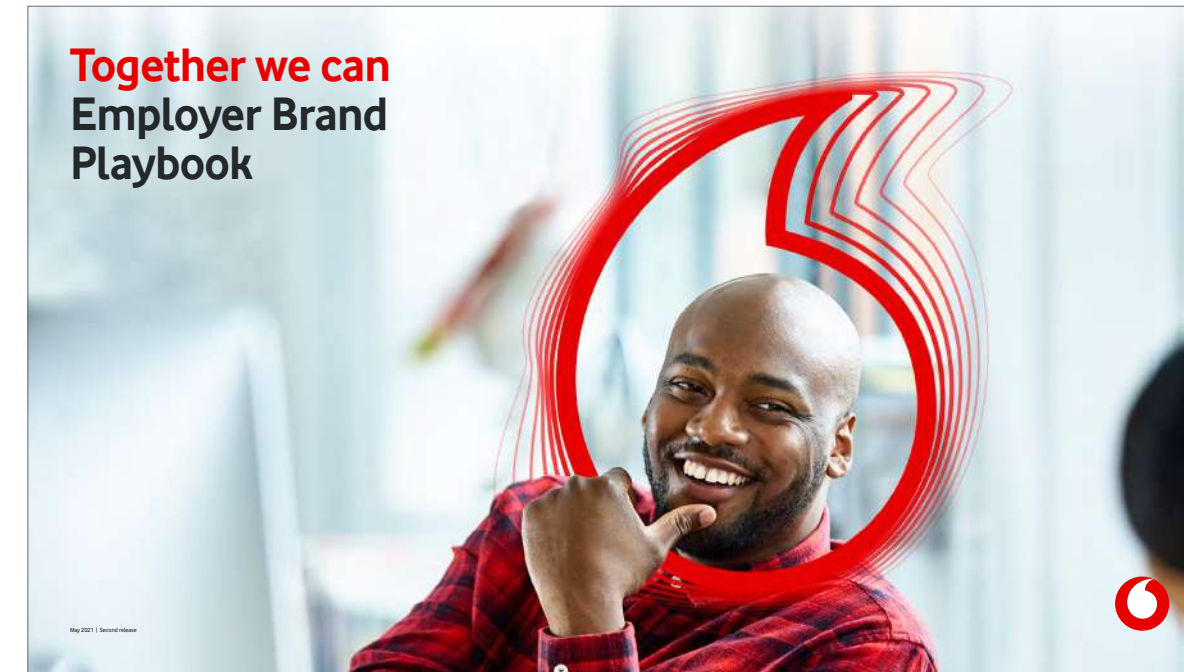
At every stage we invited feedback, debated ideas, considered our audiences and fine-tuned the work. By embracing a highly collaborative client-agency process, and getting as many people involved as possible, we were able to ensure that the new brand would resonate throughout the business and speak to our target audiences.



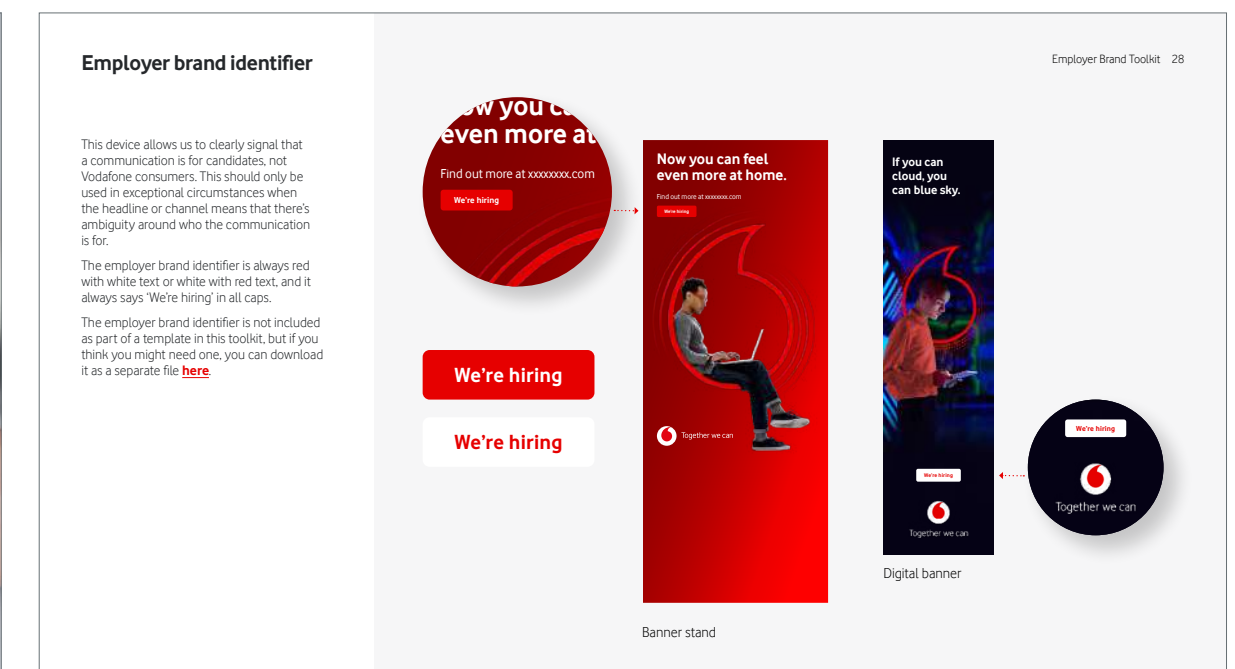
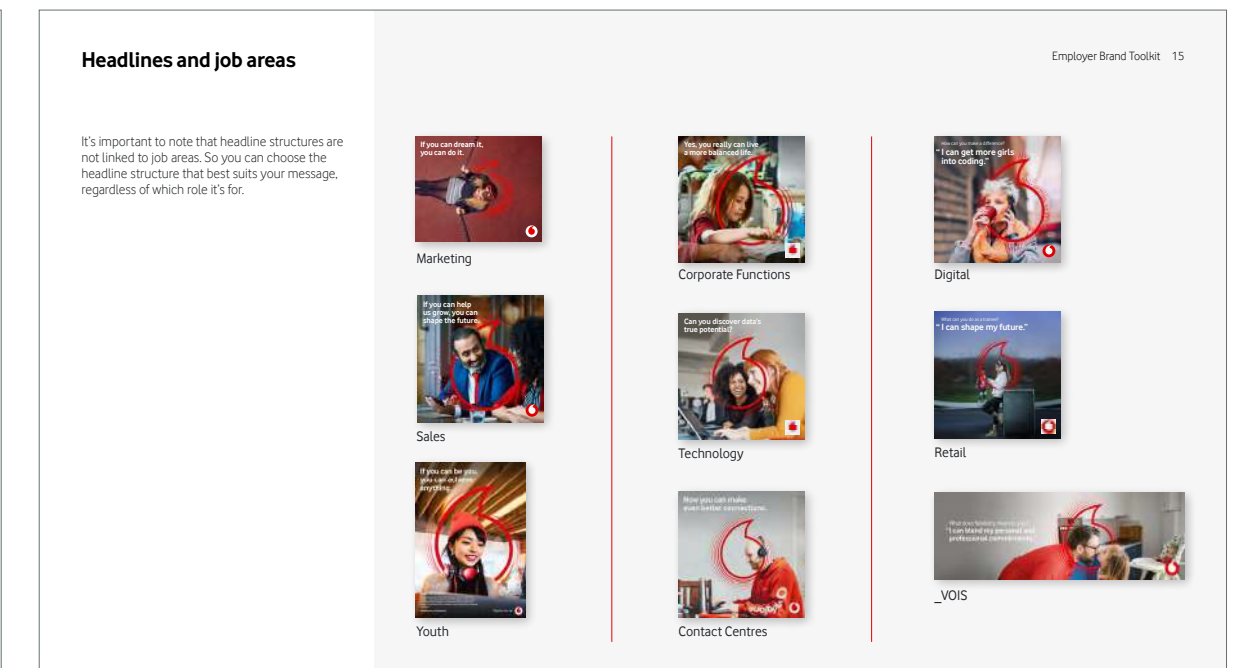
Setting out some guidelines

Variety and creative freedom are good qualities to have in an employer brand. But so too are integrity and consistency. With that in mind, we created a Playbook that set out the thinking behind the employer brand, together with clear ground rules for how it should be applied.

We then created a Toolkit full of easy, drag-and-drop templates, so that anyone at Vodafone could start making their own employer branding assets. These include social posts, printed and digital adverts, exhibition stands, branded videos and more.



Playbook spreads

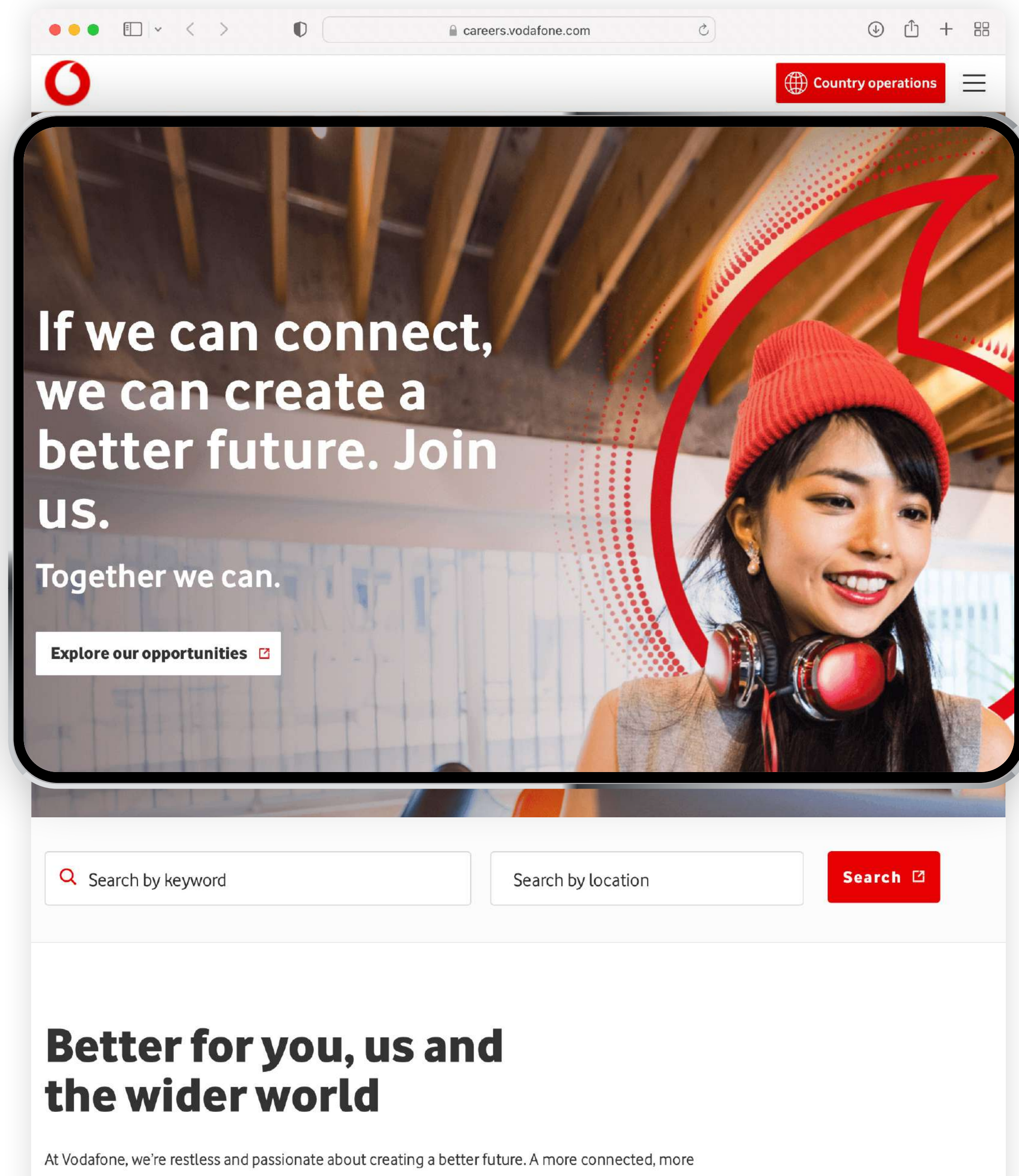


Toolkit spreads

Rebranding the careers site

The careers site had a radical makeover, with a new design and completely revised content that really brings the brand to life.

Careers website

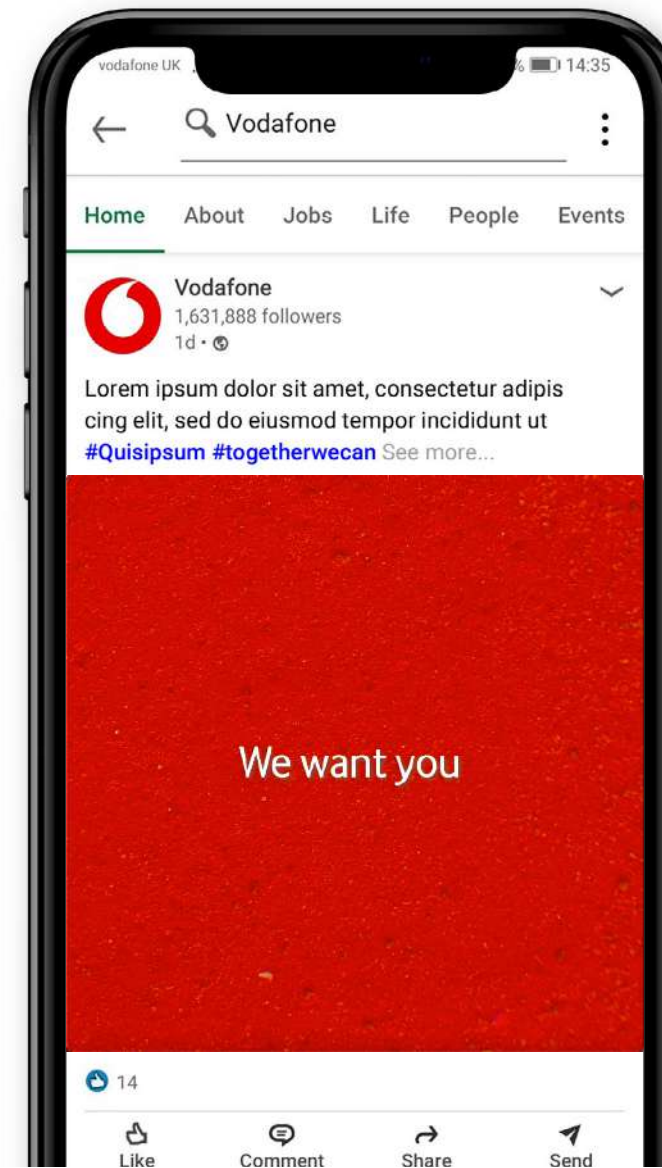


Preparing for launch

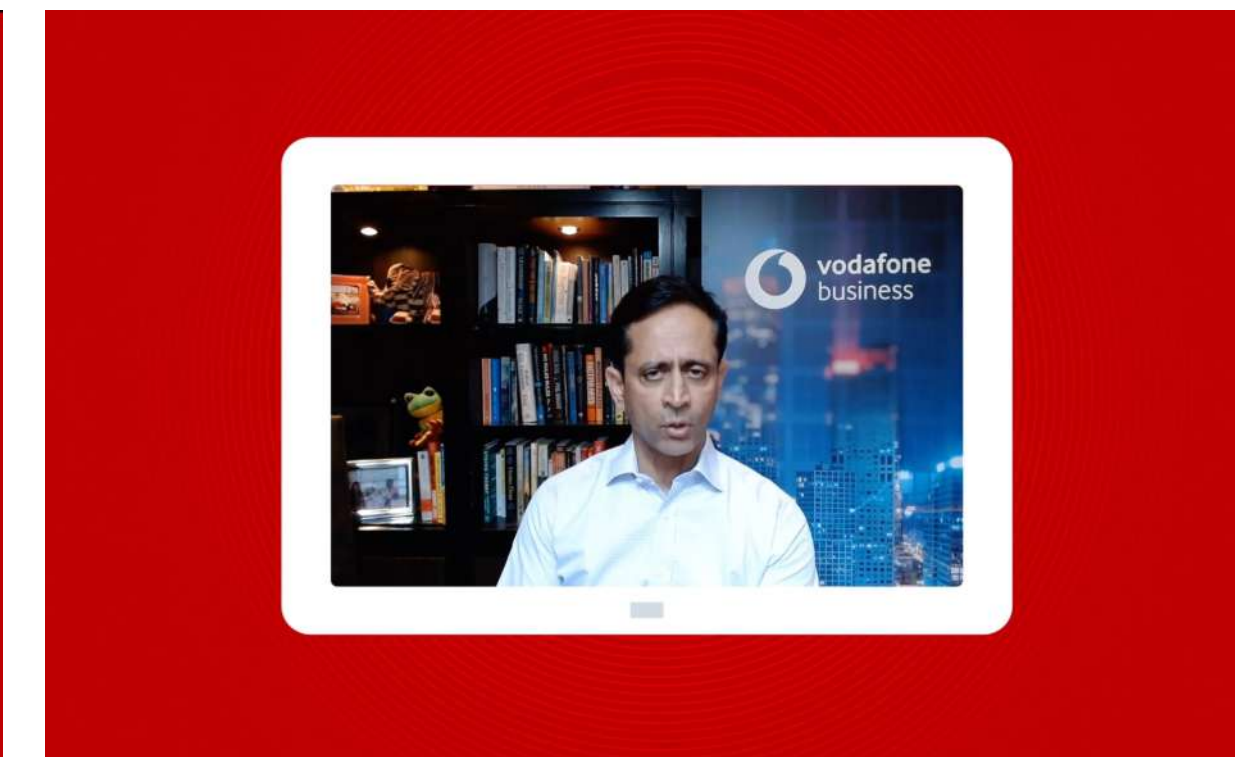
To bring the new brand to everyone's attention, we partnered with Vodafone to develop a series of short, shareable social films focusing on each of the four EVP pillars, and supported them in their creation of a longer launch film that could be used anywhere, including on the homepage of the careers site.

And of course, the brand extends to internal comms too. Like the Leadership Development film, which we created to promote Vodafone's new Leadership Development Programme.

[Click here to watch the Leadership Development video](#)



Careers video



Results that speak

The launch of the new employer brand has not only had a galvanising effect on people already working at Vodafone but, as you can see here, the results indicate it's positively influenced candidates too.

	April/May 2020 (before launch)	April/May 2021 (after launch)
Number of people who signed up for the talent community	73,737	167,410
Number of applications started	120,364	146,735
Number of applications completed	92,571	145,510
Number of careers site visitors	1,125,864	1,462,959

Quotes that tell a story

As much as we love the stats, we love hearing voices from across Vodafone that show the new employer brand is inspiring employees and making them feel more engaged.

“

I was thrilled with the level of engagement and buy-in that we achieved with our global EVP: it scored an 8.7 excitement rating when we tested it at our global training sessions (150+ participants) and it's great to see how this has translated into EVP-driven campaigns since we launched in April 2021. I'm grateful to my colleagues in the Global Working Group for co-creating our framework, and we couldn't have designed and rolled out our new employer brand on time without the support and partnership of Blackbridge Communications, who were an integral part of our team and showed incredible drive and dedication in helping us get this over the line for April.”

– Dawn Hollingworth
Global Head of Employer Branding
and Talent Attraction at Vodafone

Apprenticeship Initiative

The Background

Rolls-Royce's apprentice strategy has been in place for over ten years. The company hires around 500 GCSE and A-Level students each year for a range of programmes spanning business, operations and engineering functions.

The programmes were launched in response to a scarcity of skill and were designed to enable Rolls-Royce to grow their own talent. They are a core part of a workforce planning strategy to build a sustainable people business.

The highly-rated apprentice academy at Rolls-Royce's HQ is a state-of-the-art facility that's home to 14 distinct practical, technical and degree apprenticeships.

They bring together classroom study and on-the-job learning with plenty of practical guidance and support to help candidates gain valuable skills, sought-after qualifications and establish a solid foundation for a successful career.

The Objectives

The apprentice strategy is aligned with Rolls-Royce's core business objectives:

Raise awareness

Promote Rolls-Royce's brand to school-leavers and maximise early careers applications.

Change perceptions

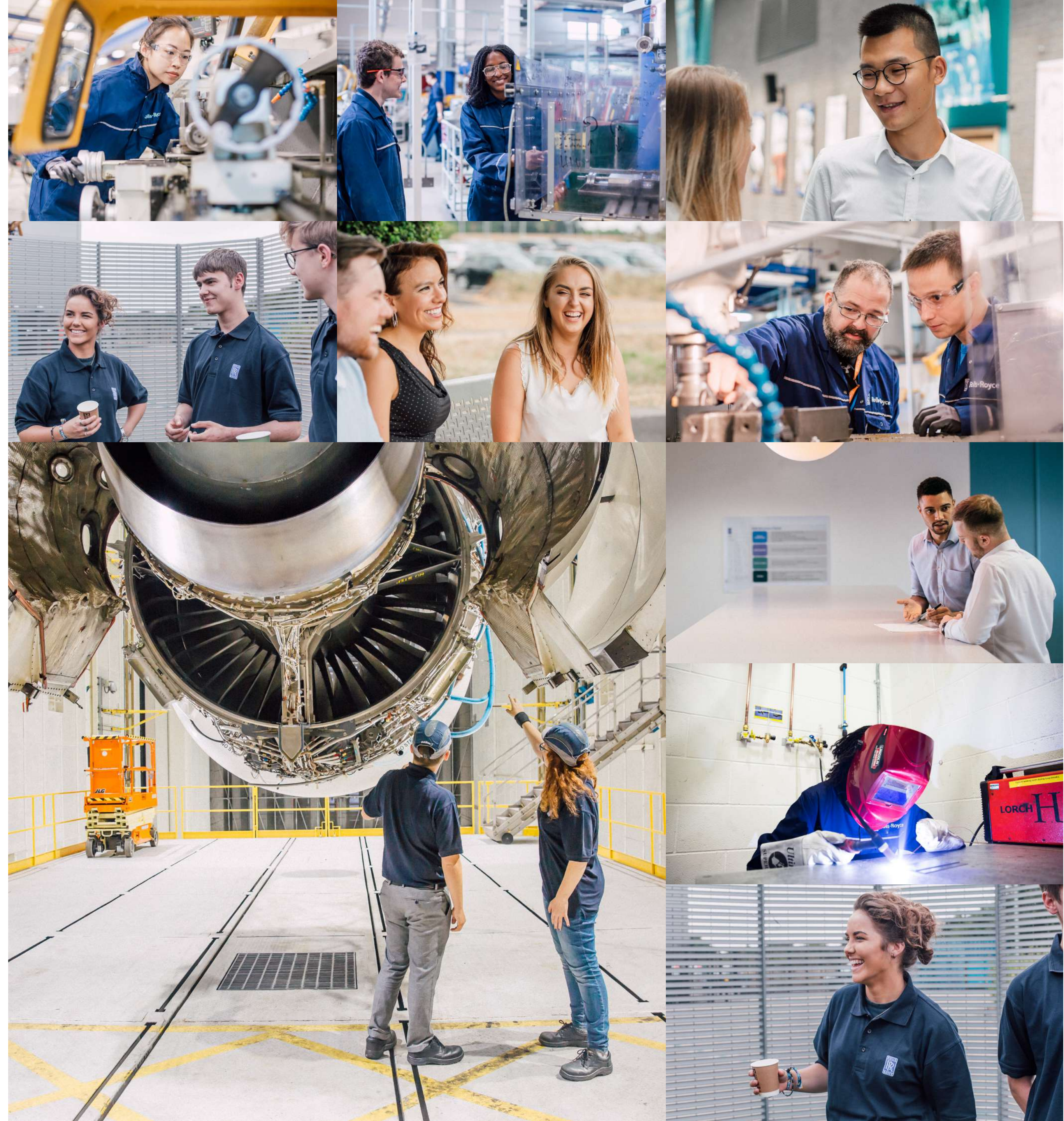
Tackle the misconception that Rolls-Royce is a car manufacturer by showcasing its vast range of innovative power solutions.

Increase diversity

Boost the number of BAME and female applications.

Optimise engagement

Use data to drive a targeted and optimised channel strategy encouraging candidates to engage with Rolls-Royce online.



During National Apprenticeship Week, our challenge was to address all four of these objectives with a single social media campaign.

Our plan was to bust some of the myths around apprenticeships. Myths that apply to apprenticeships in general and Rolls-Royce in particular.

Apprenticeships are for people who don't do well at school

You're only there to make cups of tea

You can't get a good qualification doing an apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are only available in manual industries

Apprenticeships are low quality

Apprenticeships don't lead to full-time work

Apprentices will never earn much

Most apprentices are men

16 is too young to do an apprenticeship

It's a poor second option to going to uni

But it was the execution – and the people involved – who really brought the idea to life. We gathered 14 Rolls-Royce apprentices together in a room, and filmed them – in pairs – responding candidly to apprenticeship myths pulled out of a hat.

The resulting footage was far more interesting, engaging and fun than any tightly-scripted corporate video. And it provided us with enough material to create our entire social media campaign.



Armed with this footage, we set about creating a series of videos that would not only jump out on people's social feeds but be something they were keen to share with other prospective candidates.

We started with two 120-second hero videos, but ended up producing 30 videos in all (each around 45-60 seconds long). Each video featured different conversations and had a specific audience and social platform in mind.

'Only for men' video

'Never make any money' video

'Only here to make cups of tea' video

Myth: Engineering apprenticeships are only for men

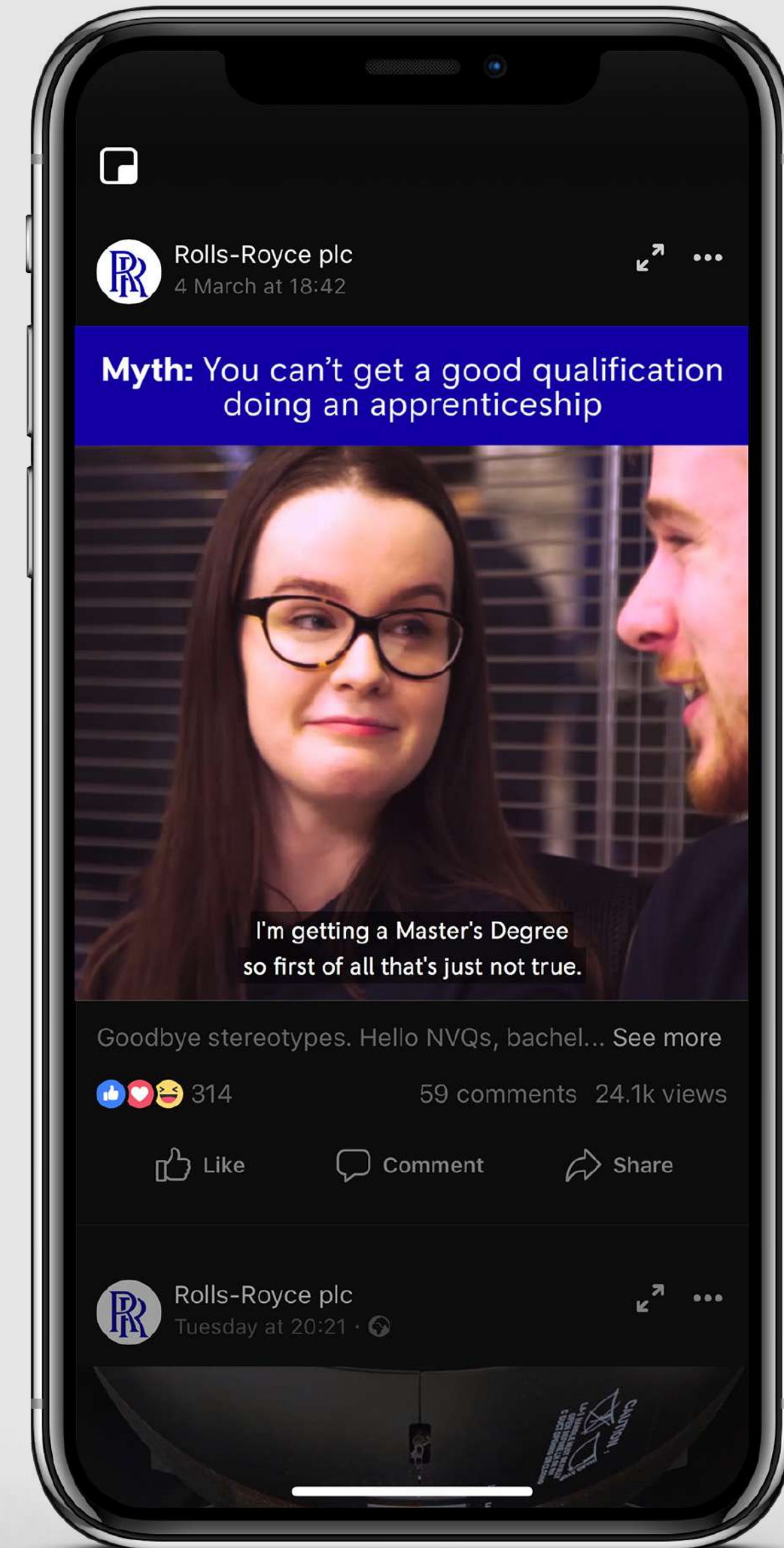
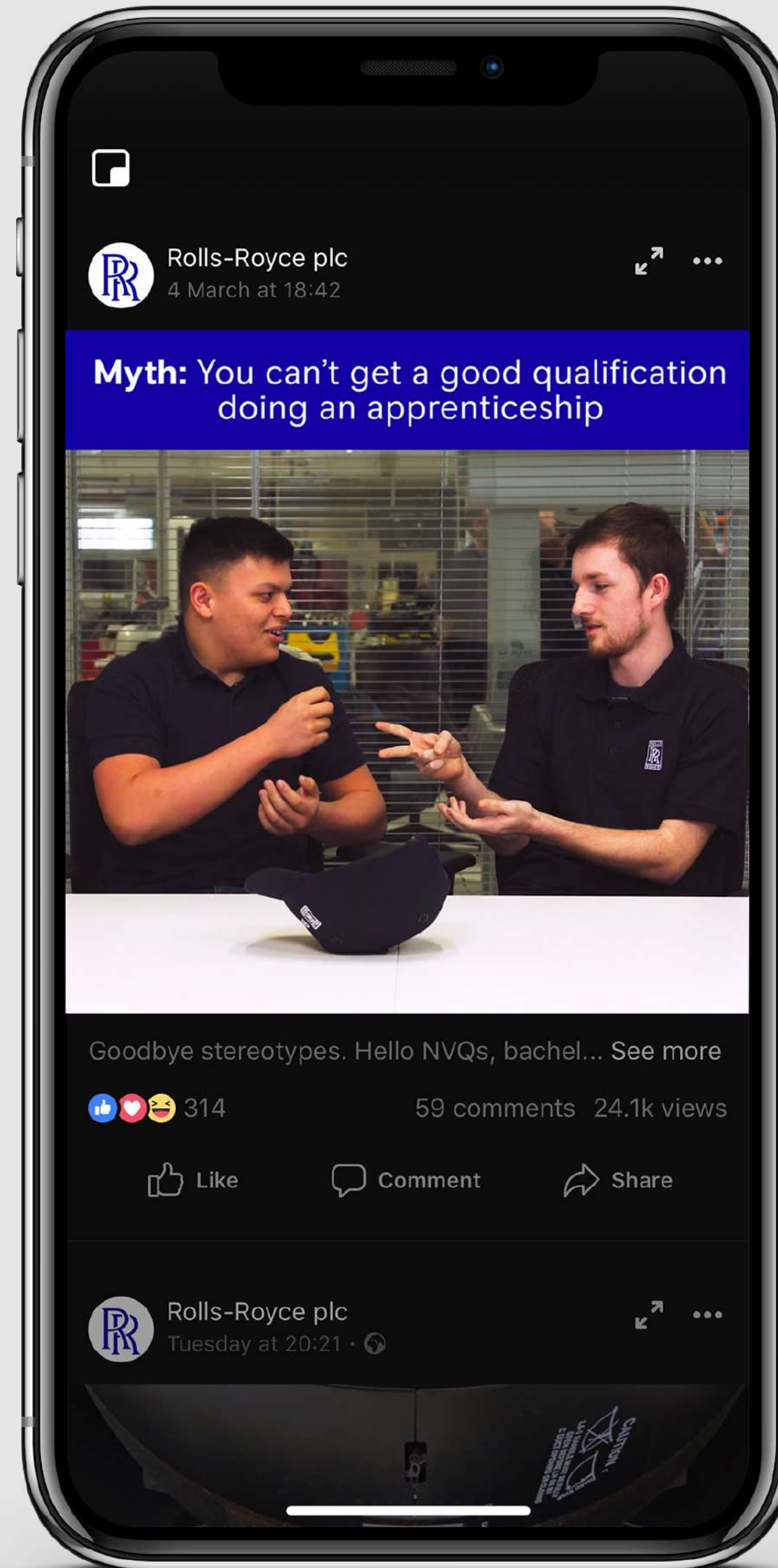


Myth: Engineering apprenticeships are only for men



From a technical standpoint, the 30 videos were created specifically for social, with:

- Formats and aspect ratios optimised for each platform.
- 'Meme bars' so viewers could jump in at any time and still understand what the conversation was about.
- Subtitles, as research shows that most people consume social media without sound.



The videos were well received and proved extremely shareable.

Target audience tagged their friends.

Parents tagged their kids.

People shared their own experiences.

Gerard Komander You can't imagine how lucky you are to get an apprenticeship!
Like · Reply · 12w

Ivor Godley paid to learn and get the qualifications for the job you want - perfect
Like · Reply · 12w

Plamen Petrov Take meeee!!
Like · Reply · 12w

Jane Le Sueur Great opportunities !
Like · Reply · 13w

Mark Llewellyn Do it, do it, do it! Best way to learn and train in probably the best engineering firm on the planet!
Like · Reply · 12w

Jon Eno Love it Isabel FitzGerald Uber proud!!!
Like · Reply · 13w

Vicky Turbin I'm surprised everyone with stem skills and an interest in engineering isn't applying! My son got an apprenticeship with RR and it's fabulous. A really well thought out and supported apprenticeship. And, importantly don't rule yourself out if you're not straight A grades. It seems to be about attitude and motivation to add value to the company more than being just a brain box. From a parents perspective, its a great employer.
Like · Reply · 12w

Matthew Orme Engineering Project Manager CEng FIMechE BEng(Hons) at the Lubri...
Without doubt one of the finest apprenticeships available, I simply cannot recommend it enough. Rolls Royce made me who I am today and I will always be grateful
2w ...

Louis Wright Technical Director at HV Energy Systems Ltd
This is exactly how I started and progressed my career at RR Filton, Bristol. Excellent apprenticeship and they sponsored my BSc Honours degree. Fantastic company, thank you for everything Rolls-Royce!
7 Likes

Barry Bexson What's not to like. Learn, study for your degree, take it all costs paid. All whilst getting paid and at the end, NO STUDENT LOAN. Well done RR, training the engineers of the future AND treating them like Royalty. My boy Ed has been through the system and has never looked back. Fantastic Company, I know, I still work for them 😊
Like · Reply · 12w

Keith Whipp Top Contributor
Fantastic. My RR apprenticeship set me up for a great career with a world class company.
Like · Reply · 13w

The Results

Across our four main social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter), the campaign achieved some impressive results.

819,604 people reached

289,214 views

1,846 link clicks

158 comments

483 shares

3,192 reactions

And best of all, it delivered the numbers where they really matter.

9,000 apprenticeship applications

The future

We've recently completed a research and insight programme on Rolls-Royce apprentices and the findings will inform our strategy for the year ahead. This will include:

- Nudge marketing techniques at key decision moments
- Creative messaging that centres on job security
- More of the popular myth-busting
- Developing create/build/problem-solve initiatives
- Segmenting our audience further (by GCSE and A-Level) and tailoring our messages to each
- Focusing more specifically on female candidates and those from BAME backgrounds
- Directly targeting influencers (parents, guardians, teachers and careers advisors)

Reaching out to our audience

Home to 30% of Spain's IT population, it's hardly surprising that so many tech-led companies have chosen to set up shop in Madrid. Even in such a competitive market, Amazon receives a large number of applications. The challenge they have is attracting the very best candidates – highly-skilled people who are not actively looking for a new role. As a way to get around the problem, Amazon had previously resorted to expensive options – like relocating people from the US.

Setting ourselves objectives

Our job was to help three core business areas within Amazon – Amazon Business, Books Tech and International Technology – find a new approach to recruiting. An approach that would bring its Software Development Engineer (SDE) role to life for more of the right candidates.

Before the work got underway, we set a number of key objectives:

- Increase in relevant, high-quality external applications
- Increase in relevant, high-quality internal applications
- Increase in applications from female candidates
- Increase in applications from Spanish nationals

A research-led approach

We wanted to develop a campaign that would really resonate with the software development audience – it had to speak their language, excite them and ultimately, inspire them to join. So it was vital for us to understand what makes the Madrid Tech hub different and to gather insights into external perceptions of it.

With that in mind, we conducted:

- Interviews with senior managers responsible for operations in Madrid
- Focus groups with Amazon SDEs
- Interviews with internal recruiters at Amazon
- An external survey with members of the wider tech community

Armed with the insights we gained from this research, we were able to identify the current barriers to application, suggest what Amazon's response to each should be, and create a messaging hierarchy aligned with their existing employer brand. This then formed the basis of the creative brief.

Selling the opportunity

From the brief, it was clear that we needed to position Amazon as a vibrant, challenging place to work, with lots of variety, excellent learning opportunities and huge scope to be creative. All of which our research told us would be extremely appealing to ambitious and inventive SDEs.

Putting our concepts to the test

We developed four campaign ideas, then tested them all with our original group of SDEs. Two routes were particularly well received. And of those two, one was the clear favourite. 66% of participants said its strapline and visuals were the ones that resonated most strongly with them. The name of that route?

Let your mind play



The power of play

What SDEs liked most about this campaign – and what set it apart from others in this sector – was that it focused on the mindset of the people rather than the technology. The vibrant images of real Amazon colleagues gave the campaign authenticity. While the flowing doodles reflected the creative freedom that's part and parcel of the roles.

“

Software Development Engineers want to be builders of their products and create new innovative things.”

“

The use of outlined drawings on top of a picture reminds me of brainstorming on a white board, which can be very satisfying.”



Quality, not just quantity

But of course, none of this would have mattered if the candidates we attracted weren't up to Amazon's exacting standards. So by emphasising the scale and scope of the challenge, the level of expectation and the pace of the working environment, the campaign was designed to encourage a degree of self-selection too.

“ Overall, I think this is the most accurate description of what I do at my job. Also knowing that being a developer is not just coding like crazy, it involves many other things.”

“ Software Development Engineers – at least those that come with some expertise in the industry – are usually looking for challenges that keep their minds alert.”

The top row contains two ads. The left ad has the text "Learn languages that inspire you" and the right ad has "Software Development Engineers in Madrid". The bottom row contains two ads. The left ad has "Let your mind play" and the right ad has "Apply now at amazon.jobs".

The bottom row contains four ads stacked vertically. From top to bottom: "Build solutions that benefit millions", "Software Development Engineers in Madrid", "Let your mind play", and "Apply now at amazon.jobs".

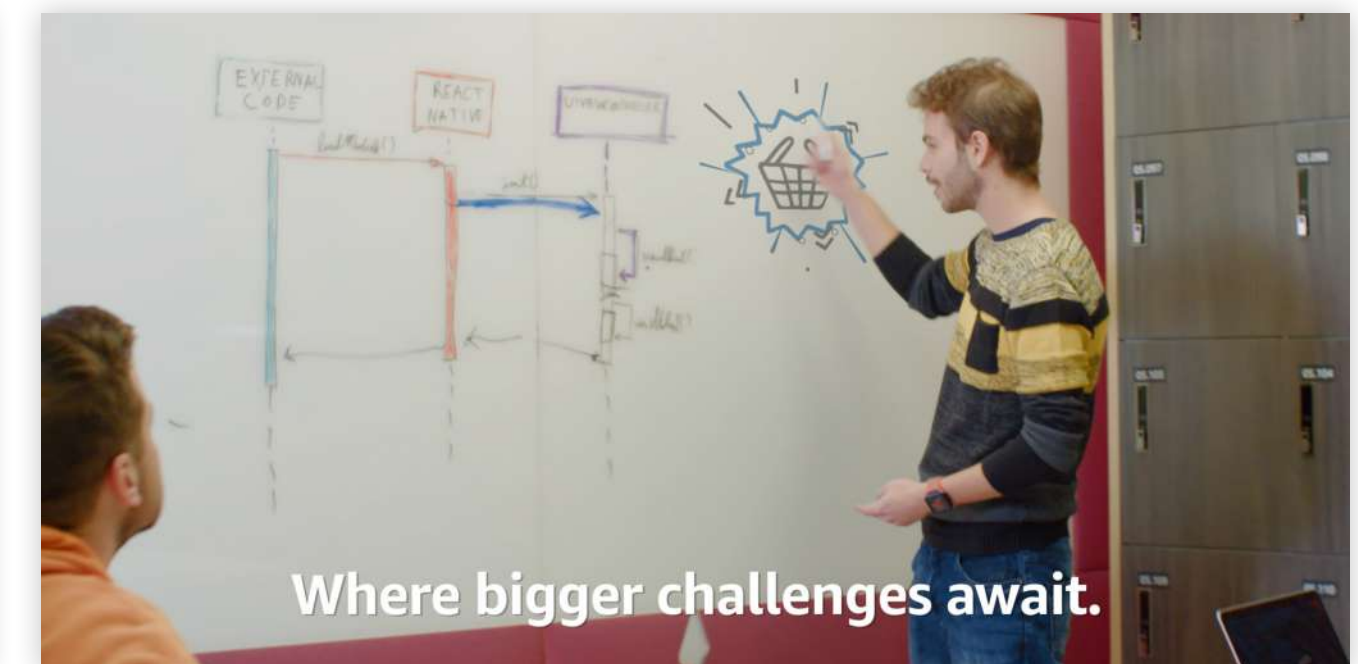
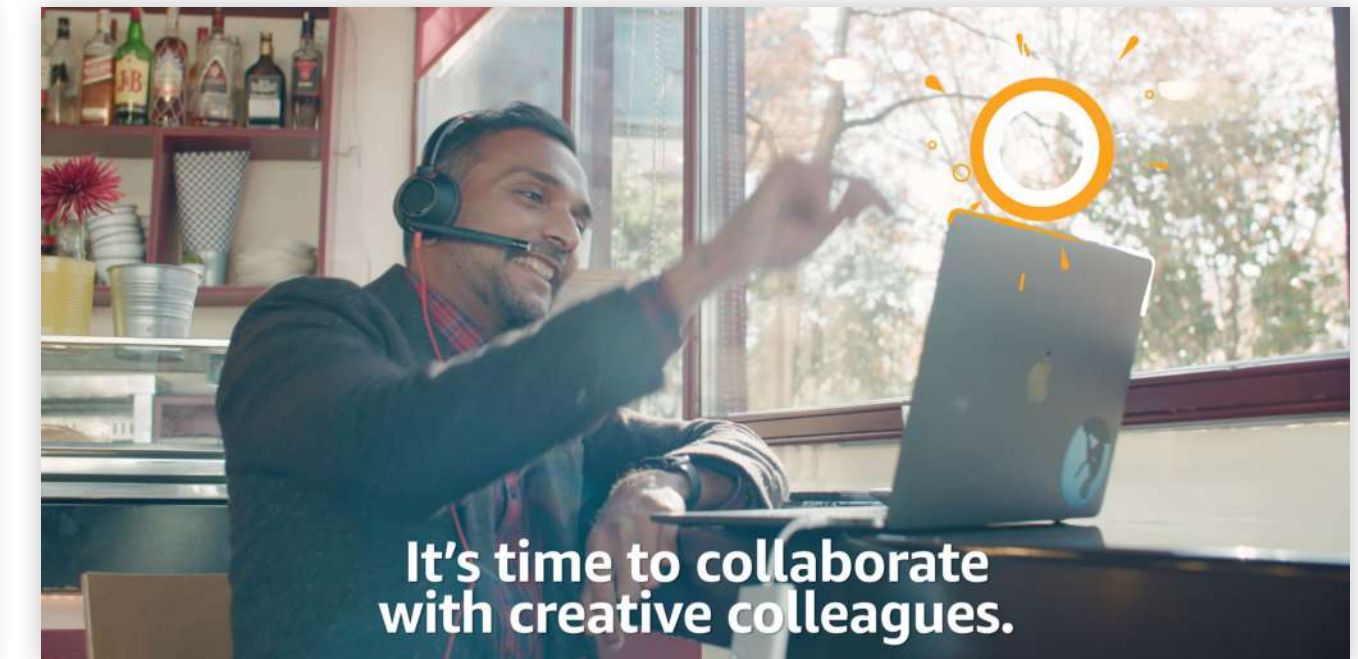
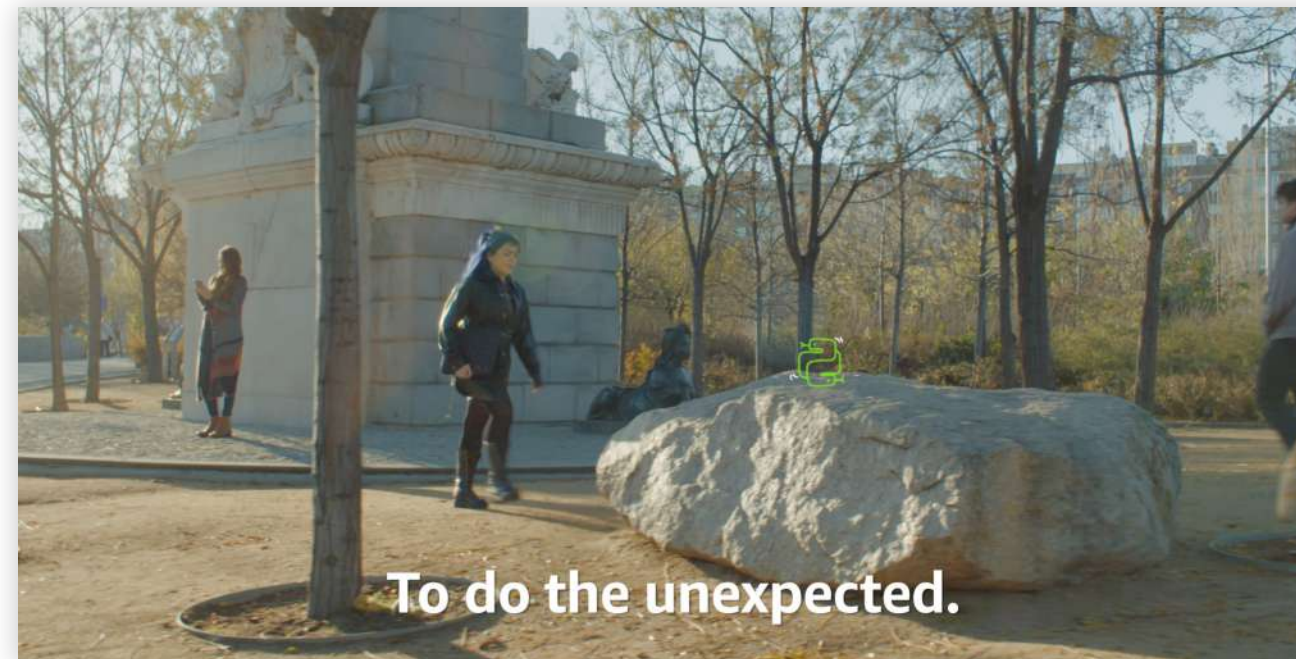
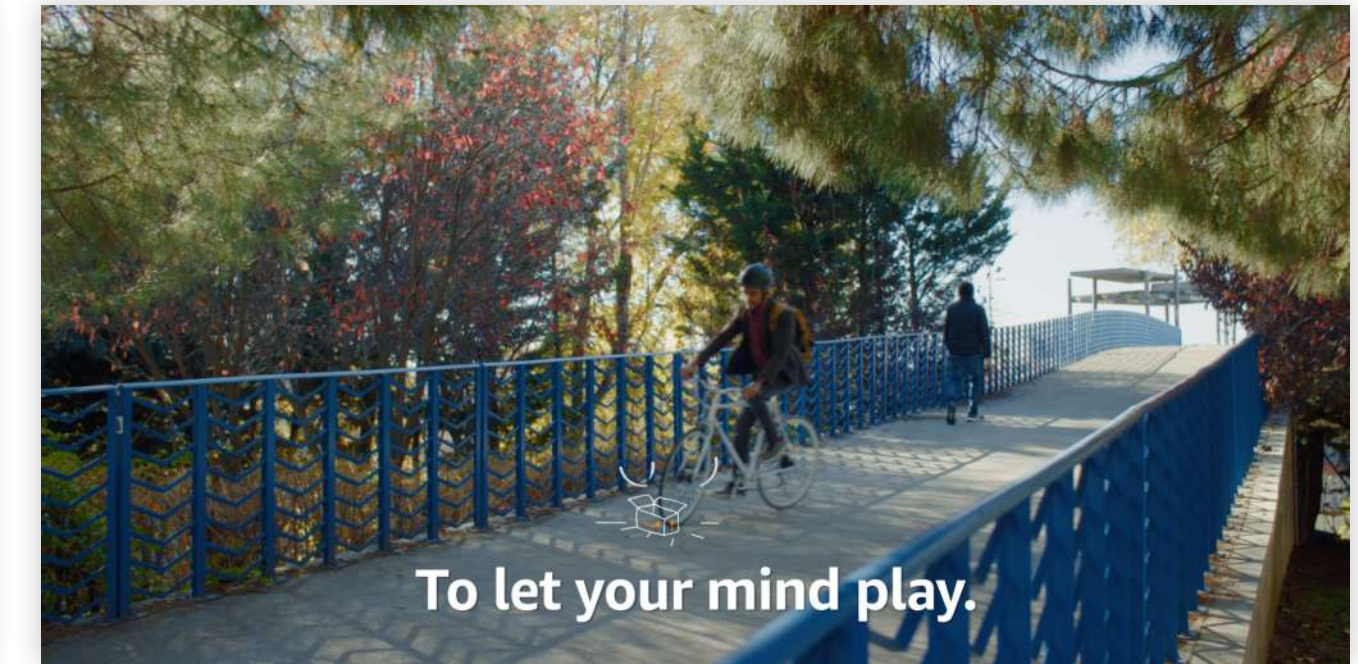
The ad features a woman with pink hair and a green jacket with white patterns. The background is orange with white icons. The text "Let your mind play" is at the top. The Amazon logo is at the bottom.

The Delivery

Along with a full suite of static executions for print and online media – all of which promoted the energetic, challenging and inclusive culture at Amazon – we decided to take the idea one step further. Not only did we create a radio ad in Spanish that was aired all across the capital, but we created an imaginative campaign film as well. Mixing live-action with animation, and featuring existing Amazon SDEs in Madrid, this short-film served as the centre piece of the entire campaign, and inspired a series of short, shareable clips on social.

[Click here to watch the Let Your Mind Play video](#)

[Click here to listen to Radio ad](#)



The Delivery

Along with using current Amazon SDEs, which helped generate a real buzz around the business, we also made a series of assets to create awareness of the SDE role all across Amazon. These included stickers, a doodle pad, LinkedIn banners and email signatures.



LinkedIn banner

Stickers



Doodle pad



Campaign landing page

Driving them home

Pretty much all of the campaign activities – including the main film – encouraged candidates to visit a campaign landing page on the careers site. There they could learn more about the role, the culture and what it's really like to work at Amazon. In fact, we even created user-generated videos with the main SDEs from the film. That way, candidates who had seen the film could gain even deeper insights into the three core business areas we were promoting from the people they had just been watching.

The screenshot shows a mobile-optimized landing page for Amazon Jobs. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Amazon Jobs logo, a search bar, a location selector, and a 'Your job application' link. The main header features a yellow background with the text 'Let Your Mind Play' and a central image of a smiling woman with glasses and a red sweater, surrounded by white icons representing various tech and creative concepts like a laptop, a lightbulb, a gear, a cloud, a star, a code editor, and a brain. Below this, a dark blue section titled 'Software Development Engineers — Madrid' contains the following text:

Being a Software Development Engineer (SDE) at Amazon means more than just developing. It means experimenting and improving, designing and building, learning and growing from day one. You'll do things that have never been done before, with the best minds in the industry by your side.

Our Tech hub in Madrid will be your new home. It's the place where autonomous teams work together on big, complex projects. The kind of projects that make an impact you can see and feel.

We're building our teams in Madrid across three businesses - Amazon Business, International Technology and Books Tech - and offer relocation packages and attractive benefits to new employees. These include medical and dental insurance, retirement, life and disability insurance, a comprehensive employee assistance program, Green Commute transportation, and discounts of Amazon websites.

Below this, another dark blue section titled 'Global projects, global users' contains the following text:

We're hiring SDEs for our Madrid Tech Hub! Join our teams in Amazon Business, Books Tech or International Technology. Together, we're building the future, one innovative product at a time.

At the bottom, there are three orange buttons: 'Learn more & apply Amazon Business', 'Learn more & apply Books Tech', and 'Learn more & apply International Technology'.

Measuring against our objectives

Our radio ad, which ran for ten short days, reached **over a million people** in Madrid. Our campaign film, on a limited, four-figure Facebook budget, garnered **1,764,568 impressions**, **6,748 complete video views**, **22,012 clicks**, a **1.25% click through rate** (more than double the industry average of 0.55%) and an impressive **€0.37 cost per click** (over 20% lower than the industry average of €0.51). Most importantly, our campaign delivered where it really mattered: against the objectives we had set right from the start.

Increase in relevant, high-quality external applications

The May 2021 campaign saw a 137% better conversion rate than May 2020

Increase in relevant, high-quality internal applications

Over a three-month period, 136% more SDEs joined from other parts of the Amazon business than over the same three months in 2020

Increase in applications from female candidates

79% increase from 2020 to 2021
(comparing January through May)

Increase in applications from Spanish nationals

65% increase from 2020 to 2021
(comparing January through May)

Objectives

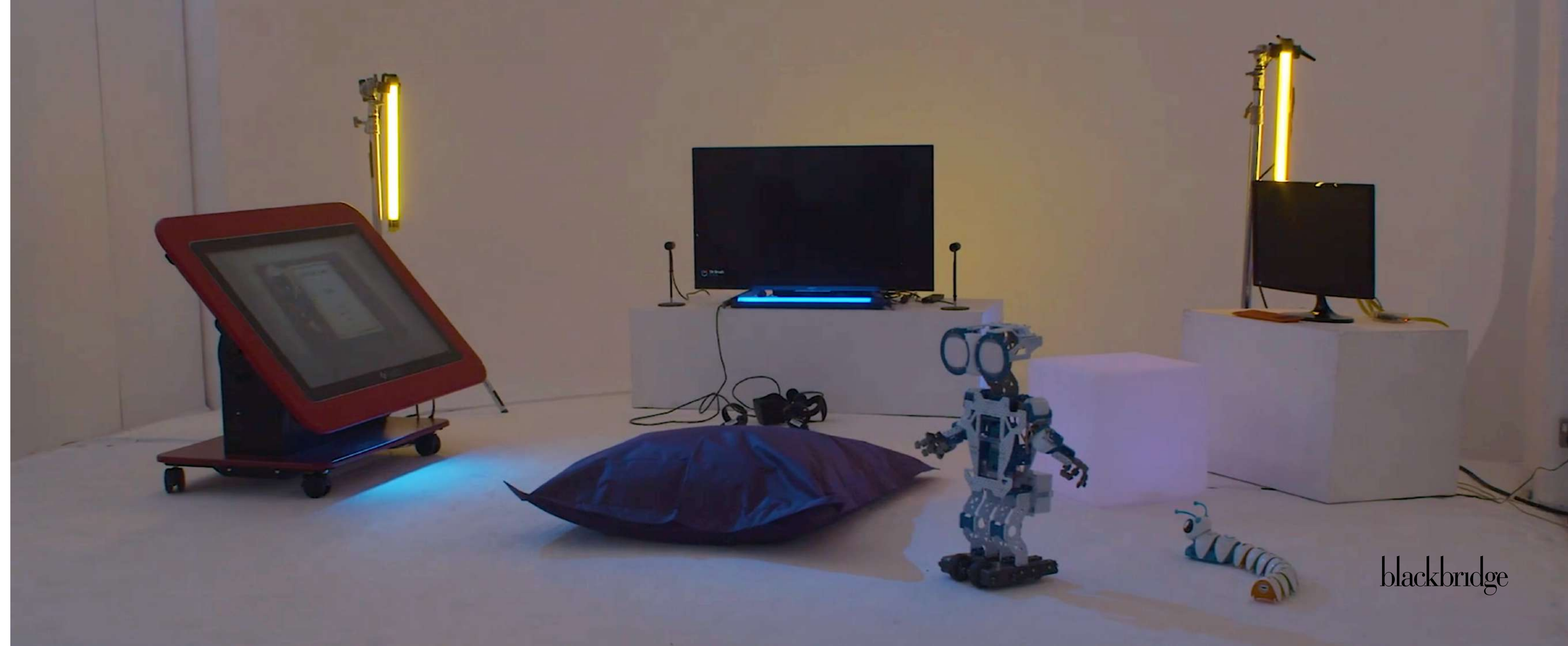
The Women in Technology team at Aviva were looking to raise the profile of the organisation as a top employer of female digital talent. The challenge in the brief was clear:

- How do we convince students, graduates and experienced hires alike that this is the place to build a rewarding career in tech?
- How do we make them trust and believe that, at Aviva, they'll be offered real choice (and real opportunities) to enable them to succeed?

Strategy

We started thinking about choice, particularly when it comes to the ratio of women to men in the tech industry. According to PwC, only 15% of tech roles in the UK are filled by women – a figure which sadly hasn't changed much in the past decade. The fact is, from a young age, most women aren't encouraged to pursue careers in STEM. And we wanted to do something about that.

To highlight how women aren't given enough exposure and encouragement when it comes to tech, we decided to conduct a social experiment. We invited five girls aged 6-8 into a film studio with two rooms. The rooms were designed with a purpose: one was filled with dolls, tiaras, stickers, make-up and a toy oven. In short, everything society tells us is traditionally "feminine". The other room was kitted out with the latest tech: coding games, VR headsets, projected holograms, robots and more. All items which society tells us are traditionally "masculine".



The girls entered the “feminine” room first. They applied make-up to their faces, twirled pink ribbons above their heads, pretended to be princesses and more. Afterwards, we asked them a number of questions. Questions like, “What kind of jobs do you think girls are really good at?” The answers, totally unprompted, included professions such as make-up artists, actresses, and teachers.

[Click here to watch the Real Choice video](#)



Interviewer: What kind of jobs do you think girls are really good at?



They're good at being makeup artists.



At being princesses.

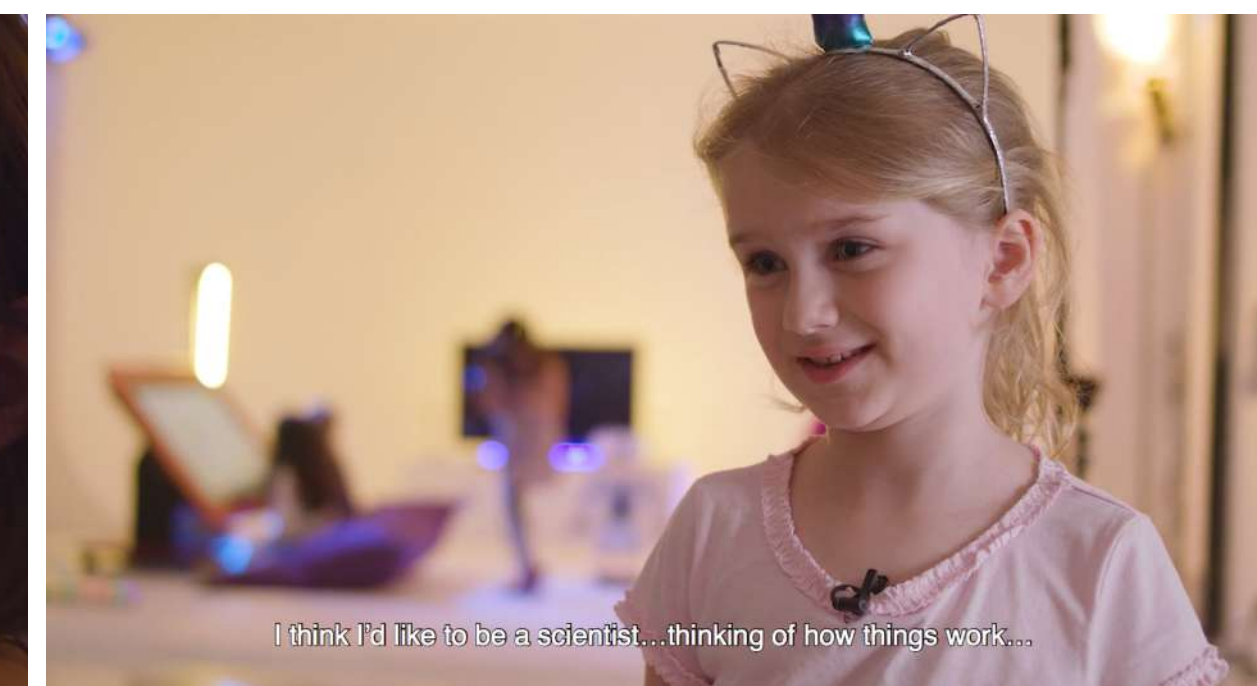
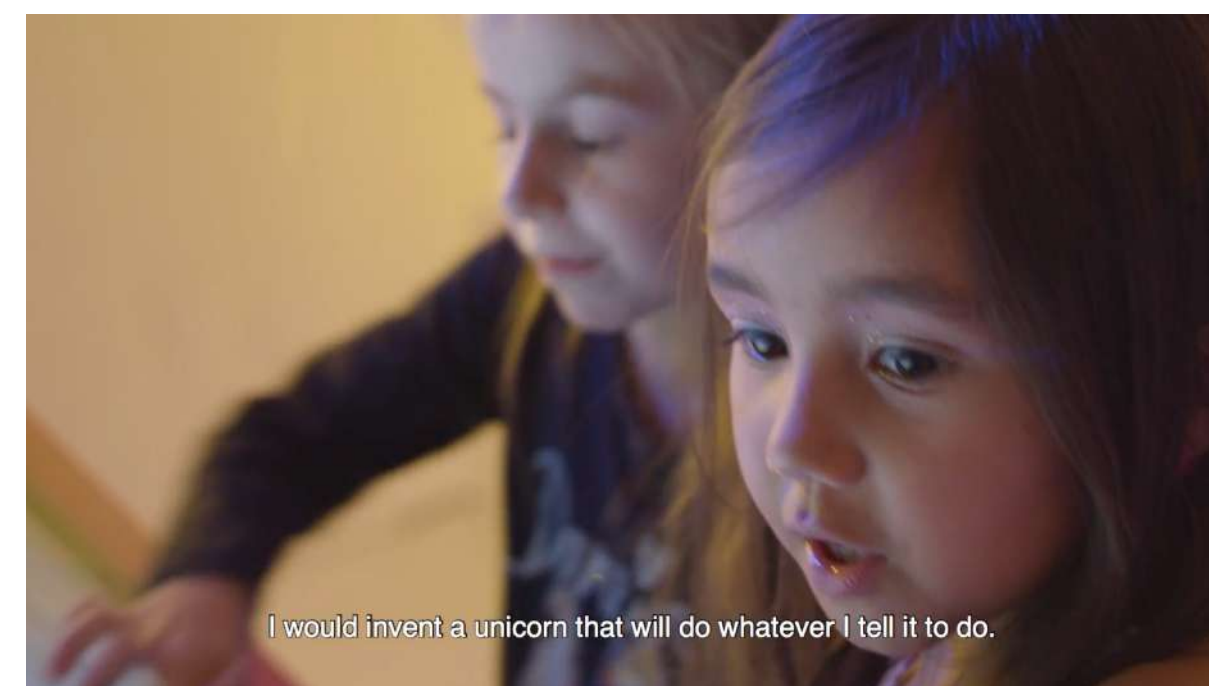
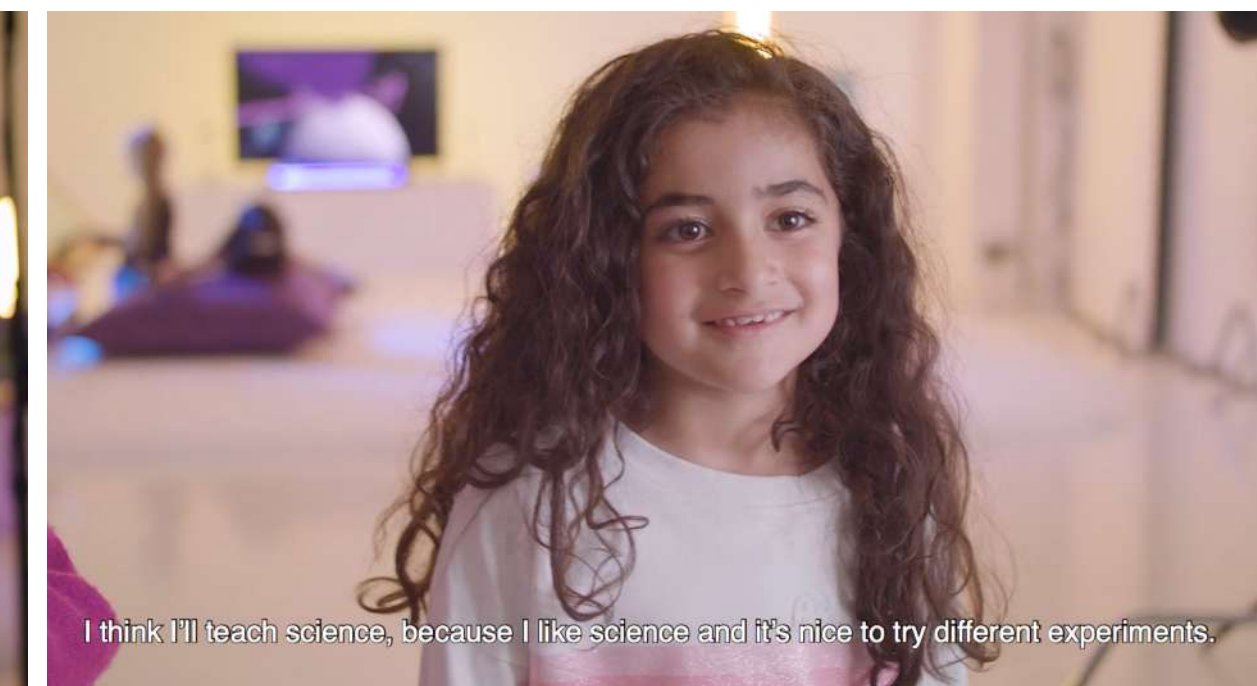
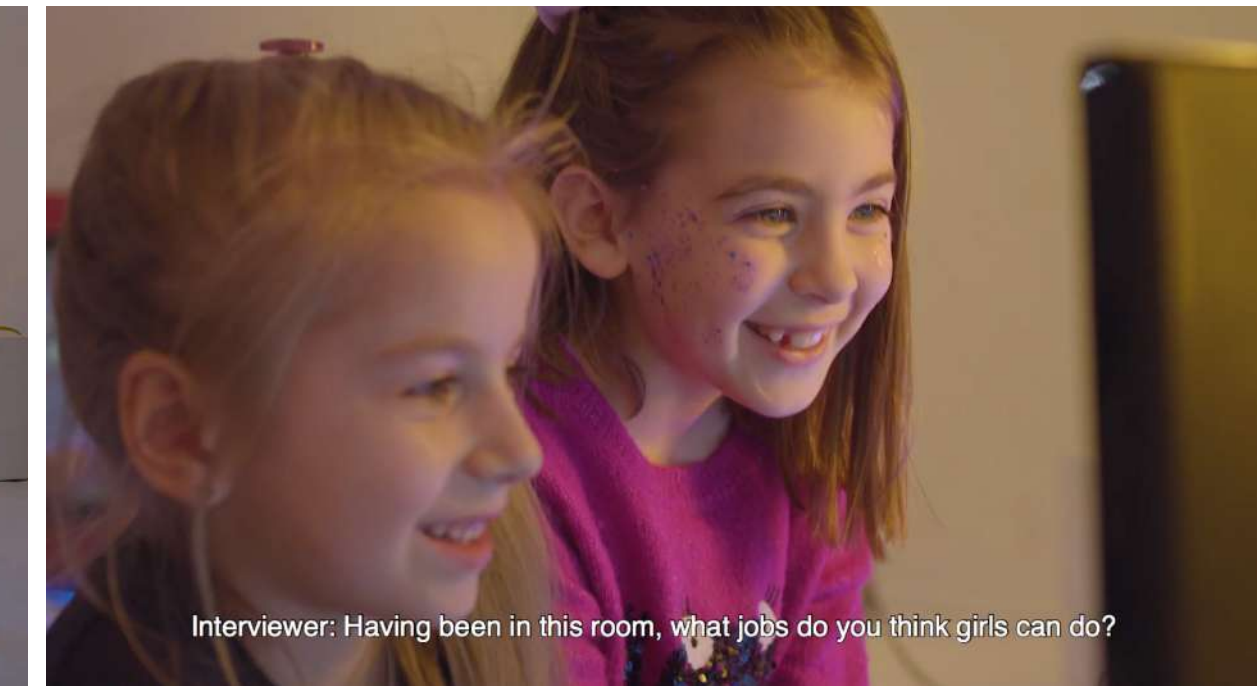


Most girls work in shops or hairdressers or they're teachers.



I've got no men teachers in my school at all

Then, we introduced the girls to the tech room. Despite having little to no knowledge of any of the gadgets inside, they took to the experience like fish to water – or programmers to JavaScript. One girl, in fact, spent most of the session coding. When we followed up with similar questions about their interests and what jobs women are good at, we discovered the girls had changed their minds. Their answers all focused on science and technology.

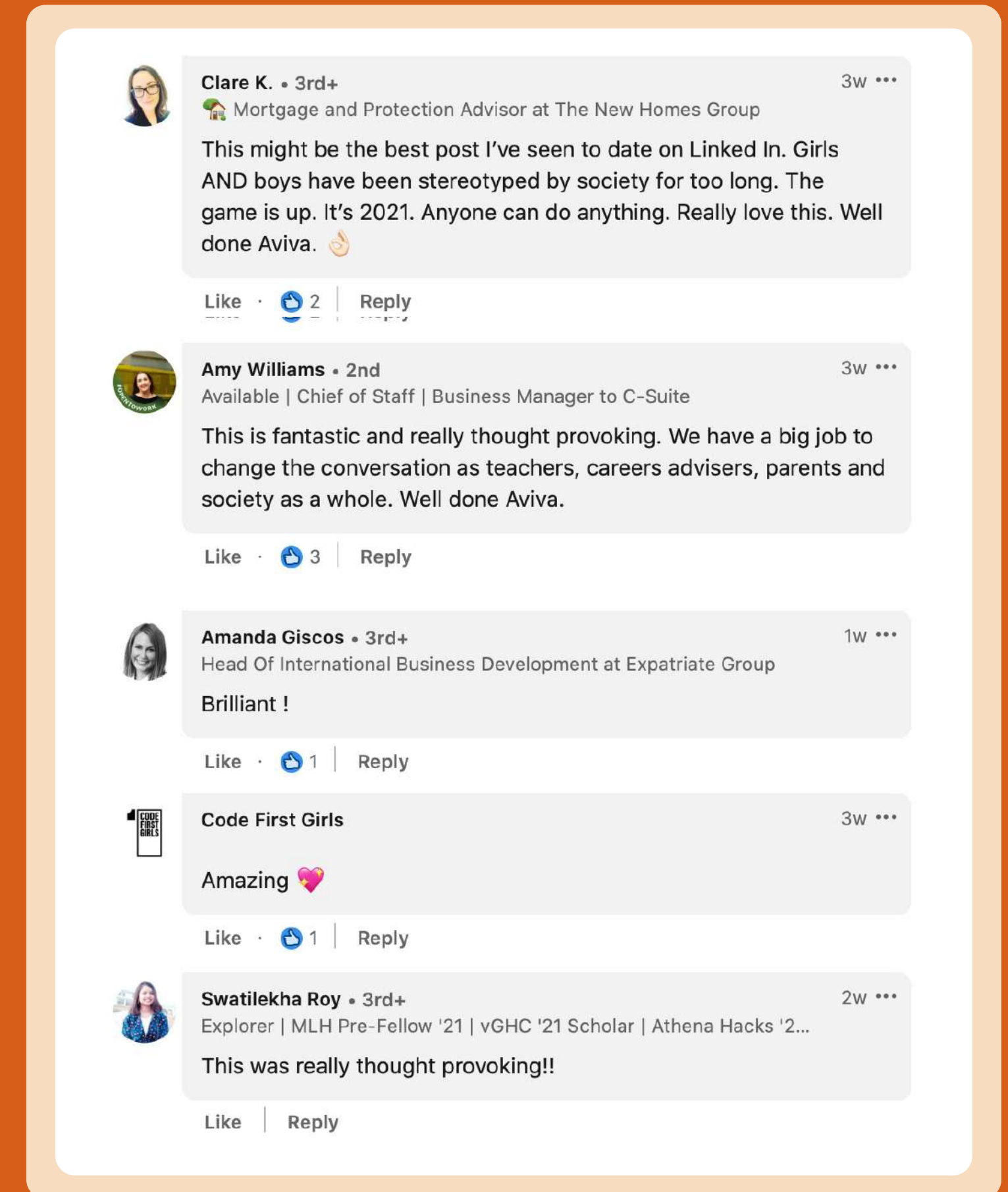


What did we learn?

In the end, what did we prove? That exposure and encouragement mean everything. If women are given the right kind of exposure to careers in technology, they won't necessarily move into technology. But at least they'll know it's a choice.

The video has only been live for a relatively short time, but, as you can see from the comments, it's already received an overwhelmingly positive response. What's more, on LinkedIn alone the video has already attracted...

10,170 views
727 reactions
26 comments
75 shares
...and all with no spend.



blackbridge

Thank you

If you would like further information,
please do get in touch at:

hello@blackbridge.co.uk

blackbridge.co.uk