



Ruth Davey
Group Head of Marketing,
NRL Group

In this case study, the APSCo Talent Development team interviewed Ruth Davey, Group Head of Marketing at the NRL Group about her company's experiences and thoughts on APSCo's Inclusive+ training course. To date, APSCo has provided in-house training to 72 delegates from NRL.

Introduction to NRL

NRL connects global engineering companies with the right mix of candidates needed to bring their projects to life, from permanent technical roles to a temporary workforce of hundreds of skilled workers. They are a family-owned business founded in 1983, and since then, it has helped thousands of candidates and contractors find the right roles to help them progress their engineering careers.

Where are you and NRL on your journey?

Ruth: I joined NRL in early 2017 when it was on a major growth curve. We had a very well-oiled recruitment machine, but we knew that we had to develop in other areas. I have since brought together a strong marketing team, and as a business we've matured in terms of our business aspirations and the initiatives that we want to align ourselves to.

By those initiatives I mean, amongst others, CSR and DE&I, which are lived and breathed throughout the company. We're 40 years old this year, and one of the things we've noticed over the last four or five years is that our clients are becoming more engaged and interested in diversity.

"Not only does it support their career aspirations, their growth and their training requirements, but it also says to our clients and candidates that we take this seriously."

What makes you stand out in the engineering sector?

We've been starting those CSR and diversity conversations and we've offered a lot of guidance to our clients. In part, that's because the engineering sector isn't really known for being particularly inclusive, but it's also because it's something that runs deep within NRL.

I think some engineering firms would be the first to acknowledge they've got some catching up to do and a lot of our clients are actively trying to address that. We're working with them, no matter whether they're large or small businesses or where they are in the world.

Their common ground, however, is that they're all committed to improving their position. I think they've all evaluated where they are versus where they want to be or should be, and they're now in a 'doing' phase, which is great, and it's where we can really add value.



How does NRL approach CSR and DE&I?

We've always been very conscious about having proof points. It's easy to say that you're committed to a cause, but you also have to tangibly demonstrate what that actually means. You can't just be performative.

We've done things like become carbon neutral, work on social mobility and work closely with the Armed Forces Covenant, for example. Another powerful way of demonstrating this is through robust DE&I training for our employees.

Not only does it support their career aspirations, their growth and their training requirements, but it also says to our clients and candidates that we take this seriously.

What led you to use the APSCo training?

We've always had a strong training programme because we're very aware that we're in a competitive environment with an enviably low employee churn. So we've always been committed to making sure that employees know how valued they are and that their commitment is rewarded by receiving outstanding training.



"APSCo training is attractive to us because it's entirely built around the recruitment process, and we wanted training that would directly apply to people's roles. Theoretical training is great, but we wanted our training to include practical examples to show what the theory looks like in real life."

We've worked with APSCo on delivering training for quite some time, but it's always been specific operational training. We realised the business demands were for a holistic DE&I training course to support our Recruiters so we are arming our teams in the best way we could.

What made the APSCo DE&I training stand out to you?

APSCo training is attractive to us because it's entirely built around the recruitment process, and we wanted training that would directly apply to people's roles. Theoretical training is great, but we wanted our training to include practical examples to show what the theory looks like in real life.

That's where the APSCo DE&I training landed very nicely for us since it's aligned to the recruitment process. We saw ourselves in all the things that the APSCo trainer talked about.

What did you think of the training?

The trainer was very engaging and could speak with personal recruitment experience and provide really relevant insight.

It was a very pragmatic approach, and there was one thing that really stood out to me. We learned that while we might not get DE&I right every time, at least you're here and you're trying, and as a recruitment agency that puts us ahead of most.

What has the feedback from the training been like?

When we offered the training internally, about 40% of people signed up within the first 12 hours, which was a really positive response. People were very enthusiastic, asking when it was going to start and what they needed to prepare - the idea for DE&I training was really well received, and the onboarding process was also really smooth.

In all, our recruiters received the training really positively. They're very keen to have DE&I and CSR conversations with their clients and candidates, but they want to do it from a position of being informed and having the confidence that they're saying or suggesting the right thing and that they're challenging appropriately. And that's what good training does, it gives you that confidence. That's what APSCo delivered.

What business benefits have you seen?

We've already seen how the training has differentiated us from our competitors. We've had lots of feedback from both clients and candidates who say that they can't have these types of DE&I conversations with other recruiters. That's helped us to build relationships with clients and move us up the value chain.

In some of our sectors where there are challenges around talent pooling and skill shortages, we've been able to encourage clients to look more creatively at people returning to work, career changes and transferable skills. There's some real confidence in having stats behind us that we can talk through with a client.

We're also now looking at DE&I through an operational lens, assessing the sort of information we should be sharing on candidates, what we redact and how we change our internal processes to ensure that if we're encouraging blind talent pooling, for example, a client can actually execute that.

The training has helped us see that we need to put in some very practical operational changes, and we're in the planning stage for that at the moment.

And finally - what would you say to anyone considering partnering with APSCo for DE&I training?

I would say please do it! It's really interesting. It's eye-opening, and not as daunting as it might first appear. While there is the potential to misstep with DE&I, robust training massively reduces that potential. It can only lead to good things and more confidence.

"We've already seen how the training has differentiated us from our competitors. We've had lots of feedback from both clients and candidates who say that they can't have these types of DE&I conversations with other recruiters."



To learn more about all our different courses and opportunities for your business to benefit from our in-house course, get in touch.

<https://www.apscouk.org/training-and-development.html>