17th July 2017

Executive summary

In the UK, 83% of people claim to have never received feedback after attending a face-to-face interview. 77% of people aged 18-23 would like to see feedback after a face-to-face interview become a legal requirement as they think it would speed up the process by giving them confidence and helping them focus on development areas.

What are the benefits of sharing feedback?

- For employers = prepared candidates, reputation, returning candidates.
- For candidates = personal development, personal confidence, efficiency.
- For the labour force = Lower rates of unemployment, prepared, more successful candidates, cost reduction.

Industry stakeholders backing the campaign and recommendations include:

- Paul Devoy, Chief Executive, Investors in People (IIP)
- Jemeela Quraishi, Development Manager, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Alex Metcalfe, UK Policy Lead for Employment and Pensions, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Grace Mehanna, Campaign Director of Youth Employment, Business in the Community (BITC)
- Stephen Isherwood, CEO of Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)

The Fight for Feedback Campaign

The Fight for Feedback campaign was launched in the interest of candidates who are trying to secure employment. The campaign has since attracted the support of all human resources stakeholders who attended the dedicated industry roundtable discussion, and all believe that encouraging employers to give feedback will have a positive impact on the UK economy.

The Solution

All stakeholders listed agree that a list of guiding principles should be made available on a new 'feedback friendly' website (funded for by the stakeholders backing the campaign), which will become the dedicated resource for employers and candidates.

Employers will be invited to tick a box to pledge their promise to follow the principles as part of their recruitment and selection process. At this point they will receive the 'feedback friendly' accreditation, which they can display using the dedicated logo on their website.
The website will promote a range of best practice employer / candidate case studies to demonstrate positive and time-effective ways to share feedback.

Research Paper Index:

Context

The UK labour force is currently experiencing the lowest rates of unemployment since 1975, however this situation is set to be impacted by two major factors – the ageing population, and Brexit.

Over 30 percent of employed people in the UK are over the age of 50. This raises concerns about a lack of younger people entering the labour market to replace this group when they leave the workforce, taking their skills and experience with them. Employers are nervous of the potential issues they face, such as skills shortages, productivity challenges, labour shortfalls and an inability to meet customer service and production targets.

There are also major concerns amongst UK employers around Brexit, and how major its impact on the UK workforce will be, and how it will affect Britain's ability to recruit international talent. With over 2 million EU workers already in the country, any substantial reduction in that number could exacerbate the skills gaps that already exist in the economy. It would also present challenges to businesses that employ EU nationals, forcing them to invest more in British workers as well as potentially increasing the regulatory barriers to recruiting staff from Europe.

Considering these concerns, it is important to equip the labour force with the skills that UK employers need. This process of 'equipping' individuals does not end with education and training – quality feedback during the recruitment process can be extremely powerful, and the party responsible for this is the employer.

In the UK, four out of five candidates claim to have never received feedback after a face-to-face interview (83%). When asked if they would like to see post-interview feedback become a legal requirement of employers, 77 percent of those aged 18-23 agreed. See appendix 1.0 for the full research.

The impact of no feedback during the recruitment process leaves jobseekers feeling disheartened, confused and slows down, or completely stops, the recruitment process in some cases.

What are the benefits of sharing feedback, for employers?

- **Prepared candidates** - Employers will benefit from other employers having shared constructive feedback, which improves the rate at which a candidate becomes a hire (speeds up and strengthens the recruitment process).

- **Reputation** – Candidates are powerful, in the rise of social media sharing every brand needs to appeal to all stakeholders, prospective employees included. It is vital that candidates have a good, positive experience, no matter what the outcome.

- **Returning candidates** – If a candidate has a good experience, they are more likely to return to interview for a different role with the same company. This saves time and investment in advertising positions and speeds up the process.

What are the benefits of receiving feedback, for candidates?

- **Personal development** - Receiving constructive feedback enables the candidate to improve and develop ahead of their next interview.

- **Personal confidence** – After receiving feedback a candidate can understand why they were unsuccessful, what they can do to improve, and approach the next interview with confidence.

- **Time** – If an outcome and feedback is shared soon after the face-to-face interview, the candidate can move on with their search for employment. Not receiving an update on the outcome, or not receiving any feedback, can slow down the process.

What are the benefits of feedback to the broader labour force?

- **Lower rates of unemployment** – The time taken for an unemployed candidate to successful secure employment will improve.

- **Prepared, more successful candidates** – Feedback will mean the candidate is ready to move on, confidently and quickly to the next opportunity.

- **Cost reduction** – The cost of unemployment benefits should improve as the recruitment process becomes more positive and the process speeds up.

Fight for Feedback

The #FightForFeedback campaign was instigated and launched by student and graduate careers app, Debut in May 2017. So far, the campaign has received extensive media coverage including prime time BBC Breakfast and Sky News, and has already attracted close to 1,000 supporters, including major employers: O2, Network Rail, Fujitsu, EY, Capgemini, FDM Group and industry stakeholders: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR), Business in the Community (BITC). *See Appendix 2.0 for quotes of support from stakeholders.*

Industry Roundtable

All stakeholders listed in *Appendix 3.0* joined a roundtable on 22nd June 2017 to discuss the impact of feedback on the UK labour force. All parties agreed that feedback after a face-to-face interview is imperative, but there are barriers that need to be removed first. Our research reveals the main concerns amongst employers around sharing feedback with candidates are:

- Time or cost pressure (too many people needing feedback; and not enough time to share it)

- Being worried about the right way to feedback without discriminating, and the legal implications

- Not wanting to offend people

- Not knowing what to say (but being less worried about the implications)

Anecdotal evidence also revealed that employers made the conscious decision to avoid sharing feedback to unsuccessful candidates, to reduce the chance of them appealing to competitors – promoting prolonged unemployment unnecessarily.

See appendix 4.0 for full research.

All parties present at the roundtable agreed on the following points:

- Informing the candidate of the outcome of an application or interview is imperative.

- Sharing feedback after a face-to-face interview is imperative, for all employers.

- There is no standard approach to giving feedback – all interview processes are different depending on various factors, including levels and types of roles. Instead, every employer needs to identify the best procedure for them, that will benefit the candidate and promote a positive relationship between the employer and candidate, in the interest of the broader labour force.

- All employers, both large and small, struggle to give feedback for a range of reasons, but mainly due to the time it takes. Small employers find it incredibly hard to juggle HR, without the support of an expert team that large organisations benefit from, so need more support.

- A lack of feedback after a face-to-face interview affects all candidates, not just early careers, but mid to late careers candidates, too.

- There are already initiatives designed to help prepare candidates for interviews, that employers can choose to support, or direct candidates towards, to speed up the recruitment and selection process. The issue is that they are not well-signposted, making them hard to find.

- The Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)'s Good Recruitment Campaign includes nine key principles – No.3 is 'deliver a high standard of candidate experience, with ongoing communication during the recruitment process, including two-way feedback for all those interviewed.' – this must happen, however it needs to be made easier, to reduce the barriers for employers, and improve the experience for candidates.

- Employers need a list of guiding principles, and supporting tools to enable them to give feedback, and improve the experience for the candidate, whilst positively impacting the UK labour force, without investing too much time.

- The guiding principles and tools will all be made available on a dedicated website, and will invite employers to tick a box to pledge their promise to follow the principles as part of their recruitment and selection process. At this point they will receive the 'feedback friendly' accreditation, which they can display using the dedicated logo on their website.

- The employers who sign up for the 'feedback friendly' accreditation should agree to be mystery-shopped, to ensure they are adhering to the guiding principles

- A list of feedback-friendly employers will be published on the website, for candidates to see.

- Candidates will be able to submit the names of employers who aren't sharing feedback, who will receive a friendly note, informing them about the guiding principles.

- A range of best practice case studies (from both the employer and candidate perspective) will be available for all to see, to inspire other employers.

- The website will include information to educate candidates on their rights, i.e. Subject Access Requests, giving them the right to see the interview notes up to six months after the interview.

Guiding Principles

These guiding principles have been agreed by all involved stakeholders, and are informed by independent research:

1) **MANAGE EXPECTATIONS -** Proactively set and manage all candidates' expectations by being transparent and clearly explaining your recruitment and selection procedure on your company's website. This information should include interview stages, timings, what feedback they will receive, and how. Include this information on each new advert and state if the process deviates from the norm, if required.

2) **PROVIDE FEEDBACK** – Always proactively share feedback as a matter of course after a face-to-face interview, in place of only offering feedback if the candidate requests it.

3) **TYPE OF FEEDBACK** - Consider and share objective feedback about the candidates' competencies in relation to the job role / person specification as a minimum, but do try to share subjective feedback where possible on the candidates' performance during the interview.

4) **FEEDBACK MEDIUM** – If possible, establish how the candidate would prefer to receive feedback – this could be stipulated during the application process. Do consider the benefits of verbal feedback, as it enables the candidate to ask questions and for a two-way conversation, which may help you to shape your recruitment process.

5) **CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE** – Feedback is designed to help individuals improve – deliver feedback in a positive way by identifying what a candidate did well, and ways in which they can be more successful next time.

6) **PERSON RESPONSIBLE** – Candidates benefit most from receiving feedback direct from the person that interviewed them – avoid watering down feedback by involving too many parties in the feedback process.

7) **TIME INVESTMENT** – Invest and dedicate a minimum of 15 minutes when preparing and sharing feedback with a candidate. Aim to feed back within three working days after the hiring decision has been made.

Support for employers and candidates

Below are some of the initiatives and support programmes that already exist, that will be sign-posted on the website will include:

- CIPD's Inspiring the Future campaign

- [BITC's Future Proof Campaign](#)
- [Debut's Interview Etiquette Guide](#)
- [ACAS Recruitment and Induction Advice](#)
- https://www.discoverwhatmatters.co.uk/introduction

Request for government support

All stakeholders listed in this document call upon the Government to proactively support the new website in the form of endorsement. We request that the Department for Work and Pensions considers the following activities, in the interest of having a positive impact on the UK labour force:

- Provide a quote of support, which will be used in media materials and on the website
- Provide approval of the accreditation scheme, and encourage the UK workforce to actively seek out the logo, to ensure they have the best possible experience when job-seeking
- Publicise the web URL on Department for Work and Pensions webpage: https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch
- Agree to include the Department for Work and Pensions logo on the website as a supporting stakeholder
- Collaborate to do further research into the tools and training required by employers

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Appendix

1.0 Feedback research

Research

Debut asked 1,000 students and graduates aged 18-23 how they felt about the issue of not receiving feedback, and 77 percent agreed that post-interview feedback should be a legal requirement of employers.

Other findings from a poll of 1,000 people aged 18-54 included:

- Four out of five candidates claim to have never received feedback after a face to face interview (83%).

- Over half (51%) said they have taken a day of annual leave – worth £117.46[i].

- The average cost of attending an interview is £41 – equivalent of 8% of the typical family household spend[ii] (this includes travel, dry-cleaning or buying new clothes).

When asked how candidates would like to receive feedback from employers, their preference is:

1. Via email (42%)
2. In person (24%)
3. Via social media messaging (14%)
4. Via phone (10%)
5. Via WhatsApp (6%)

Other media that candidates would least prefer to receive feedback via are post, video call, or text message.

According to candidates, it is reasonable to expect employers to share feedback within 48 hours (41%), followed by a working week (34%) – fewer people demanded feedback within 24 hours (21%).

Methodology

Debut's #FightForFeedback campaign research was powered by OnePulse, the UK's fastest app for gathering public opinion. On 21.03.17 Debut asked 1000 18-23 year olds how they felt about feedback post-interview, and 77% agreed it should be a legal requirement. All other stats are based on a Pulse run on 05.05.17 of 1000 people aged 18-54.

2.0 Quotes from stakeholders in support of the recommendations

Ben Willmott, Head of Public Policy at the CIPD commented on their support for the campaign: *"We agree that feedback after face-to-face interviews is something all employers should deliver whenever possible. It helps candidates understand what they can improve on, and ensures that employers are using robust hiring practices. The #FightForFeedback campaign can shine a light on the value of good quality feedback to job candidates who make it to the interview stage and encourage more employers to provide this."*

Stephen Isherwood, AGR's CEO shares his support for the campaign: *"Giving candidates interview feedback is not only really helpful to candidates who have invested time with an employer, it also helps employers build a good reputation amongst students."*

Grace Mehanna, Campaign Director of BITC's Talent and Skills team comments: *"We're proud to support Debut's #FightForFeedback campaign as we know that not providing feedback can have a damaging effect on confidence levels for young people. For young people applying for a job for the first time, constructive feedback is vital. It helps them to learn from their experiences, and improve their applications. With youth unemployment remaining disproportionately high, employers need to do more to demystify the recruitment process and providing feedback is an essential part of this.*

"We know from our survey of 4,000 young job seekers, conducted with the City & Guilds Group, that this disproportionately affects young people who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) as 40% say they did not receive any form of feedback after an interview.

"Though we recognise that it can be hard for employers with a high volume of applicants to always provide individual feedback, we would urge them to make it a priority for candidates that are interviewed."

Melissa Amouzandeh Network Rail's Emerging Talent Acquisition Manager

"Feedback is vital for a candidate's progression - without it, they may struggle to secure that next opportunity.

"It's the responsibility of the employer to share feedback, not only to help the candidate develop, but also in the interest of the UK workforce - good quality feedback reduces the time it takes for candidates to secure a position of employment, and reduces the time it takes to find the right person for the role. This campaign is win:win for all involved."

Jefferey Lovejoy, UK & Ireland Recruitment Manager at FDM Group

"As employers, we expect candidates to spend at least 1 – 3 hours in preparation for their interview, therefore it only seems fair to spend five minutes of our time following the interviews to give each candidate constructive feedback to help with their career progression. This is why we are supporting Debut's #FightForFeedback campaign and would encourage other organisations to consider feedback following interviews."

Stephanie Bishop, Head of Graduate & Apprentice Recruitment at Capgemini

"Nowadays candidates have come to expect a range of interview procedures, including online applications, assessment centres, video interviews, psychometric testing and other industry-specific tests. They have to be ready for anything, and they're under a lot of pressure when it comes to a face-to-face interview. Young people, especially struggle because they lack interview experience – they rely on receiving feedback, and Debut's research shows that 4 out of 5 have never received any – it's shocking."

Mark Jackson, Internal Mobility & Junior Talent Acquisition at Fujitsu

"As an employer it is our responsibility to ensure that candidates who attend a face-to-face interview can go on to be successful, even if it is not with us. For those who have attended countless interviews and never received feedback, it causes huge employability issues because they will never learn what they could be doing wrong, or how to improve for their next opportunity. We love to see a candidate apply for another future role having learnt from the feedback shared. Sharing feedback is essential for growth – that's why everyone should support Debut's #FightForFeedback campaign."

3.0 Stakeholders in support of the recommendations, all of which attended the industry roundtable:

Industry stakeholders

- Paul Devoy, Chief Executive, Investors in People
- Jemeela Quraishi, Development Manager, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Alex Metcalfe, UK Policy Lead for Employment and Pensions, Federation of Small Businesses
- Grace Mehanna, Campaign Director, Youth Employment, Business in the Community
- Tej Kaur Rai-Danells, Communications Officer, Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)
- Jessica Booker, Early Careers Professional, Star Potential

Employer stakeholders

- Dan Richards, Recruiting Leader at EY UK & Ireland
- Emma Britten, Graduate Recruitment Marketing manager, Citi
- Albert Wright, Small Business Advisor and London Representative for Federation of Small Businesses National Council – Small Business Solutions, Ltd
- Charlie Taylor, Founder and CEO, Debut – student and graduate careers app
- Michele Trusolino, Co-Founder and COO, Debut
- Matthieu Poupard, Director of Employer Relations, Hult International Business School
- Lisa Malyon, Founder and CEO, Sense

Employee stakeholders

- Ben Romberg, Digital Strategist
- Monique Perks, Management Consultant and Masters Student, AESC
- Chloe Wyard, Apprentice, Sutton Council

4.0 Small to Medium Business Research

Methodology

This research was conducted via research app OnePulse from 19-20th June 2017. The owners, CEOs or managers of 113 small to medium sized enterprises took part.

Questions

1) <u>Which of the following statements best describes your business's approach to giving feedback after a face to face interview?</u>

A. We always share feedback via phone or email with all candidates who have attended a face-to-face interview – 40%

B. We sometimes share feedback via phone or email with any candidates who have attended a face-to-face interview – 49%

C. We never share feedback via phone or email with any candidates who have attended a face-to-face interview – 12%

Split down between different sized businesses, the results were as follows:

No. of employees	Always	Sometimes	Never
0-9	13%	63%	25%
10-99	52%	36%	12%
100-999	29%	54%	17%

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2) <u>If you ever struggle to share feedback with candidates who've attended a face-to-face interview; please drag & drop the barriers below to prioritise from biggest to smallest.</u>

I. Time or resource pressure (too many people needing feedback; and not enough time to share it)

II. Being worried about the right way to feedback without discriminating

III. Not wanting to offend people

IV. Not knowing what to say (but being less worried about the implications)

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3) <u>Please share your reasons for not sharing feedback. Ranked answers below:</u>

I.   I don't think small employers need to share feedback we're too busy
II.   I wish we did; but we don't have time to feedback after every face-to-face interview
III.   The candidate didn't prepare well enough for the interview; so I don't want to waste my time giving feedback
IV.   I never know what to say; so just avoid sharing feedback – it's safer due to the fear of discriminating
V.   I didn't think we needed to feed back

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4) <u>If you're keen to feedback; but avoid it due to the fear of being sued for discrimination; do you think a politically correct checklist of tick boxes would be of use? i.e. appearance; attitude etc (Yes/No)</u>

- Yes – 68%
- No – 32%

This result split down by female and male respondents was interesting:

Males – Yes = 54% and No = 46%

Females – Yes = 83% and No = 17%

<u>Here are some soundbites from the respondents who took part:</u>

I give feedback, because:

- It'll aid the candidate in any future interviews
- Suggestions are the best way to assist improvement
- It's the decent thing to do; people deserve to know how they have done
- It enables people to improve
- I think its suitable to let the candidate know which area they fell short in
- It helps me to get the correct type of candidate
- It helps people with where they went wrong during the interview
- People should be able to learn from the experience
- It helps the candidate to know where the can do better or what they did well
- It's polite and gives closure as to why someone was right or wrong for the role

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i https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/timeseries/kab9/emp

ii
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/bulletins/familyspendingintheuk/financialyearendingmarch2016