

10 YEARS OF BCBF

A DECADE OF OPPORTUNITIES





**I CAN STAND OUT
FROM THE CROWD**

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FOREWORD BY BLACKROCK

Reflecting on ten years of Big City Bright Future (BCBF) fills me with a huge sense of pride for what the Internship has achieved over the last decade.

The programme was started to provide access to industries that were deemed out of reach for young people who didn't have the networks or home support to secure work experience. The fact that we have provided that experience to over 1,000 students, translating into careers and long-term prospects, is way beyond what we imagined when it started.

Investing in BCBF and our early talent enriches the firms that take part through reverse mentorship and exposure to the challenges that our young people are facing. At BlackRock alone, we have over 100 volunteers each summer, eager to participate as they want to help with our mission and enjoy the fun that the students bring to our teams. Each intern brings a fresh perspective, curious questions, and a creative approach that we benefit from. Each team that takes part in BCBF is playing its part in revealing the paths available to all, ultimately resulting in BCBF alumni enjoying successful careers across the city on their way to becoming future leaders in our industry.

BCBF, for me, is the difference in the energy between Day 1 of Bootcamp and graduation day. A nervous, quiet, unsure room becomes a joyful, lively, positive room of young people. It is a genuine transformation. Each student in the room has so much potential, and

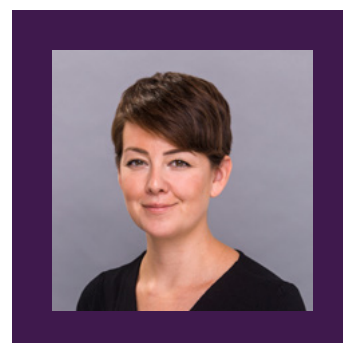
you can visibly see the self-assurance, confidence, and friendships that will continue beyond the three weeks.

Social mobility continues to be a key pillar of many firms' DEI agendas. Harnessing a talent set that can bring the widest range of lived experiences is proven to positively impact the performance of our businesses, and BCBF delivers access to those young voices year after year. Being part of BCBF has driven my own growth and understanding as I have engaged with students who have brought a wealth of knowledge, inspiration, and a healthy dose of realism to our firm. We are learning about what students facing socio-economic disadvantage need, allowing us to create meaningful early career opportunities while also fueling our own bench of diverse thought.

The ten-year report is a testament to **IntoUniversity** and our partner firms, but mainly to the students who took the opportunity and turned it into a springboard to their future careers. Whether the choice was full-time work, apprenticeship programs, universities, or graduate careers, our alumni are making their impact in the early career talent market, and we look forward to continuing to provide this opportunity to the next 1,000 BCBF interns.

GAIL LOHAN

Director / BCBF Lead
BlackRock



A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

DEAR FRIENDS,

When I first set up **IntoUniversity**, it was inspired by a recognition that many of the bright, talented young people in my local community were not being represented in the university lecture theatres in which I was then teaching.

And this really did not seem right – I felt that these wonderful young people had so much potential to achieve but simply weren't being given a fair shot. After developing programmes on the ground at a local community centre, and then establishing **IntoUniversity** as a growing and independent charity, it didn't take long for us to realise that it wasn't just in the lecture theatres of higher education institutions that young people facing disadvantage were underrepresented. University participation was an absolutely vital objective – but only the start.

The young people we supported into university were finding it equally hard to open the doors of corporate offices... let alone boardrooms. Even those who had beaten the odds to get a degree were struggling to compete with their more advantaged peers in the graduate job market, particularly in the most competitive professional roles.

The issues were then – and to some degree still remain – multifaceted. Many routes into graduate roles relied upon unpaid or low paid internships that our young people could rarely afford to take up; networks of sector contacts that they just didn't have were key to getting a foot in the door. Many young people were put off by perceptions of The City as 'not for me', walking into any large corporate office was unthinkable, and knowing no one in 'those types of jobs' made them seem alien and out of reach. Put simply, they did not see themselves represented in those companies ... and not seeing led to not believing these careers were for them. Perhaps just as much as going to university then, becoming a top financier or successful lawyer felt like flying to the moon for many of our students.

So we came to realise that more was and still is needed from us: yes, it is vital to ensure that our young people are provided with the academic support and cultural experiences they need to succeed in higher education, but equally this must be coupled with a concerted effort to provide opportunities for them to experience jobs across a range of industries and companies, to enable them to understand what sort of careers might be on offer and how to access them and to introduce them to their colleagues of the future so they feel like they can really belong.

Nowhere throughout **IntoUniversity** is this approach more visible than in Big City Bright Future (BCBF), our flagship paid internship programme. I'm so proud that we are celebrating its tenth birthday! I can still remember that first group of 15 young people brimming with excitement and nervous energy ahead of their internships. Since then we've worked with 1076 talented and unique students and an eclectic spread of 37 top tier, committed and dedicated corporate partners to deliver transformative, life-changing internship experiences.

This year it's been such a pleasure to be able to reflect on everything that has been achieved in the last ten years. This report provides just a snapshot of how impactful the programme has been in giving our young people the chance to build new skills and enjoy multivarious experiences which will help them make an informed decision about their future goals and aspirations. Recent students who have completed BCBF are now studying for a degree having experienced some of what professional life after university has to offer and they are already thinking ahead proactively about their next career steps. Many others are already embarking on successful careers: lawyers, accountants, bankers, doctors, teachers and graphic designers among them. Bright Futures indeed!

A huge thank you to *everyone* who has been involved in BCBF over the last ten years: your ambitious creativity and committed hard work have made the programme a transformative success. Thank you to our amazing corporate partners. And our talented and dedicated staff team.

And most of all thank you to our inspirational young people – I am very much looking forward to hearing about your bright futures as we continue the BCBF journey.

DR RACHEL CARR, OBE

Founder & Chief Executive
IntoUniversity





ABOUT INTOUNIVERSITY

IntoUniversity is an award-winning national education charity providing local learning centres where young people are inspired to achieve.

Its mission is to provide local support that can break cycles of disadvantage and open up new opportunities for young people. We believe that, with support, every young person can progress to an excellent post-school destination, and we are committed to helping them on this journey.

At each **IntoUniversity** centre, we offer an innovative long-term programme that supports young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to attain their chosen aspiration, including Further and Higher Education,

employment and work-based training. Students receive structured pastoral and academic support, designed to be aspirational and to promote a love of learning. This primarily consists of our four core programmes: Academic Support, Mentoring, FOCUS (immersive educational workshops which support students' aspirations, attainment, and development of key soft skills) and Student Opportunities. In the 2022/23 academic year, we supported over 52,000 young people and 61% of our school-leavers progressed to Higher Education compared to 28% and 26% of students from similar backgrounds in England & Wales and Scotland respectively.

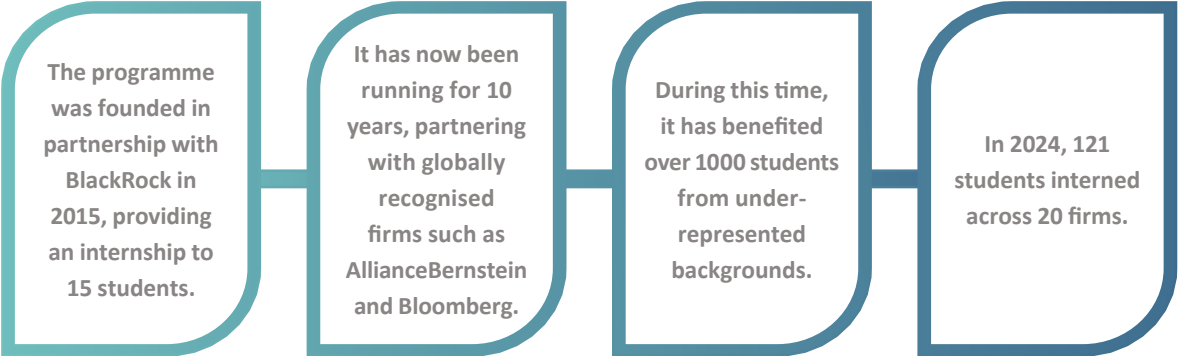
AN INTERNSHIP WITH A DIFFERENCE



ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

BCBF is an annual three-week paid work experience programme created especially to help school leavers who aspire to work within competitive industries. The internship aims to accelerate a student's career path by providing high quality work experience and access to professional careers.

THE STORY SO FAR...

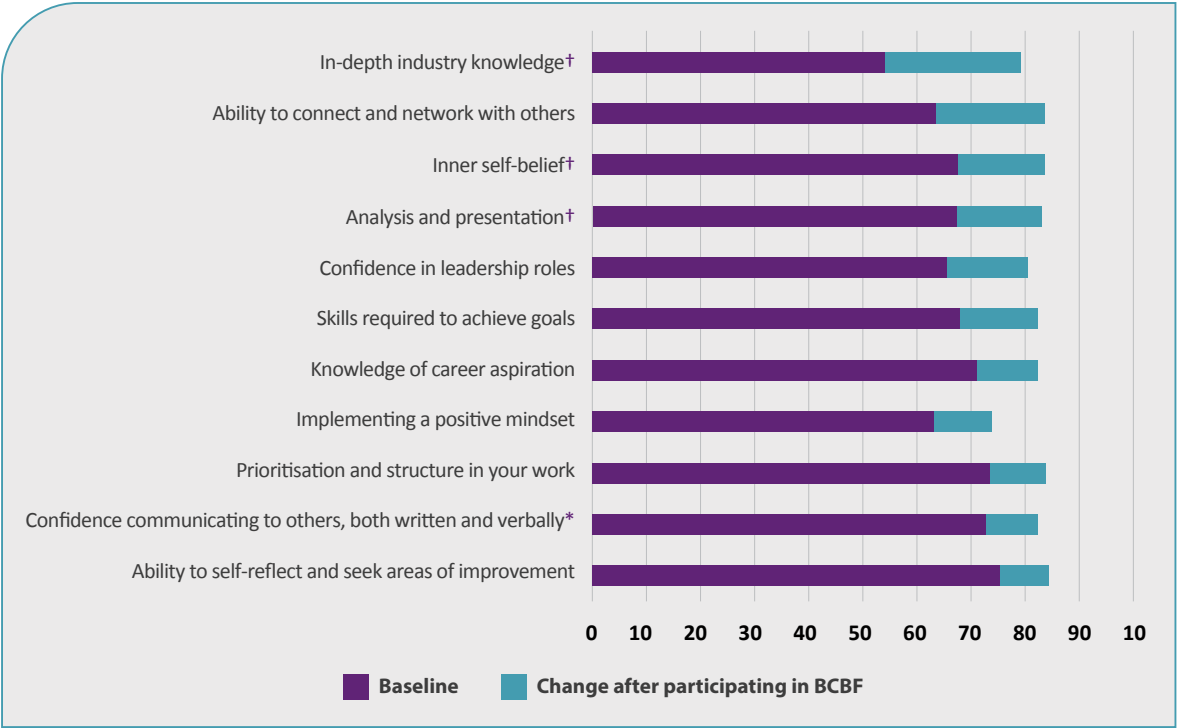


In 2014, I had the privilege of meeting students from the **IntoUniversity** charity at a corporate event at BlackRock's office. Their ambition, drive, and untapped potential struck a chord with me. I realized that these talented individuals simply needed the right opportunity to shine. Driven by this insight, we launched Big City Bright Future, opening the doors of BlackRock to these aspiring young professionals. As we celebrate its 10th anniversary, I'm incredibly proud of the paths these students have carved out, proving that, with opportunity, bright futures are within reach for all.

NITIN SHARMA
Co-founder of Big City Bright Future
Global FICC BC, Citadel Securities
(Formerly Chief Operating Officer Trading - EMEA & APAC, BlackRock)

TEN YEARS ON – EXPLORING THE IMPACT

When we first established BCBF back in 2014 we never could have imagined it would grow to what it's become. As the programme has grown, we've developed increasingly robust ways to track its impact. One of the ways we've done this is by identifying the skill areas that the internship aims to develop. Since 2021, students taking part in the programme have completed a baseline survey before the internship and a follow-up afterwards, asking them to assess their own skill level in each area. In each of the four years we have been collecting this data, the results have shown statistically significant improvements in all of the skill areas assessed. [1] The area seeing the largest increase was in-depth industry knowledge. The chart below shows the results for all four years of the survey combined. [2]



A sample of students who had taken part in the internship between 2016 and 2023 completed a follow up questionnaire in 2024. [3] Reflecting on their experience, 71% agreed that the internship had helped them develop the skills required to achieve their goals, suggesting that the impact of the programme is sustained over the long term.

[1] The statistical tests used were matched-pairs t-tests, testing for a significant difference between the baseline and post-internship survey score in each area. The p value for each area was <0.02 in all of the 4 years assessed. Of the 649 students who took part in the internship between 2021 and 2024, 219 completed a baseline and follow-up survey.

[2] The 2021, 2022 and 2023 data was collected using a 10 point-scale. For 2024, this was changed to a 5-point scale. For this chart, the 2024 data has been converted to a 10-point scale.

[3] 76 students completed the follow up questionnaire.

* This question was only asked in the 2024 survey.

† These questions were not asked in the 2024 survey.



100% OF RESPONDENTS WOULD RECOMMEND BCBF TO OTHERS.

Over the last 10 years, 98% of BCBF alumni achieved positive-destinations after finishing school including 87% that went on to university.

None of this transformational work could occur without the support of our incredible partner firms who have facilitated hundreds of challenging, aspiration-building and CV-enhancing internship programmes for our students. We are grateful to the 37 firms who have hosted our students and supported the programme over the years.

In addition to conducting the above data analysis we also surveyed a selection of students from across the full 10-year period the programme has existed.

78%

Of respondents reported an increased ability to network with others

62%

Of respondents reported an increased ability to self-reflect and seek areas of improvement

82%

OF RESPONDENTS REPORTED AN INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS



BRIGHT FUTURES IN THE BIG CITY

Three BCBF alumni reflect on their internships, and how their experiences with IntoUniversity have impacted their current journeys.

MEET KRISTIANS

Kristians started his IntoUniversity journey at our Brighton centre, and was later accepted onto the BCBF programme, securing an internship at management consulting firm Kearney.

Fast forward to now, and Kristians is gearing up to start a Bachelor of Arts in History, Politics, and Economics at University College London. His hard work and determination are paying off, and he’s excited for what’s next.

Kristians interned at Kearney, a well-respected consulting firm, during his BCBF experience. The boot camp that came before the internship was a real eye-opener for him. “The variety of workshops and talks passed many bits of insight and skills that I was able to implement throughout my internship at Kearney,” he noted.

If you’re thinking about applying to BCBF, Kristians says go for it! He strongly recommends attending all the application sessions. “Not only do they give insight into the programme and the processes in applying, but also bolster your chances of getting in,” he emphasised.



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a valuable chance to get more hands-on experience

MEET MICHAEL

Michael is a dedicated young professional from Kennington who says his experience with IntoUniversity and BCBF has played a pivotal role in shaping his career. Currently working as a Finance Assistant at a clothing company, Michael reflects on his journey and the impact these opportunities have had on his professional growth.

Michael attended IntoUniversity Kennington for about two years, initially discovering the programme through his secondary school. He was then accepted onto the BCBF programme, securing an internship with one of the world’s leading financial companies, BlackRock.

When asked about BCBF, Michael shares, “During school, I had completed some work experience, but none in the asset management sector, so this opportunity was entirely new for me.” This internship at BlackRock was particularly enticing because it lasted approximately three weeks – much longer than the typical one-week placements he had previously done. He viewed this as “a valuable chance to get more hands-on experience,” which he felt was necessary to develop practical skills and insight.

Michael strongly encourages other young people to apply for BCBF: “I would highly recommend it. There’s almost no downside to applying and gaining early experience, which many people struggle to find.”



MEET TIAN

Tian attended IntoUniversity Leeds South since she was just nine years old. Her journey has been marked by dedication and a thirst for knowledge, leading her to study Combined Social Science at the University of Durham, with a focus on Politics, Philosophy, and Anthropology.

Tian learned about BCBF through the regular IntoUniversity email newsletter. “I wanted to have something to look forward to after finishing my A-levels,” she said, expressing her eagerness to prepare for her post-education journey. This led her to an internship at the Bank of New York, specifically within the legal department focused on Public Policy, Regulation Supervision, and Corporate Affairs.

Reflecting on her experience at the BCBF boot camp, Tian says, “My experience was beyond my expectations, both in terms of the knowledge I gained and the professional growth it fostered.” She found the programme to be informative and transformative, helping her develop crucial skills for the working world. The camaraderie among her fellow interns was particularly inspiring, as she noted, “The insightful questions they posed set the stage for some deeply enriching conversations.”

In closing, Tian expressed appreciation for the firms advocating for social mobility, noting, “It was great to see how many firms are championing social mobility. Elite jobs aren’t just for the elite.” Her journey through IntoUniversity and BCBF exemplifies how determination and support can open doors to new opportunities and pathways, paving the way for a promising future.

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THE PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

Ian Foster has been a driving force behind AllianceBernstein’s (AB) partnership with the BCBF programme, which has made a significant impact in fostering social mobility and providing opportunities for young talent in the financial services industry.

Since the programme’s inception, Ian has dedicated himself to supporting this initiative, and his leadership has been instrumental in AB’s continued involvement. In this reflection, we ask Ian about his and AB’s journey with BCBF, the profound impact on both the company and the students, and the personal motivations that drive this commitment.

How long have you been a BCBF partner?

I was first introduced to BCBF in late 2016, and AB took our first intake in summer 2017, making 2024 our eighth year of involvement.

How would you describe the impact that your company’s involvement in BCBF has had?

Taking AB from a standing start eight years ago to becoming the second-largest provider of placements in the programme is something I am immensely proud of. I couldn’t have achieved this without the support of the wider AB family, both in London and beyond. We offer a variety of opportunities to our students, host great group events, and provide valuable training during their time with us. I believe our students leave AB with a better understanding of the industry than when they joined.

Why do you think BCBF is such an important programme, both for your company and for you personally?

Social mobility has always been the driving force behind this programme, influenced by my own upbringing. I have always felt a sense of responsibility to give back. We are fortunate to work in the financial services industry, and being able to contribute in this way motivates me and many others. It is easy to stand by and complain about the challenges our young people face, but we all have a responsibility to improve our society. We should be grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of emerging talent, enhancing their outlook and prospects. It’s something we should all be proud of.



Are there any particular stories from your experiences with BCBF that stand out in your memory, or that you think highlight what makes BCBF what it is?

A couple of students particularly stand out in my memory. One had only been in the UK for just over a year, having fled from war-torn Syria. Providing her with the opportunity to spend two weeks with us was incredibly special. I also remember a conversation with a student who had grown up on an estate in Hackney. He shared how the love and guidance of his parents instilled in him the belief that education was the path to a better life. He expressed immense gratitude for being part of BCBF, which truly epitomised why we do this work. This year was also special, as our nine-day programme coincided with visits from the two most senior leaders in the firm. Their engagement with the students and the insightful questions posed during firm updates were particularly memorable.

What would you say to another company considering becoming a BCBF partner?

It is a fantastic programme that allows you to meet incredibly smart and talented young people eager to learn about our work. In return, you can build relationships that may lead to discovering future talent. It is incredibly rewarding to witness the positive impact this programme has on the young participants and provides a great opportunity for staff to give back.

What would you say to a young person considering applying to BCBF?

Do it, but be prepared to work hard. Be ready to learn and be proactive in maximising your experience in the programme.

Anything else you would like to add?

I would like to highlight that the team at IntoUniversity is exceptional and works incredibly hard. They are a true credit to the programme, making a tangible difference in the lives of young people across the UK.



IAN FOSTER
Senior Vice President – Chief Operating Officer (EMEA), AllianceBernstein

On behalf of **Into**University, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Ian and everyone at AllianceBernstein for their unwavering support. We also want to thank all the other partners who have made BCBF possible, as together we work towards creating brighter futures for young people across the UK.

THE NEXT TEN YEARS – WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR BCBF?

The first ten years of BCBF have delivered transformative internship experiences for young people, working with amazing partners across a range of sectors, preparing them for future careers in the city.

But with technology driving rapid changes within existing industries and birthing new industries and professions, what will the next ten years look like for our flagship internship programme?



CONTINUE TO DELIVER AN EXCELLENT PROGRAMME

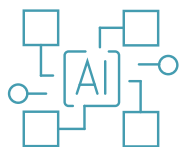
We will continue to work with our existing partners to deliver what has become renowned as a really value-adding and high quality experience for young people and the companies that host internships. Of course, that means continuing to improve our mechanisms for gathering feedback from all parties, and building in consistent improvements that enhance the experience for everyone involved. We look forward to working with our partners, old and new, to sustain and build upon the BCBF programme, so that we can make it available to more young people, in more locations, with more amazing companies.



GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

We want to continue to make BCBF as impactful as possible for those young people who really need it, those from underrepresented backgrounds for whom landing an internship in the city might feel beyond reach.

We've had great success in doing this so far, but through diversifying the range of partners we have in different locations around the country, we know we can attract even more young people in harder to reach communities, ultimately increasing the impact of the programme.



ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGY

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already a hot topic, and has started to have an impact on the world of work. But experts predict that AI will be the most transformative technology of the next decade. By 2027, the World Economic Forum estimates that AI technology will handle 42% of business tasks.

The workforce of the future will need to understand the challenges and opportunities that come with this new and powerful technology, and develop the skills needed to use it to their advantage.

For young people hoping to undertake a BCBF internship in 2035, this will likely mean that their placement will involve AI technology in a much more overt way, and their boot camp preparation will need to reflect this. The ability to constantly learn and adapt to new ways of doing things will become an increasingly essential skill.



I enjoy working on the programme as I get to meet ambitious and proactive young people who want to take control of their own futures. I'm excited to build on the diversification of our partners, grow the programme geographically and develop our support for BCBF alumni once they have completed the programme. A big thank you to our corporate partners for providing a platform that fosters a new generation of diverse talent, and a huge thank you to the exceptional students that make the most of this unique opportunity.



LUKE FRANCIS

Student Opportunities
Manager / BCBF lead,
IntoUniversity

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW SECTORS

Driven in part by this new technology, a number of new professions and industries are likely to become increasingly significant.



It is believed that by 2035, 88% of new jobs will be at graduate level. *Research from Universities UK* suggests that over 11 million extra graduates will be needed to fill jobs in the UK in industries such as computing and engineering, teaching and education, and health - with computer programming the occupation expected to grow most significantly.

From digital technologies to green jobs and advanced manufacturing, the internships young people want and need in the future will need to reflect the job market at the time – and there's a good chance that will look quite different from today.

BCBF already works with a range of incredible companies who are likely to be at the forefront of many of these workplace changes. We also recognise how crucial it is that we continue to diversify our portfolio of partner companies to ensure we can provide students with diverse internship opportunities in sectors and professions that inspire them and prepare them for the future they are entering into.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

BCBF is a popular and impactful programme, with hundreds of young people applying each year. We are proud to be able to deliver such transformative paid work placements to young people in some of the most high profile and competitive companies in the city. As we look to the future, we will not be looking to reinvent the wheel, however, we are mindful of ensuring that young people get access to a diverse range of experiences and opportunities which reflect the 'bright future' they'll be stepping into.



UNLOCKING POTENTIAL:

HOW BUSINESSES CAN ENGAGE DIVERSE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Hilai Qahari graduated from Brunel University with a Law degree and is now studying to qualify as a solicitor. Hilai took part in a BCBF internship back in 2016. She was previously a member of the **IntoUniversity** Student Advisory Panel. Hilai attended the **IntoUniversity** Brent centre and has been with **IntoUniversity** for a decade, having first attended a Primary **FOCUS** Week. She is now a member of the Advisory Panel. Here, she explores the ways in which companies can strive to make themselves more inclusive, both to improve social mobility, and so that businesses can benefit from the range of talent and experience diversity can bring.



1. Inclusive and Accessible Recruitment

It all starts with building a recruitment process that is truly inclusive and free from bias. If we want to attract diverse talent, we must examine how we present job opportunities, ensuring our language is neutral and our requirements are reasonable and focused on skills rather than irrelevant criteria. Job descriptions should not unintentionally discourage underrepresented candidates.

For instance, the BBC made significant strides by launching its Creative Diversity Commitment, ensuring that 20% of its workforce comes from underrepresented groups. They revised their job descriptions and partnered with local organisations to reach broader talent pools. Additionally, blind recruitment, where personal details like names and educational backgrounds are omitted from the hiring process, has been increasingly adopted as a way to reduce unconscious bias. By focusing on what truly matters – skills and potential – we create an inclusive environment where young professionals from all backgrounds feel they have a fair chance.

Another example is Deloitte's collaboration with Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA), a program that helps low-income students secure internships and jobs. By forming partnerships with organisations that directly engage with underrepresented communities, companies like Deloitte are not just attracting diverse candidates – they are building lasting, inclusive pipelines for future growth.

In a similar way, BCBF founding partner BlackRock has committed to taking deliberate steps to reach top talent from a diverse range of backgrounds, regularly reviewing job postings for biased language, championing diverse candidate slates and adhering to a competency-based approach to interviewing.

2. Fostering an Inclusive Workplace Culture

Attracting diverse talent is only the beginning. The real work begins with fostering a culture that encourages all employees, regardless of background, to feel valued, supported, and able to thrive. It's essential that inclusivity becomes a core part of a company's DNA – embedded in values, policies, and daily practices.

Take Accenture as a leading example. Accenture's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy is built on open dialogue, celebrating individual differences, and creating safe spaces for all employees through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Whether it's for ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, or women, these ERGs provide a support network and create opportunities for engagement with leadership. Moreover, Accenture offers training on recognizing and addressing unconscious bias, ensuring the workplace remains a welcoming environment for all. This kind of inclusive culture is what allows young professionals from underrepresented backgrounds to not just stay – but to flourish and advance.

When we create a culture of belonging, we ensure that people from diverse backgrounds are not just tokens but essential, thriving members of our teams.

3. Mentorship and Career Development

One of the most effective ways to retain young professionals, particularly from underrepresented groups, is to provide mentorship and clear pathways for career growth. Mentorship programs connect younger employees with experienced professionals who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement. It is a powerful tool for helping them navigate workplace challenges, build their confidence, and grow within the organisation.

At Fragomen, where I work, mentorship plays a key role in nurturing young talent. The firm's Mentorship Program for Emerging Leaders pairs junior employees with senior mentors who help guide their development, expand their professional networks, and provide insight into industry trends. Fragomen's commitment to mentorship not only supports individual growth but also contributes to higher retention rates, as employees feel more invested in their personal and professional journeys within the company.

Similarly, AllianceBernstein's Career Catalyst Program provides participants with the tools to manage their own career development, through a six-month coaching program which sees them paired with senior vice presidents for focused career coaching.

Additionally, programs like Google's BOLD (Building Opportunities for Leadership and Development) provide structured mentorship and professional experiences for students from underrepresented backgrounds, laying the foundation for long-term career success. These initiatives are critical for showing young professionals that they are not just part of the team today, but integral to the company's future.

It is also worth noting that companies can and are working on programmes to start nurturing and developing the talent of future generations way before they get near to entering the workplace. Investing in young people from an early age is essential to their future success – and companies are increasingly recognising this. Education, for instance, is a central pillar of Bloomberg's global philanthropy programme. By funding organisations that expand educational opportunities, Bloomberg and other companies in this space equip young people facing disadvantage with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in an ever-evolving job market.

4. Offering Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexibility is no longer a perk – it's a necessity, especially for young professionals from underrepresented backgrounds who may face unique challenges or responsibilities outside of work. Offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, adaptable schedules, or job-sharing, allows employees to better manage their personal and professional lives, which contributes to greater retention and job satisfaction.

Salesforce is a leader in offering flexible work policies. It allows employees to choose work arrangements that fit their needs, recognizing that work-life balance is essential for long-term success. Flexibility, particularly during and after the pandemic, has proven to be a vital factor in retaining young professionals who may

have caregiving responsibilities or other personal commitments.

Moreover, companies that support their employees with mental health resources, wellness programs, and financial literacy workshops show they are invested in their people's well-being, which is especially meaningful for those from marginalized communities. When we invest in the whole person, not just the employee, we create a workplace where people want to stay and grow.

5. Measuring Progress and Accountability

Diversity and inclusion efforts must go beyond good intentions. We need to hold ourselves accountable by setting measurable targets, tracking progress, and being transparent about results. Accountability shows young professionals that diversity isn't just a talking point – it's a true business priority.

Microsoft sets a strong example with its annual Diversity and Inclusion Report, which publicly shares its progress in hiring and retaining diverse talent. This kind of transparency not only builds trust but also helps attract young professionals seeking an inclusive work environment where diversity is valued and celebrated.

CONCLUSION

Attracting and retaining young professionals from underrepresented backgrounds requires intention, strategy, and commitment. It's about more than just checking boxes – it's about fostering a culture where everyone feels they belong and can contribute fully. When we commit to inclusive recruitment, build supportive cultures, offer mentorship and development opportunities, embrace flexibility, and hold ourselves accountable, we unlock the true potential of our teams.

The real-world examples demonstrate that a genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion isn't just good for business – it's essential for creating vibrant, innovative, and future-ready organisations. By prioritising these strategies, we can build a more creative, engaged, and high-performing workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the world around us. The benefits are clear: greater creativity, engagement, and overall performance.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BCBF would not be possible without the generous contributions and hard work of our partner firms and individual supporters, both past and present.



We are deeply grateful for your ongoing commitment. Thank you for your inspiring dedication to helping our young people access invaluable work experience opportunities that will enhance their career prospects for years to come.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| – ALLIANCEBERNSTEIN | – KEARNEY |
| – AMERICAN CENTURY INVESTMENTS | – KING’S COLLEGE LONDON |
| – BABEL | – LASALLE |
| – BANK OF AMERICA | – LLOYDS BANKING GROUP |
| – BLACKROCK | – MAKO TRADING |
| – BLOOMBERG | – MAN GROUP |
| – BMO CAPITAL MARKETS | – MARKETAXESS EUROPE LIMITED |
| – BNP PARIBAS | – MARQETA |
| – BANK OF NEW YORK MELLON | – MMC VENTURES |
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| – EVERCORE | – SETH WAINWRIGHT |
| – FINANCIAL EDGE TRAINING | – STEVE RAFFERTY |
| – GAIL LOHAN | – SIMMONS & SIMMONS |
| – GAM INVESTMENTS | – SINGER CAPITAL MARKETS |
| – GROWTH CAPITAL PARTNERS | – TD SECURITIES |
| – GOLDMAN SACHS | – TRADEWEB |
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