

DIN their words

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A speaker at a DIN event sparked an idea at national housing group Accent – one that led to time and resource savings... and another solution.



What was the problem you needed/ wanted to solve or the improvement you wanted to make?

It wasn't really a problem as such; we had several projects and pieces of work to do as part of our people strategy and we had been discussing how we were going to approach them.

Our exec director of people, culture and transformation had been to a DIN event and had listened to Andrew Whyatt-Sames from uptakeAI, talking about leveraging AI. We had all dabbled with Chat GPT and were starting to think about how we could use it to do some work for us, so she arranged a private training session for the people team with Andrew.

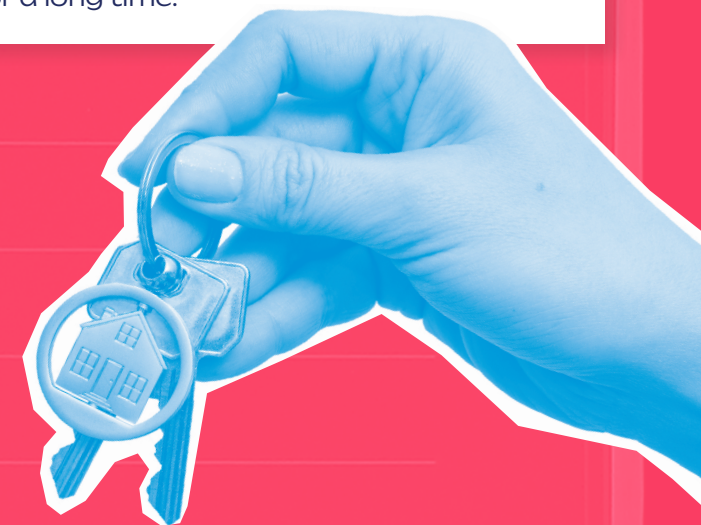
He shared some of his insights, and I just had not realised the amount of different AI tools – and that you can use them for different things. He talked about how he used AI, including as a sounding board.

Part of the people strategy was a complete review of reward, starting with job descriptions - and we had 250 of them! We started by doing some streamlining, because some JDs were created years ago and hadn't been looked at again, and some were new roles, so even the styles, language and lengths were very different.

We were also bringing in job evaluation and so we needed to get them done quite quickly. We were originally going to divide them between all the business partners but Andrew gave us ideas of how AI could help us.

What made you decide this was a priority to take on?

We were reviewing reward as part of our people strategy, so it was important to the business. We'd also listened to colleague feedback and we were hearing that people didn't feel rewarded and there hadn't been any salary benchmarking for a long time.





How did you go about it?

We engaged with IT because we wanted to make sure we weren't inadvertently doing anything daft and that we had all possible security in place.

We put aside a date – and started playing! We created two bots with Chat GPT. We fed in some data like our values, our culture book, some of the things the business was working on, reporting lines and some basic data about each role. Then we created a job description template, including the different sections we wanted to be laid out.

We gave it a list of instructions and fed in our prompts; things like the maximum amount of key responsibilities we wanted on each JD, the style and tone, and also asked it to search the internet for job descriptions for roles we hadn't had before. We also told it things we didn't want it to do, such as use US English or call colleagues 'staff'.

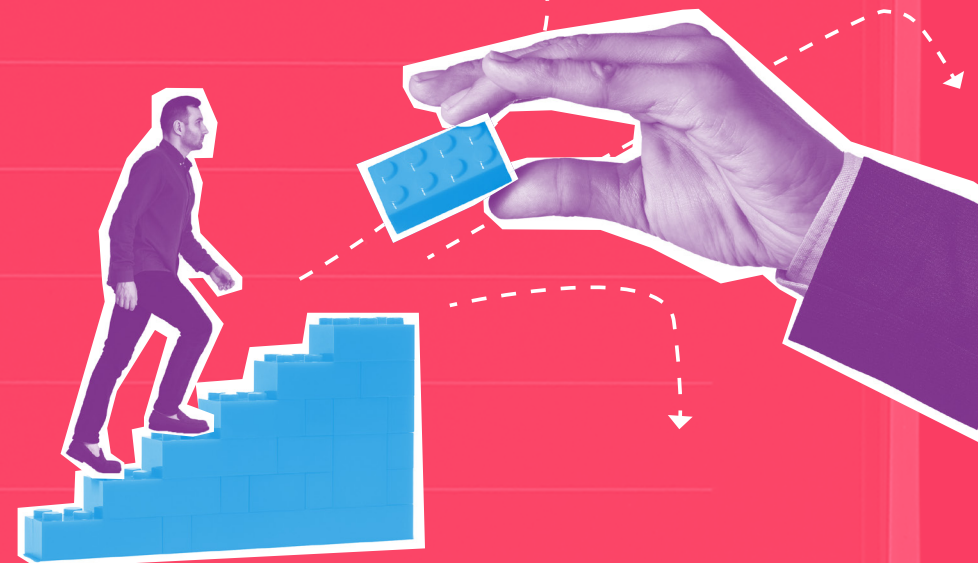
We saved each one and then did a sense check, so that when we sent them to managers, we knew they were good enough because we'd put checks and balances in place first.

The business partner team checked all of them and regardless of that time, we still more than halved the time it took to create those JDs.

What were the barriers to the change?

Originally I'd say it was our lack of knowledge about how best to leverage AI and how to create the right AI bots with clear instructions. It does take a bit of effort at first.

This is also still new for most organisations so we needed to demonstrate there was no risk in what we were doing and decide an approach which the organisation and IT were comfortable with.





What were the outcomes?

It saved about four weeks of time and when we shared the JDs with managers, we got feedback that the quality was really good.

We also learnt from it, because AI was suggesting things we hadn't even considered. If we had just refreshed the JDs internally, we wouldn't have thought of those additional points.



What worked and didn't work and what did you learn?

Sometimes you just need to take a leap from a starting point. Just run with it, knowing you've got checks and balances in place. It still needs the human touch.

I've learnt so much about how to use AI and how to give great prompts.

It's so useful but we found there came a point where we were giving it too much information and the quality actually got worse.

Think of the key things that will save you time and effort, rather than trying to get it to do everything. We could have stopped earlier, but we kept trying to add, to make it better.

How did your involvement with DIN help you with this project?

If our exec director hadn't been to that original event, we just wouldn't have gone down this route. Because of it, we've now built a second bot to help us with the competence and conduct standards.



What would your advice be to other DIN members?

It's easy to think you're too busy to attend events and webinars, but it only takes one golden nugget to make a difference – and at different levels.

Membership is open to your whole organisation, so don't rely on one person to bring back that golden nugget. The results can be outstanding.