

Edinburgh Napier University

Bright Red Triangle

Stage in the typical student journey

Who we are and what we do:

Bright Red Triangle (BRT) is based in the Business School at **Edinburgh Napier University** (ENU). BRT recruits undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students to complete paid consultancy projects for external organisations. BRT is intended to create and develop relationships which could provide career paths for graduates and at the same time enhance the competitive edge of the local business community resulting in enhanced economic growth.

With a strong emphasis on employability and commercialisation, BRT forms part of ENU's overall enterprise education model through a process which equips students with practical real life experience in order to enhance their capacity to generate ideas and give them the confidence to apply their skills across a range of applications.

Intended measurable impact

For our customers:

- BRT offers a cost effective route to the provision of a service that you do not have the time or expertise to complete
- opens up a valuable network and access to other businesses
- increases awareness of the diverse range of ENU activities from which you can benefit.

For our students:

- opportunity for paid work
- enriches student CV with practical consultancy experience
- creates relationships and enhances networks for future employment
- builds transferable skills for wider employment opportunities.

For ENU:

- graduate employment (improving ENU employability rates)
- on-going consultancy projects with original customers or other commercial clients
- extended ENU engagement with the business community for larger pieces of consultancy work; we want to engage fully with the business community and hope to identify guest speakers who can deliver master classes, as well as opportunities for work-based learning projects and internships.

Context

The aim is to create project teams which provide junior consultants (students) who will deliver business consultancy services, working to a brief devised by the client business and supervised by a senior consultant (Business School staff, including external associates). The business will pay for the service, the graduate will earn for the work

completed and enhance their CV, the senior consultant will be paid for supervision and ENU will generate income which will support the work of the Moffat Centre (ENU's business incubator which assists students and graduates to start new businesses.)

We employ students from across all faculties and graduates up to two years after graduating. The majority of our junior consultant databases are from the Business School and a large section are from the school of computing. We acknowledge the increase in creative business start-ups and encourage creative industry students to join BRT in order to gain the higher-level commercial experience and enterprise awareness that they will need in order to be successful.

Description

BRT was developed to allow students to apply their learned theoretical knowledge gained within ENU and apply it in a supportive, yet practical, experiential environment taking them out of the traditional educational assessment zone of case studies and theoretical business situations to actual real business challenges. Taking initiative, problem solving and personal effectiveness are all core competencies that we seek in students as well as develop in those who we hire.

Summary of impact

Deliveries from the measurable impacts

For our customers:

- BRT have engaged with over 80 businesses of various sizes and across different sectors/industries
- 20 completed project to date
- 10 projects pending at the moment.

Par Equity Investments LLP had this to say about Bright Red Triangle 'We very much enjoyed working with members of the BRT team on a project which will add a tremendous amount of value to our organisation. The service was extremely professional and thorough throughout, whilst also being particularly enjoyable.'

For our students:

- we currently have 55 students/graduates trained and live as consultants
- the academic disciplines of the students vary widely, ranging from web technologies, sports science to marketing, entrepreneurship and finance
- we currently have 40 undergraduates on our database
- we currently have 15 postgraduates on our database.

One of our student consultants had this to say after completing a project 'The opportunity to put forward my ideas and see them brought into reality which helped the client achieve their aims was what I enjoyed most'.

For ENU:

- seven past consultants left us to take up full-time employment
- four students have continued onto repeat projects

- BRT have completed various internal project also, these have ranged from market research, web design, data visualisation and flyer creation.

Strengths

Given the educational context outlined in the QAA guidelines (2012-14) surrounding the current economic climate, more students are turning to portfolio careers, consultancy, self-employment, as well as mainstream graduate employment, and through the first part of our process, which is the assessment centre, the student feedback has been resoundingly positive.

The feedback on our assessment centre has led to an opportunity to work with the enhanced careers service to further develop this process. We are now planning an assessment centre experience which will be open to all. Students will receive feedback at every stage from sending in their CV, through telephone screening, interview and other assessment methods, including role-play. This new approach will mean that every student can participate; we are very excited by the opportunity to provide this service to all students.

Improvements

As these are real businesses with actual challenges and problems, training of the junior consultant is of paramount importance if they are to enter the client environment and have the confidence to ask questions, scope the projects and demonstrate a willingness to take risks. It's about finding the balance between a supportive learning environment and the commercial realities of consulting.

Partners

Entrepreneurship activity at ENU is led by the Business School, but operates across all three faculties, and works with core central functions such as student and academic services and knowledge transfer and commercialisation.

We have developed a presentation format that allows us to go out and meet the business community, and generate relationships and develop projects while building links with the local business community. We have already developed relationships with the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Business Gateway and the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust to further facilitate this networking.

With regard to resources, BRT is based in the Moffat Centre at our Craiglockhart campus. We have recruited a recent graduate as Project Coordinator and we have also begun to recruit student consultants through our assessment-centre style recruitment process. This process allows us to assess the capabilities of the students who wish to take part and provides assurance to the business community that they are getting appropriately qualified consultants. We also developed a training programme for our junior consultants so that they are prepared for the commercial reality of consultancy work.

Funding

All activity is funded by ENU regarded as core to what we do, but we have seized opportunities when presented and Regional Coherence Funds were used to resource the design and development of BRT.

Website link

Website : www.brightredtriangle.co.uk

Blog: <http://brightredtriangle.wordpress.com>

Twitter: @BrightRTriangle

Contact Details

Samantha McFarlane

Project Co-ordinator

Bright Red Triangle

219 Colinton Road

Edinburgh EH14 1DJ

Tel: 0131 455 4372

E: s.mcfarlane@napier.ac.uk