

Building a talent pipeline

SCALEUP
INSIGHTS



Scaleups continue to highlight their need for employees with the right skills and experience as their number one barrier to growth. However, there are ways we can raise aspirations and develop the skills of the future workforce.

- 1** **Provide encounters.**

Scaleup leaders can connect to a local school through the Founders4Schools (F4S) platform. To date, business volunteers have given 10,414 hours and created 656,625 student-employer encounters, giving careers talks or participating in activities such as mock interviews and CV workshops. "I would encourage any scaleup that is not connected to F4S to do so," says Claudia Harris, CEO of the Careers & Enterprise Company.
- 2** **Rethink work experience.**

The conventional format of two weeks' work experience in the summer "is not necessarily the highest impact way to support a young person," says Claudia Harris. There are other ways to provide insight into work, through multiple exposure to different workplaces or through social interaction. More than six million young people have benefited from the interactive tools provided by the Lifeskills programme, which includes a virtual work experience tool. Arranging appropriate work placements has been made easier through innovations such as F4S' Workfinder app.
- 3** **Focus on the local ecosystem.**

Know your local priorities, and target resources accordingly. Connect employers with schools and colleges in a local network to identify opportunities for engagement and open the eyes of pupils to local opportunities in scaling businesses. A city-to-city, local-to-local approach shows significant results as exemplified by F4S. In one project in Stirling, Scotland, a 10-fold increase in student-employer encounters brokered on a monthly basis was recorded.
- 4** **Commit senior resources.**

Involvement of CEOs and senior managers adds credibility and weight to employer-school engagement plans and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to growing skills and talent.
- 5** **Use free tools.**

Google Digital Garage provides free training and coaching on a range of digital skills and online tools. More than 300,000 people have been trained through the Google programme; as a result, 88 per cent of participants made changes to the way they run their businesses online; almost half (49%) saw an increase in website visitor numbers and a third (32%) experienced an increase in customer numbers.
- 6** **Let the young teach the old.**

Workforce technology company Freeformers helps companies to develop its digital skills, behaviours and talent with a dual approach that combines training within companies and external training that prepares young people for the workplace. The 'Freeformers Adopt' programme transforms a business from within by helping staff develop a digital mindset. Freeformers Pulse offers self and peer assessment, while Freeformers Learn allows employees to access coaching and digital learning. "A digital future doesn't mean everyone relying on a bunch of hipsters, but a system where older employees learn from younger, tech-savvy workers is essential in order for companies to adapt to fit evolving working practices," says Gi Fernando, founder of Freeformers.
- 7** **Be confident about schools' capacity and appetite to work with you.**

"There is now a clear standard of excellence in careers education, which there has not been before," says Claudia Harris. "That standard includes an expectation of much closer working between the worlds of education and work, and an expectation that every school has a person responsible for making this happen, which we never had before."