

# CONSTRUCT: YOUR FUTURE

Attracting talent and  
recruiting apprentices for  
the construction sector

**Category:**

10 - Multichannel

**Client company:**

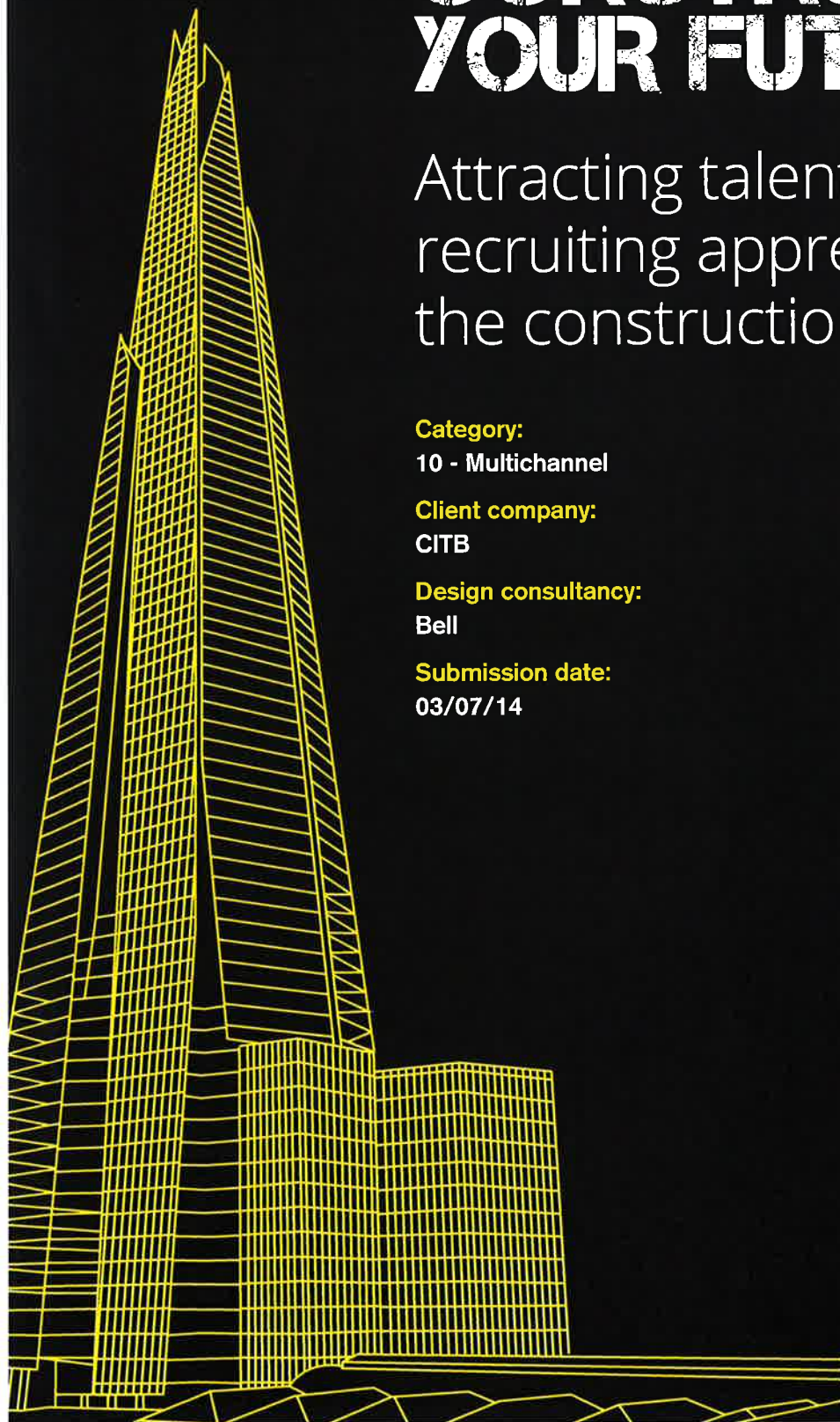
CITB

**Design consultancy:**

Bell

**Submission date:**

03/07/14



b.

## 2/ Executive summary

CITB is responsible for encouraging young people to join the construction industry. But with demand for construction workers set to soar, the recruitment challenge is increasing, with an estimated 30,000 new managers needed in the next four years. CITB needed to change perceptions of construction and recruit a wider demographic too.

Following a tender process, Bell was appointed to design a campaign for 14–18 year olds to increase apprenticeship recruitment levels and change views of the industry and its suitability as a career. Effectiveness would be measured against some highly challenging KPIs:

- Secure 150,000 unique visits to [www.bconstructive.co.uk](http://www.bconstructive.co.uk), CITB's website for construction apprentices – and from those unique visits deliver a 7:1 conversion ratio of fully signed-up apprentices.
- For the 'Attracting talent' strand, generate 100,000 unique visits to [www.citb.co.uk/careers](http://www.citb.co.uk/careers), with 3000 registering for more information. This campaign also needed to increase Familiarity and Favourability benchmark scores.

We designed a multi-channel campaign strategy to work across traditional, digital and experiential media.

At its core was a highly contemporary and immediate visual design, using infographic-style images of impressive construction projects.

We used this across a range of channels including;

- online: web; email
- pay-per-click & display advertising
- audio commercials
- social media
- experiential

We also developed a mobile app and geographically-targeted posters.

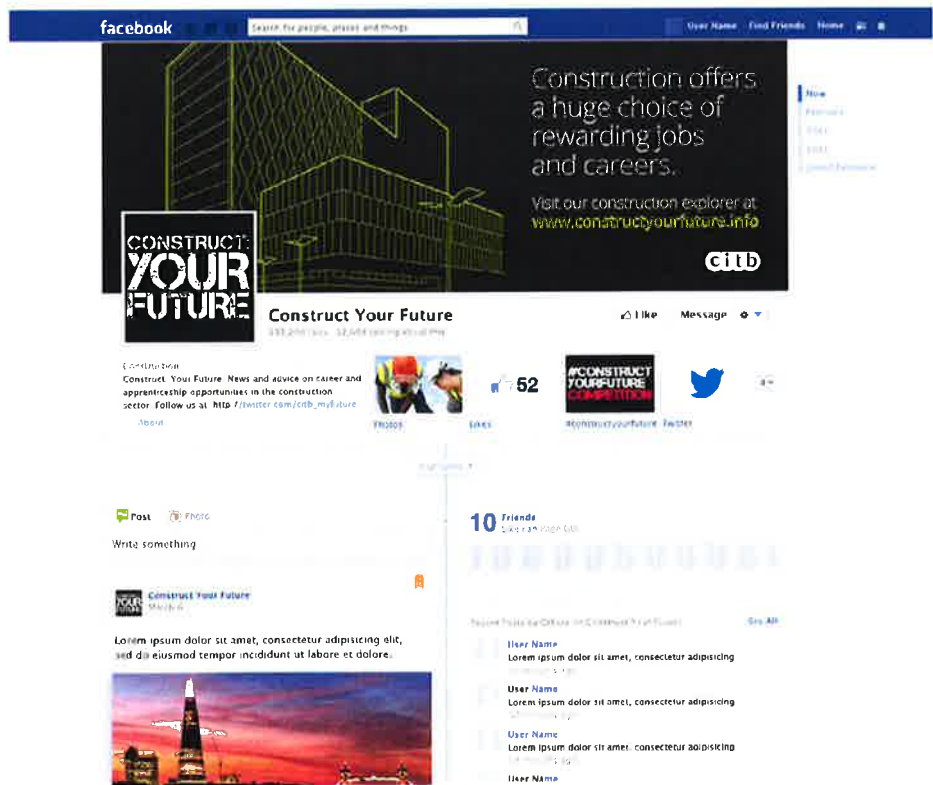


Our fully-integrated campaign, with social media at its heart, proved its effectiveness:

- The Apprenticeships campaign delivered 273,693 unique visits – **a huge 182% of the target.**
- The Attracting Talent strand achieved **110% of target.**
- The Facebook group went from 0 to 3515 members in just three months
- Mobile PPC adverts delivered 8000+ clickthroughs – **a CVR rate of 21%.**

But beyond awareness, the campaign also has **successfully increased recruitment – with over 28,000 signed up for an apprenticeship place.**

**(Max 300 words: Actual 299)**



## 3/ Project overview

### The client

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) is the statutory body that represents the UK construction industry. One of its core responsibilities is supporting recruitment, training and retention of staff. For some years, it has run recruitment advertising campaigns, aimed particularly at encouraging young people to take up construction apprenticeships.

### The context

UK construction is currently on the rise, boosted by the economic recovery and direct government support such as the Help to Buy scheme, which has led to a surge in homebuilding and a range of major public sector-backed projects (Crossrail, Nuclear new build, etc). Industry estimates suggest that, as well as needing more skilled professionals in traditional and emerging construction trades, there is need for some 30,000 more managers in the sector within the next four years.

But despite these significant opportunities, in recent years the construction workforce had not been expanding. Partly this reflected the lasting impact of the downturn, but it also reflected negative perceptions of construction, particularly amongst young people. Research conducted for CITB found that:

- many 14-18 year olds perceived construction as unglamorous, dirty and dangerous – and not a fulfilling career
- there was low awareness of the range of graduate opportunities in the industry – not only amongst young people themselves, but also teachers, careers advisers and parents.

Without turning these perceptions around, recruitment to the sector would not increase and so the industry's growth could be jeopardised.

### The objectives

Given the context, the 2013/14 recruitment campaign had two fundamental objectives:

- Transform perceptions of construction industry careers amongst 14-18 year olds, presenting them as fulfilling and aspirational
- Meet hard KPIs (below) through two distinct (but integrated) campaign strands



**Apprenticeships – predominantly focused on skilled trades**

- Deliver 150k unique visits to www.bconstructive.co.uk – where users could find out more about and sign up for an apprenticeship
- Achieve 7:1 conversion target from unique www visits to signed-up apprentices

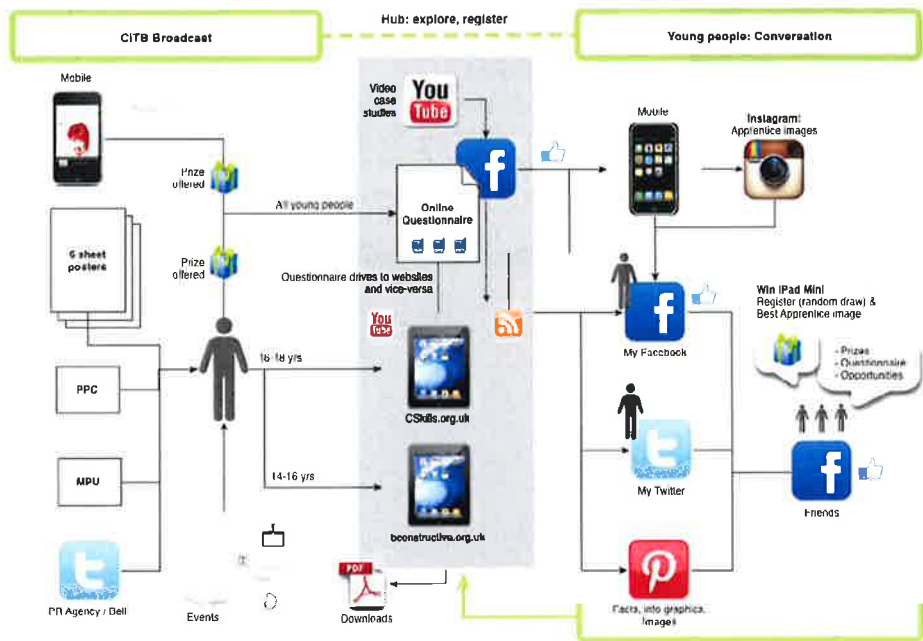
**Attracting Talent – predominantly focused on management professions**

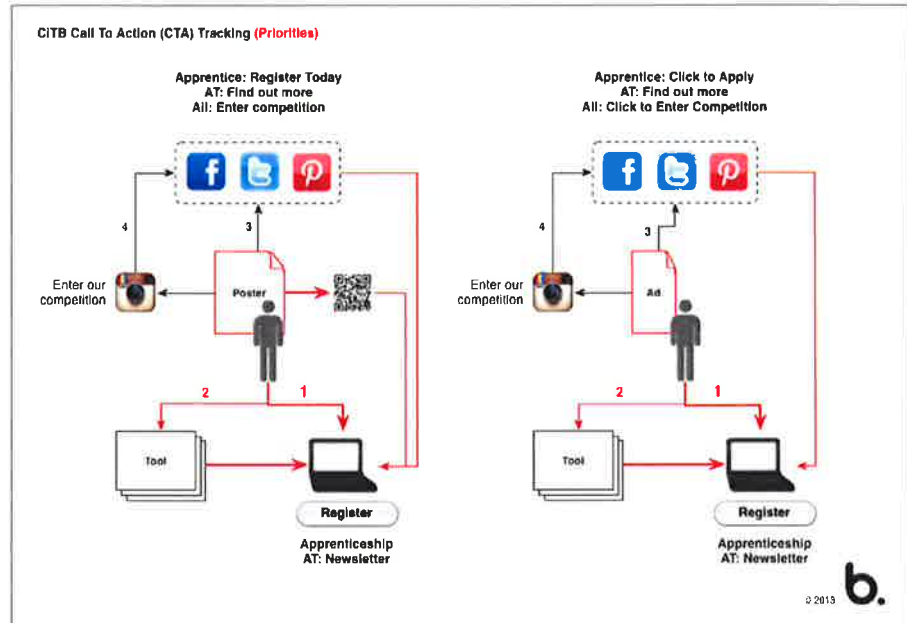
- Deliver 100k unique visits to www.citb.co.uk/careers - where users could learn more about construction careers, including graduate opportunities, and progression paths
- Raise CITB's qualitative Familiarity and Favourability benchmark scores

**The strategy**

Our strategy can be succinctly described as "fishing where the fish are". Previously, CITB had used a mix of traditional and online advertising. Based on qualitative and quantitative target audience research, we recommended a strong social focus, involving Facebook, Twitter, Spotify and Teamer (a site for young people and parents organising outdoor team sports), through which we would seek to start conversations and drive visitors to the key destinations. We also emphasised mobile advertising and engagement combined with traditional posters, distributed through schools and colleges which used the social channels as the prime call to action.

We developed a range of messages for online 'split testing' – whereby we tracked the success of creative in real-time and then amended content and messages or deployed new ones. **This allowed us to focus on the most effective creative and improve it iteratively.**





**The competition**

One key element of our campaign was a competition, driven through social media, to win an iPad Mini. Entrants (within our target age range) entered by uploading an Instagram picture of a building that inspired them. We built an online gallery of all entries, which proved an extremely effective way of driving the target audiences to our sites and – through the different perspectives in the images – of broadening perceptions of construction itself.

**The schedule**

The project began in May 2013, targeted so that the initial key messages about post-exam choices would be reaching audiences as they finished exams and were thinking about next steps. It ran through till December 2013, with reduced activity taking place up to March 2014 (as the campaign had already exceeded all targets and expectations).

**(Max 650 words – Actual 649)**



## 4/ Outline of design solution



The design solution had to be effective across all the channels we planned to use. It therefore had to be flexible and comparatively simple, so it would load quickly and retain its impact on a small smartphone screen. But the impact had to be significant: we needed to change perceptions of the construction sector and make it more appealing, particularly to those who hadn't considered it before.

Returning to the initial research with young people, we identified two key messages we wanted to communicate:

1. Construction can be highly satisfying – particularly due to the sense of personal involvement in creating something impressive
2. Construction offers genuine opportunities for career progression: it's not just a short-term job.



In response to these messages, we developed three creative executions which we sent into audience testing. Each aimed to present an image of a modern, diverse and exciting industry, which offered both personal satisfaction and progression.

The most effective route in the testing, by some margin, was Construct: Your Future.

Of the three routes, it most clearly focused on the **output** of the industry, using outline graphics of famous buildings to emphasise the opportunities to be involved in creating landmarks. The graphics were developed in a contemporary, 'web infographic' style, using high-contrast to work well on-screen and in backlit posters and display graphics. The campaign strapline – Construct: Your Future – was reversed out, using an industrial font with slightly worn edges to emphasise the hard work involved. Of the three words, "Your" is in the largest point size, but all three work together to convey the two messages.



### Multichannel implementation

This simple, but high-impact graphic style was perfect for mobile use and for online advertising. Different shape buildings could be used in different format ads: naturally, the Shard worked well for skyscrapers (as well the six-sheet posters in schools), while for a leaderboard, a bridge could be used. The buildings used in our online adverts were animated using flash so that they literally 'constructed' themselves – emphasising our key message – Construct: Your Future.

On the larger six-sheet posters, we used intriguing or thought-provoking facts about the construction sector – for example, showing how many people were involved in a particular building project or the diversity of roles.



These messages were kept alive through the Facebook and Twitter pages, which regularly provided links to media coverage of construction projects from schools to stadia and beyond, constantly raising awareness of the wider opportunities around construction. They also formed the basis for Birmingham NEC / Excel London skills shows messaging and the Spotify audio ad, which was subsequently used on the radio.

We also developed a responsive web app – Construction Explorer – as an easier way to access the excellent but in-depth careers information on the CITB website. The design of the user experience was key here: users could explore by interest as well as by profession, and the calls to action took them straight to our registration page. The app was promoted online by pay-per-click advertising, MPUs and leaderboards.

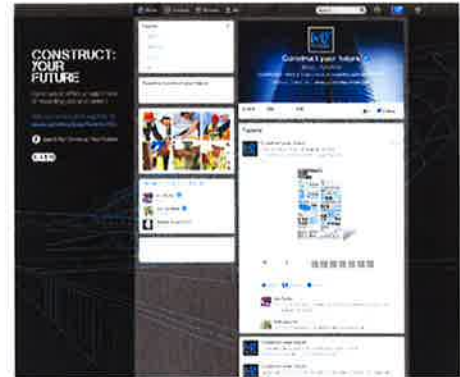
**(Max 500 words – Actual 498)**



LISTEN TO OUR SPOTIFY AUDIO AD  
[WWW.STAGING.BELL-INTEGRATED.CO.UK/CITB/TALENT.MP3](http://WWW.STAGING.BELL-INTEGRATED.CO.UK/CITB/TALENT.MP3)







## 5/ Summary of results

The results in terms of awareness, attitude and application numbers all exceeded CITB's targets.



### Apprentice campaign: increased awareness and conversion

The Apprentice campaign was set a target of 150,000 unique visitors to the Bconstructive website. **That target was achieved as early as 9 September 2013**; by the end of the campaign, there had been over **273,693 unique visitors** – equivalent to **182% of target**.

'Apprenticeship' is of course a common search term, and led to a high number of adverts being served online. The average click-through rate for apprenticeship adverts was 1.06%. Promoted tweets focused on apprenticeships led to 17,357 clicks, as well as helping build up the community of Twitter followers.



Crucially, these were leading to conversions too: from the campaign's launch until the end of September 2013, **28,654 people had completed the apprenticeship application form**. Though this equated to a lower ratio than the 7:1 target we were set, the total number of applicants was higher than would have been achieved had we simply met the target of 150,000 unique visitors.

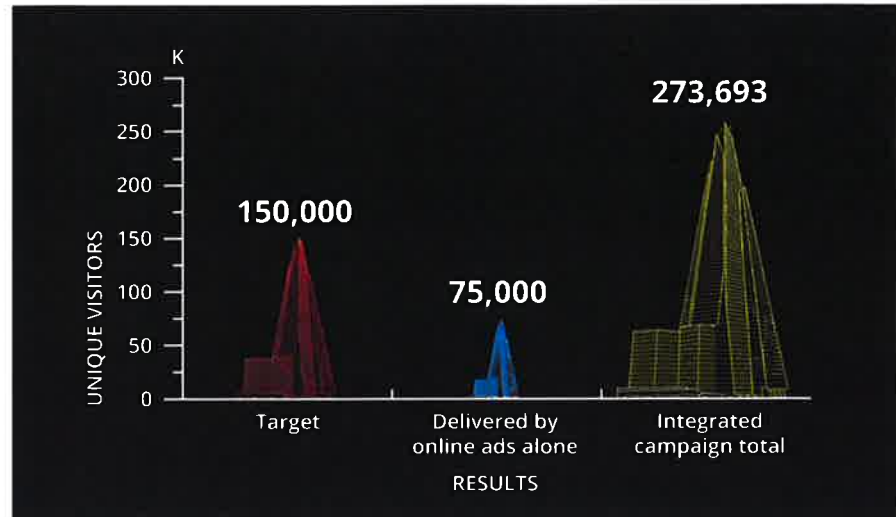
Importantly, the profile of the applicants was changing too. **42% had obtained GCSEs; 26.5% had higher qualifications** – indicating that the message about construction offering a range of careers and genuine progression opportunities was encouraging some higher-qualified young people to consider an apprenticeship.



### Attracting Talent campaign: increased familiarity and favourability

The Attracting Talent strand delivered **110% against target**, achieving a total of 110,593 unique visitors (target: 100,000).

There were also measurable increases in Familiarity and favourability – CITB's key benchmark scores: of influencers, **the number of parents who would actively encourage their children to consider a construction career rose by 6%**. Familiarity with CITB marketing materials was highest amongst Careers Advisors, who now viewed construction careers more favourably.



PPC advertising created average of

100  
conversions a day

#### Above-benchmark CTRs

The pay-per-click advertising delivered an average of **100 conversions per day**; on mobile alone, there were some 378,470 impressions, with over 8000 click-throughs. Total conversion rate (clicks/unique visits) was **21%** – and all formats exceeded standard benchmark rates. The campaign average CTR was 0.29%, above expectations – indicating perhaps the strength and immediacy of the design and clarity of the message.

#### Increased dwell time and engagement with CITB careers content

The Construction Explorer careers tool had a profound impact on the depth of individual engagement with CITB content. The aim, as stated above, was to make it easier to get to grips with the in-depth careers content available on the main CITB site, through streamlining the content itself and making the design more attractive. For visitors accessing campaign landing pages via our careers tool, **average dwell time soared from less than a minute to over 12 – a 1200% increase.**

This boosted performance against the KPIs but also indicates a deepening interest in the subject matter – something that may contribute to career or university choices in the future.

#### Competitions and conversations on Facebook

Perhaps the single biggest success was the Facebook photo competition, which was exceptionally successful as a means of driving interest. It helped create a community of over 3500 people in just three months, and the competition itself had an audience of more than 190,000. The 915 entries from 324 participants led to 136 page views a day and over 66,000 Likes.

The Facebook channel proved highly effective as a way of starting conversations. Individuals engaged with CITB directly through it, asking questions including about how to apply for an apprenticeship.



**Conclusions**

The campaign proved clearly that multiple channels featuring integrated social media was an effective means of reaching the target audience – but also underscored the importance of a relevant, immediate, memorable, instant design style. Like many large organisations, particularly in the public sector, CITB has a wealth of information at its disposal. The design style made CITB's content personal and immediate. Crucially too, it meant that the campaign, on a limited budget, was able to achieve truly nationwide reach within its target audiences. This is how our strategic and graphic design effectiveness enabled success.



### APPRENTICES

TARGET 150,000 UNIQUE VISITS  
ACTUAL 273,693 UNIQUE VISITS

# 182%

OF TARGET



FACEBOOK

0 TO

# 3,500

FOLLOWERS IN FIRST 3 MONTHS OF CAMPAIGN

### ATTRACTING TALENT STRAND ACHIEVED

# 110%

OF TARGET AND INCREASED FAVOURABILITY SCORES



Facebook photo competition

# 190,000

VISITORS

### CAMPAIGN LANDING PAGE DWELL TIMES INCREASE

# 1200%



# 66,000

LIKES

# \*915

ENTRIES

### ATTRACTING EDUCATED CANDIDATES:

Candidate profile =

# 42%

with GCSEs

# 26.5%

with higher qualifications

# 136

PAGE VIEWS

Up by 6% – the number of parents who would actively encourage their children to consider a construction career

\*915 entries = huge, free photo library of inspiring construction projects curated by our target audience



## 6/ Other influencing factors

At any given time, there is fierce competition to engage the attention of 14–18 year olds; our campaign had to cut through this noise. In addition, long-term careers planning is not necessarily front-of-mind.

There was no other construction career marketing or advertising at the time of our campaign. However, one of the key influences on any recruitment campaign is competition: are other professions recruiting in the same demographic, at the same time? For CITB, the 'competition' includes the UK armed forces – with far larger budgets and a major above-the-line presence – plus the traditional graduate employers.

To compete, we had to think smart; the multichannel campaign used predominantly low-cost channels such as social, plus some highly targeted traditional media. For example, posters were distributed through schools and colleges; we used radio advertising for just a week to drive awareness – an approach which immediately led to increases in online searches for CITB, visits to the CITB web pages and more social media conversations. This was further evidence of the effectiveness of the multichannel approach.

