

Several years ago, Magic Circle law firms were considered in a similar light. They were prestigious, elitist and not for the faint-hearted. Many lawyers, or those thinking of becoming lawyers, believed these firms were too big, that they only ever hired the same type of people from the world's most prestigious universities, and that they offered little opportunity to make a personal impact. From the very start, our work with Linklaters has exploded the myths that surround Magic Circle law firms. And we've used targeted strategies to enable the firm to meet their long-term global business plans.

What do you need to know?

It's fair to say that most undergraduates have little or no idea what life is like in their chosen profession. And in the confidential world of law, this is an even bigger problem. Our first graduate campaign for Linklaters sought to break down the barriers that existed between law firms and undergraduates. We needed to help students understand more about law, law firms, the Magic Circle and Linklaters. And we needed to appeal to people from a range of backgrounds. We took our approach back to grass roots, creating a campaign that gave students what they needed to make informed decisions.

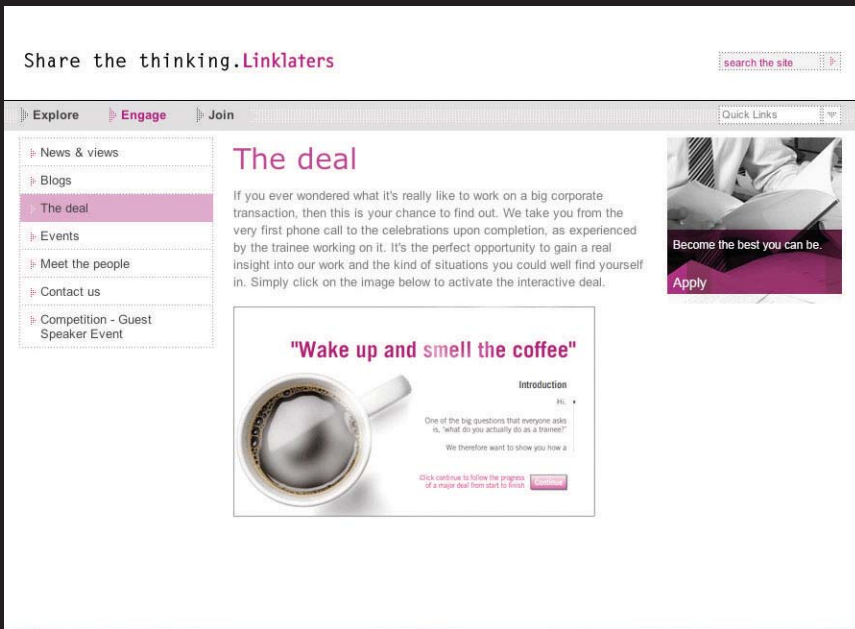
Client confidentiality issues meant that case studies were absolutely forbidden. But we needed to inform candidates what life was actually like as a lawyer. Our answer was "The Deal". Over the course of an afternoon, a team from Linklaters explained all the stages of a recent transaction. We then broke it down and mapped it onto a new, imaginary transaction, shifting the details from one sector to another and arriving at a completely new scenario. Finally, we checked our narrative with the original corporate law team for accuracy and authenticity. The resulting online animation is a simple account of a major legal transaction, seen from the point of view of a trainee solicitor. At the same time it highlights the cultural and professional issues that distinguish Linklaters from other City law firms. It forms a crucial element of a graduate site that aims to answer all the questions that students ask.

So

what's it really like?



Linklaters



Website



The shift in leadership also demanded a shift in our graduate strategy. Having already set the bar with our honest and open approach to graduate recruitment, our next goal was to reach students who shared the values and visions of the firm, conveying Linklaters' new strategic priorities. By matching the attitudes of the employees and the firm, Linklaters' long-term goals would be realised. The result was 'Share the thinking'. It enabled us to continue our path of open communication about life as a lawyer, while increasing the understanding of Linklaters' values.

SHARE THE THINKING

The website formed the central hub of our campaign. It gave viewers the opportunity to engage with the firm through complex flash sequences, videos, blogs, charts, interactive diagrams, profiles and informative text. These successfully 'shared the thinking' and helped students gain a true insight into life at Linklaters. We also launched a sophisticated brochure as a premium item distributed to key, interested students.

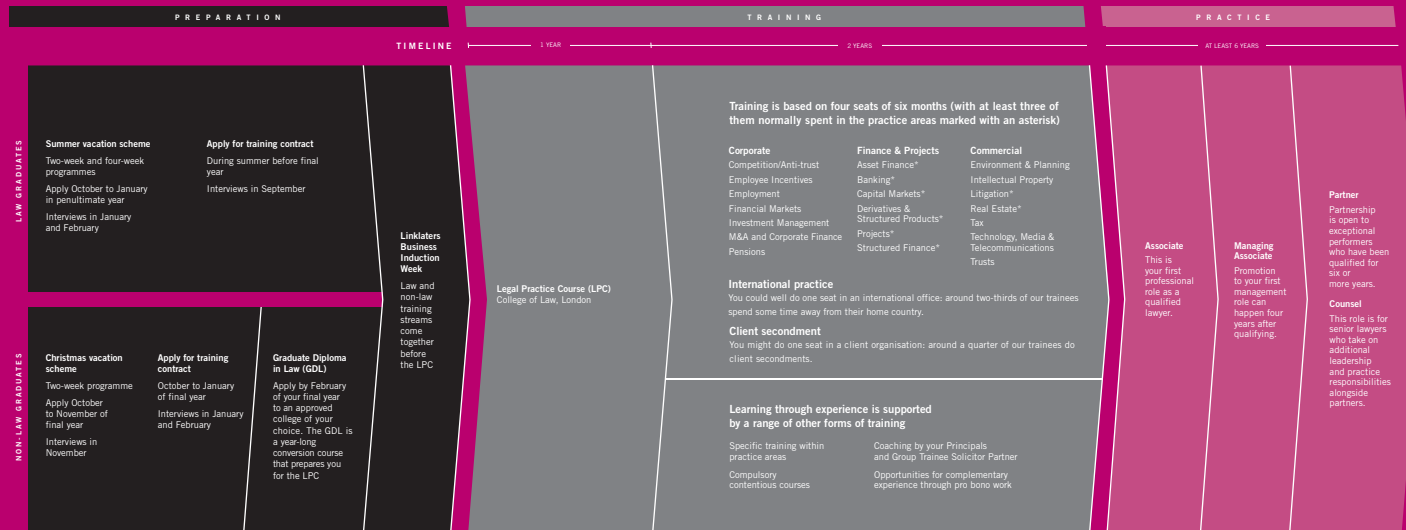
The 'Share the thinking' film was a seven-minute journey documenting the experiences of a vacation scheme student, two trainees, an associate, a managing associate and a partner. Shown at all Linklaters events, the film created an immediate connection with the firm. Students appreciated the career-path view and seeing evolution of experience throughout a career at Linklaters. At all times, it clearly conveyed the firm's six key values (opportunity, teamwork, learning,

meritocracy, challenge and ambition) and linked them back to the real-life experiences of current employees.

We also increased the focus on building students' business knowledge. We helped develop an on-campus give-away, the "commercial awareness cube", and ran advertorials in student publications. These "Hot Topics" covered subjects such as the rise of India as the next superpower.

Charting the process.

In all brochures and online we included a clear table that indicated the time, steps, process and paths for those training to be a lawyer, with options for all backgrounds, whether legal or otherwise. This simple tool became well-regarded in the industry – Linklaters were the first firm to adopt it and it is now invaluable to students everywhere.



OUR WORK IN AMSTERDAM

Based on business requirements, we extended our strategy of engagement to a campaign for the Netherlands. Fairly new to this key market, Linklaters needed a stronger reputation amongst misinformed students who were confused about the global opportunities the firm offered. Dutch legal training is often highly theoretical in content and many students were also lacking the commercial skills needed for a career at Linklaters. Our challenge was to help these candidates develop the core competencies that would see them succeed, while building the firm's status.

The result was the 'Become Complete' campaign. By implementing targeted sponsorship and careful strategies, Linklaters became the name that students thought of to enable them to become a complete lawyer. We created the 'Design your own internship' scheme. It enabled students to go online and, with guidance, choose options for their internships – shaping them entirely to their own career goals. We encouraged Linklaters to promote and increase the thesis support they offered and open up their libraries for research purposes. We enlisted the help of the Dutch alumni – profiling them on the homepage of the website.



Giving a highly-realistic experience of what life is like at Linklaters, the campaign has been very successful and this year it was awarded the Best International Recruitment Initiative at The Lawyer HR Awards.

work