

BRÄBBLE

CASE STUDY

**Revamping
Recruitment at
London Mozart
Players**

London Mozart Players (LMP) is the UK's longest-running chamber orchestra. As well as delivering world-class concerts and events, LMP runs numerous education and outreach projects each year in its hometown of Croydon, as well as Hastings and other areas of the South East.

The Challenge

Despite being based in the multicultural melting point that is Croydon since 1989, the makeup of the orchestra in terms of both the musicians and the management team who manage the business side, didn't reflect the rich diversity of the local population. Whilst they had already begun to think about diversity and inclusion in respect of their musical repertoire and the artists they worked with, this hadn't filtered through to the way that staff and musicians were being recruited, and the organisation struggled to move beyond traditional attitudes about the way that this should be done.

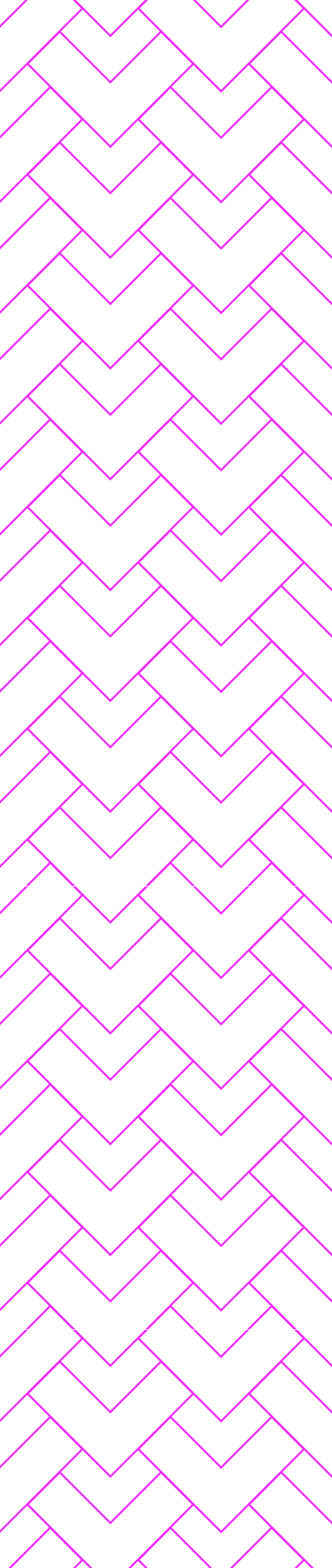
What we did

Changes in the management staff team presented an opportunity for us to look at this first, before tackling the issue of musicians' recruitment.

1

INTERVIEWS

To begin with, we focused on standardising the orchestra's approach to interviews. This involved creating new interview templates with specific scoring criteria for each question that was used. We also began sending interview questions to candidates in advance.



Previously, interview formats had varied considerably depending on the role being recruited for and who was doing the interviewing, which meant candidates for the same role could be asked different, (and sometimes irrelevant) questions.

Equally, without a framework for scoring candidate's answers, interviewers could score based on their general "feeling" about how a candidate had presented themselves, giving lots of room for bias to creep in. By contrast, this new interview approach could be used across all roles, from an entry level Marketing Coordinator, to recruiting for the team's Producer for the 2023 Croydon London Borough of Culture activities.

2

ADVERTISING

Next, we turned our attention to reviewing where the orchestra was advertising its job vacancies and expanded this as much as possible. LMP doesn't have a large budget set aside for recruitment advertising, (does anyone?), so we took advantage of free platforms such as [Creative Lives in Progress](#), which is aimed specifically at supporting underrepresented groups into creative careers, and also made use of LinkedIn - particularly for roles which didn't require specific knowledge of the orchestral sector. (Historically, the orchestra had tended to advertise roles solely on arts-related job sites). We also re-formatted job adverts to make much clearer which elements of a candidate's experience was vital to a role, to encourage more applications from candidates who may not have been able to fulfil all the requirements but were perfectly capable of doing a role.

3

MONITORING

Changes to the advertising channels made the team more curious to know how candidates were finding out about vacancies, but they didn't have any kind of monitoring or evaluation frameworks in place to measure this. We designed a very simple monitoring form which was sent to candidates *after* they submitted an application (mainly to assure people that their data really would be stored separately from their application). As candidates can generally be reluctant to provide sensitive data about themselves, we labelled the monitoring form as a "Candidate Experience Survey" instead of the usual "Diversity Monitoring Information".

“Working with Ceri has completely transformed the way we do recruitment at London Mozart Players. We now have a much more consistent process for recruiting all roles, and are more confident that our processes are genuinely transparent and as free from bias as possible. We regularly receive positive feedback from candidates too, (even unsuccessful ones!), commenting on how clearly we communicate with them and how much they appreciate the information we give to support their preparation for interviews and auditions.”

Flynn Le Brocq
Chief Executive, London Mozart Players



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APPLICATIONS

The final change we made was to the initial application process; rather than relying on CVs and covering letters, we replaced covering letters with screening questions for each role. The main advantage of these screening questions was that hiring managers could apply pre-defined criteria and consistent scoring to determine which candidates should be taken through to interview, rather than relying on subjective value judgments about a candidate's work experiences.

The Impact

As a result of the changes to LMP's recruitment processes for staff:

- A similar approach was adopted when recruiting for new violinists and viola players, marking a significant break away from historical traditions around musician recruitment and gaining lots of positive feedback from musicians;
- We learned from the Candidate Experience Survey that only a small minority of candidates found out about roles via word of mouth from existing staff, thereby reducing some concerns around the use of "inner circles" to promote roles;
- LMP has received sector recognition from organisations such as Black Lives in Music, who have publicly endorsed their process.

Ongoing Recommendations

We'd love to see LMP completely eradicate CVs from their process altogether, given the amount of research which has shown that CVs induce loads of bias, but we're glad that they have implemented scored screening questions as a way to balance this out.

What you can learn

As you'll see from our work at LMP, we didn't try to make all of the changes at once. Every time a new vacancy arose, the team would introduce a new improvement and then reflect on it for future vacancies. Our advice to you? Pick one area of your process to focus on, see what you learn, and then make further changes.

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**Want help designing
inclusive recruitment
processes you can use
again and again and
again? Send us an email.**