

NEWS RELEASE

Where are all the graduates hiding?

This week figures have been released with unemployment for 16 to 24-year-olds hitting a record high of 1.02 million. Furthermore the overall UK unemployment has reached a staggering 2.6 million*.

So, where are all the graduates?

Wenta have been recruiting graduates for the past 6 years for their Step placement scheme. The scheme places talented graduates into worthwhile paid work placements. So why, in the current economy, are we struggling to fill the wide variety of placements we have available?

Wenta arrange paid work placements for graduates looking for that all important work experience. Wenta source both the graduates and the host companies to place them in.

The Step programme enables companies to develop their business through the recruitment of bright, intelligent and talented individuals. The specialist placement team at Wenta are able to take the hard work out of identifying and assessing appropriate candidates leaving employers free to manage their businesses. Placements can operate from 8 to 24 weeks and have a variety of positions, including Marketing, IT and Project Management to name but a few. Furthermore the payments are made directly to Wenta so the host company does not have to worry about payroll, tax or NI.

It has never been more important for graduates to gain that sought after experience that proves invaluable in a competitive market. Highlighting the success of the Step programme, last year 30 graduates were placed by Wenta, with 26 receiving full time positions with the host companies post placement. Over the past quarter, when unemployment has increased significantly, we've seen a decrease in the number of graduates through the doors.

James Mall recently undertook a Marketing graduate placement and said; *"Thanks to Step and Wenta working as a marketing assistant intern I got the opportunity to work with the National Enterprise Network who operate within the enterprise support sector. I learned many highly valuable skills including: managing social media accounts, creating newsletters, emails and press releases. But the highlight for me was attending the National Enterprise Network 2011 annual conference and spending two nights in a hotel with all expenses paid. It was my first ever conference, one of my tasks there was to film interviews and take photos while tweeting live on twitter, I got to meet some amazing speakers and delegates who where kind enough to share their views on enterprise support and business start-ups with me. It was a great all-round worthwhile experience"*.

The National Enterprise network have recently benefitted from two placements via the Step scheme. Hayley Williams, Head of External Relations at the National Enterprise Network said; *"National Enterprise Network needed additional resource to support key projects over the summer and the employing of two Step interns offered us the opportunity for instant, additional support. We were incredibly impressed with how quickly the interns took to working with us, learning about the organisation and taking responsibility for their work at a very early stage. Any concerns we may have had on them being inexperienced were quickly dispelled - they were motivated, passionate and both added tremendous value to the projects to which they were assigned. We would certainly consider using a Step intern again – and the management for the process by Wenta made things incredibly easy – advertising the post, filtering the CV's and advising us every step along the way."*

This program has never been so important and as a team, Wenta are committed to helping the hundreds of local graduates put their qualifications and skills to the test. For local companies this resource is invaluable and can be of great support through the uncertain times that so many businesses are facing.

If you are or know of a graduate who would be interested in joining the Step programme or a host company looking for a support, please contact the Wenta Education team on education@wenta.co.uk or 01923 691364.

*Statistics courtesy The Office for National Statistics

Notes for Editor

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Wenta was founded in 1983 to encourage business start-ups and to support small businesses in South and West Hertfordshire. The agency is independently funded through the ownership and management of its two business centres in Watford and Potters Bar and management of two further centres in Stevenage.

These [business centres](#) comprise workshops and offices with a combined space of 100,000 square feet, let on monthly licence terms to small businesses. Wenta also attract funding from a number of public sector organisations including Business Link East, Job Centre Plus, local authorities in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and EEDA. Wenta is now the largest enterprise agency in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and second largest in the Eastern region.

Wenta run a number of programmes aimed at [inspiring young people](#) and giving them the confidence to make their ideas happen. Wenta's education team work with local schools, colleges and universities to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Wenta's advisory team work in partnership with organisations such as Business Link, The Prince' Trust and Job Centre Plus to provide [business advice and support](#) to start-up, new and existing businesses across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Services include: one-to-one general business advice, specialist advice including Tax, Legal and IT and [training and skills development](#) courses.

Wenta also run a series of Business Incubator Centres under the '[My Incubator](#)' brand at The Business & Technology Centre in Stevenage, The Business Centre in Luton. The Wenta Business Centre in Watford and The Enterprise Centre in Potters Bar. These centres are designed to help entrepreneurs and create successful businesses. My Incubator offer start-ups a work station for 3 months free of charge on the proviso that they work with our onsite advisory team to ensure that they are ready to sell their product or service, raise money or become investor ready and importantly connect them with other individuals and businesses to network.