



# Unlocking the Power of Apprenticeships with EPAM and LDN Apprenticeships

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TALENT  
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## About EPAM

**Headquartered:** PA, USA

**Size:** More than 60,000 employees in 50+ countries

**Industry:** Service development, digital platform engineering, consulting and digital product design

[Discover more about EPAM's Salesforce Practice](#)



**100% of apprentices** were billable from month three

**5.5 months** average time for an apprentice to become cost neutral

**100% offered a permanent job** on completion of the apprenticeship



# The challenge

## Creating a talent pipeline to fuel rapid growth

EPAM is a rapidly growing digital transformation services and product engineering company with significant requirements for Salesforce talent. As its Salesforce practice grows, EPAM is supporting increasingly complex and challenging projects, resulting in a constant need to recruit new team members with specialist skills.

In the current global recruitment landscape, this can be a challenge. Like many employers, EPAM faces a shortage of qualified and experienced candidates, with high competition for existing talent that can make hiring and retaining new team members more difficult.

When thinking about how to solve this problem, EPAM had three main objectives – and it needed a solution that could meet all of them.

- Despite gaps in the market, it needed **a reliable way to hire, develop, and retain motivated, passionate and high-potential talent.**
- As part of its efforts to address the fundamental issues of **Diversity Equity and Inclusion**, the solution needed to provide access to **non-traditional avenues for attracting new talent.**
- While it was aware of the many compelling socio-economic reasons to create a new entry-level talent pipeline, the chosen approach would need to be a commercially viable enterprise that **delivered a return on investment.**

With all of these factors in mind, EPAM set out to develop a completely new pipeline of junior talent as a critical part of their strategy to address their recruitment challenges. To do this, EPAM partnered with LDN Apprenticeships, a Workforce Development Organisation (WFD) that seeks to create opportunities for diverse talent to realise their potential.



**Hollie Suffield,**  
Director, Salesforce  
Talent Alliance EMEA.

**"In the Salesforce ecosystem, we're seeing more and more of our partners turn to Workforce Development Organisations that are training non-traditional talent in technology skills to find and grow their workforce. EPAM and LDN Apprenticeships are great examples of this."**

[Discover more about the Salesforce Talent Alliance here](#)

# Embracing apprenticeships

## A paradigm shift in professional development

Today's apprenticeships look very different from the apprenticeships of old. Modern apprenticeships are structured programmes of professional development with applied learning at their core. LDN works hand in hand with employers to create programmes that combine the development of the technical knowledge and skills required for a particular role with personalised coaching, peer learning and application of those skills in a real working environment.

The average apprentice has also changed. Every apprentice who joins the programme goes through a rigorous selection process, making it highly competitive. Across LDN's cohort of Salesforce apprentices, the average age is 28, showing that apprentices are joining the programme with some experience already under their belt. The majority (52%) also hold university degrees. Many of the apprentices come from diverse and under-represented backgrounds: 48% are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 44% are women.



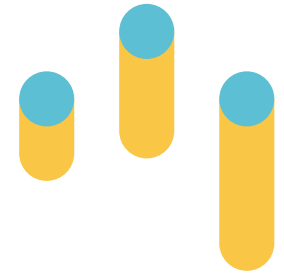
**Anass Belakhdar,**  
Business Analyst at EPAM.

"Just two weeks in to my time at EPAM, I was assigned onto a project at the discovery stage. Discovery is an essential phase to the success of any project, and it was really intense. With the help of the team, I was able to settle into the project really quickly. It was a huge achievement for me and really boosted my confidence early on."



**Simon Bozzoli,**  
Founder and CEO,  
LDN Apprenticeships.

"Our programmes give companies, large and small, access to diverse and incredibly talented people and help to develop well-rounded, technically adept employees. In the context of the Salesforce platform, the model of applied learning is ideal to accelerate skills development and time to productivity."





# Steps to success

## How EPAM onboards and trains apprentices

One of the commitments Salesforce leaders at EPAM made to the executive team was that every apprentice employed by EPAM would be assigned to a project within three months of joining, and would be cost-neutral to the organisation within six months. To ensure that apprentices are set up for success, EPAM has developed a process to guide them through their apprenticeship.

Due to the tailored, personalised approach of this onboarding and the training and support apprentices receive from LDN and EPAM, the apprentices rapidly develop the technical skills and knowledge required for their roles. Within months of starting, all of EPAM's apprentices passed their Salesforce Business Analyst certification, and many have achieved several other certifications.

Analysis shows that EPAM's first group of apprentices became cost-neutral between months five and six, and their continued ROI over 18 months shows how successful the programme has been.

All of this helps to set them – and EPAM – up for long-term success.

**"This is not about how quickly we can make the apprentices billable, but about how we can make them successful over the medium and long term."**

**Andrew Bridgen,**  
Senior Director, EPAM Salesforce Delivery (EU).



### Get certified before starting

To accelerate their start, every apprentice that joins EPAM has already completed and achieved their Salesforce Certified Administrator credential through LDN's TalentPath programme. This gives both EPAM and the apprentice confidence that they're well-equipped to hit the ground running in their new role as a Junior Business Analyst.



### Train in-house, with LDN and on Trailhead

To complement their training, apprentices spend the first three months of their time with EPAM completing additional training and upskilling themselves. LDN's Skills Coaches help to coordinate this training, working closely with managers at EPAM, and of course, making use of Trailhead.



### Customise each apprentice's experience

From there, each apprentice's onboarding is customised to the individual. For example, if an apprentice is coming from a non-IT background, they are provided with additional training on what the life cycle of an IT project looks like, an outline of common teams within IT that someone new to the sector may not have come across, and anything else they may need

to know. This means that EPAM is able to accommodate people from many different backgrounds, allowing for a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and industry sectors that helps to strengthen EPAM's DEI commitments.



### Choose the right assignments

With their onboarding complete and initial training underway, the next critical consideration for EPAM is the apprentice's first assignment. To help them match the right people with the right assignments, EPAM takes into account not only the individual's skills and knowledge but also their background and personality. They also consider who else is staffed on the project, to ensure that the apprentice feels supported. With these factors in mind, EPAM can be confident that each apprentice will receive tailored mentoring that stretches their capabilities while also playing to their individual strengths.



### Stretch their strengths

As they progress, EPAM gives apprentices the opportunity to experience multiple and varied projects from beginning to end, ensuring that they're exposed to a range of different situations while being fully supported throughout.



# The results

## Improved diversity

In addition to diversifying their workforce and delivering an impressive ROI timeline for new talent, existing employees at EPAM have been motivated by the arrival of fresh new talent to the business. The apprentices encourage the wider team to adopt a more collaborative mindset and provide an opportunity for more experienced employees to share their knowledge and give back.

## Employee engagement

Leadership and management at EPAM have also felt the positive effects. For managers, working with younger team members has allowed them to become more well-rounded professionals and further develop their management skills. Meanwhile, EPAM's Salesforce leaders have been inspired by the non-conventional thinking, fresh approaches and renewed energy that apprentices bring to the team.

## Brand recognition

As an organisation, EPAM has received significant exposure as a result of its partnership with LDN Apprenticeships, building a strong relationship with the Salesforce Talent Alliance and securing a speaker slot at Dreamforce to talk about the talent partnership.

Now, after a very successful first cohort, EPAM is looking to the future with the intention of growing their apprenticeship programme.



### Gender



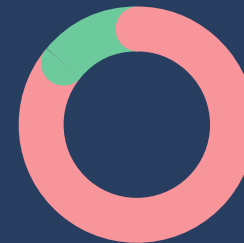
57% female  
43% male

### Ethnicity



71% BAME  
29% white

### Education



86% bachelor's degree  
14% postgraduate degree



# Reaping the benefits

## Looking to the future

While EPAM's leaders were initially focused on meeting the diversity and commercial objectives they had set out, they've seen a host of other benefits since implementing the programme. From employee engagement, to diversity and improved collaboration - EPAM is reaping the benefits and strengthening its team, its brand and its relationships with key stakeholders.



**Rebecca Davis,**  
Solutions and Design Director,  
EPAM, EMEA.

"My favourite thing about having apprentices on the team is how eager and motivated they are. Our apprentices have all been keen to show us what they're capable of from the start. They also ask very good questions, which is what they should be doing!"



**Andrew Bridgen,**  
Senior Director, EPAM  
Salesforce Delivery (EU).

"Thanks to the support from LDN, our Salesforce apprenticeship programme in the UK has grown into a programme that not only provides us with amazing, well-rounded talent, but has also been the catalyst for greater collaboration and diversity within the team. It's a partnership we value, and hope will continue to grow over the coming years."





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