

Agency founders' starter pack: who should you hire first?

In a mini-series within our weekly Agency Advice feature, we're passing on advice from top agency leaders to people just starting out. To start: who should you hire first?

The marketing agency landscape is amid one of its greatest ever periods of change, resulting in several of its biggest employers pursuing thousands of job cuts as staffing levels at major employers drop drastically.

One upshot of all that movement is the release of a vast amount of talent – at all levels – into the market. Some of that talent will find homes at other agencies. Some will leave the industry altogether. And some will set up new agencies.

To welcome that new crop of agencies (call it the Class of 26), today we are beginning a mini-series within Agency Advice, passing on wisdom from agency leaders who've done it all before. First up: who did they hire first? And, more importantly, who would they hire first if they were starting it all again?

Amy Stobie, founder, AgencyUK: "When [co-founder] Sammy and I established AgencyUK 18 years ago, we set ourselves a founding task: to create a business that develops young talent and provides opportunities through apprenticeship schemes. Having previously managed large teams in the global corporate environment, moving to a team of two was daunting but liberating, as it gave us the freedom to prioritize employee development right from the start. Our first hire was Sam, a 19-year-old apprentice from a local college. With no prior agency experience, we trained her to manage our administration and basic accounting. She thrived in the role and, three years later, she managed all accounting and finance for her partner's construction company. Taking a chance on someone can be hugely rewarding – today we partner with local schools, colleges and universities to offer work experience, internships, and apprenticeships from Level 3 up to Degree Level 6."