

## 2022 Youth Employability Awards

### Partner of the Year nomination: Salesforce with Catch22

#### Summary

Salesforce and Catch22 have been partners since October 2020 delivering *Digital Leap* – a pre-employability training programme supporting those facing barriers to work into jobs and apprenticeships in the tech sector.

The pandemic meant the programme needed to be adapted; not only in terms of delivery (which shifted to online), but also because of the reduction in the number of apprenticeship places and competition for jobs which heightened. As the funder, Salesforce recognised this changing environment and were committed to making Digital Leap as relevant and impactful as ever – and Catch22 was able to adapt content and delivery accordingly.

As well as funding the Digital Leap programme, Salesforce went above and beyond in their commitment to supporting young people furthest from the job market into work. In September 2021, Catch22 worked with Salesforce and Movement to Work to offer two weeks of work experience to people facing barriers to work. Candidates joined Salesforce to learn about jobs in tech, both in Salesforce and in the Salesforce ecosystem. Candidates were also given the opportunity to identify the careers they wanted to pursue, and work on a career pathway to move into long-term work.

Salesforce's support both in flexing the Digital Leap programme and committing to providing work experience to those young people who need it most, means the partnership with Catch22 is successful and hugely impactful. It's for those reasons we're proud to nominate **Salesforce – with Catch22** as Partner of the Year.

#### Adapting Digital Leap during the pandemic

With unemployment levels rising as a result of the pandemic and the number of apprenticeship places rapidly decreasing, those furthest from the job market would be hit the hardest. There were a rapidly increasing number of people competing for an extremely reduced pool of positions.

In light of the challenges, Salesforce and Catch22 adapted the Digital Leap programme to provide more agile support and to address the change in the market that candidates were now facing. As the funder, Salesforce recognised this changing environment and were committed to making Digital Leap as relevant and impactful as ever.

The programme:

- Focuses on increasing the diversity of candidates applying for digital vacancies and encourage employers to open their doors to fresh talent
- Supports them to create a career plan with one-to-one support and online technical training
- Empowers participants to secure digital training and career opportunities
- Increases confidence and social capital through networking and events
- Provides in-work support for both employers and employees

### Impact

- **61** participants have now completed the Digital Leap Programme to date.
- **26** participants who have completed the programme have gone into full time work.
- **We have engaged with the Greater London Authority to make Digital Leap part of the new digital hubs in London.** This will be both a collaborative approach across London to build back better after the pandemic and will involve online hubs, events and development focused on making tech roles available to people with barriers.
- **We created a ‘Women-in-tech’ challenge for participants on the Digital Leap programme.** We were joined by successful women from a diverse range of tech roles. They spoke to participants about their roles and reflected on their own journey into the sector. In preparation for the event, participants were tasked with researching women in tech, and creating presentations on their findings. They also had the opportunity to ask the speakers questions. This was well received, with feedback stating that participants were inspired and encouraged to see that there are successful women in the sector.

### More than just funding

Digital Leap is having a real, **lasting impact** and this in large part due to Salesforce’s commitment to providing more than simply funding. They have gone above and beyond to ensure the programme attracts a range of participants and that those participants are given the best chance of success:

- Through access to **Salesforce’s online catalogue of technical qualifications**, people who have been hit hardest by the pandemic and are disadvantaged in the job market have been able to skill up and demonstrate their aptitude
- Traditionally underrepresented groups in the tech sector (particularly women and those from minority backgrounds) have been **inspired by colleagues from Salesforce** who have taken part in Insight sessions to share their stories

## Daniel's Story - Digital Leap participant

Daniel is 26-years old, and has been diagnosed with Autism. After going through some traumatic personal circumstances, Daniel also struggles with anxiety and depression. Prior to joining Digital Leap, Daniel had taken part in a number of training programmes based around digital marketing but had not been able to secure any paid work experience since leaving full time education, and he was beginning to lose hope. Daniel found that even looking for an entry level position was hard, everyone seemed to require qualifications and experience that he did not have. Daniel felt demotivated and wanted to give up.

Daniel joined the Digital Leap programme and attended multiple sessions with his career coach to build his confidence and work through his barriers. Over time, he was able to fully engage on the coaching sessions and went from ad-hoc appointments to seeing his coach multiple times a week for mock interviews, CV tailoring and help with completing applications. He had a breakthrough where he was offered a second interview for an apprenticeship, however the role was withdrawn due to the pandemic. His coach supported him to remain positive, and after 5 months on the Digital Leap programme, he was offered a full-time permanent role with a PR Company as a Digital Executive.

***“I have learnt so much from the programme. It kept me busy and highlighted the many skills that I do have. I am much more confident and eternally grateful for the opportunity to be on the programme. I would encourage anyone in a similar position to sign up. It highlighted the skills that I do have. I am more confident and grateful for the opportunity”***

Daniel is feeling positive about the future and hopes to become an expert within his field. He is looking forward to exploring the many paths available within the company and plan with the continued in-work support from the Digital Leap programme, he will begin to build his long-term career plan.

## Work experience: going above and beyond

As the job market becomes even more competitive, it's easy for young people to be edge out of roles due to lack of experience. Salesforce and Catch22 recognise the catch-22 situation for many job seekers we support: how do you get experience if you can't get a job to build your experience? Many employers are hesitant if a candidate doesn't have the relevant industry experience for a role, even with entry level jobs.

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- **Week one:** the first week focussed on building participants' confidence and soft

skills. The team set out the expectations of the work experience. The candidates also began developing their presentation skills, communication, and networking. This included meeting Salesforce volunteers and learning about their career paths.

- **Week two:** the second week gave candidates the opportunity to develop their presentation skills, working on self-promotion and their personal working style. Candidates reflected on the skills they had developed over the 2-week work experience and explored how they could build these into their job search in the future.

The work experience programme was a huge success, with 93% of participants completing the two weeks of learning.

In terms of outcomes, 25 people completed the programme, and more than 20% have already gone on to secure a job or apprenticeship – directly attributing their success to the programme.

### Participant quotes

**Jamal:**

*It's nice to know that there is someone there to listen and understand you and to give me help when needed. I appreciate the whole programme. The support went very hand in hand to help prepare me for my apprenticeship interview. I officially start my Data apprenticeship in November.*

**Shreena:**

*I like how Salesforce introduced their company, how they talk us through the different department and what Salesforce offers. My [Catch22] coach put me forward for the Salesforce Work Experience, and I attended each session and Salesforce have kindly given me a mentor. They are helping me apply for UX design roles.*

**Tom says:**

*At first, I found the work experience overwhelming as I had to take a lot of notes and sit in to listen to the management on the panels. The mock interviews were great as I get nervous before an interview. Salesforce gave me interview tips, like taking a deep breath before answering a question. I feel more relaxed and confident knowing I have support whereas before I didn't know which direction to go in. I feel more confident applying to positions.*

