

# Branding the key to tackling recruitment woes in the water industry

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More effective branding of both individual employers and the sector as a whole could help to tackle many of the recruitment challenges faced in the water industry, that's according to Water by Murray.

The specialist recruiter's Water Industry Labour Report found that employers are facing a combination of talent issues. Up to 70% of the existing engineering workforce are considering new roles in sectors outside of water, while an additional 25% of existing engineers are expected to retire within the next decade. This is on top of challenges already created by major, ongoing skills shortages which have left many organisations battling to recruit.

However, the report also found that 75% of water engineers value the public visibility of a scheme when selecting their next role. Given that the majority of publicity in the sector recently has been negative, the already growing issue of worker shortages will only intensify as water increasingly becomes a less desirable career route for core engineers.

Water by Murray has warned that, unless significant action is taken – and more focus is placed on promoting the positive career routes available in the sector – many organisations will be unable to resource projects ahead of AMP8 starting next year.

Teo De La Cruz, associate director at Water by Murray – part of Murray McIntosh – commented on why branding is key.

“Very few employers within the water sector do enough to differentiate themselves through their employer branding, which is detrimental at a time when skills shortages are rife. When we consider that most of these organisations have also been badly tarnished by the wider scrutiny facing the water industry, it's clear that there's an issue with perceptions of the industry and working within it that needs to be addressed. Both individual employers, and the sector as a whole, have to consider the ways they promote themselves to engineers and whether that is helping them to attract new skills. Water engineers work on some of the most pivotal and critical projects around, but this breadth of opportunity isn't being talked about enough.”

“We know that tackling STEM skills shortages is a long-term issue and won't be solved overnight. However, if employers want to be able to fulfil their AMP8 requirements, they need to get ahead of their competitors, as there are only limited engineering resources available in the market. To do so, organisations must focus on highlighting why they are an attractive proposition, what they can offer engineers, and promote the projects they're working on more effectively. There are other options available, like leveraging contingent workers, but it would be fair to say that water has a bigger branding problem that needs to be addressed.”