Finding the Right Person

a guide to help employers with the recruitment process
Recruiting the right staff is essential to ensure the ongoing success of your business.

So how do you go about finding that perfect person?

This guide looks at each of the key stages in the recruitment process; planning, searching, filtering, interviewing and, finally, the all important offer stage.

A good recruitment consultant should be able to help you with each of these stages – working in partnership with you to make the entire process easier, more streamlined, and ultimately, more effective.
Planning

Getting this stage right is absolutely essential. All too often, with time, resource and other pressures to deal with, employers don’t spend enough time identifying their requirements before starting their search.

Finding the right person is only possible once you are completely clear on the skills, knowledge and experience you need.

So, before you do anything else, think about why you are looking to recruit, the tasks and functions your new employee will be required to fulfil and the type of person best placed to carry out this particular role.

Think about any gaps you may currently have in your organisation, or the specific team your new recruit will be joining. Remember to take into account any ‘soft skills’ needed for the role, as well as the more easily identifiable requirements such as minimum qualifications and levels of experience.

You should then put together a job description and personal specification.

Job description

The job description should outline all key aspects of the role and should include, as a minimum:

- the job title;
- the position in the company, including the job title of the person to whom the employee will report and, if appropriate, those who will report to them;
- the location of the job;
- a summary of the general nature and objectives of the job; and
- a list of the main duties or tasks of the employee.
**Personal specification**

The personal specification should **outline the key qualities and competencies** you are looking for in a candidate. This could include areas such as knowledge, experience, qualifications and skills – highlighting those that are essential for the job, and those that are desirable.

You must also **ensure** that your personal specification is **not discriminatory in any way** – be that sex, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, or because someone has a disability.

**Recruitment planning checklist:**

- Why are you looking to recruit?
- What tasks and functions will your new employee be required to fulfil?
- What gaps do you currently have in your organisation?
- What are the soft skills and minimum levels of qualifications and experience required?
- Who is the ideal type of person to carry out the role?
- Have you written your job description and personal specification?
Searching

Once you are clear on who you want to recruit, you can start your search.
There are a number of ways to find candidates and the type of role you are trying to fill will often dictate which method is most appropriate.

Internal

As a starting point you should advertise the role internally; no-one understands your business better than you and your current team. The perfect person may already be right under your nose.

Advertising

For external recruits you may choose to advertise directly, this could be through your website, in local (or even National) newspapers or industry magazines, through online job sites or through Jobcentre Plus.
For junior roles, look into modern apprenticeship schemes or graduate placement programmes.

Remember to include in your advert the key aspects of the role as well as details of the level of skills and experience you need. It is often helpful to include the salary or salary range for the position. Including a salary or salary range increasing your chances of relevant candidates being attracted to your advert, rather than just entering the term 'negotiable'.

As with the personal specification, you should ensure your advert does not discriminate – even inadvertently.

Recruitment consultants

Specialist recruitment consultants are the obvious choice for this stage in the recruitment process. A good recruitment firm will have access to a far wider candidate pool than an individual employer and will have the necessary skills to match ideal candidates to the role and organisation in question.

The most successful recruiter/employer relationships are those based on long-term partnerships.
Your recruitment consultant should feel like a natural extension of your business. The more they know and understand your organisation, the better placed they will be to put forward candidates who really meet your needs.

Selecting a recruitment consultant can be a difficult process in itself – with so many firms out there, how do you choose the best one for you? If you don’t already have preferred recruitment partners in place, there are a number of steps you can take to check the credentials of potential consultancy firms:

- **Is the firm a member of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)?**
  
  This is the professional body that represents the entire recruitment industry and member firms have to adhere to the REC code of practice and be committed to raising standards in recruitment.

- **Does your consultant have any specialist recruitment qualifications, for example the Certificate in Recruitment Practice?**
  
  Again, this helps to demonstrate a level of knowledge, understanding and commitment.

- **Does the organisation specialise in your particular industry sector?**
  
  Industry specific knowledge and experience is extremely valuable and can really help you get the maximum benefit from your recruitment partner. The best recruiters are often those who have previously worked in your industry – this really makes a huge difference to their level of understanding of what you are looking for and trying to achieve.

- **What do other people say about them?**
  
  Speak to your colleagues and peers to see who they would recommend. A good recruiter should also be happy to let you contact their existing clients for references.

However you choose to search for candidates, remember to make it clear how they should apply. This could be via a specific application form you have put together (either hard copy or online) or by sending in their CV with a covering letter. If using an application form **be careful not to include any questions that could be construed as discriminatory**. This includes things like asking for the candidate’s age or date of birth.
Filtering

Once you have your applications you need to decide who to invite to interview.
How flexible you choose to be at this stage is up to you – and, of course, will depend on the number of applications received.

As a first step, check the ‘essentials’ you require (such as minimum qualifications or levels of experience in a similar role) against each candidate’s details. Any that don’t meet your basic requirements can be excluded at this stage.

CVs and application forms can provide a useful insight into a number of areas. For example, if the role requires excellent attention to detail and the CV or application form is littered with spelling and grammatical errors, that particular candidate is probably not right for this role. If you’re looking for a salesperson with a track record for results, check to see whether the candidate has detailed their key achievements in this area throughout their previous employment.

If using a recruitment consultant get their input on each of the candidates they have put forward and ask for their help in producing your shortlist. A good recruiter should have stringently screened any candidates they put forward – this includes holding an initial discussion with them on your behalf. Listen to their input – you have appointed them for a reason and they should be an expert in this field.

Once you have decided upon your shortlist you are ready to arrange interviews. Whilst there is no legal requirement to inform unsuccessful candidates that you have not selected them for interview, it is best practice to send each a brief letter or email to let them know and thank them for their application. This shows that you appreciate the time they have taken to apply and puts your organisation in a good light. This can be useful in terms of maintaining your employer brand in general terms – and you may find that, whilst not suitable for that particular vacancy, they are ideal for a future position that may become available.
The interview

Make sure you prepare properly for the interview – book rooms in advance, make sure your receptionists know to expect the candidates and allow enough time to interview each candidate properly.

As much as the candidate is there to impress you, it is your job to show your organisation in the best possible light. You want your chosen candidate to be enthusiastic about joining you. As with many things in life – it's all in the preparation!

Think about the questions you will ask in advance of the interview – your aim is to obtain quality information from the candidate in order to gauge their suitability for the role. You may find our employer briefing note on ‘Example Interview Questions’ useful, this is available on our website, or please contact us for a copy.

The following list gives a basic structure for your interview:

1. Welcome the candidate and try to put them at ease – you want them to feel as relaxed as possible in order for you to see the ‘true’ person.
2. Introduce yourself and any other people present, explaining each of your roles in relation to the interview.
3. Explain the structure of the interview.
4. Outline the company background and role, and where the job fits.
5. Encourage the candidate to talk about how their skills and experience apply to the vacancy.
6. Ask open ended questions – ones that cannot be answered with a yes or no and make sure you allow the candidate time to think and speak.
7. Keep control of the interview. If you think the candidate is going off track, turn the conversation back to the information you need.

8. At the end of the interview, ask the candidate if they have any questions. This part of the interview can prove extremely useful in gauging the candidate’s understanding of the vacancy and their genuine level of interest in the role.

9. Inform them of the next stage in the process, e.g. appointment, second interviews or tests and the estimated timescales involved.

10. Thank the candidate for their time.

For specialist roles, additional methods of assessment may be appropriate. These could take the form of practical tests, role plays or psychometric testing, such as DISC profiling.

Keep accurate records of all the information obtained through each source – remembering to only record factual information, rather than your own personal opinion of the candidate.

Once each stage is completed you should have gathered enough information to make your selection.
The job offer

Once you have made your decision, you need to make the successful candidate a job offer. It is always a good idea to have a second (or even third) choice, in case your first choice decides not to accept the position.

It is wise to make your decision as soon after the assessment process is completed as possible. This will ensure all information is still fresh in your mind.

Whilst formal job offers should always be made in writing, it is a good idea to make the initial offer during a telephone conversation. This can help you quickly establish whether or not the candidate intends to take the position. You can then go on to discuss and negotiate the terms of employment, for example, salary, holiday entitlement and benefits.

You should also inform all unsuccessful candidates that you will not be offering them the role, as well as providing details as to why they have not been successful on this occasion. This is valuable feedback for candidates who can use the information you provide to help them in their future applications.

As with the other stages outlined in this guide, if you are using a recruitment consultant to help you, they should deal with both the negotiations with your chosen candidate and informing the other applicants that they have not been successful. A good recruiter should be able to provide useful, honest and tactful feedback to assist the unsuccessful candidates with their future job searches, whilst ensuring you, as an employer, continue to be seen in a good light.
The offer letter

Your formal offer letter should include:

- the candidate’s name and address;
- their job title;
- the terms on which the job is offered;
- the date that their employment will start;
- details of any probationary period;
- any conditions of the offer, e.g. checks on eligibility to work in the UK or subject to suitable references being provided; and
- details of any action required by the candidate to meet those conditions, e.g. production of suitable evidence proving their right to work in the UK.

You should ask the candidate to sign and return a copy of the letter, to confirm their acceptance of the position.

Once this is received the recruitment process is officially complete and you can look forward to welcoming your new employee in the imminent future.

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Sandringham Wood Recruitment

Sandringham Wood is a specialist recruitment consultancy, dealing with all types and levels of role across the financial services industry.

We strongly believe in forming long-term partnerships with our clients in order to ensure we consistently deliver excellent levels of service and advice.

To find out more about how Sandringham Wood can help your business, please do not hesitate to get in touch on 0117 962 5005 or info@sandringhamwood.com. We’d love to hear from you.
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