

“Recruitment is as easy as 1, 2, 3”

A guide to recruiting staff

Recruiting staff can be completed by anyone; however, recruiting staff successfully is a completely different matter. Get it right and you have an asset within your company, get it wrong and you could find it very expensive and inefficient.

Recruiting staff is a process like many other processes within companies. It is often seen as burdensome exercise, an unnecessary use of key decision maker's time and then there is the direct cost of advertisements etc. However, when recruiting staff thought should be given to what happens if you do not pay attention to getting it right. Not adopting the right approach can lead to lot of time wasted (time that can be spent doing many other things), repeat costs for adverts (if these are used) and very importantly having the wrong person in a job can lead to jobs going wrong, customers being upset and other staff members being de-motivated.

So recruiting staff is no different from many other day-to-day things within business, to get it right it needs the right approach. No matter how big or how small a business may be it is important to adopt an effective system for recruiting staff and the good news is, this system can be very straightforward, in fact, it is as easy as 1, 2, 3

1. Be effective!

Here you need to think about *how* to produce enough suitable candidates and *how* you will be able to distinguish between those who are suitable and those who are not. It clearly would be of little value to attract people who simply do not have the skills and knowledge to do the job needed. Therefore, thought must be given as to the job itself and what skills and knowledge the suitable person will have. The job itself is often represented by a *job description* which outlines; the job title, job location, to whom the suitable applicant will report, the main purpose of the job and its key tasks. The production a job description is common less so a person specification. Many people are put off producing a person specification as it is seen, as something only bigger companies produce – not so! A person specification is important as it enables you look at the essential qualities that the suitable person will have as well as the desirable ones. The time spent producing a person specification will help, to not only short-list potential applicants but also make the interview and selection process so much more effective. One final point on effectiveness concerns the area of salary. When recruiting staff you need to think about how much you want to pay and can afford to pay. Think about researching what other similar jobs are being advertised for or take advice from agencies such as Job Centres (they tend to be very helpful). Think about whether you want to advertise the salary – this can be contentious but many applicants may be put off unless they know the amount they will be paid.

2. Be Efficient

There are many costs involved when recruiting staff. The direct costs are associated with advertising and/or the use of external agencies. However, some thought should always be given

to whether there are suitable internal applicants? Consideration should always be given to advertising internally and before or at the same time as considering other means. Efficiency when recruiting staff is also aided by considering the type of job and matching it to the best means of attracting interest. Sometimes the best means of advertising a vacancy is a note in the window (costs very little), sometimes you need to use experts to source the right person (can cost a great deal). The decision as to which method should be made based on effectiveness not just cost; if you find the right person quickly but it costs; it still may work out cheaper than choosing a cost free solution, which does not enable you to find someone. Before choosing the methods of advertising think about the job, do a little research as to where similar jobs are advertised and make sure you choose what fits best.

Being efficient means preparing correctly in advance of applicants. In particular, once you have advertised how do people apply? Curriculum Vitae's (CV's) are very common but many company's choose to use application forms. The advantage of using application forms is that can gather information *you* wish to know rather than CV's which often are drafted to tell you what *the applicant* wishes to tell you. Whether you use application forms and/or CV's, decide and put that in the advert.

Efficiency is obviously aided by using the interviewees time well. When recruiting staff it is no good taking up hours and hours of valuable time interviewing those who are simply unsuitable. Short-listing using the person specification and job description should be done. There is no rule on how many or few should be short-listed – be efficient and have enough to compare but not too many that it becomes burdensome.

Efficiency can be aided by involving others in the recruitment of staff. Others may be potential team –mates of the applicant. This can be efficient as it both enables a different opinion but can motivate current staff through involvement.

Once short-listing is completed and people are invited to, interview thought should be given to how you invite them to interview. The most professional means would be through interview letter as it communicates a far better image of the company (provided the letter is completed correctly!). Ensure preparation is given to interviews. Remember that interviews are a two-way thing- many potential employees have turned down jobs because of poor interviews! All applicants selected for interviews should be treated the same as all the hard work up to this point could go down the drain by a less than consistent approach. Consider using checklists (to compare all interviewees against the same criteria). Consider a list of questions used with every interviewee. Consider using “scenario questions” such as “what would you do if a customer rang with a complaint” to stretch the interviewee further. All adds to efficiency in this area.

Once the interviews are completed it is vital that a decision is made – once made offer the suitable applicant the job (see our section on contract and handbook) and very importantly let the unsuccessful applicants (both those selected for interview and those not) know they have been unsuccessful.

3. Be fair!

Throughout the process for recruiting staff, it is very important to be fair. All companies regardless of size should ensure equality of opportunity is maintained.

Be fair to current employees by giving them the chance to apply for jobs.

Be fair to all those apply by ensuring they have the courtesy of a reply (remember that an applicant could be a customer or future customer however unsuitable they may be)

Be fair to all when preparing job adverts and application forms. Employment law governs both of these so it is crucial you get it right.

Overall recruiting staff can be daunting particular for those businesses who are growing and haven't the experience the bringing people on board. No matter how big or how small the company is, follow steps 1, 2 and 3 and the chances of getting right are much greater.