

Step by Step Guide to Recruitment

A step by step guide on how to recruit with tips on ensuring recruitment best practice and attracting the right talent for your business.



Our helpful manual is designed to walk you through each stage of the recruitment process, from getting started to onboarding.

How to recruit

If you are a growing business in need of guidance on how to expand your teams further, hiring the right people is essential to your success.

It's a candidate market: Attracting talent is becoming increasingly challenging as top candidates with the right skills and attitude are in high demand.

We have put together this handy guide to help walk you through the stages of the recruitment process and, more importantly, provide expert advice on how you can ensure you attract the best talent for your business.

77%

of businesses anticipate a shortage of suitable applicants [1]

49%

of CEOs said their companies lost money due to inefficient recruiting [1]



The most important thing to note is that recruitment is contextual. Looking for skills and experience alone is not enough. You need to be able to clearly articulate your culture to candidates. This is where recruitment and retention either succeeds or fails.

Getting started



Don't jump straight in

The business is being stretched or there are gaps in skills that you need to fill quickly in order to keep everything moving forward. The temptation is to pull together a quick advert and job description, even an online template, and go out to market. You may fill the position quickly but find that a few months down the line, the role needs to evolve or the fit just isn't quite right.

Establish your need

The first crucial step in recruiting is to take a step back and establish what your needs are, both now and in the future. Ask yourself these questions, before you even begin to recruit, to ensure that recruiting another employee is the best choice for your business:

- Where is the business now?
- What do you aim to achieve over the next year?
- Will you require different skills and capabilities in the future?
- Is this role needed longer term - is it temporary, fixed term or permanent?
- Do you require the role full-time or could it be part-time or contract?
- Where will the role sit within the organisation?
- What is the team culture like?
- Who will manage a new team member, and do they have the capacity and capability to do so?
- What is the typical package expected for this type of role?



Check your salary offer

Many of the job boards provide salary checkers to give you an idea of the salary associated with a particular role. PayScale offers a variety of free and paid for services to determine pay and provides a detailed range and average for a wide selection of jobs. If you work with a recruiter they should be able to offer you insights and advice about salary benchmarking.



The role

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Once you are clear about the need for a role, you need to think in more detail about the specifics of the vacancy.

- What are the core tasks of the role?
- What are the hard skills required for the role?
- What are the soft skills required for the role?
- What skills are essential for the role?
- What can be learned in the role?

Hard vs. Soft Skills

Hard skills are the 'teachable' abilities evidenced through qualifications and past experience. For example being able to speak a foreign language or holding a degree in marketing[1].

Soft skills are more subjective and harder to evidence. They are traits that determine how you interact with others and respond in different situations. For example being a good communicator, having good time management or being able to lead.

The job spec

Once you have established the key requirements of the role, you need to write your job description. Try to summarise your role in a couple of sentences to identify the core purpose.

Next, detail the main tasks of the role. Be as specific as possible to ensure you attract people with the right skills. Explain where the role fits within the wider organisation and how it contributes to the business objectives.

List the hard and soft skills that you require, stating which are essential and which are desirable.

The words you choose can make a big difference to the people that apply. Research shows that certain words can even discourage candidates from applying. For example, words like 'manage' or 'build' are said to attract more male applicants, while women prefer 'develop' and 'create'[2]. Use language that helps to show the culture and environment in which the employee will be working.



Remove unconscious bias

There are a number of free tools online that can check your job description and advert. Eploy ATS have a useful free recruitment tool that checks for gender bias, length and recruitment best practice.

[1] Hard skills vs. soft skills: What's the Difference?, The balance careers

[2] How the language used in job adverts discourages women from applying, Evening Standard, Lucy Devine, 13th June 2018

Job spec checklist

- Job Title
- List main purpose of the job
- List key tasks of the job
- Key objectives and expected results
- Who is the role responsible for (staff)
- Who does the role report into?

58%

of candidates who had a negative experience with a company's recruitment process said they would not apply again in the future [1].

The person spec

Spend some time thinking about the attributes the successful candidate should have in order to perform the job including a description of their qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge and other attributes - this is the person specification.

Person spec checklist

- Qualifications
- Previous experience
- Skills/competencies
- Knowledge
- Experience required
- What personal qualities are required e.g. self-motivated?
- Any special attributes e.g. track record of producing great content



63%

of businesses don't have an integrated recruitment and on-boarding process [2].



Take your time

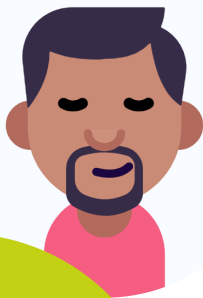
Although you may be in a hurry to fill a position, taking the time to write your job and person specifications means that you are more likely to get applicants that are a good fit.

[1] Becoming a people company: The way to unlock fast track growth, Sage, May 2017

[2] The Far-Reaching Impact of Candidate Experience, IBM, 2017

Writing the advert

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70%

of potential candidates aren't actively searching for a job [1]

Depending on the role, it can be helpful to include a deadline for applications on the advert. This is particularly useful when you are expecting a high response rate. For roles that are more niche or require a very specific skill set that is more scarce, you may not want to restrict yourself to a deadline.

Adding an equal opportunities statement shows your commitment to welcoming applications from all people that have the appropriate qualifications and experience. You may also want to highlight that you are open to flexible working to attract more candidates.

When composing your job advert, promote the role and the wider opportunity at your organisation. Sell yourself as an employer and your purpose and values.

You aren't looking to attract hundreds of individuals; you are looking to attract the right ones. Those who value what you have to offer and are excited by the opportunity. You need to be as transparent as possible.

Spending time on your advert is key because this is your shop window to potential candidates.

Including the salary, or salary range depending on experience, can increase the number of people that apply and helps to manage candidate's expectations. This can be of particular importance when you are recruiting in a competitive market. Choosing not to include a salary can put some candidates off but you can highlight other benefits of working at the business.



Understand what matters

Speak to your current employees to understand what they value about working in the business. Use this to shape how you promote the new role and opportunity.

Promoting your job



Posting your job advert on your own website is a good place to start. However, you need to consider how many people are likely to see this and whether you will attract a diverse range of candidates this way.

One step further might be to use one of the well recognised job boards including: Reed, CV Library and others. The cost of using one of these boards starts at approx. £150 plus vat (this can often be negotiated).

Over 80% of companies now frequently use social media to promote roles so share the opportunity on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn [1]. This can be done by either posting to your own network or paying for more targeted advertising. This is known as 'social recruiting'.

If the role is particularly niche, you can also consider specific publications, journals and websites that are tailored to the audience you are looking for. Advertising on these platforms can come at a premium.

Review the response to your job advert throughout and if you're not getting the response expected, explore other advertising channels. If you are getting applicants that are not a good fit, revisit your job advert and job description to ensure it clearly captures what you are looking for.



Your employer brand

Similar to the way a corporate brand works (which offers a value proposition to customers, defining products or services in the marketplace), an employer brand includes the market's perception of your company as an employer, but also describes your promise (or employee value proposition) to employees in exchange for their experience, talents, contacts, or skills.

It communicates that your organisation is a good employer and a great place to work, which boosts recruitment efforts and the engagement and retention of your current employees. In today's increasingly competitive job market, a positive employer brand is critical. Without one, hiring and retaining the best employees can be challenging – and costly.

[1] 5 Social Recruiting Mistakes and how to avoid them, Glassdoor, Dec 2018



Find your ideal candidate on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great resource if you want to proactively reach candidates rather than relying on them applying for a role through your adverts. You can purchase a package from LinkedIn called 'Recruiter'. This means that you can see everyone on LinkedIn and not just those that are within your network resulting in the potential to reach a much wider pool of candidates. The cost is approximately £7,000 per year. Again, it is important to take time to create an 'InMail' that explains why this is an opportunity they would be interested in.

75%

of people who recently changed jobs used LinkedIn to inform their career decision [1]

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Longlisting

Now you are at the stage of 'long-listing'. This requires excluding any applications that don't meet your minimum requirements. You can start long listing while the advert is still live so you can maintain momentum and ensure you don't lose good candidates.

Quick checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Establish business case for role | <input type="checkbox"/> Post job on your own website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identify what you want from the role | <input type="checkbox"/> Post job on job boards and social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft job description | <input type="checkbox"/> Review response and quality of candidates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft job advert | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a long list of candidates |

Shortlisting

Create a template

At this stage of the recruitment process, you should have a long list of candidates; these are all the candidates that met the essential criteria for the position. You can quickly reject all applications that do not meet the essential skills required. You need to ensure you keep a record of the decisions made with regards to shortlisting. Creating a template can be a useful way to score each application in a fair and consistent manner and quickly see why a candidate was taken forward or not. This should include the key requirements and desirable criteria from the job description.



Be consistent

Keep the scoring simple - for example rank from 0 - 3 with 0 showing no evidence for a certain skill and 3 demonstrating a high level of competency with proven experience.

Make notes about anything else outside of the essential and desirable criteria which is of interest. For example, the presentation of the CV, extra-curricular activities and interests.

- It is a good idea for more than one person to score the candidates independently as this helps to remove unconscious bias. You can then review together and agree the top candidates going through to the next stage based on their total scores.
- If you have a larger number of candidates that have scored highly, you might want to consider first holding a telephone interview before a more formal face to face meeting. We often find telephone interviews are a useful way to clarify any points on their CV and ensure the location, salary and job role is a good fit. If you only have a few candidates, you may wish to invite them straight in for a face to face interview.



What is unconscious bias?

Unconscious bias is unintended and natural. It occurs when people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. "Unconscious bias at work can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion, staff development and recognition and can lead to a less diverse workforce. Employers can overlook talented workers and instead favour those who share their own characteristics or views". It could be discriminatory when the unconscious bias relates to a protected characteristic[1].

[1] Unconscious Bias, Acas Website

Before the Interview

This is your opportunity to learn more about the candidate and for them to better understand your organisation. You will need to agree a standard set of questions for the interview. As with shortlisting, you should agree a simple scoring system that each interviewer understands.

Scenario based and example style questions can be useful to assess candidates soft skills and show how they respond in certain situations e.g. 'Tell me about a time...'.
 You may decide you want to include a task prior, during or after the interview. If this is the case, be clear on what the purpose of the task is, what you expect from the candidates and how this will be scored and factored into the recruitment process. Ensure that you provide each candidate with the same brief for the task and, if relevant, give them sufficient time to prepare beforehand.

Send details to the candidates with enough notice detailing who will be present at the interview and the location. It is a good idea to advise on logistics for getting to the interview e.g. whether there is parking on site and who they need to report to on arrival. Provide the time and an estimation of the length of the interview. This helps candidates to fully prepare. Ensure that you have confirmation from each candidate that they are able to attend.

Check whether the candidate needs any reasonable adjustments to attend the interview. 'You must make adjustments if they are reasonable, for example, wheelchair users to have their interview on the ground floor or enabling a candidate to complete a written test using a computer. After you have made the job offer, you can ask what adjustments they will need to do the job'[1].

Remember the candidate is also deciding whether they want to work for you. Ensure you have re-read the candidates CV and are prepared for each interview.



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Don't leave candidates in the dark

We recommend providing feedback to all candidates in the process. For those not successful at long list, a short email can suffice to advise that the candidate was unsuccessful as they did not meet the essential criteria. This will result in a more positive experience for the applicant and a better representation of your employer brand. The further along the process they get, the more tailored the feedback can be.

At the Interview

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People who enjoy the candidate experience are 38% more likely to accept a job offer [1].

We would strongly advise all employers to have interviewing training before undertaking their first recruitment. This encourages best practice and ensures that no inappropriate questions are asked during the interview which could be considered discriminatory.

We always recommend using a panel of interviewers to avoid unconscious bias creeping into the recruitment process. Ensure you agree between you beforehand, the format of the interview and who will ask which questions.

At the end of the interview, advise the candidates on next steps. Thank them for their time and allow 5-10 minutes at the end of the interview for any questions. If this is the only interview, it can be helpful to let the candidate know when they can expect to hear if they have been successful.

Doing interviews back to back can be a good way to review all candidates on the same day but ensure you give yourself time for regular breaks and turnaround time to avoid running over. Don't try and squeeze too many in on one day - its not fair to you or the candidates and can impact recruiting decisions.

A good interview can result in recruiting the right talent. A bad interview can result in bad PR for your employer brand and, at worse, legal consequences.



First Impressions Count

You may want to walk the candidate through a particular part of the office or workshop to show them your culture and how you operate. It can be a good idea to advise colleagues of the interview.

[1] The Far-Reaching Impact of Candidate Experience, IBM, 2017

Pre-Employment Testing

If you decide to use pre-employment testing, you need to be clear about exactly what you aim to achieve from the test, and at what stage of the recruitment process you'll use it. This needs to be communicated to candidates so they understand the purpose of such tests. Tests should never be considered in isolation – they are part of the process and can help to inform a recruitment decision rather than determine it.

Tests can be used early on in the recruitment process to rule out those candidates that don't meet a certain level. This can often be a short numerical or verbal reasoning test taken at home with a minimum threshold that candidates have to meet. This can help to save time in the recruitment process but at this early stage should be short and simple to avoid putting off potential candidates.

Numerical, verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests can also be used later in the recruitment process to determine a candidate's general intelligence. This can be an indicator of job performance but is not a direct correlation – general intelligence will not identify a candidate's capacity for learning or whether there is a cultural fit.

Skills based tests measure candidates skills, for example: problem solving, analytical skills, numerical skills, presentation skills, or anything else which is essential within that particular role. These practical skills-based tests require investment from the candidate and employer.



Candidates may need time to prepare and each will need to be scored in a fair and transparent way by the recruiting manager, with specific feedback offered to both successful and unsuccessful candidates. This kind of test is better later on in the recruitment process.

Scenario tests can be used to see how a candidate would respond in certain situations. The scenario is presented to the candidate either written or visually and they must choose how they would resolve or deal with the situation. Scenario based tests can be specific to the role and can give an indication of their leadership skills or behaviour in difficult situations.

Assessments that determine a candidate's motivations and values have been shown to provide a good indicator of performance and the cultural fit within an organisation. They can explore a person's behaviours, what they value and their response under stress. There is not a right or wrong answer, but different 'profiles' can be better suited to different roles. We recommend the use of these tools prior to final interview, to guide discussions with short-listed candidates.

Making a Job Offer

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Once you have reviewed all of the candidates scores from the interview, you are ready to make an offer. Make sure you have the full details of the offer before contacting the candidate. For example, if you gave a salary range at the beginning, you will need to advise them of the salary and benefits being offered.

At this stage the candidate may ask some more specific questions before accepting the job offer. For example, they may want to clarify the possibility of flexible working or wish to negotiate the salary.

Contract negotiation can be tricky and impact the working relationship before it has begun. Be transparent with the candidate - if you can't offer any more in financial rewards, you may want to highlight other benefits working for the company. This is where initial telephone conversations can be helpful to establish the candidates expectations and what you are able to offer.

If the candidate accepts, you will need to draft a contract and send them a conditional job offer pending references. If the candidate has been offered another role elsewhere or declines the position, decide whether any of the other candidates that were interviewed are suitable.

Make sure you give feedback to each candidate that attended an interview. Highlight where they scored well, any opportunities for improvement and why they were not successful.

If the candidate was a good fit for the business but not right for this role, encourage them to apply for future roles and highlight any upcoming opportunities.

When the recruitment process has not been successful, consider why. Was it the package on offer or did the candidates not have the right skills? You may want to consider employing a recruitment agency to help. Recruitment agencies will typically charge a percentage fee based on the salary for the role. They should work with you to understand the business and the role and provide insight on salary expectations and level of experience you can expect.



Review the process

It is always helpful to review the recruitment process after hiring a new person. Gathering feedback from unsuccessful candidates together with any successful candidates can be a helpful way to improve the process going forward.

Onboarding

You need to make sure everything is in place for when your new employee starts. A good onboarding process that embeds the employee into the business can help them quickly become productive and increase retention rates. Depending on the time between the job offer and start date, it is a good idea to keep in touch with the candidate to ensure they have everything they need and are made to feel welcome. Keep them engaged and excited about the role. Contact them a week before to confirm location, parking, where to report to and who will greet them.

On a practical level, make sure you have a desk and computer set up, if required. Remember that setting up an email, telephone and IT account, arranging ID badges and access can all take time and, if possible, are much better sorted out in advance.

A welcome email from the manager introducing the new staff member can be a nice way to make them feel welcome and notify all staff of the new starter. Make sure you advise any members of the team when the new team member will start. The manager should be available on the first day to greet the employer and help them settle in.



The little things count

Little gestures can really help make a new employee feel confident about their move. We always send a box of chocolates to our new starters on their first day to wish them luck in their position.



You may also want to identify a mentor or 'buddy' within the team that can provide support in the first few weeks.

Make an induction plan and discuss this with the candidate in their first week. This could involve meeting with key people within the business, external meetings with clients and visiting other offices or sites. You will need to arrange any mandatory training and discuss additional training needs. The employee will also need to be made aware of your policies and procedures including health and safety and fire safety protocols.

On a more informal basis, you might want to hold a team lunch or company get together to break the ice. Your new employee should then be able to focus on the job in hand and become a real asset to your organisation!

Your Recruitment Partner

Whether you're looking to recruit an individual or an entire team, we hope that our guide is useful along the way.

At Talent Gateway we recognise that a company is only as exceptional as the people in it, and to get exceptional people, a robust and effective recruitment process is a must. The cost of making a wrong recruitment decision can be expensive and usually leads to wasted time and resources.

We have a wealth of recruitment expertise and experience and can help find the right person for a specific job, or manage a recruitment campaign.

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