

## 7 Steps to Finding Your Perfect Employee

Finding the right person for your company can be a daunting task if you are not used to the recruitment process, so we have put together this guide to help you. Everyone involved in the recruitment and selection of staff has a responsibility to ensure that candidates are treated fairly and that decisions are made objectively.

The steps below will encourage good practice in all aspects of recruitment, promoting equality and diversity and (at time of going to press) complying with the relevant legislation.

### Step 1 - Writing a Job Description and Person Specification

Neither of these are a legal requirement, however, they will help you to identify what kind of person you are looking for, assist you in writing the job advert and select the closest matched candidate to offer the position to.

A Job Description should include a job title, the main duties and purpose of the role, information about the company and the job location. You can find Job Description templates on the internet – for example <http://www.businessballs.com/jobdescription.htm>

A Person Specification should include essential and desirable knowledge criteria, previous experience and the specific skills you're looking for in the successful candidate. You can find Person Specification templates on the internet – for example <http://www.whatjobsite.com/Job%20Specification%20Template.htm>

When writing the Job Description and Person Specification be careful the language you use does not indirectly discriminate, for example using the job title 'Store Man' rather than 'Stores Assistant'.

### Step 2 – Advertising the job

Whilst hiring through word of mouth may be economical it is likely to lead to a much smaller pool of suitable applicants and does not satisfy equal opportunities requirements because it may lead to an imbalance in the workforce. The Equality and Human Right Commission warns against such practices where the workforce is predominantly one sex or racial group. When advertising the position there are a range of options available to you including; The Apprenticeship Vacancy website ([www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)), your own website, newspapers/magazines, online job and recruitment sites and Job Centre Plus ([www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk](http://www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk)).

Things to consider:

Who you wish to target with the advert

The cost and how much you can afford to pay

How long the advert should run for and how quickly you would like to fill the position

### **Step 3 – The Application Process**

There are two main ways of inviting applications to your vacancy, these are:

- Asking the applicants to complete and return an application form – this method fits better with a recruitment policy that meets equality legislation.
- Requesting the applicant send you a copy of their CV and covering letter

#### **Application Form**

An application form allows you to request the exact information you require and it is easy to compare all the applicant's skills and experiences. You can also use the same form in the future for other vacancies. Information you may wish to include on the form is:

- Job applied for
- Name and contact details of applicant
- Qualifications
- Previous experience
- Relevant skills
- Details of referees
- If the applicant has a criminal record
- If the applicant has the right to work in the UK

Good practice guidelines from ACAS support the use of application forms, as in the event of a selection decision being challenged you can evidence a consistent process for all candidates, requesting the same information and allowing an objective selection decision.

#### **Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)**

A C.V. and covering letter can give you a good indication of the candidate's suitability to the job and can be an inexpensive method of recruiting as you don't need to produce and send out an application form to every applicant for the job.

We have devised and attached an **Application feedback tool** and **C.V. feedback tool** which you may find helpful when reviewing the applications and C.V.'s you receive. We use these feedback tools to help our learners develop and improve their application forms and C.V.'s so it would be helpful to have a copy of the notes you make for any Apprenticeship applicants and we will then feed any constructive comments back to them on your behalf.

### **Step 4 – How to shortlist suitable candidates**

Ideally the shortlist of suitable candidates should be created by more than one person to help to avoid possible bias. It is important that you don't discriminate against any applicants, directly or indirectly, on the ground of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, pregnancy and maternity and marital status.

To compile your shortlist use the Job Description and Person Specification to match applications and eliminate those who do not have the basic requirements for the job. Identify dates you (and the rest of the interview panel) are available to hold the interviews on. Be realistic about the number of applicants you will have time to interview, allowing enough time for preparation and discussion before and after the interview. Ideally you should notify candidates who will not be invited for an interview and offer feedback if possible.

Once you have your shortlist, the next step is to invite suitable candidates to interview by telephone, e-mail or letter. Ensure you advise the candidate where and when the interview will be taking place and any additional information you would like them to bring along, for example, qualification certificates. If you'd like them to do a practical test, ask them to bring along the suitable clothing/equipment. It is also nice to let them know the name and job titles of the interview panel members.

You should also ask the candidates if they have any special requirements or reasonable adjustments you should be aware of, so you can cater/accommodate for them.

## **Step 5 – Preparing for the Interview**

Preparing well for the interview makes it easier for both you and the candidates. Make sure you know the Job Description and Job Specification well so that your questions can help you compare candidates and plan questions which will allow the candidates to talk about their past experiences. Make notes about any information in their applications you're not clear on or that you would like to know more about.

Ideally two or more people should conduct the interview. If this is the case make sure you're clear on who will deal with each topic. Also think about what information the candidates may want to know from you regarding your organisation and the job.

Having standard questions you ask all the candidates can help make the process more equitable and fair. When preparing questions, it can also be helpful if you come up with ones that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Open questions starting with what/when/when/how will elicit a fuller response. For Example:

What were your main responsibilities in your previous/current job?

Why are you interested in this job?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

Why would you like to work with animals?

Make sure the room you use to conduct the interview is properly prepared and that there will be no interruptions. Allow sufficient time for each interview, so you don't have to rush and make sure other staff are aware there will be interviews taking place.

## Step 6 - Carrying out the Interview

Ensure that you welcome the candidates and introduce yourself and other members of the panel. Explain the format of the interview, outlining the job role and how it fits within the company. It is important that you keep control of the interview and allow the candidate time to think and answer your questions.

Allow the candidate time at the end to ask any questions that they might have and explain the next stages in the recruitment process, giving them an idea of the timescales involved. Lastly, thank the candidate for attending.

Ensure you write up accurate notes as soon as possible after the interview, to record what has been said.

We have also devised and attached an **Interview feedback tool** sheet which you may find helpful when reviewing the interviews you conduct. We use this feedback tool to help our learners develop and improve their interview skills and techniques. It would again be helpful to have a copy of the notes you make for any Apprenticeship applicants and we will then feed any constructive comments back to them on your behalf.

## Step 7 – Selecting and appointing the successful candidate

Once you have selected a candidate, a phone call to notify them of their success is good practice, followed by an official 'Offer Letter' offering them the position. You should also advise unsuccessful candidates, within the given timescale and be prepared to offer feedback if asked – this is where our **Interview feedback tool** could be useful.

Hopefully your chosen candidate will accept the position and you can then move on to the formalities of preparing a Contract of Employment and come to a mutual decision on a suitable start date.

Although not compulsory, it is advisable to check a potential employee's reference at this stage. You can do this by writing or telephone but must have the permission of the potential employee before any referees are contacted.

Business Link and ACAS both have help, guidance and templates for writing a Contract of Employment on their websites. They also have tools to help you calculate annual leave and details on hours, rest breaks and working weeks, pay and an overview of your obligations – see their links below in **Helpful Links**.

It is vital to have a structured recruitment process in place, follow it closely and keep records. These records could be called upon at a later date, if for example, a candidate made a complaint to an employment tribunal.

Please remember you could be in breach of the Equality & Diversity Law if there is shown to be any unfair discrimination in your recruitment process. Familiarising yourself with the following link will make sure you are well informed in this area:

Business Link – Prevent Discrimination and Value Diversity

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1074003268>

### **Helpful Links:**

Apprenticeship Vacancies – Attracting candidates to your vacancies

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Partners/apprenticeship-vacancies/filling-vacancies.aspx>

Job Centre Plus - Advertise a job and Job Centre Plus Services

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1083960949>

Business Links - Interactive tool on 'Help with Recruitment'

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1081476661>

ACAS - Promoting Employment Relations and HR Excellence

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleId=1461>