The employer's quick guide to effective recruitment

Finding the best people while keeping costs low

You know exactly how difficult it can be to find the best person for the job. There's so much to consider; their skills and experience, their attitude and personality. Not to mention how much it might cost you to find the right person. And then you've got to keep them happy and committed to the role after all of this.

At the moment, we're in a candidates' job market.

There's an abundance of vacancies available and not that many candidates. That's why candidates can afford to be a lot choosier about what they apply for, interview for and ultimately what roles they decide to accept.

And while this can be a good thing for you - you should be able to get a lot of the right people through the door - it also means you'll have to work a lot harder to demonstrate exactly why your company is the right one to choose.

Fortunately, with a little forward planning, you can handle the whole recruitment process relatively easily, and show your business off to its full potential at the same time. Oh, and I should probably also mention that this can help keep your recruitment costs down too.

So, if you're currently looking to fill a role, or you know you'll be recruiting at some point in the near future, read on to see how you can make the process a whole lot simpler and entirely more effective...

Your 7 steps to effective, low-cost recruitment

As with anything else in your business, a carefully constructed and well-thought-out plan is your number one key to success when it comes to recruitment.

I've outlined the 7 key steps that you need to take in order to make the best impression and attract the best people.

Of course, you may want to add steps in along the way, to make the plan more bespoke to your business. And you may want to seek assistance from experts (hi!) to help make the process as smooth and stress-free as possible. However, if you follow these steps, I'm confident that your next hire will be manageable and effective, even if you handle the entire process alone.

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Step 1. Identify your needs

Is this a new position you're creating? Perhaps you're looking to replace an employee who is leaving? Maybe your business is growing so you're doubling up on some roles?

Create a list of skills, knowledge and experience that you want or need your new hire to have. These could be directly related to the position you're recruiting for, or they may benefit the wider business.

Are there any skill gaps within the business that your new hire might be able to fill?

Have you considered whether the workload is sufficient to justify a new full-time member of staff? And do you know if there's anyone in the business who will be looking to retire or leave the businesses in the near future?

It's a good idea to create an organisation chart, if you don't already have one. This should include everyone in the business, their role, and their skills and experience. This allows you to see at a glance what skills you already have in the business, and where there are any gaps.

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Step 2. Create a job description

It's a great idea to have a job description for every role in your business. This way, when it comes to replacing a member of the team - or even creating new positions - you already know the responsibilities qualifications, and skills required for each and every job that needs to be done.
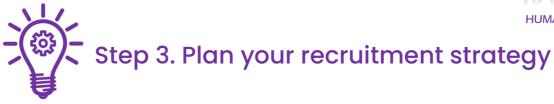
Try tasking your people with writing the job descriptions for their own roles, and keeping them updated. It will help to make sure that no vital responsibilities or duties are missed out. And you'll always have current job descriptions ready for when you're looking to hire new people.

Each and every job description should include the job title, responsibilities of the role, required qualifications (as well as the nice-to-have qualifications, too), skills, compensation, benefits and perks, and the location of the role.

If you want to take this a step further, you could also consider writing a candidate persona for each role within the business. These are designed to help you discover what kind of person you're looking for to fill each role.

A well-written candidate persona may also be able to help you know where to look for your next star employee. You should gain a good insight into where they may look for a job, and therefore where you should consider advertising your role.

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This is where you decide how you'll attract and retain the best candidates.

The first thing you should consider is whether you could recruit for a role from within your business. Perhaps someone is ready for the next step in their career? Maybe another department has too many hands on deck and transferable skills?

It's possible that you'll come to the conclusion that you'd like to bring someone new into the company. This could help to broaden the skills within the business and diversify the team's abilities.

Think about where you might advertise your role. Your candidate persona may help you to identify the places your ideal people would look for a job, but you also need to consider geographical location too. If the role is office-based, you'll need to ensure your candidate can get there, but, if the role could be remote, would you consider someone from anywhere in the country? How often would they be expected to see you face-to-face?

When it comes to advertising the job, put some consideration into your methods. As an example, you may prefer to ask your current employees if they know of anyone suitable before you post an advert on social media or on a job site. Referrals are a great way of finding excellent candidates, but you'll need to bear in mind that some employees may be hesitant to recommend a friend, in case it doesn't work out and reflects badly on them.

You also need to decide who will be responsible for creating the job advert and field responses or any questions you may receive. It's a good idea to make this one person's task, so that everything remains consistent and that all information given out is accurate.

At this stage, it might help you to create a flowchart that allows you to see the journey from application to hire.

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Step 4. Screen and shortlist

As I've mentioned, right now there are lots of candidates looking to change roles. This makes it likely that you'll have a big response to your job advert - providing you've got the responsibilities, salary and benefits right, and your company's brand or reputation is one that people can relate to.

So now your task is to sort the good applications from the no-so-good ones. Where do you start?!

First, remove any applications that don't meet your vital criteria. That's most likely to be skills and experience, but you may also find that you get applications from people who aren't in the right geographical location too.

Sort the remaining applications into two groups - those with the minimum qualifications and those with preferred credentials. Those with ticks in both boxes become your short list. It's a good idea to make a note of any questions you have about individual applicants at this point too, as you'll need a reminder when it comes to speaking to them.

Step 5. Interviews

While you're on the lookout for the most impressive candidates, you'll need to also remember that it's your job to impress the candidates too.

It's very important that you take time to consider the candidate experience if you want to attract and obtain the best talent for your business.

You'll need to decide your approach before you advertise a job, so that the whole process can flow smoothly.

Will you hold preliminary telephone calls with candidates? Perhaps you'll decide to hold short video interviews initially? Or would you prefer a more traditional face-to-face approach from the beginning?

You should also consider whether or not you need to conduct any form of trial or testing for candidates. Psychometric testing can be a fantastic way to identify how well your candidate will fit in with the business and complement the skills and personalities you already have within the business. And a short trial on the role (where possible) can help you see the skills and aptitude of candidates - although it is worth bearing in mind that under pressured conditions you may not see the full extent of a person's ability.

Look at your interview process and document it. Create a timeline that demonstrates exactly how the interview process will play out. You can even share this with your candidates so they know what to expect, and the timeframe in which they should know whether they've been successful at each stage.

Remember, be as flexible as you can with your candidates. They may be in roles that are tricky to take time away from, so insisting on a particular time or day may prevent you from finding the best fit for your business.

You could even try to implement a system where candidates book their own time slot with an online booking system, for ultimate flexibility.

Step 6. Making an offer

Before you make an offer to your favourite applicant, there are a few things you need to consider.

The first is checking references. You'd be surprised at just how many businesses skip this step, only to be shocked later on when something goes awry.

Make someone involved in the interview process responsible for following up on the references of your favourite candidate - just make sure not to contact the present employer!

You should also keep in mind that your favourite candidate may not have taken the same impression away from their interview with you. Never turn down other candidates before you've offered the job to your favourite and they've accepted - IN WRITING!

You may wish to choose a second favourite in case your first decides to take another job, or you may decide that there were no other applicants you liked and instead would start the process again. Just make sure you have a plan before you tell people they were unsuccessful this time.

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Step 7. Excellent onboarding

This step is so often forgotten about when it comes to the recruitment process. But it's one of the most essential parts to get right when welcoming a new employee... you know what they say about first impressions.

You need a solid plan to help welcome and settle a new employee into the business and their role.

Think about what they need to be able to start their new job easily. This will include things like introducing them to their new colleagues, showing them around the office, providing them with devices - like laptops and phones- as well as access to all of the systems that they'll be using for their job.

Consider what training they'll need, and the other roles that they'll need to interact with or understand in order to do their job properly. Arrange training on systems, and shadowing with colleagues so they're able to build a good picture of how things work.

You should check-in with your new hire regularly for the first week or two. This will not only encourage good communication, but it will also give them ample opportunity to voice any concerns they may have, giving you a chance to make sure everything is exactly as you want and need it to be.

This may all seem like a lot of work to do for one hire, but once you've created the majority of this plan, it can be used time and time again for each new hire you make. Getting the hard work out of the way before you're ready to recruit can mean that when it's time to start looking for new employees, you don't need to waste any time getting the behind-the-scenes work done first!

As always, I understand that you simply may not have the time to get this done for your business - especially if you want to start recruiting sooner rather than later. And in these cases, my team and I would love to help.

If you have any questions on recruitment for your business, or you'd like a helping hand, just give us a call to start a discussion.

Get in touch...

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