

Recruiting staff

Do your interviews allow the best candidates to shine?

A clear set of selection criteria and consistent assessment techniques are the best way to get the person you want. Make sure you're on the right track with these simple steps...

Shortlist

Ideally your shortlist should be no longer than five candidates. Eliminate CVs according to your essential selection criteria. Your final five should meet all your critical requirements. If you can't narrow it to five, a preliminary telephone interview may help to rule out applicants.

The interview: put your candidate at ease

Begin informally - make your candidate comfortable with some small talk. Give a brief introduction to the role, perhaps asking them what they know about the organisation as a starting point.

Look for their strengths

Remember that the best person for the job may not be the most vocal. It is in your interests to discover the strengths of a reserved or nervous interviewee - use their CV to pick out points of interest. An example might be: "I understand your last role was with Clarke and Morrow. What kind of projects did you oversee?"

Get a clear picture

If the candidate is being vague, try to draw out specifics to see how they relate to the role. Use the five Ws to get precise answers - who, why, when, where or what. 'What steps did you take to improve the situation?' 'When might you apply that experience?'

Stay neutral

You may need to ask some sensitive questions – for instance, when enquiring about a gap in a candidate’s CV. Avoid judgemental statements and make sure your tone is neutral.

Take all sensible measures to avoid legal action. Please note that questions pertaining to relationship status, religious/political affiliations and whether the candidate plans to have children are not suitable and may result in you going to court.

Take notes

Make sure you record points of interest as you may not remember them later.

Provide incentives!

Make sure you emphasise the benefits of the job. If the interviewee is a strong candidate, they will receive other offers. Don’t assume they’ll take the job if you don’t sell its plus points.

Concluding

Ask the candidate if they have any further questions. This is an excellent chance to see if they’ve researched your company. Lastly, explain when and how candidates will hear if they’ve been successful.

Seek guidance

To make sure you’re up to date with relevant legislation, check with an employment compliance service that you’re doing all you should. See our product and service pages for further details.

Finding the right employee

The right staff are vital to your business. Make sure that when you're recruiting, you use the best means possible to pick them...

Start with a clear job description

Specify skills, experience and personal qualities. This allows candidates to present themselves effectively, and gives you a checklist to assess them thoroughly.

You may want to distinguish between desirable and essential criteria.

Although salary and benefits will be important to applicants, remember that they may also be motivated by training opportunities, the chance to progress and to take on new responsibilities.

Advertise

Use word of mouth. Make sure your contacts know you are looking for a new member of staff.

Adverts with national/local press, trade publications and radio can all offer a high response rate. Recruitment agencies, despite high fees, offer a valuable service by saving you the time taken to filter applications.

Shortlist

You should have no more than five candidates in your final shortlist. Only include applications that meet your full list of criteria.

Interviewing techniques

Consider who can best contribute to the selection process and select your interview panel accordingly. Remember that the larger the panel, the greater the pressure on your interviewee.

Your questions should be pertinent to your selection criteria - e.g. "Can you give an example of when you managed a project from start to finish?" Listen to their response attentively and do not interrupt.

Assume nothing, and follow up their responses if you want further information. Ask about inconsistencies in their CV and interview. Assess hard skills with tests if necessary e.g. audio typing, use of computer software.

Use your Selection Criteria

Your business will benefit from a new employee who complements your department and brings the skills you're looking for. Do not base your decision purely on personal liking.

References

Verify references before offering the job. Make sure that the information on the CV is confirmed by the reference. Remember, if you suffer loss from employing a person on the basis of a misleading reference, you can take legal action.

Protect Yourself Legally

Check proof of entitlement to work in the UK. It is illegal to employ any person who does not have leave to enter or remain in the UK. Acceptable proof might be a documented P45, a work permit or a birth certificate issued within the UK or ROI amongst other documents. Keep a copy on file.

Seek Guidance

To make sure you're up to date with relevant legislation, check with an employment compliance service that you're doing all you should. See our product and service pages for further details.

Finding the Right Skills

Employees with the right training and expertise can enhance the growth and success of your business

What practical steps can you take to ensure that you can find suitably skilled staff?

- Identify your needs
- Ask yourself if your needs absolutely require extra staff. There may be more economically viable options for you.
- Appreciate the skills you have
- Regular staff appraisals will help you identify the skills and ambitions of your current workforce.
- Training and encouraging staff development will motivate workers as well as cut down the costs of new recruitment. It will also increase your attractiveness to new recruits who will recognise your commitment to their personal growth.
- Existing staff also understand your business and can enable new ideas and processes to be easily integrated into your current procedures.
- Cutting training costs

Training can cost money and time. There are a number of options that can help:

- Learning and Skills Council/Learndirect - provide financial support, help and advice.
- E-learning – available for a wide variety of subjects, online courses can be more easily fitted around work
- Maximising investment
- Encourage trainees to share their findings with other relevant workers.
- Encourage trainees to make positive changes to the way they or the business works based on what they have learnt.