

# How to Recruit Staff Successfully

If you're running a business and you want to expand or replace existing staff, you'll need to consider the best options for meeting your new needs. These could include using temporary staff, outsourcing, training existing staff or taking on new staff.

Taking on people, whichever way you choose to do it will always mean some form of investment for your business. However, it's equally important to remember that taking this investment seriously can make it more valuable.

This guide takes you through what you have to think about before and during the recruitment process, starting from deciding what you need and how you are going to recruit through to the interview and the offer letter. It will also remind you that you must treat all candidates fairly and avoid discrimination - for example on grounds of their sex or race, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because they have a disability.



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# Writing a Person Specification and Job Description

Vacancies can't be filled successfully unless the job has been accurately defined in the first place. This is as helpful for you, the employer, as it is for potential candidates. Think about what skills, knowledge and experience you are looking for.

## Writing a job description

Preparing a job description is useful for deciding the scope of the work, advertising the job, and clarifying what applicants will have to do in the job. It can also help to assess a new recruit's performance and determine training needs.

A job description should include:

- The position in the company, including the job title of the person to whom the employee will report to and of those who will report to them, if applicable
- Salary, possible bonus and hours of work
- The location of the job
- A summary of the general nature and objectives of the job
- A list of the main duties or tasks of the employee

## The person specification

A person specification is also useful when writing a job advertisement and defining the qualities you are looking for in a candidate. Include the knowledge, experience and skills you would like them to have, separating those which are essential for the job from those which are desirable. It's essential not to discriminate but value diversity.



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# Advertising

**Advertising** - To find staff, you can advertise in national, regional, local or trade press, on one of the many UK internet job sites, or use an employment agency or Jobcentre Plus to recruit for you.

**Advertising your vacancy** - Think about who you want to read the advertisement, how long it should run, how fast you want a response and how much you want to pay. Options include:

**Newspapers and Magazines** - they can reach specific audiences within a sector or locality.

**Internet sites** - they can reach a wide audience quickly, and some have a database of candidates that you can search. This higher volume of applicants can however reduce the quality of candidates on certain websites. Do also consider those that don't have internet access.

**Costs** - internet sites can be cheaper than advertising in a newspaper but you will need to research which ones are best for your particular role. It's best to time the advert carefully, e.g. avoid holiday periods. Remember to plan how you will deal with responses.

**A good job advertisement should:** be concise but give enough information so candidates can decide whether to apply, e.g. give the location and pay range; clearly state the skills and experience needed based on your person specification and job description; be attractively designed; be non-discriminatory; explain how the applicants should respond to the advertisement, eg by sending a CV or completing an application form; include a deadline for responses.

**Employment agencies** - As an alternative to advertising or even in addition to advertising you may also want to consider using a Recruitment Agency as they have a databases of potential candidates and can advertise on your behalf to a wider audience.



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# Using Recruitment Consultants

If you're not sure of whether to use the services of recruitment consultants it's important to consider the following points: -

**Recruitment & Employment Confederation Member (REC)** - If the Recruitment Consultants are members of the REC they have to adhere to the REC's code of professional practice. This code was created in consultation with industry stakeholders to ensure that both employers and job seekers receive the highest recruitment standards.

For help choosing a suitable agency please click on the link here: - [Choosing a suitable agency](#)

**Fees** - although agencies will charge you a fee most will work on the basis of no placement, no fee so the service is free until you find a suitable candidate. They will also advertise the vacancy free of charge through various different sources opening it up to a wide variety of candidates.

**Pre Screening** - Most agencies will have face to face interviewed their candidates to ensure that they are suitable for your role. However, it's definitely worth checking that this is the case and what other checks and profiling they actually carry out.

**Local Knowledge** - most agencies will have in-depth knowledge of the local recruitment market and can provide help and advice in the recruitment process and salary levels.

**Downtown Recruitment** - can offer all of the above and in addition we are so confident of our service levels we offer a 100% refund of your fee for permanent placements or placements of 12 months or more. \*

If you decide to solely use the services of Recruitment Consultants please go to [page 9](#) otherwise go to the [next page](#).

\* *Terms & Conditions apply.*



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# The Application Process

You must make it clear in your advertisement, or your brief to the recruitment agency, how you want candidates to apply. You can get information on applicants by:

- providing an application form - designed by the employer or bought from a stationery supplier
- requesting a CV with a covering letter or email - a brief account of the person's education, qualifications and previous work experience

## Advantages of application forms

- You can decide exactly what information you need to know.
- It is easy to compare the skills and experience of different applicants.
- You can re-use the form for future vacancies.

## Disadvantages of application forms

- They are time-consuming and can be tricky to design as they must be easy to fill in and have clear instructions.
- You pay the cost of producing and sending them out to applicants.
- A form can put some applicants off.



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# The Application Process cont.

## What to include in an application form

- Name and address of your organisation.
- Job applied for.
- Name, address, telephone numbers and email address of candidate.
- Educational and professional qualifications.
- Work experience.
- Other relevant information and skills, eg languages, clean driving licence.
- Names and addresses of referees.
- Be careful to avoid possible discriminatory questions, eg by asking them to indicate if they have childcare responsibilities.
- Whether the applicant has a criminal record.
- Does the applicant have any health issues that would directly affect their ability to carry out the role.

*It's advisable to take some form of legal advice if you are using an application form.*



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# The Shortlist

## When you have the replies to your advertisement

- compare applications against a job description and person specification outlining the skills and experience you need
- eliminate applicants who do not have the basic requirements for the job
- draw up a shortlist - a list of candidates to interview - based on the applicants who most closely match your needs
- consider notifying candidates who you will not be inviting for interview

## How do I make a shortlist?

- Include only the number of applicants you will have time to interview - usually no more than three to four people a day. Allow time for preparation and discussion before and after the interview.
- Draw up a table listing each candidate against the essential requirements of the job. Those that meet all the essential personal criteria could form your shortlist.
- If there are too many possible candidates, then you could weigh them up against the desirable qualities you are also looking for.
- Don't discriminate against applicants on the grounds of sex, race, age or disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief - see our guide on how to prevent discrimination and value diversity.
- Ensure you are consistent in the way you use personal data to draw up the shortlist to ensure objectivity.
- Get more than one person to compile the shortlist to avoid possible bias.



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# Inviting Candidates to Interview

Invite the most suitable candidates for interview by letter, telephone or email - for the last two, confirm arrangements in writing.

You should say:

- when, where and how long the interview will be
- how to get there - provide a map if necessary - and whether you will pay travel expenses
- what documents the candidate should bring
- who the candidate should ask for on arrival
- the names and job titles of the people conducting the interview
- if there will be a test to take, or a presentation and if so, its type and duration
- You should also ask candidates to tell you if they have any special needs that you will need to cater for.



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# Preparing for the Interview

The more preparation you do for the interview, the easier it will be for both you and the candidate.

## Plan the questions

- Use information from the candidate's application form or CV to prepare a set of questions.
- Look for any gaps in education or employment, or things that don't seem to add up.
- Beware of possible discrimination in the questions you ask, which could mean you miss the best candidate and may be unlawful.
- Know the job description and person specification really well so that your questions help you compare candidates.
- If two or more people are interviewing, decide who will deal with what topics.
- Think about what information candidates may want about the job and your organisation.

Prepare some open-ended questions - ones which need more than a 'yes' or 'no' to answer - to ask all candidates, for example:

- What were/are your main responsibilities in your previous/current job?
- Why did/do you want to leave your previous/current job?
- Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
- Looking back at your career, what would you have done differently?



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# Preparing for the Interview cont.

## Making arrangements for the interview

- Make sure that the interview room is properly prepared, with drinks and stationery available.
- It's best not to hold the interview sitting behind a desk, or use a higher chair than the person being interviewed. Try and sit at a round table if possible.
- Find out if a candidate has any special needs before they arrive.
- Make sure there will be no interruptions, for example, switch off mobile phones.
- Brief other members of staff, such as receptionists, to expect the candidate.
- Allow enough time for the interview so you don't have to rush.
- Come to each interview with an open mind.



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# Carrying out the Interview

Make sure the interview area is bright, clean, has suitable seating and is located in a private area or room away any potential disruptions (e.g. Telephones or machinery). Prepare your questions in advance of the interview. Your aim is to get quality information from the candidate so you can assess them fairly and fully against your needs.

- Welcome the candidate with a friendly smile - try to put them at ease and offer them a drink.
- Introduce yourself and other people present.
- Explain the structure of the interview.
- Outline the company background and role, and where the job fits.
- Encourage the candidate to talk about how their skills and experience apply to the vacancy.
- Ask open-ended questions - ones that cannot be answered with a yes or no and allow them time to think and speak.
- Keep control of the interview. If you feel the candidate is going off-track, turn the conversation back to the information you need.
- At the end of the interview, ask the candidate if they have any questions.
- Inform them of the next stage in the recruitment process, e.g. appointment, second interviews, tests and the estimated timescales.

Thank the candidate for their time.



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## Carrying out the Interview cont.

### Keeping records of the process

- Back up interviews with a detailed record of the procedure, written as soon as possible after the interview.
- Only record what has been said in the interview and how the selection decision was made, not your beliefs or thoughts about the candidate.
- Be aware that candidates who later make a complaint to an employment tribunal have the right to ask for copies of any notes made during the interview, and that you may need them for defending any possible discrimination case relating to the process.
- Only record or keep personal data after an interview if it is necessary and relevant to the recruitment process, or in respect of a discrimination challenge. Data that is kept should be securely stored.



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# Downtown Recruitment's Blog

You may be interested in following The Downtown Recruitment Blog, please see it's objective below: -

## Blog Objective

The objective of this blog is to provide subscribers with interesting information with regard to changes and updates of employment laws, recruitment issues & news and information about the services of Downtown Recruitment. It should be of interest to business owners, HR & Recruitment managers and anyone else that deals with recruitment and staffing related issues.

[View Downtown Recruitment's Blog](#)

If you would like to see Downtown Recruitment's website please click on the link below.

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