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Recruitment: an introduction

Looks at the main stages of the resourcing and recruitment process, from defining the role to making the appointment

Introduction

Good recruitment is vital for every organisation - finding the right people for the right roles at the right time. It ensures that the workforce has the relevant skills and abilities for the organisation's current and future needs. Effective resourcing is not just about filling an immediate vacancy but about having an impact on the long-term success of the business, using workforce planning data to understand what skills are needed for organisational performance.

This factsheet looks at what recruitment and resourcing involves and outlines the UK law affecting recruitment activities. It describes the stages of the recruitment process: defining the role, including job analysis and job description; attracting the applicants using both internal and external methods; managing the selection process; and, finally, making the appointment and employment offer.

What is recruitment?

Recruitment and resourcing involve attracting and selecting individuals into a job role. Recruiting the right individuals is crucial for organisations who need people with the right skills and capabilities to deliver their goals. It's a critical activity, not just for the HR team but also for line managers who are increasingly involved in the selection process. Everyone involved in recruitment must have the appropriate knowledge and skills to make effective and fair recruitment decisions.

The length and complexity of the recruitment process will vary depending on an organisation's size and resources. However, each of the following stages should be present and are explored in this factsheet:

- Defining the role.
- Attracting applicants.
- Managing the application and selection process.
- Making the appointment.

Recruitment in the time of coronavirus

Recruitment has undoubtedly been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although hiring has actually increased in some UK sectors, for many recruitment has reduced or been on hold, according to our latest Resourcing and talent planning survey, with many organisations increasing training and retention. Now more than ever, organisations need to take a strategic approach to recruitment, selection and talent management. Read our tips for putting recruitment on hold.

One impact is the increased use of technology in recruitment processes. This was already on the rise pre-pandemic, but it has become a necessity where traditional 'in person' interview and assessment processes are not appropriate. As it's likely to continue in some form after the pandemic, organisations should evaluate and monitor their use of technology.

For more on what employers should be doing, see our Responding to the coronavirus hub.

Key points for recruitment and resourcing professionals

It's important to be aware of the labour market trends that affect recruitment and resourcing. For the UK, our quarterly Labour market outlook monitors UK economic and labour market indicators and recruitment outlook. Our Resourcing and talent planning survey provides data on UK recruitment trends and employers' practices, including the impact of Brexit on resourcing. For more about the implications of Brexit in recruitment and resourcing, visit our Brexit hub and our factsheet on employing overseas workers in the UK.

Beyond hiring the right person for the job, candidate experience is a key part of resourcing. The recruitment process is not just about employers identifying suitable employees, but candidates finding out more about the organisation and considering if it's one they would like to work for. First impressions matter; the process should be transparent, timely and fair, regardless of whether the candidate is successful or not. In a digital age where candidates can share their experiences online, inefficient, poorly

designed recruitment processes can negatively impact on an <u>employer's brand</u> and the ability to attract candidates.

Another key part of resourcing is attracting a wide range of candidates. <u>Diversity and inclusion</u> should be considered throughout the process, with practices and systems regularly reviewed to ensure resourcing methods are inclusive and hidden bias is removed. Everyone taking part in activities such as shortlisting and interviewing must be aware of relevant legislation and the need to avoid discrimination. CIPD members can see our <u>Recruitment and selection law Q&As</u> for more on the UK legal aspects of recruitment. Our report <u>Diversity and inclusion at work: facing up to the business case</u> also highlights potential pitfalls in recruitment and ways to tackle them.

Our new <u>Profession Map</u> sets out the specialist knowledge that resourcing professionals need to identify, attract and assess to get the right people for the organisation.

Defining the role

Job analysis

The first step is to spend time gathering information about a job from a variety of sources, whether the position already exists or is new. This analysis provides the information needed for the job description and person specification. It should include:

- The job's purpose and what duties are involved.
- How and where it could be carried out.
- What outputs would be expected of the jobholder.
- How it fits into the organisations' structure.

Job description

The job description explains to potential candidates the detailed job requirements such as responsibilities and objectives of the role. It helps the recruitment process by providing a clear overview of the role for all involved. It can also provide clarity during induction and later, on performance and objectives.

Person specification

The person specification states the essential criteria for selection. The characteristics must be clear, demonstrable and <u>avoid bias</u> in wording.

Competency frameworks are sometimes substituted for job or person specifications, but these should include an indication of roles and responsibilities. See our factsheet

on competence and competency frameworks.

Job advertisements

Job adverts should give clear, accurate information about the organisation and the role. They should include:

- Job description and person specification.
- Job location.
- Type of employment offered - for example, is it a fixed-term role?
- The organisation's activities and values.
- Reward and benefits package.
- Flexible working opportunities, where available.
- Details of how to apply and the deadline.

Attracting applicants

There are many ways to generate interest from potential candidates.

Employee referral schemes

Some organisations operate an employee referral scheme. These schemes usually offer an incentive to existing employees to assist in the recruitment of friends or contacts. But employers should not rely on such schemes at the expense of attracting a diverse workforce and they should complement other attraction methods.

External recruitment

Our Resourcing and talent planning surveys identify common ways of attracting candidates including the employer's website, commercial job boards, recruitment agencies, and professional networking sites such as LinkedIn (although this will vary by sector and seniority).

Other common ways to attract applications include links with local colleges/universities, working with the local jobcentre and using local networks. Using multiple and non-traditional outreach methods widens the talent pool.

Most candidates expect to search and apply for jobs online, meaning employers need to pay attention to their corporate website and their online employer brand. Our latest Resourcing and talent planning survey shows that organisational values are seen as the most important aspect of brand in attracting candidates. Many organisations also use social media to identify candidates, but employers should exercise caution - see more in

our report Putting social media to work: lessons from employers.

Candidates and organisations should be aware of the increase in fraudulent online job adverts, where fraudsters post a false role on job boards, posing as a legitimate organisation in order to ask applicants to pay for online checks or training. Safer Jobs can provide advice and support.

External recruitment services

Some organisations use external providers to help with their resourcing and recruitment. Recruitment agencies or consultants offer a range of services such as attracting candidates, managing candidate responses, screening and shortlisting, or running assessment centres on the employer's behalf. They need to have a good understanding of the organisations and its requirements. These services might also be provided by an outsourcing provider - find out more in our HR outsourcing factsheet.

Internal recruitment

It's important not to forget the internal talent pool when recruiting. Providing opportunities for development and career progression can help retention and support succession planning. For more, see our talent management factsheet.

Managing the application and selection process

TPaper and online applications are likely to be received as a curriculum vitae (CV) with covering letter, or an application form. Some organisations allow candidates to apply with their LinkedIn profile.

Throughout the application and selection process, reasonable adjustments may need to be made for candidates. For example, as well as helping those with a physical disability, recruitment processes might be adapted for neurodivergent people.

Application forms

Application forms allow for information to be presented in a consistent way. This makes it easier to collect information from job applicants systematically and objectively assess the candidate's suitability for the job.

However, an unnecessarily long or poorly-designed application form can put candidates off applying. And, it may be necessary to offer application forms in different formats to comply with discrimination law.

CVs and LinkedIn profiles

The advantage of CVs or LinkedIn profiles is that candidates are not restricted to a standard application form. However, CVs and LinkedIn profiles may include surplus material and vary in format which undermines their consistent assessment.

Managing applications

All applications should be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process.

Prompt acknowledgment of an application - whether successful or unsuccessful - is good practice and presents a positive image of the organisation.

Selecting candidates

Selecting candidates involves two main processes:

- **Shortlisting** those who have the necessary skills to proceed to assessment stage.

- **Assessing** those candidates to find out who is most suitable for the role. See more on this stage in our selection methods factsheet which covers the various techniques and tools available to employers, and the importance of using valid and reliable methods.

Making the appointment

Before making an offer of employment, UK employers are responsible for checking applicants have the right to work in the UK and have the appropriate qualifications or credentials. See more in our factsheet on employing overseas workers in the UK and our guide to pre-employment checks.

References

References are most frequently sought after the applicant has been given a 'provisional offer'.

Any recruitment policy should clearly state how references will be used and what kind of references will be expected (for example, from former employers). These rules must be applied consistently, and candidates should always be informed of the procedure for taking up references.

CIPD members can find out more on the UK legal aspects in our References law Q&As.

Medical questionnaires and making reasonable adjustments

Any necessary physical or medical requirement should be made clear in the job advertisement or other recruitment literature.

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to ask candidates to complete a medical questionnaire before being offered a job. Only essential medical issues should be discussed at this stage. See more in our factsheet on disability and employment.

Employers should also ask candidates if they need any adjustments or have specific access requirements to attend an interview or undertake a test.

Employment offer

Offers of employment should always be made in writing. But it's important to be aware that a verbal offer of employment made in an interview is as legally binding as a letter to the candidate.

UK employers must also know what information must be given by law in the written statement of particulars of employment. See more in our contracts of employment factsheet. CIPD members can use our Terms and conditions of employment law Q&As.

Unsuccessful candidates should be notified promptly in writing and every effort should be made to provide feedback. If psychometric tests are used, feedback on the results, delivered by a qualified person, should also be offered.

Joining the organisation

Well-planned induction enables new employees to become fully operational quickly and should be integrated into the recruitment process.

Documentation and evaluation

The recruitment process should be documented accurately, and access limited to recruitment staff for confidentiality reasons. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) means that recruitment process and applicant tracking systems may need review - see more in our data protection factsheet.

Information should be kept for sufficient time to allow any complaints to be handled - our factsheet on retaining HR records has guidance on how long records should be kept.

It's good practice to carry out equality monitoring in the recruitment and resourcing process. This includes monitoring the diversity of applicants, from the initial stages through to a person being appointed. Action should then be taken to address any issues.

Using metrics such as cost of hire, candidate experience ratings and time to hire can also provide insight into the effectiveness of recruitment processes. Our HR and standards factsheet has information on standards relating to recruitment, such as cost of hire and workforce planning.

Useful contacts and further reading

Contacts

Acas - Hiring someone

GOV.UK - Recruiting and hiring

GOV.UK - Employers: preventing discrimination - recruitment

Recruitment & Employment Confederation

Safer Jobs

Voluntary code of conduct for executive search firms

Books and reports

GOVERNMENT EQUALITIES OFFICE. (2011) *Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know? A quick start guide to using positive action in recruitment and promotion*. London: GEO.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE CARE AND RESETTLEMENT OF OFFENDERS (NACRO). (2015) *Recruiting fairly and safely: a practical guide to employing ex-offenders*. London: Nacro.

NEWELL-BROWN, J. (2012) *The professional recruiter's handbook: delivering excellence in recruitment practice*. 2nd ed. London: Kogan Page.

TAYLOR, S. (2018) *Resourcing and talent management*. 7th ed. London: CIPD and Kogan Page.

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Journal articles

ACIKGOZ, Y. (2019) Employee recruitment and job search: towards a multi-level integration. *Human Resource Management Review*. Vol 29, No 1. pp1-13.

BROWN, P. (2018) It's time to put data at the heart of the recruitment process. *People Management* (online). 13 February.

CAPPELLI, P. (2019) Your approach to hiring is all wrong. *Harvard Business Review*. May-June. Reviewed in *In a Nutshell,* issue 89.

INGOLD, J. and VALIZADE, D. (2017) Employers' recruitment of disadvantaged groups: exploring the effect of active labour market programme agencies as labour market intermediaries. *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 27, No 4. pp530-547. Reviewed in *In a Nutshell,* issue 73.

JEFFREY, R. (2017) Would you let AI recruit for you? *People Management* (online). 12 December.

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This factsheet was last updated by Melanie Green.