

Recruiting is tough at the Best of Times

In the final part in a series of articles Andy Taylor explains how to recruit successfully.

Part 5

In the fourth instalment we looked at how to prepare for and run the interview.

In this article we look at post interview activities.

After the Interview

So you have run your interviews and treated everyone fairly and equally and each has left having enjoyed the experience with your organisation. It doesn't stop there, the process may be finished for them but, it still goes on for you.

During the interviews you will have taken notes that now need to be written up. Ideally they should be written up between interviews as your memory will serve you better. When you write them up you write them in report form from a third person perspective. That is you write as if you witnessed the interview rather than taking part in it.

For example: instead of writing, "*I asked 'How do you deal with unhappy customers?'*" you write, '*The candidate was asked how they deal with unhappy customers*' followed by their answer, '*to which they replied....*' By doing this you avoid writing opinion which must be avoided when writing up your notes and you stick to the facts of the interview. So if a question is asked and not answered you write, '*The candidate was asked what their previous experience of accountancy was and they refused to answer the question after being pressed for an answer with rephrased questions*'. If this happened this is fact, you do not need to give a reason as to why they did not answer if they did not say why they do not want to answer because that would be an opinion. If they had worked somewhere where they had signed the Official Secrets Act or a confidentiality clause in their contract prevents them from telling you then they would normally tell you. This you write in your notes as fact.

There are some simple rules to follow when writing up notes

Do

1. Write only facts - what was said
2. Write up your notes as soon as possible - preferably on the same day
3. Write as a third person
4. Consult with the other interviewer
5. Write in a report format
6. Reserve judgement until you have written the notes completely
7. Date and Sign them

Don't

1. Make it up
2. Write opinion

3. Delay writing up your notes - it gets harder the longer you leave it
4. write 'I' statements
5. Show your notes to anyone not involved in the recruitment process
6. Throw your notes away when you have written them up

Everything involved in the recruitment process is covered by the Data Protection Act as you are collecting personal data from individuals. As such all the paperwork - CV, Application Form, Interview Letters, Notes and Write up are covered and must be kept under lock and key.

The reason we keep the notes even though we have written them up is if the candidate wishes to take you to an employee tribunal - which they are entitled to do - if they feel they were not treated fairly or that they felt that they should have gotten the job and you only have the written up version you have no proof were you got the information from. With your notes supporting your written up report it makes your argument for fairness and justification for not employing them better, if you win the case or not is up to the tribunal.

When you run an interview another piece of information you need is proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK. Anyone within the European Union (EU) qualifies automatically and anyone outside the EU you would have to register with the foreign office first and then you could only employ them if a suitable candidate was not available within the UK or the EU and then on a points based system. The identification that you need to check is a valid passport or National ID Card from which you take a photocopy. In the case of a Passport

the employer retains a copy of the following pages of that document in a format that cannot be subsequently altered-

- I. *The front cover*
- II. *Any page containing the holder's personal details including nationality*
- III. *Any page containing the holder's photograph*
- IV. *Any page containing the holder's signature*
- V. *Any page containing the date of expiry; and*
- VI. *Any page containing information indicating the holder has an entitlement to enter or remain in the UK and undertake the work in question;*

(Source: Amendments to the Immigration (Restrictions on Employment) Order 2007)

Failure to do this will result in a hefty fine.

When your notes are written up and you are sure you have all the paperwork you need and must have, you are ready to make a decision as to who if anyone you will employ. You can do this in a number of ways

- By scoring
- By going on the best experience
- Who is available to start immediately - notice period, no notice period

If you have two or candidates that are very close or the same then the notice period would be the deciding factor unless you really wanted to hang on for the other candidate. It all depends how soon you needed to fill the position. If the notice period is the same you would look (as long as you asked the question to both candidates) who has holiday booked and where it falls. If one has holiday booked and it comes two weeks after their start date and the other 3 months after the start date you could argue that the second candidate would be trained and half way through their trial period whereas the other one would just be trained then the one with holiday 3 months in would be appointed.

Whatever your decision you need to write a formal offer letter in which you offer them a

contract to join your organisation. Wait until they accept or decline your offer before you write to the unsuccessful candidates. In the current climate, which is an employers market (few jobs Vs high unemployment) you will have a bit of time before your second or even third choice has found employment. In a job seekers market (plenty of jobs Vs low unemployment) you do not have time as a luxury as people seeking employment will often have several offers on the table and will then start to bargain to the best deal.

To those that you write to to say that they have not been successful you do not need to state why. Be prepared though as today it is acceptable for candidates to telephone and ask for feedback as to why they were unsuccessful.

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