

# Recruiting is tough at the Best of Times

In the first of a series of articles Andy Taylor explains how to recruit successfully.

## Part 1

**D**uring a downturn recruitment is a costly exercise and getting it wrong is an even greater cost. How you recruit says a lot about your organisation and how you interact with the community you work in. Recruitment is a public relations exercise and an advertising opportunity as it tells your competitors that you are expanding and growing. As a public relations exercise it meets members of the community that are interested in working for your company. Whatever the outcome of the interview or how the interview went the candidate must leave having enjoyed the experience. This is then an advert for your company.

So, how do we go about it?

First of all we need to ensure that we need to recruit. Can the role be made redundant? Can it be made part-time? Can it be a job share - where two people carry out the role or can it be absorbed into other roles? Can the role be out sourced?

A part from out sourcing, doing any of the others will save you a lot of time and money in recruitment costs. If none of these are possible then recruitment is the answer.

The first part of and the start of your public relations exercise is the advert for the role. Where are you going to advertise? Trade magazines, local newspapers, national newspapers, Job centre, Recruitment Agencies, Head Hunters, websites, internal notice boards, radio, schools and universities.

Where you place the advert says a lot about your company and it will have an affect on the calibre of the candidates that you attract. It also depends on the job.

Job	Where to Advertise
Director	Institute Of Directors Trade magazines that are industry specific Guardian Newspaper Times Newspaper Specialist Recruitment Agencies
Company Secretary	Trade magazines that are industry specific Guardian Newspaper Times Newspaper Specialist Recruitment Agencies
Senior Manager/Department Manager	Trade magazines Recruitment Agencies Websites - totaljobs.com, monster etc.

Job	Where to Advertise
Supervisor	Internally Local Newspapers Recruitment Agencies Websites -totaljobs.com, monster etc.
Front-line staff	Internally Local Newspapers Recruitment Agencies Job Centre Websites
Trades people	Internally Trade magazines Local Newspapers Job Centre
Internships/Apprenticeships	Universities University Press Schools Job Centres Job Fairs

The job will usually dictate where to advertise. To advertise for a cleaner in the Times or the Guardian would be a costly exercise and possibly a waste of time. This is because the cost of advertising in relation to the wage or salary paid is high and if someone was looking for a cleaning position it is unlikely that they would pick up the Times or the Guardian to look.

If you are advertising internally be it on notice boards or the company intranet the wording of the advert needs to be as it would in the outside world. This then complies with Equality laws. When advertising externally, attention needs to be paid to appearance of the advert and the positioning of it. If you are placing an advert in a magazine or newspaper it ideally should appear in the top right hand corner of the right hand page. This would then get the first look as, when people are flicking through this is usually where they look first (page numbers, section title etc.) and if your advert appears there it may result in a higher response rate. Of course placing an advert here may incur a higher premium but, the number of response may offset this. This also does not mean to say that elsewhere on a page an advert receives less responses. An advert should carry your organisation's branding and message as this will serve as easy recognition of your organisation and get your brand 'out there'.

The wording of the advert is very important. It has to be honest and must avoid certain phrases that might infringe age discrimination laws or discrimination laws.

If your company is new, to say in an advert 'A young and dynamic Company' is getting close to indirect discrimination on the basis of age. It does not state that everyone that works for you must be young but, it might put off older people. It might well be young (new) and dynamic (full of enthusiasm and energy) and that is fine, however, the wording must be done carefully to avoid direct and indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination is fairly easy to commit as you may not realise you are being so and might be doing so perfectly innocently by stating in a job advert that your company is 'young and dynamic' It is much better to say 'A new company that is growing with enthusiasm'

This way prospective candidates are aware of what the company is and what is happening. There is no indication of age or types of personality or people so is acceptable.

Within your advert wording there must be some vital information. This is

- **Job Title** - what the job is called
- **Location** - where the job is based
- **Hours** - Full-time, Part-time, Flexi-time or job share
- **How long the job is for** - Permanent, short term contract, interim contract, maternity cover, long term sick cover or holiday cover
- **Salary** - the amount or
  - Negotiable - usually based on experience
  - Between x and x
  - Amount + bonus/OTE (on target earnings)/allowances/travel/car etc.
- **Basic duties** - what the job holder will do
- **The type of person** - who do you want to fill the role? What are you looking for
- **How to apply** - Application form, letter and CV,
- **Contact details** - contact name, telephone number, address, email. To provide just an email address could also discriminate if someone does not have access to a computer or an email account.
- **Closing date for applications** - so that applicants have a rough idea of the timetable for interviews and appointment.
- **Any Organisation Logos that the company is a member of** - Investors in People, the Two Ticks Symbol (Positive about disabilities) and trade related organisations (ABTA, IOSH etc.)

The timing of the advert is also important. Too close to the deadline for applications and you may not get any. Too far from the deadline and you might get too many. Depending on the role between 6 and 4 weeks is suitable. If no suitable candidates apply in that time you can, budget permitting, advertise again.

The key to successful job advertising is to have the basics in place first. These are

1. **An up-to-date Job Description** - this will identify the duties you want the job holder to perform and to see if the job has changed from its original role. In the Job Description you can state all the things you need for your advert. It will contain the Job Title, the location, the hours, and the length of the job, the salary, the main duties and the benefits that come with the role.
2. **A Person Specification** - this identifies the qualities the job holder will need to qualify for the job. It will identify the level of knowledge, the level of experience, the qualifications and the skills together with desired personality traits.

A Person Specification for a Marketing Manager might look something like this:

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	English, Maths at Grade C GCSE or equivalent	NVQ5/Degree in Marketing

<b>Knowledge</b>	<p>Knowledge of the Marketing environment and current legislation surrounding marketing media.</p> <p>Knowledge of marketing tools.</p> <p>Knowledge of computer based marketing tools (Microsoft Publisher, Word etc.)</p>	<p>Knowledge of web design and Web design packages</p>
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Must have worked in a marketing department or company.</p> <p>Managed or led a substantial marketing project</p>	<p>Negotiating marketing budgets.</p> <p>Managing marketing budgets.</p>
<b>Skills</b>	<p>Excellent communication skills both written and orally.</p> <p>Negotiating skills</p> <p>Team player</p> <p>Good listener</p> <p>Able to think outside the box</p>	<p>Interview skills</p>
<b>Personality Traits</b>	<p>Out going</p> <p>Enthusiastic</p> <p>Ability to handle change.</p> <p>Calm under pressure</p> <p>Able to deal with multiple deadlines</p>	

Both of these tools will give you basics for the job advert to make it successful.

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