

## How to improve the quality of your recruitment



How well you manage recruitment has a significant impact on your business. Get it wrong and it will cost you a fortune in lost productivity and hassle sorting it out. Get it right and you'll be able to delegate more, worry less, check up less and feel more confident in your team.

You'll find what we've got to say useful if:

- you've had situations where someone you've recruited doesn't fit in and/or their performance is not what you expected
- you've had situations where someone leaves shortly after joining
- you feel you would like to improve the way you recruit people
- you would like to feel more confident in your recruitment decision making
- you are about to recruit new people

### The business case for paying attention to recruitment

To allow your business to grow and thrive everyone needs to perform at their best. Making the wrong decisions during recruitment will cost you in terms of lost productivity, lost opportunities, time spent trying to help people, time spent dealing with poor performance, and ultimately the time, cost and hassle of replacing a bad hire. And we'll not even mention the potential cost of discrimination claims!

Whilst we are in business to help you develop your people, we do recognise that one of the most effective ways to avoid the hassle of dealing with poor performance is to recruit the right people in the first place.

The difficulty is that recruitment, and interviewing in particular, can be a bit hit and miss to say the least. However, the good news is that there are a few simple things you can do to improve the decision making process.

### What's wrong with interviews?

Interviews are an expected and important part of the recruitment process. Without them the candidate would feel uncomfortable joining you and you would feel uncomfortable hiring them. Every business has its own culture and how well someone "fits" is important.

However, research has shown that interviews on their own are very poor predictors of future performance. An effective interview process depends on being clear about what you are looking for and then being able to accurately assess candidates against that profile. Sounds simple, but many interviews leave the interviewer making decisions on the basis of gut feel.

### What can be done to improve the situation?

Three things will help.

**1.** Spend time defining what qualities someone needs to have to be able to do the job. These will broadly fall into what someone needs to know to do the job (their qualifications and experience) and what they need to be able to do (in terms of skill and past experience). Both of these things can be assessed fairly easily from the candidate's CV (assuming they haven't lied on their application!) and during an interview.

However if you think about your best people versus your OK people, your best people are probably differentiated not by what they know, but by their attitude and how they behave. Defining and assessing attitude and behaviour is a bit more tricky. Just spend a few minutes listing down what qualities you value in your best people and then mark each one as being to do with skill, experience, knowledge, attitude or behaviour.

**2.** Improve your interviewing technique. Some practical improvements are:

- ensure your managers have been trained in what a good recruitment process looks like and in good interviewing skills - this is about managing the process, being more professional and making better decisions
- structure your interviews so that you ask the same questions to each candidate
- use a behavioural, scenario based interview technique - this is about asking people to give examples of what they have *actually* done rather than asking them what they *would* do in a hypothetical situation (it's too easy for them to tell you what you want to hear).
- review your criteria and your recruitment process to ensure you don't fall foul of the laws around discrimination, immigration, rehabilitation of offenders and data protection. Discrimination claims will take up a huge amount of your time and can be extremely costly if you end up in Tribunal.

3. Combine the interview with additional data from psychometric profiling tools. We'll look at this in the next section...

### How can psychometric profiling add value to the process?

Psychometric profiling is a scientific way to assess someone's ability, style and preferences. As such it adds objectivity and accuracy to the recruitment process. It will allow you to more effectively probe at interview, make better decisions on each candidate and avoid potential discrimination issues.

Psychometrics cover two main areas:

1. ability testing
2. personality and behavioural profiling

Ability tests measure (you guessed it) the ability to do a specific task or display a specific skill - numerical reasoning tests, verbal reasoning tests, driving test for example. They have right and wrong answers so provide an indication of someone's ability. However, they are very specific in their application and do not assess "softer" aspects of how people behave.

Personality profiling tools are not ability tests - there is not right or wrong personality - but they do give an insight into how someone might operate by assessing the attitudinal and behavioural characteristics we talked about earlier.

Some instruments originate from psychiatric research, but these are of limited value in a work context. There are now several instruments which measure personality and behaviour in a work context and we are qualified to use several.

Best of all is that these tools can be done online and are very cost-effective - we recently administered profiles for a client in Australia!