

## 10 TIPS FOR RECRUITING SUCCESSFULLY

As for all areas of employment nowadays, there are lots of laws and regulations surrounding the recruitment process. These tips are designed to point you in the direction of information you need to be aware of and to share some practical suggestions gained from experience.

Be realistic in your expectations and open minded when recruiting, the 'perfect' candidate probably does not exist. Value diversity – teams usually function more effectively if their team members have different skills and life experiences rather than being clones of a particular mindset. Look for enthusiasm and flexibility and for candidates who with appropriate training could grow into a job rather than someone who is already fully skilled and may get bored with the job or may quickly want to move on to a more challenging role.

Business Link London has produced comprehensive advice and guidelines on the whole recruitment process (see [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)) – Employing People, Recruitment and Interviewing. ACAS ([www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)) is another good source of information as is the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)).

1. The Data Protection Act 1998 placed additional responsibilities on potential employers in dealing with applications by giving rights to candidates to see any notes written about them at interview and if subsequently employed, to see their Personnel file and any comments written about them during employment. Be aware of the rules relating to recruitment and employment (see [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)) and search for Recruitment.
2. Falling foul of the Asylum & Immigration Act can be an expensive business so make sure all employees are entitled to work in the UK by checking documentation prior to or on joining. Working with children or vulnerable adults can also require additional checks to be carried out such as Criminal Reference Bureau (CRB) checks [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk).
3. The biggest area for legal concern is discrimination. You do not need to actually employ someone for them to put in a claim to an Employment Tribunal for discrimination on grounds of sex (gender), race or disability. The bad news is that there is no upper limit, to damages which can be awarded under these headings, unlike claims for unfair dismissal.
4. From October 2006, age discrimination has been added as another ground for bringing a discrimination claim in relation to employment and affects the recruitment process. It is now unlawful for recruitment advertising to state or infer that you are looking for candidates of a particular age group e.g. "young and dynamic", or "mature and experienced". Requests for date of birth information should also be removed from application forms. It is important to be aware, that age discrimination does not apply only to older people but also to young applicants.
5. To comply with Disability Discrimination laws, it is important to check at the first stage of recruitment whether an applicant has any special requirements or needs any reasonable adjustments to be made for an interview to take place. Watch out for less obvious disabilities such as dyslexia.

6. Be consistent about questions asked – it is best to draw up questions in advance and to stick to them for everyone being interviewed, avoiding asking questions about age, family responsibilities and so on. If using a panel of two or more interviewers, then work out in advance model answers to the questions and a scoring system which will be useful in showing how applicants have been scored and how and why the panel reached their ultimate decision.
7. Use open ended questions i.e. questions that require more than a yes/no answer. These can usually be achieved by asking what, why, how, when type questions or can you tell me about..... an achievement of which you are proud? a difficult situation you have had to deal with? can you give me an example of? Can you quantify the saving you made? etc.
8. Ask questions related to real life situations/scenarios such as how would you deal with? what action would you take? etc. Use simulations, in tray exercises and case studies to obtain data relating to how someone might approach a problem. Do the values they exhibit fit in with Company values, are they likely to be a good team player or a leader depending on the role being recruited for? Be open minded in evaluating responses.
9. If using tests validate them first on existing staff – are they appropriate? are they free of bias which might disadvantage ethnic minorities or less educated candidates? Set realistic achievement levels – are 5 GSCEs really necessary to do this job?
10. Always make offers of employment subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and **make sure that you take them up**. Include a clause in application forms and contracts of employment which makes the contract void if the applicant has given false information either in their application or at any time during the recruitment process.

*(See also 10 Tips for a Happier Workforce; 10 Tips for Dealing Successfully with People at Work and 10 Tips for Avoiding Employment Tribunals).*

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