

Be Part Of The...



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# RECRUITING YOUNG PEOPLE – TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Young people are not only your workforce for tomorrow; they are also an invaluable asset to your organisation here and now. Younger workers bring unique skills, new ideas and an enthusiasm because of their age and the fact that they don't come from a pre-programmed corporate background.

In this season's newsletter, we explain the six steps for recruiting young people and how you can benefit.

## STEP ONE: Think about how young people can help you achieve your business objectives

Young people may lack work experience, they can bring a wealth of ideas into your organisation and challenge existing thinking.

Young people's unique skills are particularly important to organisations when it comes to digital literacy, social networking and social media. They are great in dealing with technology because they have grown up with it.



## STEP TWO: Focus on ability rather than experience

Look at existing Job Descriptions and Person Specifications and re-write them so they are focused on ability rather than experience. Identify the employability competencies required to fit into your organisation and ensure these are reflected accurately.

Does the job require an individual with a graduate qualification, or could it be performed by a school leaver or an apprenticeship who can study for this on-the-job?

## STEP THREE: Consider how to advertise to attract young people

Young people don't go about the job search in the same way as more experienced workers do, they are much more likely to use social and professional media to find opportunities, so consider advertising on your organisation's Facebook and LinkedIn sites, as well as at local young centres, or places young people visit (cinema, bowling etc). Keep the wording short and use bullet points or graphics to make it look attractive.

Supplement informal recruitment methods with formal practices. In addition to using word of mouth and refer-a-friend schemes, employers should explore using:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Local / National Apprenticeship Service
- Web-based job boards
- Recruitment fairs
- Recruitment agencies
- National and local press
- Magazines and posters
- Youth charities (The Prince's Trust, etc.)
- Graduate websites
- Non-graduate websites

Review how adverts are written. Do they need to be a certain length? Is all the information provided useful? Remember to write the adverts so they are focused on ability rather than experience. Keep it simple - the clearer you are, the better the applications you'll receive. Provide the closing date and contact details for the advertised position. Be open about the recruitment process, what the stages are and the expectations during those stages.



## STEP FOUR: Plan your shortlisting, selection and processes in advance

Shortlisting and selection is the most challenging stage in the recruitment process for young jobseekers. To ensure you consider the brightest and the best young talent available, employers can try the following:

### Applications

Develop simple, easy to use application forms and include sections for them to complete based on your identified Employability Competencies. For example, if 'Teamwork' is one you can ask "please describe how you will complete and manage your own work, but also involve others and motivate others to perform". Under the heading 'Quality' ask "give an example of how you have completed work to a high standard and taken pride in doing so".

### Interviews

Hold short initial interviews and explore the Employability Competencies as well as ensuring the candidate has done background research into your company. Then select a small pool for second interview and maybe include a test on the computer or whatever is relevant for the department they are working in (this way you can check the quality of their work before they start).

### Assessment Centres

Alternatively consider an 'Assessment Centre' - these have the advantage of seeing how candidates interact with others as well as assessing their soft skills, intelligence and problem-solving, social skills, management skills and personal characteristics. Typically, 12 candidates are invited to the assessment, and the assessment is usually carried out over half a day or up to a full day. Assessment centres usually take place after the first round of interviews but can also be used as an initial selection process or before final selection. This process requires careful planning but once set up the same model can be used in the future.



## STEP FIVE: Make the most of the interview / assessment stage

For a young person, the interview/recruitment process should be a confidence-boosting experience. Equally, for the employer, increasing the confidence of the young person means they will perform better during interview. As an employer, you can:

- Provide as much information in advance as possible. (What they should wear, who they should ask for at reception and what form the interview will take.)



- Give them a tour of the office and show them the work area they'd be working in.
- Ask existing young employees to act as ushers during the interview process to encourage young people to ask questions they may not feel confident enough to ask the interviewer.
- Do not create a barrier between you and the candidate, e.g., sit alongside a desk rather than have one between you.
- Begin the interview with an informal chat – perhaps discuss the hobbies or interests on their CV. This will put them at ease and encourage them to be more open with the interviewer.
- Follow by telling the candidate about the job - including prime responsibilities, reporting structure, key challenges and performance criteria. This helps the candidate provide relevant responses.
- Listen – if you are doing most of the talking during an interview you will not be able to obtain enough information to distinguish between candidates or to determine a candidate's ability. So don't be afraid to pause and wait for the candidate to speak!
- Write down key points and use a simple scoring system so you can compare candidates after all the interviews have taken place.
- Don't assume that if the candidate doesn't make good eye contact that they are "shifty", certain personality types are not comfortable with permanent eye contact.
- Always ask the candidate what questions they have...this will test their desire to work in the role applied for as they are showing an interest in more information
- Inform the young person of the date by which you expect to have made a decision.

## STEP SIX: Provide Constructive Feedback

Feedback is crucial to young people's development. By giving open, honest and constructive feedback, you can directly influence young people's behaviour in the recruitment process and help ensure their success in the future. This also applies to other applicants whatever their age. You can do so in the following ways:

- Acknowledge each application with an automated email.
- List 'common reasons' applications have not been shortlisted in an email/letter to candidates. This can be a template document if volume is an issue.
- Provide candidates who have been unsuccessful at interview/assessment an opportunity to receive feedback. (Ideally a phone number or email address of the manager who conducted the interview.)
- And finally... Be positive but honest! Don't focus on where they went wrong, but explain why the role isn't necessarily right for them.

**Thank you for reading!**

**Got a question or want to know more? Let's Talk!**

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