

Selection Checklist – essentials for bringing on new recruits

You want the best people in your team, because with the right leadership, these are the team members that will help you achieve your business goals. Finding the best people for your business is seldom achieved through good luck alone. What can you do to ensure that your HR processes will help you get the right people, with the right skills, at the right time?

1. Workforce Planning

Once you have devised your business goals for the next year and beyond, you need to work out what your 'people' needs are for the business. Undertake an audit of the skills, experience, knowledge and abilities of your current team. Identify the gaps between your existing requirements and your future needs – focus on the gaps when creating job descriptions, person specifications and when undertaking the hiring process. If you know there is a skill shortage, ensure that you have an effective recruitment strategy in place. You do not want your business success to be hindered due to the inability to find the right people when you need them onboard.

2. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

Every time you have a vacancy within your business, review the incumbent's job description and ask yourself if their job description is an accurate reflection of what the new job holder will be required to do. Whether the position is new or existing, ensure that the functions of the job holder are aligned to your strategic business goals. If certain tasks have no bearing on the success of the business objectives, ask yourself if these functions really are necessary?

Ensure that the job description clearly states the purpose of the role and be specific in terms of how you would like functions to be performed i.e. Answer the phone promptly, in a professional manner, taking messages and handling any actions appropriately

When preparing your person specification focus on the skills, abilities, experience and knowledge required (essential or desirable) of the new job holder – and don't ignore these during the interview process.

3. Interviews

Take time to prepare interview questions for your candidates. The questions you ask each candidate should be the same, by doing this you will increase objectivity and it will enable you to make a fairer comparison of responses between candidates.

Ask competency based questions – these focus on the competencies that are required of the ideal job holder i.e. *attention to detail* – 'can you give me an example of what you do in your current role which shows how you minimise errors in your work?' You want your candidates to tell you how they would behave in a particular situation whether the competency is listening skills, working under pressure or team work. Past performance is often a predictor of future performance, therefore, a candidate's response should give an indication of their likely behaviour.

Wherever possible, endeavour to have the same interviewers in each interview (for a given position), that way the interviewers will have the same experience with the candidates and you will again be able to compare each candidate more objectively.

4. Psychometric Testing

Having conducted an interview you may have a few niggling doubts about your preferred candidate; or you may like to get a better understanding of their management style or how they like to be managed; or maybe you want to find out more about their coping style or general ability. Personality and ability assessments are a great way to find out likely preferred behaviours, attitudes and ability levels.

5. Reference Questions and Probity Checks

So often employers are impressed with the 'performance' of their preferred candidates during the interview that they forget (or choose not to) follow up references with previous employers. Reference checks are essential for confirming whether what the candidate claimed they can do and have done, is true. Always ensure that your reference questions mirror those asked at interview and ensure that you are talking to their previous line manager... not a peer that they sat next to in the office of their previous employer.

Other probity checks can be highly beneficial too, i.e. criminal history checks, qualification checks, credit checks etc. These may or may not be relevant for the role you are recruiting.

6. Remuneration

How much to pay? What commissions or bonuses to offer? Does the package include a mobile phone or use of a company car? These are all factors which you should consider in your remuneration strategy. Ensure that you are consistent and fair in how you put the strategy together and stick to it, wherever possible. Sometimes the market dictates that we need to pay people more if their skills are in demand, but take into account what your business has to offer the employee – is there training?; are there great opportunities or projects for them to work on?; are there chances for fast tracked promotions?; Are you an 'employer of choice'?

7. Employment Agreements

Put it in writing! Ensure that every employee within your business has an employment agreement, this is a legal requirement and without these agreements you are putting yourself at risk. Well written employment agreements are worth their weight in gold, they set out expectations and make the employment relationship clear to all parties – which can be an immense relief if things do go wrong.

8. Onboarding

When your new employee starts with the business, make sure the rest of the team know that they are coming. Make sure that their desk is ready, business cards printed and that an onboarding (induction) process is in place. An onboarding programme will help your new employee to quickly adapt to the business, its culture, their team and their role. Do follow ups at one, two and three months to monitor the

performance of your new team member and to ensure that they are getting adequate support to succeed in their new role.

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