

Recruiting Staff



SUMMARY

Recruitment is one of the biggest issues facing the tourism industry. A variety of factors including low unemployment, a poor image of tourism as a career choice, antisocial hours, low wages and some bad publicity – and higher expectations of career progression and earning potential have all affected the number of people wanting to work in the tourism sector. You may have already faced difficulties in filling a post in your business – in which case you are far from alone. And that is where having good recruitment and employment practices are essential in finding the right people and then keeping them.

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But recruitment still requires consideration in its own right. You are, after all, trying to “sell” your business as an attractive workplace to a complete stranger! You will need to consider pay rates, and how these relate to other job roles in your organisation. There are also a number of rules and regulations that govern recruitment practices, and we’ll cover those later.



KEY POINTS

- Good recruitment requires planning and preparation.
- You can spend time producing documents that will help you significantly in the process.

PLANNING

If you have job descriptions (see [Staff Job Description](#)) in place, and know who is doing what in your organization, you should find it straight forward to identify your recruitment needs – what vacancies there are, any new posts that are required, and what skills and experience you will need someone to have to do the job. You will also have an idea of what training and development and career progression you will have to offer.

JOB TITLE

A job entitled “Administrative assistant” may send an entirely different message to one entitled “Administrative Support Officer”, even if the salary and job description are identical. They may attract a totally different sort of applicant. You need to make sure that the job title and the job role match – if you put “Restaurant Manager” as the job title, that role must have genuine managerial responsibilities, not be a cunning plan to get more candidates for the role of Head Waiter than you might otherwise attract!

PAY

You will have to pay at least the National Minimum Wage, which is set by the Government (Link to <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw/>). However, if the new post is for a fairly senior position, you may want to offer a

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salary scale – where the applicant starts on a point on the scale, determined through your selection process, with increments annually until they reach the top of the scale for that job.

If you are in an area where competition for staff is intense, you may feel you have to offer more than the “going rate” to attract new staff, but you need to make sure that the rates for any new posts are in line with your pay policy for all your other employees.

There are no rules that make you put the pay details in your job advertisement (although it is often what people look for!) and you may choose to stress other benefits e.g. provision of accommodation, flexible working, a bonus or pension scheme as well.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Once you have the job title, job description and wage rate in place, you need to consider the application process:

- Where are you going to advertise?
- Will you ask candidates to fill in an application form, write in with a CV or telephone you?
- How will you narrow down the field if you get a lot of replies?
- Who will do the interviewing?

A lot of these decisions will depend on the nature of the job and the procedures that you feel would work best for your business. But you also need to bear in mind the issue of fairness. As an employer, you have a legal responsibility to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination between potential candidates on the grounds of age, sex, race, religion or disability.

A word on disability – you will be aware of the main obligations of the Disability Discrimination Act from the changes you may have had to consider for disabled customers, but it also applies to those you employ, or seek to employ. You have a legal obligation to consider all applicants equally, and to make “reasonable” adjustments to the workplace where possible to enable a disabled person to work for you. An excellent advisory service is provided by the Disability Employment Advisers (Link to www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk) who will also help you if an existing member of staff should develop a disability. You may also want to consider your role as an employer within the local community.

You may feel that this is all getting very complicated, particularly if you are a small business with more than enough on your hands already, but there are very genuine business benefits to getting your recruitment processes right:

- As you will already know, recruitment is a costly business – apart from the cost of advertising, there is the time factor and the shortfall in staffing while the job is vacant. Having a process in place means that you have less to think about once it’s operational.
- It can be easy to be a bit blinkered about the type of person you think is suitable for the job, or to be drawn instinctively to people like yourself – that’s human nature – but it may mean you are discounting a whole range of individuals who would be more than capable.
- To go through the whole process, only to find that the person you take on leaves again in a short space of time, or turns out to be the wrong person for the job, is wasting your valuable time and resources.
- There are legal – and costly - implications to getting it wrong. If you have procedures in place that are applied to everyone, it will be easy to demonstrate to an unsuccessful candidate why someone else was appointed. If your job advert and recruitment process is thought through carefully, you can be sure that no-one will be accusing you of discrimination!



ADVERTISING JOBS

There are a variety of options open to you, and most successful tourism businesses use a mix of these:

JOBCENTRE PLUS

The range of services offered by Jobcentres for employers now is extensive – from helping you draft your advertisement, to giving up to date information on the labour market in your area – and completely free of charge.

You will be given a Vacancy Service Manager as a contact point – and a word of advice, the more they know about you and your business, the better able they will be to sell it on your behalf to potential candidates, so build a good working relationship with that individual! Your vacancy will also go onto the national vacancy web service, which is becoming a very popular source of information.

Jobcentre Plus also have Disability Employment Advisers who can advise on the recruitment of someone with any form of disability and how you can cater for them in the workplace.

Jobcentre Plus will also be able to advise you on the New Deal programme – this allows you to take on a New Deal recruit with a subsidy payable depending on their age and training needs. New Deal has been extended to cover different age groups from 18 – 24, 25 plus, 50 plus, for Lone Parents, Disabled People and Partners of Unemployed people.

For more information, look at the website at <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/>

RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

These are probably most suitable for larger businesses as they come, of course, at a cost but they can be very effective for screening applicants and there are specialist ones for the hospitality and tourism industries.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Extensive readership, and can attract people from outside the area who may be looking for a lifestyle employment package – less income in return for living in the country or on the coast – with some good experience. But advertising in these can be expensive!

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRESS (NEWSPAPERS, RADIO)

These are usually the first port of call for anyone looking for a job in their locality, although response rates may vary depending on the labour market available.

Specialist interest and professional journals

The Caterer, Leisure Management. These have the benefit of their professional or special interest readership, but can be very expensive.

THE INTERNET

If you have a web site have a job section on it if you feel it's worthwhile, but there are many specialist internet recruitment companies out there www.hcareers.co.uk and www.leisurejobs.com are examples – and they are becoming a well recognised medium for recruitment, with some providing lists of potential applicants for employers to view as well as job vacancies.

WHO DO I ASK?

WORD OF MOUTH

Asking your existing staff if they know of anyone can be a great way to fill a vacancy, as we've already seen. You'll get some good indication of your reputation as an employer in the locality too!

A card in the window or local shop

Obvious, but can produce surprisingly good results for very little outlay!

EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

If you are interested in employing people from outside the UK, the Employment Service operates a special section called the European Employment Services (EURES) <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/home.jsp?lang=en>. There is no charge for this service and further information can be obtained from your Jobcentre or by contacting the Welsh Euroadviser on 029 20 380781. See also Work permits

(http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk/working_in_the_uk/en/homepage/work_permits.html)

APPLICATION FORMAT

There are a variety of methods to get information about applicants, and again, you may decide that one or other is most suitable for the job being advertised, or use a combination of methods. There are pros and cons to each of them:

TELEPHONE RESPONSE

Pros: You may get a good idea of whether you would like to invite a candidate in for interview from a telephone conversation. You can be free of visual discrimination.

Cons: They may phone at an inconvenient time. It's difficult to remember to ask the same questions for consistency. It may not be the most suitable medium of contact for the job role – someone should be able to talk quite confidently on the phone to a stranger for a receptionist's role, but many would find it difficult and may be discounted without good reason.

SENDING A CV

Pros: You usually get a lot of information about the person and their past experiences.

Cons: They can be very different in format and length, making it difficult to compare like with like. You may not get information that is important to you – like whether they have good communication skills

APPLICATION FORMS

Pros: You can ensure that everyone sends information in the same form, helping comparisons. You can design the form to suit your needs. You have a written record of qualifications, abilities and experience as stated by the applicant.

Cons: Form filling can be very off putting for some people and may not be relevant to the job role – it may even be discriminatory if written skills are not necessary. It can constrict candidates from giving information that may be useful if they don't feel there is a "box" to put it in.

WHO DO I ASK?

WRITING A JOB ADVERTISEMENT

If you want to get an idea of how much job advertisements differ, have a look through any of the media listed above and see what you think! In a competitive market, it is important to get your recruitment advert right, just as it is for advertising your business to customers. The other issue, of course, is that you don't want to waste a lot of time sifting through unsuitable applications – which is what can happen if your advert is too vague.

These are some tips on getting your job advertisement right from ACAS (Link to <http://www.acas.org.uk/>):

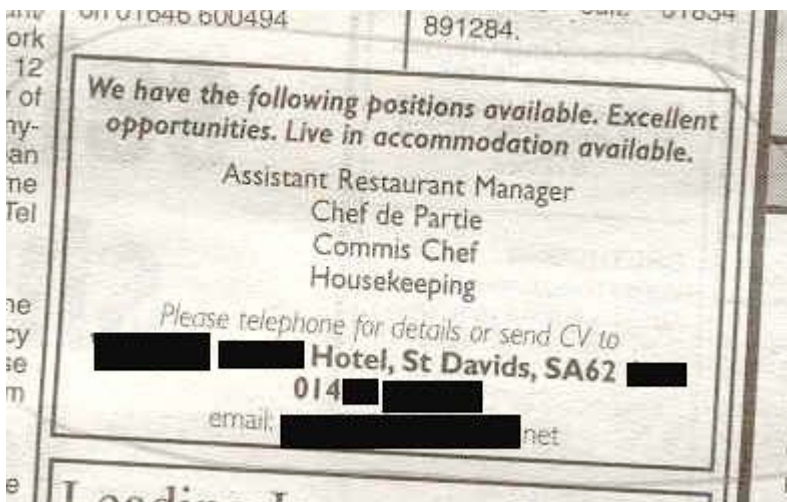
- Make sure the advert is consistent with your business image – use a logo, add the business address (don't assume everyone will know where the Castle Hotel or Courtyard Cottages are!), any awards you have etc.
- Keep it short and simple but ensure that you have the main aspects covered – job title, pay, contract length, hours of work (part time, full time etc) basic job role, any additional benefits
- Try to avoid generalisations, such as “appropriate qualifications”
- Make sure that the application process is clear – the closing date, format of applications etc – and that you give a contact name and number for queries

Examples of Advertisements

These are genuine examples of advertisements from tourism businesses. Which one would make you think about applying?



(The advert above may be in contravention of discrimination law when changes are introduced next year on age – they would have to justify why the member of staff had to be over 23 (understandable over 18 if working in a bar, but why 23?))



WHO DO I ASK ?

Category	Reception (inc. Management)
Temp/Perm	Permanent
Location	Llanwddyn
Title	Head Receptionist
This 4* Hotel is looking for a Head Receptionist to manage their team of front office staff. There are 35 bedrooms and the hotel has also gained 2 rosettes for their excellent standards of food.	
Description	The hotel is set in 24,000 acres of land which includes a large picturesque lake that the hotel overlooks. This position requires a candidate with a strong front office background and ideally a knowledge of the Omega Reservations system.
Live-in accommodation is available plus meals on duty and uniforms.	
Salary Package	14k

SHORTLISTING

Setting shortlisting criteria is a useful way of systematically assessing candidates prior to and/or during interview.

Using your Job description, you can decide what are the most important attributes for the job and weight them accordingly, e.g. if you may feel that previous experience in a relevant field is most important then you might give this a higher weighting, whereas a relevant qualification, though useful, may be less important so has a lower weighting. By marking candidates against this, you will see who “scores” most highly. If more than one person does this process, you can compare your findings and draw up a shortlist together.

You should end up with a list of the best of your applicants who you can then invite for interview. An example of a proforma for application or interview criteria selection is shown on the next page:

WHO DO I ASK?

APPLICATION OR INTERVIEW SELECTION CRITERIA

Job Requirements	Weighting	Candidates				
		A	B	C	D	E
Previous Experience						
Attainments/competencies						
Communication skills						
Presentation						
Attitude/awareness						
Total						
Rating Scale		Mark				
Does not match specification		1				
Matches some aspects with some important omissions		2				
Matches fairly well with weaknesses in some aspects		3				
Matches well with slight discrepancies		4				
Fully matches specification		5				

WHO DO I ASK?

INTERVIEWING

Most jobs are decided by interview: it is an opportunity for the employer and prospective employee to find out more about each other and to make sure they are suited! As with all aspects of recruitment, however informal you wish your interview process to be, it helps if it is planned well and carried out systematically.

Firstly, who is going to do the interviewing?

Will it be one on one or do you want others involved?

It is always useful to have the line manager for the post at the very least available to have a chat with the candidates on the day, even if they don't take part in the interviews.

Preferably those who are conducting interviews should have some training, to ensure that any issues regarding equality of opportunity are properly addressed (for further information on this contact ACAS, who offer short courses and advisory leaflets – <http://www.acas.org.uk/>, helpline 08457 474747).

The interviewer/s need, obviously, to have read application forms prior to interview and should have drafted questions that can be asked of all candidates, as well as specific ones related to the information provided on the candidate's form.

If more than one person is involved, it helps if who is going first and asking what is decided in advance too! It's also important to think about what candidates may ask of you, and to have any relevant information to hand.

On the day, it helps to have agreed a timetable for candidates, so that they either arrive together and get a guided tour, any practical tests etc in a group, or well spaced to ensure that every candidate gets as much time as they need. The "formal" interview needs to be conducted in a room where there are no interruptions – either from other staff, customers or 'phones. If you have difficulty finding a space like this in your business, consider interviewing off site – Jobcentre Plus can provide interview rooms if needs be.

Once the interview is underway, all the normal rules of good communication apply:

- introduce yourself (and anyone else) and make the candidate feel welcome and as relaxed as is possible
- Ask open ended questions wherever possible to get the most information and help the conversation flow
- After a brief scene setting, allow the candidate to do most of the talking – don't be tempted to fill in any "gaps" but if they are obviously struggling to answer a question, try re-phrasing it or move on to something else
- Be sure that the questions you are asking are not leading and not discriminatory – so best to steer clear of personal issues!

In addition, remember to make notes on the responses, but also remember that under the [Data Protection Act](#) of 1998, a candidate has a right to see those notes if they wish to do so!

At the end of the interview, don't forget to advise the candidate on the procedure that follows – when they can expect to hear if they've been successful, check that they understand the basic terms and conditions of the job, find out when they would be able to start, and tell them that you will be taking up references for the successful candidate.

It helps to make a decision on the appointment as soon after the interview process as possible, with reference to the notes you made at the time. If you are interviewing a number of candidates, it can be easy to forget details about an early candidate by the time you get to the last, so notes are a helpful reminder.

Once your decision is made, they will also provide useful supporting evidence of your rationale in selecting the candidate should there be a challenge from an unsuccessful candidate under discrimination legislation.

For excellent information on making sure you are complying with both the word and letter of equal opportunities legislation, go to <http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk/>

WHO DO I ASK?

Some interview guidelines from www.investorsinpeople.co.uk.

- Don't start interviewing anyone until you have a reasonable choice of candidates
- Aim to end up with at least three candidates whom you would be happy to appoint. Offer the job to the best candidate, keeping the others in reserve
- If none of the candidates meet your requirements, it is better to continue searching than appoint 'the best of a poor bunch'
- Prepare thoroughly whatever the level of the position on offer
- Ensure that you are not interrupted during the interviews
- Preparation work should include a list of the skills, competencies and experience you require

Go through the applicant's past employment record carefully asking relevant questions. Go on to background and leisure interests and end with discussing future aspirations. Don't ask a woman any questions that you wouldn't also ask a man, for example, do you have children or who will look after the children while you work? This could result in a claim for discrimination

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- "Tell me about yourself."

You want to hear them talk and to see what they emphasise or leave out

- "How would you describe your career to date?"

This can give a good indication of self-confidence. Are they a happy and positive person?

- "What do you dislike about your current job?"

This may give you an indication of the candidate's suitability for your position

- "What are your strengths?"

This should tell you what they are good at and how that will help you

- "What are your weaknesses?"

This will also tell you if they can take criticism and learn from their mistakes

- "Why do you want to leave your present position?"

This should determine whether the candidate is ambitious or just greedy

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Body language and initial impressions are very important. You should assess how comfortable you felt with the candidate's attitude and approach, and whether this would fit in with the way your company works
- Describe the job on offer and encourage questions. No questions usually means no interest. Don't oversell the company or the job
- Probe to find out how much they know about your firm and your business. If they have done some preparatory research this is a good sign
- If the candidate appears to be a serious contender for the position, go on to discuss the terms and conditions of the position - it's no good offering them the job only to find they're already paid £5,000 more than you're offering!
- The interview should take no longer than one hour and no less than thirty minutes. During this time, the candidate should have done at least 75% of the talking
- Carefully record your impressions and conclusions immediately using the same format for every candidate. Don't write down anything that could be used against you subsequently at an Employment Tribunal (e.g. anything that could be interpreted as discriminatory)

WHO DO I ASK?

- Even with the most impressive of candidates, it is not a good idea to make job offers on the spot. Go over your notes, and talk it over with others with whom they will be working. There is no harm, however, in finding out at the end of the interview if they are still interested in the job, and what sort of notice period they would have to give if offered the job.

NOTIFYING SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Before you notify the successful candidate of their appointment, you will almost certainly want to take up references (although you can let them know they've been successful subject to references by 'phone if you want to cut short the agony!).

To get the most relevant information from a referee, it helps to send a copy of the job description; so that they know what the job the candidate will be doing entails.

It really helps if you let the unsuccessful applicants know as soon as possible too, as it can enhance your reputation as a good employer and you may have another suitable vacancy at some other time. Giving constructive feedback on what could be improved – if it's wanted – can be very helpful for the individual.

Once any necessary checks have been completed, you can write confirming the job offer. This is important even if you have already 'phoned, as this is effectively the point at which you are creating a legal contract of employment (of which more in the next chapter). The letter should set out the following:

- The job title and offer of that job
- Any conditions that apply to the offer
- The terms of the offer – salary, hours, benefits, pension arrangements, holiday entitlement, place of employment etc
- Start date, and length of probationary period if applicable
- What you need the candidate to do to confirm their acceptance e.g. return a signed letter of acceptance, provide certificates as evidence of qualifications etc

WHO CAN HELP?

If you want any further information or have queries on any aspect of the recruitment process, there are a number of organisations that can help you – and all of the information is completely free of charge!

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/>

<http://www.startups.co.uk/> - useful info on all aspects of starting a business

Equality Direct – <http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk/> or helpline 0845 600 3444

Equal Opportunities Commission – <http://www.eoc.org.uk/>

DTI – <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er>, 0870 150 2500

<http://www.busesseye.org.uk> and <http://www.businesslink.org.uk/>

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk - an excellent site linked to the Investors in People scheme, with a wealth of information on all aspects of recruitment and employment, designed for small businesses

<http://www.caterer.com/> – **click on ADVICE and scroll down to Manager office** for really practical advice on writing job ads, interview techniques etc.