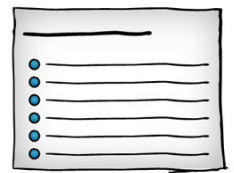


# 17 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN RECRUITING STAFF

## 1. Not writing a full job description or forwarding it to the candidate in advance.

At Orchard, we often re-write job descriptions with our clients' approval prior to submission to candidates. We write them in a jargon-free way that is easy to understand. Explain not only the duties but the actual demands of the role, deadlines, software/equipment used and training provided. Most recruitment 'failures' are simply due to a lack of mutual understanding. Explain upfront the disadvantages of the role, culture, and the management style and you will have fewer disappointments. Too often the employer dusts off a previous job specification and uses this to recruit from. Usually, the demands of the position have changed. A little time engaging with the incumbent employee, other staff members, managers, and even clients will help you refine and develop a current job description.



## 2. Not considering the type of candidate that fits in best with the team.

In the days of equal opportunities and discrimination, we all seem too scared to discuss personality types for fear of offending someone or worse! Teams are like mini-ecosystems and consideration about the 'fit' should be taken into account. We use a psychometric profiling tool not only to establish what type of person would fit in best but also the characteristics of the individuals being shortlisted.



## 3. Not checking out the candidate on Facebook or LinkedIn before the interview.

Facebook is a great way of snooping on people. We don't want to submit racists, drug takers or undesirables to our clients and we suggest you don't want them either. Weed them out in advance. Ensure that they are eligible to work in the UK. Are they UK residents or do they have a current work permit?

## 4. Not carrying out a telephone screening call in advance of the interview.

We urge you to pick up the phone first; ask some basic questions about their relevant experience, interest in the role and what they know about the company. Are they going through the motions or are they genuinely enthusiastic?



## **5. Not having checked out skills properly or obtained proof of qualifications and exam results in advance.**

Whether recruiting via an agency or purely on your own; access some software that will enable you to evaluate a prospective employee's skills in advance; especially essentials such as Word & Excel, spelling, and maths. Request copies of professional qualifications and memberships. The number of candidates who say they are AAT or CIMA but are unable to provide copies is surprising. Candidates will lie; don't be taken in.



## **6. Many employers have not actually read the CV properly and it shows.**

We know this because we are given feedback by candidates after the interview. By not reading the CV or preparing any questions in advance, it sends a clear message to the candidate. "We are NOT taking this process seriously and we are not paying you the respect you deserve"

## **7. Having a poor interview technique.**

Employing a new/replacement member of staff is a massive investment. Assuming a UK average salary of £28,000 then with employers tax contribution of, currently 13.8% take that over, say 3 years, you are investing £95,000. Surely it makes sense to have had some interview training, attended a course or at least read a couple of books about this essential business skill in advance. And of course, there is so much free content on YouTube. (Although we suggest that some American videos are a bit OTT!) Above all, learn about competency based interview questions.



## **8. Having too many people present in the interview.**

We strongly suggest a maximum of two, with one person 'leading' the process, maybe with the other taking notes. Avoid the good cop/bad cop set up. An interview is a two-way process, not an interrogation.

## **9. Not 'selling' your company at interview.**

Today's candidates are very discerning and they have choices. They are looking for training, professional development, promotional prospects, solid management, a sense of corporate social responsibility and a financially stable organisation.

Above all, they want a great boss and nice colleagues. No pressure there then...!

## **10. Turn YOUR phone off and advise other colleagues that you are interviewing.**

Candidates are used to turning off their phones and devoting their attention to the process. Surely, if we are to give a good impression, the same rules should apply.



## 11. Instructing more than one recruitment agency.

Recruiters are currently overwhelmed by the number of search assignments they are working on. Naturally, they will work on the roles that they are more likely to fill than those they are not. When an organisation instructs more than one recruitment firm it means that those other agencies are less likely to fill the position than if they'd been exclusive. The reality is that they will work much harder as an exclusive agency rather than one of many competing against each other. Chose one agency and give them a deadline to work to. If they are not communicating with you or submitting candidates for your approval; disengage them and instruct another firm.



## 12. Driving fees down too far.

By being a really 'tough negotiator' and driving down fees you may shoot yourself in the proverbial foot. Even if you 'negotiate' hard on the end of the phone, their manager may well instruct the recruiter to focus on better paying vacancies first. Remember, recruiters are usually paid upon commission and have only 9 hours a day at work so they'll concentrate on the vacancy with the highest fee. Likewise, with such a current lack of exceptional candidates, a recruiter is inclined to send the very best ones to the organisation who will pay the highest fee. With long standing clients, there will usually be a discount for the loyalty shown but it must still be worth working on.

## 13. Not taking references.

Pick up the phone and have an off "the record" chat and make it informal. Avoid the clichés of grading the candidate in terms of Excellent, Above Average, Average, Below Average & Poor. Ask more open questions such as 'How often were they late', 'How did they respond to changing priorities' and 'How could they have done their job better'. Personally, I always ask 'If you were to leave your current organisation and start your own business would you personally hire this candidate to carry out a similar role for you? If you do have to apply for a written reference, create a bespoke one that fits the role.

## 14. You snooze, you lose!

In today's candidate-driven market, too many employers are chasing too few candidates.

When you have identified a suitable candidate or had one submitted to you, move quickly. You will not be the only employer looking to recruit such a candidate and we are finding that there are more and more employers who delay making contact and are missing out. This is essentially because some employers believe that there is still a glut of candidates available. If you are ready to make an offer, do it fast, send the offer letter via email and request acceptance by return. Send the contract & employee booklet out by recorded delivery. After acceptance, follow up by phone and maintain contact during the period before start. Just because the candidate has accepted your offer, doesn't mean those other recruiters won't be trying to persuade 'your' new member of staff to attend other interviews.



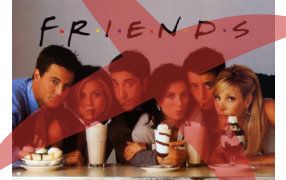
## 15. Offer the going rate or maybe a little above.

If you offer below market rate, you may well think that you've had a 'result', but in reality, you may have scored an 'own goal'. The candidate might accept the position but still secretly keep looking. It's frustrating when they resign after three months for another £2000. You have already trained them, spent time and possibly money in recruiting them. You are back to square one. Ouch!"



## **16. Never, ever offer a position to a family member or a friend.**

When (not IF) things go wrong, you'll find it far harder to discipline a family member or friend than someone who you don't have a relationship with. Other members of staff will treat them differently. If YOU are a Director and decide to hire one of your children/nephew/niece as a management trainee then make sure that they have worked elsewhere first and that they report into another Director who is empowered to manage and develop them individually. It can work but it is usually fraught with challenges.



## **17. Not providing a decent induction course, regular reviews, and appraisals.**

The interview, assessment and offer process is crucially important, as is making an appropriate offer on time. However, just because your preferred candidate has turned up on day one does not mean that they'll stay! They need nurturing, listening to, engaging with and developing. A well thought out induction process, broken down over a week is better than half an hour over coffee on day one. Develop a regular appraisal process with the opportunity to feedback to you as well. This will ensure that any challenges are identified in advance. Effective, well thought out recruitment processes are as essential to a business as ensuring that accounting, distribution, and quality assurance systems are robust. Someone said that we get the staff that we deserve. I suggest that we actually get the staff that we plan for.

For more detailed recruitment strategies, read "How To Recruit (And Retain) The Right Staff" by Graham Martin. Available on Amazon.

**To discuss YOUR vacancies with a recruitment firm who fulfill these criteria, contact:**

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