



First steps to hire ground

Want to attract and - more importantly, perhaps - high calibre staff? Then put more effort into good recruitment and selection, say experts at Jonathan Lee Recruitment's Integrated HR operation.

Companies who take advantage of good recruitment and selection processes are more likely to attract high-calibre staff and enjoy good levels of staff retention which - in turn - makes positive contribution to overall efficiency within the business.

As skill shortages persist across a whole range of industry sector, it is increasingly important for companies to present themselves in their most positive light to attract high quality individuals to join their team.

A well-structured selection process is certainly an attraction to good candidates as it reflects a high level of professionalism with that employer and sends a very positive message to those who are unsuccessful.

"A good selection process is the first step towards good retention," states Lorraine McCracken, consultant at Integrated HR and previously HR manager at MG Rover, where she was involved in selection at all levels across the company.

"Tailored development, progression opportunity and challenge in the role are also important; all will play an important part in attracting and retaining the best candidates," she says.

Selection processes vary widely, from unstructured interviews with inexperienced interviewers (which historically have a very low predictability of job performance) to well designed, appropriate assessment centres where candidates are repeatedly evaluated against a series of qualities for a specific role (which have a high level of predictability).

Henry Noteman, head of Integrated HR, says: "The problem with general interviews is the lack of objectivity, making candidates difficult to differentiate. Are they really that good or are they just saying they are? Sometimes it's too late when the grim reality is uncovered, and with current employment legislation, it can prove very difficult, costly and time consuming to correct."

Assessment centres - and techniques such as psychometric testing - help to bring greater predictability to the selection process, according to Mr Noteman.

The highly-objective assessment of individuals against very specific criteria is useful when recruiting at both graduate and experienced level.

When conducted by an independent, or external supplier, the independence of any decision is clear to candidates, thus avoiding internal politics and reinforcing equal opportunities policies.

This is particularly appropriate when assessing internal candidates for career potential or promotion.

Through their Integrated HR brand, Jonathan Lee Recruitment has been involved in assessing staff for companies in the Midlands - including TRW Automotive in Solihull, Metsec in Oldbury and Smith & Nephew in Bromsgrove and Leamington Spa. They have also undertaken projects for companies such as Unipart and Airbus.

One of the most difficult hiring decisions relates to graduates where their discipline dictates that they are all doing the same course and have very little or no experience.

How do you decide?

Historically this is based on impressions from an interview.

This is an area where an assessment centre approach is exceptionally useful.

Psychometric assessment can also be used in a wide range of roles with experienced candidates. In the workplace, more emphasis is now placed on interpersonal skills and the ability to work as part of a team.

This again is where assessment centres came to the fore, as no other process will objectively give the candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their behavioural skills.

It is not uncommon for people to be hired for their technical skills - and fired due to their behaviour patterns. The consideration of cost should also not be ignored, according to Mr Noteman. "It really is vital that companies devote time, energy and financial resources to their recruitment and selection processes," he says. "Those who do will reap their reward with low staff turnover, improved morale, high levels of motivation and an efficient overall operation."

To find out more, contact Henry on 01384 446190 or visit our website at www.integratedhr.co.uk