

PEOPLE POWER

Making the right hiring choices is the key to success. Want to know how to attract the right talent for your business? *Jane Gormley*, director of operations at Recruiters.ie has the answers.

The recruitment industry is booming. This is good news and if you're searching, you'll be pleased to know it has created a market that's driven by candidate demand. For employers, this means there is stiff competition out there. From graduates up to associate levels, the challenge to attract and retain top talent is ongoing. With constant development within technology, globalisation, advertising and messaging the methods of reaching your market are multiple. At its core, however, recruitment remains, fundamentally, a very human experience. It's a personal process for an individual, and your perfect candidate will make their decisions based on some key criteria. Surprisingly, salary is typically around number three or four on a list. Elements such as location, training, leadership, team, growth plans, opportunities and environment ranking high. Top talent has ambitions, plans and personal lives. So whether you're a business owner, a team manager, launching a start-up or part of a multi-national, you should think carefully, think positively, and be smart in how you approach your recruitment plan.

PLANNING: Regardless of the size of your business, it's crucial to put some shape to the process. Dedicate the time to sit and define what the most important elements of the role are. What is expected of the person you ultimately hire? What background/experience/education/personality do you need to identify? The first step is to write a job specification that you have invested time and thought into. Agree with the appropriate team members on what skills are needed. Assign a point of contact to manage the process. All too often, these criteria only begin to be asked when candidates are in the process and with constantly changing goalposts causing delays, you're not going to get very far. Engage with the front line of recruitment. Ensure they fully understand the important parts of the role before going out to the market. Don't forget about the culture fit of your team, and communicate this. Your job spec forms the single document committed to paper on what this person's role will be, and receiving parties will place a lot of worth on it. Use it to showcase your team, your role, your company. Get to the point, and get it right.





your brand is. This is important; the candidate market is powerful and miscommunications can quickly spread. Both successful and unsuccessful candidates should experience a positive recruitment process, as it will forever be associated with your organisation. If you are just starting to build your brand, look at your positives such as training, autonomy, growth and flexibility.

INTERVIEWING: The average recruitment process is six weeks. If you factor in notice periods, you have a timeline to work backwards from when arranging interviews. Whether this is a face to face/phone/Skype introduction, get your process sorted before you start. How many interviews are involved? Who are the interview panel involved? What dates in the diary can we book in advance for first- and second-round interviews? Do you want presentations, and if so, what's the topic? Plan the questions that you want to ask, and keep it consistent for all your candidates. This will allow you to be objective afterwards. In the interview room, manage the process, remain in charge and explain the format to the candidate. Allow them to feel at ease. This is an interview, not an exam. Sometimes candidates are excellent at interviews, and not so excellent at the job. Be fair. Be observant. Provide an opportunity before finishing for a candidate to ask questions. (Their performance here is a good indication of their level of interest also). Remember, as you move through advanced processes that you may need to start selling. When you identify a great potential employee, it's unlikely you're the only person to spot their talent, so make sure that you use your time well and are open, honest and realistic in what you can offer, whilst ensuring to showcase your organisation to its full potential. Establish if the candidate is interviewing elsewhere (they probably are and that's okay) and try to keep timelines in place. You don't want to miss out on your preferred candidate by being a few days late extending an offer.

ONBOARDING: The recruitment process simply *does not stop* just because an offer has been issued and (hopefully) accepted. Many offers fall through as the first few days in a job were not as expected. There is also a risky time period between offer acceptance and start date when minds can change. Put in a couple of calls, arrange a welcome coffee. Keep communication open. It's of high importance that new team members are guided through the first few days with professional care and management.

PREPARE: For your new employee. Organise computer access, passwords, user accounts etc in advance of their arrival. Take time to sit down formally with them on their first day. Welcome them, refresh the contract and ensure it's understood. Perhaps go through some softer details (When is it okay to have lunch? Where is the bathroom? How do I buy a coffee in the canteen?) It's amazing what gets overlooked, and not feeling of any importance is a surefire way to have employees looking for new roles. The people you hire are the most crucial investments that you'll make in your business. Keep an open mind – people are usually adaptable and capable. If your gut is telling you someone is right, then trust it. Don't forget, as their employer or manager it's your responsibility to create an environment that allows them to perform, then it's over to them.

BRANDING: Why would someone want to work for you? If you can't answer that easily, then you better start thinking about it right now. Employees work best when they believe in and respect their employers and the business. Be confident in your brand, promote your story, allow your business to have a character and utilise any medium available to do this. When using recruitment agencies, identify high-calibre consultants from reputable agencies that you trust. These are influential professionals with valuable networks. They can accurately represent, communicate and protect what

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