



How to Filter Job Applications

Introduction

In a downturn employers can get deluged with applications for vacant positions – so you need to make sure that only the right people apply by using various techniques. In the past, the wide availability of jobs meant that people have tended not to apply for positions that they were ill-suited to, not interested in or that they deemed to be poorly paid. Now, in a recession, we are finding employers get deluged with applications for senior or specialist positions that would usually only attract a manageable number of applicants. To counter this, you may need to adapt your approaches to recruiting experienced people.

1 Develop clear job descriptions

Before the recruitment process starts, it is critical that you develop clear job descriptions and role profiles, and agree on the selection process that will be followed. This will enable everyone involved in the selection process to clearly focus on what they are seeking. When developing job descriptions, you should involve line managers and other colleagues who understand the role's requirements to ensure the description is accurate and pinpoints the correct competency requirements.

2 Use targeted advertising

Ensure a job advertisement is targeted specifically at the group you are seeking to recruit from. This could mean using the trade press instead of national newspapers, or specialist web sites rather than job boards. Be explicit about what you are seeking – make sure the text of an advert clarifies what qualifications, abilities, sector knowledge, and role experience the applicant must have, and the application route that all applicants are expected to follow.

3 Think about the application method

Allowing people to simply send in a CV and covering letter to an email address on your website could lead to a deluge of applicants. So consider using a more detailed process, such as an application form that includes specific sections to cover your minimum requirements. This may come as a surprise to some people, particularly those who have only ever used the CV method.

4 Consider automated selection

Look at providing applicants with online tools to help to automate selection. Online pre-screening helps to sift out applicants that fail to meet your minimum ability thresholds, and also helps candidates to assess their own suitability for the job. They should be re-assessed in person if they reach the later stages of the selection process, though.

5 Profile the candidate as well as the role

If you have developed a clear role profile at the start of the selection process, then you should be able to use profiling tools to assess a candidate's suitability for the role.

6 Ensure that interviewers know what to look for

Look at the skills of the HR team and the line managers who will be conducting the interviews. Ideally, all interviewers should have received appropriate training and be able to apply proven competency-based interviewing techniques. This will enable them to quickly spot those who have embellished their CVs, talked up their track records or who do not have the personality to thrive in your organisation.

7 Monitor recruitment activity closely

Keep an eye on the activity of your HR and recruitment teams. If it appears that particular positions or business divisions are attracting significantly higher volumes of applications than others, look to redeploy people to the areas in most need of additional support.

8 Key points

- Have clear job descriptions and role profiles
- Advertise in specialist press/media
- Prevent speculative email applications
- Brush up the skills of all interviewers
- Redeploy resources to the areas with the greatest need

Contact Us

If you would like any further information or wish to speak to someone about how to approach this subject, please contact our senior consultant, Ann Robinson, on **07966 640064**, or email us at consultant@ianshaw.co.uk and we will call you back.