

Summary of WCN e-Recruitment Breakfast Seminar Friday, 28th November 2008

“An e-Recruitment Success for Local Government”

Speakers were:

Richard White, Head of Resourcing, Hampshire Local Government Partnership and
Steve Tope, Head of Client Services, WCN Plc

Public Sector Recruitment

The credit crunch is having an impact on the public sector as much as on the private, if not more in some cases. Already affected by the Government's efficiency directives, public sector is going to have to be more innovative to find ways of making even greater savings. Local governments have been hard hit, some more than others, and the financial troubles come at a time when an ageing population and a range of pressures across the board are putting a real strain on their finances. E-Recruitment provides opportunities towards making their money stretch further.

The presentation given by Richard White, Head of Resourcing at Hampshire Local Government Partnership tells us what the 4 main drivers were for a joint approach to developing and implementing an e-recruitment system. Richard talks about the criteria for success and how they took the project forward starting with the business case and their subsequent approach. He tells us that in the first six months after implementation they had already made savings of £280,000 across all 12 councils with an anticipated ROI of 240%! Richard then reviews the project looking at what worked well and lessons learnt. Hampshire Local Government Partnership is now looking to carry out further developments for the future, which will further impact on costs.

Hampshire Local Government Partnership

Key success criteria:

- Ensure all information is held in a central location
- Automation of key activities for high volume recruitment (i.e. issuing rejection emails)
- Savings:
 - reduced recruitment advertising costs
 - reduced staff costs (or reallocation to other HR priorities)
 - reduced cost of paper / printing / postage
- Eliminate the cost of procuring and developing e-recruitment systems individually
- Provide a platform to explore longer term talent management opportunities across organisations

- Financial savings of over £1million
- In the first 6 months the following efficiencies have been delivered:
- advertising spend reduced by £237,000
 - staffing reduced by £31,000
 - supplemental costs reduced by £12,000
 - a total of £280,000 across the 12 councils
- In the first 6 months the following service improvements have been delivered:
- individual authorities have reduced the time taken for specific tasks (e.g. short listing) by over 40%
 - over 85% of all applications are now received online directly into the Regional Recruitment Portal
 - Over 95% of candidates rated the application process as good or better with 76% rating it as very good or excellent

Considerations

When looking for an e-recruitment system:

- Understand your requirements, set clear goals and have a vision;
- Make a compelling business case for the changes you wish to make and get buy-in from your organisation;
- Ensure you have a clear methodology for project managing and minimising the risks associated with change;
- Ensure the team and roles and responsibilities are defined for strategy and policy, managing changes and for operational recruitment;
- Be sure your supplier can meet your requirements and beyond if necessary, and be willing to work with you to resolve any issues you may have;
- Don't get sucked into believing cheaper is better. If it is cheaper, check the small print to make sure your supplier is providing you with everything you require.

Q&A

Q: Do you have an interface between e-recruitment and HR Systems?

A: Richard White answered that whilst the WCN system would integrate, they chose not to, because the 12 authorities were not using the same HR system and it would have made their internal costs too high for the benefit of loading the information into the systems.

Q: Can you discuss changes to the speed of recruitment?

A: Richard admitted that this was an area they had only recently started monitoring, but pointed to the features that have cut the time to hire: automation of short listing; enabling candidates to book interview slots online and track their pre-interview processes. Scottish Natural Heritage reduced time-to-hire from 16 weeks to 28 days following implementation of the WCN e-recruitment solution.

Q: How many suppliers were involved in the Tender process?

A: Richard answered that 80 companies expressed an interest, from which 20 supplied completed Tenders, 6 were short listed and 2 or 3 were invited to interview stage before WCN were unanimously chosen.

Q: What problems were caused by not engaging managers earlier?

A: Richard answered that it was an internal PR issue and that getting through some of the steps of the process and some of the objectives would have been easier if they had brought the managers on board earlier and taken their input.

Q: Has it caused problems having the system engaging with managers? And how was it dealt with?

A: They created a system, which worked to a time scale to solve any issues with manager involvement. Also, a communication centre was created – this includes all correspondence and notes on applicants being attached to the candidates' record.

Q: Can the system complete reference checks?

A: With regards to references, requests for references can be sent in bulk then the system places the responsibility on the candidate to chase requested references.

Q: If managers are using the system directly, how would they use it and how do they access relevant information?

A:

- A manager's homepage would only list the tasks they carry out in the language they use, e.g. raise a job requisition or screen candidates. The homepage links are intuitive and the system guides users through a step-by-step process.
- An "ownership" structure in the system and user account functionality means that each manager automatically only sees information relevant to them i.e. their candidates, their panel/interview days, their vacancies including statistics on this information.
- Management information is available for recruiters monitoring manager behaviour, e.g. late with tasks, performance in interviewing etc

Q: What feedback have you got from clients with regards to right to work?

A: All clients ask the same questions; they all want to pre-screen, ask if it is ok to collect National Insurance numbers early. However, the answers to these questions depend on your direction.

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