

VSO Working Papers in Development

Recruitment and selection manual

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No 2: Manual for Recruitment and Selection

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About the Author

Jean Satterthwaite holds an advanced Diploma in Special Needs Education, is a member of the Institute of Training and Development and is accredited to Level 3, British Psychological Society. She also has extensive experience in staff and management training with both public and private organisations.

Jean was a VSO Management Trainer at the Association of People with Disability, an NGO working with physically disabled people in Bangalore, India. She ran training courses for staff and produced

this Recruitment Manual, as well as a number of other staff handbooks and training manuals.

Introduction

Recruiting a new member of the team is one of the most important things a manager ever has to do. If it is done well then everyone benefits: the individual who has been recruited the team and the organisation.

If it is done badly then the damage can be very costly. Morale can suffer, the work will be done badly or not at all, and expensive training time will be wasted. The manager will have to spend time controlling the damage rather than helping to achieve the organisation's goals.

This manual is designed to help good recruitment. It includes explanations of each stage of the process and examples of forms to use.

Forms are not important in themselves but if they are used carefully they help people to think clearly and help to avoid missing any vital information or step in the process.

The Job Requisition

The first steps in recruiting someone are:

1. To make sure that the job needs to be filled:

Could the work be done better some other way? Does it need doing at all?

2. To decide exactly what the job is: a vacancy may give you the chance to change the job a little to suit your current needs. Or it may be a new job, in which case it needs thinking about from scratch.

3. To obtain permission from senior management to go ahead and perhaps to ask for help in doing so.

The Job Requisition should help to make sure that you do not miss out on any of these essential first steps.

Proforma: Job Requisition Form

To the General Manager

From:..... Department.....

Vacancy..... Department..... Date required.....

Permanent/Temporary/Contract Level/ Age range.....
(delete as appropriate) rate of pay (if appropriate)

Reason for Recruitment: (replacement/temporary replacement/new post)

.....

.....

Main purpose of job.....

Principal duties.....

Qualifications/experience/special skills/special conditions.....

Conditions of service (house/salary/benefits/working conditions/place of work)

.....

Request for advertisement: suggested wording attached

Post to be advertised in the Employment Exchange

Post to be sought via the network

(Strike out which do not apply)

Signature..... Date.....

Authorised..... Date.....

Describing the Job

Once it is decided that someone may be recruited then it is vital to describe the job thoroughly.

Applicants need to know in full what they are applying for and the manager responsible for recruiting needs to know exactly what the person selected will be asked to do. In that way people do not waste time applying for unsuitable jobs and managers can decide on the basis of the job description what sort of person is needed. It is a good idea to send the job description out along with the application form.

Job descriptions are not just necessary for recruitment. A detailed and precise list of duties and responsibilities in the job description means that actual performance in the job be monitored and evaluated and the job holder can take responsibility for what she/he must do.

Job descriptions need to be kept up to date as jobs grow and change: once a year during appraisal is a good time to re-evaluate them.

Proforma: Job description

Name of post holder..... Date of appointment to post.....

Department.....

Title of Job.....

Reporting to.....

Responsible for

.....
.....

The purpose of the job is to

.....
.....

The duties and responsibilities are:

.....

Post described on.....199...

Signed.....

Deciding what sort of person fits the job

The person specification

Once the job is fully described then it is possible to decide what sort of qualifications experience skills and attitudes are needed to do the job well. This is called the person specification: it is an essential part of looking at a job and its needs before recruiting someone. Person specifications should be divided into 'necessary' and 'desirable' elements.

When applications come in the person specification is used to select suitable applicants for interview.

Depending on the job, some parts of the person specification are more important than others. If it is a technical job, the specific skills and qualifications may be most important. If it is a management post, then interpersonal skills and attitudes may be more significant.

Proforma: Person specification

Job Title.....**Department**.....

	Essential	Desirable
Education and Training	.....	.....
	Essential	Desirable
Special skills	.....	.....
	Essential	Desirable
Experience	.....	.....
	Essential	Desirable
Physical requirements (if any)	.....	.....
	Essential	Desirable
Attitudes/personal attributes	.....	.....
	Essential	Desirable
Personal circumstances	.....	.....

Any other relevant requirements.....

Signed.....**Head of Department**

Date.....

Advertising for the job

One of the best ways of finding good candidates is by well-focused advertising in the local or state press.

This way the reliance on who knows who and the NGO/academic network is supplemented. With good advertising, people from different working backgrounds may become interested and bring valuable new skills and approaches to the work. It is also fairer because people who are not already in the network have a chance to apply.

A job advertisement should be accurate and concise and give the maximum necessary information to allow people to decide whether they should apply. Insufficient information wastes time. Thus the purpose, key responsibilities and salary package should all be included.

The advertisement should also be designed to make people take notice. The job should sound attractive enough to encourage applications. It should, however reflect the reality of the job. If it is made to sound more attractive than it actually is, there is a risk that many unsuitably qualified candidates may apply. A firm closing date should be specified.

Proforma: Example of an advertisement

Manager for new "Food for the Table" Unit

required by the Association of the Physically Handicapped (APH) Bangalore.

APH is urgently seeking a manager to establish and run a new income-generating and work-generating project selling hot food in the local area and employing local skilled labour.

Experience in large-scale catering is necessary but drive, enthusiasm and the ability to motivate and manage others is even more vital.

If you feel your skills and background match our needs, whatever your formal qualifications are you

may be the person for us! We offer an inclusive salary of Rs.X per month.

Please write/ phone APH for an Application Form: no CVs please. Completed applications should reach APH by..(give a deadline).....

Making the application form suit the purpose

Application forms modified for the job under consideration help to filter candidates and achieve an appropriate shortlist.

A well-designed application form gives you the opportunity to find out what you want to know: CVs only tell you what the candidate wants to tell you; they can also be misleading and conceal as much as they reveal.

An application form also enables you to compare candidates against the same criteria.

Certain questions should always be asked but the needs of jobs vary widely. It does not make sense to ask for the employment record if you are looking for a recent school-leaver or new graduate. Neither does it make sense to ask for a lot of information about schooling for a senior post demanding considerable work experience.

To save time and postage it is useful to include in the advertisement "Write or phone for an application form: do not send CVs".

A great benefit of this system is that applicants have to be serious to apply: it cuts out people who simply send out dozens of CVs speculatively.

Proforma: A basic application form

Application for the post of. (job title)..

1. Personal details

First name..... Surname..... Title (eg/Mr/Mrs/Miss etc.).....

Address for correspondence

Permanent address (if different)

Tel (Home)

Tel (Work, if appropriate)

Date of birth.....Place of birth.....

Languages spoken/written.....

Driving status.....Ownership of vehicle?.....

2. Education

2.1 Schools attended from the age of 11 years:

Name	From	To	Examination results
.....
.....

2.2 Further education

Name	From	To	Examination results
.....
.....

3. Professional qualifications

Give details of all diplomas, certificates or membership of professional bodies

4. Employment history

Name Address Tel. No. Relationship to you

.....
.....
.....

Please indicate if this person can be contacted now: Yes/No

Name Address Tel. No. Relationship to you

.....
.....
.....

Please indicate if this person can be contacted now: Yes/No

7. How did you hear about this post?

8. Interests and any other relevant information

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

I declare that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge

Signed Date





Assessment methods

Before any formal interviews take place, there are ways in which useful information can be gathered about the candidates.

If the **filtering** of candidates at the stage of receiving applications has been thorough and based on careful thought about the job and the person needed to fill it, then any shortlisted candidates should, in theory, be able to do the job.

To produce a **shortlist**, the person specification should be used. Each application should be considered against the 'necessary' and 'desirable' elements. Candidates usually need to meet all of the 'necessary' elements in order to be shortlisted. If there are many candidates who meet all the 'necessary' elements, the 'desirable' elements can be considered in order to select a shortlist. It may be helpful to prioritise the most important 'desirable' elements of the person specification before drawing up the shortlist.

To find out more about them and to enable them to respond intelligently at interview, **visits and informal meetings** are helpful. If they are able to see the work they might be involved in and meet the Head of unit or other staff, their interests and their attitudes may be revealed. Feedback from the unit after the visit should be recorded for use by the selection panel.

References have a more limited usefulness especially as they are often requested after the selection has taken place. In that case, the purpose of the reference can only be to check the truthfulness of information already gained from the candidate and to ensure that there is no serious issue the organisation should be aware of before finally appointing. At least one reference should always be sought from the current or last employer of the person concerned, and the relationship of the referee to the candidate kept in mind.

Proforma: Example of a model letter requesting a reference

Dear Sir

Miss X : Manager "Food for the Table" Unit

We have offered Miss X this key post within our organisation and would be grateful if you would supply us with a reference for her. In particular please be kind enough to respond to the following questions:

1. Has Miss X a good record in terms of health, punctuality and reliability?
2. Has she worked co-operatively with her superiors?
3. Has she run a successful and contented team?
4. How would you judge her contribution to your organisation?
5. Would you employ her again?

Any comments you are kind enough to make will be kept strictly confidential. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience and thank you in advance for your help.

Yours faithfully

General Manager

The end of the process: The interview

The formal interview comes at the end of the process of recruitment and selection.

NO CANDIDATE SHOULD REACH THE INTERVIEW UNLESS IT IS BELIEVED THAT HE/SHE COULD DO THE JOB; FILTERING EARLIER ON VIA THE APPLICATION FORM AND PERSON SPECIFICATION SHOULD HAVE ENSURED THIS.

At the interview stage, a lot is already known about each candidate and needs checking only.

The real purpose of the interview is to find out:

1. Whether what the application form claims is true.
2. The things that the application form cannot tell you:
 - mental agility
 - self-presentation
 - ability to establish rapport
 - communication skills
 - any other untested elements of the person specification
3. If you would like to work with this person: would he/she "fit" within the culture of your organisation and within your team.

The areas needing explanation should be decided on beforehand and the questions to the candidate should be open, (ie not allowing just 'yes' or 'no' answers). Interviewers should be ready to probe until everything is clear and to wait for answers. Sometimes silence has to develop and interviewers should not rush in to fill it.

The questions should be designed to reveal **evidence** of past working behaviour: that is the very best guide to future performance as most people repeat themselves.

The **interview schedule** is an aid to making the final decision. Most of it can be completed ahead of the interview, and the rest during the interview itself. The score, although never decisive, is a good indication of the interviewers' thinking and helps to cut out purely subjective reactions.

Proforma: Interview schedule

Specification	Comments	Desirable	Essential
Qualifications			
.....		
.....		
Experience			
.....		
.....		
Skills			
.....		
.....		
Attitudes			
.....		
.....		

Totals:
Overall Total out of a possible:

Scoring system: For every tick in the desirable column score 2

For every tick in the essential column score 5

Making the offer

Once a post has been offered and accepted verbally then an offer letter must follow immediately. This is a formal invitation to accept the post and requires the candidate to respond by signing a formal acceptance of the terms set out in the letter.

The offer letter represents the **contract** between the employer and the new employee. It must therefore include details of salary, leave and sickness regulations, place and hours of work, any probationary terms, the length of the contract and any key disciplinary issues. These should either be included in the letter itself or on an attached "Conditions of Service" sheet.

A copy of the offer letter plus the acceptance letter must be kept permanently in the Personnel file of the new member of staff.

It is usual to take up references at this point although some organisations do this at the shortlist stage and use them to help make the selection. If the job offer is conditional upon receiving satisfactory references, this should be written into the offer letter and further written confirmation should be given once satisfactory references have been received.

Proforma: Example of an offer letter

Dear Miss X

Post of Senior Stenographer APH

I am very pleased to formally offer you this post within our organisation subject to the conditions set out below and providing that satisfactory references are received.

1. This post will be subject to a six-month probationary period counting from the start date. During that time, the appointment may be terminated by giving a week's notice on either side. At the end of this time if the probation period has proved satisfactory, the appointment will be confirmed in writing.
2. The appointment will be for an initial term of three years counting from the start date. By mutual agreement, this may be renewed for either a fixed or an indefinite period. Once the appointment has been confirmed, one month's notice of termination is required on either side.
3. The salary will be consolidated at Rs.X per month: the statutory requirements will be met.
4. The hours of work will be normally be 8.30 - 5 pm. Monday to Friday and 8.30 -12.30 each Saturday. However it is in the nature of the post that unusual or extended hours may occasionally be required for no extra pay. A half-hour lunch-break is taken.
5. Annual leave and sickness leave are granted according to the current leave rules of the organisation which are attached.
6. If for a period of 8 consecutive days, there is an absence without sanction of leave or if sanctioned leave is overstayed for 8 consecutive days the post holder will be held to have abandoned the employment, voluntarily ending the service.

We hope that you will be able to start work on Monday January 15th and very much look forward to having you as a member of our team.

Yours sincerely

Appendices

Appendix 1: Example of a completed Job requisition

To the General Manager

From:.....*Accounts manager*..... Department.....*Central office*.....

Vacancy: *Accounts assistant* Department: *Central administration/accounts* Date required: *as soon as possible*

Permanent/Temporary/Contract (delete as appropriate) Level/ rate of pay: *RS 2500- RS 3000* Age range: *not appropriate*

Reason for Recruitment: (replacement/temporary replacement/new post)

.....
.....*An assistant left due to sudden illness*.....

Main purpose of job.....*to offer assistance in the day-to day running of the account department*.....

Principal duties.....*Simple book-keeping, assisting with petty cash, preparing for bank / post office/*

.... *utilities payments etc*.....

Qualifications/experience/special skills/special conditions..*SSLC. Experience in an accounts department*

....*essential, keyboard skills an advantage, experience of computing*.....

Conditions of service (house/salary/benefits/working conditions/place of work)

.....*Mon -Fri, 8.30 - 5 pm Lunch 1/2 hr,*.....

.....*Sat, 8.30 -12.30,*.....

.....*Working in the Central Administration Office*.....

Request for advertisement: suggested wording attached

Post to be advertised in the Employment Exchange

Post to be sought via the network

Strike out which do not apply

Signature..... Date.....

Authorised..... Date.....

Appendix 2 Example of a completed Job description

Name of post holder..... Date of appointment to post.....

Department.....*C& F Cell*.....

Title of Job.....*Fundraising manager*.....

Reporting to.....*The President of the APH Board*.....

Responsible for...*The Fundrasing Assistant*.....
.....*The Secretary of the Cell*.....

The purpose of the job is to*help shape APH's fundraising policy and carry out agreed initiatives*
.....*in order to fulfill that policy*.....

The duties and responsibilities are:

- *Develop annual work plans, including budgets*
- *Pay particular attention to the targets and income/expenditure ratios as authorised and incorporated into the plans*
- *Make appeals through direct mail*
- *Approach industry and the corporate sector*
- *Organise an annual fundraising event, with a number of co-ordinated activities carried out with the active support of the different units with APH*
- *Ensure the preparation and use of a range of communications materials*
- *Ensure proper acknowledgement of donations and recording/ accounting of donations and proper response to telephone and correspondence enquiries*
- *Prepare monthly, six-monthly and annual reports of progress*

Post described on.....

Signed.....

Appendix 3 Example of a completed person specification

Job Title.....*Manager, "Food for the Table" Unit*.....Department....*"Food for the Table" Unit APH*

Education and Training	Essential <i>S.S.H.C. Certificate/ Diploma in House Science</i>	Desirable <i>Degree in Home Science Degree in Economics. Other relevant qualifications</i>
Special skills	Essential <i>Proven ability to cook Proven ability to manage a business Proven ability to manage staff Communications: oral/written</i>	Desirable <i>Management of budget</i>
Experience	Essential <i>In managing a catering unit In managing people</i>	Desirable <i>In managing a busy unit In PR/ Publicity</i>
Physical requirements (if any)	Essential	Desirable <i>Physically disabled</i>
Attitudes/personal attributes	Essential <i>Open/ friendly/ easy to talk to good with people/ good self- presentation</i>	Desirable
Personal circumstances	Essential <i>Able to keep unsocial hours Drive</i>	Desirable <i>Owner of vehicle</i>

Any other relevant requirements.....*None*.....

Signed.....Head of Department

Date.....

Appendix 4 Example of a completed Interview schedule

Stenographer APH

Name..... Date.....

Specification	Comments	Desirable	Essential
Qualifications			
<i>SSLC</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Senior typing</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Junior shorthand</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Computer knowledge</i>		<i>Yes *</i>	
<i>General office skills</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
Experience			
<i>Min. 1 year office</i>	<i>3 years' experience at senior level</i>		<i>Yes *</i>
<i>With NGOs</i>	<i>Previous work in commerce.</i>	*	
<i>With/ knowledge Dis.</i>	<i>Interested and sympathetic, but no experience</i>	*	
Skills			
<i>Typing</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Shorthand</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Computing</i>	<i>Limited, but eager to learn</i>	<i>Yes *</i>	
<i>Office practice</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Filing</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Telephone</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Simple book keeping</i>	<i>No experience at all</i>	*	
<i>Verbal communication</i>			*
<i>Oral communication</i>	<i>A good communicator</i>		<i>Yes *</i>
Attitudes			
<i>To disability</i>	<i>Admits lack of experience but</i>		<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Team playing</i>	<i>her personality and general attitudes</i>		<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Commitment</i>	<i>seem positive</i>		<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Pleasant personality</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
<i>Self presentation</i>			<i>Yes *</i>
		4	80

Totals: 84

Overall total out of a possible: 95

Scoring system: For every tick in the desirable column score 2

For every tick in the essential column score 5

Appendix 5 Recruitment and selection: flow chart

Jan.1. 1996 Head of Unit puts in a job requisition for a replacement Social Worker

Jan.3. Request granted: the Head of department writes the advertisement and then prepares the job description and the person specification

Jan.4. Advertisement agreed. It goes in the classified section of the local newspaper and comes out

on Monday X. It asks people to write in or phone for an application form and specifies No CVs. The closing date for applications to be received at APH is Monday Y. When the application forms are sent out to prospective candidates a job description is also sent

Jan.23. Using the person specification the General Manager and the Head of department go through the 23 applications received and draw up a shortlist of five candidates

Jan.24. Letters of invitation are sent out to the short listed candidates. Other candidates are informed by letter that they are not on the list. The Head of department prepares the interview schedule

Jan.31. Selection day: probably taking the form of a brief tour/introduction to the organisation followed by interviews. Each interviewer will have a copy of each application form and this will enable them to complete parts of the interview schedule ahead of each interview: it will also indicate which areas need probing and discussing. At the end of the day the interviewers discuss the candidates and make their decision using their interview schedules and the notes they have made on them

Feb.1. Selected candidate phoned and is offered the job subject to references. The candidate accepts verbally and is sent a formal Offer Letter. Then the other short-listed candidates are informed by 'phone if possible that they have not been successful. References are sent for asking specific questions

Feb.26 The new social worker takes up the post

THIS PROCESS, WITH NOT A DAY WASTED, HAS TAKEN 6 WEEKS.

GETTING IT RIGHT IS NEITHER FAST NOR EASY.

HOWEVER FOLLOWING THESE RULES MAKES GETTING IT RIGHT MORE LIKELY.
