

How do I start recruiting people?

Recruiting people is about getting the right person for the job and for your organisation. Recruitment starts long before the interview process even begins - it involves attracting, screening and selecting qualified people to join your organisation. Recruiting people is an important stage in any organisation's development.

However, if you are a start-up or a small social enterprise, recruiting the wrong person could have significant consequences on your ability to grow. Equally, a new social enterprise should carefully consider whether it really needs to take on an employee at this stage and whether it is the most practical and realistic option to increase capacity or get things done.

Although recruiting people is part of growing your organisation, you may not be in a position to do so financially, especially if there is a lot of uncertainty around where your next contract is coming from. If this is the case, instead of risking employing someone right away, it is sometimes best to get support from volunteers, interns, and your board members if you have any, until you are in a more secure position to employ someone. You could also consider taking someone on for a defined project on a fixed term contract.

However, if you are sure that you are able to afford and manage a new staff member, you should think about what employment option best suits your needs before starting the recruitment process. Remember that your employees are a valuable investment, so if you want to grow your team, make sure you get it right. Ask yourself:

- Are you looking for someone to fill a specific skill gap or just to cope with extra workload?
- Is this additional workload temporary or are you considering your long-term staffing requirements?
- Do you need to recruit or can you train and develop one of your existing employees? (See our guide on Identifying skills gaps, training and development for further information),
- What will be the impact of taking on a new staff member? Do you have somewhere for them to sit? Will you need to buy new equipment for them? Can you afford it?
- Are you considering taking on your first employee to help you grow your business or handle an increasing workload?
- Are you replacing an employee who has left? If so, why did the previous employee leave and what skills and experience have you lost?

How does recruiting people work?

First, you must have a clear understanding of what is required from the person doing the job. This consists of 'hard skills' (qualifications, knowledge and experience) and 'soft skills' (such as influencing, negotiating and the ability to work as part of a team). Separate those qualities which are critical or essential to the job from those which are non critical, i.e. those that are desirable but will not affect a person's ability to fulfil their role successfully.

Try to picture the perfect person for the role:

- What technical and professional skills will they need?
- How do they behave - do you need them to take initiative?
- Do they need to have strong interpersonal skills?
- Consider the environment the employee will work in - do they need to work independently or are they required to interact with other staff?

Be specific with the job requirements. You will only know if you have a good match with a potential employee if you have a list of attributes to measure against.

What are the options for recruiting staff?

You need to consider the type of employees you want to recruit based on factors such as the number of hours of work per week and how constant the work is:

- Permanent employees can be full-time or part-time and will have open-ended employment contracts.
- Fixed Term Contract employees can be full-time or part-time and will have an employment contract with a stated termination date (for example, the end of a project). You will have the same employer obligations that you have for permanent staff (such as paying holiday entitlements, sick pay and pension scheme if your enterprise employs more than five people). The difference is that these obligations are only valid until the end of the contract.
- Employment agency - temporary staff are engaged by the agency and supplied to you. Your contract is with an employment agency to supply you with staff, but you still have certain legal responsibilities towards the agency worker.
- Self-employed freelancers, consultants and contractors give you the minimum of employer obligations. You need to be sure that the people are legally defined as self-employed. This means that they are registered as self-employed with the Inland Revenue and responsible for their own taxation and National Insurance or similar contributions.
- Interns and Volunteers are a way to get flexible additional support for your organisation and can eventually lead to recruitment. This can be a very useful and low cost resource for your social enterprise. See our guide on Working with Interns and Volunteers for further information.
- Sharing staff with another organisation is a way to reduce the cost of employing someone and this is what a number of social enterprises have implemented. This will require a legal agreement between the two organisations and is not without risk, but it might work for you.

As soon as you take on employees, the law outlines the responsibilities you have towards them. Please visit the Business Link in London website or read our guides on HR Policies and Ensuring your enterprise complies with legal requirements for further information.

How do I recruit staff?

Once you have a detailed job specification, there are a number of options open to you to begin the recruitment process. You can use Job Centre Plus, employment agencies, advertise the job on your website or place advertisements in national newspapers. You can also send the job description to your networks and contacts or use agencies that work in the non-for-profit or third sector.

After short-listing your candidates and inviting them for interview, you need to properly plan and prepare:

- What are you looking for?
- What criteria are you going to assess all candidates against?

Keep records of the interview with details of the procedure, written down as soon as possible after the interview. Only record what has been said in the interview and how the selection decision was made, not your beliefs or thoughts about the candidate. Remember that candidates who later make a complaint to an employment tribunal have the right to ask for copies of any notes made during the interview, and that you may need them for defending any possible discrimination case relating to the process.

Remember, it is essential not to discriminate - see the Business Link in London website for guidance on how to prevent discrimination and value diversity (<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>). You can also download a guide for small businesses on the Employment Practices Code from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (www.ico.gov.uk).

What should be included in an induction?

You should carry out an induction with every new employee, be they a permanent or temporary member of staff, and introduce them to colleagues where appropriate. This also applies when working with interns and volunteers.

You need to include information on health and safety, confidentiality, use of IT and phones, your company

culture and admin issues (such as bank accounts). This is important to show due duty and care towards your employees.

Things to look out for with recruiting people

If you take on a member of staff you might be eligible for a new subsidy to help with the costs of recruiting and training a new employee. Employers can now claim a £1,000 recruitment subsidy from Jobcentre Plus for each employee they take on who has been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for six months or more. In addition, employers may be able to claim an additional amount of up to £1,500 per eligible employee towards the cost of in-work training. Find out about recruitment and training subsidies on the Jobcentre Plus website (www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk).

If you are taking on your first employee you may be required to register as an employer with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). You can find information to help you decide whether you need to register in the HMRC information pack for prospective employers, 'Thinking of employing someone?' found on the HMRC website (www.hmrc.gov.uk).

Before you take on anyone, check whether the potential employee is eligible to enter, stay and work in the UK.

If you plan to employ children or young people (for example, school work-experience schemes) you should keep in mind that there are restrictions on the hours and types of work allowed, and that you will need to ensure you have the right policies and CRB checks in place.

Further information

Visit The Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) website:
www.cipd.org.uk

Visit the ACAS website:
www.acas.org.uk

Visit the HM Revenue & Customs website:
www.hmrc.gov.uk

View the Information Commissioner's Office website:
www.ico.gov.uk

Read our guide on Ensuring your enterprise complies with legal requirements:
www.blondon.com/SocialEnterprise/Operations/Compliance/Complyingwithlegalrequirements.aspx

Read our guide on Working with interns and volunteers:
www.blondon.com/SocialEnterprise/Operations/HumanResources/Workingwithinternsandvolunteers.aspx

Read our guide on Developing HR policies:
www.blondon.com/SocialEnterprise/Operations/HumanResources/DevelopingHRpolicies.aspx

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