



Tree Frog

Talent

WHY CAN'T I FILL MY JOB?

Everybody has their own motivations when they're looking for their next position. It might be the challenge, perhaps status is the driving factor and of course, in some instances people are simply after a pay increase. Whatever the candidate's primary reasoning, what it boils down to is that **a position needs to be right for them.**

- **Not for you**
- **Not for your company**
- **Not for me as a recruiter**

It has to be the right move for them. What this means is that from initial attraction right through to final offer, the process needs to speak to prospective candidates and tell them just what it is about your company and position that means they should join you.

Be honest with yourself on this. It's so easy to convince yourself that things are candidate focused whilst really just indulging your own company's wants and needs, but this really will get you nowhere.

So you have a vacancy...

First part of the journey is identifying a need. Perhaps a colleague has moved on or maybe your company is growing. Whatever the reason, it's time to get thinking about who it is you want to hire, and how you'll go about finding and enticing them.

Who are you looking for?

This really is the key question you need to ask yourself when hiring. The answer to this will have a huge influence on everything that you do towards filling your job.

Consider:

Career Level - It seems obvious to say, but what appeals to a graduate level candidate will naturally be completely different to what's expected by a director or high-level manager. Graduates often appreciate a more conversational tone, "friendly" process with focus placed on how the role will help them grow. A prospective director will likely be looking for more professionalism and will be interested in things like remuneration, benefits and a flexibility to make their mark. There's no such thing as a "one size fits all" approach.

Skills - Self explanatory really, what skills and background does your ideal candidate need to be a success in the role? Tailor your process to fit with the skill set you need. Somebody working in a data driven role is more likely to appreciate a professional and matter of fact approach. If you're looking for somebody creative then you'll need more than just a list of duties.

Culture Fit - "Poor cultural fit" is often mentioned as a reason for an employee leaving an organisation prematurely, so the time to put emphasis on it is when you're taking on new staff. Is your company known for its innovative and forward thinking culture? Then advertise and interview in a creative way. Keen to maintain your company's professional outlook? Perhaps take a more traditional route. Bringing on staff who share your company values is a great way to maintain a culture. Conversely, if you feel the team has become a little stale then looking to bring in somebody with a different way of thinking can give things a real shot in the arm. Look to appeal to the type of person you're looking for.

What next?

Once you know just what the ideal candidate looks like it's a case of finding and attracting them. As you'll be aware, this can be easier said than done. Nobody likes the word "compromise", but now is a time for realism. Can you get your ideal candidate on board with the resources available to you?

Is there a sufficient local talent pool? – If not, then already you may need to look at making some compromises. Has the Covid-19 crisis introduced you to working from home? If people only need to come into the office once a week then already you've opened yourself up to a much greater pool of people. Relocation is always an option, however if somebody is relocating then you need to be doubly sure that your role can offer a significant upgrade on their current one.

Do you really need that 5 years' experience? – It's a fact that many people move on because they're after a fresh challenge. If you're looking for somebody with experience but are essentially offering up more of the same, then be aware that you'll need a strong salary, brand reputation and a healthy list of benefits to make people sit up and take notice. Job seeking is a huge investment of time (and often, holiday days!) and true sideways moves are rare. If you are struggling to hire somebody with the requisite level of experience, then maybe consider other avenues. In the time it takes to find somebody with the years under their belt, perhaps you could've trained up a slightly more junior candidate eager for a step up?

Are the skills they need transferable? – For niche industry technical roles it can be time consuming to get somebody working in a whole new way, but if you are struggling to find somebody then it's always worth questioning why you need to hire from within your industry. For instance what's more important for that Project Manager role? Is it the PRINCE2 methodology and impressive portfolio, or is it their in-depth knowledge of industry acronyms? Often a fresh niche will provide your new recruit with the challenge they crave. People thrive when stretched and asking questions.

Do we need a degree? – Why is it that you're asking for a degree? If it's a technical role within a laboratory or research position for instance, then chances are without a degree your new employee won't have the requisite base of knowledge to thrive. If however this is more of a "nice to have" you may find that first rate education to be counter productive as you hire your third incumbent in a year.

Posting an ad online...

Here's your first chance to get the message across, and I'm afraid it's not always a case of "if we build it, they will come". Look at any of the online job boards - do a quick search and scan through the plethora of jobs available. How do they make you feel? I'd be confident guessing that if you browse through a few of the posts you'll come across the same few adjectives more than just once. If you're after an "exciting opportunity" with a "market leading" company I'd be willing to bet that you're in luck.

Of course the irony is that words like "exciting" no longer excite anybody. They've been overused to the point that it's now just an expected part of your average job description. Similarly- "market leading". With so many niche markets out there, what does this really mean? Job seekers are after something a bit more tangible.

What is it that your company can truthfully say that they do better than your competition? Maybe it's a proven track record of staff development with an emphasis on staff training. Did your current MD start off in a grad level role? Great! Shout about it.

Perhaps you're a small company, and as such you can't offer the best salary. What you may well be able to offer is a strong insight into the wider business. As well as working their key roles perhaps your employees also take on client facing work, or are involved in company wide projects. Here's just one area where you have a massive advantage over larger, more segmented organisations where employees tend to stick to a single, core role. Use your ad to get this across. Maybe make things personal and tell your company's story. Play to your strengths and show your candidates that even if you can't compete on some fronts, there is still a lot that you have to offer on others.

One further point to make on salary, "competitive" is an ambiguous term, and many simply assume that it in fact means the exact opposite. Be aware that hiding a salary will limit your applications

What do you love about your job?

Put yourself in the shoes of your prospective employees, but with the benefit of the inside knowledge that you have. You choose to do your job for a reason. What is it that you love about your company???

Naturally to you and your colleagues your vacancy will be important. But think back to the job board- How many of those job ads inspired you enough to take action? Made you want to leave your comfortable position working with the colleagues and friends that you've worked with for years?

Prospective employees have no inbuilt ability to see past the information that you give them, so if you're not telling them why they should come and work for you now then you'll find that you're not attracting the people you want to attract.

Use your advert to entice and encourage potential candidates to apply. Words like "must have" and "imperative" (often coupled with an overuse of capital letters) make an ad look cold and uninviting. Whilst companies might do this to dissuade irrelevant applications, the effect this will have will often in fact be the opposite. Those with no urgency to move on will probably not read it, and a higher percentage of your applications will come from those who need to apply to any job (relevant skill set or not).

The best people will always have a choice of places to work. If you're not standing out in the way you attract people, then without a strong brand and reputation behind you you'll find that you're not even able to get the right people in front of you for interview.

The Interview Process...

Nerve wracking for all concerned, the interview is an oft-flawed but nevertheless, major component of any recruitment process. Obviously it's a candidate's prime opportunity to wow you, but it's also another great opportunity for you to showcase just why they should come and work for you.

- Make things personal and leverage your own experiences with the company. Talk about your progression through the ranks and what it is that you enjoy about working there. Do you have team members eager to meet potential new recruits? Give candidates a taste of the team environment they will be coming in to and make them feel valued even before the decision to join you comes up. Double whammy as you'll get feedback on potential team fit from people you trust.
- Be real - If you have challenges or frustrations with the company or role then lay your cards on the table. It will lend more power to the positive and will show people that they're not simply being mindlessly sold to. Furthermore, this gives candidates the opportunity to weigh up whether the role truly is for them. There is no point in "tricking" people into joining you by telling them anything other than the absolute truth, this won't do either party any good in the medium to long term.
- Can you be flexible on time, date and location? If you work outside of regular office hours you can bet any candidate will be delighted that they don't have to take that precious day of annual leave. For multi-stage processes, can initial stages work as a telephone or video call? Once you break from routine and get that initial know-how under your belt you might find the time savings to be invaluable and you'll deliver a great candidate experience to boot.

The All-Important Offer

You've navigated the process, attracted a good response and you've met the person that you want to see working with you. Still, you're not quite there just yet. We often see a romanticised portrayal of this on TV and in the media, the old adage of "I got the job!". It doesn't always work like that, and again it falls down to whether you as a hiring company can and will offer your ideal candidate what it is that they want from their job.

Some do see this stage as a bit of a game. It's not a game, it's another key part of the process determining whether you bring your first, second or sixth choice candidate on board. It's important to know this - You haven't "lost" if you haven't bartered down the candidate. In fact doing this will at the very best mean that you increase your time to hire (whilst admittedly saving a few pennies) or that you miss out. At worst it will mean you have a new employee who instead of starting their new role full of excitement, feels disengaged and undervalued before they've even sat down for their induction.

You will generally have an idea of what a candidate wants from the word go. Here's an area your recruiter or talent acquisition team can help out, scoping out why they are willing to leave their current role and just what it will take for them to do so. If you can see from the start that you won't be able to offer what a candidate wants or needs then it's in everybody's interests to move on long before you get too involved.

What do recruiters actually do?

As with any service, recruitment is something you could do yourself. And in many cases people do so quite successfully. It's also a bit of an urban legend that recruiters are a bit of a pain to work with. In fairness, in some instances this can be true.

However just like with the garage that you keep going back to or the electrician that makes everything work whilst being a pleasure to work with, you can take real value from working alongside the right recruiter - Choose wisely and you'll have a partnership which will truly benefit your organisation and it's staff both short term and long.

Have a look at a recruiter's previous work and challenge them on it. Are they advising on your positions and on what you can expect for what you're able to offer? Are they creating an inviting job ad or are they copy/pasting your job spec and hoping for the best? Essentially, a good recruiter will make your job stand out from the crowd. They'll attract the right people to the role and will advise you on best practice at each stage of the process.

There are both good and not so good recruiters, but ask the right questions and you'll soon get a feel for what works for you.

The sales bit...

Hopefully this short guide has proved useful to you and your own processes. Should you wish to discuss any of the points made in more detail then you are more than welcome to get in touch.

Tree Frog Talent are a recruitment agency based in the southeast of England specialising in finding the people with the right talent and mindset to help your business succeed and flourish. Offering services across UK industry, the goal is to get people truly enthusiastic about your business and what it is that makes it extraordinary.

Services range from advert writing, recorded video interviews and full-service contingency through to more exclusive consultancy work. If you're struggling to make that perfect hire or are just keen to see your business presented in the best possible light, then get in touch for a chat around what it is you need.



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