



Recruitment and retention guide 2022

Tips for employers and managers on how to
attract and retain a talented workforce

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RealityHR

Intro

Right now, many businesses are struggling to find quality candidates to fill vacant roles. This is compounded by what has become known as ‘the great resignation’.

The reasons for this vary – and identifying them is crucial. Many people are reflecting on their employment experiences over the last 2 years and thinking about what their employer is offering going forward. Some people feel overworked and undervalued, while others are looking for new meaning to their work or seeking ways of working that perhaps their employer can’t or choose not to provide. Whatever the reason, employers need to be proactive and flexible in order to retain their top talent.

This year employers will need to understand the needs and preferences of their existing workforce and those of the talented candidates they want to attract, adapting what they offer in terms of pay, benefits, career development, culture and ways of working to create an employee experience that puts them higher than other organisations they compete with for high performing talent.

In this guide we look at the ways employers and managers can attract and retain talent.

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Supercharging your recruitment process

Recruit the right people and your business will soar. If only it was that simple. Attracting and retaining staff is far from easy. The recruitment process needs significant time investment and finding the right person can be painful.

So, imagine if that pain could be taken away and the process handled for you. Reality HR does just that and can take on as much or as little of this as you need – drafting a job ad, sitting in on interviews, employment checks or carry out the entire process.

Where to advertise and how

As a result of the pandemic, the way job seekers are looking has changed. People are no longer going out to drop-in CVs speculatively. They are trawling online channels and because of remote and hybrid working are prepared to widen their geographical nets.

Working with a deep understanding of your business and its teams, we use the most appropriate tools to supercharge your recruitment process including agencies, job boards, advertising and networking to seek out the candidates who are the best fit.

Our specialist team can help with the following recruitment process steps:

Writing the job advert

Candidates are looking for security and to buy into company culture and values, so that first impression of an advert is important. For many candidates, working in an office environment is out of the question, so can remote working be a permanent arrangement? Do you offer flexible working? These things need to be communicated in any advert and interview questions.

Tempting people who may feel insecure about their current position is another way your advert can stand out. Why not ask existing employees why they like working for your business and include their thoughts in your ad.

Screening CVs

It is possible you may get an influx of CV's during a time when unemployment is high, so sifting through them as part of the recruitment process is a lot of pressure on your time. With our help to create an efficient process, it will not only ensure you send out the right message to potential future employees (by managing the candidate's expectations), you may find that you are more confident with your hiring decisions and ultimately reduce staff turnover as you hire the right people more frequently.

Conducting interviews

Conducting an interview looks easier than it is. And that's why many managers don't always prepare as well as they should for this step in the hiring process. We can conduct interviews for you or with your recruitment team using a well organised structure and right combination of questions to get the best picture of a candidate.

Why Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is important for recruitment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have a strong effect on the overall culture of your workplace and can help to attract and retain talent of all backgrounds. Here's why:

To ensure recruitment policies are fair

Before you start the hiring process, you should review your recruitment strategy and factor in any requirements of your diversity and inclusion policy. To attract through a varied talent pool, you need to ensure your requirements for any job role can be justified and do not indirectly discriminate against anybody.

As an example, you might decide to anonymise applications, offer flexible working hours for parents or carers, and actively encourage applications from all in the community. This should continue through to the selection process where all candidates should be marked against selective criteria.

To give employees opportunity to progress

When Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are celebrated, employees have equal opportunities to progress through a business. Staff are less likely to move on from a job if they know they can develop their skills and be rewarded for their hard work.

Opportunities to progress should follow with equal pay and promotion. Many businesses are conducting equal pay reviews which aim to ensure that male and female staff receive equal pay for equal work. This is also necessary to eliminate pay disparities between ethnic groups. Addressing any issues demonstrates a commitment to Diversity and Inclusion as well as equal opportunities within the business.

To protect reputation

If your processes aren't rigorous and your managers are not trained in diversity issues, you may be leaving the door open for trouble later on.

No employer wants to be tangled up in a discrimination case, so it's essential for businesses to ensure robust equality policies are in place. There must also be focus on bringing those policies to life and ensuring all day-to-day people practices really do create and sustain a genuinely inclusive culture. Do what you say you will do.



To build a strong inclusive company culture

Actively encouraging the conversation around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will create an all-round more positive culture. Company culture can be a make or break for candidates when deciding to accept a job offer or even apply for a role. Without attending an interview, candidates can get a sense of what it's like to work for you from the job ad or speaking to your employees.

New recruits will be looking for ways they can add value and have a purpose in an organisation, so you'll want to communicate how inclusive the company is and that you value everyone's ideas. In the job description, you could describe by what means their actions will help in achieving the company's goals.

To improve employee engagement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion supports employee engagement, and as a result, retention. When these things are celebrated in a business, employees are more likely to feel comfortable in their roles and with their team and want to stay in the business.



Frequently asked question

How can I improve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

Reassess your policies

Having equal opportunity policies and procedures is a bare minimum but employers cannot rely on them as a 'get out of jail free card'. These policies should be kept up to date and reviewed regularly, as well as implemented effectively. This could be by allocating the responsibility of monitoring each one to your management team.

The policies to think about could include an equal opportunities policy, discrimination and anti-harassment and bullying policy (and potentially a separate sexual harassment policy).

Focus on Diversity and Inclusion training

Regular training should be given to all staff on Equality and Diversity, and line managers should be given specific training in relation to recruitment and promotion. This includes regularly reviewing your equal opportunities policy, looking to see where changes could be made and communicating these to your team. Look into providing company-wide training that ensures all employees have a mutual understanding of your equality and diversity policies, this will help your employees to understand what is expected of them.

Communicate with employees

Employees need to be aware of policies and procedures involved with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and also the potential consequences of breaching these policies.

Inform your managers and employees about how you expect them to behave and about the importance of complying with your policies. Do not rely on what's written in a handbook, make sure you speak to your employees too and check that they know what you expect of them.

This could be carried out in regular 1-2-1s, staff surveys and exit interviews – having an open door policy is also a good idea. You should use these to help you understand where any potential issues lie and whether the steps you are taking are working.

Recruitment and its role in building a positive culture

Attracting and retaining talented staff is far from easy – the recruitment process needs significant time and investment, and finding the right person can be difficult. Whether you handle it in-house or seek support elsewhere, here's why positive culture is important to your recruitment strategy, and why the right recruitment strategy is important to your culture.

Culture attracts talent

Perceptions of company culture can be make or break for candidates when deciding to accept a job offer or even apply for a role as 57% of UK employees value a good company culture over salary, according to Glassdoor.

Evidence of a positive company culture will enable you to attract a wide pool of talented candidates and can help persuade them to choose you over another employer. Think about how you can demonstrate your culture to external candidates.

Once they have joined, a positive culture that aligns with people's personal values and means that they enjoy working with you will improve your retention of quality team members.

It helps ensure candidates are a good cultural fit

A good recruitment strategy run by trained managers or outsourced specialists will incorporate desired behaviours and ways of working into your person specification, alongside the technical skills and experience someone might need to do the job well. Think about how you can fairly assess this in candidates, as it will help ensure that successful candidates are a good cultural fit for your organisation.

Promoting your company culture on your website and in your job adverts will help attract the best candidates to your business. That might mean putting more focus on work-life balance, ways of working, commitment to development, or flexible working and less on competitive salaries and on-site benefits.

A culture of flexibility

Increasingly, the ability of an organisation to be flexible and adaptable to respond to frequently changing market forces is becoming a key competitive differentiator, and so creating a culture of flexibility with staff that are comfortable with change will be vital. This can begin from Day 1, or before, by showing recruitment candidates what you mean by true flexibility. Make sure your recruitment process adapts to different individuals' needs, and talk about how your working practices are flexible to enable people to work at times and in locations to suit them, where appropriate for the role.

Before you begin your search for candidates, think about using your job ads to show your flexible working approach, for example job location and working hours. You should also be open and transparent about the possibility of flexible working during the interview process.



Frequently asked question

Can new hire's shape company culture?

It's clear that culture plays a critical role in the hiring decision of most organisations.

A good recruitment policy run by trained managers or outsourced specialists helps ensure that successful candidates are a good cultural fit for your organisation. This can make the difference between a successful recruitment process and one which stores up problems for the future.

“Cultural fit” is essentially whether someone fits into your set of business values and particular working environment. However, it's not always about being a ‘cultural fit’, as new staff can also help develop and enhance culture.

People are now talking about hiring for “cultural add”. What can a candidate bring to the table that will add to your culture and help it move in the right direction?

To do this you need to first understand and define your culture and then find out what areas you are lacking in. Employees who bring in a fresh perspective and desire to learn something new could help drive a positive change in your business.

Get in touch to find
out how we can help
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Everything you need to know about Ghosting in recruitment

When a recruiter or hiring manager doesn't respond to an applicant after an interview or an initial contact, the individual may say they were "ghosted".

Why does ghosting happen?

Ghosting candidates should not be an intentional part of your recruitment process, but sometimes keeping up contact with candidates can slip through the net.

Businesses when recruiting are often inundated with CV's and might find it difficult to handle the high volume of applications that come through, especially when it's hundreds per job role. This means contacting every rejected employee is probably low on their list of priorities.

Managers may also not have a real reason for rejection, especially when they are trying to shortlist the top candidates from a high-quality group of them, so in the end choose not to follow up at all. Or recruiters may rely on the job ad's information that they're going to contact only chosen candidates.

Of course, ghosting happens both ways. Many hiring managers have likely experienced setting aside time to meet with a candidate that does not show up for an interview, or return calls on more than one occasion.



Frequently asked question

How do I ensure I don't ghost a candidate?

Don't abandon the recruitment process once you find a perfect match. Make sure that you follow the interview process through and ensure every candidate receives acknowledgement of their application.

Give feedback promptly

This seems like the obvious solution to ghosting, but it's very important to let rejected candidates know why they might not be getting the job. Not only for the wellbeing of the candidate, but also for your business.

This helps improve how the candidate sees your company, and it can go a long way to building a positive employer brand, especially on social media.



Positive communication

When letting a candidate know they were not successful, be professional, kind and respectful. You don't have to use the word rejected. Instead, you could say that the team has decided not to further their application on this occasion.

Remember to avoid words that could be misconstrued – this could be seen as discrimination. Try to avoid saying that you are searching for more qualified applicants.

Be transparent about the process and set realistic expectations

To job seekers it may seem like the employment process is kept slightly under wraps. They might submit an application online via your website, or platform like Indeed, then sit and wait because they've not been told when the next communication is coming – and where it is coming from.

Try to explain the steps it takes in the hiring process in your job advert, for example, when they can expect to hear back from you. Specify a date after which, the candidate could follow up to check the status. If you're concerned about candidates calling or emailing too early in the process, this should help prevent that.

Keep a network of candidates

Just because a candidate isn't a good fit for your current job vacancy, doesn't mean they won't be in the future. Especially in the current job market where there are more vacancies than people looking for work, it would be a good idea to keep in touch with the candidates you don't hire, so you don't miss out on people that may still be a good fit in your business. Check that they are happy for you to keep their details on file, so you don't fall foul of Data Protection regulations.

Outsource your recruitment process

If you struggle to stay on top of communication when hiring staff, you may find it beneficial to outsource some or all of your recruitment process. A recruitment specialist can screen CVs, interview candidates, and help you maintain your reputation, free from employee ghosting mishaps.

At Reality HR, we can support you with recruitment, taking care of the whole process, or the parts where you need the most support – from developing job specifications to conducting interviews, onboarding the successful candidates and beyond. Just get in touch with our team for more details.

Above all, your hiring process is a reflection on your company culture, and ghosting can be dangerous for your brand. Clear communication at every stage of the hiring process can improve your rate of accepted offers and improve employee retention.

How psychometrics can help in recruitment

Hiring someone who looks great on paper but struggles to settle in or, even worse, disrupts the team can be a costly and time-consuming mistake that as an employer, you'll want to avoid. Luckily, personality profiling or psychometrics can be useful in recruitment, as part of a robust selection process.

Psychometrics must, however, be used with caution. You should ensure you use a tool that is designed to support a robust process, and never base any hiring decisions on personality profiles alone.

A broad selection process will ideally include a number of interviews, possibly supported by psychometrics, as well as some technical or job-based testing, for example, excel, work planning or presentations – whatever is relevant for the job role. Your psychometrics can help you build appropriate competency based questions to use in the interview e.g. looking for a logical thinker, a quick decision maker, a confident networker, but remember that personality profiles measure preference and not ability, so cannot be relied upon as a predictor of future performance.

In short, while psychometrics can't influence the kind of candidates applying for your job vacancies, they can really help you select the right candidate, and then help them settle in to your culture and your existing team.



Frequently asked question

Do I need to be qualified to administer psychometric testing?

Some psychometrics require a qualified and licensed practitioner to administer them, others can be delivered by HR professionals or line managers. Reality HR can offer a choice of tools to your operational needs and budget.

Engagement and retention

In this difficult job market, it is more important than ever to think about how you will retain your existing staff – why should they stay with you when there are numerous other jobs available, some of which may be offering substantial salary increases? Research shows that engaged employees stay with their companies longer and are up to 25% more productive than non-engaged colleagues.

Engaging your employees is easier when you understand them and their differences. Knowing how they think, communicate and work with one another can help build relationships and a positive culture.

Insights Discovery is a personality profiling tool designed to enable this, and here's how it can help with engagement and retention.

Support personal development

Investing in your people is crucial for employee retention. This might involve technical or job-based training but also psychometrics such as Insights Discovery, which helps people to understand themselves and each other.

When you spend time and money on employee development, it shows your staff you value them as an employee and are invested in their growth and progression within the business. This is likely to improve their engagement and job satisfaction and as a result they would be more inclined to stay in the business.

Communication and connections

We've had excellent feedback from our Insights workshops – which are fun, engaging and help people learn about their colleagues and team. We also share tips and tools to take away immediately to help influence others, whether that's the team, boss or customers.

Investing in training in general is great for individuals to feel valued, but will also make them more effective communicators and help the group work more cohesively as a team.

Build a positive company culture

One of the most valuable reasons you might choose to add Insights into your learning and development process is to improve your company culture. By understanding your teams' individual characteristics, how they work and how they communicate, it can help you to plan how best to introduce different ways of working and improve team effectiveness.

Recognising and valuing people's differences in personality is also the first step to an inclusive culture and supports Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Inclusion isn't just about protected characteristics, but diversity of thought – which can be explained by understanding personality traits and preferences.

Onboarding new employees

For new starters, understanding the type of personality traits and attributes they have can help ensure their first few weeks in your company are all plain sailing.

Psychometric testing is useful in this scenario because it can give you an idea of what motivates and engages your new employee, and how they may fit into your existing team.

And while it can be tricky to know exactly how an individual is going to react in a challenging situation, using Insights profiling can help you to understand what extra support or training they might need from you to be most productive in their role as quickly as possible.



Frequently asked question

Can Insights help with other business challenges?

Absolutely! Whether it's a series of virtual workshops designed to help your teams work more productively, or a longer term programme based on leadership, culture or change, Insights can deliver the breakthroughs you've been searching for.



Get in touch to find
out how we can help
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How to attract and retain candidates through ways other than salary

It's no secret that recruiting and retaining staff at the moment is a bigger challenge than it's ever been.

Now with so much choice, jobseekers can afford to be picky, and are looking for roles that give them everything they're looking for. And, while salary does matter, it's other perks and benefits that often seal a candidate's interest.

Here's how you can stand out and catch the eye of top talent:

Flexibility

Understandably, not all businesses can offer 100% remote working, but offering some kind of flexibility, whether that's hybrid working or flexi hours, gives people an opportunity to balance their working life, with their personal life, without either one suffering.

Obviously, this will not work for all companies – some people need to be in the office and work better when teams can collaborate and share ideas. But if it can work for your business, it's very effective – and very attractive to new recruits.

Opportunity for progression

If you can show in your job ads and interviews, that the role has a guaranteed career path, it shows the candidate that you're committed to keeping them in your business, and moving forward, for the long run.

Some things you could give detail of include any training and development programmes they'll have access to, any mentoring systems you have in place and examples of other staff members who've worked their way up in the business.

Extra holiday

If you have the capacity to allow people extended time off, extra holiday is an effective way of rewarding employees. It's also valued by working parents. Typically, staff come back motivated, stimulated and more productive. But if you can't gift your employees the extra days off, you could offer the chance to buy holidays, when necessary, as part of your benefits package.

Other perks and benefits

For many businesses, extra holidays and four-day work weeks will not be a reality, so don't forget that some of the old staple benefits can still get candidates through the door.

Gym memberships or contributions could sway some individuals and are also great for health and wellbeing at work. Other ideas could include giving your employees their birthday off or time off for training or paid-for courses in a topic that interests them (not just work-related training). You may even be able to offer them the chance to take a sabbatical.

Company culture

For many jobseekers, finding an organisation where they would 'fit' in, is essential. Aside from ensuring factors like work environment and management style match their needs, they also want to know that the business they're applying to work for has good values that match theirs.

One in particular might be social responsibility. Young people will be especially impacted by climate change in the coming years, so it is no surprise that environmental commitments would be important to them in their working lives as well as personally. Without giving a clear indication in your job advert of what it's really like to work for your company, you're making it harder for candidates to gauge if they are suitable for the job role.

Focus on wellbeing

Candidates are more likely to be drawn towards initiatives that put mental health support first. Glassdoor found that 58% of employees place more emphasis on employee benefits relating to physical and mental wellbeing. This could be anything from wellness days, no-meeting Fridays or the support of mental health champions.

And whether it's in your job postings, on employer career pages or social profiles, or during communications with candidates, a mention of your company's wellness efforts can say a lot about the culture too.



Frequently asked question

How else can I attract candidates and engage staff?

As public awareness about the climate crisis hits an all time high, there is mounting pressure on businesses to be more sustainable.

Prioritising sustainability can be one of the most effective ways to attract and keep top talent. Of course, factors like pay and work-life balance play their part, but your approach to sustainability is more important than ever in finding good candidates.

According to a survey of 1,000 young UK employees by TheTalentPeople, 33% said they think that climate change has affected how they search for job opportunities. Of these people, more than two thirds (68%) said they'd like to work for an employer that is doing something positive for the future of our planet.

Young people will be especially impacted by climate change in the coming years, so it is no surprise that environmental commitments would be important to them in their working lives as well as personally.

To find out more about what you can do to become more sustainable as a business in order to attract and retain staff, read our blog [here](#).

Responding to a request for a pay rise

It has hit the headlines recently that average pay rises are failing to keep up with the cost of living.

As an employer, you may wish to increase your employees' earnings to match price rises, but that's not viable for every business, especially when things have been upside down for the last two years.

You may also have employees who expect pay rises to be in line with the rise of cost of living – so how do you deal with that conversation?

Here's some advice for businesses on what to do if your staff are asking for more money.

Do your research

Now is a great time to research the salaries and benefits packages available across your industry, so that as and when you get requests from your employees, you have already started the information-gathering process. Know your market, because it's likely your employees will be looking at this information too.

We are seeing in the headlines that people are moving to roles where they're earning ridiculous money, but is that really happening in your industry? You don't want to end up paying a salary twice or three times the average if that's not what your employee would be getting for the same role elsewhere.

If you need support with this, we provide a comprehensive salary benchmarking service to ensure your base salaries and overall compensation packages are competitive.

Remember it's not just about salary

Company culture, a focus on wellbeing and opportunity for career progression all go towards retaining and engaging employees. You can read about this in detail in our blog [here](#).

It's also good to note that some employees may not be thinking about their 'salary' at all and want a one-off payment. Consider everyone on your team as an individual, some people may be struggling financially as a result of the rise in living costs, which is why they have come to you to ask for a pay rise.

Be kind and show compassion, especially when the answer is no. You do not want to appear dismissive or uncaring.

Look at your benefits package

A comprehensive benefits package is what many candidates are looking for when applying for work, and this may also help retain staff if you can't offer them an increase on their salary.

If you have the capacity to allow people extra time off, extended holiday is a great way of rewarding employees. Working parents will appreciate flexible working benefits such as flexi hours, hybrid working or even a four-day work week.

Social events and team building days could make up another element of your benefits package, they not only help build relationships within your teams but also reduce stress levels and possibility of burnout.

Be open, honest and encourage feedback

We would always encourage you to be honest and transparent with your employees.

You want them to feel confident to have conversations with you or their line manager, on tricky subjects and if for instance they are struggling to make ends meet, this would be hard to do.

One idea is to ask your teams directly what they want, this could be through staff engagement surveys. These are a proven way to measure how your staff feel about working for your business, and to identify issues that need to be addressed, e.g. pay.

You can also ask managers to bring up the topic of pay in their 1:1s, just make sure they have the skills to have those conversations to begin with.



Frequently asked question

How do I approach the conversation with my employee?

Asking for a pay rise is a potentially uncomfortable situation to be in for the employee – it's probably taken some courage, so try to be completely honest and take their request seriously.

Keep in mind they are asking you this because they would like to stay with the company, so this is a good opportunity to work on your employee retention.

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you have to turn down a request for a pay rise, for financial reasons, or to keep salaries and pay grades aligned across the organisation. To ensure the employee stays motivated and feels appreciated, put some time in your diary to meet with them, listen to their request with an open mind, and do your research before making a snap decision or answer.

Organise a follow up meeting to review their pay rise request and feed back the decision and reasoning to them. This is a great opportunity to talk to them about setting tangible goals that can be reviewed at a specific date in the future, but be careful not to over-promise here!

If you find yourself in a situation where an employee threatens to leave if you don't pay them more, resist the urge to respond straight away and carefully think it over, considering their contribution to the company. Also, has their salary changed much over time? How does their salary compare to similar positions in the company, or similar positions available elsewhere?

If employees do want to leave because they're being enticed by more money elsewhere, remember that the grass isn't always greener. Everyone needs to consider the bigger picture – it's not just about salary.



The Manor House,
Lutyens Close, Basingstoke,
Hampshire, RG24 8AG

44 (0)1256 328428
info@realityhr.co.uk
www.realityhr.co.uk

RealityHR