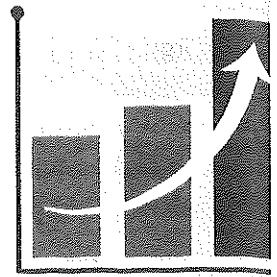


Getting started

Part of recruitment and selection is making people aware that a vacancy exists. Write down as many ways as you can think of that an employer could use to make people aware of a vacancy. When you have completed this unit, see how many ways you missed.



A

Examine how effective recruitment and selection contribute to business success

In this section, you will consider the reasons why a vacancy exists in the first place, the processes that happen to attract and choose new staff and the ethical and legal considerations that influence those processes.

Recruitment of staff

There are lots of different reasons why an organisation may decide to recruit someone to a position (see Table 8.1). One of the most common that you may have heard of is that someone is leaving to go and work for another organisation and their position needs to be filled. Large businesses carry out **workforce** planning to find out if they need to recruit anyone at all.



► Before looking at Table 8.1, how many different reasons for recruitment can you think of?

Workforce planning

Businesses need to match the skills, knowledge and number of employees to their current and future needs. To work out their needs, they need to review the number and skills of employees they have now, what they think will happen in the future and the number that they will need in the future.

Discussion

ICT has changed the skills, knowledge and number of employees that are required in the workplace. How do you think the following advances in technology have affected the way that businesses plan their workforces: mobile phones, laptops and video conferencing? Does the use of IT decrease employee numbers? If so, why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of relying on IT?

In large organisations with more than 250 employees, the types of skills required will depend on the industry that they work in. For example, a retail business may need staff to put out stock and to serve customers face-to-face. A production company may need staff to work in packing or on the production line. A financial organisation may need staff with specialist experience and qualifications to offer advice and maybe telephone skills.

There are lots of reasons why businesses will need to recruit staff. Businesses often recruit due to a mixture of some, or all, of the reasons that are shown in Table 8.1.

Research

Find out and compare the staff turnover rates in different industries. Find out which industries have high rates of turnover and which have lower. Choose two businesses (one in each industry) and examine the impact of their rate of turnover on the recruitment of staff.

Table 8.1: There are many varied reasons why businesses recruit staff

Reasons for recruiting staff

The business is growing	If the number of customers or sales is increasing, the business will need to recruit. Employees may be needed locally, nationally or even globally.
Job roles are changing	Advances in technology influence the way jobs are performed. For example, self-service tills were introduced in the UK in 2002. This did not lead to fewer staff being recruited by supermarkets but, instead of having staff on the tills waiting for customers, they are able to stock the shelves and increase sales.
Systems are changing	If customers use systems in new ways, the skills and number of employees needed changes too. For example, many people book hotels and flights online so staff taking telephone bookings only are reduced.
New vacancies are being created by more space or product development	Staff may be needed to operate in new gaps in the market or environment. For example, Facebook was effectively launched to the general public from 2004. Now there are vacancies to work at Facebook all over the world for the people with the right skills and expertise. Businesses launching new products may need new staff to promote and sell them.
Vacancies caused by leavers/staff turnover	Staff leave for many different reasons and may or may not need to be replaced. Staff may leave due to personal reasons such as moving house, for promotions outside the organisation or for higher wages/salaries.
Staff are being internally promoted	If an employee gets a promotion to a higher job within the business, this is called an internal promotion. A new person will need to be recruited to cover their former role.
New offices or branches are being opened	Businesses often start small and then need more staff as they start to expand.
Seasonal fluctuations lead to a need for temporary staff	For some businesses, there are huge variations in staff, for example businesses working in the tourist industry often see large increases in the number of staff needed in the summer compared with the winter. Hotels, holiday parks and entertainment businesses will all see high increases in the demand during the summer months. Other businesses have large increases in the winter, for example retailers during the run up to festivals such as Christmas, Hanukkah or Eid.

Job centres and agencies

An organisation may not be able to manage the process of recruiting themselves because they are too busy or feel they do not have suitably qualified staff to run the recruitment process. They may use job centres or other agencies. Job centres are popular places for employers to advertise vacancies as this is where people go to get advice on different jobs and benefits. Job centres work with employers to provide additional training and support to local areas so that employees can be found to fill vacancies. Job centres are also able to offer employers extra training and support so that they can recruit employees, for example, by giving advice on recruitment or on different training opportunities such as apprenticeships. Recruitment agencies such as Reed or Office Angels are also popular but, unlike the job centre, they charge commission for finding suitable people for employers on a temporary or permanent basis.

Key term

Staff turnover – this calculation takes the number of employees that left in a given amount of time (usually a year) as a percentage of all employees. For example, ten employees leaving in one year from 100 employees would be $10/100 = 10\%$ turnover. The average UK staff turnover is 15%.

Research

Many vacancies are available online so it is a popular method of recruitment. In small groups, research the type and variety of vacancies available. Consider splitting your research into regions. Can you see any differences between the types of job available? Why are there regional differences?

Can you find examples of off- and online advertising at your local job centre?

Key terms

Fixed-term contract – an employment contract between employee and employer with a defined end date.

Probationary period – a defined 'trial' period where employee and employer can work out if the employee is a good fit for the role and the business.

Recruitment agencies provide employers with details about potential applicants. Often recruitment agencies will provide staff on a temporary or permanent basis. This means that an employer may have a chance to see how an employee is likely to work out by putting them on a three-, six- or twelve-month **fixed-term contract** initially. This is often a cost-effective option for employers, particularly if their business changes rapidly and they may not need to keep staff permanently. Also, almost all jobs, whether permanent or fixed-term contracts will have a **probationary period**. What do you think are the advantages for an employer and employee in using fixed-term contracts? What are the advantages of having a probationary period?

The advantages and disadvantages of using an agency are outlined in Table 8.2.

► **Table 8.2:** Advantages and disadvantages of using an agency or consultant

Advantages

The organisation can concentrate on running the business and not looking for new employees.

The organisation does not have to employ a recruitment team.

The agency/consultant will have access to lots of different people and will screen out anyone who is unsuitable.

They will not tell competitor organisations that you are recruiting, but your own advertisements will.

They can offer specialist support and expertise for the recruiting team, for example a finance specialist when recruiting to the finance team.

They can offer advice about what is happening in the employment area.

Disadvantages

The organisation must pay the agent and the new employee, adding to costs. These costs include a fee for finding the employee and often a percentage of their salary going forward.

The agency/consultant may not find the right person for the job as the agent does not know in detail the culture and values of the business. They also do not know if the person will work well with other members of the team.

They may not care about employing the right person for the job as much as someone working in the organisation, as they will not be working directly with that person.

Case study

Bartley Major

Bartley Major is a **headhunting** agency based in Cheshire. They recruit employees for leading companies throughout the British Isles.

They were approached recently by a leading cosmetics retailer, Live Beauty, to help them recruit a new Brand Communications Director. To ensure they got the right person for the job, the agency spoke extensively with

their contact at Live Beauty and made sure they had as full a job description as possible. Making sure they knew the deadlines for the role, the recruiter at Bartley Major then researched suitable candidates, providing Live Beauty with an appropriate shortlist. The recruiter then helped prepare the candidates for interview and, when a successful candidate was chosen, the recruiter managed much of the administrative detail between the new employee and their new employer.

For all roles like the above, Bartley Major's activities include:

- targeting high achievers to form a pool of applicants
- presenting candidates to clients after initial screening and selection
- interviewing candidates and preparing them for interview with the employer
- negotiating salary packages
- helping candidates to resign from their current employer.

They also conduct assessment days so that employers can receive details about applicants' previous knowledge, experience and ability before the recruitment process starts.

Check your knowledge

- 1 What is a recruitment agency?
- 2 What were the advantages to Live Beauty of using Bartley Major?
- 3 Do you think there may have been any disadvantages?
- 4 'Headhunters are only useful to recruit the most senior employees.' Discuss.
- 5 What sort of information do you think the recruiter needed from Live Beauty to make sure their search was successful? Create a list, and share with a peer to see how many you have both thought of.

Internal advertising compared to external advertising

Jobs can be advertised internally or externally. Internal advertising means that the advertising of the job will only be done inside the organisation. This means that the person will already have an idea of the type of organisation that they are working for and the skills needed to work there. Sometimes, this type of advertising and recruitment will also give current employees the chance for promotion or additional responsibility, so it can be motivating for them.

Organisations will sometimes decide to advertise a vacancy internally first. If no suitable employees apply for this job, they will advertise outside as well. Of course, if a vacancy is advertised internally and someone changes jobs to fill the role, somebody new may be needed to replace them, in turn. This may extend the recruitment process and may be a problem for the organisation if they need to recruit quickly. The advantages and disadvantages of internal advertising are outlined in Table 8.3.

► **Table 8.3:** Advantages and disadvantages of advertising internally

Advantages	Disadvantages
Cheap to advertise	Limited choice of candidates
All candidates known to the organisation	May cause problems amongst employees due to the change
Candidates also already know the organisation	Employees may be stuck in their ways
More likely to have a smaller number of applicants	May not generate new ideas
Can encourage career progression	The successful candidate will need to be replaced, needing another recruitment plan

Key term

Headhunter – an organisation that finds and approaches individuals already employed by a business to ask them if they wish to work for another business.

External advertising is the opposite of internal and is the process of recruiting from outside the organisation. There are a number of ways this can be done and these include the organisation itself doing the recruiting or making use of job centres and agencies. The advantages and disadvantages of external advertising are outlined in Table 8.4.

► **Table 8.4:** Advantages and disadvantages of external advertising

Advantages	Disadvantages
Higher number of candidates	Takes longer
Candidates may have new ideas	Person appointed may not be as good as they appear
Potential for new skills to be brought into the organisation	More expensive to advertise

Online recruitment and traditional methods

Many businesses now make use of online methods to recruit staff rather than traditional advertising such as shop windows or in the local newspaper. Online methods include:

- social media such as Facebook and Twitter
- websites
- online application forms to be filled in onscreen
- emailing completed forms or curriculum vitae (CV).

Traditional methods are those that have been used for many years including:

- calling in for a discussion or informal chat
- sending in a paper application form
- writing a letter of application to be sent in by post with a CV.

Case study

Debenhams



Debenhams use their website to provide information for applicants. The site uses online questions to help potential applicants search for job vacancies that might be relevant to them. They then set up a user name and password as well as giving their email address to Debenhams and starting the online application. This means that Debenhams have contact information from the earliest stage and can monitor who is interested in their vacancies.

The online application form screens applications by asking questions about aspects such as:

- whether the applicant has the correct legal documents to work in the UK
- whether they are at least 16 years of age and therefore of school leaving age in the UK
- qualifications relevant to the role
- skills relevant to the role
- previous criminal convictions.

Check your knowledge

- 1 How do Debenhams use online applications as part of recruitment?
- 2 What are the advantages of using such a system?
- 3 Are there any disadvantages?
- 4 Compare and contrast the online application process for three different organisations that you are aware of. To what extent do these processes have common features? How important is conformity in recruitment?

II PAUSE POINT

Can you explain what recruiting staff means? Can you explain the difference between internal and external recruitment and the difference between online recruitment and traditional methods?

Hint

Draw a table showing the differences between internal and external recruitment, with examples.

Extend

When is online recruitment used more than traditional methods for internal recruitment and why?

Recruitment and business success

Recruiting the right staff is very important for the success of a business. Often people are the most expensive assets in a business and employing the wrong people can be costly if customers are unhappy or receive poor service. Each time a business recruits a new member of staff there is a cost to the business. This is called an **opportunity cost**. This is the cost of the advertising and recruitment process itself but also the cost of the opportunity (because the time that the hiring manager spent on recruiting could have been used elsewhere in the business). Good recruitment leads to high numbers of applicants and, ultimately, a good choice of people to work for the business. Poor recruitment has the opposite effect and can lead to the business being short of staff and unable to work effectively.

Key term

Opportunity cost – the cost to the business of making one decision over another, choosing one alternative compared to the next best.

Professional recruitment leading to efficient staff integration

Recruiting staff in a professional way is also critical to businesses and helps their success. This is because professional recruitment means that the reputation of the business continues to be good so more people will be attracted to work there.

Professional recruitment also ensures that new staff fit into the **culture** of that business and quickly have a positive impact on the business because they are aware of what is required by the business at the very start of the process. This means that staff become integrated more quickly, leading to efficient working practices. What do you think the impact of recruiting the right people is on the business?

Key term

Culture – this means 'the way we do things around here': the values and expectations of people in a business that are not written down.

Recruitment and selection process

The two elements of the recruitment and selection process are:

- ▶ producing the documents that are needed for recruitment from the advertisement, including arrangements for applicants to send in their information to the business
- ▶ selection of the candidates once applications have been received.

The recruitment process

You have already learned that advertising can be internal or external and the same is true of all other elements of the recruitment process. Businesses often use different documents for internal recruitment compared to external. This is because they already know the employees that are involved. Some businesses may ask employees to write a letter rather than fill in an application form for an internal vacancy.

Job advertisement

Internal advertising is the simpler of the two types of advertising for a vacancy. This is because it only needs to be shown to employees who currently work for the organisation. It may be placed on the staff noticeboard, web page, company magazine or mentioned in a staff meeting or through a mass email. The details of the job need to

be given, together with any increase in pay or responsibilities. All members of staff can decide whether or not they want to apply. Organisations sometimes ask employees to provide a 'declaration of interest' for a vacancy. This means that they write a letter to their employer or speak to their employer about why they are interested in a particular job. The employer can then see how many potential people would apply for an advertised job and make a decision as to whether this is the best way to recruit. They often also ask that any potential candidates inform their current manager of their interest in another role.

External advertising is more complicated as it can be achieved in a number of different ways. Some organisations use newspapers or radio, others a poster in a window, some keep an up-to-date list of interested people to email and others rely on industry-related journals or magazines. Online advertising through websites is becoming increasingly popular. In short, the most suitable place to advertise a post is where potential applicants will read it, so this can vary by sector depending upon who your likely pool of candidates is. Advertising, as you have already learned, may also be done by using an agency or job centre.

One of the cheapest methods of advertising a position is a poster in the window of a business or on a noticeboard. You may have seen this type of notice when you were looking for a part-time job. Employers will put it in the window and anyone in the local area will see it and then may decide to apply. Any applicants will already have some information about the company. This type of advertising does limit the number of possible people applying, because only those who have been past or into the organisation will see it. This type of advertisement may seem old fashioned but it is still relevant for certain types of work.

Job analysis

The job advertisement is one of several documents needed for the recruitment process. As soon as an advertisement is placed, potential applicants will want to know more about the job role so a job description needs to be written. Before businesses write this description, they often analyse the job to review all the different parts of it and the type of person that would be able to perform the role effectively. Job analysis considers the:

- ▶ tasks (including difficulty and impact of errors)
- ▶ competencies
- ▶ attributes.

Job analysis is used to create the job description and person specification that are required.

Job description

Job descriptions give information to prospective employees about what the job actually involves by giving the purpose of the job and the types of responsibilities and duties that will be expected as part of that job. Different organisations have their own particular extra information, but there are a set of key elements that are always included and they are shown in Table 8.5.

Key term

Person specification – the list of requirements that a person needs to have in order to meet the expectations of the job.

Person specification

The job description essentially concentrates on providing information about the job. The **person specification** is a direct contrast. It provides information about the type of person that the organisation is looking for to do the job. The elements of a job specification are shown in Figure 8.1.

Table 8.5: Elements of a job description

Element	Description
Title of the job	This is really important as it is used to give a person an idea of what the job involves and an indication of the level of responsibility, for example, Finance Manager.
Department and location	A job description will be written for a particular department in an organisation, especially if the organisation is very large.
Broad terms	This gives a very rough idea of what is involved in the post. Many job vacancies have open-ended terms, meaning that they can change slightly to take into account the needs of the business or employee.
Responsible to whom	This tells the applicant to whom they must report with any problems or queries.
Responsibilities	This tells the applicant about any people or resources they are responsible for.
Scope of post	This gives the applicant guidance on how far reaching their post is, for example, whether or not there is a possibility to supervise others or make management changes.
Education and qualifications	Some organisations will also include details about the level of qualifications and experience that the job requires, for example, 'graduate required'. Such information may also be included in the person specification.
Name of compiler and approver	This is the person who designed and agreed the job.
Date of issue	This is when the description was issued. In a fast-changing business world, it is important to know when the last changes were made to the job.

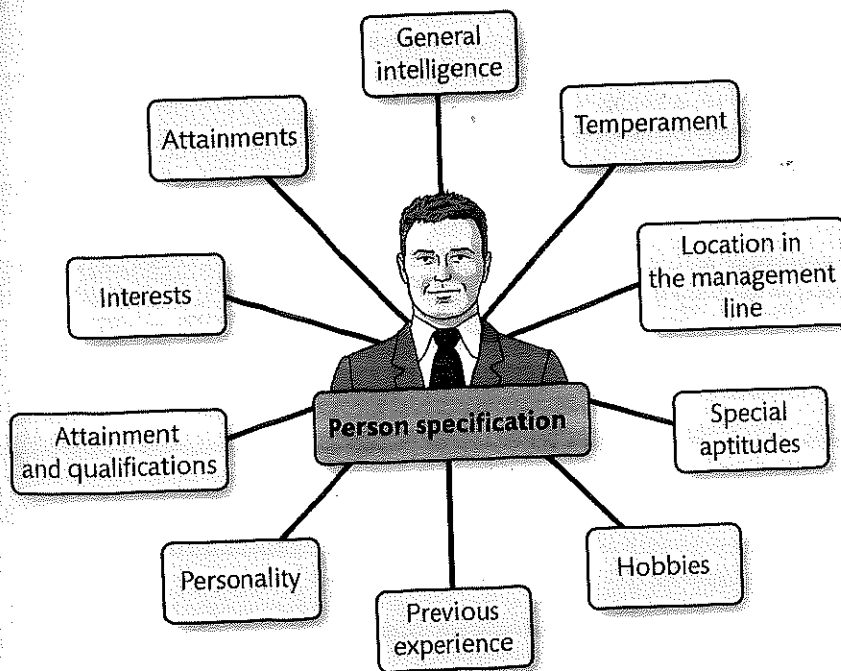


Figure 8.1: Elements of a person specification

The person specification gives a list of requirements, but these relate to the person doing the job. It will have an introduction at the start giving details about the job, such as job title, post reference number and management responsibilities (including who the employee needs to report to and is responsible for). It will then detail attributes that the organisation wants that person to have, for example, their type of personality or intelligence level. Often person specifications have a list of attributes that are considered to be **essential** or **desirable elements**. The elements of a person specification are outlined in Table 8.6 and an example of a brief person specification is shown in Figure 8.2.

Reflect

What elements do you currently have if you applied for a job now? What elements are you working towards and want to achieve? How will you gain these elements.

► **Table 8.6:** Elements of a person specification

Element	Description
Title of the job and reference number	This is really important as it gives a person an idea of what the job involves. The reference number makes it easier for the organisation to send out details and keep information on file.
Location in management line	A person specification will give clear details about how senior the post holder will be. This helps a potential applicant to work out whether they are suitable for the job.
Essential and desirable characteristics	The person specification will list characteristics that a person needs in order to perform the role, for example, excellent communication skills or the ability to speak an additional language.
Attainments, qualifications and general intelligence	This information details the education level and qualifications that the person should have. Employers will sometimes write 'must have degree-level education' or 'Level 3 education'.
Previous experience	The level of experience needed for the job should be outlined. This must be done in a way that does not discriminate against older or younger employees, so should not state a number or years but could say 'extensive experience'.
Special aptitudes	These are special skills that a person doing this job needs to have, for example, ability to use IT or minimum typing speed.
Temperament and personality	Someone applying for this job needs to be able to demonstrate a certain type of personality so indicators will be provided to help applicants understand what is required, for example, 'able to work under pressure' or 'good sense of humour needed'.
Any other relevant information	Without discriminating against any applicants, it may be possible to list other relevant information on the person specification, for example, 'must be willing to undertake extensive overnight travel'. This is indicating that such work will be needed and therefore should be prepared for.

Person Specification

Post Title: Finance and Administrative Officer

Grade: Clerical 3/4

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications/Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTEC National Diploma in Business • GCSEs in Maths and English plus 3 others at Grade C or above or equivalent • ICT skills, particularly spreadsheets and databases 	
Work-related Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or 2 years general office and/or financial experience • Good level of numeracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in higher education
Skills/Abilities and Special Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good organisational skills • Able to prioritise workloads • Good communication skills • Team-working ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience or willingness to work in an open-plan environment

► **Figure 8.2:** An example of a brief person specification

Some organisations will also use ratings in their specification (see Figure 8.3). This means that they will rate how important a part of the person specification is to a job, with 10 meaning that this attribute is very important and 1 not important.

Person Specification

Post Title: Business Assistant
Grade: 4

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Rating
Qualifications and knowledge	BTEC National in Business (Merit)		10
	Maths and English GCSE Grade 5 or above		10
		Good working knowledge of word processing software	8
		Good working knowledge of spreadsheets	5
Work-related experience		Experience of working in an office	5
Skills	Good organisational skills		10
	Able to prioritise workload		10
	Good communication skills		10
	Able to work well in a team		10
		Experience of working in a sales environment	3

Figure 8.3: Applicants must have the essential skills to be selected but having desirable ratings ensures that the correct emphasis is placed on the skills required for the job

II PAUSE POINT

Hint

Extend

What is the difference between a person specification and a job description?

Think about the purposes of each document to help you remember.

What would happen in the recruitment process if one of these documents was missing? What would the implications be for the business?

Research

Imagine you have a degree in Business Studies following your BTEC National Business course. Find three job descriptions, with person specifications for a Business Assistant/Executive, to compare. Use job websites to help you and make a note of the similarities and differences. Which would you apply for? What skills would you need to develop to apply for that role?

Theory into practice

Write your own CV using the examples listed to help you with your design. Now share your CV with two other learners in your class. Ask them to give you feedback on your CV and how you could improve it. Once you have made the requested changes, repeat the process.

Did you find any common mistakes or errors?

Were there any areas where everyone could improve their CVs?

If you, as a manager, received a CV with mistakes in it, what would you do? Would you still consider the applicant for the vacancy? Why?

CV or application form

A CV (curriculum vitae) requires applicants to write all their details including education and history on a two-page sheet, including referees. The organisation can immediately see everything about an applicant. CVs only focus on positive aspects of an applicant, so it may be difficult to compare candidates. CVs may also have been used to apply for lots of jobs so may not be specific to a particular role. It is important to review a CV regularly or to adapt it for each individual job if an applicant really wants that job. An extract from a CV is shown in Figure 8.4.

Curriculum Vitae	
Personal Details	
Name	Gita Powell
Address	18 Hill Lane Southampton SO15 5RL
Telephone	023 80511822
Education	
2015–2017	Topton College
2010–2015	Besthampton School
Academic Qualifications	
BTEC National Extended Diploma in Business Eight GCSEs	MMP Awarded including Maths and English
Work Experience	
2015–2017	Part-time employment at Next using the till, pricing stock and stock management as well as dealing with customers
Personal Statement	
I am a really outgoing person who likes to play sport. I am a member of the Badminton Team at College and also play at the weekend for my local team. I enjoy computing and am able to use a number of different software packages including Microsoft Office XP. I am hardworking and always on time.	
Referee	
Kate Sharp 76 Laxford Avenue Southampton SO26 8PU Tel: 02380 876233	

► Figure 8.4: Example of a CV

Research

Find a job online that you want to apply for. Think about the skills needed and how to display them in your CV. Have you chosen the best format? Look online. Are there other ways of presenting your CV, e.g. a skills-based CV? Write your CV into a different template, thinking about the skills you need for the role you researched.

Employment Application Form

Section 1: Contact and personal details

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY USING BLOCK CAPITALS

Please print clearly using block capitals.
 Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms Surname: Forenames:
 Address: Home tel. No.:
 Mobile No.:
 Postcode: Nationality:
 Date of birth: Age:
 National Insurance No.:
 Do you have a family member or friend employed here? Yes ☐ No ☐
 Have you worked here before? Yes ☐ No ☐
 Do you have a criminal record? Yes ☐ No ☐
 Do you have any police proceedings pending? Yes ☐ No ☐
 Please note: Applicants may be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Section 2: Employment & Availability

Shift systems and pay scales are uniform across all departments as is our commitment to good customer service. Once you have completed this form, you may be contacted by a manager for any department to arrange an interview.

Do you require FULL TIME / PART TIME work? ☐ ☐
 Do you have any holidays booked? Yes ☐ No ☐
 If yes, please give details:
 Are you available to work Bank Holidays? Yes ☐ No ☐

Section 3: Education

Please give information of schools and colleges attended and dates of leaving if applicable

From to
 From to
 From to

Section 4: Qualifications

Please give details of any qualifications (GCSE, BTEC) etc:

Subject	grade	date

Are you still at school and studying for GCSEs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please note that if the answer is yes to the above question, we cannot employ you until you officially leave school on the last Friday in June. However, we would like you to continue and complete this form so that we can keep your name on file for the Summer Holidays.

Any other qualifications?

Section 5: Social Activities

Are you a member of any clubs or sporting associations?

How do you like to spend your free time?

Briefly describe your personality

Section 6: Work History

Please give details of previous employers, company name, address, dates of employment and reason for leaving

Company: Address: Postcode: Employed from to
 General Duties: Reason for leaving: Are references available? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 7: Personal Reference

Please supply name, address and contact number of a person, not family, who has known you for at least three years so that we may contact them for a character reference if required.

Name: Address: Tel. No.:
 How long has this person known you?
 Years months

Section 8: Additional Information

Why did you choose us as a potential employer?

What relevant skills do you feel you have to offer?

Section 9: Questionnaire

Please circle one

How did you learn of this vacancy? Radio Newspaper Internet Friend/family Other

Section 10: Declaration

I confirm that the information I have submitted is true

Print Name signed date

Figure 8.5: Have you ever used sample application forms?

Application forms also require applicants to give their details but in a standard format that makes it easier for employers to compare applicants (see Figure 8.5). They can be completed online or in paper form. The information in the questions can be directly related to the individual business needs, meaning that they can sometimes be of more use to a business to ensure they are getting the right candidate for that specific job role. Paper application forms are sent out and this means there are often additional time and postage costs. Online application forms can save processing and postage time as part of online recruitment.

Letter of application

Letters are used by applicants to outline why they are suitable for a job. Applicants can use a letter (see Figure 8.6) to highlight any special skills and attributes they feel they have that make them suitable for the job. Applicants should use the job description and person specification when highlighting their particular strengths so that an employer can match them to the job.

14 Tottington Road
DANESBURY
DN8 8LM
Tel: 02931 645424
Email: jackkelly@athome.com

18 April 2015

Ms Sue Jones
Human Resources Manager
Safety First Ltd
Main Street
DANESBURY
DN3 9JL

Dear Ms Jones

CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM MEMBER

I would like to apply for the position of Customer Services Team Member which is advertised on your website.

I successfully completed a BTEC First business course at Danesbury College last month and since then have been working at the local Sports Gear store. I am also taking a summer course to improve my IT skills. I am attaching my CV which gives details of my qualifications and my work history.

I would very much like to be considered for this job for several reasons. I really enjoy helping customers both in person and over the telephone. I am well organised and do not need direct supervision to do a good job.

I would very much like to work for your company and contribute to the work of the customer services team. I am familiar with the range of products you sell and know their importance because of my work on my business course. I would really enjoy learning more about customer services and would enjoy studying for a qualification in this area.

I am an enthusiastic and conscientious worker. I am also used to contributing to the work of a team, both at Sports Gear and as a member of a local charity football team. I can attend for interview at any time.

Yours sincerely

Jack Kelly
Jack Kelly
Enc.

Use a standard business format with your address and contact details at the top.

The date and the name and address of the addressee come next.

Keep the letter short - three or four paragraphs with a clear beginning, middle and end.

First paragraph: Explain why you are applying for this job.

Second paragraph: Background information about yourself. If you are enclosing a CV, refer to it here.

Third paragraph onwards: Link your skills and achievements to the essential and desirable qualities for the job. Say why you want to work for the business and what contribution you could make.

Final paragraph: State when you are available for interview.

Try to provide information that will make your application stand out as different and interesting.

► **Figure 8.6:** Example of a letter of application

Online recruitment

Online applications are very popular. They take two main forms: the email application and the online application form.

- ▶ Email applications are very similar to the letter application but, instead of sending the information through the post, it is emailed, which is quicker. An email application may have the letter of application within the body text of the email or attached as a separate document.
- ▶ Some employers ask for CVs by email.
- ▶ Applicants may need to download and fill in an application form that can be sent as an attachment by email.

All these methods save time and postage costs, allowing businesses to make use of technology to become more cost-effective. Online applications mean that, rather than filling in an application to send in, the application is online so the information is sent to an online database and stored immediately. This method of application is very cost-effective for employers as data can be filtered automatically, reducing processing costs. It also reduces time spent on the process, for example, by not having to use agencies or staff members sifting through CVs. A time-saving example might be an employer asking that potential applications have a Merit for BTEC National Business. When the online application reaches the online database, those details will be automatically checked and, if the information provided does not match the specification required, then that application is immediately discounted.

II PAUSE POINT

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using application forms and CVs online and offline?

Hint

Compare the different types of paper applications and then online applications. Consider creating a table.

Extend

Consider one business and decide which application documents and methods would suit their needs best.

Selection

The selection part of the recruitment and selection process refers to the methods used to actually choose the right person for the job. There are lots of different methods that can be used. A summary of each of these methods is given in Table 8.7 and each is explored in more detail throughout this unit.

▶ **Table 8.7:** Summary table of selection methods

Assessment centre	Assessment centres involve candidates being asked to go to a location for one or two days where they take part in lots of different activities. These activities may include role plays, tests, group interviews or presentations. The purpose of an assessment centre is to see candidates perform over a longer period of time. Assessment centres are commonly used for graduate or senior management positions.
Psychometric tests	Psychometric tests try to measure intelligence or personality type to assess how good a person will be at a job. These may be multiple-choice tests that are paper-based or completed online.
Group/team activity interviews	Group/team interviews involve a number of candidates being invited to visit the organisation, talk to other candidates and ask questions about the job. They take place if large numbers of staff are needed. Group interviews may be used as the first stage of the process to select candidates who seem more interested in the job or who ask suitable questions. It can be a good opportunity for a candidate to decide whether or not they wish to go forward with their application and for an employer to get a first impression of the candidates. In a group interview, it is important for candidates to stand out from the rest of the applicants and this may be difficult to do. Employers may give candidates a task to complete as part of a smaller group to monitor how well they work with each other.

► **Table 8.7: – continued**

Individual face to face interview

This type of interview is very intense and expensive as the candidates are expected to meet in a one-to-one situation to talk about why they want the job. Each candidate is spoken to individually. It is likely that only very promising candidates will be picked to go through to this stage. Sometimes, candidates will need to have more than one interview and will need to be called back for a second interview that might be on the same day or at a later date.

Telephone interview

Telephone interviews are often conducted with candidates who are applying to work in a customer service environment such as in a retail store or in a call centre. The telephone interview can take place at any time and the interviewer chats to the candidate to judge whether or not they have the right skills to work for their organisation. The interviewer may ask all sorts of questions about organisational skills or other information to make decisions about the suitability of the candidate. Telephone interviews can be a useful way of screening out unsuitable candidates at an early stage as they do not require the candidates to travel to a location, or if they live a long distance from the employer. As part of the interview, candidates may be asked a number of different questions including calculations, so they should be prepared for this.

Panel interviews

Sometimes interviews are carried out by a group or panel of people from the organisation who will have different backgrounds and who will be looking for different skills and characteristics in the candidates. A Chairperson will be appointed and each member of the panel will be able to ask questions.

Presentations at interview

Some employers require candidates to give a presentation at interview. A presentation may require a candidate to talk to the panel about a pre-prepared particular topic, and can be a good way to choose a person for the job. Some employers give time during the interview process for candidates to prepare. Candidates are given instructions about the amount of time they are allowed to use and if they can have technology or other aids to help them, for example, slides or handouts.

Tests at interview

Tests can also be used at interview to select the best candidate. The results of the test may be discussed during the interview with the candidates to find out their thinking or can be used towards the end of the process to choose between candidates. The type of test will depend on the role. It is common in jobs related to finance or data for candidates to be given a piece of data to analyse and then talk about at interview.

Research

Find out about the use of technology in selection interviews by researching video conferencing during selection. How many organisations do you know that use this type of interviewing? What are the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing in this way?

Interview protocol and the selection process used

Interviews need to follow interview protocols. Protocols are expected rules and guidelines that are not written down but the candidate(s) and the interviewer(s) are expected to follow. These may be things like:

- candidates arriving at the interview early
- the need to dress smartly with a clean and tidy appearance
- the interviewers shaking hands with candidates when they enter the room
- the candidate speaking highly of their last or current employer and not saying bad things about them
- candidates not eating during the interview including chewing gum
- at the end of the interview, the candidate thanking the employer for the interview.

For different types of interview the protocols are slightly different and this does have an impact on the way that the process is run. The type of interview and process used is very important to make sure that the organisation recruits the right person and that the candidates are given the right impression of the organisation. The best selection processes give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the job as well as ensuring that they leave the process with the very best impression of the organisation. You have already learned about different types of selection and each has its own set of protocols.

Assessment centre

At assessment centres, candidates are usually given their meals throughout the day and overnight accommodation and breakfast if the event goes over two days. Candidates are assessed during the formal stages of the two days, for example during the interview, but also during the less formal stages such as during dinner or coffee breaks. Candidates need to be aware that they are being monitored and judgements are being made throughout all activities and they should be professional at all times.

Advantages

- Assessment centres allow employers to see candidates for longer and can form a better view.
- Candidates also spend longer with the employer to find out if they wish to work for that business.
- Different tests and activities can give the employer a more rounded view of the candidates.
- Large numbers of candidates can be screened quickly as they can all be invited together.
- Agencies may be used to carry out the process on behalf of the employer and this avoids them wasting their own time when looking for the right candidate.

Disadvantages

- It can be costly particularly when using an agency.
- It can take a lot of time to carry out.
- Sometimes candidates may not turn up if they think that the process is too difficult or they have to travel from far away.

Psychometric tests

Psychometric tests may be completed in a test centre, for example with the employer or with an agency, or many organisations are now asking candidates to complete them online at home. Psychometric tests can be used to test for different types of skills. Some psychometric tests make judgements about levels of skill, for example in literacy or numeracy. Other types of psychometric test give information about the type of personality and working practices that a person has.

Advantages

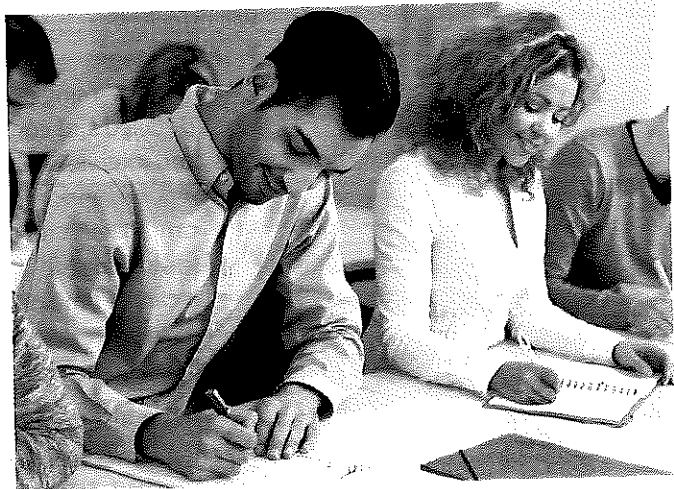
- Psychometric tests for literacy and numeracy can help to work out if a person is suitable for a role, for example, if they have to use numeracy a lot in their role it can be critical.
- The tests may help to predict if a candidate is going to fit well into a team or a job role.

Disadvantages

- Candidates may get nervous and not perform as well.
- Good candidates may be rejected if online tests are used before they arrive for interview.
- It may be possible to cheat in an online test if it is completed at home.

Key term

Psychometric tests – a series of tests that measure personality, skills or behaviour types of prospective employees and are used to compare applicants as part of recruitment and selection.



► What are psychometric tests used for?

Research

Research the use of psychometric testing in your area. You could use online research or interviews/questionnaires.

- Which companies are using it?
- How are they using it?
- How do you think they benefit from it?

Share your findings. Can you see any similarities with the type of businesses that have chosen to use psychometric testing? Why do you think this is? Discuss as a group.

Group or team activity interviews

The protocols for group or team interviews will vary significantly depending on the type of business that is recruiting. This is because the skills that are required for those businesses will also vary significantly. If a person is being recruited to work in an office, for example in finance, the type of activity that is conducted will be very different compared with a group interview for a role in a customer service environment such as in a retail shop.

► Advantages

- Many candidates can be seen quickly.
- It can be a good way of screening candidates initially.
- There is less chance of the interview not taking place as many candidates are invited.
- Discussion and debate can be generated which helps the employer make decisions about the best candidates.

► Disadvantages

- Candidates may be shy in larger groups and behave differently.
- Conflicts may occur between candidates if not managed correctly.
- Peer pressure between candidates may make them behave differently.



PAUSE POINT

Hint

Extend

How would you feel as an interviewee during a group interview or team activity?

Think about the types of activities you might be asked to do.

What would you find out as an employer?

Individual face to face interview

Face to face interviews carried out one to one are still one of the most common forms of interview. This type of interview will usually take place in the workplace. Candidates will usually wear business dress such as a suit.

► Advantages

- There is a single focus on the person being interviewed.
- Detailed and confidential information can be shared between the interviewer and interviewee.
- A good rapport can build between interview and interviewee allowing the candidate to do their best.

► Disadvantages

- It can be time consuming.
- It may involve several one to one interviews which takes time.
- If candidates fail to turn up then the time is lost.

Telephone interview

Telephone interviews are commonly used when large numbers of applications have been received. Telephone interviewing enables communication skills to be assessed. Sometimes telephone interviews will include scenarios that candidates have to complete, including mini tests.

► Advantages

- The interviewer gets to talk to the interviewee in person.
- There is no travelling involved for either party.
- The interview can be carried out by an inexperienced person or be automated, making it cheaper.

► Disadvantages

- It is not possible to give a judgement about body language or other characteristics of the applicant.
- Questions may be too basic by telephone and not provide sufficient information about candidates.

Panel interviews

The protocols for panel interviews are again very different depending on the organisation. Often panel interviews only consist of three panel members but, on occasion, it can be as many as ten different people depending on the job role and organisation involved. Panel interviews, particularly when they are large panels usually adopt formal procedures.

► Advantages

- Candidates can be met by more than one person up to large groups of people.
- Different panel members are able to look for different aspects or skills of the candidates.
- Candidates are put under some pressure and this can test their communication skills.
- Different departments in a business can be involved.

► Disadvantages

- Panel members can only ask a limited number of questions.
- Candidates may be nervous and not perform correctly.
- It can take time to organise.

Presentations and tests at interview

There are no set protocols for presentations and tests at interview. Each business will decide how and when presentations and tests are used. Sometimes candidates are asked to prepare a presentation in advance of the interview day and then be prepared to give that presentation. For other recruitment processes candidates are given the topic when they arrive. Tests may also be done in advance, usually online, or on the day, and candidates are then often asked to discuss what they have found and be asked further questions about their results.

► Advantages

- Gives another perspective to the candidates that can be used to compare good candidates.
- Identifies any weaknesses that candidates may have, for example when testing literacy and numeracy.
- Can test the skills that may be essential for the role, for example presentations.
- Research presentations can provide good ideas for the organisation that can be used later even if candidates are unsuccessful.

► Disadvantages

- It needs organising in advance.
- Questions and model answers need to be prepared for tests.
- It takes up time during the interview.

II PAUSE POINT

Hint

What are the benefits of a telephone interview compared to a face to face one?

Think about the different skills of communication required for each. Are telephone interviews ever not appropriate? Justify your answer.

Extend

What type of interview would be most suitable when employing a senior member of staff to work in a large finance organisation, and why?

Initial selection processes using screening

Selecting the right person for the job from the candidates shortlisted is a very lengthy process so this means it costs businesses time. Some organisations will use initial selection processes to screen candidates first before they take them through to be selected for interview. The screening will check skills, for example organisational skills or other information, to make decisions about the suitability of the candidate to go forward.

- ▶ Telephone interviews cut out time and costs for both parties by avoiding travel. Telephone interviewers often have a set of standardised questions so the process may be completed by less experienced interviewers and is more cost-effective for the organisation. As part of the interview, candidates may be asked a number of questions including calculations.
- ▶ Short online tests also ensure that candidates are screened. These tests may be completed within strict timed deadlines to see how candidates work under pressure. They may test English, maths or other types of skills such as attention to detail or awareness.

It is really important that all selection processes meet the needs of the business that is recruiting, especially the initial selection, or the organisation may lose very good candidates at the early stages of the process who may have been good for the role. This is even more important in areas of industry where there are not enough skilled people in a particular field. An organisation will want to encourage as many people as possible to be interested in their role and not be put off or excluded at the first stage.

Use of technology in the process

Technology has transformed the way that employees are recruited, as you have already learned. It reduces costs and makes the process much faster through the use of online application forms and CVs being uploaded to websites, compared with waiting for the post. Even traditional methods of application can be enhanced using technology. For example, if an employer wishes to see an example of a candidate's handwriting, this can be scanned and then emailed or uploaded. It is important that technology is used carefully and appropriately for the role but, because technology is used in many roles, using it in the process of application can, in itself, test the skills of the applicants at the initial stage.

II PAUSE POINT

Hint

What are the benefits of a telephone interview compared with a face to face one?

Think about the different skills of communication required for each. Are telephone interviews ever not appropriate? Justify your answer.

Extend

What type of interview would be most suitable when employing a senior member of staff to work in a large finance organisation, and why?

Communication with prospective employees

Communication during the selection process is also very important and this can be done easily through a variety of different methods:

- ▶ letter
- ▶ telephone
- ▶ email
- ▶ text
- ▶ social media.

It is really important that the communication is good, clear and that applicants/candidates are kept up to date at each stage of the process. While letters are an excellent way of having a record of something that is sent out, they take longer to send than an email.

On the flip side, a letter is often viewed as an official and important document compared to an email, which may get lost in a junk inbox or go unnoticed if the applicant receives a lot of emails on a daily basis. Most methods using online or paper provide a record of the communication that can be reviewed at a later date, if necessary. Telephone communication through voice rather than text does not always provide a record unless the organisation uses voice recording as part of their protocols. It is very important that the quality of any selection process can be monitored to ensure that the organisation is providing the very best service possible and that, if any improvements need to be made, these can be identified and actions be put into place.

Quality of the process and the documents

Recruitment and selection is very important to businesses because a good quality process using good quality documents should lead to good quality employees that join and stay with the business. If the process is weak and the documents are poor, it is likely that the best employees will not be recruited and that some employees may not stay.

Linking the process to efficiency and business success

Having the best process that requires the least amount of time necessary to recruit the best employees should lead to business success. Often employees are the biggest expense for a business so having an efficient selection process ensures that the correct amount of money is spent on the process and also ensures that the right people are selected.

Ethical and legal considerations in the recruitment process

There are a number of ethical and legal issues that you must consider in relation to the recruitment and selection process. Ethical issues are those not governed by law but which are considered as the right processes to follow to be fair and equal to all.

It is important that employers are aware of the latest equal opportunities legislation and ensure that they comply with it or risk prosecution. Most employers have a very clear equal opportunities policy to help them comply with the legislation, and also to ensure that they make changes to help prospective employees from different groups to be successful in their applications. Try to think of the benefits to employers of hiring a diverse workforce.

Research

Carry out research into Equal Opportunities Policies by either researching online or visiting employers to ask for a copy. Your school or college will have a policy too. Review the content of the policy and discuss what you have found, in small groups or pairs. How does this influence recruitment and selection in an organisation?

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are slightly different to legal ones in that they include elements that are not required by law but, when implemented, they ensure that the process is fair, even if legal action could not be taken. These include considering:

- ▶ being honest in an advertisement
- ▶ maintaining confidentiality throughout the process
- ▶ ensuring the same questions are asked at interview to all candidates
- ▶ using the same criteria for all applicants
- ▶ asking applicants to disclose if family or friends work for the same business.

II PAUSE POINT

Hint

Extend

What would the consequences be if an employer did not follow any of the above ethical considerations?

Think how you would feel if any of these ethical considerations affected you.

What could the consequences be for an employer that was found to be acting legally but not ethically?

Link

More information on equal opportunity legislation can be found in *Unit 23: The English Legal System*.

Equal opportunities legislation

Equal opportunities legislation ensures that all prospective employees are supported to do their best and that they are not disadvantaged. The law that relates to equal opportunity changes regularly and is updated. The *Equality Act 2010* ensures that different groups of prospective employees are not discriminated against when applying for jobs due to any of the following reasons:

- ▶ age
- ▶ being or becoming a transsexual person
- ▶ being married or in a civil partnership
- ▶ being pregnant or having a child
- ▶ disability
- ▶ race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- ▶ religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- ▶ gender
- ▶ sexual orientation.

These reasons are also called 'protected characteristics' and, if discrimination does take place, a prospective employee can take action against an employer.

It is also important that employers offer the minimum wage when advertising a vacancy. The National Minimum Wage is the amount of money set by the government as recommended by the Low Pay Commission. Each year the amount goes up, but it is the minimum amount that workers aged 16 or over must be paid for doing a job. There are very few exceptions to this amount of money and specific rates are given for workers aged 16 and 17, as well as 18 to 21 and 22 or over. These amounts are the minimum rates that must be paid, but, of course, employers can choose to pay more if they wish.

In 2015, the rates were increased to:

- ▶ £6.70 an hour for adults (aged 21 and over)
- ▶ £5.30 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20 inclusive
- ▶ £3.87 an hour for young people (16 to 17 years old)
- ▶ £3.30 for apprentices.

If employees are not being paid the minimum wage, they can ring the Pay and Work Rights Helpline to report their employer and either give their name or call anonymously.

Employers must always ensure they are using the latest legislation and minimum wage rates during the recruitment process. If any of the above is not adhered to, then employers can face prosecution. This is obviously damaging to a business, not only due to the financial impact, but also to their reputation as a reliable and honest business.

Right to work legislation

Employers must also make sure when they are recruiting a person that they have the right to live and work in the UK. The law relating to working in the UK is complicated and changes frequently. Employers must make sure that they are aware of the law and that they ask for the right documents and information to avoid employing a person that does not have the right to work in the UK.

The government's website has lots of information about the latest legislation but, essentially, the most critical information is to ensure that prospective employees have the correct paperwork such as letters from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) or a British or an EU passport, or documents from the Home Office proving their right to work in the UK. Employers must check these documents and ensure that prospective employees are allowed to work in their businesses. Employers must keep a copy of the documents and ensure that they are still within the required dates. If they do not check these documents, and employ someone illegally, they risk a fine of up to £20,000 per person (as of August 2015).

Research

Go on to the gov.uk website and find out the latest legislation relating to documents and the right to work in the UK. Consider how this legislation would affect a hiring manager in a small business.

Case study

Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council are an equal opportunities employer. They have an equality statement that is given to every applicant for employment with them. They also carry out equal opportunity monitoring as shown below.

Equality Statement

Birmingham City Council is committed to equal opportunities in employment and we positively welcome your application irrespective of your gender, race, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, sexuality, gender identity, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, trade union activity and age.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Monitoring is an essential and integral element of the City Council's Equal Opportunities in Employment

Policy. The City Council will develop a comprehensive monitoring system in order to examine the effective implementation of its policy and to assess whether it is achieving its aims and objectives, and to plan future priorities and strategies.

Check your knowledge

- 1 What is the purpose of an equality statement?
- 2 Why do you think Birmingham City Council (BCC) monitors the success of its equal opportunities policy?
- 3 What benefits do you think BCC gain by having an equal opportunity policy?
- 4 To what extent can an organisation remove both indirect and direct discrimination from the organisation through its equal opportunities policies?