

## Why can't I find good staff??

If you're struggling to fill a role, it's easy to assume that it's because the right person doesn't exist and just put it down to a skills shortage. However, that's often not the case! Follow our top tips to help you understand what's going wrong.

1. **Are you looking in the right place?** An advert in trade press will hit people in the right industry, BUT most readers will statistically be outside your region and most will probably not be looking for a new job. Local papers have similar problems – you get the location right, but not the industry or job seekers. Spread your net wider and it'll be easier to catch the right people.
2. **Are you offering the right package?** Too much money is just as bad as not enough! You need to be competitive but without either making applicants suspicious or imagining the job is more senior than it really is.
3. **Are you looking for Mr / Ms Perfect?** Be realistic – it's really rare to find the absolute perfect match of experience, skills and qualities that you imagine the role needs. How much of it is essential and how much can you train? The more open-minded you are, the more candidates you'll have to choose from.
4. **Are you flexible enough?** If you offer flexible working, flaunt it! It's a major plus for many people to know that they'll get a decent work/life balance or be able to work around the school run. Be explicit about this in your adverts
5. **Do you have to advertise?** You might find that your perfect candidate isn't actively looking for a job. Do your homework and you might just find that gem hiding away somewhere, just waiting for the perfect opportunity to coax them away.
6. **Are you prepared to train someone?** It might not be as painful as you think. How about someone from a completely different industry? Just because they've never worked in your industry before, doesn't mean they can't. And if they have transferable skills from another industry, you'll probably find training doesn't take nearly as long as you'd think.
7. **Are you well known as a good employer?** If not, why not? It's not all about the money. For some people, switching employers is a big deal and they need to know they're doing the right thing. You don't have to be a



huge corporate to have a strong employer brand! Get known as a great place to work and you'll soon reach a point where great people approach you, rather than you having to hunt them down.

8. **Think like a marketing expert!** If you can get your head around how to attract customers, then attracting staff isn't so different. Understand your audience, know where to find them, give them what they're looking for.
9. **Don't try to change people.** If you want to find real star performers, put talent first (the behaviours and actions that come naturally and are hard to teach) and skills, experience and qualifications last. It might take a couple of days longer to train the person in the skills you need, but it'll be worth it in the long run. Trying to change behaviours might succeed to a degree, but rarely to any great extent.

For some of these points you have to think long-term, but get it right and the overall impact on your business will be good quality staff, reduced cost, reduced stress and increased profit!

#### About the author

Chantal Walton MIH, MREC is Director of HR on Tap Ltd and specialises in helping hospitality businesses to increase profits by reducing unnecessary employment costs and increasing value from staff. Since HR on Tap was formed 10 years ago, she has worked with clients ranging from 2 to 30,000 employees both in the UK and overseas, helping them to deal with specific business issues.

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