

E-RECRUITMENT BEST PRACTICE
IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR: A
RESEARCH PROJECT

Phase 1: emerging issues
to inform best practice
across the public sector

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| Table of contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Executive summary | 5 |
| 1 Introduction: the current market | 6 |
| 2 The Departmental response | 7 |
| 2.1 First edition of DTI's e-recruitment best practice guide | 7 |
| 3 Aim and objectives of this project | 8 |
| 3.1 The methodology | 8 |
| 3.1.1 Short-term objectives: phase 1 | 8 |
| 3.1.2 Longer term objectives: phase 2 | 8 |
| 4 The research in practice: phase 1 | 9 |
| 4.1 The interview methodology | 9 |
| 5 Emerging issues | 9 |
| 5.1 Aim of this section | 9 |
| 5.2 Research prior to project initiation | 9 |
| 5.2.1 The first stage: commence the research | 9 |
| 5.2.2 The second stage: utilize professional research expertise | 10 |
| 5.2.3 The third stage: consider including a wider range of helpful organisations in the second edition | 10 |
| 5.3 IT supply: after completion of the research phase | 10 |
| 5.3.1 Change management and its effect on recruiters | 10 |
| 5.3.2 Thinking ahead | 11 |
| 5.3.3 Minimising risk | 12 |
| 5.4 Candidate application and tracking | 13 |
| 5.4.1 Overview | 13 |
| 5.4.2 The process | 13 |
| 5.4.3 Filtering and screening | 14 |
| 5.4.4 Security issues | 15 |
| 5.5 Promotion and marketing | 15 |
| 5.5.1 Developing areas in sourcing talent | 16 |
| 5.6 Metrics | 17 |
| 6 Recommendations and conclusions for Phase 1 of the research | 18 |
| 6.1 How can the best practice examples from the private sector benefit the public sector ? | 18 |
| 6.1.1 How to deal with the first steps on the best practice journey | 18 |
| 6.1.2 IT supply and risk management | 18 |
| 6.1.3 Other beneficial outcomes | 19 |
| 6.2 Conclusion | 19 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Appendix 1 Glossary of definitions | 21 |
| Appendix 2 Specific comments received about the first edition of the best practice guide and offers of case studies for a second edition | 22 |
| Appendix 3 Suggested improvements for a second edition of the best practice guide derived from an analysis of Phase 1 of this research evidence | 25 |
| List of references | 26 |

Executive summary

The aim of this research is to discover what the latest key benefits of e-recruitment are emerging from the private sector that will help in developing the e-recruitment best practice agenda across the public sector.

A series of interviews for the first phase of this research were held with: innovative HR personnel in large corporates, of similar size to the larger government departments; providers of IT solutions and the publisher of Online Recruitment Magazine.

e-recruitment is becoming increasingly sophisticated in the private sector. The concept of issuing and applying for a job via a website has moved forward to tracking the complete employment lifecycle of a successful candidate within the organisation. This data is being used imaginatively, for example, in developing talent pools containing profiles of candidates' special skills to match vacancies to the right candidates quickly. The private sector also perceives an e-recruitment system as playing an important role in business planning. To make the best use of an individual's personnel data, metrics to measure data such as fulfilment of training and diversity targets and performance records are being developed to inform future business decisions.

The private sector is exploring novel ways in filtering and screening techniques to select the best applicants in a competitive market place. These may range from basic spelling and arithmetical testing for operational staff to in-depth psychometric assessments for potential strategic managers.

Horizon scanning for innovation and overseas best practice, especially in the USA, is considered vital to the private sector in maintaining a competitive edge in talent sourcing to ensure economic success. For example, HR personnel in several large companies have seized the initiative to form a group to brainstorm best practice ideas and benchmark progress in e-recruitment against one another. This excellent concept could be explored further as part of the developing dialogue between the public and private sectors in establishing best practice standards. A further emerging concept is the promotion of rich content via RSS feed to push pro-actively job adverts to personal laptops, mobile 'phones and personal web addresses to those who have registered their career aspirations either online or through a dedicated hot line.

The key benefits of e-recruitment are not solely dependent on this process as an end in itself, but as a vital component in an organisation's holistic recruitment policy and this is where an important aspect of the debate is focused. Recruitment is a multi-faceted industry, in which other media: broadcasting, recruitment and headhunting agencies, Internet search engines, press and poster advertising are all playing an essential part in a complementary strategy.

Apart from the invaluable input of novel concepts and horizon-scanning ideas, dialogue with the private sector will pay dividends for the public sector in providing vital insight into the depth of preparatory research and estimate of the change management and other risk impacts, which must be reviewed before the start of each e-recruitment project. But ultimately, this is a two-way and ongoing debate for the interchange of best practice ideas in which both sectors should achieve a winning outcome.

Best practice in private sector e-recruitment:

1. Introduction: the current market

It is ten years since the first e-recruitment sites were launched in the UK. The industry now boasts hundreds of commercial job boards and eleven million job seekers. There was agreement that in 1995, no one would have predicted that the development of online recruitment would have had such a huge impact on the way that employers recruit and pay for candidates.

Developments in Internet technology, notably in the falling cost and increasing accessibility of broadband will result in an even greater impact on traditional recruitment techniques. The traditional boundaries that existed between print media owners, job boards, recruitment advertising agencies, recruitment consultancies and technology companies are breaking down. (1)

Recruitment showed the biggest growth as the highest spending sector in online advertising, with an eighty per cent increase in the first six months of 2005. (2). According to the Internet Advertising Bureau, online recruitment represented 22.1% of all online advertising in 2005. The World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) and the Advertising Association estimate that the forecast growth in online recruitment advertising is forecast to increase from £158m in 2005 to some £262m in 2007.

There is an increasing proliferation of published evidence on the Internet to substantiate the significant growth in on-line or e-recruitment: the terminology is synonymous. Recurring positive strands include:

- the substantial cost savings in applicant processing time;
- more manageable accessibility of candidate applications;
- giving candidates a better opportunity to apply for jobs of their choice through retaining information about new posts for longer periods on the Internet, than a single advertisement in a daily newspaper, with the added advantage of “24/7” job seeking and application.

A less desirable theme of e-recruitment is arguably the issue of the unmanageability of a substantial increase in applications matched by the growing problem of phasing out the volume of unsuitable candidates.

Guidance to encourage prospective online recruiters is available from websites such as CIPD (<http://www.cipd.co.uk>), which gives pointers to further advantages and disadvantages, details of useful contacts and bibliographic assistance.

The Online Recruitment Marketing Council (<http://www.ormc.org.uk>) displays e-recruitment case studies to identify clearly and succinctly: the key elements

of each project, the lessons learnt and the results and benefits. This structure indicates some similarity to the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI's) new approach in project management to ensure that the lessons learnt (good and bad points), results and benefits are evaluated and documented effectively.

The Online Recruitment Magazine (<http://www.onrec.com>) provides a further source to track successful outcomes and emerging issues in this industry.

Key Note forecasts that by 2009/2010, the majority of adults in Great Britain will have Internet access, with the proportion of adults using the Internet to find jobs or access careers information at 74%. A new breed of super suppliers is predicted, capable of offering employers of offline and online resourcing. Jobsites will need to grow in sophistication in terms of both the range and quality of services offered. (3)

2. The Departmental response

2.1 Background to the first edition of a guide to best practice to e-recruitment projects in the public sector

Working with its close links with industry and with officials in other parts of the Government departmental network and via its membership of the Digital Content Forum (DCF) (which provides a two-way conduit between industry trade associations and Government to share knowledge and input to the policy making process), DTI's Newspaper and Directory Publishing Team developed the first edition of *e-recruitment projects in the public sector: a government guide to best practice* (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/sectors/publishing/index.html>).

Ian Watmore, the former Head of the e-Government Unit at the Cabinet Office, endorsed this Guide when it was published in March 2005.

The Guide aims to show HR managers in the public sector how to make the best use of the experience gained from past e-recruitment projects from both inside and outside Government. DTI hopes that:

- it will encourage further dialogue across departments;
- it can be improved for future editions;
- future editions will include advice tailored to successful case studies and further illustrative material;
- it should help public sector HR managers begin a dialogue with industry to identify issues, which they should consider when beginning a new e-recruitment policy.

3. Aim and objectives of this research

A primary aim of this research is the commencement of a dialogue with innovative HR managers in private sector e-recruitment, which will serve in identifying the key benefits for the public sector. This feedback will assist in developing input to the next edition of the best practice guide due for publication in December 2006.

3.1 The methodology

It is envisaged that this project will be longitudinal. It will have short and longer- term objectives, using semi-structured interviews to derive fresh insight and originality, so that it will be more focused on the specific requirements of the public sector, rather than relying solely on a review of existing published sources.

3.1.1 Short-term objectives: phase 1

- To interview senior HR personnel in large corporates of comparable size to central Government departments and key HR infrastructure providers;
- To investigate how far the best practice examples are meeting the objectives of their respective organisations and could benefit the public sector;
- To quantify the level of risk for the private sector in developing an e-recruitment strategy to develop insight for the public sector;
- To assess and utilize the impact of IT on future-proofing an IT strategy;
- To assess the potential pitfalls that comparable organisations in the private sector have already overcome;
- To examine impacts of any resource and administrative constraints. For example, Gershon/Lyons equivalent challenges in the private sector, at a time of unprecedented growth in online recruitment;
- To seek views from the private sector on the first edition of DTI's e-recruitment best practice guide to derive input for the next edition;
- To quantify other efficiency impacts from the private sector to benefit the public sector.

3.1.2 Longer term objectives: phase 2

- To undertake interviews with a more extensive range of private sector organisations, in particular, with those either brokered or put forward during the first phase and to develop a focus on newspapers. The rapid

shift of advertising from print media to online is stimulating acquisitions by regional newspaper groups. For example, Trinity Mirror, the owner of the Daily Mirror, has been buying classified websites, including Hotgroup, the Internet recruitment advertiser in September 2005. (2)

- ❑ To quantify the costs that are likely to accrue from substantial savings inherent in the adoption of e-recruitment best practice techniques;
- ❑ To identify the range of benefits that should accrue to the public sector from following private sector examples;
- ❑ To explore the extent and feasibility of sharing e-recruitment best practice ideas between private and public sectors in future via continuation of the dialogue.

4. The research in practice: phase 1

4.1 The interview methodology

Seven interviews were held with HR representatives of the companies listed below at end September and throughout October 2005:

- a.) David Hurst, Publisher of Online recruitment, via DTI's membership of the DCF. David Hurst has agreed to act as a critical friend for all stages of this project.
- b.) T-Mobile and Canon Europe (corporates);
- c.) i-Grasp, World Careers Network and Brassring (delivering IT solutions).

5 Emerging issues from Phase 1 of the research

5.1 Aim of this section

Issues emerging from the research were examined from the dual perspective of: identifying improvements for a second edition and pinpointing either subsequent innovation in e-recruitment since publication of the first edition or new areas of e-recruitment best practice for further investigation.

5.2 Research prior to project initiation: proposed improvements for a second edition of the e-recruitment best practice guide

5.2.1 The first stage: commence the research

- ❑ In scoping a project from vision to viable solution, begin by reviewing a wealth of published information that is now freely available on the Internet. Use search concepts such as "online recruitment" and "e-recruitment", particularly when linked to suitable qualifying terms "benchmarking" and "best practice", which should reveal evidence of similar projects and case studies. Named organisations with appropriate contact details should be

identified, so that prospective recruiters can make a follow-up approach for further guidance as required.

5.2.2 The second stage: utilise professional research expertise

- ❑ Advise professional recruiters to consult their organisation or professional association's information and library services and trained research staff in public libraries, as a key additional step in researching and reviewing published evidence of best practice and emerging trends.
- ❑ This research should not be limited to the UK. It should also focus on developing markets in other pioneering countries, in particular Australia, Canada, and in particular, the USA, where the development of e-recruitment is highly innovative, as unlike the UK, it lacked the long standing tradition of print media recruitment. The US example could also be of value in horizon scanning for further innovative ideas in this rapidly developing market.

5.2.3 The third stage: consider including a wider range of helpful organisations in the second edition

- ❑ The first edition of the e-recruitment best practice guide refers to the Digital Content Forum (DCF). References should be cited to further leading associations and professional bodies in the industry, particularly if they are non-profit making, have a key advisory status or offer further research capability.
- ❑ To maintain the Guide's political neutrality, as a central government publication, cite references in the following way; "for example, CIPD (plus website details) publishes research papers on e-recruitment best practice" or "organisations such as the Online Marketing Recruitment Council organise seminars, which provide opportunities for useful networking". These additional sources should enable prospective e-recruiters to take their research to a deeper level before development of their project documentation.

5.3 IT supply: the next issue to consider after completion of the research phase

5.3.1 Change management and effect on recruiters

- ❑ Firstly, consider the impact of this change on the organisation. At all times bear in mind the simple, yet effective, maxim: people>process>systems. At the outset, get effective buy-in and good co-ordination between the key sections affected: IT, Finance and HR. This is essential to ensure that the project is properly resourced.
- ❑ Consider the impact of change management on individual recruiters. Ask the advice of the recruitment team as to what they would do and how they would implement an e-recruitment strategy. Obtain their input in

developing a process flowchart, for all stages of the process, showing clear roles and responsibilities. The flowchart should show how individual processes should be handled, with an indication of timings as necessary and serve as a useful source of reference. The consultation with the recruitment team will be an iterative process throughout the implementation. Organise “open surgery” meetings to review potential issues of concern.

- ❑ Effective training of recruiters at an early stage is critical to the project's success. Prepare user-friendly and easy to follow guidance for devolved e-recruitment managers,(for instance, for regional recruiters in the GOs and in RDAs in the public sector). Use techniques such as regional seminars, video conferencing and help desk facilities to assist the training strategy.
- ❑ A recruiter must have clear objectives about what the intended system is to deliver before and not after contacting IT suppliers.

5.3.2 Thinking ahead

- ❑ Think well ahead beyond the initial change management and implementation of an e-recruitment strategy. Do not select a supplier on the basis of either what they can offer your organisation today or slick advertising. Only select a supplier, who is likely to stay abreast of your organisation's technological requirements. For example, organise further research on prospective suppliers to ascertain what investment these firms are making in product development/innovation in three to five years hence.
- ❑ Find out what experience a prospective IT supplier has already acquired in implementing e-recruitment systems in comparable organisations.
- ❑ The supplier must have a flexible and committed approach to innovation and have a good track record of listening to clients and fully understanding their requirements.
- ❑ Assess whether a preferred supplier is able to relate an organisation's e-recruitment infrastructure requirements to an understanding of emerging trends in e-recruitment.
- ❑ Only visit organisations that have been operating e-recruitment systems for at least one to two years rather than a few months to find out how they have already overcome the initial pitfalls.
- ❑ Seek an HR system that is capable of minimising multiple points of failure if it is to be future proofed and integrated into an organisation's wider systems, for example, payroll.
- ❑ e-recruitment IT objectives should be capable of being set within the parameters of an organisation's wider business objectives, for the exchange of information: for example, to improve services, cut costs and reduce administrative business burdens. Likewise, the chosen IT system

should possess sufficient flexibility to be integrated into an organisation's intranet and be sufficiently robust to accommodate structural changes, for example, mergers and demergers between sections of other Government departments.

- Large public sector e-recruitment projects will probably require some level of integration either with existing departmental systems or with third party suppliers, for example for the development of psychometric assessments or interface with the Civil Service Gateway (Cabinet Office). This may include the transfer of hire data from the e-recruitment system into personnel systems and the transfer of job requisitions or employee information from third party systems into applicant tracking systems. (Refer to Appendix 1 for a definition of psychometric test.)
- Develop e-recruitment systems in a modular way, to enable component parts of the system to be updated, switched on or off independently of one another.
- Ensure that the system will operate on open standards, on a platform that is compliant with all automated and accessibility standard checks. .
- An IT partner should be experienced in systems integration, so that the process and the technology can be expanded when future developments arise.
- Find out whether the preferred supplier is able to provide a help desk facility to assist recruiters during implementation to assist recruiting staff and at the post implementation stage to assist job applicants as necessary.
- Ask the preferred supplier to organise presentations about their e-recruitment systems to potential recruiters.
- Review diversity issues in planning e-recruitment implementation, for example, incorporating screen readers for the partially sighted.

5.3.3 Minimising risk

- Leave sufficient time between deciding on a supplier and commencing the recruitment programme to ensure that the delivery is smooth and allow plenty of time for testing.
- The main areas of risk should be included in a checklist in the next issue of the Guide to assist in preparing a risk assessment audit.

The main risks include:

a lack of understanding about the organisation's requirements;

the system was neither delivered on time nor to the right standards of quality;

users neither understand the system nor feel they have the required level of training and back-up support to understand and exploit opportunities of the system effectively;

shortcomings are neither envisaged nor redressed in the performance of the network architecture;

funding issues remain unresolved;

data protection issues are not fully understood;

unclear communication about responsibility for taking decisions and lack of empowerment for individuals or teams to make key decisions on behalf of the organisation;

the lack of an effective project planning framework to anticipate and factor-in possible unforeseen contingency arrangements, which might arise.

5.4 Candidate application and tracking

5.4.1 Overview

- ❑ The process is essentially about trying to find and target applicants with the right skills and abilities, rather than attracting the widest audience.
- ❑ The concept of applicant tracking systems is evolving from a single stage process of applying on line via a job board on a website to tracking the complete employment lifecycle of the original applicant within an organisation. In particular, the ability to use the original source data as the genesis for hot talent pools containing profiles of an individual's special skills in order to attract the right talent to fill vacant posts quickly. Vital added value data about individual employees is retained that might otherwise be lost.

5.4.2 The process

- ❑ In designing the format of e-recruitment advertisements, confer with existing staff as to what characteristics about particular posts they would wish to see in an online advertisement
and
- ❑ consider either consulting a suitable copywriter or training an organisation's HR managers in copywriting skills to develop best practice in drafting online advertisements.
- ❑ Develop good help screens throughout the application process to minimise the quantity of telephone and e-mail enquiries for assistance in completing application forms.

- ❑ Give candidates the opportunity to track the progress of their respective applications through the online recruitment process. Visibility is important throughout. Let candidates know immediately when their applications are rejected, to enable them to apply elsewhere without delay.
- ❑ Consider the provision of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with candidates, to advise them as to when to expect feedback on the process of their application forms including time deadlines. For example: “you should hear from us within three weeks. If you do not hear from us within a month from the closing date of your application please contact...”. Also include advice within the SLA on how to obtain further assistance during the process of their applications.
- ❑ Within the SLA include a process flow-chart of key actions for the benefit of job applicants. An employer’s brand can be damaged if there is poor communication about job application outcomes.
- ❑ Remain focused on the core attributes of the job. Endeavour to minimise the number of clicks that each candidate will need to use in finding the right job.
- ❑ Use a system with the ability to send e-mail reminders to candidates that have only partially completed their application forms.
- ❑ Make contingency arrangements for candidates, who are unable to complete their applications on line. For example, include provision for the submission of postal applications.
- ❑ An applicant tracking system must be kept under review constantly. Ask candidates, whether successful or unsuccessful, about their respective experiences of using the process. Use their feedback (both technical and process) to develop a strategy of continuous improvement.
- ❑ Provide a facility for candidates to deselect their applications if they are no longer actively job seeking.

5.4.3 Filtering and screening (to consider ways of selecting the best talent and filtering out the increasing volume of applications inherent in web –based advertising)

- ❑ e-recruitment systems usually include pre-screening capability to establish the eligibility criteria. The private sector provided evidence of using a range of approximately five “killer questions” for the initial filtering out and reduction of the volume of unsatisfactory applications. Questions may include the following examples: “do you have a current work permit for employment in the UK?” “This role has a shift pattern, are you able to undertake shift work?” “Are you prepared to work in the company’s sub-offices in other parts of the UK? “

- ❑ e-recruitment systems are becoming increasingly sophisticated in incorporating psychometric and related automated and assessments and screening exercises. These range from basic spelling and arithmetical testing for junior operational staff to more detailed and deeper levels of testing for tactical and strategic managerial levels. Examples of the latter are making provision for: numerical, verbal and logical reasoning; personality and psychometric assessments concerning business relationship skills; management decision-making and scenario roles around leadership issues for senior management roles.
- ❑ The optimum method for formatting and presenting the questions commensurate with the aptitude and skills levels sought by the parent organisation will need to be investigated. Questions might be multiple choice, closed or open.
- ❑ Traditional requirements for candidates to provide evidence of their educational achievements, proven training skills and work experience should remain as a further method of candidate selection.
- ❑ It is essential for the recruiter to remain consistently focused on the core requirements of the post advertised. For example, there is no requirement to ask for a driving licence, if the duties of the post do not require driving skills.

5.4.4 Security issues

- ❑ The filtering and screening process, in particular for internal candidates where the e-recruitment system is subsumed within the organisation's wider personnel system, may also include an additional facility for validation checks against performance (annual assessments); training; security and disciplinary records. However, for the public and private sectors, security checks on new employees are of paramount concern. Both sectors will need to make provision for verifying candidates' I D and accessing criminal justice records within their overall respective e-recruitment strategies.
- ❑ Firewall protocols must be managed carefully to maintain confidentiality of access to key HR personnel.
- ❑ An e-recruitment project must include a strategy for disaster recovery.

5.5 Promotion and marketing

- ❑ e-recruitment must not be considered in isolation from other methods of recruitment, it is a complementary service, rather than replacing the more traditional forms of advertising. The debate is about a more holistic recruitment strategy. Different types of recruitment advertising

are using a wide range of media to further their campaign objectives as follows:

Internet and intranet job promotion, including the use of banners promoting the organisation's brand on intranet site job boards, using compelling messages (ie: developing and promoting brand awareness to provide a further incentive to potential applicants);

linking online to the Civil Service Gateway (of key concern to public sector recruiters);

press and poster advertising, both for generic advertising and the use of the specialist periodicals, for example, for niche advertising to source engineers and accountants. Newspaper adverts are used increasingly as a form of alerting service to direct a job seeker to more detailed particulars online, including the application form;

recruitment agencies, which may use an interface to an applicant tracking system;

advertising and networking at job fairs, conferences and seminars;

roadshow promotions;

use of TV and radio, in particular local radio in regional areas;

use of headhunting agencies, usually for the pro-active sourcing of top-level managers or to source someone with the right background within a limited talent pool;

use of Internet search engines such as Google's sponsorship of key words for online recruiters, for example, Bedfordshire County Council's advertising campaign for health workers in Dunstable;

use of alumni sites to enable an organisation's existing staff to make recommendations about others who might be interested in applying for prospective posts (employee referrals).

5.5.1 Developing areas in sourcing talent

- Tailored and targeted e-mails to employees that are facing a "Moves Pool" situation alerting them to new vacancies.
- Extension of the scope of an e-recruitment process still further from the original "job board" concept to an integral part of the induction process for successful applicants. In its simplest format this might include a welcome message from the recruiting line manager.
- At a more sophisticated level aimed at strategic, specialist or incoming consultancy staff, their training programme may commence on receipt

of their letter of acceptance of the job offer. The recruiting organisation will forward an information pack, including the job description and organogram, with subsequent in-depth briefing. This approach will ensure that the incoming applicant is sufficiently well briefed “to hit the ground running on arrival”. It should obviate the need for a lengthy induction process.

- ❑ Promotion of rich content via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed to push jobs to personal laptops, mobile ‘phones and personal web addresses to those who have registered their career aspirations either online or through a dedicated hot line. (The pro-active push, rather than the reactive pull approach.)
- ❑ Profiling of amenities available in regional areas, where jobs are to be re-located away from London to help facilitate organisational change.
- ❑ In the private sector, innovative HR personnel in several companies of similar size to large government departments, for example, T-Mobile and Astra Zeneca, have formed a group to meet regularly for brainstorming ideas and benchmarking progress in e-recruitment against one another. This outreach includes some provision for their HR personnel either to work or undertake job shadowing in each other’s companies. Members of this group recognise that sourcing the best talent is a vital element in staying at the forefront of competitiveness in their holistic business strategies.

5.6 Metrics (see Appendix 1 for a definition of this concept)

The development of good metrics to measure statistical output data is perceived as a vital part of a new e-recruitment system to:

monitor online advertising spend against all other recruitment methods and not just against print media (cost comparisons);

and

develop suitable parameters to rank the success rate of each sourcing strategy;

assess more effectively the anticipated advantages of online recruitment;

improve the consistency and retention of data collection for a more effective audit trail;

manage the fulfilment of the organisation’s diversity targets;

profile recruitment patterns at both national and regional levels;

develop qualitative data through the availability of better management information to inform future decisions about an organisation's e-recruitment strategy.

6. Recommendations and conclusions for Phase 1 of the research

Section 3.1.1 set out a number of short-term objectives. In concluding an assessment of the emerging findings against the objectives, to what extent have the objectives been fulfilled so far?

6.1 How can the best practice examples from private sector benefit the public sector?

6.1.1 How to deal with the first steps on the best practice journey

In scoping the extent of an e-recruitment project from conception to operation, the private sector has developed a wide vision from the outset, rather than focusing either exclusively or too soon on IT procurement. There is a recognition in the private sector that e-recruitment, despite its increasing growth, will not completely supersede other recruitment advertising media. Therefore, an e-recruitment strategy must be considered within the context of using other advertising media. A blended solution is required.

At the first stage in planning the strategy, before concluding aims and objectives, undertake rigorous research and analysis of the market to derive insight from experiences that both public and private sectors may have addressed already. The research should incorporate evidence from both public and private sectors in the UK and in developed countries overseas, especially in the Commonwealth and USA.

The private sector has demonstrated that at the outset it is vital to involve and secure the buy-in of other management units affected by changes in recruitment policy to minimize organizational turbulence and ensure a smooth transition to e-recruitment. In both sectors, the change management policy will probably have a substantial effect on the human resources and IT procurement personnel. This will pay dividends in resourcing the business case. Training requirements will need to be prepared and scheduled carefully to ensure that the necessary level of training and back-up assistance is available to recruiters during the implementation. Consider the optimum method of training regionally based recruiters at remote sites, for example, through the development of explanatory flow-chart diagrams.

6.1.2 IT supply and risk management

The research findings have provided best practice checklists (Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3) to assist public sector organisations in developing some key questions that they will need to ask before appointing an IT supplier. The main points underline that both a public sector organisation and a prospective IT supplier will need to maintain a visionary perspective with an eye to future technological developments for a period of up to five years. This also involves

a parallel commitment to making the required investment in modifying or upgrading e-recruitment systems over the lifespan of a longer-term strategy.

An organisation's e-recruitment infrastructure must possess sufficient flexibility to integrate fully with an organisation's holistic IT strategy. The checklist of requirements, as suggested by the private sector in Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 of this research, serve a useful purpose in the preparation of tender documentation for a prospective supplier. These lists may also assist in minimising the level of risk, which could occur.

6.1.3 Other beneficial outcomes

The evidence demonstrates that large private sectors of comparable size to central government departments have made considerable intellectual investment in initiating complex candidate application and tracking systems to fill vacancies and filter out less successful candidates. This investment is paying further dividends as it metamorphoses into a complete employment lifecycle tracking system from entry to exit. The private sector is also evolving imaginative techniques for horizon scanning and future proofing their respective e-recruitment strategies.

In making provision for organisational change, the private sector has introduced measures to offset the impacts similar to the effects of the Gershon and Lyons reviews on the public sector. These concern a possible need to re-train staff in new or updated skills when posts are either terminated or re-located. For example, through the issue of tailored and targeted e-mails to those employees affected to inform them about new job opportunities elsewhere and to profile the key amenities of new locations for posts re-located to other parts of the United Kingdom.

Overall this research has proved that the public sector has access to a rich seam of best practice ideas from the private sector to either initiate or refresh the policies in taking forward e-recruitment strategies. The willingness of the private sector to share so freely the range of their experience indicates that further dialogue with the private sector will yield still richer outcomes from this seemingly inexhaustible data mining. The transformation of all this data into new policy initiatives will require careful scrutiny within the holistic framework of governmental strategic objectives and standards for managing human resource issues, especially diversity.

6.2 Conclusion

DTI is considering all the outcomes from Phase I of this research for:

- a second edition of the e-recruitment best practice guide;
- how to take forward the best practice ideas for inclusion within central government workstreams

and

❑ in helping the Government to act as an intelligent customer.

Appendix 1

Glossary of definitions

☐ Metrics

Are measurement systems used to determine the value of human resources programs implemented to improve employee performance and increase profits.

The systems include the evaluation of organization assets such as the creativity of the workforce and other statistics that drive company decisions. (4)

☐ Psychometric test

Is the generic term used to describe a wide range of tests that measure mental abilities, behavioural preferences and attitude/values.

The tests produce a quantifiable result- a test score- that can be used to compare a person with others, or against a particular standard.

Such tests can be used as part of the selection process, although they ought to be administered and interpreted by qualified professionals with psychology training. (5)

Appendix 2

Specific comments received about the first edition of the best practice guide and offers of case studies for a second edition from:

a.) David Hurst, Publisher of Online Recruitment

- ❑ Think about developing a signposting guide to best practice in the next issue of the Guide rather than trying to develop a solution to everything.
- ❑ Suggest the inclusion of either a representative case study from a small, medium and large company or a niche market feature, ie: legal or IT.
- ❑ Arrange further meetings with IT suppliers, rather than focusing on corporates for the first phase of the research, as they have the ability “to see issues from the underside”.

b.) Judy Skeats, HR Business Partner, Canon Europe

- ❑ e-recruitment is not perceived within the framework of the “rules of engagement” of the wider recruitment industry, which the private sector would expect.
- ❑ e-recruitment is about trying to find and target candidates with the right skills and attributes, rather than trying to attract the widest audience.
- ❑ It is too geared towards people advertising on generic websites such as Monster and Total Jobs only.
- ❑ There should be more about change management impacts: suggest the inclusion of a flow chart in facilitating the training of new recruiters.
- ❑ The document should list the advantages of e-recruitment.
- ❑ The document does not include the impact of the impending legislation to outlaw age discrimination.
- ❑ The document does not cover psychometric testing. This aspect of e-recruitment should feature in a second edition.
- ❑ The potential advantages of a third party partnership, should be explored, including the development of ideas for “future-proofing” an organisation’s e-recruitment strategy.
- ❑ Canon Europe will be happy to provide case studies for a second edition.

c.) Tim Shore, former Senior e-recruiter, T-Mobile

- ❑ Liked the way in which the reader was taken through the process of the key step by step, but the guide requires case studies to highlight best practice at each stage of the process.
- ❑ T-Mobile will be happy to feature in best practice case studies.

d.) Jeremy Langley, Marketing Director, Stepstone Solutions (formerly Managing Director, Brassring)

- ❑ Case studies are required to enable full understanding as what people are to do.
- ❑ Suggest use of Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) for the digitally excluded.
- ❑ Provide examples of workflow diagrams to demonstrate particular processes clearly.

e.) Keiran Ward, Director of Client Services, World Careers Network Plc.

- ❑ The first edition seems to focus on job boards and procurement of services, rather than dealing with that as part of the overall process.
- ❑ Case studies would be good. WCN will offer case studies.

f.) Andy Randall, CEO and Nick Holmes, Consultant, i-GRasp

- ❑ Praised the first edition of the guide, especially the introduction, which they considered gave a very clear focus to the overarching objective of the publication. The flowchart on page 15 was commended. They liked the way in which it demystified complexity of the process for their public sector clients embarking on e-recruitment.
- ❑ They said: “we are very pleased that DTI is getting involved in this type of work. We are so glad that DTI is taking an interest”.

g.) Comments received from other users of the first edition

- ❑ The second bullet point on page 8 “To set target volumes. Quality and diversity of applicants that you hope to attract requires amendment to focus on “quality” and not “volume”. Volume has an adverse impact on application processing time.
- ❑ Include an effective applicant tracking system with different levels of functionality to facilitate “ the drill down” to particular sources ie: where are applicants coming from? Try to capture more of what should be working and what to avoid in the next edition of the Guide.

- Include niche websites such as Accountancy, rather than the more general ones like Monster.
- Include psychometric testing.
- Include a focus on promoting the brand. The corporate image is a particular strength and should not be diluted.
- Under Anti-discrimination Legislation in Annex B refer to Fixed Term Workers' legislation, which gives contract workers access to similar entitlements as permanent staff.

Appendix 3

Suggested improvements to the second edition of the best practice guide derived from an analysis of the Phase 1 of this research evidence:

- ❑ focus on more in-depth research and analysis prior to the Project Impact Review stage and procurement of the e- recruitment system. The preparatory work should evaluate the impending change management impacts;
- ❑ Identify key essential requirements that a preferred IT supplier will be expected to meet, including the need for flexibility to integrate the e- recruitment system effectively into an organisation's existing HR records systems and link to other websites (for example, The Civil Service Gateway) as necessary;
- ❑ Identify via a checklist, the main areas of risk to avoid when embarking on a new e-recruitment IT project;
- ❑ Include a focus on the increasing sophistication in candidate application and tracking systems, marking a new phase of evolution from advertising and applying for jobs online to tracking the complete employment lifecycle of applicants, from entry to departure from their chosen organisations;
- ❑ Identify the key metrics required by public sector organisations in developing qualitative management data to inform decisions either about the future of their e-recruitment strategy or for better accountability via the audit trail;
- ❑ Include emerging techniques in applicant filtering and screening to select the best and most appropriate candidates, especially the use of psychometric testing and initial "killer questions" to reduce the growing volume of potentially unsuitable applicants attracted to online job adverts;
- ❑ Cover promotion and marketing, including the development of brand awareness within the context of a holistic recruitment strategy. Explain how other types of recruitment are important: for example, newspaper and periodical advertising, which have a key role in the case of the former, to direct prospective applicants to on line websites for further information and application forms; for the latter, niche jobs adverts in specialist periodicals;
- ❑ Illustrate particular processes with sample flowcharts and best practice case studies from both public and private sectors as required.

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