EFFECTIVE APPLICANT SCREENING
the easy complete guide for employers

DISCLAIMER

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Attracting the Best People

Once you know who you are looking for, the next step is decide how to attract these people to apply for the position.

The goal of recruitment is to ONLY attract those people that have the required performance factors or KSAAs needed for the position you are selecting for, not every Jo Blogg in town.

Issues to Consider
- Whether to recruit internally or externally or both
- Whether to recruit yourself or use an agency
- Where and how to advertise the position

Pros and Cons of doing it yourself

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these options.
The best option becomes clear after considering the following factors -
- Time
- Cost
- Administration
- Accessibility of suitable applicants

The following table gives an idea of the pros and cons of each method -

Should you…….	Advantages	Disadvantages
Recruit yourself?	• Less costly	• Time-consuming
		• Additional administration
		• Need to be aware of the legal aspects of recruitment
Use agency to recruit	Large data base of prospective applicants	• Costly
Recruit internally?	• Motivates staff	• May not get the best person for the job
	Know person's track record	
	• Less costly	
Recruit externally?	• Get new insights and skills	• Don't know the person

Ok, so you'll do it yourself

Attracting applicants can be a major cost saver in terms of agency fees. The administrative costs of recruiting yourself are hidden. To manage these costs and streamline your recruitment process, follow these simple guidelines.

1. **Write an advertisement**, outlining the performance factors and other relevant details. Be specific and avoid broad sweeping statements like 'Only people with attitude need apply'. List simple measurable KSAAs.

2. **Publish the advertisement**. Some of your options are -
   - Newspapers
   - Professional / Industry magazines
   - Internet
   - Radio
   - Notice boards
   - Email circulars

3. **Decide who will**
   - Deal with all the enquiries
   - Record the dates when CVs were received
   - Send out acknowledgment letters and rejection letters at the end of the process

4. **Review** the CVs and shortlist a few suitable applicants who will advance to the next stage of the selection process.

KEY POINTS

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING AN ADVERTISEMENT

- Who is your target market? Are you trying to attract school leavers, graduates, or present employees?
- What is the best media to reach your target market? Newspaper, Internet, radio?
- Will your target audience notice the advertisement? Are you using boxes, bold type, graphics, and catchy phrases?
- Is your advertisement sending out a realistic message? Are you telling it like it is, both the positive and negative? It is an offence in terms of the Fair Trading Act to place a misleading advertisement.
- Does the advertisement tell applicants how to apply for the position? Should they phone, send in a CV, or complete an application form?
- Does your advertisement use any discriminatory language? Unless you have a good reason, you cannot discriminate on the basis of gender, race or marital status.

CHAPTER 2 – INITIAL SCREENING

STEP 3 - INITIAL SCREENING

Assessing Cvs and Telephone Interview

The first step in the selection process is to "knockout" those applicants who do not have the essential performance factors, by assessing all CVs.

To ensure that each CV is systematically analysed, draw up a matrix of the 3 categories of performance factors. Assess each CV in terms of these categories. This matrix will enable you to compare each person in terms of the key performance factors (KSAAs) needed to be effective in the position.

What to look for in a Cv

A well-constructed CV will be short and concise, well presented and organised. Remember that CVs can be written to impress. Look out for -

- Gaps and inconsistencies in timing
- Verifiable qualifications
- The time spent in each job
- Illogical career moves

Example Matrix for Short-listing Cvs for a Sales Representative Position

Performance factors	Jo Blue	Anne Grey	Sam White	Amy Black
Essential PF				
Driver's licence Motivation to influence Negotiating ability Communication skills				
Desirable PF				
Sales knowledge Sales experience Product knowledge				
Bonus PF				
Network of clients				

Benefits of this Approach

This systematic approach ensures that -

- each applicant is measured against the same criteria
- applicants are compared to each other objectively and systematically
- you focus on those KSAAS that are essential for high performance
- you avoid focusing on irrelevant factors

KEY POINTS

SHORT LIST TO KNOCKOUT SUITABLE APPLICANTS

- Assess all applicants against the same performance factors
- Knockout all applicants who do not meet the essential criteria
- Don't settle for the "best of a bad bunch"

Because you may not collect information on a person for one purpose, but then use it for another, it is important to ask applicants whether they want their CV returned to them or whether it can be destroyed or kept on file for future positions.

CHAPTER 3 – SCREENING HIGH AND LOW PERFORMERS

Step 4 – Screen the High Performers from the Average and Low Performers

A systematic selection process involves a series of hurdles to filter the potential high performers from the marginal performers.

As discussed, the first hurdles results in screening-out applicants who do not have the **essential** performance factors (the marginal performers). The next hurdles involve systematically screening out applicants according to whether they meet the **desirable** and **bonus** performance factors.

A List of Techniques

There are many selection techniques that can be used to assess the essential, desirable and bonus performance factors (KSAAs). These include -
- CVs
- Interviews
- Work samples
- Ability testing
- Personality profiling
- Reference checking
- Drug / medical screening

How to decide on a Technique

Which of these techniques and in what order to use them depends on -
- the position involved
- the number of applicants

Screening In and Screening Out

Adopt a strategy of **screening-out** unsuitable applicants for an entry-level position, if the number of applicants is likely to be large, or if many applicants are expected to have the skills required. Think of this as having a jar of marbles and you only want the jar to contain solid coloured marbles. Your process is to sort out any that don't fit and discard the others. If the pool of applicants is small, there is a shortage of skills, or the position is more senior, consider using a **screening-in** approach to look for the most suitable applicant. Now you have an empty jar and your job is to search the toy shops to find solid coloured marbles to add to the jar.

Screen-Out Approach	Screen-in Approach
Entry-level positions	Middle to senior positions
Large number of applicants	Small number of applicants
Many skilled applicants	Shortage of skilled applicants

The selection process is like a tennis tournament in which players are systematically knocked out at each round.

Flowchart showing the Two Approaches

The following table outlines the order of steps to be taken for both the screening-out and screening-in approaches

Screen – In Approach		Screen-Out Approach	
Review CV		Review CV	
	Knockout		Send rejection letter
Telephone Prescreen (Optional)		Telephone Prescreen (Optional)	
	Knockout		Send rejection letter
Employment tests: Abilities Personality		Initial behavioural interview	
	Knockout		Send rejection letter
Behavioural interview		Employment tests • Abilities • Personality	
	Knockout		Send rejection letter
Reference Check		Second behavioural interview Work sample	
	Knockout		Send rejection letter
Decide		Reference Check	Send rejection letter
Send Employment Contract		Decide	
		Send Employment Contract	