
Chapter 8

Recruitment and selection

Learning objectives

After reading through this chapter you will be able to:

- Define human resource needs
- Source applicants
- Select staff and volunteers
- Maintain records of recruitment and selection
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

Introduction

This chapter will cover the processes of recruiting and selecting paid staff and volunteers, which is often fraught with difficulty. Some events are so popular that everyone wants to work there. For example, many thousands of people want to be on the field of play during an opening ceremony. During the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games there was one individual who called the organizing committee every day for over 1000 days to speak to anyone who would listen to him about his desire to be in this opening ceremony! For other event organizations it is quite the opposite: it is a real struggle to attract enough volunteers to sustain the event, particularly if it is a fundraiser.

Employing full-time temporary staff is another challenge, simply because the work is temporary. While event work has its intrinsic attraction, the event organization seldom offers permanency or a career path as would most traditional organizations. A convention centre is clearly able to sustain a group of permanent people at management level, but at the service end the staff cohort is almost always casual. Attracting volunteers to a rock concert is the easiest task in the world; it generally takes only one phone call and word spreads instantly. To advertise for volunteers would be insane, as the phones would ring around the clock for days.

Thus, an understanding of labour market forces, people's motivation and their interest level can assist a great deal when deciding how to approach recruitment.

Definitions of recruitment and selection

The terms recruitment and selection are often assumed to mean the same thing when in fact they do not. *Recruitment is the process of attracting potential candidates to the organization.* A successful recruitment campaign attracts a pool of candidates that is just large enough to handle. A campaign that is too successful is a disaster as each individual needs to be considered against the selection criteria. For example, a local council advertised an events manager's position and attracted 1000 applicants. Unfortunately, they were not specific about their requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and experience, and other pertinent criteria were missing. Therefore, they had to work through all the applications, some from people who had experience arranging school fetes and charity balls and others from council employees who had worked on the approvals process and had qualifications in this area only.

It is therefore essential to establish the appropriate criteria before advertising. How demanding the advertised requirements should be is a question of judgement; if too demanding it could result in too small a pool of applicants.

Selection is the process of choosing the most suitable candidates. It is here that equal employment opportunity (EEO) comes into full effect. The criteria by which candidates are chosen must be directly related to the position in question. A person must be offered the position on merit. The person specification is the document that supports the selection decisions.

Selection of volunteers is very difficult when jobs are fairly generic and there aren't many specific criteria, particularly if the interest level is high. If this is the case, the criteria should be expanded to include communications and customer service skills, experience in similar roles, knowledge of the city and region etc. All of these would support a spectator services role in an event environment. However, a volunteer cannot be discriminated against if they do not live in the area in which the event is held. As with all job requirements, the volunteer (or paid employee) must make his or her own decisions about transportation and accommodation.

Managing expectations is essential. If the job is routine, requires moving equipment or is away from the action, this needs to be explained beforehand. Some people will then remove themselves from the selection process because the position does not meet their expectations.

Defining human resource needs

The previous chapter on job analysis described the development of the master human resources plan, involving consideration of the number and type of people to be appointed and their start dates. In the event environment this is determined not only by need but also by the budget. It is not uncommon for appointments to be delayed until the last possible minute (or beyond it) in order to stay within budget. The commencement of recruitment thus needs to be approved by the responsible manager. This person will decide whether each position is necessary and whether it is in line with earlier planning. Specific requirements will be identified and the recruitment method and advertisements will be approved.



Issuing uniforms to volunteers

The process of recruitment and selection is illustrated in Figure 8.1. As this shows, once candidates have been sourced, they are selected against the criteria established in the person specification in a competitive process which identifies the best person or people for the job. Interviews are conducted, often by human resources personnel, and then by the direct supervisor. For very senior critical roles, such as artistic director, there is often a panel interview. Following this, references are checked and, for some events, a police check is done for accreditation purposes. Finally, the successful candidate is sent an offer letter which spells out the terms and conditions of their employment. It is also essential that unsuccessful candidates are advised in a timely manner.

In their study Arcodia and Axelson (2005) found that the top five skills mentioned in Australian advertisements for events managers were organizational/planning skills; general communication skills; team skills; customer service skills; and computer skills. These were closely followed by skill in building internal and external relationships. The top five attribute categories emerging from the study were motivated, flexible, positive, friendly, and committed/dedicated. One of the most interesting features of this study was the cataloguing of 355 job titles related to event management out of an analysis of 1002 job advertisements, some of which did not initially appear to have an association with event management.

Sourcing candidates

There are many ways in which people can be invited to apply for jobs, although success rates and costs differ markedly.

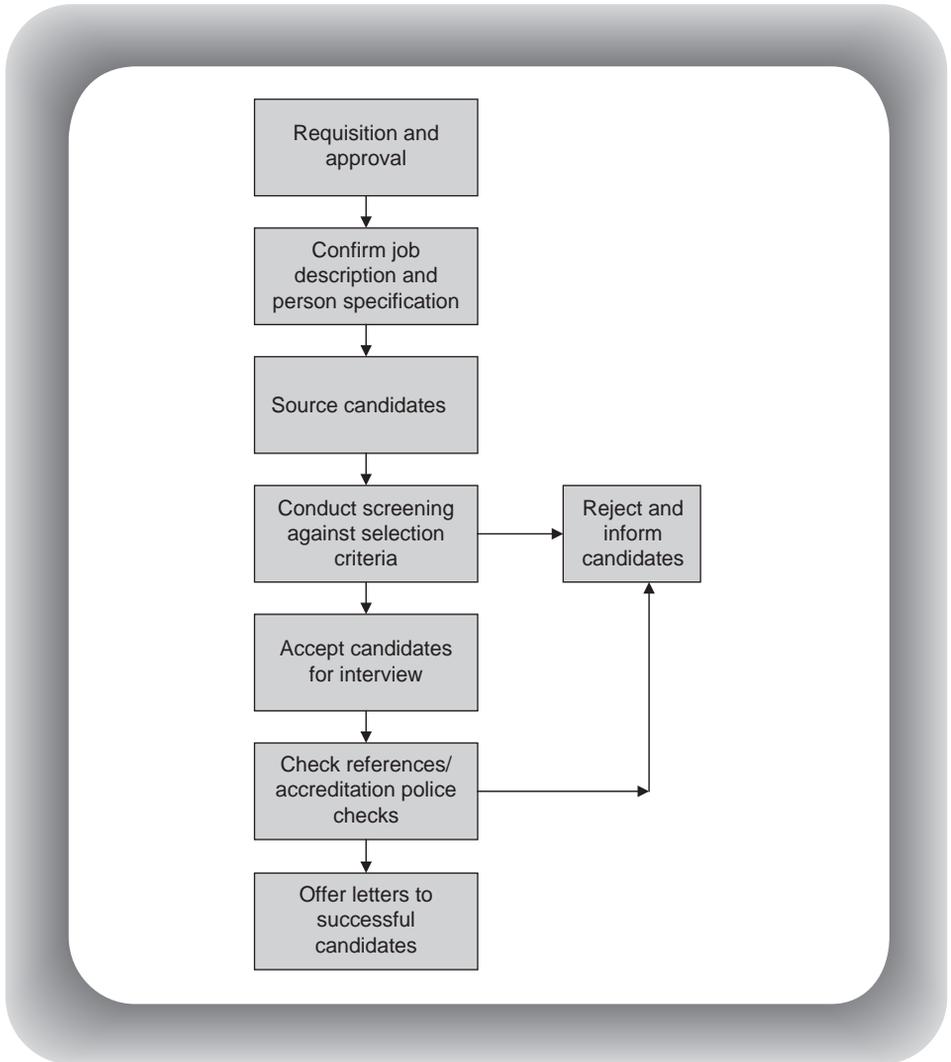


Figure 8.1 Recruitment and selection process

Referral by other employees

The most popular and cost-effective method of recruitment is to invite employees to make referrals (see Case study 8.1). It appears that their judgement of who might be a good prospective employee and their explanation of the duties involved in the position lead to realistic expectations and higher than average success rates. In some cases, there are incentives associated with this practice.

This is a core component of the recruitment practice of Cleanevent, a fast-growing international cleaning and waste management company which has been operating for seventeen years, employs over 10 000 people in permanent and casual positions, and has provided cleaning services for four Olympic Games, Wimbledon, the US Open and Formula One, to name just a few. Their human resources profile is exemplary and their website well worth visiting.

Case study 8.1

Referral as a source of applicants

Human resource managers from 70 area companies favour employee referrals to any other method when recruiting new workers, according to a recently released survey by the Southern Connecticut Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SOCT SHRM). Nearly 70 per cent of respondents said they prefer their employees to refer new hires, while about 50 per cent said they also like to use regional-based websites, such as *fairfieldcountyjobs.com*, *westchestercountyjobs.com* and *fairfieldcountyhelpwanted.com*, to recruit workers. A close third in preference, with just fewer than 50 per cent, was national employment websites, such as *monster.com*, *hotjobs.com* and *careerbuilder.com*, followed by newspaper advertising a distant fourth, with about 22 per cent of HR managers using this method.

Perhaps the biggest surprise, however, was that employment agencies did not even receive 20 per cent support among managers, but David Lewis, vice president of SOCT SHRM, who conducted the survey with fellow vice president Will Brewer, said that agencies suffer partly from the current economic climate.

'The times we're in are directly reflected in this survey,' Lewis says. 'If this were 1999, when the job market was extremely tight, the results might be different. Back then, agencies were vital for finding good new hires. Nowadays, there are lots of potential employees out there.'

'In addition, companies have been slashing HR budgets for the past few years so the managers of these departments are searching for less expensive ways to attract talent,' Lewis added. Using employment agencies can cost a firm thousands of dollars, but companies often pay between US\$500 and US\$2000 to employees for solid referrals that stay for six months or more, and the company still saves money.

(*The Westchester County Business Journal*, 44(43), 24 October 2005. Reproduced with permission.)

Reflective practice 8.1

- 1 Why do companies prefer referrals to other recruitment methods?
- 2 What job market conditions would lead to a swing to other methods?

Internet advertising on event or organization's website

Almost every major event advertises positions on their own website to encourage direct applications. Such sites are generally popular with consumers and cover all aspects of the event, including the programme and the organization. Events such as the Edinburgh Festival, Toronto Film Festival, Rio Carnivale and the Volvo Ocean Yacht Race are all examples of events that would attract potential candidates by virtue of their reputation. Conversely, recruitment is much more of a challenge for the smaller event for which it may be necessary to look for staff and volunteers among the local community.

Employment agencies and recruitment consultants

As the boxed article illustrates, employment agencies are seldom used but for the most difficult positions. However, there is an exception. Many world-class events appoint an employment agency as a service provider and sometimes sponsor, enabling them to meet staffing needs across a range of areas. For example, Adecco recruited and trained 20 000 volunteers for the 2006 Torino Winter Olympics following their

success at the Hanover EXPO, Manchester Commonwealth Games and Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Newspaper advertising

Newspaper advertising remains one of the most common approaches to recruiting for mid-level and specialist positions such as conference organizers, production assistants, stage managers and sound technicians. By choosing the newspaper carefully, it is possible to limit the scope of applicants to the local area, or extend it to cover the whole nation.

Listing on job search engines

There are many different job search websites including seek.com and mycareer.com. Placement on this type of website is cost effective and easy to organize. The sites often provide a template for the candidate to enter key information, making it easier to find relevant data. Others provide the applicant with the opportunity to attach letters and résumés to the application. These websites are categorized as monster job boards or niche job boards. The latter is a board maintained by an event industry association, which is a much more targeted approach than placement on a monster job board.

Figure 8.2 provides an example of a website advertisement.

Associations and clubs

Volunteer associations are a first rate source of people and advice. Many sporting and music events are supported by associations and clubs, which play a vital role in their planning and organization. Qualified umpires and officials are essential for sporting events and they can be co-opted from such clubs. Networking with clubs and associations is the best and quickest way to find specialists in fields such as basketball, golf, blues music, etc.

Colleges and universities

These institutions are an exceptionally good source of volunteers and interns. If the event organization works closely with a university, the relationship can reap benefits for all parties. For example, BA (Hons) Event Management students within

Logistics & Operations Manager
Events & Logistics Management
Brilliant career opportunity
Prestigious sporting icon

Outstanding career opportunity to join the functions and events division of a well-known sporting institution. Reporting to the Food & Beverage Operations Manager, you will be responsible for the daily planning, purchasing, inventory control and distribution of food and beverage operations within this dynamic organization.

[Click here to apply ↗](#)

Figure 8.2 Example of a website advertisement

the Tourism, Hospitality and Events (THE) School at Leeds Metropolitan University has a placement year in industry (Williamson, 2005). With this length of internship, there is no doubt that the intern is well placed to make a valuable contribution, applying knowledge gained in the lecture room. In Australia, colleges of technical and further education (TAFEs) are a common starting point for event recruitment drives.

Advertising positions

When developing an advertisement, whether it is to be used in a newspaper or on a college notice board, the purpose is the same: to attract the best candidates and reject those who are unsuitable. This requires a fine balance between selling the position in the most positive light and being quite clear about requirements and expectations. In the advertisement in Figure 8.3, there are two parts: one explains and sells the job in a positive light and the other states the selection criteria. If these are stated clearly, the individual can self-select by deciding whether or not they meet the minimum criteria.

When advertising in a newspaper, the placement of the advertisement is important. Some pages and places (e.g. the right-hand side) are better than others for visibility. The price per column centimetre will reflect this. In countries such as Australia hospitality positions are advertised in a separate section to the general classified job

Event Sponsorship Co-ordinator

We are a government agency with a brief to deliver high-profile events in the harbour area. We are looking for an exceptional person to drive our sponsorship programme, look after marketing and manage our ongoing relationships with business organizations. The position is challenging and requires someone with a strong track record in a competitive market.

Job details

- Deliver new sponsorship deals for our events
- Maintain and effectively manage current sponsor arrangements
- Manage marketing initiatives for current and new events
- Negotiate with other government agencies where required
- Manage and develop business and industry contacts

Selection criteria

- Previous demonstrated experience in sponsorship development and management in Arts and Entertainment
- Previous experience in negotiating and managing contractual relationships with key clients
- Project management skills, ability to meet tight deadlines
- Established relationships with key players in government and business
- Degree qualifications in Marketing, Business or Events Management
- Understanding of main legislative compliance issues for events

Figure 8.3 Example of a balanced advertisement

advertisements. This creates a dilemma when placing advertisements for event management positions, as many of them do not include any hospitality-related work. To play safe, some organizations place the advertisement in each of the two sections. Many event-specific websites include online magazines which also carry this type of advertisement (see www.specialevents.com.au).

Following are some tips for employment advertising:

- 1 Make sure that the main heading identifies the job.
- 2 Include the company name and contact details.
- 3 Explain and sell the paid or volunteer position.
- 4 Be clear about the selection criteria.
- 5 Describe the job context and conditions of employment.
- 6 Make sure that the wording meets EEO guidelines.

Using the Internet for recruitment

Michael Foster (2003) has written an excellent guide to recruiting on the Web. This is essential reading for anyone conducting a major recruitment drive using this method. Consistent with the earlier study which showed that 70 per cent of companies prefer to find new hires by employee referral, Foster suggests that positions should be widely advertised on the company intranet so that current employees are aware of vacant positions (and, of course, of any incentives for successful placement of their referred contacts).

When developing an online recruitment website, a facility for applicants to enter their data should be provided. This is absolutely essential for volunteers otherwise someone has to enter data for every written application.

Questions asked by the 2004 Athens Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games included:

- Name and contact details
- Educational background
- Occupation
- Field of studies (for students)
- Medical conditions (for consideration)
- Disability (in order to facilitate placement)
- Availability
- Languages (verbal and written).

The application then asks for experience and interests according to functional areas:

- Spectator services
- Security
- Doping control
- Venue staffing
- Transport
- Accreditation
- Village operations
- Press operations
- Technology
- Ticketing
- Venue management

- Medical services
- Sports (applicants could choose up to three sports, identifying their capacity: athlete, referee, instructor, club member).

For such positions the framework is quite rigid, giving the applicant little opportunity to go off track. For more senior positions, however, it is essential to allow for more free text or for submission of a résumé. The résumés are then stored in a digital database. From here they can be retrieved by using key search words. Text strings such as 'risk management', 'staging', 'Microsoft Project', 'conference planning' and 'crowd management' can be used to find applicants on the database. An automatic note of thanks should be generated for every application or résumé submission. The organization needs to think about the public relations role played out during a recruitment campaign. The biggest campaigns, generally both media and Internet based, generate a significant amount of interest in the event, which may also result in ticket sales. The profile of the organization, and the goodwill it generates, is a significant consideration in human resource planning and operations.

To drive traffic to jobs, the job centre webpage must be listed with key search engines such as Google and Yahoo! It needs to be registered separately from the main event website if you want to ensure that searches will lead applicants to your site. The design of the site is vitally important. As Foster (2003) suggests, keeping people engaged with interactive features is a good idea: 'the more they click, the more they stick'. This way people hang around the site for longer and their interests can be monitored by following the clicks, giving the web designer and the recruiter some insight into the profiles and interests of site visitors.

Figure 8.4 shows the total volunteer applications via the Internet and paper received by the Manchester Commonwealth Games from the launch of its recruitment programme in May 2001 to the end of the programme in August 2002. Figure 8.5 includes a good example of a volunteer application form.

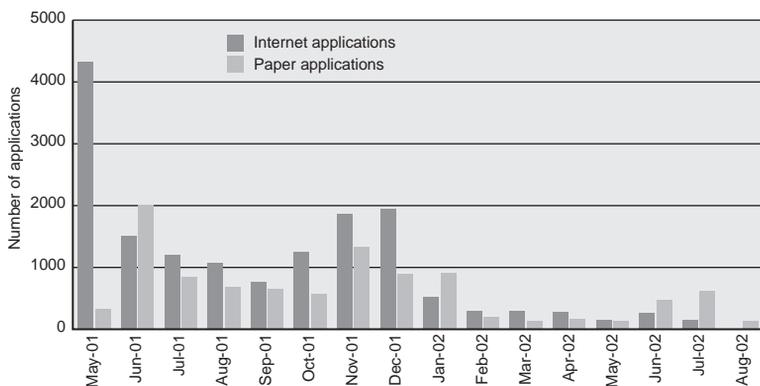


Figure 8.4 Total volunteer applications (paper v. Internet) by month for the Manchester Commonwealth Games

(Manchester City Council (2003), Manchester Commonwealth Games Post Games Report; for further information see www.gameslegacy.com)

Canmore Folk Music Festival Volunteer Application Form



2005 Festival: July 30–August 1

*= Required Field

1. *Last name *First name

2. **Contact Information:**

*Home phone: Cell phone:

Business phone: Fax number:

3. **Email:**

4. ***Address:**

Street

City

Province Postal code

5. ***Have you volunteered for the festival before? Yes:** **No:**

If Yes, in which area?

Who was your co-ordinator?

What year(s)?

6. ***Would you like to be kept on file for next year if you don't get placed? Yes:** **No:**

(Note: You must be available from Saturday to Monday of the festival in order to be placed as a volunteer)

7. ***Do you have a valid driver's licence? Yes:** **No:**

8. **In case of emergency the festival should contact:**

*Name:

*Relationship:

*Contact number:

9. ***Do you have any medical/physical restrictions of which we should be aware?**

No: **Yes:** **If Yes, please specify**

10. **Do you have a valid first aid certificate? Yes:** **No:**

If Yes, level

Figure 8.5 Example of a volunteer application form
(www.canmorefolkfestival.com/volunteerform.html)

11. *Volunteer area: the following is a list of areas in which volunteers are needed. Please *indicate* your top 4 preferences in order of choice (1, 2, 3 and 4) (*Preference will be given to returning volunteers*)

Note: The positions most needed by the festival are indicated with**.

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| **Children's area | <input type="checkbox"/> | Floater | <input type="checkbox"/> | **Site set-up/breakdown | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| **Environment (recycling/park) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation
(requires class 4 licence) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| **Gate | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Co-ordinator/
Co-ordinator Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Information booth | <input type="checkbox"/> | **Security | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

12. *Age: (Select one)

Under 16 16–17 18–24 25–60 Over 60

Guardian contact information (req'd only for *Under 16*)

APPLICANT'S AGE (if under 16):

GUARDIAN'S NAME:

GUARDIAN'S PHONE:

13. *T-shirt size (Select one)

Small Medium Large X-Large XX-Large

14. *Volunteer Agreement: If accepted as a volunteer, I will adhere to the volunteer code of ethics and fulfil my responsibilities. I understand that if this is my first year volunteering, I may not be assigned my stated area(s) preference. I understand that I am committing myself to a minimum of eight hours festival volunteer work.

I Agree

Print out the form¹ and mail to:
Canmore Folk Music Festival
Volunteer Co-ordinator
PO Box 8098
Canmore AB
T1W 2T8

¹**Note:** Please adjust your browser margins first (File -> Page Setup), and font size if necessary, to ensure all questions fit on the page before sending to print. Include additional comments on separate page.

Last Modified: 14 March 2005

Figure 8.5 (Continued)

Preparing for the interview

Once a number of applications have been received, they need to be sorted to see which meet the selection criteria. Candidates who are rejected should be advised immediately; those who make it to the next selection phase are usually interviewed.

Although there has been much debate about the validity of interviews for selection (De Cieri, 2003), they continue to be the mainstay of most human resource processes. One of the ways in which the validity of the interview can be improved is by asking all applicants the same carefully prepared questions. These questions should emerge from the job description and person specification. They should be 'behavioural' questions that reflect the person's past experience and not hypothetical questions about what they might do in the future. If we use the event sponsorship co-ordinator's position in Figure 8.3, the questions prepared for the interview could include:

- Previous demonstrated experience in sponsorship development
 - Q: Describe the approach you took to securing sponsorship in your previous position
- Previous experience in negotiating and managing contractual relationships with key clients
 - Q: Explain some of the problems and pitfalls you have experienced in managing contractual relationships with key clients.
- Project management skills, ability to meet tight deadlines
 - Q: Describe a project you have managed where the critical path has been impacted by something unforeseen.
- Established relationships with key players in government and business
 - Q: How have your relationships with government impacted on your role?
- Degree qualifications in Marketing, Business or Events Management
 - Q: Why do you think your qualification is helpful in meeting the challenges of this position?
- Understanding of main legislative compliance issues for events
 - Q: Can you identify legislation that impacts on arrangements with sponsors?

Conducting the interview

There are two main parts to the interview: explaining the job to the applicant and seeking information about how they meet the selection criteria. Most human resource professionals ask the questions first and explain the job later as this gives the person time to relax and absorb the information. By this time, the interviewer also has a fairly good idea of the person's likely success and can gauge how much time to spend in explanation. In some cases, of course, the interview turns into a sales pitch if the applicant is clearly outstanding and would be a potential asset to the organization.

In Case study 8.2, many of the keys to success and pitfalls of interviewing are discussed.

Case study 8.2

Interview for success and to avoid legal pitfalls

We all know how litigious our society has become in the area of employment-related issues. Every recruiter, hiring manager, executive and department manager must realize that asking the wrong questions or making improper inquiries can lead to discrimination or wrongful-discharge lawsuits, and these suits can be won or lost based on statements made during the interview process. Thus, it is important to incorporate risk management into your interviewing process to help minimize your firm's exposure to employment practices liability.

You, or your company, could be accused of asking improper questions or making discriminatory statements or comments that reflect bias. It is also possible to make assurances or promises during interviews that can be interpreted as binding contracts. Recognizing these potential danger areas is the best way to avoid saying the wrong thing during interviews.

To minimize the risk of discrimination lawsuits, it's important for interviewers to be familiar with topics that aren't permissible for questioning. For example, you shouldn't ask a female applicant detailed questions about her husband, children and family plans. Such questions can be used as proof of sex discrimination if a male applicant is selected for the position, or if the female is hired and later terminated. Older applicants shouldn't be asked about their ability to take instructions from younger supervisors.

It is also important to avoid making statements during the interview process that could be alleged to create a contract of employment. When describing the job avoid using terms like 'permanent', 'career job opportunity' or 'long term'.

Interviewers should also avoid making excessive assurances about job security. Avoid statements that employment will continue as long as the employee does a good job. For example, suppose that an applicant is told 'if you do a good job, there's no reason why you can't work here for the rest of your career.' The applicant accepts the job and six months later is laid off due to personnel cutbacks. This could lead to a breach of contract claim where the employee asserts that he or she can't be terminated unless it's proven that he or she didn't do a 'good job'. Courts have on occasion held that such promises made during interviews created contracts of employment.

Most companies have at least two people responsible for interviewing and hiring applicants. It's critical to have procedures to ensure consistency. Develop interviewing forms containing objective criteria to serve as checklists. They ensure consistency between interviewers, as well as create documentation to support the decision if a discrimination charge is later filed by an unsuccessful applicant.

Learn to assess job candidates on their merits. When developing evaluation criteria, break down broad subjective impressions to more objective factors.

(www.hireability.com/employers/articles/interview_for_success.html)

Reflective practice 8.2

- 1 This article provides some guidelines on questions that should not be asked in the employment interview (the same principles apply to volunteer recruitment). Explain why each of these questions is inappropriate.
- 2 Give three examples of behavioural interview questions more specifically related to event industry requirements.

Testing and evaluating candidates

There are many different types of tests that are used to test psychological attributes and general intelligence, as well as tests for specific skills such as word processing.

Psychological tests, despite their popularity, remain questionable in terms of validity and reliability, and there is much ongoing debate on this topic (Aiken, 2000; Cook and Cripps, 2005). Where used, the tests should be carried out by professionals qualified to conduct assessment and interpret results. It is typically an employment agency that performs this role. The test needs to be reliable, delivering consistent results over time, and valid in that it measures what it sets out to measure (construct validity). Finally, the results should have validity by predicting how well the individual will perform on the job (predictive validity).

References are another part of the selection process. While many employers are not prepared to make evaluative remarks due to legal and ethical problems, there is every reason why an employer should check the accuracy of the information provided in the candidate's résumé. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2004):

- About 40 per cent of HR professionals report increasing the amount of time spent checking references for potential employees over the past three years.
- Of all organizations, 96 per cent conduct some kind of background or reference check on prospective hires.
- Almost 50 per cent of survey respondents reported that reference checks found inconsistencies in dates of previous employment, criminal records, former job titles and past salaries.

Maintaining records

It is essential to be aware that a selection decision may be challenged. For this reason, documentation should be maintained throughout the process of selection. This could include, for example, a rating scale when evaluating written applications and another when evaluating interview performance. Reference and background checks should also be fully documented. Employment on merit is the expectation and this can be justified long after the process if this has been done methodically. Comments made about applicants should not breach EEO guidelines.

Everyone who has been through a selection process knows how stressful it is. Since this is potentially the first stage of the person's psychological contract with the organization, first impressions count. An upbeat, positive and informative approach is essential.

Breaugh and Starke (2000) have done extensive reviews of recruitment research and have come up with the following conclusions:

Although one can view the existing recruitment literature as a hodgepodge of inconsistent results, we feel there are certain themes that emerge. For example, research on recruiters makes apparent the critical role these individuals can play both in terms of being informative and in terms of treating applicants in a personable fashion. These themes of informativeness and personable treatment also permeate other areas of

recruitment research, such as research on the site visit and the timing of recruitment actions. The importance of providing realistic job information (e.g. via employee referrals or realistic job previews) has also been an important research theme in the recruitment literature. Another theme that emerged in our review of the literature is the importance of 'signals' that employers may unintentionally be sending to job applicants. For example, Rynes et al. (1991) showed that applicants used information with regard to recruiter friendliness and informativeness as an indicator of how a firm treated an employee (p. 27).

Case study 8.3

Edinburgh International Book Festival 2006

Job Description: Press Officer

Contract

Full-time temporary 30 May – 1 September 2006

Key dates

The 2006 Edinburgh International Festival runs 12–28 August.

The 2006 launch is on 15 June. Ticket sales open on 16 June.

Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival began in 1983 and is now a key event in the August Festival season, celebrated annually in Scotland's capital city. Biennial at first, the Book Festival became a yearly celebration in 1997.

Throughout its 22-year history, the Book Festival has grown rapidly in size and scope to become the largest and most dynamic festival of its kind in the world. In its first year the Book Festival played host to just 30 'Meet the Author' events. Today, the Festival programmes over 600 events, which are enjoyed by people of all ages.

In 2001 Catherine Lockerbie, the Book Festival's fifth director, took the Festival to a new level by developing a high-profile debates and discussions series that is now one of the festival's hallmarks. Each year writers from all over the world gather to become part of this unique forum in which audience and author meet to exchange thoughts and opinions on some of the world's most pressing issues.

Running alongside the general programme is the highly acclaimed Children's Programme, which has grown to become a leading showcase for children's writers and illustrators. Incorporating workshops, storytelling, panel discussions, author events and book signings, the Children's Programme is popular with both the public and schools alike and now ranks as the world's premier books and reading event for young people.

The Book Festival receives just 18 per cent of its income from public funds (Scottish Arts Council, City of Edinburgh Council). An unusually high proportion of over 80 per cent of income is self-generated, raised from ticket sales, book sales and sponsorship. The Festival runs a unique independent book-selling operation, now a trading subsidiary, which has become increasingly important in the generation of revenue.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a VAT registered company limited by guarantee and has charitable status.

Press team

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Press Office comprises a Press Manager, a Press Officer and a Press and Marketing Assistant. The press team is very busy, working

long days and, during the festival itself, working a seven-day week. The press team will work at the Book Festival's offices in Charlotte Square in the lead-up to the festival, and on site in the Press Pod in Charlotte Square Gardens during the festival.

The Press Officer reports to the Press Manager and is responsible for:

- 1 being one of the main points of contact for all media enquiries in the lead-up to, and during, the Book Festival
- 2 proactively selling the Book Festival to targeted media sectors (including online channels) and regions and responding to all media enquiries
- 3 developing and nurturing strong two-way communication with these contacts to secure coverage/visits to the Book Festival in 2006 and future years
- 4 identifying and pitching strong news lines and clear feature angles (either generic or author-based). This will require a good working knowledge of the 2006 programme and the authors attending
- 5 maintaining an up-to-date database of journalists and publications
- 6 managing the media accreditation system and ticketing procedure
- 7 organizing the Book Festival press launch with the Press Manager and Marketing and PR Manager
- 8 liaising effectively with authors and authors' publicists as necessary
- 9 setting up, manning and helping to oversee the effective operation of the Press Pod – the service point for all media on site at the Book Festival
- 10 organizing photocalls and interview schedules in conjunction with the Press Manager and effectively supervising freelance and contracted photographers on site
- 11 overseeing television and broadcast crews on site
- 12 monitoring and archiving all coverage and chasing any outstanding copies of broadcast/print coverage for files
- 13 assisting the Joint Festivals Travel and Tourism Press Officer to maximize positive coverage in the travel media
- 14 regularly and proactively feeding Book Festival news to the Joint Festivals Web Content Coordinator and writing news stories and updates for the Book Festival website
- 15 along with all other staff, assisting with the clear-up of the Book Festival site and Press Pod – this will involve some moderate lifting and carrying
- 16 assisting the Press Manager prepare a debrief report evaluating the press operation during 2006 and making recommendations for 2007.

Person specification

The successful candidate will possess the following:

- Ideally, three years experience in an event-based PR role
- Excellent communication and organizational skills
- An enthusiastic personality with a flexible can-do attitude
- The ability to manage and report on projects and work under pressure to meet deadlines
- The ability to work effectively as part of a small team.

We are committed to making the Book Festival as accessible as possible to customers, participants and staff. If you have any specific access requirements or concerns, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

(Reproduced with permission of Edinburgh International Book Festival; for further information see www.edbookfest.co.uk)

Reflective practice 8.3

- 1 Discuss the best placement for this advertisement (e.g. newspapers, festival website, industry magazines). Which do you think would be most effective?
- 2 Develop a range of behavioural interview questions to match the position advertised. Which of these would you ask first?
- 3 Do you think educational qualifications would be relevant to this position?

Chapter summary and key points

This chapter has looked at two distinct processes, recruitment and selection. Recruitment attracts applicants to the organization, while selection is the process whereby the best of these is chosen and offered the jobs. Equal employment opportunity (EEO) needs to be applied at every step to ensure that only job-relevant selection criteria are used.

Recruitment for an event organization is often a public relations exercise too, as it raises awareness and impacts on the profile of the event. For these reasons, the recruitment process needs to be managed particularly well to prevent the oversubscribing of paid and volunteer positions. Smaller events have the opposite problem, and their approach has to be more targeted. By approaching clubs, associations, schools and colleges, many of these event planners find people they need who are well matched to the event type (sports, arts, community, etc).

The validity of job interviews can be improved using behavioural interviewing techniques and asking the same questions of every candidate. Once the selection decision has been made and references checked, the person should be offered the position in writing.

Revision questions

- 1 Define recruitment.
- 2 Define selection.
- 3 Using a diagram, illustrate the staffing process.
- 4 List and describe the attributes of three primary sources of event employees.
- 5 List and describe the attributes of three primary sources of event volunteers.
- 6 Provide some simple guidelines for employment advertising.
- 7 Develop a job description and person specification for a volunteer working at an event information kiosk.
- 8 Using the above documents, prepare some questions for the volunteer interviews.

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