

5

Recruitment and selection

Chapter objectives

This chapter addresses recruitment and selection in the tourism and hospitality industry. In particular the chapter aims:

- To understand the differences between, yet complementary nature of, recruitment and selection.
- To appreciate the importance of job descriptions and person specifications/competency profiles in recruitment and selection.
- To recognize the type of people and skills that tourism and hospitality organizations are seeking.
- To consider the range of selection techniques available to tourism and hospitality organizations.

Introduction

Generally recruiting and selecting people to fill new or existing positions is a crucial element of human resource activity in all tourism and hospitality organizations, irrespective of size, structure or activity. Although we have noted how the importance of service quality has increased the pressure on organizations to select the 'right' kind of individual, it is often widely suggested that too often decisions are made in an informal, ad hoc and reactive manner. This point may be especially true in smaller organizations that may not have well developed HRM functions or recruitment and selection systems, and may recruit irregularly with heavy reliance on informal systems and methods (Jameson, 2000). Indeed, within the context of the hospitality sector, Price (1994) found that of 241 hotels sampled in her research, a third never used job descriptions or person specifications. More recently, Lockyer and Scholarios (2005) surveyed over 80 hotels and again found a general lack of systematic procedures for recruitment and selection. This lack of systemization may seem strange when many writers would point to the cost of poor recruitment and selection being manifested in such things as:

- expensive use of management time;
- retraining performers;
- recruiting replacements for individuals who leave very quickly;
- high-labour turnover;
- absenteeism;
- low morale;
- ineffective management and supervision;
- disciplinary problems;
- dismissals.

Clearly then it is important for organizations to consider how they can approach recruitment and selection to increase the likelihood of a successful appointment/decision and in a cost effective manner. Reflecting this latter idea of cost effectiveness it is important to recognize the contingent nature of recruitment and selection. Thus, although there may be good practice approaches to recruitment and selection these are not going to be appropriate for all positions available in an organization. For example, for a management traineeship in a major hotel the company may use a variety of sophisticated and costly mechanisms culminating in an assessment centre. On the other hand for a part-time seasonal position in a

fairground the company may recruit an employee based on word of mouth. Indeed, in considering why it may be difficult for tourism and hospitality companies to aim for best practice in recruitment and selection Lockyer and Scholarios (2005) recognize that the lack of formality can often be overcome by effective use of local networks in recruiting employees. For example, they suggest that the person responsible for selection should have a good knowledge of the local labour market and be able to make the best use of informal networks to find suitable employees.

A further point to consider by way of introduction is the notion of 'fit' between the individual and the organization who are seeking to attract and admit those who are considered 'right' for the organization, in terms of issues like commitment, flexibility, quality, ability to work in a team and so on. Thus, the match between the individual and organization may be 'loose', that is applicants having the ability to do the job; or 'tight', where the individual has to demonstrate not only technical competence but whether they have a specific personality profile to 'fit' the organizational culture, as discussed in Chapter 3. In such circumstances clearly there is the possibility to see the notion of tight fit between organization and individual in a slightly sinister way and we will consider this point throughout the chapter. Relatedly, there is the idea of discrimination being a key issue within the recruitment and selection process. Of course, at one level recruitment and selection is inherently discriminatory as, at times, organizations will have to choose between two or more applicants for a job, particularly for managerial positions. Crucially though such discrimination should be based on the applicants ability to do the job. Thus companies are discriminating all the time

HRM in practice 5.1 Skills involved in the recruitment and selection process

The recruitment and selection process

Job description
Person specification
Advertisement
Shortlist
Interview
Selection tests
References
Decision

The skills required

Evaluation of the vacancy
Drafting the criteria
Summarising
Fair discrimination
Questioning skills
Listening skills
Assessment skills
Evaluation

on the basis of whether or not candidates have the attributes and skills to do the job, but this should not contravene statutes in areas such as race, sex and disability (and see Chapter 6). One final point by way of introduction is to recognize the range of skills which managers need in the recruitment and selection process. As many line managers in tourism and hospitality, as well as human resource specialists, are increasingly involved in recruitment and selection it is important that they should recognize the skills required in such a process (and see HRM in practice 5.1).

Recruitment

Recruitment is defined by Heery and Noon (2001: 298) as ‘the process of generating a pool of candidates from which to select the appropriate person to fill a job vacancy’. In essence, in the recruitment process organizations are seeking to attract and retain the interest of suitable candidates, whilst at the same time also seeking to portray a positive image to potential applicants. Of course, recruitment is a dynamic process as within organizations people are constantly retiring, resigning, being promoted or, at times, being dismissed. Equally, changes in technology, procedures or markets may all mean that jobs are re-configured and become available to the external labour and thereby trigger the recruitment and selection process. Having decided to recruit, organizations will ordinarily consider a range of questions to determine how they might approach filling the vacancy. Specifically, they might ask themselves the following questions:

- What does the job consist of?
- What are the aspects of the job that specify the type of candidate?
- What are the key aspects of the job that the ideal candidate wants to know before applying?

Conventionally the answers to these questions will be provided by job analysis, the job description and person specification, which allow the candidates to gauge their chances of being appointed.

Job analysis

Armstrong (1999: 190) defines job analysis as ‘the process of collecting, analysing and setting out information about the contents of jobs in order to provide the basis

for a job description and data for recruitment, training, job evaluation and performance management'. Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) suggest that undertaking a job analysis may not be necessary for every time a vacancy arises, especially in organizations that have high levels of labour turnover. However, they do recognize that job analysis does allow for an examination of whether existing job descriptions and person specifications/competency profiles are appropriate for future needs. The same authors also recognize that there is likely to be variation in terms of the sophistication, cost, convenience and acceptability of job analysis and this will also determine the methods utilized to analyse a job. Organizations may use one or more of the following methods: observation of the job, work diaries, interviews with job holders and questionnaires and checklists. The output from such job analysis is the job description and person specification.

Job description

Heery and Noon (2001: 186) describe the job description as, 'A document that outlines the purposes of the job, the task involved, the duties and responsibilities, the performance of objectives and the reporting relationships. It will give details of the terms and conditions, including the remuneration package and hours of work'. In many respects the job description can be thought of as a functional document which outlines the 'what' elements of a job. It should aim to provide clear information to candidates about the organization and the job itself, such that it acts as a realistic preview of the job. Importantly, as well as offering a realistic description of the nature of the job, the job description should also act as a marketing document that seeks to make the job look attractive to potential applicants.

Person specification/competency profile in the recruitment context

Whilst the job description considers the 'what' aspects of the job, the person specification is concerned with the 'who'. In this way the person specification should aim to provide a profile of the 'ideal' person for the job. In reality, the ideal person may not exist, but the person specification provides a framework to assess how close candidates come to being the ideal. Conventionally the person specification is a document which describes the personal skills and characteristics required to fill the position, usually listed under 'essential' and 'desirable' headings. In that

sense essential criteria form the minimum standard expected for any given job and will form the basis for potentially rejecting applicants. For example, if an advert for a tour company manager stipulates a degree in a travel and tourism-related area, then non-degree holders would be automatically excluded. On the other hand the desirable criteria are those things which are considered over and above the minimum and should provide the basis for selection. For example, an organization may stipulate that for the same managerial job we have just outlined that a foreign language is desirable. If a candidate had a foreign language they may be at an advantage to other candidates who do not, though ultimately the company may appoint somebody who does not have a language.

The two most important person specification models are those provided by Alec Rodger in 1952 and John Munro Fraser in 1954 (Torrington et al., 2005).

Rodger seven-point plan

- 1 *Physical characteristics* – such as the ability to lift heavy loads or appearance, speech and manner.
- 2 *Attainments* – educational/professional qualifications, work experience considered necessary for the job.
- 3 *General intelligence* – such as the ability to define and solve problems.
- 4 *Special aptitudes* – skills, attributes or competencies relevant to the job.
- 5 *Interests* – work related or leisure pursuits that may have a bearing on the job.
- 6 *Disposition* – job-related behaviours, for example demonstrating friendliness.
- 7 *Circumstances* – for example domestic commitments or ability to work unsocial hours.

Munro Fraser five-fold grading system

- 1 *Impact on other people* – similar to Rodgers physical make-up.
- 2 *Qualifications and experience* – similar to Rodgers attainments.
- 3 *Innate abilities and aptitude* – similar to Rodgers general intelligence.
- 4 *Motivation* – a person's desire to succeed in the workplace.
- 5 *Adjustment* – personality factors that may impact on things like ability to cope with difficult customers.

More recently, Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) note how many companies now use competency frameworks to outline the type of person that they are seeking. The focus of competency frameworks is on the behaviours of job applicants and they are useful as they can also set a framework for other subsequent HR practices, such as performance management and pay. Marchington and Wilkinson (2005: 169) also note how, 'the competencies can be related to specific performance outcomes rather than being concerned with potentially vague processes, such as disposition or interests outside of work'. The use of competencies tends to focus on areas such as team orientation, communication, people management, customer focus, results orientation and problem-solving.

Regardless though of whether organizations are using person specifications or competency frameworks, tourism and hospitality organizations are now seeking employees, especially those who will interact with customers, with certain types of skills.

Review and reflect

What are the types of skills that tourism and hospitality organizations are likely to seek in their front-line staff? How can these skills be discerned in the recruitment and selection process?

The 'ideal' front-line tourism and hospitality employee

With the shift to a service economy the type of skills demanded by employers has also shifted. Employers in hospitality and tourism in both the UK and elsewhere increasingly desire employees with the 'right' attitude and appearance (Chan and Coleman, 2004; Nickson et al., 2005). The right attitude encompasses aspects such as social and interpersonal skills, which are largely concerned with ensuring employees are responsive, courteous and understanding with customers, or in simple terms can demonstrate emotional labour. However, it is not only the right attitude that employers seek. Nickson et al. (2001) have developed the term 'aesthetic labour' – the ability to either 'look good' or 'sound right' (Warhurst and Nickson, 2001) – which points to the increasing importance of the way in which employees are expected to physically embody the company image in tourism and hospitality.

In an analysis of 5000 jobs advertisements across a number of different occupations and sectors in the UK, Jackson et al. (2005) found that the skills stated as necessary by employers are 'social skills' and 'personal characteristics'; only 26 per cent of organizations mentioned the need for educational requirements. Within personal services this figure was less than 10 per cent. Furthermore Jackson et al. found numerous instances of front-line service jobs asking for attributes that referred less to what individuals could *do* than to what they were *like*, such as being 'well-turned out' or 'well-spoken', or having 'good appearance', 'good manners', 'character' or 'presence'.

Nickson et al. (2005) also report evidence from a survey of nearly 150 employers in the retail and hospitality industry. On the question of what employers are looking for in customer facing staff during the selection process, Nickson et al. found that 65 per cent suggested that the right personality was critical, with the remainder of respondents suggesting this aspect was important. Equally, 33 per cent of the employers surveyed felt that the right appearance was critical and 57 per cent as important, only 2 per cent of respondents felt it was not important. These figures can be compared to qualifications, with only one respondent seeing qualifications as critical, 19 per cent of employers felt it was important and 40 per cent suggested it was not important at all for selecting their customer facing staff.

In terms of the skills deemed necessary to do the required work, employers placed a far greater emphasis on 'soft' skills for customer facing staff. Ninety-nine per cent of respondents felt that social or interpersonal skills were felt to be of at least significant importance, and 98 per cent felt likewise about self-presentation, or aesthetic, skills. Conversely 48 per cent of employers felt that technical skills were important in their customer facing staff and 16 per cent stated they were not important at all. The skills that matter to employers in customer facing staff in tourism and hospitality are generally then 'soft', including aesthetic skills, rather than 'hard' technical skills, which will often be trained in when people join the organization (and see HRM in practice 5.2).

Of course we should recognize that the use of person specifications and competency frameworks may still involve a degree of subjectivity, especially in judging which potential employees have the 'right' kind of attitude or appearance. Evidence suggests that employers will often make judgements which penalize people for not having the 'right' appearance or attitude (Nickson et al., 2003). Clearly, then, there is the potential for overt and not so overt forms of discrimination in how person specifications and competency frameworks may be used by

HRM in practice 5.2 'Scotland with Style': aesthetic labour and employees who look good and sound right

Glasgow was once an industrial city. Now, over 85 per cent of the city's jobs are in services. Aiming for the city break tourist market, the city promotes its retail, cultural and hospitality attractions. Between 1994 and 2000, the number of major hotels in the city increased from 42 to 89, with 27 more planned. Glasgow has approximately 1000 bars and restaurants and is second only to London as Britain's culinary capital. Similarly, Experian acknowledges Glasgow as the second largest retail centre in the UK outside London. The city also now has a well-developed niche of designer retailers, boutique hotels and style bars, cafes and restaurants. Not surprisingly, the city was recently described by US magazine *Travel and Leisure* as 'The UK's hippest and most happening city'. Three million tourists visit the city each year, generating £670 m annually in the local economy. In recognition of this new economic success, the city re-branded itself as 'Scotland with Style' in 2004.

To take advantage of this booming tourist market and reflecting the city's new image, tourism and hospitality employers want staff with the right customer service skills. Job adverts specify that applicants be 'well spoken and of smart appearance' or 'very well presented'. One Scottish-based boutique hotel company, known pseudonymously as Elba, has created a sophisticated recruitment, selection and training programme for its new staff. Elba has hotels in two Scottish cities and has expanded into England and France. Opening a new hotel in Glasgow, the company deliberately placed job advertisements in the *Sunday Times* rather than local evening newspapers. Opening a hotel in Newcastle, England, it placed TV adverts during programmes aimed at the youth market. As a consequence, its typical front of house employee is in his or her twenties, a graduate and well travelled. Recruitment literature featured a person description not a job description, asking applicants to assess themselves by the 13 words that characterized that company's image; 'stylish' and 'tasty' for example. After a telephone interview, application with CV and then a face-to-face interview, there was a 10-day induction at the Glasgow hotel in which extensive grooming and deportment training was given to the staff by external consultants. Sessions included individual 'make-overs' for staff, teaching them about hair cuts/styling, teaching female staff about make-up, male staff how to shave and, for all, the expected appearance standards. The sessions were intended to relay 'this is what we want you to actually look like ... you have to understand what "successful" looks like ... what "confident" looks like.' The hotel wanted staff that were confident, with a good attitude and appearance. 'There is an Elba

look', said the hotel manager, 'neat and stylish...young, very friendly ... people that fit in with the whole concept of the hotel' (Nickson et al., 2001: 180). The hotel wanted staff able to project the company's image and help it differentiate itself in a crowded and competitive market. It is a policy that seems to pay: the hotel claims above average occupancy rates for the city.

Derived from Nickson et al. (2001, 2005).

those making the final decision about who is to be employed by the organization, a point considered in further detail in Chapter 6.

Ultimately in considering the person specification or competency profile it would seem sensible for organizations to consider several points.

- Are all the items on your person specification/competency profile relevant to the job?
- Are you reasonably sure that none of your criteria would discriminate unfairly against a group of potential candidates?
- Would your person specification/competency profile enable a shortlisting and interviewing panel to distinguish clearly between candidates?

Having reviewed the importance of the job description and person specification/competency requirements we can now move on to consider how organizations can attract the interest of appropriate potential employees. Initially, there may be a choice as to whether the organization looks to somebody within the organization or alternatively looks to the external labour market. For example, for a promotable position organizations which are seeking to sustain a strong internal labour market may have a policy to offer this position in-house first to existing staff. Equally, though, the organization may feel that offering such positions to the external labour market is important to bring in new ideas and new blood to the organization. In deciding their target group organizations may also wish to address issues such as under representation of a particular group, for example ethnic minority employees or women managers, a point that is further considered in the following chapter.

Generally speaking organizations have a number of methods which they can consider in seeking to engage with their target market for new employees. First, as we have already noted they may use existing employees. For example, this can be

in relation to promotable positions or also in terms of word-of-mouth approaches, which are commonplace in tourism and hospitality, especially for front-line positions. Alternatively the organization may choose to use external contacts, such as job centres. Indeed, this may well be something that organizations see as important in their attempts to be good corporate citizens (and see HRM in practice 5.3).

HRM in practice 5.3 Jurys Inns: offering a helping hand to the unemployed

The Jurys Inn hotel is a three-star plus hotel chain targeting business travellers and leisure guests. It is the key brand of the Irish Jurys Doyle Hotel Group PLC that owns and operates three-, four- and five-star hotels in the UK, Ireland and the US, and has a workforce of 4000 employees. As any other companies in the highly competitive and unstable hospitality sector, the Jurys Inn hotel had to develop a successful strategy to stand out from the competition and weather the economic slowdown. Among the strategic initiatives was a recruitment and training strategy aimed at improving the quality of customer service. Every time Jurys Doyle Hotels opens a new Jurys Inn, they rely on key local employment providers, such as the Job Centre Plus, the local council and a local training provider, such as a college, to develop a gateway training programme for people willing to move into the hotel industry. Applicants who have passed the initial sifting process are then invited to an 8-week pre-employment training programme run in partnership between Jurys Doyle Hotels and the training provider. This programme has proved successful since it was first launched in 1993 and 20 people who are currently working in the company are estimated to have joined the pre-employment scheme. It is now estimated that there are, on average, 30 places available at each new Inn, representing 25 to 50 per cent of the staff base. After the pre-employment period, successful candidates and other new recruits alike join the Guest Service Staff (GSS) training 4 weeks before an opening. The main objective of this scheme is to develop a multi-skilled team able to operate within all areas of the hotel. Furthermore, the programme has no time limit and is available for every employee willing to advance their career. Finally, to make sure its employees are the most effective in the industry, Jurys Doyle Hotel strive to ensure that their staff gain external or professional qualifications such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) or CIPD qualifications.

Jurys Inn's recruitment and training strategy has helped them expand in a recent context of economic slowdown. Aside from building Jurys Inn's skill base, the pre-employment scheme has contributed to creating jobs in cities often hit by unemployment,

thereby improving employee loyalty to the hotel. In addition, it involves new recruits in the development of the building in which they are to work. This helps build the involvement of employees who might have had doubts about the scheme or working in a hotel. On the other hand, the GSS training aimed at developing multi-skilled staff, is beneficial both to the employer, who seek to maximize the use of its workforce, and to the employee who gains diverse levels of experience and benefit from more flexible working hours, as they are able to take on a number of different roles. As Edward Gallier, development and training manager for the UK and Ireland, puts it, 'Our employees can work anywhere in the Inn ... this means we have GSS who can deliver the services of a receptionist, room attendant or porter equally well, with the confidence good training gives them'.

Source: Gallier (2004).

A further key aspect of looking externally for new employees is the importance of advertising and media. An obvious starting point here is the printed media and specifically the press. The use of the print media to advertise jobs is one of the most popular formal methods of recruitment. When thinking about where adverts are best placed organizations need to be cognizant of the labour market on which they are hoping to draw for a particular job. In recognizing the most appropriate labour markets organizations could conceivably place adverts in either the local/national press or in trade and professional journals. For example, for a front-line position it is likely that the local press will be used, whilst for a managerial or specialist position the use of the national press or trade press may be more appropriate. In using the printed media it is important to consider the manner in which organizations can portray the desired image and here we will consider how this issue can be addressed.

When organizations advertise vacancies it is important that they convey the right message in order to attract suitable applicants and discourage those who do not have the necessary attributes. Equally important is that advertisements project a positive image of the company and in that sense adverts can be considered a selling document. Initially organizations have the choice to get it alone and contact the media directly or alternatively they can deal with an advertising agency, who can help in drafting and placing an advert. Advertising agencies can be thought of as experts who can offer advice on the choice of advertising copy and the choice of media. They may also have better contacts to ensure advertising space at short notice. The only drawback is that agencies may also be rather costly. Regardless of

whether an agency is used or not there are certain key points which should be borne in mind in devising an advert and at the very least the following aspects should be apparent (Torrington et al., 2005: 128).

- Name and brief details of the employing organization.
- Job role and duties.
- Key points of the person specification or competency framework.
- Salary.
- Instructions about how to apply.

Moreover organizations should also consider the image they are portraying and the CIPD and the Institute of Professional Advertisers (IPA) outline the following criteria for judging excellence in recruitment advertising (CIPD, 2006):

- visual impact,
- typography and balance,
- clarity of message to the target audience,
- promotion of job vacancy,
- projection of a professional organizational image,
- focus on workplace diversity.

Review and reflect

Using the above criteria attempt to find a job advertisement for a tourism and hospitality organization which exemplifies at least some of these aspects and briefly describe why these aspects makes a job look attractive.

With regard to that last bullet point it is important to reiterate that adverts must not discriminate on grounds of sex, race, sexuality, religious orientation and disability.

In addition there are other areas which can potentially be used including TV, radio, cinema, careers exhibitions, conferences and open days and posters. Whilst TV, radio and cinema adverts have been utilized to recruit in areas like the military or teaching they are much less likely to be used by tourism and hospitality organizations. The other aspects though could all be conceivably used. For example,

HRM in practice 5.4 Who would you most like to be stuck in a lift with?

Hills (2004) reports on the recruitment process in Tiger Tiger, which is one of the UK's most popular nightclub groups. As part of their recruitment process they host open days to allow potential employees to sample the Tiger Tiger atmosphere. A general manager, Beverley Harley, is quoted as saying, 'the leisure sector is a particularly social and competitive one and we're on the hunt for hardworking team players'. As part of assessing whether applicants have these attributes, during the open day potential employees take part in various 'fun' activities, including being asked who they would most like to be stuck in a lift with and which type of animal they would choose to be.

TGI Fridays, the American restaurant chain, have successfully used open days to recruit staff in the UK. As a company with a very distinctive service style open days are felt to be useful to expose potential employees to the nature of the work they will be undertaking. As the company is looking for very outgoing individuals who can do things like juggle or sing whilst serving customers the open day is designed to assess such aspects. Team tasks and tricks and dances are just some of the things that potential employees will be expected to demonstrate in their 'audition' during the open day (Baker, 1999; and see HRM in practice 5.4).

Another source of recruitment is increasingly the Internet. IDS (2003) have recently noted how the use of the Internet in recruitment has tended to be complementary to existing methods, rather than replacing them. In this sense, although the Internet is playing a growing role in organizations recruitment strategies, its importance should not be exaggerated. For most companies the use of Internet tends to be in terms of sections on their websites that allow job seekers to check for current vacancies. Beyond this facility there may be more strategic approaches in using the web, particularly with regard to the ability to receive and process job applications online, something which is outlined in HRM in practice 5.5.

Smethurst (2004) notes other reasons for employers, including Whitbread, for using online recruitment, including:

- Reducing cost per hire.
- Increasing speed to hire.
- Strengthening the employer brand.



HRM in practice 5.5 Hilton International: spreading the web

Beal (2004) notes how Hilton International wanted to improve its fast-track Elevator programme – a selection tool introduced in 1998 and designed to recruit highly talented graduates as future hotel general managers. As new graduates had to learn the role of a manager in a short period of time, the tool had to be extremely reliable to pick up the right candidates. As such, the Elevator scheme, which involved hand-processing and scoring an application form, conducting a face-to-face meeting, psychometric testing and conducting a final 24-h assessment centre, proved costly and time-consuming, especially in terms of senior management involvement.

To streamline its selection tool, Hilton International commissioned the business-psychology consultancy Human Factor International to introduce a web-based screening system – a so-called ‘virtual psychologist’ – running in five European languages. This online tool would not have been possible without a technological breakthrough which allows for a time limit on the intellectual-reasoning part of the test. The system was successfully implemented in 15 working days, from Christmas 2003 to 20 January 2004. Since the running of the programme, Hilton has invited applicants through presentations at the main European hotel schools and universities to apply through the website <http://www.hilton-university.com> and complete the standard application form. Those who pass the initial sifting are then asked to fill in online ‘personality’ and ‘workplace values’ questionnaires. At this stage all candidates receive an electronic report analysing their results and providing tailored career advice. Successful candidates are then invited to complete three ability and skill tests of 15 min each before being selected to the assessment centre. At the end of the assessment centre unsuccessful candidates receive detailed e-mailed feedback outlining the reasons why they have not been chosen and inviting them to phone in if they want to have further explanations. As Christine Jones, Director of the Consultancy Human Factor International adds, ‘Even unsuccessful candidates have told us they have been pleased with the feedback they have been given, and are comfortable with it’ (p. 31).

By introducing the online system, Hilton has been able to reduce the number of assessment days without damaging the quality of its new recruits. Indeed, the 14 graduates who first joined Hilton through this tool had to pass only two final assessment centres rather than the five or six previously needed. As John Guthrie, Head of International Management at Hilton International comments, ‘While unlikely to save significant costs in pure cash terms, getting rid of manual processes has freed up managers’ time to concentrate on more value-adding work. Additionally, it helps to portray the organization as more contemporary and technologically oriented and strengthens our appeal in a competitive search for talent’ (p. 31).

	Operative (%)	Management (%)
Job centre	87	13
Local press	80	30
Word of mouth	70	35
Employment agencies	32	57
Trade press	26	66
National press	8	24
Personnel consultants	2	42
Others*	22	22

*Others represented internal sources and in one chain an in-house recruitment centre.

Reprinted by permission from 'Personnel management in hotels – an update: a move to human resource management?', Kelliher, C. and Johnson, K. (1997). Copyright John Wiley and Sons Limited.

Figure 5.1 Sources of recruitment in the hospitality industry

- Greater flexibility and ease for candidates.
- Broaden the applicant pool.

Lastly, beyond individual company websites there are other commercial websites, such as <http://www.traveljobz.net/>, which aims to allow job seekers to access jobs in a wide variety of travel and hospitality jobs, including airlines, hotels, cruise lines, restaurants and other travel companies.

We recognized earlier in the chapter how a key aspect of recruitment and selection was cost effectiveness. As a result it is not necessarily sensible to use certain recruitment methods for certain jobs and in reality the aim should be to ensure the best method to hit the particular target group for a particular job and in a cost effective manner. The recognition of the need for a contingent approach to recruitment is apparent from the research outlined in Figure 5.1 (and see also HRM in practice 5.6).

At this juncture in the recruitment process the organization will hopefully have generated sufficient interest from suitable applicants. In that sense it is important for organizations to periodically review the recruitment process and evaluate its effectiveness against this kind of criterion. Additionally, the organization may also want to consider the issues of costs and equal opportunities issues.



HRM in practice 5.6 'Realistic' recruitment in the cruise industry

Raub and Streit (2006) recognise that, as within other tourism and hospitality settings, human resources are crucial to success in the cruise industry as guests are in constant contact with service staff and unlike conventional hotels cannot usually wander 'off site'. Regardless of the likely pressure that this is likely to create for front-line service staff many people might think that working in the cruise industry is likely to be exciting and fun. Life on board a cruise ship though can be difficult for staff, for example they are likely to face cramped and difficult living conditions. The unique work context in the cruise ship industry means that many organizations attempt to offer a 'realistic' and 'honest and objective' view of working life in the industry, which means that staff do not have an unrealistic view of working in the industry. Key to this approach is the use of several types of recruitment media such as interviews, company-specific videos, company presentations, written information (such as fact sheets) and web-based information. This realistic job preview is placed alongside the positive aspects of the job, for example the manner in which working on cruise ships can significantly broaden the professional and individual horizons of young employees. By balancing both positive and negative aspects of working in the industry in this realistic manner companies seem to be able to lessen high levels of labour turnover thus increasing retention and potentially enhancing job satisfaction.

Ultimately in evaluating the process of recruitment organizations can ask themselves several key questions:

- Do recruitment practices yield sufficient numbers of suitable candidates to enable the organization to select sufficient numbers of high-quality employees?
- Could a sufficient pool of suitable candidates be attracted using less expensive methods?
- Are recruitment methods fulfilling equal opportunities responsibilities?

Depending on the type of job, and presuming that there is more than one candidate, the final part of the recruitment procedure is the notion of shortlisting. The outcome of the recruitment process is to produce a shortlist of candidates whose background and potential are in accordance with the profile contained in the person specification/competency framework. Clearly this is a way of making good use of the information gathered to date about the candidate. We can also appreciate the

need to ensure that things have gone smoothly so far. In this sense if there has been a problem, say with the advert, shortlisting can conceivably be a problem. If, for example, there are insufficient number of candidates who are appointable or indeed if there are too many candidates. Presuming that there are sufficient numbers of suitably qualified people for the position the conventional method is to shortlist by comparison with the person specification/competency framework. Torrington et al. (2005) though note that if there is a large number of people who have applied for a job there may be fairly arbitrary criteria, such as people being excluded because of their age or their handwriting style. As they recognize though such shortlisting techniques are wholly unsatisfactory, being potentially both unlawful and certainly unfair. A fairer approach is likely to be based on a rigorous and systematic view of each candidate via five stages (Torrington et al., 2005: 136):

- 1 Essential criteria for shortlisting.
- 2 Individual selectors produce their own list of a given number of candidates.
- 3 Selectors reveal list and try to reach consensus, if still not clear.
- 4 Discuss why certain candidates are preferred and others not.
- 5 Produce final shortlist after negotiation and compromise.

We have now reached the stage where the organization is ready to move on to selection.

Selection

To-date in this chapter we have essentially been examining the notion of recruitment and how organizations attempt to attract the interest of potential employees. We can now go on and examine the idea of how organizations match potential employees to jobs, via the processes of selection when organizations will decide who is the most appropriate person for the job. We will do this by contextualizing the process, and then go on and look at some of the techniques utilized by organizations in selecting new employees. We will then assess some of the possible problems within this process and finally examine the way most organizations approach the idea of selection.

As Heery and Noon (2001: 320) note selection is, 'the process of assessing job applicants using one of a variety of methods with the purpose of finding the most suitable person for the organization'. Increasingly many writers argue that the selection of staff may well be the most important aspect of HRM as staff are



increasingly expected to become effective immediately. Allied to this point is the cost of various selection techniques which means organizations will want to get it right first time. However, despite this recognition there is no one best way which is universally recognized as the best method of selecting the right person for the job. Torrington et al. (2005: 141) argue that, 'the search for the perfect selection method continues, in its absence HR and line managers continue to use a variety of imperfect methods'. What this quote points to is that no one selection method can guarantee success in terms of choosing the right person for the job, especially given the level of human involvement in the process. As organizations recognize this conundrum they are adopting a variety of techniques to address questions of selection. Thus, the methods selected are influenced by the employer's view of what is required to provide a satisfactory basis for decision-making and awareness of the appropriateness of particular techniques to provide what is sought. Before we go on though and examine various selection techniques in detail it is important to recognize two points which complete the context of the selection process.

The first idea is that the selection process is a two-way process. Often the perception is that the organization has all of the power in the process of selection. However, this is not strictly true, even though it may seem that way when you are going through the process. Selection is in fact a two-way process, because people have the option to pull out of the process or turn down a job. For example, a major international hotel company may advertise a graduate trainee scheme and get an initially good response, such that over 300 application packs are sent out to potential employees. Of those only 127 are returned. Following the selection process 23 are offered jobs, 19 accept the offer and only 15 actually start with the company. What this example illustrates is that selection may also be occurring from the employees' point of view, especially when the labour market is buoyant or their particular skills are in demand. The second point is the selection criteria. Selection does not take place in a vacuum, there is also the context of whether the person will fit in with the job requirements, so the person/job interaction is important. As we have already noted there is also the question of whether the person will fit in with the group or work team or department and will they be able to work with colleagues. Finally there is the question of whether the person will fit in with the organizational culture and the way things are done in a particular organization. The ways organizations attempt to find this out are myriad, and we can examine some of the techniques that they utilize in the selection process. The first method, which is the most popular, is that of interviewing.



Although criticized, for example many argue interviewing is not very good in predicting actual performance in the job, the interview is usually the central element of the selection process in many tourism and hospitality organizations. Indeed, the interview is often characterized as being the third part of the 'classic trio' of application forms/CVs, references and interview. In that sense for many people their experience of the selection process will be filling in an application form, including supplying two references and then going along to an interview. As far as selection methods are concerned the interview is seen as the most straightforward and least expensive approach and what most candidates would expect. Employers in the UK often express concern about the fairness of psychometric testing and yet continue to use and seem relatively happy about interviews, despite the potential for bias and discrimination. The interview remains popular then despite poor evidence of validity and the fact that other methods have more predictive power in terms of job performance. Regardless of the latter points the interview remains enduringly popular as a selection tool, with 71 per cent of private service sector organizations using it as part of the selection process (CIPD, 2004). Although increasingly more sophisticated techniques are emerging, such as psychometric testing and assessment centres, they are in addition to rather than replacing the interview.

Review and reflect

Think about an employment interview that you have attended and whether you felt it was a 'good' or 'bad' interview and what influenced your judgement, either positive or negative.

Riley (1996) feels that the interview is sometimes unfairly criticized because too much is expected of it, and it is also done badly. Equally, he also makes the point that it is quick, convenient and when done well, an effective selection method. Riley (1996) describes the interview as 'A conversation with a purpose' and that purpose is to assess four objectives:

- 1 To decide if an applicant is suitable for a job.
- 2 To decide if the person will fit into the existing work group or organization as a whole.
- 3 To attract applicants to the job.
- 4 To communicate essential expectations and requirements of the job.



Essentially then the interview process is about gathering information which allows for an evaluation of the appropriateness of the individual for a particular job. Interviews can either be one to one, sequential or phone and again it is likely that for the majority of positions in tourism and hospitality the first type will predominate. To have a good interview regardless of which type it is, it is also suggested that certain conditions should be met (Torrington et al., 2005). These conditions are concerned with aspects such as attention being paid to noise levels, avoiding interruptions, lighting, dress and manner of the interviewer, positioning of furniture and attempts to create an informal atmosphere. These aspects are concerned with taking away as much of the anxiety of the situation as is possible to ensure interviewees perform to the best of their ability. Recognizing this point there are several things which should be recognized in interviewing (IRS, 2000, 2006; Torrington et al., 2005: 201–215):

- Interviewers should only talk around 20 per cent of the time, the remaining time should be filled by interviewees.
- Open questions are more useful, so questions starting with what, why, when, which and how can be very useful to elicit information from candidates. For example, instead of asking a question like ‘Did you enjoy your last job?’ the interviewer could ask ‘What did you enjoy about your last job?’
- Interviewers recognize and like candidates from similar backgrounds to them, in terms of things like social class and educational background.
- It is estimated that interviewers often make their decision within the first 4–9 min of an interview.
- Interviewers are vulnerable to prejudices with regard to aspects such as sex, race and age.
- Interviewers are affected by physical cues, for example spectacles equals greater intelligence.
- Interviewers need to be aware of the ‘halo’ or ‘horns’ effect, when either in a positive or negative manner, some trait or personal characteristic influences or overwhelms all other thoughts.
- There is a need to recognize the importance of non-verbal communications, or what is commonly described as body language. For example, interviewers and interviewees should aim to be open in their stance and throughout the interview sustain animated, yet controlled body language.

Despite the many criticisms of the interview as a selection method it remains extremely popular. It is worth remembering as well that often many of the criticisms are largely about the interviewers themselves and not the process. As Watson (1994: 211) aphoristically notes, 'employment interviewing is like driving. Most people rate themselves highly; the consequences of mistakes can be serious and when something goes wrong there is a tendency to blame the other party'. Similarly, Taylor (1998: 130) has suggested that, 'individuals will not tolerate criticisms of their performance as lovers, drivers or interviewers, since all such criticisms strike deep into the core of the human ego'. As Riley (1996) argues although interviews are subjective and require judgement so do other management activities and the real problem is not the interview but the way it is carried out. To conclude it is worth noting the view of IRS (2000: 12) who suggest that, 'there are few more complex, intuitive, intelligent or sophisticated information processors than a competent and confident interviewer'. With the interview set to continue as an integral part of the selection process it is important for individual managers to recognize the need to develop their interviewing skills as an essential part of their managerial skillset.

Beyond interviewing there are a number of other techniques which organizations can conceivably utilize in selecting employees. An obvious aspect to this is the use of tests and psychometric testing. In general a test may refer to something like a dexterity test for a manually skilled employee or an attainment test, for example typing skills. More specifically, psychological or psychometric tests are tests which can be systematically scored and administered. These tests are used to measure individual difference in aptitude, ability, intelligence or personality. Organizations are increasingly using these types of tests, particularly for managerial positions (IRS, 2002). That said, psychometric tests are a source of great debate, particularly the use of personality tests. Much of this debate is concerned with whether tests of this nature can genuinely predict future workplace behaviour. Aptitude tests may test specific abilities in relation to verbal, numerical, spatial or mechanical skills to provide an indication of how well applicants will cope with the job. General ability or intelligence tests are used to test how well individuals think on their feet and will be about analytical reasoning and ability to think critically. The most controversial tests are personality tests, which are often described as Orwellian or biased, manipulative and intrusive as they attempt to assess how people will cope with demands, or how people will cope with stress, rigidity or attitudes to authority or creativity.

There are a number of issues which arise in the use of personality tests. For example, there are concerns about how comparable information is. Equally, there are major concerns expressed by bodies such as the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality about the gender and ethnic bias in tests (IRS, 2002; LRD, 2003). Lastly, a number of occupational psychologists have expressed concerns at so-called off the shelf models, which may be used in organizations in an inappropriate manner and may be, in the words of one personnel specialist, 'no more reliable than a *Cosmopolitan*-style questionnaire' (cited in Sappal, 2005: 40). In sum, rather like many of the other selection methods described above the proper use of psychometric testing can help organizations make objective and more reliable selection decisions as long as they are used in an appropriate manner and administered properly.

Other methods which could be used by tourism and hospitality organizations include things like presentations. For example, an applicant for a training manager's job is likely to be required to give numerous presentations and the organization may want to assess their presentation skills. Organizations may also use various group methods such as which often involve problem-solving. These activities may involve some element of role playing. By undertaking such problem-solving in small groups applicants will have the opportunity to demonstrate things like ability to work within a group, creativity, interpersonal skills and so on. One final method is the so-called in-tray exercise which will simulate an in-tray of a manager and the applicant has to go through the tray and make decisions on the problems that they find.

Finally we come to the last method of selection, the assessment centre, which ordinarily refers to a process rather than a physical centre. Assessment centres utilize a mix of all of the above techniques and due to the opportunity to use a variety of methods – all of which are potentially assessing different aspects of the candidates – they are often described as the 'Rolls Royce' of selection methods (IRS, 2005). In this sense they are widely considered the most objective and best predictive selection tool for future performance. Equally, though, we should also recognize that assessment centres are also complex to design, time consuming and costly meaning that they are often, though not exclusively, reserved for appointing managerial- or graduate-level staff (and see HRM in practice 5.7).

In order for the overall process of recruitment and selection to be considered successful it is important that it is considered fair by candidates, is cost effective, is user friendly, acceptable to both the organization and the candidates, and is reliable and valid. The reliability of a selection process refers to the extent to which

HRM in practice 5.7 The use of assessment centres by easyJet

IDS (2002) notes that as a major airline easyJet is concerned to get it right in recruiting staff, especially pilots, who are one of the company's most expensive resources in terms of salary, training and career development. The assessment centre for pilots was introduced in 1999 and has now been extended to the recruitment of cabin crew and call centre employees. The assessment centre for pilots is particularly demanding, covering 2 days. Potential pilots face a range of challenges which aim to assess aspects such as team-working, ability to cope under pressure, ability to adhere to standards and technical knowledge. Additionally, Captains who attend the assessment centre are also assessed against leadership and decision-making criteria. Day 1 of the assessment centre is largely concerned with a range of tests and activities such as group work, personality tests and interviews. If the applicants successfully get through day 1 they progress to day 2. The second day is a flight simulation exercise which assesses the candidate's basic handling skills, as well as broader aspects such as flight management and crew resource management skills.

Cabin crew undertake a 1 day assessment in which the company evaluates potential employees against a number of competencies, including conscientiousness, sense of urgency, initiative, empathy, self-confidence and enthusiasm. To assess these aspects candidates have an ice breaker and the 'easyJet test'. The test measures things like mathematical ability, knowledge of easyJet and other factors relevant to the job, for example knowledge of foreign currencies.

a selection technique achieves consistency in what it is measuring over repeated use. Validity can be seen in three different ways. First, face validity on refers to the issue of whether the selection procedure was seen to be valid to candidate and tester. Face validity can be particularly important in terms of organizations being able to attract good candidates in the future. Second, predictive validity is concerned with whether the outcome selection able to predict the ability to perform effectively when in post. Lastly, content validity is about ensuring that the test or exercise in assessing certain skills is actually relevant to the job in question.

Once the selection procedure is over there is also a need for organization to ensure that there is feedback to both the successful and unsuccessful candidates. Organizations should aim therefore to give feedback as soon as possible. It is also important to recognize that for the feedback to be meaningful it should be specific



as opposed to being too vague to allow candidates to fully appreciate why they did not get the job. A benefit from giving constructive feedback is that at the end of the recruitment and selection process the organization is still maintaining a positive image. Rather like much of what we have previously discussed the provision of feedback is an essential part of how organizations can portray themselves in a positive manner throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Conclusion

Clearly tourism and hospitality organizations are faced with a mass of possible methods and techniques in which to approach the question of recruitment and selection. As we described in the introduction there is no one best way to recruit and select. Instead, organizations should be prepared to develop a contingent approach. On the one hand this may simply mean employing people on the basis of word of mouth or because they responded to an advert in the window of a restaurant, for example. On the other hand it may be the culmination of a lengthy and expensive selection process, particularly for managerial and graduate-level positions.

In answer to the question of whether there has been significant change in recruitment and selection in the tourism and hospitality industry in recent years the answer would be yes and no. Yes in terms of a shift to organizations looking for the 'right' people in terms of attitudes and behaviour and adoption of more sophisticated techniques, such as psychometric testing. Equally, though, we could also answer no in terms of the widespread use of traditional forms of recruitment and selection, such as interviewing. Moreover evidence continues to suggest that the recruitment and selection process in many tourism and hospitality organizations often remains ad-hoc and informal, especially for operative and front-line positions.

References and further reading

- Armstrong, M. (1999) *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, Kogan Page, 7th edition.
- Baker, J. (1999) 'Friday's people', *Caterer and Hotelkeeper*, 28 January, 30–31.
- Beal, B. (2004) 'Psychological search for Hilton hotel managers', *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 12(1), 30–32.
- Chan, B. and Coleman, M. (2004) 'Skills and competencies needed for the Hong Kong hotel industry: the perspective of the hotel human resources manager', *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*, 3(1), 3–18.



- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2004) *Recruitment, Retention and Turnover: A Survey of the UK and Ireland*, CIPD.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2006) *The Guide To Recruitment Marketing*, CIPD.
- Gallier, E. (2004) 'When the going gets tough', *Hospitality*, June, 35.
- Heery, E. and Noon, M. (2001) *A Dictionary of Human Resource Management*, Oxford University Press.
- Hills, R. (2004) 'Who would you most like to be stuck in a lift with?', *Sunday Herald*, 23 May, 12.
- Income Data Services (2002) *Assessment Centres*, IDS Studies No. 735, September.
- Industrial Relations Services (2000) 'The interview: its role in effective selection', *Employee Development Bulletin*, No. 122, February, 12–16.
- Industrial Relations Services (2002) 'Psychometrics: the next generation', *IRS Employment Review*, No. 744, 28 January, 36–40.
- Industrial Relations Services (2005) 'Centre of attention', *IRS Employment Review*, No. 816, 28 January, 42–48.
- Industrial Relations Services (2006) 'In the hiring line: boosting managers' recruitment skills', *IRS Employment Review*, No. 846, 5 May, 42–48.
- Jackson, M., Goldthorpe, J. and Mills, C. (2005) 'Education, employers' and class mobility', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 23, 1–30.
- Jameson, S. (2000) 'Recruitment and training in small firms', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 24(1), 43–49.
- Kelliher, C. and Johnson, K. (1997) 'Personnel management in hotels – an update: a move to human resource management?', *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3(4), 321–331.
- Labour Research Department (2003) 'Employers warned over bias in aptitude tests', *Labour Research*, December, 25.
- Lockyer, C. and Scholarios, D. (2005) 'Selecting hotel staff: why best practice does not always work', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(2), 121–135.
- Marchington, M. and Wilkinson, A. (2005) *Human Resource Management at Work: People Management and Development*, CIPD, 3rd edition.
- Nickson, D., Warhurst, C., Cullen, A.M. and Watt, A. (2003) 'Bringing in the excluded? Aesthetic labour, skills and training in the new economy', *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(2), 185–203.
- Nickson, D., Warhurst, C. and Dutton, E. (2005) 'The importance of attitude and appearance in the service encounter in retail and hospitality', *Managing Service Quality*, 15(2), 195–208.
- Nickson, D., Warhurst, C., Witz, A. and Cullen, A.M. (2001) 'The importance of being aesthetic: work, employment and service organization', in A. Sturdy, I. Grugulis and H. Wilmott (eds.) *Customer Service – Empowerment and Entrapment*, Palgrave, 170–190.
- Price, L. (1994) 'Poor personnel practice in the hotel and catering industry – does it matter?', *Human Resource Management Journal*, 4(4), 44–62.
- Raub, S. and Streit, E. (2006) 'Realistic recruitment: an empirical study of the cruise industry', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(4), 278–289.
- Sappal, S. (2005) 'Top scorers', *People Management*, 13 January, 38–40.
- Smethurst, S. (2004) 'The allure of online', *People Management*, 29 July, 38–40.
- Taylor, S. (1998) *Employee Resourcing*, IPM.
- Torrington, D., Hall, L. and Taylor, S. (2005) *Human Resource Management*, Prentice Hall, 6th edition.
- Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D. (2001) *Looking Good, Sounding Right*, Industrial Society.
- Watson, T. (1994) 'Recruitment and selection', in K. Sisson (ed.) *Personnel Management: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice in Britain*, Blackwell, 185–220.



Websites

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has a useful publication on recruitment, which is available at <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=526&detailid=584>

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has a very informative factsheet on recruitment which can be found at <http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/recruitmen/general/recruitmt.htm?lsSrchRes=1>

There are a variety of different links covering recruitment and selection at <http://www.hrmguid.co.uk/hrm/chap8/ch8-links.html>