

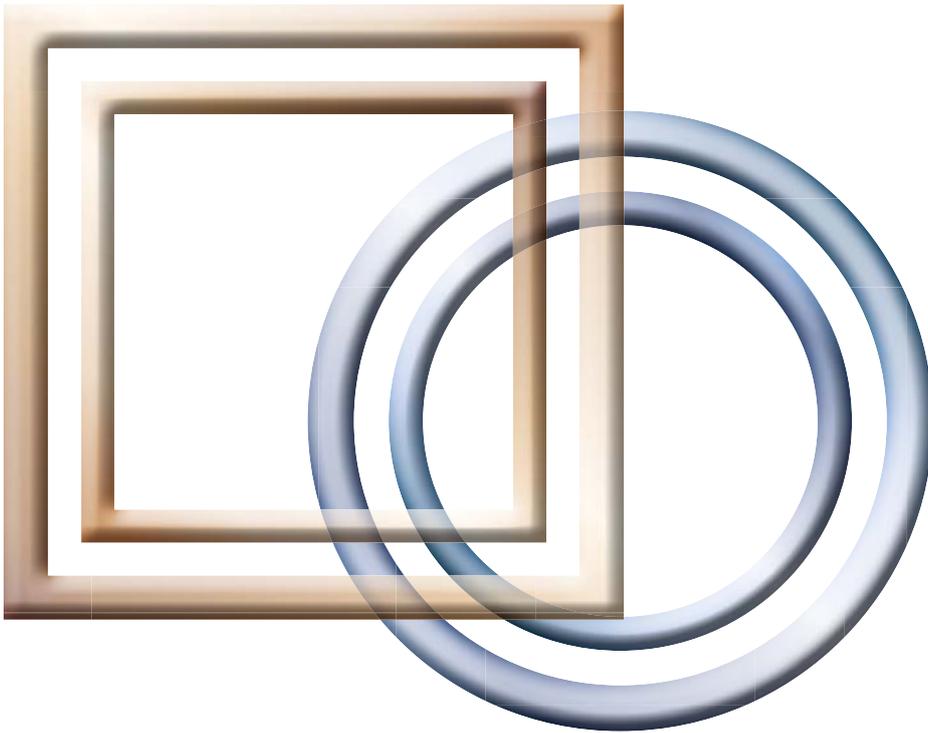
# The Perfect Fit



ADVANCED SKILLS FOR  
FINDING AND HIRING  
THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Ed Grimshaw





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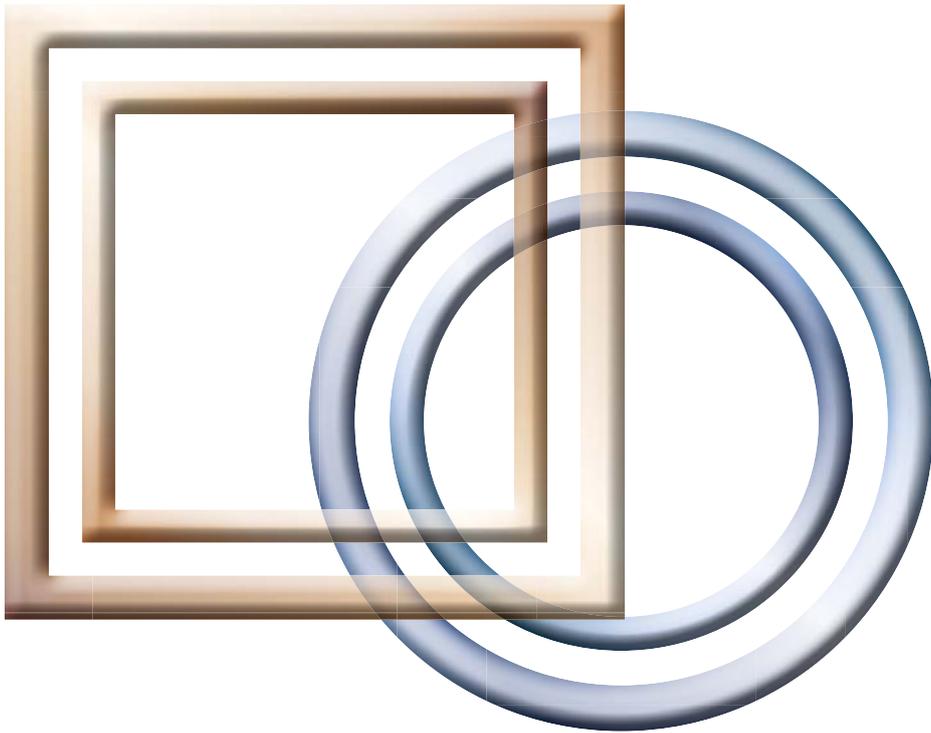
By Ed Grimshaw

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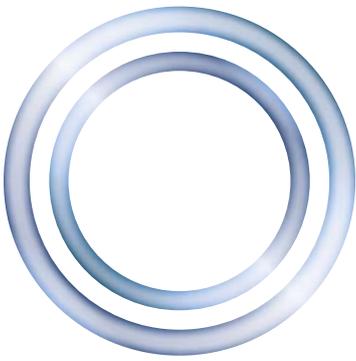
## DEDICATION

To Rosemary and Tom

*Without whose support and help, this book would not have been written.*

To Silvia Hartmann and Alex Kent

*Without whose faith, this book would not have been published.*



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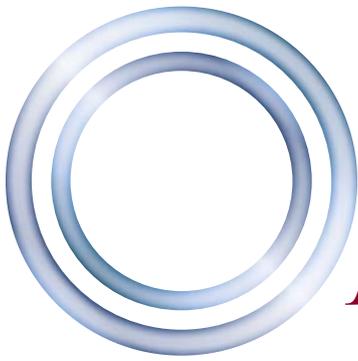
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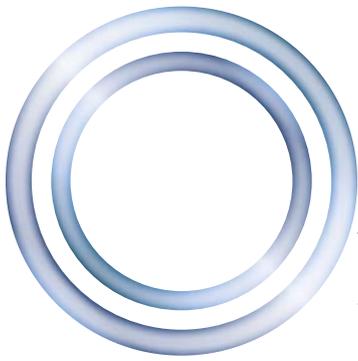
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# INTRODUCTION

*It is the first of all problems for a man (or woman) to find out  
what kind of work he (or she) is to do in this universe.*

Thomas Carlyle

## SMART RECRUITING CAN BE TRICKY

The business of finding and hiring people who are perfectly suitable for individual organisations and roles can be a tricky one. The recruiter is assigned the task of making accurate predictions about potential employees and how they will perform and respond under a variety of conditions. Those of us who get involved in the process of recruitment have to deal with an ever-changing environment, evolving organisations and the unpredictable behaviours of people being people. We need a deep understanding of human behaviour and knowledge of how organisations function; we have to be objective in applying specialist skills and understand the consequences of recruiting each employee. We are fitting people into existing structures, projects and working teams, we are channelling them into roles with assigned objectives and tasks. These often evolve into something quite different than anticipated.

In setting up the relationships between organisation and people, recruiting produces streams of income and expense that flow from the contribution that each employee makes to the organisation. The recruiter is a human investment manager. Recruitment generates momentum within an enterprise, providing a people resource that achieves objectives, solves problems, interacts with people, works in teams, innovates, provides leadership, takes risks, initiates change and forms part of the identity of the organisation. The recruiter plays the role of psychologist, obtaining an understanding of how people think, what makes them tick, analysing their personality, evaluating how they fit in a team and what they do effectively day in day out. In recruiting there has to be understanding of the technical aspects of the role, the day-to-day requirements, the skills set, the competencies, the content knowledge, the hard core of evidence that defines what has to be done to complete the task. The recruiter must also get a sense of how that behaviour will adapt over a range of contexts.

We set ourselves a difficult task to accurately predict the future behaviours of individual candidates based on the limited experience and information from the recruitment process. This is the case whether we spend a couple of hours screening and interviewing each candidate or two days undertaking comprehensive behavioural assessments. We continually learn new things about people, including those who we consider familiar or even close to us. How well do we understand those people who we encounter briefly during the selection process?

*The Perfect Fit* offers practical solutions and advice for managers and recruiters who seek to improve the results generated from the recruitment process. As the reader, you are presented with the choice of picking up the methodology wholesale or simply picking off the parts that

will produce the most value without the complete redesign of the recruitment system you use. I would, of course, recommend that you at least consider implementing the whole system but recognise some managers prefer to modify rather than completely re-engineer, for a whole variety of reasons. However, the cost and the investment of time should not provide an immovable impediment to improving the recruitment of staff and performance of the organisation.

In my experience, common responses amongst some recruiting managers as to why they should recruit and select a particular candidate include: “Well I just get a gut feel, they seem to be right for the job”, or “She seems to have what we need”, or “We just think they could do a good job for us”. Often managers will intuitively select someone who they think is suited to the job but do not understand or are able to articulate exactly why. The intuitive skills of the manager take on the characteristics of a fortune-teller or tealeaf reader. The reading and interpretation of their feelings is translated into the judgement of people and suitability in fitting the job.

Some managers focus on one or two qualities of the candidate, ignoring the complete specification; the resulting decision is unbalanced, having discounted other qualities required to undertake the role. In recruiting the Perfect Fit we are offering a balanced and thorough approach to recruitment without incurring high or excessive levels of cost. Many line managers who get involved in the recruitment process, are thrown in at the deep end. They may be given some procedures, a set of guidelines, and, if they are fortunate, a little training, but the associated skills required for successful recruitment practice are neglected.

The practice of recruitment in many organisations contradicts the very requirement they are looking for—behavioural skills and competence. Managers and recruiters need training; they require specialist skills to define precisely what they want from the recruitment process and then how to achieve it. The skilled manager involved in recruitment considers the big picture as well as the small detail. In understanding how recruiting affects the organisational culture and strategy we, as recruiters, can direct the process to obtain the maximum value. At the same time the competent recruiter is able to evaluate the minimal responses and behaviours of each candidate during the selection process.

The recruitment environment is competitive. We are competing for talent—talent that fits the unique aspects of our individual organisations. The recruiter needs the skills of a business analyst and strategic planner, evaluating and creating roles that contribute to the long-term objectives of the organisation. The recruiter is a promoter and salesman, someone who knows how to attract people to products, those products being vacancies and eventually jobs. In recruiting we need to harmonise and integrate the skills and behaviours of the new individuals with that of the existing group and teams of people. We must ensure the collaboration is sustained and developed by a set of values and common behaviours that represent the heart of the organisation.

One of the challenges for the modern-day recruiter is to have the ability to assess objectively those candidates who possess effective strategies for the recruitment process itself, that surpass by far their performance in the job itself. In this day and age candidates are becoming switched on to the recruitment process and the embedded requirements to get that job. There is no shortage of information and advice for the candidates in submitting an application and handling the selection process. This development can sometimes hinder rather than assist the recruiter. It's the trained candidate rather than best suited prospective employee that comes across best.

Organisations are complex organisms, changing, evolving, learning, performing and resourcing. The processes of the organisation need to be accounted for in the “predictive world” of recruitment. We attempt to recruit for a fixed point or period in time—a snapshot—yet the organisation is constantly changing. Organisations often outgrow the people within them and there is a whole range of dynamics that contribute to this. Organisations respond to economic change, social

change, legislation, technological change and the competition, including changes to the structure of the market they operate in. Personnel changes, in respect to the new people recruited and those who evolve and develop. We must be aware of these changes and at least attempt to build these factors into the flexible recruitment system.

In seeking the Perfect Fit, we need detailed knowledge of the organisation, the role of the candidates and the dynamics of how they interrelate with each other—a systemic understanding. We develop a precisely defined role that meets the relevant needs of the organisation and we then translate this role into requirements the candidate needs to meet that can be clearly evidenced and tested. If we do this, we are well on the way to recruiting people who will best suit the role.

## NATURAL RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION—WE ALL DO IT

Recruitment and selection is a natural process in our everyday lives. We recruit and select people, in the simplest sense, in our regular interactions. We recruit the suppliers we use, our partners, our friends, lovers, business associates, mentors, heroes, advisers and the companies we work with. The overall process is similar to that of organisational recruitment. We make a decision to obtain a resource, we attract and consider one or more options and we select from those options, acquiring the knowledge to make a final decision. In making these significant decisions we consider what is important to us: our criteria. One of the secrets of making good decisions is to understand the criteria and the value systems that influence the decision-making process.

The skills that will be explored and learned throughout this book can be applied beyond the corporate environment. Whether you are interested in getting a deeper understanding of people's behaviour, sharpening up your questioning skills, learning how to set outcomes, or increasing your awareness and perception, all of these skills can be applied across the organisational environment as a whole.

## IF YOU WERE RECRUITING A RECRUITER, WHAT KIND OF SKILLS WOULD YOU BE LOOKING FOR?

Anybody can be a recruiter. You don't need qualifications and you can start without experience and little skill. You don't even need to prepare for the selection process. You only need a vacancy to fill and a group of willing candidates. Recruiting is prone to all kinds of errors, incompetence, poor decisions and bad practise in searching for the right person. It is not uncommon to find people who don't know what they're doing and are unable to recognise it. On one occasion, a small but growing engineering business was looking for an experienced Company Secretary. For those not familiar with the UK, that's a role that takes care of some of the legal and administrative requirements of the company. The local recruitment agency sent round a shorthand typist who they deemed the kind of secretary the engineering business required. It makes one wonder what kind of questions they asked in specifying the requirements of the job.

If you were recruiting a recruiter for your organisation, how would you specify the role? What behaviours and skills would be essential? Recruitment consultancies, more often than not, require recruiters with sales skills, someone who knows the market, someone with good interpersonal skills. All of these are useful but not of the greatest value to the organisation recruiting. In adding value to the organisation, the recruiter must be an effective decision-maker, someone who understands the influences and consequences of the recruitment process. In recruiting suitable candidates there needs to be an understanding of the personal patterns and criteria that apply in individual roles. The recruiter must be able to ask penetrating, well-targeted questions, obtain the trust and cooperation of the candidates and be able to promote the organisation to suitable

applicants. The person or team recruiting needs detailed knowledge of both the role and the organisation, not just the current status, but also likely future changes.

## NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING (NLP)—WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO KNOW

*Neuro-linguistic programming is the model about the special world of magic and illusion of human behaviour and communication—the study of the components of perception and behaviour which makes our experience possible.*

*NLP, Volume 1—John Grinder, Richard Bandler, et al.*

This book is not about Neuro-Linguistic Programming. There has been plenty of material written on that subject. It does contain some of the models and methodology derived from its application. NLP is an application of the tools and models that are the product, as well as the thinking, that produces this product. For those of you who have never heard of it or know little about it, that's OK, because this book is aimed at the people who want to improve their recruiting skills not just their NLP skills.

NLP gives us a framework and a model with which to understand human behaviour. It provides us with the methodology to model and learn new behaviours in recruitment and more generally in an organisational environment. Effective recruiters understand people. They know how they think and why they behave the way they do. NLP presents an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what makes people the individuals they are. Most human behaviour is patterned and programmed and, therefore, predictable. Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a highly effective methodology based on the belief that all behaviour has a structure and this structure can be modelled, learned and changed. It is a study of these patterns and programmes and is designed to increase flexibility, effectiveness and ultimately the choice available to us.

In applying NLP to business and organisations, we can gain deeper insights into how people function individually and in teams. We can increase our understanding of the patterns of communication and the behaviours that contribute to an average performance or an exceptional performance. NLP provides us with the tools to make clear distinctions between the two, not just what is done consciously but also those behaviours that are unconscious. When we have collected this data, we have the basis of a new model. In recruitment, our task is to discriminate between the average and the first rate. When we know what contributes to our success in finding an ideal candidate within the specified organisation, we are on the way to creating the Perfect Fit.

Some of the content of this book is based on the work of Richard Bandler and John Grinder who originally developed NLP back in the 1970s. There is material that has been created using models developed by John McWhirter, the developer of Developmental Behavioural Modelling. There is also some work based on the ideas of that little-known trainer, Harold Milnthorpe (who sadly passed away a few years ago).

I have removed some of the jargon where possible and presented the material so it is easier for anyone to understand, without needing a thorough grounding and training in NLP.

For those of you who are a little curious and would like to improve the performance of their businesses as well as their personal life, NLP has much to offer. I have witnessed hundreds of people change their lives for the better using just a few of the tools and techniques that NLP has to offer. Its application goes far beyond the confines of the business world. There are some useful contact details at the back of the book.

## ROUND PEGS, SQUARE HOLES

Generally, as recruiters, we place the main emphasis on the needs of the organisation rather than the best interests of the candidate. The candidates usually have to look out for themselves and make decisions with similarly limited information. Recruitment can shape people's futures, not just the organisations they work in. The recruitment decision has knock-on effects across the futures of the enterprise and the individual that can be long lasting.

I remember having just left school at the end of the 1970s, and interviewing for a job as an audit clerk for a firm of chartered accountants. It was my first interview. I was green and inexperienced, even clueless. It was at a time when the British economy was in a deep slump and jobs were hard to come by. As a naïve teenager, I had to get a job at any cost. At the end of the interview the accountant leaned over and said he had no doubt I could do the job but it would be unfair to take me on. He thought my capabilities were beyond that job. Although I was disappointed at the time, he was right. I would have been miserable in a job that did not stretch me and would have been unlikely to stick with it for any length of time.

As recruiters, I believe we have a duty to our candidates to make decisions based on their needs and requirements, not just those of the organisation. If we do this, it will serve us well in the long run with employees undertaking jobs in which they are satisfied and fulfilled. There are people in the recruitment industry willing to convince candidates that ill-suited jobs are right for them. Commission and short-term results rule. Fortunately, not all recruiting agencies are like this and many recruiters are focused on building long-term relationships with organisations and candidates alike.

## THE VALUE OF RECRUITING

In analysing the cost of recruitment we can acknowledge the importance of the decision itself. The decision is of greater value than the immediate hard financial costs. However these other costs should not be ignored (Table 1).

The financial numbers obviously vary depending on the circumstances that surround the recruitment and termination of employees. As a rule of thumb it would be reasonable to include costs that equate to three quarters of the total annual salary during normal operating conditions. This would mean an organisation with 1,000 employees and a turnover rate of 8 percent incurs a recruitment cost of £1.6 million per year. Not exactly chicken feed! These costs exclude factors such as costly mistakes and the difference between an average performance and the high-class

**Table 1** Figures based on an average salary of £27,000

The cost of recruitment and screening (including advertising and agency costs)	£4,050
The cost of selection and job offer	£2,000
The cost of employee induction and initial training	£3,000
Administrative costs of a new employee	£1,050
Costs of bringing performance up to standard	£7,000
Additional cost of functioning during transitional period	£2,700
Cost of termination or departure	£1,600
Total cost of employee recruitment	£21,400

performance after the designated incumbent has settled into the role. Also excluded are additional redundancy costs that might result due to restructuring where unsuitable candidates are removed as part of the process.

Recruitment also offers an opportunity to accrue the following gains and benefits. Although in this case they do not attract a financial value, they nevertheless can produce priceless rewards for the organisation:

- Improvements in organisational performance.
- Redirecting strategy and the direction of the organisation.
- Re-engineering the culture of the business.
- Improving and building teams.
- Adding scarce skills and capabilities.
- Adding diversity and fresh ideas.
- Increasing motivation for individuals and the organisation.
- Focusing on added-value activities.

The effective recruiter has to resist the temptation of simply just putting another cog in the wheel. The organisation, together with the recruiter, has to get the most from drawing in people who will contribute beyond just performing in a role.

## DOING THE ACTIVITIES

I have included activities in the book to provide more than just advice and go beyond an academic exercise. I recommend that you participate in the activities to get the experience of learning from experience. They provide an opportunity to interact personally with the material and more fully integrate the skills.

I hope you enjoy reading and studying this book. It is intended to assist managers to be more effective, not just in recruiting, but also in their everyday interactions with people.



# JUST FIND ME THE RIGHT PERSON!

*I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day you bet on people, not on strategies.*

Larry Bossidy

## WHAT IS THE PERFECT FIT?

As managers we crave practical, fast-acting solutions. We are constantly tasked with finding the constituent resources that will contribute to tomorrow's improved performance. People improve or worsen performance; therefore, we carefully need to manage their input into our distinctive organisations. People, in many ways, are the least predictable factor in organising unpredictable organisations. The recruiter is challenged with increasing the predictability of individual people and ensuring an improvement takes place against the backdrop of an ever-changing organisational environment.

The Perfect Fit adds value to organisations through improving the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process. Ultimately this means advancement in the performance of the enterprise. The improvement can take the form of increased profitability, improved customer service, a greater market share, a better quality product, a return on sales and development of the organisation through the performance drivers, whatever they may be. The importance of the effectiveness in recruiting staff is often overlooked as a direct contributor to the performance of the business. It is usually not treated as a direct driver of competitive advantage. Recruitment is sometimes treated as a chore, a necessary inconvenience, rather than a catalyst for improvement. As managers and recruiters, it is vital that we squeeze the last drop of value from the recruitment process. In finding that Perfect Fit, we can develop and grow high-class organisations through the people we select.

We will achieve this improvement through focusing on and increasing the skills of the recruiter, deliberating on the desired outcomes of the recruitment process, deepening the understanding of organisational needs, reducing the ambiguity of the selection process and providing practical solutions for dealing with the day-to-day problems of finding and hiring "ideal" candidates.

We are going to invest in the process of choosing people that are perfect for individual organisations and its own individual recruiting specifications. We will increase the level of predictability and the precision in assessing candidates during the selection process. Through increasing the recruiters' skills, developing the structure of the recruitment and selection process and integrating the role requirements with the organisational requirements, we can improve performance and extend the benefits of hiring people who fit perfectly. We must be competent to handle the detail in analysing work roles and individual people, then filter that detail for relevancy and understand its purpose within the framework of the whole recruitment system.

Getting an agreement on what qualities and behaviours are consistent with those of the organisation is sometimes problematical. What are the common behaviours that drive performance within the organisation? I once sat in on a meeting between the HR director and the manufacturing director and watched them have a heated discussion for nearly an hour over behaviours that would be considered the “specified norm” across the various sites. They were attempting to implement a competency-based selection process. The main sticking point was getting agreement on the competencies for testing new candidates. They had to make the distinction between the behaviours in the current situation and what was desirable in the future. It involved taking the best of what they already had and then adding what they considered was required. Definition was difficult. Their eventual agreement affected the organisation profoundly and led to a major shift in what was then current thinking. The balance of competences introduced contributed to recruiting candidates who were a better fit for the organisation.

Recruitment can be easy, but recruiting the Perfect Fit is ambitious. Without this ambition we run the risk of aiming lower than what we could achieve through recruitment and selection. In designing a recruitment system and developing recruiting skills, we must be aware of all the facets that affect performance within a given role of any individual organisation. Understanding what the fit consists of is key in building a model that integrates the requirements of the organisation with the attributes and personal patterns of each individual. We will consider the recruitment process from many perspectives. We will explore the relationships between organisation, role and candidate that are fundamental in finding the Perfect Fit. Analysing in detail the constituent components and elements that make up each of these aspects, we can generate a greater knowledge of the process that blends people with organisations.

A by-product of this process is to improve the job satisfaction and the fulfilment people gain from working for organisations and the roles for which they are best suited. Within an ever-changing environment, the Perfect Fit is more difficult to find and the demands of the organisation are spiralling. Gone are the days of the well-defined job description was cast in stone within a traditional organisational structure. Today we have to be more flexible in a fast moving, constantly changing, continuously improving, customer-focused organisation. The growth in small businesses together with a diversity of roles and job content mean the recruiter has much more to consider and deal with. In the same way, our recruitment systems need to reflect this level of flexibility and have to adapt to fit the characteristics of the new environment. One thing is certain: the pace of change will increase and the skills to adapt to that change will be integral feature in this new organisational order. Greater differentiation, more variation and less stability is the order of the day.

## RECRUITING FOR THE PERFECT FIT

Recruiting the Perfect Fit is the process of uniting people with organisations. This can be done one of two ways.

The first approach is to define the role, incorporating various aspects of organisation and role into a precise role specification. The specification incorporates organisational culture, strategy, structure and activities together with tasks, relationships, values and objectives. This is translated into a profile that contains behavioural indicators that best represent the demands of the role. This approach is best used where the organisation is established and the responsibilities within the role are well-defined. The recruiter has flexibility to decide and make judgements on those aspects that are tightly specified and those that can be broadly determined.

The second approach is through recruiting people with the ideal qualities that suit the organisation. A role or position is then created that fits their skill set and personal attributes. The

ideal qualities can be defined using behavioural indicators that cover the needs of the enterprise generically.

An acquaintance of mine runs a small- to medium-sized hospitality business with about 90 employees. He places very little emphasis on defining the role for individual employees. He expects a high degree of flexibility together with an aptitude to grow within the job. He is on the lookout for people with a “positive” attitude and knows exactly what to look for and test for in checking whether they will fit the company rather than a specific role within the company.

The Perfect Fit focuses on the individuality of the candidate. We are interested in eliciting differences between people. The more distinctions we can make, the more precise and detailed our understanding will be. These distinctions have to be paralleled with precision in specifying the role. We are not interested in making people fit the job but in finding which people and how people fit best. In the early 21st century we are becoming a more diverse population in terms of knowledge, skills, interests, experience and tastes. The challenge for the modern recruiter is to incorporate this change into the system that brings together organisations and people.

This chapter introduces some of the issues and concepts that surround the recruitment decision and the process of decision-making. The decision to go ahead and recruit to fill the available role or to create a position suitable for a person with the qualities required by the organisation. We are also concerned with the influences that surround the recruitment process. With increased understanding we can add further value to the organisation.

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION DECISION MAKING

Life is a series of decisions, even picking up this book and getting as far as reading this line has involved a complex process to reach a relatively simple decision (see Activity 1).

Decision-making is just one aspect of the recruitment and selection process but it requires detailed understanding to improve the results obtained from it. If we consider the process of finding and hiring individual people who are suitable for the organisations we work for and with,

### Activity 1 How Do You Make Your Decisions?

Just think back and remember all the decisions that led you to pick up this book.

- How have you decided where the decision-making process started?
- What steps were involved in deciding?
- How many decisions made up the overall decision?
- What information was required to reach the decision?
- What connected with the decision making process?
- What clinched the decision?

Contrast this decision with recruiting a member of staff?

- How many decisions are involved?
- How much or little information is required?
- What steps are involved?
- How do you know whether or not you made a good decision?
- How do you think you could improve your decision-making process in the context of recruiting?

the process presents complexity. A whole myriad of decisions is made, from the decision to recruit in the first place to the terms of the final offer. We must obtain some understanding not just of which decisions are made, but how and why they are made.

So why is recruitment and selection so important in managing organisations? Well, you could consider the costs involved in making a poor selection, the disruption, the rectification costs, the replacement costs or, if the person stays with the organisation, the cost of under-performance, additional development costs, the management and support of the under-performance and the knock-on effects across the organisation. Then there's the outstanding performer—the person who outperforms all expectations, who stays and develops with the company and contributes beyond what was reasonably expected. The person who provides a shining example of what the recruitment and selection process can provide if it is done well.

I'm sure we can all find examples of a bad hire, or even a hiring decision that was acceptable at the time but the environment or the role changed and the decision was re-evaluated with hindsight. Think back from start to finish what effect that had on you as an individual and the organisation as a whole. How do you think that came about? Could it have been avoided and what difference would it have made? My guess is in reviewing the possible causes and effects, it could have been avoided. "and it would have made a substantial difference to the performance of the organisation.

There is an old business cliché: "People are our most important resource". Many managers quote this but few live it. We witness this every day as employees, customers, suppliers, managers and recruiters, and every single time we come into contact with a poor-performing organisation. We can all recall examples of customer service managers who had no interest in the customer, sales representatives who did not like the product they were selling, directors who had little interest or expertise in directing, and human resources managers who were unresourceful and knew even less about humans.

I recently went into a well-known electrical retail chain in Preston, Lancashire. I wanted to buy a microphone for my computer. I was less than delighted with the assistance, or lack of it, from the sales staff. From what I could see around me, I was not the only customer having problems. The staff were like zombies, totally switched off, unwilling to help their customers, knowing less about some of the products than I did. A member of staff who did try to help called over to someone else, but he was completely ignored with the cold shoulder treatment. While much of this might not be solely attributed to recruitment, there were patterns of behaviour from a customer perspective that were less than satisfactory. Poor recruitment was a cause of the problem. Anyone can be a sales assistant, can't they?

The costs of placing people in unsuitable jobs within organisations go far beyond the financial dimensions. They affect people's lives emotionally and can impoverish their view of themselves in their professional life. Recruiters not only owe it to the organisations that employ them but also to the candidates they select from. A poor selection decision not only means the recruiting organisation has lost out, but a potentially more suitable candidate has also failed to obtain a position in which they could have excelled.

I remember working in an organisation, which shall remain nameless, and it was not exactly an uplifting experience. The site director was attempting to raise our spirits for Christmas and invited a few selected managers and employees to a soiree in the boardroom. He pontificated in no uncertain terms that "we were the organisation's most important resource". After a selection of sausage rolls, mince pies and local punch, we were subjected to the sounds of "Simply the Best" and "We Are the Champions." This seemed so out of character, we were left chunnering into our glasses of warm Pomagne. Where was this leading? Had the world really changed? Not to worry

though. We returned in the New Year to the usual ranting and blaming. It made us wonder why he bothered—the cynical culture thrived. And listening to Tina Turner and Freddie Mercury was never quite the same experience.

Some sources rely on the definition of recruitment and selection to match people with jobs. This is somewhat of an oversimplification. We need to consider organisational influences and requirements that extend beyond the completion of a defined group of tasks. We must attend to the developmental requirements of role and organisation, and think about how the candidate will evolve as an individual and can grow within the organisation. We also need to consider how people fit within teams and groups, how we can create a chemistry and blend of personal patterns that complement each other. What kind of candidate will naturally develop within the organisation and which one will stagnate?

### **Recruiting to Make a Difference**

So what can we do to make a difference in being more effective as recruiters? The following are suggested categories that will make a difference in the recruiting environment:

- Having a greater knowledge of the organisational requirements and needs from the recruitment process.
- Determining the role dynamics and requirements.
- Knowing what the job entails.
- Knowing what needs to be achieved and how it can best be done.
- Knowing what kind and level of relationships the role entails.
- Knowing what behaviours drive performance in the role.
- Understanding and evaluating human behaviour (people that is).
- Designing a fair and effective selection process.
- Conducting a fair and effective selection process.
- Increasing clarity and removing ambiguity from the recruitment process.
- Making well-informed, fair and balanced recruitment decisions.
- Being objective, as far as possible, in the selection process.
- Predicting and incorporating likely changes to both the role and organisation over time.
- Improving the recruitment process through targeted initiatives.
- Learning to adapt to a changing recruitment environment.

In the forthcoming chapters we will explore these skills together with some useful structures and procedures in achieving the above.

## **DEFINITION OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

It will be useful to clarify the terms “Selection” and “Recruitment”, which are often used interchangeably. We recognise that other definitions exist, but for the purposes of clarification and ease of use, the following definitions should be applied to the subsequent material contained within this book.

**Recruitment** is the process of bringing a person or persons into the organisation. It starts with the decision to recruit and continues through to the induction and settlement of the new employees.

## Activity 2 Do You Really Think of Recruitment as a Process?

Consider carefully each of the following sentences individually, compare and contrast how you think about each.

- “We need to improve our recruitment.”
- “We must improve the way we are recruiting.”

And consider also

- “We made a good selection.”
- “We were selecting well.”

How did you visualise (internally represent) and experience each of the above? What were the differences? Which statements created internal pictures with more movement?

---

**Selection** covers the process of deciding between a group of one or more candidates who is most suitable for a particular role or organisational profile. It extends from the screening process up to deciding which successful candidates to make an offer of employment.

You will find some sources define recruitment as the process of attracting a pool of qualified candidates for the purposes of selection. This goes against the popular use of the word and would mean we would be unable to use the shorthand without qualification.

It is important to distinguish between both recruitment and selection as processes. Often we lose our sense of the process in using language and adopting management speak. This changes the way we think about how we relate and interact with these processes (see Activity 2).

The dynamics of how we experience processes are affected by the language we use. By changing the language, we change our internal experience—the images and audio inside our heads. It is critical to be able to focus on the processes of recruitment and selection and also the processes within each process; for example, understanding the process of attracting candidates for the role for which they are being recruited or the process of developing rapport with the candidates. As we explore the processes at work during recruitment and selection, we can view them as interactive movies, one process acting on another, a sense of a system. The candidate, the role for which they are applying and the processes of the organisation are all interacting during the recruitment process. All of these aspects of recruitment change over time and are constantly evolving. Sometimes these changes may be very small but nevertheless will affect the people we are searching for and how we find them.

## THE PURPOSE OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The motives for recruitment can be varied. Once the decision to recruit has been made, the reasons for recruitment fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Maintaining current levels of performance.
- Meeting increased demands within a growing or changing business.
- Improving competitive advantage.
- Initiating or developing culture change.
- Business restructuring or remodelling.
- Supporting or developing business strategy.

It is useful when recruiting not to lose sight of the purpose of hiring staff. These purposes are the benefits associated with the end product of the recruitment process.

### What Do We Want to Gain by Filling This Position?

If the reason for recruiting is simply to maintain performance, then the benchmark is the current incumbent in the role or the output using the current methodology. If maintaining performance is the only reason for recruitment taking place, it is well worth questioning the current practice and exploring some alternatives. It is critical to utilise recruitment as an opportunity for improving performance by creating high expectations and then managing performance against those expectations.

The need to support culture change and business strategy is becoming more important within the recruitment process. The effect of both can improve the alignment of the business function so that all efforts can be combined to meet the same ends. The question of business culture in the recruitment context is vital to ensuring the Perfect Fit.

Apologies to those of you who might be going over familiar ground here! The definition of **Competitive Advantage** is the ability of the firm to outperform rivals on the primary performance goal—profitability. We will broaden this and move away from finance-orientated measurements to the following interpretation: the ability of the firm to outperform its rivals on measured performance goals. To simplify further: How do we do better than the perceived competition. This applies to recruitment; we are competing for scarce resources, not just in obtaining them but also in applying them effectively to support the strategy of the organisation. If we utilise the people within our organisation ineffectively, then the competition gains ground or establishes an advantage. If people really are our most important resource, then it is critical we use the opportunity to obtain an advantage.

Where there are increased demands placed on the business and recruiting is taking place, it is often worthwhile to ascertain whether economies of scale or efficiency savings should be evidenced, rather than just accepting the status quo. Recruitment and selection nearly always provide an opportunity for improving performance. If we fail to make these improvements then the medicine may be far worse further down the line (see Activity 3).

Recruitment can be an easy decision to make but a difficult one to correct. It is always worthwhile exploring alternatives in addition to improving efficiency; it can bring about a deeper understanding of the business issues that surround the role being recruited.

## STAGES OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Figure 1 shows a brief timeline of a recruitment and selection process. This will be useful when discussing skills later in the book. It gives us a common framework around which to work. It should

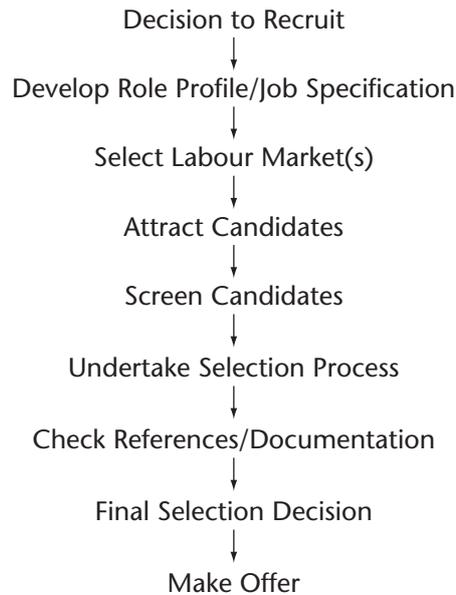
### Activity 3 To Recruit or Not to Recruit?

Useful questions to ask when starting out in the recruitment process are:

- “Why am I recruiting here?”
- “What would happen if I didn’t recruit here?”
- “What alternative actions instead of recruitment exist here?”
- “What benefits will the organisation accrue from recruiting?”

Apply these questions to your most recent experiences of recruitment, using both organisational and natural contexts (see introduction)

**Figure 1 The Recruitment and Selection Process**



be pointed out that this is only one version. Although it is probably the most standard, there are other variations used by other organisations. Each stage of this process will be explored in later in the book.

### **Decision to Recruit**

The decision to recruit is obviously fundamental to the subsequent stages of the recruitment process. The manager needs to make the decision whether to recruit or to find some other alternative. Often the solution is predetermined rather than taking a fresh look at the problem and the opportunity to stand back and consider whether recruitment is the best solution under the circumstances is missed. How else could we deal with this role?

Other questions are: Why are we recruiting here? What are we looking to achieve in recruiting this position? Is this the best way to improve performance, meeting our business objectives, bringing about a culture change, increasing flexibility or developing our competitiveness?

If the mindset behind the decision to recruit is on automatic, than we risk sleepwalking into unforeseeable people problems and developing stagnant organisations. Conversely if we build improvement into the process as a recruitment objective, we will perpetually improve the standard of performance.

### **Developing the Role Profile/Job Specification**

Developing the role specification helps to provide an objective profile of the skills and behaviours required to meet the tasks and the objectives and goals required in making the selection decision. Even the most crude selection process requires a test as to whether the desired criteria have been met. It could be as basic as an informal chat. A more sophisticated approach will build in many factors and indicators within the role profile and interlink this profile with the organisational requirements. We will develop the Role Specification Process and how to go about it in the later chapters.

I worked in an organisation, where the directors and 95 percent of the senior managers were male. Let's just say the recruitment and selection procedures were less than adequate. Those managers who had secretaries and personal assistants seemed to apply curious criteria in selecting

their staff. The particular people that were chosen were unhelpful to all except the senior management, their work was inaccurate, their attendance records left a lot to be desired and they were not exactly bursting with A-levels. The key criteria used was that the people had to look the part rather than do the part.

### **Select the Labour Markets**

The selection of the appropriate labour market determines the quality and type of candidate that will be attracted into the selection stages. The markets are influenced by economic, geographic and social factors and determine the pool of labour available. The markets can be accessed via a number of methods including advertising, recruitment agencies, employment centres and consultants. The recruiter should be aware that the various markets attract a different type and cross section of candidates. Once the recruitment channel has been chosen, it is important that the form of promotion complements that channel. For example, it is useful to predetermine which pool of candidates will be available for screening using a specialist agency and those that might apply through advertising in a professional publication.

### **Attract Candidates**

Once the recruiter has decided which labour markets to access, the communication between the organisation and the applicants must be suited to attract candidates that meet the requirements specified in the profile. The recruiter needs to consider the number of applications that are needed and meet the basic profile requirements. It is useful to set targets for the number of applications received and the number of candidates to be considered using the selection process. We will discuss the process of attracting candidates in detail in Chapter 5.

### **Screen Candidates**

Having successfully attracted the candidates, the screening process involves eliminating those candidates who do not meet the basic requirements and then filtering for those that are best suited to the role. Providing the basic requirements are well specified, the initial screening will be a simple process. The recruiter has to decide who to invite to the selection process. Key criteria and a well-structured application form are used as the means by which candidates are considered further or which need to be eliminated.

### **Undertake Selection Process**

The recruiter has attracted the candidates and screened the applications. The pool of applicants is now ready for the selection process. The selection process should be designed to discover who best matches the requirements of the role profile or required qualities. It is a test—a test of behaviours, skills, attitudes and other prescribed attributes. Successful selection means that the candidate fits the organisation and the role and is best suited from the applications received. The selection process basically acts as a filter. We will provide details in later chapters on how to improve the reliability and precision of the filter.

### **Checking References/Documentation**

It is surprising just how many organisations fail to follow up in checking and verifying collateral information revealed during the selection process. As an absolute minimum, an employer needs the National Insurance number in order to make decisions. The references provide a safeguard as well as a check on the legitimacy of the successful candidate. Some organisations make these checks earlier on in the selection process and the reference request forms part of the selection

process. Once the reference process has been completed and the collateral information successfully provided, the final selection decision is made.

### **Make An Offer**

The job offer is the final stage of the recruitment process, unless post conditions have been applied to the offer. The offer can be written or made verbally. Post conditions may include probationary periods where a formal review takes place. This may determine the level of pay or increment to be applied. The terms of the offer however should be clear and unequivocal.

## **ASSUMPTIONS WITHIN THE “STANDARD” RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS**

It is useful to consider the assumptions that underpin the recruitment and selection process: what is true and what is presupposed within a typical recruitment scenario? Some of these are generalisations and there are exceptions, but nevertheless it is useful to examine some of the accepted common principles and policies in recruiting personnel:

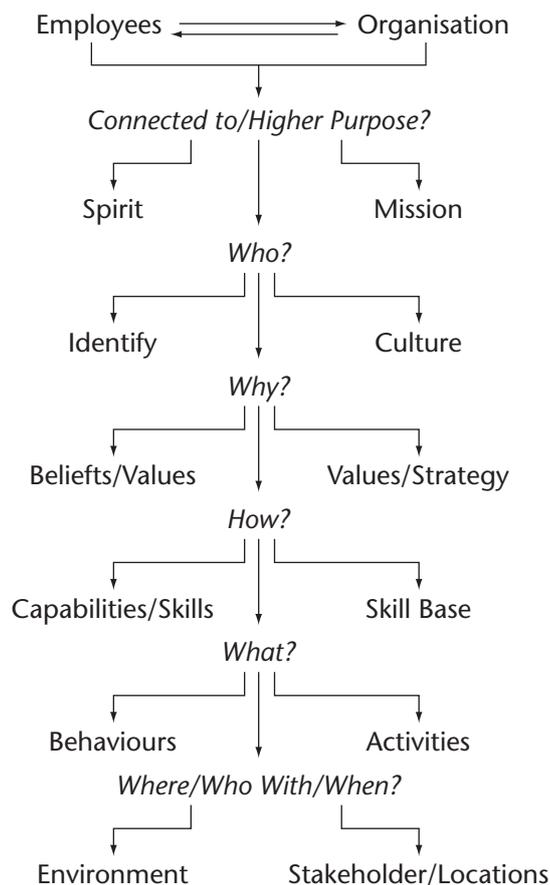
- Recruitment is the only solution available; particularly where a vacancy is being filled is a replacement.
- The Candidates' Selection Performance = Potential Job Performance.
- The role specification is fixed and cannot be flexed.
- The selection process chosen is the most suitable way of testing candidates for a particular role.
- It is difficult and costly to test candidates with work related material.
- The candidate generally wants the job.
- The recruitment process places an emphasis on results in the short term only; the long-term is left to chance.
- The recruiter knows the strategic and cultural requirements of the business.
- The recruiter knows how to build the cultural and strategic requirements into the selection process and test whether candidates meet them.
- The selection process is based almost wholly on historical data.
- Experience is sector-orientated and does not translate by behaviour; for example, a public-sector worker has little valid experience in the private sector. A person who has experience in the National Health Service would struggle in a role in the manufacturing industry.
- The recruiter has to “like” the candidate.

Do any of these assumptions apply to your organisation? If so, how are they limiting? Which of them would it be possible to change and improve the performance that results from the selection process? Most of the above restricts organisational flexibility and limits the diversity of the people entering the organisation. These assumptions can sometimes be useful but not always. We will revisit some of these assumptions later in the book.

## **RECRUITMENT DYNAMICS**

We will be exploring recruitment dynamics throughout the book using different models, some of which have been adapted, some of which are new. The following model provides an introduction to the relationships that exist between aspects of the organisation and the individual.

**Figure 2 Logical Levels Model for Employees and Organisations**



The Logical Levels model (Figure 2) was developed by Robert Dilts, a developer of NLP, based on the work of Gregory Bateson. The model was developed to assist individuals make changes and model new behaviours. I have extended this model to include the organisation itself using a similar structure; the labels will mean more in the corporate environment. The levels do not actually exist, but the structure is useful as an illustration of various aspects of both the individual and the organisation. In practice, a holistic structure is evident where all are present simultaneously, operating not on levels but as a system. Beneath each level is a question, or a number of questions, these elicit a response to acquire more information about that level or indeed the system. For example, the “why” questions obtain information about beliefs, values or strategy about the system.

This model highlights the dynamic and interactive nature of individuals within organisations, with each level influencing every other level. For example, if we consider that the skills of an individual affect all aspects of an organisation, from the mission to the stakeholders, likewise all aspects of the organisation will affect the individual to some extent. This provides a broad systemic perspective on the recruitment decision. How will the organisation influence the individual and how will the individual influence the organisation? Do we have sufficient understanding of each to provide the match, the blend, and even the fit that will be successful?

Figure 2 deals with the individual and organisation, it doesn’t include the role being recruited; this will be introduced at a later stage in the book. However the Logical Levels model does provide a useful framework for mapping the characteristics of individuals in given contexts or domains and for organisations generally.

Understandably, in a typical recruitment process the recruiter will concentrate on questions that test the behaviours and skills of the candidate mainly within the context of work. Less time is

given to directly questioning the identity and beliefs of the candidate that underpin these behaviours and skills. These beliefs and values also govern the behaviours and levels of motivation of individual candidates. The candidate who appears enthusiastic during the selection process may have the belief it is important to appear enthusiastic during the selection process and the enthusiasm disappears as soon as the realities of the role become apparent.

A very simple example, of using the model is illustrated below.

**Environment:** *Where are you?/Who are you with/When?*

"On April 5th, I am sitting in my lounge reading whilst drinking a cup of tea, on my own."

**Behaviours:** *What are you doing?*

"I am sitting, reading and drinking, thinking about the contents of the book *The Road Ahead* by Bill Gates."

**Capabilities:** *How do you do it?*

"I am able to read it quite quickly but sometimes I stop and ponder on a particular point that interests me."

**Beliefs/Values:** *Why are you doing it?*

"I enjoy reading particularly when it makes me think and I learn something. Drinking tea is refreshing."

**Identity:** *Who are you in doing this?*

"I am someone who enjoys reading business books. I'm also a confirmed tea drinker."

It would be somewhat facile asking for the connection or higher purpose around the activity of reading and tea drinking. It can also be taken as intrusive once one starts to ask questions regarding beliefs, identity and higher purpose. It is still useful to be aware that these aspects exist and how they interrelate to each other.

Here is another example and this one is more closely related to information sought after during the recruitment process. These examples of dialogue have been edited for the purposes of illustration.

**Environment:** *When did you take the role of Treasury Accountant and whom did you work with?*  
(The question "where", was eliminated from this example)

"I was promoted to Treasury accountant in April 2001, and worked with various accountants including central accountants and accounts staff based at various locations within the group. I reported to the Financial Controller."

**Behaviour:** *What were you doing in that role?*

"Every month I had to prepare a cash flow statement for the head office. I produced both actuals and forecast figures, the forecast figures going forwards 12 months. I had to complete the figures within five working days of the month end."

**Skills:** *How did you complete the cash flow forecast?*

"Every month I received key figures from the various accountants relating to the cash flow. It was my job to check the figures for reasonableness and crosscheck them against other forecasts. I entered the numbers onto an Excel spreadsheet which formed part of the management accounts package."

**Beliefs/Values:** *Why was the cash flow produced on a monthly basis and what was its importance?*

"The company was cash conscious in its operation. As far as I know, it was produced on a monthly basis because it was part of the management accounts package and was an important indicator in assessing the financial health of the company as evidence as to how

## Activity 4 Questions for Yourself

Try out these questions on a regular, non-work related activity undertaken by you. What answers do you give to these questions? Make sure you give complete and full answers.

- What are you doing? Where? When and Who with?
  - How are you doing it?
  - Why are you doing it? And Why is that important?
  - Who are you in doing it?
  - What have you learned about yourself?
- 

## Activity 5 Questions for Others

- Ask the same questions of another person, this time mix the questions into everyday conversation. e.g. So what do you do when you put together a sales estimate?
  - Did you find any new information about them? How do they differ from you?
- 

the company could invest in the future and provided the predicted measurement of the company's liquidity."

The identity question ("who?") is omitted here, firstly because it would be inappropriate to ask at this point and secondly because it is defined in the role of Treasury accountant that is evidenced by the start of the dialogue.

I should point out that these questions were started with the environment and behaviour. It is possible to start the questioning process with yourself, depending on what information the recruiter is seeking (see Activity 4) and then move on to asking questions of others (see Activity 5).

## COMMON RECRUITMENT SCENARIOS

The various recruitment scenarios fall under the following categories:

- Replacement
- Growth/expansion
- Restructuring
- Transitional
- A combination of the above.

Each one of the scenarios demands a different approach in specifying the role and considering the qualities of the candidates. Once again the immediate requirements need to be balanced with the longer term objectives.

In the case where recruitment is undertaken for a **replacement**, the danger is that the recruiting organisation simply goes ahead and recruits without examining any possible alternative. The recruiting managers do not take the opportunity to improve performance, they just replace like with like. It is worthwhile making it policy that alternative action is always considered where any replacement positions are filled. This will be dealt with in chapter 2.

Where recruitment is undertaken to support the **growth and expansion** of an enterprise, there is a danger that the role is too tightly defined and there is little flexibility allowed to incorporate future

changes. Secondly where an organisation is expanding rapidly, emphasis is placed on meeting the immediate current demands rather than the long-term requirements. If the organisation does not plan for the long-term then this is left to chance. If long-term plans exist, then these should dovetail with manpower planning, which include the details that underpin those plans. The role specification includes behaviours that reflect an ability to respond flexibly.

Where businesses are going through a **restructuring** process, internal recruitment is prominent and maybe job losses are taking place. There are usually restrictions and limitations placed on the recruiting organisation. Often the main consideration is to find places for existing staff rather than focusing on the best fit for the organisation. Under these circumstances, organisations would do well to consider the difference in value generated between settling for someone less than ideal and recruiting from a pool of best-suited candidates. Obviously training can play a part here but the organisation must consider the financial consequences of such action.

**Transitional** recruitment is undertaken to manage a transition within the organisations operation. It is usually undertaken using temporary or contract labour. The transitional solution permits the management to hold off on a decision until conditions change or a satisfactory permanent solution is found. This does provide thinking time; however, it may cost the organisation in a substandard performance during the time of the transition. Sometimes transitional solutions are more difficult to manage due to the increased lack of certainty and reduced commitment on the part of the staff that are employed as a temporary measure.

## RECRUITMENT ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to recruitment often requires the ability and motivation to make a tough decision by asking the question, "How else can we obtain these skills, perform these activities, do these tasks?"

**Outsourcing**—Using an external source for the purposes of undertaking an activity or function already undertaken within the organisation. Current trends at the time of writing have seen an increase in this activity due to the emphasis being placed on concentrating on the core business.

**Subcontracting**—Similar to outsourcing, but usually undertaken on the small scale or as a temporary measure to overcome resource or cost issues.

**Internal Restructuring**—The process whereby internal activities and tasks within the organisation are reallocated or redefined for the purposes of improving competitive performance.

**Process or Business Re-Engineering**—Where all aspects of current practice are challenged, changing the internal processes and controls, focusing on the end results. Process re-engineering can result in jobs being combined or eliminated altogether. The steps in the process are often reduced and performed in a natural order. The decision-making process associated with the task is made at an operational level rather than relying on middle management. This process requires the buy in and co-operation of all employees and is not something to be undertaken lightly.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT INFLUENCES

The purpose of this section is to briefly cover the internal and external influences to illustrate and think about factors that affect the recruitment decision. As recruiters, we do not work in an isolated vacuum. An awareness of these influences will improve our decision-making skills. The difference between internal influences and external influences is that internal influences remain directly under the control of the organisation and thus can be fashioned to support the recruitment process. The external influences are rooted in the external environment—the organisation has little or no control over their existence but can take some evasive action.

## Internal Influences

### Organisational Culture

*Culture is “how things are done around here”. It is what is typical of the organisation, the habits, the prevailing attitudes, the grown-up pattern of accepted and expected behaviour.*

D. Drennan 1992

To many, organisational culture is intangible, to some it is no more than waffle. One of the challenges here is to introduce some tangibility and linkage between recruitment and culture. The recruiter can only work precisely with real, hard evidence. Culture may be defined as a pattern of assumptions that underpins the identity of the organisation. It consists of the common values, beliefs and behaviour patterns that set the norm for the way of doing business. Each organisation has a unique culture; it is not necessarily what an organisation does, but rather what one is. Culture permeates the whole fabric of the organisation. It manifests itself in behaviour patterns, language, symbols, rules and procedures. As organisations continue to differentiate themselves, the unique cultural aspects of the organisation grow and diversify. More often than not culture is formed unconsciously, it develops through the way of doing things. The cultural requirements within the role are increasing in significance in many organisations therefore the recruiter must give culture more credence within the role specification.

The internal culture frames how the organisation responds to the external environment, to the external stakeholders. The strength of the culture defines the consistency of mindset and it provides a focus of identification through the core values and beliefs. The recruiter must accommodate the mindset, values and beliefs within the recruitment process.

The challenge for the recruiter is to select people with the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour patterns that support the current or espoused culture. If the factor of culture is overlooked, then the danger is the candidate will not fit in and will come into conflict with the existing personnel and procedures. In the dynamic world of recruitment, as discussed above in the Logical Levels model, every aspect of the individual affects every aspect of the organisation and vice versa.

For the organisation to recruit the Perfect Fit, the culture must be included within the role profile. Without tangible evidence of what the culture consists of, the role profile becomes no more than an academic exercise. Once again, the most valid method for eliciting this tangible, actual culture is using a sensory-based experience of what the common values and beliefs translate into and the common behaviour patterns that are witnessed. For those organisations that wish to recruit personnel to shape their culture, then the behaviours must be defined up front. It may be necessary to set some transitional steps in a culture change process to ensure the change takes place smoothly (see Activity 6).

#### Activity 6 The Culture Check

- What are the values of this organisation? What do they mean?
- How do or should people demonstrate them?
- What are the common behaviours required in this organisation?
- What behaviours are NOT tolerated in this organisation?
- How do people get on in this organisation? What do they do?

When recruiting, these cultural behavioural indicators are set across the whole organisation, rather than for specific roles or areas of the business. These are the assumptions and values that are applied through the behaviour of everyone on board. The culture of the organisation influences everything from the recruitment process, the reward system, the office layout, to the characteristics and behaviours of the recruiter themselves. Each individual who performs within the organisation will influence the values and beliefs of that organisation. If these beliefs and values are not in alignment there will exist a dissonance between the individual and the organisation that will impede organisational performance.

### ***Organisational Strategy***

With the organisational strategy we face a similar problem of tangibility. Without the linkage between recruitment and strategy, the organisation is likely to hire people whose role is misaligned with the direction of the company.

Strategy determines the goals and objectives of an organisation in the long run. It requires an understanding of the competitive environment together with an objective appraisal of resources. For the strategy to be successful it requires effective implementation in setting the direction for the utilisation of resources and capabilities. In the context of recruitment this means we must implement organisational strategy by ensuring the process supports the goals and values of the organisation and reinforces competitive advantage. Recruitment is only one of the components in managing people; however, it is fundamental to ensuring the resources and resource allocation matches that of the organisational strategy. The strategy of the enterprise determines the level of recruitment together with how the recruitment is directed.

*“What business strategy is all about is, in a word, competitive advantage...the sole purpose of strategic planning is to enable the company to gain, as efficiently as possible, a sustainable edge over its competitors. Corporate strategy also implies an attempt to alter a company’s strength relative to that of its competitors in the most efficient way.”*

Kenichi Ohmae *The Mind of the Strategist*  
(Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983).

One of the challenges for managers, not just those involved in recruitment, is linking the higher level strategic goals and objectives with the rough and tumble of the day-to-day operation of the business. If the recruitment system does not direct the recruiter to include vital strategic objectives, then any additional skills and associated efforts could be wasted. The role specification needs to include behaviours that are aligned with the business objectives.

For those people who direct organisational strategy, one of the key questions is: “What is the secret of success in this industry?” The output from this question requires translation into measurable objectives, these objectives are cascaded down to the individual roles within the enterprise.

We shall be revisiting both the application of strategy and culture within recruitment in later chapters (see Activity 6).

### ***Pay and Working Conditions***

Pay and working conditions are obviously key components in influencing who we recruit. People have perceptions of what they are worth and what they do is worth. Organisations place values on what roles, positions and people are worth. The reward system and pay structure influences the applicant and is fundamental in attracting candidates with suitable credentials.

The salary or pay rate tagged alongside basic role requirements speaks volumes to potential candidates. It automatically excludes a population of potential suitors and to those who it presents itself as a possible opportunity, sends a message for further investigation of the vacancy. Pay is

usually cited as the main reason for the inability to attract suitable people to a role or work sector. At the time of this writing, the public sector in the UK is a classic example. The rewards within the role are not simply limited to pay and much can be done to alleviate the shortfall. The equations that govern the ability to attract people are somewhat complex; the benefits available to candidates elsewhere are always a consideration.

A large retail operation wanted to know why there was a high turnover of staff, which was running at 35%. They thought it might be due to their recruitment practices. After interviewing the employees and researching other competitors, it was clear the remuneration and incentive packages were insufficient to hold people within the job, particularly as there were plenty of alternatives to choose from. This was not the answer that the company directors were looking for.

The following questions distinguish different approaches to the reward systems available:

- Where does this role fit within our remuneration system?
- How much are we willing to pay for this role?
- How much are we prepared to pay to find the right person?
- How much will we need to pay to recruit the ideal candidate?
- What can we get away with paying this candidate?

Of course, pay isn't everything, and organisations are faced with putting together a rewards and benefits package to attract suitable candidates. Other factors such as working hours, working conditions, location and accessibility and opportunities for promotion all affect the attractiveness of the offer made by the enterprise.

Training and development is another key component that can be viewed as a potential benefit for candidates who are considering making an application. From the perspective of recruitment, this is not just an attractor to the organisation but also a tool for developing skills and behaviours that do not meet the standards detailed in the role specification.

### ***Industry Sector and Public Relations***

The industry and the public image of that industry can attract or dissuade candidates from applying for roles. The position of the industry sector and enterprise in the mind of the candidate has a part to play in the attraction of candidates. Candidates today are better informed about their career path and the implications of making decisions to join different organisations. Is the organisation or industry viewed by the candidate as a cul-de-sac, a safe haven, or a fast track to success or purgatory? The recruiter's strategy to attract candidates must incorporate these viewpoints (see Activity 7).

The internal influences affecting recruitment can be used by organisations to make the jobs on offer more attractive to any prospective candidate. They should also be considered by the recruiter from a broader perspective when deciding how to recruit candidates in the context of the overall market.

### **External Influences**

The external influences, by definition, are outside the control of the organisation. The recruiter should be aware of the effects on the recruitment process. The recruiter may be required to take complementary action to offset these influences or even tap into and streamline behind them.

### ***Economic Forces***

The economic conditions that govern the activities of organisations are drivers on the labour markets that ultimately influence the recruitment of staff. These include inflation, unemployment,

## Activity 7 So what's important about your job?

From the industries and sectors for which you are qualified and meet the requirements of the organisation, try the following questions:

- a) Which organisation would you most like to work for?
- b) In answering question a), what would be the minimal contract you would accept considering all the conditions of the contract?
- c) Which organisation would you least like to work for?
- d) What conditions would persuade you to transfer to this organisation?
- e) Taking these two organisations, what are the key differences that appeal to/repel you?
- f). Why are these differences important to you?

If you examine the answers to these questions, we have taken two polarities and hopefully elicited a response. How much flexibility will a recruiter need in relation to pay and conditions to attract you? From the response to question f), put the criteria (words that represent values) contained within the answer in order of priority.

Taking the criteria, how else could you create/develop these within your current job?

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interest rates, levels of disposable income and the strength and growth of the general economy. There are also the economic factors that drive the industry and sector in isolation. Salary and wage inflation places pressure on a business to control costs and the recruiter has to account for salary levels within a changing market. The organisation's cost position can determine the ability to recruit within set cost limits. This in itself will result in the ability to recruit being limited.

### **Legislation**

The legal framework governing recruiting staff is becoming an increasingly complex area, not least because of the law enacted through the European Union. Legislation includes anti-discrimination legislation, data protection, human rights and basic contract law applied to the employment relationship, to name just a few. A recent addition within the UK that has relevance to the recruitment process is the Human Rights Act of 1998. The articles include: respect for privacy and family life, home and correspondence, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, etc., and cover everything from health screening to psychometric testing that is culturally biased. Staff who are involved in recruitment need to be aware of the latest developments, including such issues as positive discrimination and recruiting through the Internet. This book does not attempt to outline those legal obligations except to provide some general guidelines, that will be included later.

The legislation basically places limits on the recruiter, the recruitment decision and the selection process. The decision-making process must be shown to be open and fair, and there must be transparency in the way the selection process has been conducted.

### **Availability of Labour**

The recruitment process is further complicated by the availability of labour and the associated skills and behaviours. The market not only includes full-time staff, but also part-time, contract and temporary workers. Today the pressure is to fashion a flexible workforce responsive to market conditions. Skill shortages exist even in times of recession; the recruiting organisation needs to

decide just how much it is willing to pay for that shortage and what other alternatives are available. Availability is not solely determined by their own attractiveness but also the desirability of competing organisations. Geographical availability, sector demand, public perception of the organisation all contribute to the availability of manpower. The recruiter needs to be capable of selling the role to suitable candidates rather than just presenting it.

### *Technological*

One of the challenges for the modern recruiter is incorporating and assessing skills in using technology. Technology, like many other aspects of working life, is increasing in its diversity. The use of information technology is commonplace yet few organisations are geared up to test the competency of individual candidates. Given the level of rapid development in this area, the recruiter could consider evaluating the candidates' ability to respond and develop their skills using IT and similar technologies.

## SKILLS FOR RECRUITING THE PERFECT FIT

In the recruitment and selection environment, the following behaviours and skills will enhance the chance of success in finding and selecting the Perfect Fit. The activities and information supplied here are focused on improving the skills for recruiters and managers involved in the recruitment process. The Perfect Fit provides information and activities to assist in building the skills required.

- Making better, "well informed" recruitment decisions.
- Defining a well-formed Role Specification that fulfils the organisational needs.
- Building, maintaining and breaking rapport with candidates.
- Creating and utilising emotional states that complement the process of selecting people.
- Objectifying the recruitment process for fair and effective results.
- Integrating the cultural and strategic requirements of the enterprise into recruiting.
- Developing a recruitment system that supports organisational needs.
- Increasing awareness, attention and perception during the selection process.
- Creating well-targeted questions that recover specific information.
- Eliciting and understanding the needs, wants, and likes of the candidates.
- Identifying personal patterns to predict future behaviours of candidates.
- Attracting suitable candidates for screening and selection.
- Taking different perspectives on the recruitment process and other bigger pictures.

The recruiter should have both a broad and detailed understanding of the dynamics between the organisation, role and candidate. The role specification acts as an interface between the candidate and organisation. It is a map against which the recruiter assesses the candidate. The organisational and role requirements are included within this map.

The skilled recruiter is able to specify a well-defined outcome in sensory-based terms for the recruitment and selection process in order to understand exactly what is required for each role and to objectify it. The emphasis is placed on defining the required behaviours for the series of tasks, activities and objectives within the role. The recruiter is also able to set outcomes for the selection process and other steps in the recruitment process. This improves the clarity and objectivity in hiring suitable candidates.

The recruiter creates a recruitment model designed specifically for the needs of the individual organisation by incorporating various organisational systems in order to account for the various

## Activity 8 A Questionnaire

- What are you seeking from this book?
  - What evidence will you have when you have achieved it?
  - What additional knowledge do you need to improve how you recruit?
  - How would you know you had been successful in improving the results from recruitment for your organisation?
  - Where do you think you could make greatest improvement in the recruitment and selection process that is currently used in your organisation?
  - What aspects of recruitment do you already do effectively?
  - Who or which organisation do you think is effective as a recruiter, and why?
  - What makes them different from other recruiters?
  - What have you learned from the above questions?
- 

influences that affect the recruitment system and to utilise them where possible. The recruiter has to attract a sufficient pool of suitable applicants. In order to do this the role has to be promoted by paying close attention to the likely criteria and patterns of the ideal candidate. In recruiting, we need to specify, identify and test the personal patterns required within each individual role being recruited.

If we increase our level of awareness of what actually is taking place during the selection process, we are capable of recovering more information. This will lead to drawing out greater distinctions for each individual candidate and the role being profiled. In undertaking sound recruitment practice, greater importance is placed on sensory-based evidence (what you can actually hear, see and feel) than on pure opinion or conjecture. The recruiter should be able to design well-targeted questions eliciting specific information relevant to the role being recruited.

The skills of the recruiter are critical in seeking to improve the recruitment process. We have started to explore some of the dynamics of the initial recruitment decision. We have investigated the process of decision-making and the purposes of recruitment and selection and considered the influences on the recruitment and selection processes. Having outlined some of these skills, we will continue to develop these in the future chapters. We will undertake a deeper exploration of the stages of the recruitment process together with recommendations for moving to better practice (see Activity 8).

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced some concepts surrounding recruitment and selection. It has covered some of the basic aspects of the recruitment decision together with the recruitment and selection process.

### WHAT IS THE PERFECT FIT?

Recruiting the Perfect Fit is the process of uniting people with organisations. Integrating the requirements of the candidate with the needs of the organisation is fundamental in building a relationship that will last.

## Scenario 1

The recruiter specifies a role through analysing the requirements of the organisation. These are translated into behavioural indicators.



## Scenario 2

The recruiter identifies the requirements of the organisation and finds a candidate with the qualities and behavioural skills. A role is created to fit the candidate into the organisational structure.



## DEFINITION OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

To avoid any confusion, the definition of recruitment and selection to be used within later chapters is as follows:

**Recruitment** is the process of bringing a person or persons into the organisation. It starts with the decision to recruit and continues through to the induction and settlement of the new employees.

**Selection** covers the process of deciding between a group of one or more candidates who is most suitable for a particular role or organisational profile. It covers from the screening process up to deciding on which successful candidate(s) to make an offer of employment.

A key distinction when considering recruitment or selection is to identify each as a process.

## THE PURPOSE OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The purpose of recruitment and selection is to achieve one of the following objectives:

- Maintaining performance.
- Meeting the increasing demands within a growing business.
- Improving competitive advantage.
- Initiating or developing culture change.
- Business restructuring or remodelling.
- Supporting business strategy.

If the recruiter is not recruiting with at least two of the above objectives in mind, then the recruitment decision should be reconsidered.

## COMMON RECRUITMENT SCENARIOS

Recruitment involves the following organisational needs:

- Replacement
- Growth/expansion
- Restructuring
- Transitional
- A combination of the above.

## RECRUITMENT ALTERNATIVES

“How else can we obtain these skills, perform these activities, do these tasks?”

**Outsourcing**—Using an external source, for the purposes of undertaking an activity or function already undertaken within the organisation.

**Subcontracting**—Similar to outsourcing, but usually undertaken on the small scale or as a temporary measure to overcome resource issues.

**Internal Restructuring**—The process whereby internal activities and tasks within the organisation are reallocated for the purposes of improving competitive performance.

**Process or Business Re-Engineering**—Where all aspects of current practice are challenged, changing the internal processes and controls, focusing on the end results.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT INFLUENCES

### Internal

- Organisational culture
- Organisational strategy
- Pay and working conditions
- Industry sector and public relations

### External

- Economic forces
- Legislation
- Availability of labour
- Technological

## RELEVANT SKILLS

In the recruitment and selection environment, the following behaviours and skills will enhance the chance of success in finding and selecting the Perfect Fit.

- Making better, “well informed” recruitment decisions.
- Defining a well-formed role specification that fulfils the organisational needs.
- Building, maintaining and breaking rapport with candidates.
- Creating and utilising emotional states that complement the process of selecting people.
- Objectifying the recruitment process for fair and effective results.
- Integrating the cultural and strategic requirements of the enterprise into recruiting.
- Developing a recruitment system that supports organisational needs.
- Increasing awareness and perception during the selection process.
- Creating well-targeted questions that recover specific information.
- Eliciting and understanding the needs of the candidates.
- Identifying personal patterns to predict future behaviours of candidates.
- Attracting suitable candidates for screening and selection.
- Taking different perspectives on the recruitment process.