



**HAYS** Recruiting experts  
worldwide

# THE TALENT GUIDE

Finding people to power your business



[hays.de/recruiting](https://hays.de/recruiting)

As your business grows, so too will your need for talented new team members to take it into the future. As the world's largest specialist recruiter, we understand the challenges of recruitment better than anyone, and are perfectly positioned to help you find dedicated, high quality and highly skilled professionals.

The following pages will give you a head start on some of the challenges you'll need to overcome if you're looking to expand your teams. You will discover how to identify your requirements into key points, learn how to analyse applicant CVs and structure interviews to discover the most about a candidate in the most efficient manner. You'll also find out how to combat counter offers and how to best work with a recruiter to track down staff who will meet and exceed your expectations.

We hope you find the Talent Guide useful, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

## WORKING WITH A RECRUITER

Finding the best people for your organisation can be a considerable challenge, which is why working with an expert can vastly increase your chances. When you engage a consultant from Hays, we will be able to assist you with identifying your current and prospective needs, and turn this into a bespoke recruitment strategy.

The best thing you can do when working with a recruiter is to be open. We'll make a real effort to understand the culture of your organisation, as well as your key skills requirements. So the more you tell us about your company and its values, the more information we will have to search our vast database of engaged candidates. It's likely we already have who you're looking for, but we'll also use a wide range of technologies and methods, including social media, to find candidates who meet and exceed your expectations.

“ When you engage a consultant from Hays, we will be able to assist you with identifying your current and prospective needs, and turn this into a bespoke recruitment strategy. ”

## KNOWING WHAT YOU NEED

The first step to finding the best talent is identifying your specific needs and wants. What do you need this person to accomplish? What do you want this person to bring to your organisation?

Here's a good place to start:

### Define your role requirements by essential skills

Identify the key requirements you need for your organisation by determining three essential skills you must see in the candidate's CV (skills or training essential to the role).

### Narrow your role requirements by 'nice to haves'

As a second step to the process, determine three 'nice to haves' that your ideal candidate would possess. This can include further skill sets, qualifications or personality traits that would set the candidate apart.

### Define your organisation's culture

Think about your fit in terms of behaviours, what is acceptable and not acceptable to your organisation? Make sure you have a clear picture about the work environment in order to select candidates that will help achieve this.

# WRITING A JOB AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Once you have decided exactly what you need from your new team member, you need to articulate this into a specification. Your recruiter will work with you to do this, offering their insight into the candidate market to ensure you appeal to those most likely to suit your requirements.

You'll need to create both a job specification and a person specification, and it's a good idea to have a rough idea of these before engaging a recruiter. The job specification is a tailored description of the vacancy, including the responsibilities and goals of the post-holder, while the person specification is a profile of the person you think would fit your culture and requirements.

Many employers make the mistake of advertising a vague-sounding job, with the intention of seeing 'who turns up'. This invariably leads to time being lost sifting through irrelevant applications or interviewing candidates who, when confronted with the reality of the position, discover the role is not for them after all.

The specifications you prepare will help you and your recruiter evaluate CVs speedily and ruthlessly, as well as providing a list of pertinent questions for interview.

Follow this structure to ensure you have the detail you need:



## The job specification

### Overview

- Department and job title
- Salary range
- Core job description
- Aims of the position
- Specific responsibilities

### Range of responsibilities

- Day-to-day duties
- Who the job-holder reports to
- The 'job process' from start to finish
- A 'typical day' (if appropriate)
- Examples of one-off projects (this brings the job specification to life)



## The person specification

### Skills and abilities

- Abilities you expect your ideal candidate to demonstrate
- Think in terms of technical, organisational, communicative or creative skills
- Apply each skill required with the specific job tasks

### Qualifications and experience

- What specific education or course background do you require?
- What level of experience (if any) is needed?
- Is the candidate required to have held a prior job of similar description?
- Length of experience gained, in which specific industries and departments?

### Character and personal qualities

- What personality type would fit in with your team?
- Use descriptive words that would describe the nature of your ideal candidate
- Think of traits that would help them complete the job efficiently
- Character traits of a person with a love of the industry or a similar role?

### Ideal qualities

- What other qualities would you like your employee to display?
- Include any other areas of the person and job that you have not included
- Think laterally in your descriptions – delve into the underlying nature of the person and job

### Don't be vague

By specifying as much as possible, jobseekers will know exactly what the job entails and will be better able to say if they fulfil your requirements. By specifying exactly who it is you are looking for, you should also avoid the problems that can arise once the successful applicant has actually started work.

Vague descriptions can result in an employee leaving prematurely because they have found that the job has not fulfilled their ideals. Failure to agree the job specification with everybody involved in the hiring process will risk employing the wrong candidate, to the detriment of the team. In essence, a job or person specification is a communicative document between you and your department, your HR or personnel officer and finally, your job applicant.

## CV ANALYSIS

While you may be pleased to receive a large number of applications for your advertised role, it can be difficult and time-consuming to sort through all the CVs effectively. Your recruitment consultant will provide you with a shortlist of favoured CVs, but when you're considering who to invite to interview, you need to make your own assessment of each candidate.

Use these points to get you started on analysing CVs, and refer back to your original specifications for guidance.

### Key skills and achievements

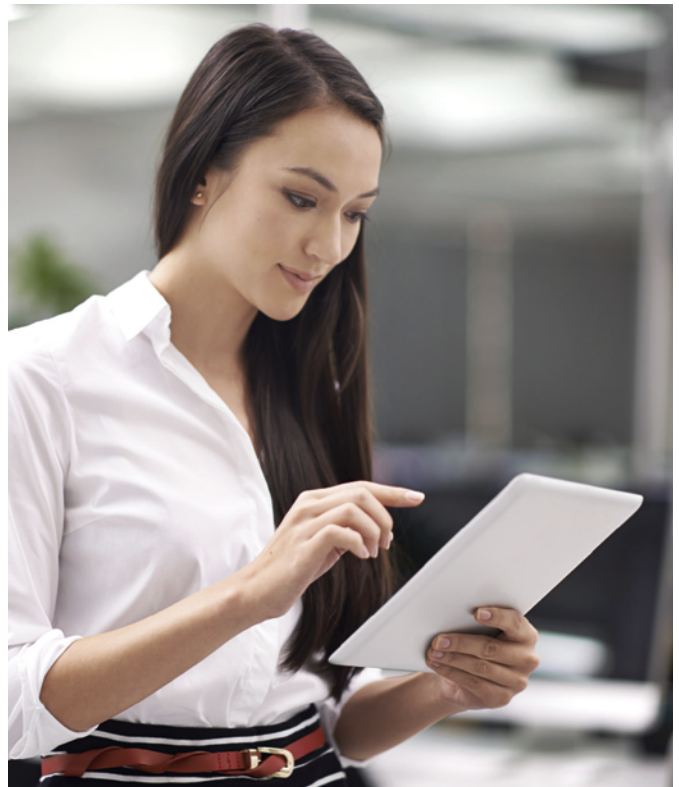
- Do their key skills correlate with the job and how would their skills benefit you?
- Have they shown that they can set goals and achieve them?
- What makes them unique? Have they been involved in other studies, activities?
- Have they travelled or gained worldly experience?

### Qualifications and education

- Do they have the academic background needed to complete the job?
- What have they done to develop their skills further?
- Have they exemplified a professional standard in their studies?

### Previous employment

- What work experience did they gain?
- Have they given a reason for leaving their current position?
- Who have they worked for and how long have they been with each employer?
- Consider organisation size, location and nature of the business
- What were their responsibilities in their position and who did they report to?
- What clients have they worked with?
- Have they put forward any initiatives?
- What successes have they achieved?
- Have they been unemployed for a long duration?
- Do they have any grounding or administrative skills that would help them in the position?
- Were they capable of working and studying at the same time?



## USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't neglect social media in your search for a new candidate. A candidate's LinkedIn profile compared against a CV can yield interesting discussion points, as can any external links, skills or achievements they may have listed online. Be wary however, social media has transformed the way businesses recruit, but it is not a tool to be used alone.

In the right hands, LinkedIn can be used to track down ideal candidates who meet your values and required experiences. The landscape is vast however, and to find the small number of people who not only meet your requirements, but are considering moving on from their current position, can be a high-impossible challenge on your own.

That's why we invest significantly in our social media presence. We have been awarded LinkedIn's award for the Most Socially Engaged Recruiter (2016), and through thought leadership and strategic networking, we have gathered over five million engaged followers, increasing your chances of finding your ideal candidate.

We can help you find the best possible candidates on social media, but it's just as important to make sure that your company pages are as intriguing and engaging as possible. This means making sure everything on your social media profiles is up to date and detailed enough for any potential candidates to get an idea of your organisation's values and culture.

Once you think you've found your potential new team member, who suits your requirements and engages with your brand, it's time to invite them to interview.

## INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND STRUCTURE

The interview is the most important part of the recruitment process, both for you and the candidate. It's your opportunity to see how this person would fit into your organisation and to see if they have the knowledge and expertise you need to improve your business. For the candidate, it's a chance to examine the surroundings and get a sense of what you are like as an employer, so be sure to put your best foot forward and be welcoming, but have probing questions prepared in advance.

First and foremost you need to ensure your candidate has the skills they claim to possess and can apply them with commercial acumen. You're potentially basing several years of service on a one hour interview, so make sure your interview structure allows for the most enlightening conversation. Before the interview, plan your key objectives and agenda:

### First, lay out clear objectives for the interview:

- Can they do the job?
- Is it the right move for the candidate?
- Will they fit in with the team?

### Secondly, lay out a clear action plan which includes:

- Plans for any subsequent interviews
- Two-way feedback
- Decision timeframe
- Offer and rejection



### Lastly, set up a clear agenda for the interview, such as:

- A brief company introduction
- Discuss the candidate's background
- Discuss their preferences
- Talk about the opportunity
- Time for feedback and questions
- Next steps

### During the interview itself, focus on getting to know your candidate

- Assess first impressions
- Aim to build a rapport within the first minute as this will help to get a better sense of the interviewee
- Build a composite picture by going through a candidate's background chronologically, asking key questions and establishing their motivations, accomplishments and frustrations.

To help with this last point, ask a range of open-ended, probing, situational and behavioural questions, such as the following, and use the STAR method of interviewing:

- "Tell me about..." (open ended)
- "Talk me through the steps..." (probing)
- "What would you do if..." (situational)
- "How did you approach..." (behavioural)

For competency-based questions, develop a scoring system for each response and compare it to a competency definition. This will help you rank candidates.

You could also try role play scenarios to see how quickly a candidate can think on their feet. This is particularly useful for customer facing or sales positions.



#### The STAR method:

**Situation:** Ask the interviewee to describe a specific situation they were in or a task they needed to complete.

**Task:** Find out what objectives they were working toward.

**Action:** Ask them to describe the actions they took to complete the project and overcome any challenges.

**Result:** Have them describe the outcome of their actions.



## WRITING OFFER LETTERS

You've invested time and effort in identifying the right person for the job, so secure their acceptance with a well-worded offer letter.

### Avoid standard letters

Most firms have standard template offer letters that are inserted with name, job title, start date and salary. However, in the wake of warm, friendly, face-to-face meetings with you, such letters run the risk of coming across as lazy, impersonal and off-putting, particularly if signed by the person who actually conducted the final interview.

Why not take time to write something original, or at least to amend your firm's standard letter so that the candidate maintains enthusiasm. If they have any lingering doubts, an impersonal offer letter can tip them in the wrong direction. Write something positive instead and the chances are higher that an acceptance will be forthcoming.

When extending a job offer, certain formalities need to be respected, but that doesn't mean you need to use stiff, overly formal language. For a start, 'Dear Tom' or 'Dear Jane' is much friendlier than 'Mr Simpson' or 'Ms Duncan', and sets the right tone.

### Act now

Once you've decided to make the offer, and especially if you've already asked your recruitment consultant to tell the candidate about it, it's best to write and dispatch the offer letter straight away, if possible. Contrary to some perceptions, jobseekers don't tend to use offers at other organisations to drive up their salaries. For most people, going on interviews is time-consuming and stressful, so a positive job offer, extended swiftly, can make the world of difference. Candidates we meet will often instruct us to cancel any outstanding applications on receipt of an excellent offer letter.

### Sell the offer

Emphasise the most appealing benefits in the package you're offering and ideally keep conditional benefits (for instance, study support, provided exams are passed) in a separate document or 'sandwiched' between other benefits. The letter needs to sell the offer to the candidate, and small print and legal jargon can unnecessarily get in the way.

Articulate that you are pleased the candidate has succeeded in gaining a position with your firm, but don't assume acceptance. Certainly ask for it, but remember the candidate has a choice. You may want to refer to specific skills or experience that the candidate has that would enhance your business, and you might reiterate any particular projects you discussed at the interview that the candidate expressed interest in.

Always ask the candidate to call you personally if there are any queries about the offer or any other aspect of the job. Your recruitment consultant will be in touch with the candidate anyway and will alert you to anything that needs addressing, but it adds another personal angle to the letter to make yourself available for queries.

### A personal touch

Candidates regularly tell us that they appreciate it when the offer letter includes an invitation during their notice period to meet the team and go for drinks or lunch with future colleagues. However confident people are, changing jobs can be unnerving and it's much better to look forward to your first day knowing you've already met the people you'll see when you walk in. It's also easy to forget that working a notice period can be a lonely time, and one in which successful candidates can be vulnerable to counter offers or open to considering other jobs they see advertised.

The more you can do to keep your organisation's name at the forefront of the candidate's thoughts, the better and making such an invitation in your offer letter is a method of 'closing' that really makes an impact.

## COUNTER OFFER ADVICE

It's an unfortunate truth of the market that in some sectors, the most highly in-demand candidates will want to be retained by their previous companies. Counter offers can sometimes entice your preferred candidate to withdraw their application.

Most counter offers will take the form of a salary increase, and if you're unwilling or unable to match an increased salary offer, you can sometimes lose out on your preferred candidates.

By anticipating and preparing for a counter offer, you can usually avoid the situation altogether. It is therefore crucial to ask potential applicants some questions early on in the recruitment process:

- Why are you unhappy in your current position?
- What have you done to address the situation?
- Have you told your employer of your concerns?
- What was their response?
- If you are successful obtaining this position, do you expect to be counter offered?
- If so, how will you respond? Will a monetary counter offer only solve the problem in the short-term, meaning you will be in the same position you are now again in six months' time?
- Under what circumstances, if any, would you stay?
- If you would not accept a counter offer, why not?
- How committed are you to your reasons for leaving?

These questions will do more than just inform you of the values of your potential candidates, they will reinforce the candidate's decision to leave their organisation.

The advantage you have is the fact that the candidate wanted to leave in the first place, and money isn't normally the sole factor. If they wanted to leave their current employer because of a lack of progression, poor promotional opportunities, an unsatisfactory office environment, a personality clash, location or scope of the role, then your organisation may still be able to appeal more to the candidate than their previous employer.

This is where your recruitment consultant will help you. It is possible that by arranging to see the candidate again you'll be able to address the reasons she wanted to move in the first place and reaffirm the reasons why joining your company will be the right move.

“ By anticipating and preparing for a counter offer, you can usually avoid the situation altogether. ”

Finding the talent you need to grow your business is a challenge, and to track down the very best, you need to use a wide range of techniques and make sure your culture appeals to exactly the type of professional you want to employ. We are experts in finding people who can invest themselves in organisations and work to grow with them for mutual benefit. As well as an extensive database of active candidates, we have the most engaged LinkedIn audience of any recruiter and can use our reach and expertise to find your next employee.

**To get in touch with your local expert, and to find out more about attracting the right candidates to help grow your business, visit [hays.de/locations](https://hays.de/locations).**

# CONTACT US

For more information about retaining, reviewing or expanding your teams, get in touch with your local Hays consultant at [hays.de/locations](https://hays.de/locations)

[hays.de/recruiting](https://hays.de/recruiting)