

Skillbook

Recruiting Skills

Team Management
Skills



Mindtools

Recruiting Skills

Skillbook

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mtecustomerservices@mindtools.com.

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1. Introduction

Effective recruiting means getting the right people into the right jobs. But, while this might sound simple, the reality is that recruiting the right person is often more difficult than simply picking the person you like the best.

For instance, how will you know that they will fit into your team and your organization? What if they exaggerate their skills and knowledge, and are actually incapable of doing the job? How will you ensure that you get people with the relevant skills to apply for the job?

Recruitment is a key organizational function and, if you do it right, it can save you time and money. This means it's essential that you spend time planning and preparing for it.

In this **Skillbook**, we'll explore the benefits of effective recruitment and introduce you to some key strategies that will help you to attract great candidates that fit the role and your organization.

Specifically, we'll explain how to:

- Decide when and when not to recruit.
- Write a job description.
- Advertise your job opening.
- Assess candidates' suitability for the role.

2. Deciding When to Recruit

Recruitment mistakes waste time, money, and organizational resources, and they can really hold a team back. This is why learning how to recruit effectively is such a smart move for managers.

An effective recruitment process can have a number of benefits. For example, it can:

- **Increase productivity** – ensuring that you get the right person in the right role will make your team more productive. In contrast, if your new recruit lacks the correct skills, has values that differ significantly from those of your organization, or isn't a "team player," it will likely have a damaging impact on team performance and morale.
- **Save you time and money** – the hiring process will likely take time, money and energy. And the costs don't stop there. Training is also expensive. This means it's vital that you recruit people who are capable of performing well, quickly. If you don't, you may find yourself stuck with someone who isn't right for the job or who quits, leaving you with no choice but to go through the whole process again.
- **Decrease staff turnover** – a person who's happy in their new role, who feels confident and competent in meeting the challenges of the job, will more likely stay longer. This reduces staff turnover, and helps you to avoid the disruption and expense that it causes.
- **Boost team morale** – employing someone who's capable of carrying out the role, but who's also able to fit into your team, will likely boost your team's performance and have a positive impact on its morale. If, on the other hand, you recruit someone who clashes with other team members, it can result in negativity and conflict, causing morale and motivation to plummet.

When and When NOT to Recruit

Part of effective recruitment is knowing when and when **not** to recruit. Hiring a team member at the wrong time, or for the wrong reasons, can end up costing you time and money.

The tables on the following pages illustrate when it's best to consider recruiting and when it's best to avoid it.

| When NOT to Create a New Role | When to Create a New Role |
|---|--|
| Seasonal increases in workload. If your team is overworked at specific times of the year, it's better to hire temporary help to relieve the workload. | Consistent work overload. If people who are able to manage their time effectively are consistently overloaded with tasks, recruiting a new team member will help to reduce stress and enhance productivity. |
| One-off or unusual projects. If your team is responsible for delivering an unusually large project that's outside your "business as usual" work, consider using contractors to meet this temporary need. | Regular use of contractors. If you already use a lot of temporary workers, freelancers or contractors, it could mean that you need another permanent member of staff. |
| Sick or vacationing team members. Temporary staffing can help to fill these gaps. | Improvements in the economy. Many organizations downsize during a recession. But when things begin to improve, they often want to re-hire with the aim of stimulating growth. |
| Complaining team members. If someone on your team is complaining that their workload is too heavy, make sure that they are managing their time and tasks effectively before you hire another person. | Spending time on lower-value tasks. If you spend most of your day on tasks that could be done by someone less skilled, then creating a new role could help you to free up more time to focus on high-level tasks, such as strategic planning. |



Action:

Think about two situations in the past when there was a hiring mistake in your organization. First, describe what went wrong. Did you really need to hire the person? Was there a mismatch between the job description and the person's expectations?

Did the person lack the skills or motivation to do the job? Or, were they a poor fit with the rest of the team? Did their values conflict with those of your organization?

Then, record the outcome. Did they end up leaving the organization? Or move to another team? Or, did they require additional training? Write down your thoughts in the boxes on the following page.

| Situation One | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| What went wrong? | |
| What was the final outcome? | |
| Situation Two | |
| What went wrong? | |
| What was the final outcome? | |

Now that we've explored the benefits of effective recruitment, and learned more about when not to recruit, it's time to start thinking about the practicalities involved in hiring someone.

The first step is to create a job description that's accurate and engaging. So, in the next chapter, we'll demonstrate how to produce one that will ensure that you get the right people applying for the role.

3. Writing the Job Description

Jobs often grow and evolve over time, based on the role holder's skills, abilities and interests. But, while this informal system of responsibility can work well, it can be problematic if they decide to leave.

How do you, for instance, begin to recruit for a job, when you're no longer certain about what the key responsibilities are? Or what qualifications are needed to fulfill them?

This is where job descriptions come in. The main aim of a job description is to give candidates a clear idea of what the role is and what will be expected of them. Job descriptions can also be used to demonstrate the role's key priorities, or as a framework against which you can monitor and benchmark people's performance.

Job descriptions can also act as dynamic, "live" documents that enable you to align individual roles with team objectives and your organization's mission.

In other words, they can supply new recruits with a clear sense of meaning and purpose. In general, a job description should include the following sections:

1. **Position Identifiers** – the position title, department and organizational information, salary and benefits package, and who the job holder will be reporting to.
2. **Position Purpose** – the main mission and focus of the position.
3. **Description of Duties** – what will be expected of the candidate. For instance, their main responsibilities and priorities, as well as details of specific goals and key performance indicators (KPIs).
4. **Job Qualifications** – the skills, technical abilities and experience needed to fulfill the role requirements.
5. **Personal Characteristics** – a description of the type of person that would best fit the position, the team and the organization.

You may also like to include details of your organization's history, its mission and values, as well as further details of opportunities for progression or training within the company. We'll look at each of the five sections in more detail in the following pages.



Tip:

Before you begin to write up the job description, gather together all the information that you'll need. This might include:

- Organizational or team mission and vision statements.
- Interviews with the current role holder.
- Old job descriptions used to advertise the job or similar jobs.
- Competency lists and performance criteria.
- Performance goals.
- Organizational charts.
- Regulatory requirements.
- Advice from HR regarding recruitment standards/procedures.

1. Position Identifiers

It's essential that you spend some time researching the exact requirements of the role that you're recruiting for. Remember, these may have changed over time, so it's always useful to ask the current job holder what tasks or projects they are currently responsible for, and how they split their time between them.

In this section of the job description, you should include:

- Title of the role.
- A brief description that captures the purpose of the position.
- Department information.
- Who the person will be reporting to, as well as which people report to the position.
- The date you created or revised the job description.



Action:

Start writing out the job description by working through the steps on the following page. Begin by including details of the position identifiers, including:

- Job title.
- Department.
- Who the person will be reporting to.
- The date the job description was updated.

See [page 12](#) for a completed example of a full job description.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Job Title: | |
| Department: | |
| Reporting to: | |
| Updated: | |

2. Position Purpose

Next, you need to outline what the main focus and mission of the position will be. Start by thinking about **why** the position needs to exist. What will its impact be on the “bigger picture”? What will the role holder need to accomplish to meet expectations?



Action:

Write out the job purpose in the box, below. This needs to clarify the main focus and direction of the role. Try to limit yourself to one sentence, and remember to focus on the position, not the person.

See [page 12](#) for an example.

| |
|---------------------|
| Job Purpose: |
| |

3. Description of Duties

This is the main part of your job description. It should summarize the key tasks that the person will be expected to complete, and what their main responsibilities will include.

Start by identifying essential areas of activity, and list them in order of importance. Think of these as Critical Success Factors. In other words, the aspects of the role that will need constant and careful attention, and that are strongly related to the team and organization's main objectives.



Tip:

Some job descriptions split the main responsibilities by the percentage of time that should be allocated to each one. This can help the candidate to determine the main priorities of the role. But, not all jobs can be evaluated in this way, so use your best judgment.



Action:

List the main duties of the role in order of importance in the boxes on the following page.

Then, for each one, include details of how the person's performance will be measured to evaluate success. And describe how the role's objectives will need to be accomplished – what will the new hire need to do to fulfill each responsibility?

See [page 12](#) for an example.

| Main Duties | Details of Duties |
|-------------|-------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

4. Job Qualifications

In this section, you need to outline the combination of education and experience the candidate needs to have. This may include specific skills, technical skills and qualifications, as well as work history and experience.

Remember, this is not just a list of qualifications that the person currently doing the job has. Instead, think about the specific skills and experience that a **new** person will need to have to carry out the job effectively.



Action:

In the box on the following page, list the education and experience that candidates will need to fulfill the purpose of the job role. Include basic job skills (such as communication, customer service, and so on), technical skills, qualifications, and work experience.

See [page 12](#) for an example.

| Job Qualifications and Experience Needed |
|--|
| |

5. Personal Characteristics and Other Details

Finally, think about the type of person that would best “fit” the role, the team and your organization. For example, what personality traits will they have? What about their values and interpersonal skills?

Remember to be realistic and fair, otherwise you may end up being discriminatory without realizing it. For this reason, it’s a good idea to ask your HR department to check your job description before you finalize it.

You may also like to include desirable (but not essential) educational and technical experience. These are “nice things to have,” but go beyond the minimum requirements of the job.

This section is often combined with Job Qualifications. You can also use it to provide additional details of the role, such as:

- Work conditions – are there shifts? Is the work outdoors? Do you offer hot desking or allow people to work from home?
- Special regulations associated with the position – this might include health and safety regulations.
- Security – will the person need a background check or need to go through a vetting procedure? What will this involve?



Action:

In the table on the next page, list the personal qualities and characteristics that you’d like candidates to have. This might include desirable values, traits, education, and technical experience.

Finally, write down any other details of the job that are important, such as working conditions, special regulations, or security clearances.

See [page 12](#) for an example.

Personal Qualities

Other Information

Tip:



It can also be helpful to consider the following style tips when writing your job description:

- Be clear and concise.
- Use specific action words, such as “analyze,” “audit,” “estimate,” “review,” and “observe.”
- Avoid business jargon or slang.
- Spell out acronyms, or define them in full before using them a second time.
- Use short, simple sentences.
- Use job titles, not people’s names.
- Avoid gender identifiers, such as “He will...” or “She will....”

Job Description Example: Marketing Manager

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Job Title: | Marketing Manager |
| Department: | Sales and Marketing |
| Reports to: | Head of Marketing |
| Updated: | April 2025 |
| Job Purpose: | |
| To manage day-to-day marketing activities for the organization, and oversee its long-term marketing strategy. | |
| Description of Duties (including responsibilities, actions and results): | |
| <p>Manage day-to-day marketing activities for the organization (50 percent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare digital, print and email marketing campaigns. • Create and publish all marketing materials for the organization. • Monitor and report on the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. • Co-ordinate marketing campaigns with sales activities. • Oversee the marketing budget. • Design, set up and attend industry events. • Manage and evaluate the performance of other team members in the marketing department. • Keep up-to-date on competitors' marketing activities, and attend marketing industry events. <p>Develop and implement the organization's long-term marketing strategy (30 percent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a long-term marketing strategy that aligns with the company's wider objectives. • Manage the organization's brands and its corporate identity, as well as any changes to these. • Use data and analytics to test and measure the effectiveness of new marketing strategies. <p>Assist new product launches (10 percent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, implement and evaluate marketing campaigns to assist new product launches. <p>Maintain effective internal communications regarding marketing activities (10 percent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with other departments regarding ongoing marketing activities and upcoming campaigns. | |
| Qualifications and Experience: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree in marketing. • Professional Certified Marketer (PCM) qualification. • Strong analytical and project management skills. • Experience in a similar role. | |
| Personal Characteristics: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative flair. • Superb attention to detail. • Great interpersonal and communication skills. • Confident and dynamic personality. • Works well independently and in a team. | |

4. Advertising the Job

Now that you've written up your job description, you need to start attracting some applicants!

You can use a variety of different channels to do this, but it's important to consider which one best suits the role, and your organization.

The right ad, in the right place, will attract lots of good-quality candidates. But, the wrong ad, in the wrong place, might result in you receiving applications from people who may not be exactly who you're looking for.

Common advertising channels include:

- Online: job websites, company website, and social media.
- Print advertising: newspapers, trade magazines, and professional associations.
- Radio.
- Job fairs.
- Recruitment agencies.
- Referrals: employees, customers.
- College recruiting.

When deciding on your approach, it's important to determine your target market, and to advertise your role accordingly. For instance, some people will favor using recruiters, while others will stick to job websites.

If you need to recruit people with specific technical skills, using professional networking websites, specialist recruiters or headhunters, and trade websites or publications will likely be the most successful.

Tip:



When it comes to making your recruitment decision, you want to be choosing between as many good candidates as possible, rather than hiring the one candidate who might be able to do the job.

You'll need to attract a lot of applicants to put yourself in this position, and this means spending a reasonable amount of money on recruitment.

Try not to skimp on this. If you do, you may struggle to find good candidates.

How to Create a Great Job Advertisement

When you've decided what channel you're going to use to advertise the job, it's time to write it up! Remember that the job ad is different from the job description. The main purpose of your ad is to engage people, rather than to inform them.

This means that it needs to be short, snappy and interesting. You need to make a compelling case for why people should come and work for your organization. Think of the ad as your "shop window." How can you "sell" the job to your target audience? How can you appeal to their wants and needs?

The following guidelines can help to get you started:

Use an Appealing Job Title

Make the job title as appealing as possible. Internally, the role may be known as "Level 5B Development Officer," but how many people are really going to get excited by this? Instead, why not try "Development Analyst," or "Development Executive"?

You also need to be specific, so avoid exaggerating or using generalized terms. For example, instead of "Admin Assistant," you could say "Editorial Admin Assistant" or "HR Admin Assistant."

Pay Attention to Structure

Make sure that you include all the relevant information that the candidate will need. This will help them to judge whether it's the right position for them. Include the following details:

- **A short, snappy intro.** Give some context to the ad by providing a few details about the job and the organization. Keep it to between 70 and 100 words. This will help candidates to quickly assess their suitability.
- **Role responsibilities.** List the top five tasks that the person will need to carry out, and relate them to business objectives where possible. For example, "Develop a new marketing campaign to help increase customer retention." Remember, your advert is not a job description. It doesn't need to include every single duty that the role includes.
- **Person specification.** Your ad should appeal to the candidates you want, and screen out the ones that don't meet your requirements. So, be clear about the experience, skills and qualifications that your candidate must have. You may like to divide these into "essential" and "desirable" qualities, to reduce the number of unsuitable candidates. But, try to avoid being too picky, unless you require someone with specialized skills. Job seekers can be easily put off by ads that include long lists of "essential" qualities, or that require lots of experience.
- **Benefits package.** Include information about salary, as well as some of the other key perks that the candidate can look forward to. For instance, a company car, healthcare or dental care.
- **Location.** As well as the geographical location of the office, it can be helpful to provide details of transport links, local amenities, or locations of other offices that your organization has. Also specify any working from home options.

- **The application process.** If the job seeker is interested, what do they need to do apply? Is there an online form to fill in, or do they send an application via email? It can also be useful to give details of the person managing the application process, and their phone number.

Sell the Position

Many companies assume that they are doing job seekers a favor by inviting them to apply for a job. But this kind of attitude is more likely to deter potential candidates than attract them.

Remember, it's your responsibility to sell the position to the candidates that you want to attract. So, remember to be welcoming, professional and polite. Highlight the rewards of the job. This doesn't just have to be about salary. What about career progression, for instance? Or training and development?

Use Calls to Action

Verbs motivate people to act! This means they'll be more likely to respond to your ad, once they've finished reading it.

For example, instead of saying "This is a great opportunity," create excitement by saying "Seize this opportunity today!"

Talk Directly to People

Make your ad more personal by addressing people in the second person. For instance, instead of saying "we" and "our," say "you" and "your." This will also make your company appear more friendly and welcoming.

Be Concise

Avoid rambling! Job ads that are too long suggest a stifling or boring work environment, while ones that are too short may not provide enough information about what the job actually requires.

Bear in mind that looking for a job takes work in itself. So, keep your message concise and to the point. Try to keep to a word count of 700 or under.

Example Job Ad



Marketing Manager

Are you a confident and creative marketing professional? Are you looking for your next big career move?

If so, Example Furniture could be the place for you! We are a global provider of high-quality, flat-pack furniture, with 300 stores spanning 16 countries. And we're growing! That's why we're currently seeking an experienced marketing manager to join our friendly, fun and high-performing team.

About the Role

You must be able to:

- Create and implement B2C marketing strategies that will raise Example Furniture's profile across the world.
- Attend industry events and develop marketing collateral, including event booths, for furniture industry events attended by the company.
- Oversee the development of a long-term marketing strategy that will help the company to enter new markets and secure future growth.
- Use key analytics tools to measure and monitor the impact of the company's ongoing marketing initiatives.
- Manage a team of marketing executives – monitor their performance and ensure work is completed on time.

The Person

You must have:

- Creative flair.
- An eye for detail.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.

Essential Experience

- A degree in marketing.
- A professional Certified Marketer.
- Strong analytical and project management skills.
- Experience in a similar role.

Desirable Experience

- Previous experience developing marketing strategy.
- Previous experience working within the furniture industry.

At Example Furniture we're dedicated to helping our people to grow and develop. That's why, for the right candidate, we can offer excellent career progression as well as top-quality training and other benefits. So, if this sounds like the right job for you, don't delay! Get in touch by emailing jobs@examplefurniture.com.



Action:

Using the job description that you wrote up in Chapter 3, and the guidelines that we covered on pages 14-15, create an engaging job advertisement that you could place on your website or in a newspaper.

Include the following details:

- Job title and a short, snappy intro.
- Role responsibilities and person specification.
- Benefits package.
- Location.
- The application process.

Job Title and Intro:

Role Responsibilities and Person Specification:

Benefits Package:

Location:

How to Apply:

5. Selecting a Candidate

You've sent out the job ad, and now you've got plenty of résumés to consider. So, what's your next step? How do you ensure that only the best candidates make it through to the next round of the recruitment process?

Shortlisting

The first thing to do is to make a shortlist of candidates. This essentially means eliminating people who are clearly unsuitable for the role.

For example, if the job requires a certain skill or qualification, you can easily exclude candidates that don't have it from the next stage of the recruitment process.

Once you've done this, go back to the job description and identify the skills and abilities that are absolutely essential to the role. Then, create a scoring system that you can use to rate each application.

Finally, select the number of candidates that you want to take through to the interview stage of the process. This number will likely vary depending on the size of your organization, but often it's between 12 and 15 (for every 100 applications that you receive).

Interviewing

Now that you've got your shortlist of candidates, it's time to set up some interviews. Interviewing has two main objectives. First, you need to assess the candidate's true ability. Do they have the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job successfully?

Second, are they a good "fit" for your team and organization? Do they share the same values as the rest of the team, for example? Are they self-motivated? Will they be able to get along with the people that they will be working with?

For these reasons, interviews need to go beyond simply assessing whether candidates **can** do the job – they must also determine whether they **will** do the job.

To evaluate this, use a mixture of “getting to know you” questions, which allow you to learn more about the candidate’s personality and background, and competency-based questions, which help you to assess whether a candidate has the precise knowledge, skills or values required.

“Getting To Know You” Questions

To get the best out of your candidates, you want to make them feel at ease. So, a good place to start is with some informal “getting to know you” questions. This can help you to develop rapport, and to learn more about their personality and background.

Example questions could include:

- What aspects of your last job did you really enjoy?
- Why did you apply for this job?
- Why do you want to work for our organization?
- When you’re not working, how do you like to spend your time?
- If you could instantly become an expert in something, what would it be?
- What dream have you yet to achieve?



Action:

List five “getting to know you” questions that you’d like to use in your interviews in the boxes, below.

| “Getting to Know You” Questions |
|---------------------------------|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

Competency-Based Questions

Competency-based questions help you to assess candidates' strengths and weaknesses in the key competencies that they'll need to be effective in. You can then score their responses against agreed competency criteria to build up an objective picture of each person's suitability.

But first, you need to know the core competencies that are essential to the role. This will help you to test and compare candidates fairly. A good place to start here is with your competency framework or your team's skills matrix.

Also, look at the job description. What will their main duties be? What skills will they need to carry out these duties? What qualifications and experience do they need? And what personality traits will they need to "fit" into the team and organization?

Action:



Write down four or five key competencies candidates will need to carry out effectively in the boxes, below. These might include, for example, creativity, communication, team management, or decision-making

| Key Competencies |
|------------------|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

Once you've decided on the key competencies that you want to test, it's time to draw up some questions. Think carefully about how you'll word each one, and structure them in a way that will enable candidates to provide specific examples.

The STAR technique is a particularly useful way of structuring competency-based questions. It stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. For instance, you could use it to frame a question about conflict resolution, as follows:

- **Situation:** "Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a conflict on your team."
- **Task:** "What did you do to resolve it and why did you decide to handle it in this way?"
- **Action:** "What action did you take and what skills did you use?"
- **Results:** "What did you achieve? How did your team benefit?"

Remember, it's OK to ask for examples of situations when things didn't go so well – for example, when someone missed a target, or had to work under pressure. This can help you to test their resilience. But, be sure to keep a balanced and reasonable tone. If you concentrate only on the negatives, it will likely give candidates a bad impression.



Action:

Choose one of the competencies that you listed on page 20. Then, use the STAR technique to create a competency-based interview question that will help you to test it. Now, do the same for the other competencies that you listed.

| | |
|---|--|
| Competency: | |
| Competency-Based Question: | |
| Situation (<i>an example of a time when he/she demonstrated the competency</i>): | |
| Task (<i>what did he/she do to resolve the situation?</i>): | |
| Action (<i>what actions and skills were involved?</i>): | |
| Results (<i>what was the final outcome?</i>): | |



Tip 1:

It's important to remember to ask each candidate the same set of questions, even if you use different probing questions to learn more during the interview. This will ensure a fair and equal interview process, and will make it easier for you to pick the right person for the job.



Tip 2:

You may also want to assess candidates' competencies and skills by using recruitment tests.



6. Key Points

Effective recruitment is crucial to the success of your team and your organization. In fact, it's one of the most important skills that you need to be an effective manager and leader. The best way to achieve it is to develop a rigorous, intelligent and fair recruitment process.

First, you need to decide whether you really need to recruit. Is your team consistently overworked, for instance? Do you use contractors regularly? Is your company in a good financial position and looking to grow? Or, do you spend too much time on lower-value tasks?

If you do decide that recruitment is the right option, your next step is to develop an accurate, clear and concise job description that outlines the role's requirements and expectations. This will ensure that you only receive applications from people who have the relevant skills and abilities.

Then, you need to attract top quality candidates! Remember, the job market can be competitive. So, you need to make a compelling case in your job advert for why people should come and work for you!

Finally, you need to develop an interview process that will allow you to assess whether people are a good "fit" in terms of both personality and ability.

When you can do all of this, you'll likely find that staff turnover and absenteeism improves, and that the time and money that you spend on recruitment falls. More importantly, you'll have a team that works well together, and one that is motivated, productive and engaged.