

## Needs Analysis and Recruitment

There is a saying that goes as follows: “if you don’t know what you want then you are unlikely to get it.... “. This is so true in recruitment. Another expression which is very apt for this topic is: “start with the end in mind”.

This is exactly the idea behind Needs Analysis. To right at the very start of the recruitment process make a determination round what you actually need in new hire. So, right at the start. Right, when you are even just considering the need for an extra member of staff. Make a determination – an analysis - of what you ‘need’ from the person whom you might hire. This is your Needs Analysis.

From what we see, most recruitment disasters start from - the earliest stage. And it starts from missing it on the Needs Analysis.... Whilst many other things can go wrong; starting a recruitment project without doing the upfront legwork is really starting off on the wrong foot. Sadly Line managers and non-HR personnel are often loath to spend this vital time up front. Yet starting off with a ‘Needs Analysis’ really is the foundation of successful recruitment.

Whilst it’s true, you can find some overly bureaucratic examples of Needs Analysis (e.g. the UK public sector in our experience is especially rife with over-engineered process). A useful and solid Needs Analysis should not be a huge exercise. Indeed we suggest that spending time now on this activity will almost certainly save time and possibly even much expense later on in the recruitment process.

So what is a Needs Analysis? It’s basically a Job Description but with an emphasis on the duties, responsibilities, skills, outcomes, competences and requirements that you are expecting from the person you end up hiring. It is of course, a document. A good one will outline these in a way that is relevant to both role and organisation. To be really useful it should be done in a way that will lend itself to the assessment itself. After all, it should end up being the standard by which you assess all your candidates – both at screening and at interview.

It is rare that you will find the perfect candidate who will clearly excel in every area. So consider using weighting against each of your requirements. Decide on what are the most important items and weigh them accordingly. You will very likely have to assess and decide between candidates who have different strengths and qualities in different areas. Indeed this is one of the main reasons it’s so powerful as a recruiting tool. You can then use the Needs Analysis as the basis for scoring your candidates. We assume by the way that you are, of course, scoring your candidates...?

If you are not yet doing so we do recommend that you consider scoring candidates both (a) pre-interview when you are screening or assessing, and (b) at interview. With legal issues abounding over rights and discrimination, having a robust and legally compliant recruitment selection process is something all organisations want. Scoring candidates against pre-formed criteria at least demonstrates an objective based measure and should support demonstrating a fair and legally compliant recruitment process. It does not have to be the sole method of selection but it’s better than relying solely on “gut-feel” as often happens.

Leaving the benefits of compliance aside, a properly constructed and implemented Needs Analysis will also likely increase the quality of interviewing. See the internet if you are looking for figures and evidence. In our experience, managers who are inducted into working with Needs Analysis tools almost all say, it increases their interviewing effectiveness and results in better hiring decisions.

If you have not already adopted Needs Analysis contact us to see how it might increase your recruitment efficiency and effectiveness.

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