



LAUNCHING A SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN



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The UK procurement world has arguably never seen a more competitive candidate marketplace than it is experiencing right now. There are a lot of things to consider when preparing to run a recruitment campaign and in this article, Simon Burr from Langley Search & Interim, a minority owned, APSCO accredited recruitment business specialising in Procurement & Supply Chain, sets out some of his top tips on how to ensure you end up attracting the best applicants for your vacancies.

Langley has operated in the UK public and private sector markets for over 20 years now and the world of recruitment has changed so much during this time. It is now almost unrecognisable, and the role of the internet, and how important it is to have a strong web-presence occupies a large part of this change.

1 Are you confident that the way in which your organisation is being presented online is representative of its culture, its values, and what it is like to work there, day to day?

In an era where social media is at the forefront of much of what shapes people's perceptions, this is a question we strongly

advise you ask yourselves before launching any recruitment campaign.

2 Are your social media channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook etc.) up to date and bursting with content that is consistent with the truth of what working life within your organisation is like right now?

The various methods you use to present information to the world which are directly linked to your organisation's culture and values are now key components in attracting the best talent. In a vacancy-rich, candidate-led marketplace, we estimate that prospective applicants will be considering somewhere between 10-15 potential vacancies at a time so ensuring you stand out by presenting yourselves as an organisation which is, for example, inclusive and has values which are aligned with your reality is crucial. The likelihood is that after reading your job advert, candidates will be checking you out online *before* they hit the apply button, so it is extremely important that you have taken the right steps to ensure they decide to follow through with an application to your job, rather than to your competitors.

3 Have you decided precisely who your target audience is, and how best to reach them?

Are the individuals that you are looking to attract to your organisation likely to be *actively* applying for jobs, or are they more likely to be *passive* candidates, meaning they are not regularly trawling the job boards and may not necessarily stumble across your advert?

Depending on which, you might look at advertising your vacancy directly on your own website and on job boards to attract applicants. However, if you are not confident this will yield the right results, you might decide that you will be better off engaging with a specialist recruiter externally to support you with your campaign who will take a more pro-active approach in contacting candidates on your behalf.

4 Have you thought about the language you are using in your job advert?

The phrasing of a job advert can have an enormous influence on the individuals that it appeals to, and you should try to avoid any unconscious bias at *all* costs. Believe it or not, certain words are scientifically proven to put off male and female candidates and there are somewhere in the region of 25,000 gender-coded words to think about. Langley Search & Interim works with diversity and inclusion specialist Jasmine Gartner PhD who, amongst other things, advises us on the right language to use in our adverts to appeal to the broadest spectrum of applicants.

5 Are you ready to shout about it on LinkedIn?

Once your advert has been released online, you may wish to consider driving extra traffic to it by strategically posting the link up online to generate more views and

potential applications. Put a plan in place, think about your angle and get as many of your current team members onboard with your post ad-launch strategy as possible to gain additional reach across your social media channels. Get them to write up some personal content to post alongside a link to the job advert on their LinkedIn pages for instance.

What is working for the procurement team really like? What career path can you expect to be setting yourself on by applying to this vacancy? What is the hybrid-working model? What does the team get up to outside of work? Your existing employees are by far your best ambassadors. We have even seen some of our clients go to the lengths of getting their team to record short individual video blogs talking about what it's like to work for their organisation, providing some of that additional colour and personality that social media consumers are specifically drawn to these days.

6 Do you have an applicant response plan in place?

Managing your applicants well, and with respect, is vital. It is surprising how often we hear stories from candidates within our network of long and arduous application processes they have been subjected to in the past. Processes to which they have ended up receiving little or no acknowledgement or response. The result? They will be incredibly cautious when it comes to applying for a job with you again as their opinion of your organisation has been tainted. A call or a personalised email acknowledging the time and effort candidates have put in to register their expression of interest can go a very long way.

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7 How will you ensure all applicants will be left with an excellent overall impression of your organisation?

The 'candidate experience' is a phrase which has been buzzing around recruitment offices the length and breadth of the country for some time now, and this experience starts with the first touchpoint a candidate has with your organisation. Have you thought about the long game, and how you are going to ensure each, and every applicant has something positive to take away from this experience? Or will your focus only be on responding to those whose applications are wholly

appropriate to this specific vacancy, due to time constraints/lack of personnel etc? Sadly, the latter is often the case, but it is an approach which may impact negatively on your organisation in the future.

Taking the time to engage with *all* your applicants can really pay dividends in the long run. A short, personalised response, positioned in the right way will be remembered. It may feel like the smallest gesture at the time, but that ambitious Buyer who has just applied to your Head of Procurement vacancy may not yet have the right credentials to be taken forward right now. However, provide them with a personalised response and tell them you will store their CV to be matched against future vacancies and you never know, in a few years' time they could be a great fit for that Category Lead role you're looking to fill. The conversation will be so much more straightforward if you have already had some positive engagement with them in the past.

Take the extra time to be organised and build up your own candidate database and you could save yourself a lot of time, energy (and expense) further down the line.

There is certainly no one-size-fits all approach to launching a successful recruitment campaign, and this is by no means an exhaustive list of what should be considered when planning to do so, but some of the above will hopefully help. We live in a rapidly changing world with new technologies and online social channels emerging all the time. At Langley Search & Interim we believe that, from a recruitment perspective, these should be embraced as a way of adding extra context to your proposition. In turn, this will lead to the best procurement and supply chain professionals out there in the market wanting to work for you.

