

# Problem Solver

*How can I cut down the costs and processing time involved in recruiting?*



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When it comes to recruitment, the old adage that time is money could not be more appropriate. Time spent on any recruitment activity by the HR department and the hiring manager comes at a cost and the more senior the position being recruited the more costly this will prove to be. However the biggest cost of all is the time the vacancy remains open. Any opportunities or added value that your new hire might bring to the business will not be realised until he or she starts. It follows that any reduction in cycle time that can be saved in recruitment will be a cost benefit to the company.

Research conducted by CTPartners shows that the average time to fill an executive vacancy is around four to six months. The research shows that over half of that time is determined by decision-making processes within the hiring company. Typical roadblocks include getting candidates into busy executives' diaries for interview and multiple decision makers with differing or constantly changing agendas. Other delays might be caused by candidate availability for

interview, insufficient resources in the recruiting firm or the staffing department and a lack of understanding by the recruiters of the position and candidate profiles.

So, how can time (and therefore cost) savings be made? The answer lies in planning ahead. If you can answer the following questions before the recruitment project starts you should be ahead of the game:

- What is the purpose of the role? (in other words, why do we need it at all?)
- Which candidate characteristics are essential and in which areas can we compromise?
- Who will be involved in the recruitment? Do all the decision makers agree on the scope and purpose of the role and the candidate profile?
- Does the staffing department or recruiting firm have the resources and processes to deliver quickly?

It's all about tight project management. If you are using a search firm ask them about their project management processes and cycle times – do they measure them? Are they audited? Are they published? Finally don't underestimate the importance of Executive Assistants – bring them into the process early and persuade them to make your project a priority in their boss's diary.



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In order to cut down on the time and costs involved in recruiting, employers should consider investing in the e-recruitment technology that is now available. Many employers have already followed this course of action, with over two-thirds of organisations now using some form of e-recruitment. Technology has developed considerably in recent years, with e-recruitment now being about a lot more than just advertising online. E-recruitment now involves the use of sophisticated back office systems to process applications, sift, track and respond to candidates and to store and analyse data on the recruitment process.

The move to an electronic recruitment system can lead to significant cost savings from a reduction in advertising and agency fees, the need for less paper and postage and a reduction in headcount due to the lower amount of administration that e-recruitment requires. A number of employers have already experienced considerable cost savings through the move to e-recruitment. For instance, Orange initially experienced savings of £1.8 million per year

as a result of shifting three-quarters of their recruitment online.

Candidate management systems also provide the facility to manage large numbers of applications easily, in less time and using fewer resources. Information is entered into the system by candidates themselves which is quicker and more accurate. For instance, Marks and Spencer reduced the amount of administration needed in their recruitment process by 60% through the use of an e-recruitment system. This means that e-recruitment can greatly reduce the time to hire – advertisements can be posted on a corporate website or on jobs boards virtually immediately as there is no need to wait for print deadlines, applications can be short-listed as they are submitted and responded to quickly using automated emails set up on the system.

If employers wish to reduce the cost and time involved in recruitment then I would urge them to seriously consider using the technology that is available for this process. E-recruitment technology has developed so that it can now address a variety of organisational needs. Providing that employers take the time to consider the available options and to select the system that is best for them, it may enable them to successfully achieve a faster and cheaper recruitment process.