



How do you find exactly the right person for your company?

How do you make sure that you're not fooled by a well-written C.V. and polished interview performance, or a seemingly perfect application form and high assessment test results?

How can you be totally sure that the person you think you've recruited is who they really are once they settle into their new job?

We're well into the first decade of the 21st century and yet the way most companies recruit staff hasn't really changed since the 1950s. Yes, there have been what seem to be some clever innovations and variations in interview processes, but more and more companies are finding that they just aren't getting the right people – those old-fashioned fairly basic processes just don't work properly any more.

One such company who were having real problems with finding the right people, i.e. the correct total person, not just the best skills, experience and qualifications, was [Document Direct Ltd](#), an innovative business that offers a range of digital dictation and other document preparation services to the professional services sector.

According to recent DTI studies, over two-thirds of businesses have real difficulties recruiting the staff they really want.

It now costs, on average, around £5000 in advertising, staff time and agency fees to recruit a mid-level employee, and can cost between £2000 and £5000 in extra cover, lost productivity and un-worked notice every time someone leaves too.

Add up the numbers and it doesn't take a genius to realise that recruiting the wrong person could cost you up to £10,000 and that's without taking into account any knock-on effects to your existing staff and your reputation either. Of course, all this assumes that they leave – if they stay, imagine all the additional problems you'll have as it's getting increasingly difficult to get rid of staff you'd rather not have.

We worked with **Jayne Smith, Head of Operations for Document Direct** to stop their current downward spiral of disappointment, claw back over 70 hours of time wasted on recruitment every six months, and help them recruit some real 'star' staff...

This is the transcript of an interview with Jayne a few months after their 'Recruiting Success' project with us. Read it, and then decide how much more you need to know - if you really want to find out what it was Steve asked the existing key staff in their interviews, how he discovered what makes a Document Direct 'star typist' tick, and how on earth you design the recruitment process so only the people you'd love to employ make it all the way through?

And when you do want to know, get in touch with us at info@iceandlemon.com, or call Steve Wooding direct on **07730 651648**.

So Jayne, how would you describe your problem?

"Well, we had lots of people wanting to work for us but we were hiring the wrong people as we'd focused on testing typing skills mainly. That meant we ended up taking on people who didn't have enough experience in the kind of work we take, wouldn't work the company way, or, once they'd put in the effort to do well in the tests they weren't putting the same effort into their work.

Quality was dropping and staff turnover was very high, maybe because the people we took on didn't realise how high a standard of work we need to produce and how quickly some of our clients need work turned around. This meant that there was a potential knock-on effect on our reputation, which we obviously didn't want so we needed to do something quickly."

What had you already tried?

"We'd used ads in the local Job Centres, especially during the busy summer period when we have a lot of extra work covering for staff on holiday, and word of mouth. Recruitment agencies are just too expensive for what we wanted.

We'd send out a standard test we use, and then have to go through each one and mark it, which obviously took a long time, and during the busier periods, we'd take on whoever got the top scores on the tests.

We rarely interviewed anyone face to face – any that we did were usually over the phone simply because of needing people quickly."

Why weren't you happy with the results you'd been getting?

"There were a couple of key things really. We'd often be inundated following each Job Centre advert, and a lot of applicants simply weren't up to the task – they'd assumed that because they could use a computer or they had a basic typing qualification, that was enough.

On top of that, some of the people we were taking on weren't reading the instructions we gave them in detail, so their work wasn't up to scratch and some needed too much hand-holding to use our fairly simple I.T. systems – it felt like we were on the phone to them continuously trying to sort

things out, which meant we were wasting too much valuable time before any actual work had been done.

One point that also proved to be a big management problem is that some of the people we were taking on didn't like work being sent back to them if they'd made spelling or formatting mistakes – they just didn't seem willing to work to the high standards we expect and our clients need."

How did you find out about Steve and ice&lemon?

"We met at a breakfast networking group and had a chat over coffee afterwards so I could find out more details of exactly what a 'communications expert' could do for us."

Why did you decide to go with Steve's approach?

"After talking to Steve, it was a no-brainer really! We'd tried all the usual ways and not got what we wanted so common sense tells you that if what you've been doing isn't working, you need to do something different, and Steve's approach was certainly different!"

Did you have any concerns before you started working with Steve?

"I have to admit I was a little sceptical at first, but I was also very curious as I'd never come across a recruitment process like it before. I was also a bit apprehensive since Steve would be interviewing my 'stars' – the best typists I have on the team – and didn't want to impose on them or scare them either!

I was concerned that I might have to learn too much to be able to use the process properly myself, though I have to admit I also wanted to find out exactly what made me tick too. The idea that I'd be able to get exactly the people I needed for the company was what really drew me though, and I was quite excited about that!"

How did you find the actual process and the project as a whole?

"In a word, fantastic! Steve's first step was for him to interview our best performing and most motivated staff - our 'star' typist - so he could profile them and find out what it was about the way they worked, their approach to the tasks, what they wanted from their work in a broader sense, and even what they believed and valued about their work and themselves that made them so perfect for their role.

I know it sounds complicated, but Steve made them feel really at ease, more like a chit-chat over coffee with a friend, and the questions were simple and straightforward on the surface, although I now know how carefully crafted they were and how deeply revealing your answers are!

Once he'd done that, he then led me through the interview process so I could do it too. This was a pretty big chunk of stuff to learn but I think I got the main points fairly quickly, and discovered how to find out what makes other people tick, even from phone and email conversations!

The most important part though was what we found out about what makes a star typist, and it has very little to do with ability, although that's obviously important – it's all about key aspects of their psychological and emotional make-up. We were able to sort out the essential characteristics that I needed if I was to recruit only potentially excellent staff.

However, that was only the beginning. Once we'd got those characteristics sorted, along with some 'nice to have' ones too, we totally redesigned the entire recruitment process so that only people with the characteristics we needed would make it through.

The clever bit was designing the advert, the application form and the tests so that anyone who didn't have what we were looking for would get bored or demotivated and wouldn't finish it. That meant that although less applications came through to me, a higher proportion were much closer to what we needed, and I'm saving so much time because I've got specific things to look for that make it really easy to say whether a candidate should be interviewed or not."

So, what have the really important results been for you?

"Well, I've already said we now have a much more effective and efficient way of finding new staff, saving me at least two weeks of my time every year.

The excellent news though is that since we've been using the new process, we've found two new 'stars' who our clients are already extremely happy with.

There have been some great knock-on effects too, for example, our clients now interact far more with the typists themselves, rather than through me and because we're recruiting people who are comfortable and able to do that, our clients are also happier too.

Now I know what makes each of my staff tick as well, I can manage them much more effectively and in a way which means each of them is getting the kind of interaction and feedback they need to stay focused and motivated. Interestingly it's actually different things for different people, and for them all, pay and time off etc. are much lower on the list as they have other things that matter much more to them. Because I now know what keeps each one of them happy and satisfied, they're even more productive and the quality of the work they produce stays high.

As well as all that though, it's changed me too. I'm now much more confident in dealing with people in general, especially when I need to say "No", and it's no exaggeration to say that this whole experience has completely changed the way I look at communicating and interacting with the people around me, and not just in a business sense."

So, would you recommend Steve to your clients and other contacts?

"Absolutely, without any hesitation at all!"

Get in touch **TODAY** and let us help you find your own 'star' staff – call **0845 111 0360** or **07730 651648**, or email info@iceandlemon.com.