# Representing Look

# RECRUITMENT IN THE RETAIL SECTOR





# **A Refreshing Look**

There are many benefits to a career in retail, however many of these can often be overlooked; possibly as a result of outdated views on what the sector has to offer in terms of career development and opportunities for progression. The younger generation still seem to have misconceptions about working in the retail sector, following the belief that it is all low paid work that serves only a temporary purpose.

It seems now that a career in retail is becoming a much more tempting career choice as these views are beginning to be side-lined. With more clarity in what candidates expect from employers, employers must be clearer with what they expect from candidates. This openness will help to ensure that, as a retail business, you will fulfil the requirement of having the right calibre of staff which is essential for you as an employer. The retail sector is currently at the point where over 60% of employers have reported that applicants lack customer handling skills and only 11% of employers say that employees have all the necessary skills to work in their store (Labour Market Review).

When acquiring staff, those in the retail industry can struggle to capture the attention of the right quality of candidates. The reason for this is that the hiring process is often left to the individual store managers whose budget can sometimes be seen to stretch as far as a notice in their shop window or a placement in the local job centre.

There will be few who will know what is better for the store than the shop managers, but it's important to introduce the manager at the right time. A manager will be able to add more value to the business during the interview stages where his experience and knowledge as to what the store needs can be utilised. Introducing the manager during the shortlisting stage where he will have to sift through potentially hundreds of applications is a less productive use of time, and regardless of managerial involvement at this stage, it is impossible to guarantee that you choose the best fitting candidates if you recruit via a manual, paper or email inbox method of recruitment.



# Helping one of the UK's retail giants move towards a standardised, central approach to recruitment.

www.aldirecruitment.co.uk

# Background

There are few people in the UK who will not be aware of the meteoric rise of Aldi. Having recorded double digit growth, Aldi is now Britain's sixth largest supermarket and one of the fastest growing companies in the UK. Aldi is currently opening more than one new store every week.

To support the company's growth, the Aldi Academy was launched in October 2013. The new facility, was based at its Middleton distribution centre, but has recently been moved to Bolton; as a centre of national excellence for recruitment and training, replacing a previously decentralised and regionally-operated recruitment process.

# **Aldi Stores and Vacancy Filler**

Moving to a standardised central approach to recruitment was an important step to ensure that Aldi could meet its ever growing requirements. It was also essential that the new academy was operationally efficient and did not significantly increase overhead costs and allowed Hiring Managers to retain ownership and to continue to manage the recruitment process for themselves.

At the outset of the project, the Aldi Academy looked at a number of different aspects of the recruitment process, broken down in to three work streams:

- Create a candidate marketing and attraction process to promote Aldi as an employer of choice
- Build a competency framework to identify and define Aldi's essential and desirable selection criteria
- Implement an integrated Applicant Tracking System to manage, automate and streamline the recruitment process

Each stream was managed by a separate supplier, each a specialist in their own area and led by the Aldi Academy.

Aldi chose Vacancy Filler Recruitment Software as its technology partner to implement its Best-in-Class Applicant Tracking System. Vacancy Filler was chosen for its ease of use and its guided candidate shortlisting functionality whereby candidates can be scored by

the Hiring Manager against essential and desirable criteria ensuring a uniform process.

Ruth Doyle Regional Managing Director at ALDI UK said "The Vacancy Filler system has improved the quality and frequency of candidate engagement and provided us with a consistent and repeatable process across all of our eight UK regions. It will also deliver valuable management information to support our expansion programme." "The Vacancy Filler system has improved the quality and frequency of candidate engagement..."

Overall the recruitment process project was broken down into two sections – the Candidate Journey and the Hiring Manager Journey.

For the Candidate Journey part of the 'candidate marketing and attraction' work stream, the Aldi careers website was totally re-vamped. It promotes Aldi as a first class employer and acts as the first stage of filtering by telling candidates what's expected of them should they be successful. If the candidate wishes to apply, then they pass through Vacancy

Filler's Intelligent Screening Questions and Situational Judgement Testing stages to filter out unsuitable candidates before being invited to complete an application form. This was one of the key design principles for the project as much time was previously wasted by having to sift through large numbers of unsuitable candidates.

The candidate journey is tailored according to the role. Candidates that successfully complete the candidate journey then go through an extra stage of filtering, using one of the delivery partners, to pre-screen candidates. One of those pre-screening options is to invite candidates to conduct a video interview in their own time, the results of which can be viewed within the system.

After screening, the candidate is automatically routed to the Hiring Manager where the candidate will step through each stage of the process prior to hire. The Vacancy Filler software guides the Hiring Manager and the candidate through each stage of the process, automatically notifying the candidate if they were successful (or otherwise) by inviting them for assessment using the Vacancy Filler Event Management functionality. The Hiring Manager, using a "checklist", scores candidates following assessment to ensure consistency across the process. At the point of hire, the system generates a Conditional

"We have been able to take a more holistic approach to our recruitment..." Contract of Employment and if accepted electronically, will go onto capture the New Starter information.

Ruth Doyle added, "We have been able to take a more holistic approach to our recruitment which now allows us to forward-plan our people requirements more

effectively for the next 12 months. This highlights any action we need to take to fulfil those requirements."

The implementation and rollout commenced in September 2014 to coincide with the seasonal graduate intake. The Vacancy Filler Recruitment Software was further extended before rollout to each region in January 2015 which completed at the end of June. The system processed in excess of 1.5 million candidates in a nine month period from September 2014, for area manager and store roles.



# From Advertising in shop windows to costefficiency and effective, volume recruiting.

http://www.rohan.co.uk/Content/AboutUs/jobs\_at\_rohan

# **Company Background**

Rohan is the original all climate clothing specialist. Established in 1972, the company designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of lightweight, packable, easy to care for clothing that uses the world's most advanced fabric technologies and which offers protection from every climate in the world.

Ian Palmer is responsible for all Rohan personnel in every location. The company employs 75 people in the Head Office in Milton Keynes as well as staff in 37 shops throughout the UK.

#### **The Recruitment Process**

For a while, staff in the shops were recruited via a basic advert that was placed in the shop window at the location where the company were recruiting, as well as in the local job centres. Office staff were hired through agencies, which the company relied on quite heavily, as well as through advertisements in newspapers. CVs were handed in on paper or sent through the post, and even emailed CVs had to be printed out.

The rapid expansion of the business meant that lan needed to find a way of recruiting good staff – both for the shops and for other functions – quickly and efficiently. Although initially

somewhat reluctant to embrace an online recruitment system, he decided to take a quick

look at the Vacancy Filler system, and immediately realised its potential for helping him to overcome his recruitment challenges.

lan said, "Having used the software for a little while now, we definitely operate our recruitment process in a much more professional manner than before – and much more cost-effectively too. Going to an agency is addictive, as it's so easy – but it was a good habit to break."

"...we definitely operate our recruitment process in a much more professional manner than before"

#### The Vacancy Filler Benefits

An example lan gave of the benefits the Vacancy Filler system has brought is the increased efficiency of the recruitment process for staff for Rohan's largest shop, in Covent Garden. Rohan needed sales people for the shop, and had over 1500 applications over

"...we were able to get a better quality candidate and at the same time they were easier to find." one weekend. Prior to taking the system it would have been extremely difficult to process these.

"The Vacancy Filler filter function allowed us to quickly highlight those applicants that were suitable for the role and the company," said Ian Palmer. "We filtered by looking for specific skills in the CVs. This meant that we were able

to get a better quality candidate and at the same time they were easier to find."

Another example lan cited was of a manager who they hired but who for personal reasons had to leave after some three weeks. Because of the system and its Talent Pool feature, which keeps details of applications on file, Rohan was able to look back at those who applied after the interviews and also those who were shortlisted before. "We ended up with a really good candidate who has worked out very well, without having to advertise and go through the entire process all over again," said lan.

Finally, we asked lan, what would life be like if he went back to not having the Vacancy Filler system?

lan was quite firm in his reply. "I can't even think about that," he said. "I refuse to accept that as an option - it would be a nightmare. If you took the system away tomorrow I'd have to go straight out and find another one to use. We couldn't go back."



# **A Refreshing Look**

Although the problems that are felt by most in-house recruiters are shared by retail, the sector has its own specific set of troubles. Innovative methods of recruiting have been proven to help with attracting the best staff, deal with extremely high volumes of applicants and combat a negative stigma attached to the industry for some of the United Kingdom's biggest and most successful retail brands.

For a sector that is represented by its staff, recruitment can be one of the most influential parts of business. Furthermore, it is essential to make certain that those applicants that are rejected are not alienated by a poor candidate journey as these candidates are likely to also be customers.

# Your Recruitment Process Discovery Report

Find out which areas in your hiring process are costing you in time and money, and where improvements can be made to enhance your employer brand, the candidate journey and the quality of candidates applying to your organisation.

Visit info.vacancy-filler.co.uk/free-report

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