KALLIDUS

10 minutes with Iceland's Retail Recruitment Manager

Iceland, the UK's leader in frozen food, has sales of over £2.7 billion, employs over 22,000 people and operates over 900 stores across the country. For the past 12 years, it has been ranked by the Sunday Times as one of the 'Best Big Companies to Work For'.

We spoke to **John Crossland, Iceland's Retail Recruitment Manager**, about how he has modernised the company's recruitment processes.

Q Hi John. Can you tell us about your old recruitment processes and why you needed a new system?

A Up until 18 months ago we'd been using an Applicant Tracking System for around seven years at head office for our management recruitment. We decided to look around and see what was happening in the ATS market and that really opened our eyes up to what today's systems can do.

We decided we needed a new system to bring us up to date with current best practices that could be rolled out to all of our stores too, particularly to relieve the pressure on store managers during busy seasonal recruitment drives.

Q What made you choose Kallidus Recruit?

A We chose **Kallidus** from a shortlist of three companies. **Kallidus Recruit** ticked all of our boxes with its comprehensive functionality. It also looked really good on a mobile phone. We'd not had that capability with our previous system.

When we met the team, we really liked their down to earth approach and openness. We felt they listened to our needs and that the relationship would be a true partnership. We have high expectations and the fast changing environment we work in means we often chop and change our ideas. **Kallidus** have been flexible and have really supported our vision and passion every step of the journey.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

How did you find the implementation?

The system went live in June 2017 to our in-house recruitment team of 16 users who are responsible for the recruitment of head office positions, area managers, store managers, senior supervisors and other middle and senior management roles.

Next we rolled out a "Fisher-Price version" to over 900 stores, going live in September 2017 in time for our busiest recruitment drive of the year during October and November.

We now have around 2,000 people using the system in our stores. Our experience with both implementations was very positive and was particularly seamless for the recruitment team because the training we received from **Kallidus** was great, and they already had experience of using an ATS.

**How had you previously been managing your store recruitment?**

I think it's fair to say that we were behind the times as our recruitment was completely manual. We relied on in-store job posters and handing out printed application forms and then waiting for candidates to bring or post these back to us.

Implementing a new system was always going to be a major step forward for our store managers and other store users, but we had good buy-in and everybody understood the advantages of moving online.

Some of our store managers have been with us for 25 years but everybody has coped really well with the change to online recruitment. The system is easy to use and we've given users the choice of accessing it via desktop or mobile phone, and the response in-store has been overwhelmingly positive.

> "I wouldn't want to be doing the next phase of our implementation with anybody other than Kallidus!"
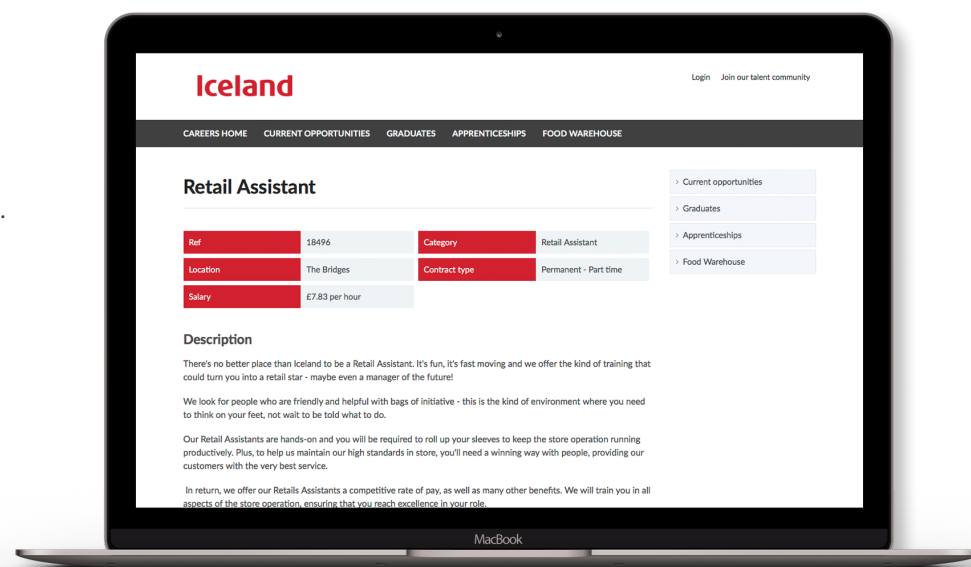
That's quite a change. Have you seen any benefits yet?

Kallidus Recruit has helped us to move things forwards for our management recruitment and has totally transformed how we recruit in our stores. We've satisfied our biggest motivation which was to bring our recruitment processes up to date in the competitive landscape in which we operate.

We've also met our objective to save managers time by automating and streamlining our recruitment processes. On average, we've halved the time to recruit candidates too. Previously it was taking anywhere from six to eight weeks from advertising an appointment. Now it's taking just three-to-four weeks thanks to **Kallidus**. Our candidate experience is also much improved.

Another benefit of moving online is the quality of candidates we receive. We've gone from 5 or 10 applicants per role to around 40 per role in the first two weeks of advertising a position and store managers are telling us that the increase in applicants is giving them much more choice when they have a vacancy to fill.

Every new recruit has to go through a Right to Work screening process. We were faced with the challenge of integrating NSL Checking with **Kallidus Recruit** and this has been a real success as all the necessary screening can be carried out at the click of the button which has further streamlined the recruitment process.

GDPR was also an important driver for moving our recruitment online and the new system has helped us to improve security around the data we collect.

Overall, we have transformed our recruitment processes and have increased recruitment efficiency. Technology has enabled us to engage our hiring managers and enable them to process an increasing volume of job applications more quickly, with greater visibility across the recruitment lifecycle.
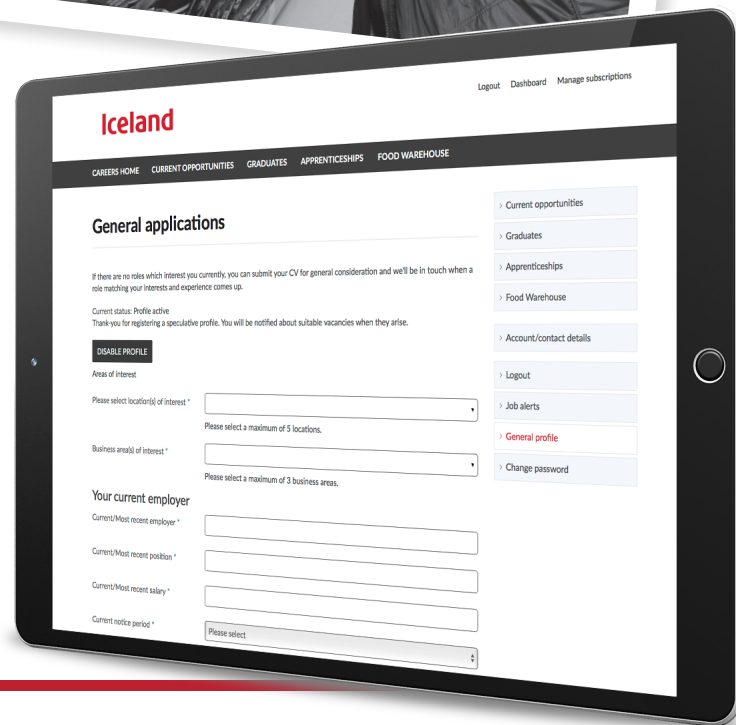
Q How big a job is seasonal recruitment?

A It's a really big job! Our busiest time of year for recruiting seasonal staff is from October right the way through to early December. From when the system went live at the end of September and the period up to early December, we received over 163,000 applicants and had 2,954 offers accepted.

We would never have received or have been able to process this level of applicants without **Kallidus Recruit**. Our new system has helped us to raise the bar as managers really can cherry pick and hire the right people.

> "It's been a pleasure working with Kallidus who are always forthcoming with solutions."

Q How will the system support business growth?

A We're opening 53 new stores this calendar year, each employing 20-30 members of staff. **Kallidus Recruit** is the perfect solution to help us manage the recruitment process particularly with its self-scheduling feature which enables us to plan when we need resources and we can then schedule interviews on set days leading up to the stores opening.

We are often looking for great people and sometimes location can be a challenge, for example when recruiting for our head-office roles in Wales. The system's talent banking functionality is something we plan to do more with in the future to support our business growth as it enables us to keep good people in our system that we can go back and talk to in say six months time if we don't have the right position for them in the first instance.

Q Now that you've completed the roll-out to all your stores, what's next?

A Phase 2 is really about embedding **Kallidus Recruit** and maximising all the benefits it offers. We are working on Management Information reports for head office, putting videos into job ads and examining the quality of our hires to see if turnover has reduced for example.

The reporting functionality is going to give us much greater visibility into the effectiveness of our recruitment processes. We'll be able to look at the average time it takes us to screen, interview and fill roles and understand better the implications for the business. We'll be moving from a world where this just wasn't possible before to a world where we'll have the information we need to do things better and quicker.

Phase 3 which will take place in our Financial Year 2021 will see the integration of **Kallidus Recruit** with our in-house personnel system. This is going to massively streamline recruitment and will mean that we no longer have to manually enter new starters' details into a separate system. Given it takes managers around 20 minutes to enter each new starter's details we've going to be able to save over 100 working days per year alone in management time spent on data entry!

Q And finally, what tips would you give somebody looking for in-house recruitment software?

A The product needs to be fit for purpose but ultimately the relationship you have with your vendor is the most important thing. Pick an organisation that you trust to be a partner for the whole journey.

It's been a pleasure working with **Kallidus** who are always forthcoming with solutions. They provided a helping hand every step of the way while educating us to be self-sufficient. I wouldn't want to be doing the next phase of our implementation with anybody other than **Kallidus**!