

CASE STUDY

Cardiff and Vale College
Coleg Caerdydd a'r Fro

Cardiff and Vale College

Caring for Candidates: An improved Candidate Journey with a truly bi-lingual application process

Background

In August 2011, Barry College and Coleg Glan Hafren, two established and successful Further Education colleges, merged to create Cardiff and Vale College. Cardiff and Vale College is one of the largest colleges in the UK, with around 20,000 students and 1000 members of staff. They provide education and training across the capital region of Wales in top class industry facilities and centres of excellence across sites in Cardiff and the Vale, as well as in the community and in the workplace.



The Solution

Cardiff & Vale College were looking to improve their hiring processes and reduce the amount they were spending during periods of recruitment; both common areas of improvement for any HR Department.

However, they were looking to improve their candidate experience as well, and the solution they required for this was more unique; they were looking to provide an application process in English, and also an application process that was purely in Welsh.

Mark O'Brien is the HR Systems and Data Manager at CAVC and plays a key role in deciding the direction that the college takes in terms of modernisation and improvement of existing HR processes. Mark said, "The recruitment process here has always been very manual, it was a process that involved lots of admin and lots of paper. We receive over 2000 applications each year for roughly 100 vacancies, this results in us printing off more than 20,000 pages of applications per year and reducing this was key."

Mark explained the importance of creating a better candidate journey to put their recruitment process in line with the college brand, whilst highlighting that the

existing manual process was something that needed to change, "Using a word document wasn't a modern way of doing things and we wanted to make sure our candidates had the appropriate communications at the right time. We knew that this was only possible if our recruiting managers had more visibility and more control over the vacancies that they were managing – ultimately, this is what was needed to reinforce our brand."

As a key benefit to the software, and to further enhance the Cardiff & Vale College brand, the bi-lingual application process has been a great addition; particularly for showing the importance of the Welsh language to the College. Mark commented, "We are now able to have a truly bi-lingual application process."

So we have a Welsh internet page and when someone clicks on 'apply in Welsh', they go to a Welsh recruitment page where they can complete a Welsh online application form. As a college we strive to ensure both the English and Welsh languages are treated equally so it was vital for us to be able to provide the option to apply in Welsh."

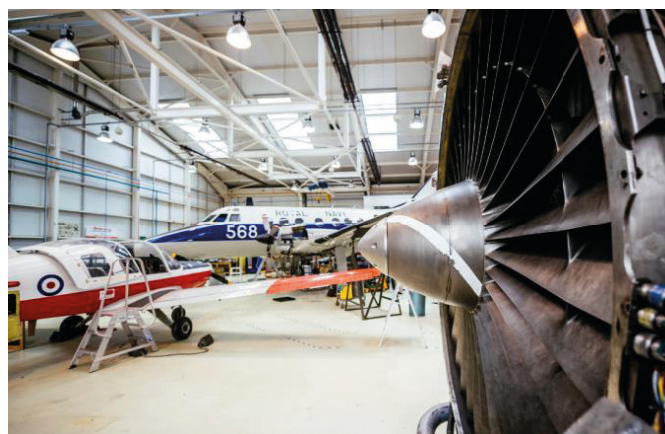
One of the main reasons for Cardiff & Vale College taking on a recruitment solution, was the realisation that reductions in spend had to be taken, Mark said, "The whole education sector is experiencing funding cuts and we have to work as efficiently as possible – automating the process and working with Vacancy Filler has allowed us to free up resources."



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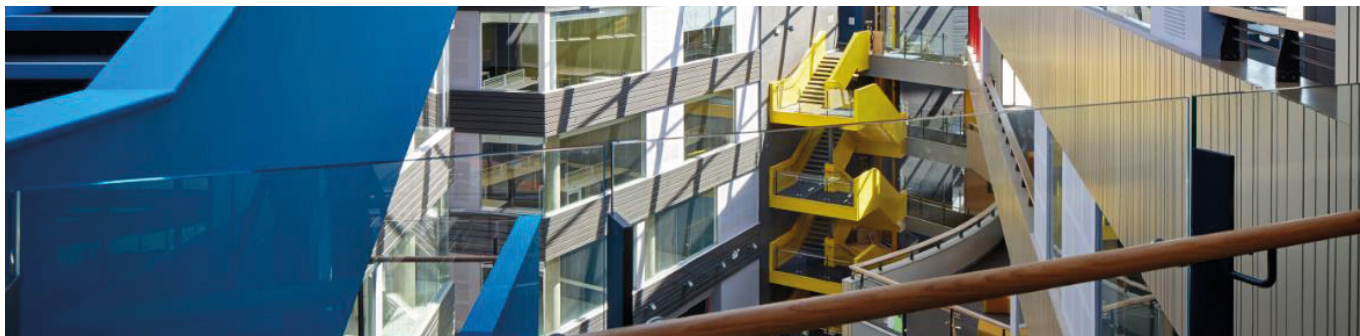
The reduction in available funding actually meant that Cardiff & Vale College needed to reduce costs where possible and introducing Vacancy Filler allowed them to reduce the resources required for the management of the recruitment process. This reduction in resources for the recruitment process has meant that even in busy periods of recruitment, which tend to be just before the start of a new term, the Vacancy Filler system



has made it possible to manage the large volumes of candidates that apply. Mark said, "We have around 100 vacancies a year and even with roughly 150 applications for some roles, it's no problem for us to work through them now that the system is in place."

Reporting capabilities have allowed the HR team to make informed hiring decision to continually improve their recruitment process, with Equality and Diversity being a key report in the Public Sector, the ease of generating this report has really helped the College.

Mark saw a huge benefit in the reporting being that they can report on not just the successful candidates who make it to an employee, but also on all of the applicants. This has allowed them to see if



the people applying are a good fit for the business, and also where they are coming from so they know if they are advertising in the right places.

Mark said that although the existing recruitment practices were in line with best practice, the recruitment process has improved further at the College for both employees and candidates; and the process is now much more streamlined and

we would then go back and manually email all unsuccessful candidates and also all of the successful candidates so we can invite them to interview."

The old process covered off all the things that good employers do, but automating this process has allowed more efficient use of resources once assigned to the recruitment process, providing both time and cost savings to the college at a time where funding is low and spending is tight.

For Mark, it was the intuitiveness of the software and the simplicity of the back-end that played a big part in the decision to go with Vacancy Filler. He was impressed with the clean screens and the fact that it was easy to work out what needed to be done at each stage of the process, so very little training was needed.

Cost was also a big factor in his decision; Mark felt that Vacancy Filler was very well priced in terms of having all of the features that they needed and the level of support that was included in the price of the software. Mark said, "We were aware of alternatives out there, but in terms of cost and features, ease of use, and friendliness and helpfulness of staff, Vacancy Filler were the best choice for us."

Cardiff & Vale College have benefited from reduced spend in terms of resources as they need less resources for recruitment across the college. They have also seen an improvement in the number and quality of candidates;



manageable. "Before, we would advertise the role with FE Jobs and there the candidate could download a word document to apply with" explained Mark.

He continued, "They would then complete the form and email it back to us, it would then come into the HR Team's central inbox where they would manually send out a thank-you email for the application.

It would then be split manually in terms of diversity before having a reference number added to each application. We would then manually add that to the HR system so we could track the application.

Once that was all complete, it was printed out as a pack and manually sent off to a shortlisting manager. They would shortlist manually and



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Mark believes that this is a result of the improved candidate experience that applicants go through as this is the first contact that they have with the college.

He went on to say, "I think the old process being manual didn't represent an otherwise excellent recruitment process for the college in the best way. This process keeps them informed all the way through so it is of a much higher quality and keeps the candidate interested and connected all the way through the process."

Mark plans to use more of the system's features in the future to further improve things at the college. He said, "We know the training is there but we haven't had to rely on it too much as the system is just so simple to use. But we may take it up for use of some of the additional

features like the interview scheduling feature as we're waiting for a quieter period to fully get to grips with that.

One thing that we do want to start using is the free skills-based tests - we think they will be really useful. It will give us a better insight into our candidates without spending any extra time or resources."

Mark summarised the benefits of the software by saying, "The key benefits have been: the candidate experience, as that is definitely better, the efficiency of the software, as its made things much quicker and easier to manage with visibility of all activity, and the fact that Managers can now use a modern way of recruiting, which saves them time as well. And there is the obvious cost savings."



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