It is no use saying: ‘We are doing our best’
Sharon Homes discusses the recruitment and selection process

I have always been responsible for the recruitment of staff throughout dental arts studio. It was as simple as placing an advert in whichever source you chose, receiving and reading through the applicant’s curriculum vitae and then inviting them to an interview. When the potential candidate arrived at the practice we would hand them a questionnaire to fill in, which had general questions on it such as, why would you like to work for us etc.

Once I had completed all the interviews I would shorten the list down to the top three and arrange for a second interview to take place with either Dr Solanki or Dr Malhan. We would then select from these three the person we thought was best suited to the role after a reference check had been carried out. This has always worked out well up until now.

With CQC being one of the tasks that I have been dealing with for the past six months it’s been like having a spring clean of my administration folders. One of the outcomes we have to deal with is the suitability of staffing, which led me into refreshing our recruitment policy with the help of the Code ADP website.

The Code website has been a massive help in enabling me to update all our practice procedures and policies. On a whole we were very much in line with requirements, but like many other practices there were a few policies not in place, as well as a couple being outdated.

One of our newly updated policies is to have a clearly defined outline for recruitment. Success after all is in the preparation of any task or challenge undertaken.

The advice that Code gave is outlined as follows:

1. Identify the specific job related criteria using a job description
2. Match these criteria with those detailed in the CV or application form
3. Use this list to select which candidates will be interviewed if appropriate

Once a list has been created it is much easier to choose which candidates to interview. Once your selection has been made you then invite your potential candidate to present themselves for an interview. A job description should be sent out to the candidate before hand to ensure a successful application and interview as the candidate has already had the opportunity to decide whether they are the correct person for the role being advertised.

Preparing for a recruitment interview is just as important for us as it is the interview preparation for the applicant.

To have a successful interview it is no use saying: ‘We are doing our best’.
The second opinion is valuable in making a recruitment decision. It's also important to be able to sit back and watch your colleague interview while you have the opportunity to observe the candidates body language and facial expressions. It's also helpful in your own development as your colleague can also give you feedback on your own interviewing technique.

Interviews should be confirmed in writing. Now days this is easily achieved as most of us now have access to the internet. If this is not possible then a letter confirming the interview should be sent.

When preparing for the interview you should identify any areas on the CV that do not appear clearly laid out and does not define the experience and qualifications required for the job role being advertised. Look where there are unexplained gaps and make notes to ask specific questions to these areas. Also pay attention to short span employment in short periods of time. Also validate statements of achievement.

Create questions to be covered in the interview process and ensure that the interviewee is able to answer your questions decisively and constructively.

Conducting the interview

1. Use the same line of questioning with each candidate. Keep it simple; do not ask for any personal information as this is not relevant to the job and it could be considered discriminatory

2. Do not accept partial or unclear answers to any of your questions

3. Keep the questions open for example; do not ask simple questions that require a simple yes or no answer

4. Take notes of the candidate’s answers and note down your own comments

5. The candidate should be talking for 80 per cent of the interview and you should only be talking for 20 per cent of the interview

After the interview

1. Read carefully through the notes that you had taken about each candidate and complete ADP’s assessment form or you could create your own if you are able to. Your reasons for your selection are important in case your final decision is challenged by the interviewed candidates, eg under the Sex, Age, Race or Disability Discrimination Acts

2. Compare each candidate using the information you have against the requirements of the job being advertised

3. Make an assessment for each candidate as to whether
they have met the criteria for the role. Make sure that they fit in with the culture of your team; however make sure that you do not discriminate. Be sure to make the correct choice as an error in judgement can be costly and time consuming should it not pan out.

An offer of employment should be made verbally upon the receipt of two professional references which are satisfactory. These two references should be from a previous and current employer. In the case of a school leaver a reference from a teacher is acceptable. These references should be in writing, although details may be clarified by telephone if necessary. If the references are not produced in a reasonable amount of time then it may be necessary to retract the offer of employment.

Once you are happy with the character references an offer of employment must be sent to the potential candidate to confirm the offer of employment and the conditions thereof. Once the job has been accepted then a contract of employment should be sent out.

Make sure to ask the candidate to present all necessary documents for eg qualification certificates, work permits, Hep B, personal information with regards to next of kin etc. All the essential documents must be placed in a personnel folder and placed in a secure environment only accessible to the practice manager or principal dentist.

As Winston Churchill once said: ‘It is no use saying, “We are doing our best.” You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary.”

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‘Identify areas on a candidate’s CV that are unclear’