



CORPORATE AND
TRANSACTIONAL

e-Recruitment in Derbyshire Cuts Costs

Summary

Derbyshire County Council implemented Phase I of their e-Recruitment project in September 2004. By doing so, the council widened its pool of applicants, met ODPM Priority Outcomes and provided more choice and better service to its citizens, whilst also realising efficiency gains.

Before the council implemented the e-Recruitment system from Abacus eMedia, job applicants had to request paper application packs. More than 60,000 packs were sent out each year at a cost of more than £120,000. Derbyshire County Council has also cut its contact points for job applications from 500 to one by introducing the new system. People interested in any of the 5,000 vacancies the council advertises each year can now apply online.

Quote

“The most direct benefit from an HR perspective is that we are widening our pool of applicants, and the number of applications that we are receiving online has exceeded expectations.”

James Luckraft,
Personnel Manager

Improvement through efficiency



Centre of
Excellence

East Midlands

emce.gov.uk

Reasons for implementing e-recruitment

A number of internal and external factors motivated Derbyshire County Council to implement an e-Recruitment system.

External motivators included:

- Compliance with e-Government Agenda and modernisation targets, specifically BVPI 157.
- Compliance with ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) Priority Outcomes
- Achievement of Derbyshire's "Putting People First" Change Management Programme goal to improve access to Council services.

Internal motivators included:

- The council wanted to widen its pool of applicants and improve efficiency in their recruitment practices
- The council wanted to make their recruitment practices consistent across the organisation.

Issues addressed

The implementation of the Recruit system addressed a number of issues.

First, the council wanted a more unified approach to recruitment. Previously, recruitment was devolved across the entire organisation, which resulted in different departments having different recruitment practices. Derbyshire County Council has 35,000 employees, and the introduction of e-recruitment presented the opportunity for a more structured approach with all departments managing vacancies in the same way. This would promote the council's brand, and applicants would associate jobs with the authority as a whole. There were also various points of contact throughout the council for recruitment issues, and Derbyshire wanted to streamline this by establishing a single point of contact via its call centre.

Derbyshire knew that 40% of site hits were recruitment related, however, they had no means of assisting people to use the Internet to actually apply online. Feedback received from potential applicants established that they were missing out on key applicants who were put off by the fact that they could not apply online. There were also a number of citizens who had requested job packs but opted not to apply for the jobs.

It was also important, as part of Derbyshire's "Putting People First" programme, that applicants had the greatest amount of choice possible in how they pursued employment within the council. By implementing e-recruitment, citizens would have the option of applying online, by post, or by email attachment.

Specific objectives

By implementing the Recruit system, Derbyshire hoped to achieve the following objectives:

- To complement, but not replace, the traditional paper-based system
- To demonstrate their commitment to the e-Government standards
- To widen their pool of applicants
- To link recruitment (both on and offline) with the other services that they offered through "Call Derbyshire", the Council's all service contact centre
- To enable greater access via the Call Derbyshire call centre's extended opening hours.

Measuring results

Derbyshire planned to measure the success of the Recruit system by:

- Administering questionnaires and surveys to applicants in order to gather direct feedback
- Measuring the take-up of the online services compared with the application pack rate of return
- Using the site analysis tools to see what types of people were using the service and for what purposes
- Looking at how much money was saved by the Council by investing in an e-Recruitment system and centralising the recruitment process as a means of re-directing services to the front end.

Outline of implementation

Phase I of the e-recruitment project was approved in March 2003, and implementation was completed by September 2004.

The first step was to identify the need for an e-Recruitment system. Derbyshire chose the Abacus e-Media solution, Recruit, the main reason being that the product could be tailored to Derbyshire's specifications to ensure that it reflected the Council's recruitment process. Recruit had recently been implemented at Leicester City Council, so officers from Derbyshire County Council visited Leicester to see the system in action.

Implementation was completed in September 2004, product training was provided by Abacus e-Media. Derbyshire opted for a cascading training structure in which Abacus trained officers of the Council who then trained their colleagues.

Partner organisations

Derbyshire County Council is part of an e-Government partnership with nine other councils in the county as well as three other organisations; Peak Park Planning Board, Police, and Fire and Rescue. This partnership is recognised as one of the best e-Government partnerships in the country. Presentations have been made to the e-Government Management Board in an effort to encourage others to participate in the e-Recruitment process. Interest has been apparent in a number of these organisations, but a shared service is only likely once existing contracts held by partner authorities expire.

Outcomes and benefits

Quantifiable results

- Over 55% of all applications submitted were done online during the first nine months Recruit was in use. This number has increased to over 60%
- There were over 226,000 visits to the new jobs website by over 93,000 visitors within first nine months
- Net savings in staffing efficiencies of over £90,000 per annum
- Printing and stationery costs were reduced by approximately £100,000 year on year arising from a 50% reduction in number of job packs requested in hard copy format.

Other results

- The website and call centre are now fully integrated within the council's recruitment process, and citizens now have three ways of applying for jobs; online, by post or by email attachment
- Job adverts are placed directly on the web site, the weekly job sheet is automatically produced and recruitment analysis tools (i.e. who is applying, demographics, what they are applying for etc.) are being used extensively
- There is now a consistent recruitment practice across the council, and improved management information allows for more effective use of advertising and related expenditure

- Applicants can store job applications for future adjustment and submission for similar vacancies. Recruit also assists with vacancy screening process for potentially displaced employees
- Applicants can register what type of jobs they are looking for and an email will automatically alert them when a job that meets their criteria becomes available.

How does the citizen benefit directly?

Benefits to citizens can be grouped into two key areas; access and quality.

Access

- 24/7 access via the Internet with support available through local libraries at no cost to the applicant
- Application packs and job details are available immediately online and job applications can be submitted in real time. Eliminating unreliable postal systems and related postage and paper costs
- Applicants can search jobs by occupational group, contract type, job term, salary or location
- A link to the council's Geographic Information System enables applicants to view in detail the workplace location.

Quality

- Derbyshire offers prospective applicants considerable choice in how they apply for jobs within the council
- Applicants get a consistent response including automatic notification of the receipt of online applications
- Enhanced opportunities for the promotion of vacancies for under represented groups through the capture of demographic information by the system
- More opportunities for consultation with and feedback from potential job seekers and applicants through a standard questionnaire included on the website and in the job packs
- Quick links to all relevant information on www.derbyshire.gov.uk

Future developments

A Phase II scoping document has been approved, which establishes a series of developments and enhancements to the system. Developments in Phase II include the following:

- Improved processes for the capturing of request information and the distribution of literature for school vacancies, schools are not wholly conforming to the entire recruitment process
- The inclusion of an abbreviated application form for certain types of jobs where the full range of information is not required
- Greater utilisation of community-based offices to provide remote access to the recruitment system. This will enable those without home PCs access to a computer
- Extension of system to incorporate other parts of the recruitment and selection process. At present the system covers the process up to the receipt of applications. It is anticipated that the system will facilitate the generation of all recruitment correspondence up to the issue of contract of employment
- Automated population of application forms with individual and vacancy information as well as the capture of hard copy application details in the back-end of the system.

Contact

James Luckraft

Personnel Manager
Derbyshire County Council
tel: 01629 580 000 (extension 6918)
email: james.luckraft@derbyshire.gov.uk

Paget Miles

e-Government Account Manager
Abacus eMedia
tel: 020 7297 5205
email: paget.miles@abacusemedia.com

Julie Slatter

Assistant Director (Partnerships)
East Midlands Centre of Excellence
tel: 07921 491 699
email: julie.slatter@nottsc.gov.uk