



New Norms Challenges & Opportunities in Recruitment

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Introduction

Like with most things, people and businesses have had to adapt to the changing landscape created by the current pandemic and recruitment is no different.

Your traditional telephone interview followed by face to face interview or often multiple interviews with various parties (especially for more senior roles) is no longer practical. If companies want to keep up with their competitors and their own business needs both from an operational and transformational perspective, then they will need to embrace the new ways of recruiting.

Due to a combination of Covid and the planned (but not implemented IR35 changes), we are seeing several things in the recruitment space:-

- Many companies have withdrawn offers or placed roles on hold. This is likely to be due to reasons such as, not wanting to make any further financial commitments at an uncertain time, focusing on crisis management but not having a recruitment process that supports a virtual world will also be a factor.
- Where roles have been advertised - A significant volume of people are applying, meaning the pipeline is often too big for recruiting managers or agencies to deal with, leading to a poor applicant experience.
- Many contractors were let go leading up to the proposed IR35 changes in April and as Covid then hit it was a perfect storm with lots of people looking for work and very few roles available.
- Programmes put on hold as firms re plan based on changing priorities.

It is estimated that **60% of the adult population in the UK have been working from home during the lockdown**. Numerous recent surveys point to both the need and desire for employees to retain flexibility moving forward with **75% of people preferring a hybrid model of 50/50 split between home and the office**.

We don't of course know how long some of the current restrictions are going to remain in place, combined with fears of a second spike, so companies would be prudent to plan for the worst case scenario. Its therefore likely that conducting interviews, onboarding and training in the traditional way, may not be appropriate or safe for some candidates for the foreseeable future.

What's changed?

Exceptional efforts have been made by recruitment and HR teams with moving the selection, interview and onboarding process into a virtual experience. Not all efforts have been seamless as there will always be challenges when moving embedded processes quickly and with little notice. Those that have got it right have offered not just the facility to process candidates online but provided the continuous technical and IT support to enable them to use the remote tools. Where this support is lacking for whatever reason, will there be a bias towards those that are tech savvy and can navigate these remote tools with ease?

Feedback from candidates that have had a great recruitment journey have praised the consistent and regular communication. Even pre-pandemic this was an essential part of recruitment but even more so during times of crisis where not hearing from employers can feel like abandonment and exacerbates the frustration and rejection felt by candidates. It is clear that increased contact is required but the whole experience more than ever represents the company in the absence of a swanky office and the opportunity to meet potential colleagues and bosses in their usual environment.

Others have experienced an extremely elongated onboarding journey. A data analyst from our network described a typical journey with an initial telephone interview, two and a half hour online assessment and a formal virtual interview spanning over the course of one month. When offered the role, she was kept waiting for nearly four weeks to be formally given a contract to start at some point within the next 12 months but no definitive date. Do employers hold the upper hand now that the employment market has contracted as result of the pandemic?

Old Way	New Norm
Face to face interview	Interview or initial contact is often now conducted by video conference using platforms such as Skype, Teams or Zoom.
Face to Face assessments	On-line assessments and use of AI tools.
Onboarding on first day in the office	Meet the team by video conference, using systems such as sharepoint or Yammer to share documentation, complete mandatory reading and attestations.
Face to face or on the job training	Delivery of remote training, sharing self learning material and remote 121 sessions with the team.

What are the opportunities?

- Roles will attract lots of applicants so hiring managers are likely to have a pipeline of strong candidates to choose from.
- There is an opportunity to get ahead of your competitors if you make the necessary changes quickly and effectively.
- If you link in the new ways of hiring with embracing remote working then you will reduce your cost base, increase staff morale whilst having a wider range of potential employees to choose from.
- A significant proportion of highly skilled contractors are available and considering contract, interim or permanent employment so in a sellers market you may be able to attract some highly qualified/skilled individuals to your company.
- Many of the changes needed to the hiring and onboarding process can be done relatively cost effectively and quickly.

What are the challenges?

- You may need to make hiring decisions without actually meeting a candidate in person, making it hard for the employer to fully assess a candidate and individuals to visualise working for a company.
- Managing a large pipeline of candidates in a way that's customer centric and protects your brand.
- You may need to invest in technology to enable effective remote recruitment, onboarding, training and working.
- If you get your changes to your recruitment process wrong you may make some bad hires, which impact on cost, performance and brand.
- You may need to work with any 3rd party suppliers, who complete your recruitment to make the necessary changes in collaboration.
- New recruits may find it difficult to build relationships, get up to speed with requirements at pace, feel motivated and understand company culture.

Hints & Tips for candidates

- Your best chance of getting a role in the current climate maybe through people you know, so networking is key. Look back through your connections, previous employers, Managers, ex colleagues, friends etc and get in contact with them. Let them know you're available and see if they have anything, even if not immediately if they know you are looking, they may just come back to you if something comes up in a few weeks/months time.
- Use the time to think about any personal development/qualifications that will make you more marketable.
- Review your LinkedIn profile as this is a popular way for recruiters to find potential candidates, specifically:-
 - Think about your job title, is it identifiable outside of the company you worked for and make sure it's a job title recognised by LinkedIn's predefined list.
 - Have you got the key words in your profile that people looking for someone with your skillset might use, ie Agile, BPO, Transformation, Transfer Agency, Digital Transformation. Think about your skills and experience and make sure they are included in your profile, if people use a key word search and you don't have them in your profile, then you won't make the shortlist.
 - Make sure your profile is set to "open to new opportunities", most recruiters will look there first as they know you are available and likely to respond.
 - Be active on LinkedIn, grow your network and respond to messages and comment where appropriate as inactive candidates are unlikely to be approached.

How can Simplify help?

We have a network of pre assessed, high calibre Transformation and Risk specialists who are ready to help. We don't advertise roles as we have the required skills and experience within our team and associate pool, meaning we can quickly respond to requests for resources and deliver quality candidates at pace.

Get in touch if...

- You are a company in the wealth space struggling to navigate the new way of recruiting or have an urgent need for strong practitioners in transformation, process optimisation or risk.
- You have change or risk experience in the Wealth space and would like to find out about joining our Associate Network.

Feedback from recent appointments:-

- "Dealing with Simplify was a pleasure. Knowledgeable industry professionals, who were able to accurately assess my experience and articulate that to the end Client. Contact through the process was engaging and thoughtful. I would not hesitate to deal with them in the future". Brian – Programme Manager
- "The Simplify Consulting consultant contacted me to check if a particular role suited me and if I was available. It did, and I was. From then Simplify kept in touch in all the right places ensuring delays on the client side did not leave me wondering if the opportunity had disappeared. They provided the personal touch that has almost disappeared from the recruitment industry". Alan – Pensions Expert



Simplify Consulting

Why Simplify?

Experienced practitioners

Deep knowledge of the operational processes in Wealth Management

Ability to mobilise quickly

Use of the Simplify Capability Model to provide structure & consistency

Ability to leverage the existing artefacts produced already

Commercially competitive

Contact Us Today:

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