



ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT IN A CHANGING WORLD

A briefing for SME leaders in Greater Manchester

THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET HAS EXPERIENCED A SHIFT LIKE NO OTHER IN THE PAST 18 MONTHS, AND THE TALENT OF THE FUTURE WILL LOOK VERY DIFFERENT TO THE TALENT OF THE RECENT PAST.

An engaged and energised cohort of jobseekers are placing greater emphasis on values, culture and diversity, presenting challenges around attracting and retaining talent for small and medium sized businesses in this fast-changing world.

With that in mind, this guide provides leaders with advice on how to ensure that your business remains agile in the jobs market, and provides the best skills, support and growth for your team now and in the future.

FINDING THE RIGHT TALENT IS NO MEAN FEAT, BUT ADOPTING AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT CAN HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR YOUR BUSINESS.



Firstly, it is vital that you clearly understand the exact behaviours and skills you are looking for when advertising a role, as well as any possible development opportunities that may exist within the position. This can be done by engaging with team members about the demands of their roles and utilising their lived experiences to ensure your ad is as accurate as possible. This process also attracts candidates by helping them to understand how they can succeed in the post and their opportunities for further development.

Alongside the technical aspect of recruitment, it is increasingly important for businesses to demonstrate their commitment to social values and how those values are embedded into the company culture.

This can attract likeminded candidates and improve retention by increasing the cohesion of your team. Leaders should also be mindful to focus on embracing equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the recruitment process, as these qualities can have a big impact on your ability to attract and retain talent: **67% of job seekers say that diversity is an important factor when considering a company.** Being mindful of placing the job advert where a wide and diverse pool of candidates can access it is a good place to start. You could also remove names, schools, locations and dates of birth from CVs to reduce unconscious bias and ensure that you only focus on the candidate's skills and competencies. Finally, try to appoint a diverse interview panel to help candidates feel at ease throughout the process.

IN A FAST-PACED WORKING ENVIRONMENT, SUCCESSFUL LEADERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO COMMUNICATE THE JOURNEY THE BUSINESS IS TAKING TO THEIR STAFF AND PROSPECTIVE TEAM MEMBERS THROUGH A STRATEGIC NARRATIVE.

Staff need a voice and want to feel that they are listened to, so regularly involving them in the roadmap for your company can ensure that retention levels remain positive. If staff are unaware of why changes are being made, feel they are not supported or feel like they don't fit with the company's culture and direction, they can quickly become demotivated and disengaged. Younger employees in particular expect more engagement and value continued dialogues, mentoring and support, otherwise they can be quick to look elsewhere.

As with the recruitment process, embedding social values into working practices can also encourage team members and display the business's commitment to making a difference to their communities. If this is done in the right way, it can breed a generation of loyal colleagues.

CASE STUDY

Developing a people-focused culture with Cornerstone Design & Marketing

- Completed the Executive Development and Skills for Growth Programmes
- Achieved 20% growth
- Created 8 jobs

“I signed up to the Hub's Executive Development Programme and learnt so much about what makes people tick and what they want to get out of work. I worked closely with my business advisor Sean Bowman and together we carried out a people-focused growth assessment of the business. This really helped me to put people policies in place and now everyone has a five-year career development plan that fits around their aspirations, as well as the business's goals.”



DAVID WADSTONE
 Founder, Cornerstone
 Design & Marketing

REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE AND STATE OF THE BUSINESS, LEADERS MUST PLAN ACCORDINGLY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR STAFF.

Having a company-wide development plan can be useful when discussing development needs with individuals and can also help you address any gaps if roles change. By providing tailored support such as dedicated mentors or bespoke training programmes, you can improve retention by helping staff enhance and hone their skills within your business.

Giving team members more freedom and responsibility can show that leaders trust their staff and give them the room to thrive. Losing stars can cost money and time, forcing you to repeat the recruitment process and train up new staff members. However, a continued focus on development can increase your people's appetite to stay in post and upskill within your business, rather than having to leave to develop new skills and get new opportunities elsewhere.

THE PANDEMIC HAS FUNDAMENTALLY INCREASED THE FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN BUSINESSES ACROSS THE WORLD, GIVING LEADERS NO CHOICE BUT TO ADDRESS IT.

Doing so can aid retention, but leaders at every level within organisations need to show courage in engaging with their teams on a deeper level and asking about their welfare. While it can be a daunting step at first, taking this conscious decision will help you create a positive workplace culture and begin a trend that will encourage team members to speak openly, boosting the team mentality.

Anonymous pulse surveys, opening dialogues and actioning on trends that arise are all good starting points when dealing with health and wellbeing, and business leaders that take an active part in the process will act as an important role model to staff. Where skills gaps in health and wellbeing arise, acknowledging this and being proactive in addressing the need for training is essential. The **Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter** can aid leaders looking for examples of how to meet best practices here, as well as the key characteristics that can foster a thriving working environment. Working with specialists to train mental health first aiders within your business will also ensure you are equipped with the right skills to address most issues that arise.

CASE STUDY

Rowlinson Knitwear strengthens workforce

- Participated in the Be the Business Mentoring for Growth pilot
- One of the first members of the GM Good Employment Charter
- Created 7 new jobs

“I’m always really blown away by the amount of support there is available from the Hub and the value of it. There are so many things that we have wanted to do as a business, but perhaps would have struggled with due to costs – were it not for the Hub’s support.”



NICOLA RYAN
DIRECTOR OF
COLLEAGUE SUPPORT,
ROWLINSON KNITWEAR

WE HELP BUSINESSES UNLOCK GROWTH BY FOCUSING ON THEIR PEOPLE.

Through tailored support facilitated by a dedicated advisor, we help you strengthen your senior leadership team, identify any skills gaps and upskill staff, ensuring that your business is prepared to retain, recruit and develop your talent.

From increasing your employees' job satisfaction to driving productivity and boosting company turnover – we help you to get the most out of your workforce.

Our support includes:

- One-to-one mentoring
- Tailored support for business leaders
- Bespoke action learning with other businesses
- Specialist workshops

Our specialist advisors are experienced in shaping leadership and management strategy, gaining and enhancing skills, improving employee satisfaction and more.

Get in touch to discuss how we can help you to attract and retain talent in a changing world.

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🌐 www.businessgrowthhub.com/services/support/people-skills-and-talent