abacus e-media

recruit

Recruit at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

The brief

↘ How to compete more successfully in the labour market

↘ How to facilitate access to a wider pool of candidates

↘ How to encourage talent to proactively seek employment via the system-generated email alerts

↘ How to improve management reporting and statistics

In a competitive tender process, Recruit was chosen because of Abacus' experience in working with other local authorities, its flexible hosting options, and to budget.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council employs 13,500 staff and is widely recognised as a successful and progressive council. The Authority advertises 1,800 jobs per year, and has recently selected the Recruit e-recruitment solution from Abacus e-Media to advertise those jobs online and better manage the Recruitment process.

Paul Cosgrove,
HR Consultancy
Manager RBT

"Despite initial reluctance on the part of some managers, we regarded the adoption of 'self-serve' as fundamental to the transformation of the HR and recruitment function within the Council. As managers began to see for themselves the benefits which could be realised with self-serve, the same approach was used for Recruit."
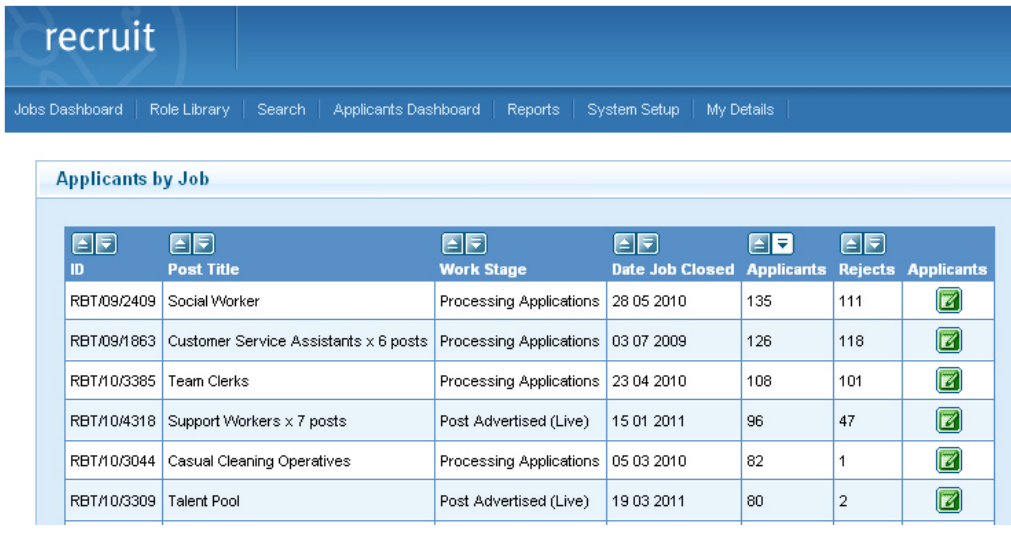
A partnership approach

In 2003, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council formed a pioneering public-private partnership with BT – RBT (Rotherham Brought Together) – with the aim of improving and delivering services electronically to citizens over a 12 year timeframe. Supported by funding from BT of some £30 million, RBT draws upon BT's business transformation and technology integration expertise to introduce or improve e-government objectives in a number of core services, including ICT, Revenues and Benefits, Procurement and Human Resources.

In the case of Human Resources, a core project has been to implement an integrated HR and payroll system, to centralise the HR function as a service centre, and to standardise and simplify processes. This has resulted in considerable process improvement and the automation of many activities, which in turn have resulted in a 20% reduction in staffing. Paper-based transactions have, in some cases, been removed totally whilst others have been reduced.

As an integral part of these technical (and cultural) changes, RBT provided training to help managers develop awareness and knowledge of the 'self-serve' approach to HR and recruitment. Thus rather than relying on the HR department to carry out every aspect of the recruitment process, they would be able to undertake much of this themselves.

A tender for an e-recruitment solution for Rotherham Council was issued in 2008. The decision to adopt Abacus e-Media's Recruit product was taken in August of that year. The new Recruit-based e-recruitment system was launched by RBT – in one 'big bang' approach on 18th March 2009.

The implementation included integration with the Council's existing HR and payroll system and automatic login from the intranet to seamless management access.

↘ recruit

recruit

Jobs Dashboard | Role Library | Search | Applicants Dashboard | Reports | System Setup | My Details

Applicants by Job

ID	Post Title	Work Stage	Date Job Closed	Applicants	Rejects	Applicants
RBT/09/2409	Social Worker	Processing Applications	28 05 2010	135	111	
RBT/09/1863	Customer Service Assistants x 6 posts	Processing Applications	03 07 2009	126	118	
RBT/10/3385	Team Clerks	Processing Applications	23 04 2010	108	101	
RBT/10/4318	Support Workers x 7 posts	Post Advertised (Live)	15 01 2011	96	47	
RBT/10/3044	Casual Cleaning Operatives	Processing Applications	05 03 2010	82	1	
RBT/10/3309	Talent Pool	Post Advertised (Live)	19 03 2011	80	2	

"Managers now recognise self-serve is saving them time and perhaps even more importantly, giving them much greater control over the recruitment needs of their own department."

Paul Cosgrove,
HR Consultancy
Manager RBT

Working with Recruit

Job advertisements across all directorates (excluding schools) are now produced using the 'self-serve' approach by managers or their administrative staff and posted using Recruit.

By interfacing to the HR system, Recruit is used to automatically check if there are any suitable internal candidates for the vacancy. If not, then the advertisement is posted online to attract external applicants.

Managers can view online applications immediately as they come in. In stark contrast, prior to the implementation of Recruit, they had to wait until the closing date for the job. Sifting applications, short listing and sending out interview letters are all done by the individual managers using Recruit. They also use the system to carry out pre-employment and recruitment checks on successful candidates.

Once the appointment has been confirmed, the details are passed to HR and input directly into the HR and payroll system.

Measuring the benefits

Significant achievements have already been realised following the implementation of Recruit. Managers are now able to create their own job advertisements and manage the recruitment process for their own departments.

Within months of implementing Recruit the changing economic climate required a shift in emphasis to promote internal recruitment, to support the achievement of council targets for headcount reduction. All internal jobs are advertised and processed online, in exactly the same way as external ones.

In terms of paper, printing and postage costs, targeted savings of £30,000 each year are on track. Staff savings have also been achieved. Four basic grade transactional posts have been replaced with two professional level posts to handle more demanding recruitment issues. Using 'web centric' advertising for all recruitment has resulted in significant savings and by extending the use of Recruit for all internal recruitment, further cost savings will be realised.

Planning for success

RBT attributes the success of the project to a number of important activities which were carried out prior to the roll out of Recruit.

A pilot group was set up to carry out trials and testing, including feedback of the 'user experience'. Extensive consultations were held with senior management teams, key managers, the general public and working groups.

Training was high on the agenda. In areas of high employment turnover, the recruiting managers were given special training, and a bespoke application form was put in place for cleaners' posts. Paul Cosgrove: "Whilst this may sound a relatively minor point, the results have been significant. Ninety per cent of all cleaners now apply online and managers have reached the situation where they no longer need to regularly advertise these jobs because they have a pool of potential applicants."

A number of nominated super users were on hand to help their colleagues, and tailored sessions

were put in place for contact centre, library and HR call centre staff to help them deal with customer queries. Sessions were organised to improve manager awareness, with everything being underpinned by detailed user guides and a dedicated intranet page including FAQs.

Paul Cosgrove: "In the current year we are on track to reach Rotherham Council's target for full-time equivalent headcount reductions, and aim to repeat this each year, for the next 3 years. We are assisted in achieving this with the functionality provided within Recruit".

Steve Feigen, Managing Director of Abacus e-Media, congratulated RBT on their successes and commented that "the Rotherham implementation, in respect of functionality, is the most advanced implementation of Recruit to date". He added that "the level of manager self service access achieved by RBT showcased the functionality available in the Recruit".

Conclusion

↘ A quicker and more efficient process producing savings in staffing, advertising, printing and postage

↘ Improved experience for applicants with 97% of applications now online costs

↘ Delivers greater management information with both background and ad hoc capabilities