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The Right Process for the Right IT Staff

Shortlisting Candidates

You have advertised your roles, spread the word that you are hiring and taken recommendations from your recruitment agency and staff. Now you have a pile of CVs in front of you and need to decide who to take forward to the next stage. Getting the right balance in terms of numbers and available time is essential in securing the best candidates for your position. Below is our step by step guide to help you select the prime applicants to take forward to interview.

o   Check the locations and nationalities of any perspective employees. If you do not provide visa sponsorship, immediately discard any that are not eligible to work in the UK. Sadly, this may be the bulk of applicants from some job boards as, despite screening questions, unsuitable candidates often misrepresent their location so they can still apply.

o   Refer to your job spec. You should have sat down at some point with the rest of the technical team and discussed what skills you want to add to the team, especially in relation to current and future projects. You also defined what was considered essential experience/ background and what was not (e.g. web/software, banking, e-com etc.).

o   Using the job spec, create a list of the 5 most important skills or backgrounds and make a note of them. Go through the remaining CVs and mark down/ highlight how many of those skills each CV has. You may not get any 5 out of 5's but decide whether any 4/5 or 3/5 may still be worth considering. Do you have any red lines (e.g. must have PHP) remove any candidates who do not meet these requirements?

o   Check any code samples, Github, portfolios, Bitbucket, LinkedIn, Stack Overflow etc, to try and get a feel for their applied skill-sets and fill in any gaps. Discard any really poor portfolios/profiles.

o   Remember many technical professionals are not CV writers. Unless it is for a creative CV, pay limited attention to layout and possibly even wording and grammar to a point (although watch out for bad English if communication is important to the role).

o   If there are any borderline CVs, or those with not enough information, then contact the candidate for more information. You might find a hidden gem that others have overlooked.

o   Invite any who pass the minimum standards above to interview, do not wait for others to come back. Remember time kills deals.

o   You should be left with a good shortlist of between 3-10 candidates who are booked into interview. Keep in contact with them throughout the process and make sure you give feedback within 48 hours.

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