



# 6 HIRING TRENDS IMPACTING YOUR JOB SEARCH IN 2024

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The last few years have seen a significant shift in the world of work and how employees like you are thinking about their careers.

It is easy to think that the Covid-19 pandemic has fuelled every change; it hasn't.

However, it has opened our thinking about what we as human beings want in our lives.

Technology and A.I. have elevated our ability to interact in unprecedented ways. At the pandemic's start, many manufacturing employees worked from home for the first time with laptops and cameras.

Remote working became a viable option much earlier than the first global lockdown we all experienced. And according to a Microsoft Workplace report, upwards of 75% of people want access to some level of flexibility in the way they work.

No wonder workforce tension is rising with key skills missing from the workplace and many candidates planning a move.

As a food manufacturing employee considering a move in 2024, it is critical to know the hiring trends that could impact your job search.

Therefore, here at your company, we have put together six hiring trends to be aware of this year.



**Scott Williams**  
**Director, Food Recruit – Search & Selection**



# 1. Specialist Recruiting Partners Will Become Consultants Critical to Your Career Success

It is well-documented that when markets move and shift, there is an uptake in consultancy services as different organisations navigate a new business landscape.

[IBIS World](#) in the U.S. shared the latest growth analytics in the consultancy market, which revealed an increase of 1.6% a year in 2016 to 8.6% in 2021.

The recruitment sector is a recognised and respected part of the consultancy world; therefore, it is logical that companies from small S.M.E.s and large corporates are turning to recruitment companies to support their hiring process.

Remember though; recruitment companies work with both sides of the hiring process. Clients pay a fee to find the right hires for their team.

We are in a skill-short market where talent pipelines need to be developed through networks and understanding of the market, which takes time that many internal hiring departments don't have.

This is what we do as experienced recruiters, and consequently, we are in greater demand than ever to support our clients hiring plans.

Therefore, don't be surprised if you are approached more in 2024 by recruiters representing the ideal company for you to work with.

A [specialist recruitment company](#) will generally understand the marketplace and get to know you well. They will take time to comprehend your career goals and exactly what you are looking for.

Building great candidate relationships is critical to a recruiter – it will enable them to match the ethics and values of a company with yours, ensuring we only talk to you about the right roles for you.

We listen and understand what parts of the offer are 'deal' makers or breakers for you. We will even represent you exclusively to our clients and support your salary conversations.

If you have avoided a recruiter's email or call before: Stop!

They might not have had a role for you straight away; however, they need to know your goals first, and everything starts with a conversation.



## 2. Hybrid, Home and Flexible Working

Let's start with one of the biggest trends to hit recruitment; hybrid, home, and flexible working.

A well-known phenomenon is that life moves in cycles, and remote working certainly fits this category.

A fascinating fact for you; before the Industrial Revolution, going back to the start of the 5th century, there were over 1,300 years of home-based work.

Over the last 140 years, especially during the 20th century, work has been organised from offices and plants as we moved through the different ages and the first technology developed.

Technology to facilitate remote working has been with us for years. The biggest barrier to the rapid expansion of remote work has not been a lack of access to high-speed Internet or better technology: It's changing organisational and managerial strategy and implementation. After all, traditional 'management' practices are based on office-based employees and company cultures.

Though a strange time during the first months of the pandemic, candidates we work with were exposed to working from home and started to appreciate its many benefits, including zero commuting and zero cost, the ability to improve concentration and focus, greater flexibility, a true work-life balance, and higher productivity.

Our clients experienced benefits too.

An employer can reduce expenses for office space, increase productivity and communication, have better staff retention, and recruit talent outside of a local commutable distance.

It's no wonder, therefore, that the [Microsoft Work Trends report](#) based on data from over 32,000 respondents earlier this year highlighted that 75% of job seekers are looking for flexible work arrangements and that over 46% of the global workforce are considering leaving their employer. No doubt, both of these data points are connected.

Though not every sector can fully embrace the home and hybrid model, every employer can consider their options for flexible working in their team.

Is flexible working on your wish list? As a skilled manufacturing candidate in demand, there may be an option to negotiate a flexible work option at another company.



### 3. It's All About Your Skills

We are currently part of a skill-short economy. The years of reduced funding and investment in training and developing our workforce has taken their toll across all sectors and especially the food manufacturing marketplace.

You will read many articles and posts that appear to sensationalise the issue as they refer to the 'war for talent' and 'the great resignation' predicted for 2024 and beyond.

The challenge is these issues are real for employers.

There is a huge skill gap, and consequently, skilled candidates are in demand. The workforce is ageing, and technology is increasing; therefore, focusing on your personal development is vital.

Though employers are more flexible than ever, they are also looking for employability and transferable skills.

These are traits and skills needed to succeed in any role. They are the soft skills that make you desirable to a food manufacturing employer regardless of your previous training or professional experience. The most common employability skills are:

- Good communication.
- Motivation and initiative.
- Leadership.
- Reliability/dependability.
- Following instructions.
- Teamwork.
- Patience, flexibility and proactivity.





## 4. Virtual Recruiting Is The New Norm: Are you Ready?

Virtual recruiting became a process over ten years ago and was utilised when multiple parties were involved in the hiring process.

This technique continued to develop as an advancement to telephone screening. As the technology improved, so did the uptake and the results both candidates and clients experienced throughout the process.

In 2020 many clients, candidates and, in honesty, recruiters got their first true experience of virtual recruiting and what a time saver it could be.

Interviewing can be expensive and time-consuming for both candidates and clients. The simple task of scheduling an interview can turn into an enormous headache as you try to find a time that's convenient for all participants.

As a candidate, I am sure you appreciate that you often need to take time off for a first stage interview that you might not even get through; it is no wonder everyone is starting to appreciate video interviewing and its many benefits.

In 2024, expect more requests for a video about you and your skills. Though a prospective employer does not expect you to be a budding filmstar, they expect you to be fluent and professional.

Recent research has found that up to [84% of recruiters](#) have reported altering their process to accommodate virtual exchanges. Video interviewing is now a critical stage in many organisations' recruitment processes.

Video interviews can benefit both the candidate and the hiring company – reduced travel costs, ease of scheduling around your current commitments, and some of the stresses of an in-person interview can even be eliminated.

With this in mind, preparing for a video interview should be in every candidate's repertoire of skills.

If you have been invited to a video interview, you might be wondering what this means and how it might differ from a regular 'interview'. Many candidates worry that a video interview might put them at a disadvantage.

But what are the real differences?

The truth is that a video interview should not put you either at an advantage or a disadvantage – both have their benefits and their drawbacks.



Let's take a closer look.

### **Video Interview – Advantages**

- Be interviewed from the comfort of your own home
- Ability to draw on notes
- Increased flexibility of time
- Travel cost and time, and stress are eradicated

## **5. Diversity Equity and Inclusion**

A diverse and inclusive recruiting process accepts all applicants and welcomes, rather than excludes, a varied range of candidates.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the cultural shift that has happened since has changed the working – and recruiting – landscape.

All applications should be considered equally:

- Race
- Sex
- Age
- Background
- Disability
- Sexuality

D. E. and I is a wide-ranging topic, and the fact that it's still a relatively 'new' H.R. concept means some organisations struggle to get it right.

Employers are increasingly turning to recruitment companies like ourselves to provide a more inclusive recruitment process.

Candidates have a right to know that the employers they are considering for their next career move are considerate and accommodating to employees from all walks of life.

Ensure the [specialist recruiter](#) you work with knows what the D.E. and I policy is of the clients they work with before you progress with your application.



Look out for the following:

- Make sure your job descriptions use inclusive language and are not discriminatory, for example, stating that a degree is needed when other qualifications or experience will suffice.
- Broaden your search to include a more diverse pool of talent.
- Continually review your shortlists and shortlisting process to ensure it is fair.
- Train managers on unconscious bias.
- Make reasonable adjustments to your job roles and interview process to avoid discrimination.

## 6. Companies Should Communicate A Caring Employer Brand and Employer Value Proposition

As a respected recruiting partner for the food manufacturing workforce, part of our role is to profile our clients to you as our candidates.

All organisations need to understand what their employees, future employees, stakeholders, and customers think of them. Employer branding involves applying a similar approach to people management and describes how an organisation markets what it offers to potential and existing employees.

Organisations can use an employer brand to help them compete effectively in the talent market and improve employee engagement and retention. A recent report from the [CIPD](#) found that of those organisations that have taken steps to improve employee retention, 19% of those have promoted their employer brand to employees.





A strong employer value proposition communicates what the employer can offer you to feel valued, looked after and developed.

Employee well-being has been a conversation no longer ignored throughout the last two years, yet some organisations are slow to change their culture.

Look out for indicators about a company's culture online and on their social channels, and ask your recruitment consultant before you move forward in their interview process.

As we mentioned earlier, we are in a skill-short market with an ageing workforce adapting to increased technology. The good news is many employers understand this and want to support your training and development and therefore include their development process as part of their Employee Value Proposition.

## Summary

After the unpredictable two years we have experienced, normality will start to return, though likely slower than we would all want.

2024 will see a continuation of an unpredictable human capital landscape. Good people with the skill levels required will be in high demand.

[Specialist recruiters](#) will continue to have increased demand from their food manufacturing clients and the candidates they represent.

Employers will need to work 'harder' to demonstrate that they are the organisation to work for because of their compensation package and flexible approach.

Any interesting year ahead for all of us.

Good Luck!

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What to do next?

Connect with me on LinkedIn



To book a confidential call, please click here





## About Food Recruit

With a proven blend of knowledge, research and contact network, we source candidates who meet your specific needs.

Helping Blue Chip, SME & Start Ups source their critical hires. We identify and nurture the best Food Manufacturing talent across the UK and internationally.

Matching both your expectations and candidate aspirations, we ensure you are the right fit for each other providing a professional and personal service.

Over 10 years practical Food Supply Chain & Business Development experience. Over 5 years search & selection and CIPS (Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply) certified. We have an unrivalled industry network allowing us to source exceptional candidates that meet our clients needs

Whether you are looking to fill a void left by a departing senior colleague, you are looking to up skill the team or looking to grow or diversify your board – Please get in touch to arrange a discovery call.

# JOB SEARCH



## About Scott Williams

I started my career in the Food Manufacturing industry back in 2007 as a Forecast Analyst for one of the worlds largest value-added food producers. Progressing through the business, I oversaw the £90m supply of poultry, duck, seafood and dim sum into Manufacturers, Foodservice, Retailers, Cash & Carries and QSR Restaurants.

Wanting to round my CV with a more commercial perspective, I moved to a competitor as Business Development Manager looking after the same market.

Fast forward to 2016, and unfortunately, I found myself redundant due to my home working role becoming office-based.

It was at this stage that I was approached by a reputable local Automotive and Engineering recruitment consultancy, looking to establish a footing in the Food & Drink market.

Although I had not previously considered recruitment as a chosen profession, as experience as a hiring manager and indeed a candidate, I knew my market well, and so it made a logical step to take.

Progressing through the business from Senior Consultant to Group Business Development Manager, I honed my skills and provided leading talent to Food Manufacturers in an industry I had worked in my whole career.

A similar story to most, the pandemic then hit, and I had a chance for some self-reflection and I took the opportunity to launch my business Food Recruit – Search & Selection in September 2020.

I partner with clients from startups to SME's through to Blue Chip brands across the UK and abroad. My professional, flexible and solutions-driven approach has enabled me to work with the industry's well-known names, staying humble and hungry for success.

It is this hunger that drives my service and determination to disrupt the market and make Food Recruit – Search & Selection the go-to name in the Food Manufacturing sector.



## Testimonials

What you need when you are recruiting is someone who understands your requirements, who can put themselves in your shoes as they sift through the masses of CVs for the candidates that are appropriate for your needs.

Anybody can throw CVs at a client, but very few can throw the right ones and the certainty that the skillset and cultural fit are aligned to the client's needs.

With Scott, you get someone who has the industry knowledge within Procurement & Supply Chain, he just gets it because he has done it, he also has integrity in abundance, something that can be overlooked as we play our part in the "recruiting game".

Other recruitment organisations should take a good look at themselves and understand you don't need salespeople to recruit, you need subject matter experts who know what their clients are seeking.

Would I use Scott again? Absolutely, in a heartbeat!

**ANDY NEILSON FCIPS, FCILT**

It is an absolute pleasure to work with Scott.

Open, honest, collaborative and communicative, Scott mixes utmost professionalism with humour and personality which makes the (often painful) process of finding top talent a pleasant experience.

Scott takes the time to fully understand the needs and personality of the organisation before recommending candidates but still delivers within often very tight timescales.

I look forward to working with Scott again and have no hesitation in recommending him to support your executive search.

**HEAD OF HR**