

HOW TO HIRE EMPLOYEES IN A SKILLS-SHORT MARKET

PREPARED BY



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794 High Street, Kingswinford,
West Midlands, DY6 8BQ

WWW.FOOD-RECRUIT.COM
SCOTT.WILLIAMS@FOOD-RECRUIT.COM
01384 470822



The staffing and recruiting landscape has changed.

Data suggests that employees in every sector are moving through specific skills that may be in short supply. A recent research report from Microsoft revealed that approaching fifty per cent of the global workforce would consider a move in the next two years.

And a recent article on HBR validates that most people who took a new job [weren't actively searching for one](#); 'somebody came and got them'.

The challenge is many food manufacturing candidates have reconsidered how they now want their career to move forward.

Because it's getting harder to recruit the right employees, your manufacturing organisation must do everything it can to stay attractive in a different marketplace where salaries are rising, increased flexibility is demanded, and counteroffers are on the increase.

The companies that will win the battle for talent in the next few years are the ones who understand, at every level, what an accomplished food manufacturing employee is looking for.

This report explores these essential elements and demonstrates how you can update your recruiting process to hire the right talent to take your business forward.

Ready to get started?



Scott Williams
Director, Food Recruit – Search & Selection



Understand Your Manufacturing Candidate Psyche Has Changed

The truth is the candidate psyche, and consequently, their ideal role and employer wish list has changed.

During the last few years, many of us experienced a whole new world of work which has driven employees to expect more from their current or future employers.

Let's talk about a topic many candidates now consider before agreeing that their CV is sent to an employer: remote, hybrid or some form of flexible working.

Remote working has become normal for many organisations, especially where a classic 'desk' job is required. The UK based office of national statistics (ONS) reported that approaching 47% of employees in the UK did some work at home. Review42, a US respected review and research website, shared that 55% of businesses globally offer some form of remote working; conversely, 45% don't, which on closer examination, aren't only companies where remote working isn't an option.

Good news for remote workers; with 99% wanting to continue telecommuting in the future, while they save money, in some instances, anywhere between £3-5000/\$3-5000 a year.

Though not every employee can work remotely, those that can't have increased expectations around career development, salaries and additional perks. Last week in one of the online recruitment groups I visited, a colleague shared that a candidate he was attempting to place was counteroffered from her current employer with a 35% salary increase.

Ironically the exact salary she would be receiving in her new role. On top of this, she was also finally offered remote working after being refused the opportunity before.

Not surprisingly, the candidate declined the offer to stay as she found herself reflecting on the dramatic shift in her current employer's new view of how valuable she was. This leads to what your existing brand communicates.



Assess What Your Current Employer Brand Communicates

Having an employer brand that stands out has been increasingly critical over the last ten years. Now more than ever, it might be time to re-evaluate what you are currently communicating in this new decade.

As business brands help to engage customers, employer brands ensure companies can attract the right talent. The right brand is crucial to building the perfect team in the manufacturing sector where access to talent can be limited.

Recruitment is rapidly becoming more like marketing, as candidates do extensive research into their potential employer, whether a specialist recruitment /or staffing company like [Food Recruit - Search & Selection](#) is representing them or not.

Today, you need more than the right salary to attract the right food manufacturing employee; you also need a brand that conveys company culture, specific values, and a clear vision for the future.

Crucially, your brand isn't set in stone. As the industry evolves and employee preferences change, you'll need to update your identity to suit new jobseekers. In today's talent marketplace, an employee's perception of business authenticity often influences how likely they are to be satisfied in their role. If your candidate believes you're transparent, straightforward, and honest with them, they'll be more attracted to the idea of working with you.

A trustworthy and authentic image starts with being upfront about everything you do. Share information about your business on social media, post videos of behind-the-scenes working sessions and allow your employees to talk about your business on review sites.

The way companies find and hire employees has changed significantly in recent years. Today, you need a fast-paced, tech-savvy, and diverse approach to finding new candidates. Hiring the right [food manufacturing recruitment specialist](#) to help with this process is often the best way to ensure you're giving your candidates the experience they want.

The hiring processes that attract talent today are the ones that prioritise equality and inclusion, respecting different perspectives and insights from all kinds of team members.



Perhaps the easiest way to determine whether your employer brand needs an upgrade is to listen to your current employees and the potential candidates you consider hiring. The image of your employer brand and your team members' perception of you should be perfectly aligned.

Uplevel Your Candidate Experience From The Job Description to Onboarding

The candidate experience describes the entire process that each candidate goes through when applying to your company, either by working with an [experienced recruiting partner](#) or your internal team.

In today's food manufacturing workplace, candidates have more choice. An employer who is slow to respond and is unclear with their offer will lose out as candidates often have multiple offers to consider.

This is why it is vital to create a compelling candidate experience that connects with potential new hires.

This includes the detailed job description, advert, interview and feedback process and hopefully benefits negotiation and finally onboarding.



A good candidate experience looks something like this:

- The job description is clearly written and thorough.
- The application process is simple.
- A time frame is highlighted which is clear and transparent.
- You act with appropriate speed in any decisions that need to be made.
- You and or your recruiting partner follow up with the candidates at every stage of the process.
- You give the candidates who you have selected for the interview a breakdown of the interview format.
- The interview is conducted professionally, either via video link or in person.
- You inform unsuccessful candidates at the earliest possible point.
- Your offer is clear and includes flexibility in the package.
- You communicate your onboarding process.

Unfortunately for many candidates, this is not what their candidate experience looks like.

The biggest complaints currently from manufacturing candidates about a negative candidate experience are as follows:

- A slow process.
- Unclear details and requirements.
- Non-correspondence even after the candidate has had an interview.

At best, a good candidate experience leaves even rejected candidates with a positive perception of your company.

So, the candidate experience is all about making sure current and future candidates view you as a reputable employer with a trustworthy recruitment process.

Communicate Your Culture Clearly

Your company has a culture that is going to either attract or repel candidates. Culture is fundamentally important to get right. If your candidate is not a cultural match for your organisation, no matter what you think, your new manufacturing hire will ultimately not work out – be that in six weeks or six months.

There is a significant volume of data on the topic of 'company culture', and most of it has the same message; make sure your organisation has a strong teamwork ethic, create a positive working environment, and offer your employees flexibility.



But what many food manufacturers fail to acknowledge is that 'positive' company culture is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Of course, you can't please everyone.

What one candidate regards as a perfect working environment might not be right for another. This is where using an [experienced sector recruiter](#) can save you both time and money.

For instance, our candidate process involves a detailed career discussion with every candidate we work with. Our understanding of your culture and the personality, skills, and traits of the candidates we have access to means that we won't recommend candidates who look perfect on paper. However, a deeper understanding means the culture and candidate match won't be sustainable.

Demonstrate Your Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance Approach

The past few years have created a huge spotlight on the mental health and wellbeing of our employees.

Coupled with research that increasingly highlights that happy employees are more productive, making work-life balance a natural extension to creating a positive company culture.

Across the globe, the highest number of employees ever now sit in the Millennial category, a group who are recognised for valuing their own and others wellbeing. The Following [Acas study](#) further backs this up.

- 53% stated that balancing life and work was the top issue for employees throughout their working lives
- 51% reported 'staying healthy and feeling well' came second.

The two, it can be argued, are inextricably linked.

Despite fears by some employers, allowing employees considerate work-life balance arrangements does not decrease productivity; it has the opposite effect, as demonstrated by the increase in remote working over the past few years.



Work-life balance works both ways, and employers do have a duty of care to their employees. Providing free tea and coffee as your core wellbeing offer no longer ticks the box. For example, many companies now offer a wellbeing portal that includes a mix of lifestyle benefits from reduced gym fees to financial training related to employees' personal finances.

Social wellness is a key aspect of wellbeing, and much of this comes down to job satisfaction and workplace culture. Employee recognition can make a big difference in this respect.

Encouraging managers and co-workers to recognise the efforts of team members can greatly impact motivation, helping individuals feel valued and, ultimately, satisfied in their roles.

Recognition can be as simple as saying thank you, whether in a handwritten note or team meeting. A study by Glassdoor found that 80% of employees would be willing to work harder for an appreciative boss, and 70% said they would feel better about themselves and their efforts if their manager thanked them more regularly.

Attention to their wellbeing is one thing candidates expect, though they will ultimately decide on the fundamentals of your offer before they say yes.



Make Your Offer Compelling For Today's Economy

It is a facet of the world in which we now live that to get something specific that you want, you will likely need to be flexible with your offer and often pay more.

This is exactly the case with the current hiring landscape. Though candidates are willing to move, it will only be for the right offer, which combines remuneration, benefits, culture with a level of a future opportunity or potential for growth.

We have already shared several ideas in this report and, depending on the role in question, improved flexibility in working hours where possible is a game-changer.

Salaries are increasing across many sectors in the UK/UAE/Australia.

An Opportunity to Develop and Grow With Knowledge and Skills

Food manufacturing employees want to work with organisations that will help them develop personally and professionally. This isn't surprising as this is how human beings are 'wired'.

Dr Maxwell Maltz wrote the New York Times Bestseller [Psycho-Cybernetics](#), based on his research and experience of patients in his cosmetic surgery practice. He identified how our self-image was fueled by an innate drive to succeed and better ourselves.

That means offering stimulating workplaces and opportunities and seeing development not as an 'add-on' but as part of the company DNA.

A business acquaintance of mine, an MD of her own company, has written into the company ethos that every team member spends half an hour a day training on a subject they have pre-chosen to better understand a particular topic or process. That's right: every team member, including herself.

It is an accepted part of the company day, and the benefits are clear. The team is happy to develop skills and understanding around topics they know will be of value to them.

Does this sound like something that you could implement in your organisation?



As humans, we naturally want to grow, improve and seek out new challenges. Any employee who finds themselves facing a brick wall in terms of development will usually start to look elsewhere for their development fix.

Many manufacturing candidates are now looking for growth opportunities within an organisation, even if this is simply an opportunity to become a senior Engineer with increased responsibility and remuneration.

In the past, development opportunities were only given to those at a 'certain' level within manufacturing companies. Now, growth and development for all employees is an expected norm.

Clear growth opportunities is a must for any company looking to attract the right talent.

As a manager, you have the perfect opportunity to coach and mentor your employees as they grow within their roles.

Employee development shouldn't be brought up at periodic meetings and then forgotten about. Ask your employees how they wish to be developed and then put in place a development plan, with time frames such as one, three, six months and yearly goals. When employees help create their development plan, it is much easier for them to have enthusiasm and passion for both their role and the company.

A Company With a Vision and an Opportunity For Challenging Work

Vision, mission and values all sound like the latest buzz words, though it might surprise you that your employees want to work in an organisation with a clear vision of where they are going.

Alignment and purpose are what we all want. A few years ago, a report from the [World Economic Forum](#) found that a 'sense of purpose' in work is the second most important criteria for millennials considering a job after salary.

Given that this generation will make up the majority of the workforce in the coming years, it's not difficult to predict that if your candidates don't believe or support your company's vision for the future, they won't sign the contract – and you'll lose out on potentially an excellent employee.



Remember to communicate this openly through your employer brand, website, and social channels; today's aware candidates want to know where you are going.

Leading on from this, they want to be part of a team taking things forward, including being willing to take on challenging work.

In a recent HBR employee engagement and retention survey, 'lack of challenging work' was cited as the third most significant reason for employees leaving their posts, just behind insufficient pay and limited career paths.

People generally can do much more than they are aware of, but this can only be realised when presented with an opportunity to do so.

We have shared several different criteria that today's candidates want from their new employer. The question now is, how do you find this ideal employee in the first place? There are many options available, yet in today's market where companies need to 'sell' the opportunity of taking their role, working with a specialist food manufacturing recruiting partner is now your best option.

Let me explain.



Work With A Specialist Recruiter To Identify The Candidates You Want

The recruitment sector has been part of our society for many years. History suggests that the first person to write a professional CV was Leonardo Da Vinci in 1482. Looking for work in Milan, Da Vinci sent a letter to Ludovico Sforza, the Regent of Milan, describing his many skills.

Perhaps the world's first CV: A case of the right person for the right job - the actual output of today's recruitment and staffing organisations.

That premise continued over the years, with commercial recruitment accelerating during WWII. Agencies started to thrive as they were the ones connecting the candidates to the right industries.

The recruitment sector continued to grow as the world evolved as we became a true consultancy used by companies that couldn't find candidates for their roles.

Over the last twenty-plus years, recruiters have been used when the right candidates are a challenge to find by an organisation, especially in the economy we are experiencing today.

Let's say you want a Head of Operations. As an experienced recruitment company in the manufacturing sector, we are talking to and building relationships with this type of candidate all the time.

Candidate research and sourcing is a critical function of our organisation. We market-map the sector and sub-verticals and identify individuals according to their skills, expertise, and experience, matching our client's requirements. In essence, we do the work for you.

Depending on the role, we work in different ways with clients, including exclusively and on a retained basis. The good news is that with a clear and compelling job description and access to our database, we can find candidates.

The challenge for organisations now is ensuring they have an offer that the candidate is looking for and are willing to act speedily.

The uncomfortable truth is that good candidates don't hang around.



If you would like to find out how our expert recruitment services can help find you the talent you need to expand your team, get in touch with us today.

We have been recruiting in the food manufacturing sector for 5 years, and we can offer help and support to enable you to improve productivity.

Get in touch with me by calling [07835426149](tel:07835426149) or emailing hello@food-recruit.com and let's start improving productivity in your organisation today.

Scott Williams
Director

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.





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!

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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