



# Your Business, Your People Survey 2020

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

# Gloom or boom?

## How the coronavirus pandemic is affecting businesses in different ways.

**“Job shortage sees 1,000  
people chase one position.”**

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**“I’ve applied for 2,000 jobs  
with no success.”**

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**“Bank to cut 550 jobs  
in branches.”**

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Just three of the headlines from the BBC News website in the week commencing 24th August. According to the same site, the number of job vacancies in the UK fell by 62.7% in the second quarter of 2020. Whilst for those jobs that are being advertised, competition is tough, with the average application-to-job ratio increasing by 84% over the same period.

Certainly the world of work is changing and, if you take the national picture, some sectors and employees have been harder hit than others. The youngest workers, oldest workers and those in manual occupations have felt the full brunt of job losses during the pandemic, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) states. And between April and June 2020, the number of people in work across the country fell by 220,000.

However, these figures don’t include the millions of people who are furloughed, those on zero-hours contracts (but not getting shifts) or people on temporary unpaid leave from a job, as they still count as employed. So as such, they do not capture the full impact of the pandemic or take into account any variations we may be experiencing regionally. And whilst many business have been hit hard, there are plenty of others, including online retail for example, that have done well in these times – and others who have changed their business model to adapt to the circumstances.

This is why we conducted our ‘Your Business, Your People Survey 2020’. And we are now ready to share our results.

# So what have we learnt?

## How the coronavirus pandemic is affecting businesses in different ways.

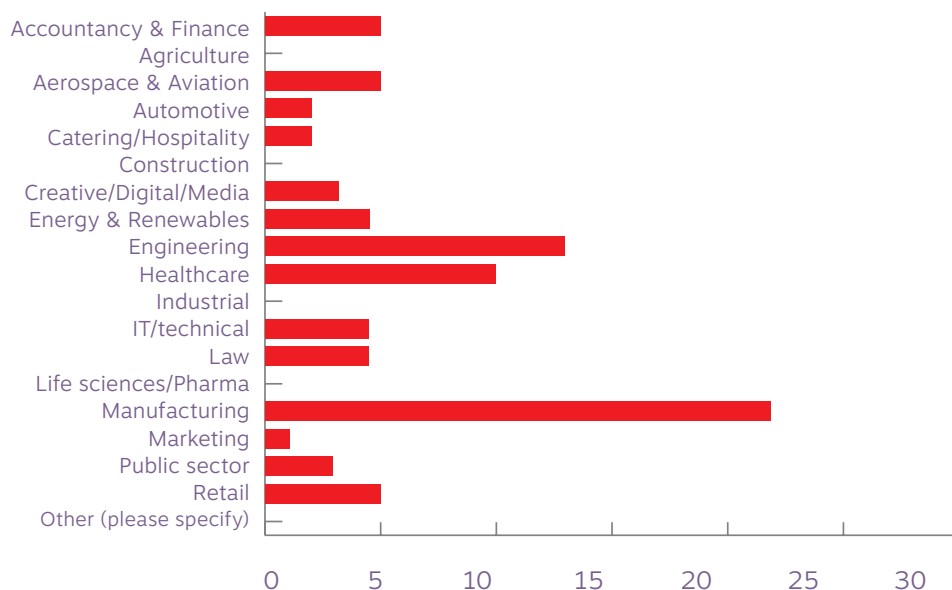
Our 'Your Business, Your People Survey 2020' survey was completed by 103 businesses in a cross-section of 20 sectors, mainly in our core business regions of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Herefordshire. The highest response rates came from businesses operating in manufacturing, retail, engineering, healthcare, finance, accountancy and aviation.

Just under 30% of our respondents employ 1-50 people whilst 47% have over 250 employees.

Around nearly 40% of these businesses are operating across five or more sites. 40% of responses were from people in Senior Management positions, with the remaining 60% equally split amongst Executive, Middle Management and HR functions.

Our top 5 findings are featured in this White Paper. For a full breakdown of respondents and detailed survey results, please refer to the section at the end of this White Paper.

### Responses by business sector



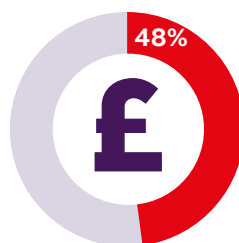
## 01

# Winners and losers

The UK Prime Minister has warned that as a result of Covid-19 the country has a “long, long way to go” before the economy improves. The drop in the number of people employed in the last quarter (April-June 20) was the largest quarterly decrease since May to July 2009, the depths of the financial crash. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the average number of hours worked also continued to fall in April-June, reaching record lows both on the year and on the quarter.

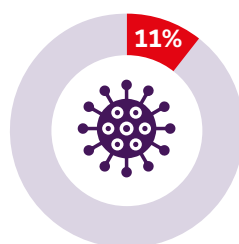
**Despite this, the pandemic has brought mixed fortunes for businesses and the outlook isn't universally negative.**

48% of businesses in our survey say the pandemic has had a disruptive impact and they're actively seeking ways to make spending cuts as a result. Whilst on the other hand, 10% of our region's businesses state they've seen no real difference in their performance and over a quarter (26.2%) of all respondents say the pandemic has actually had a positive impact.



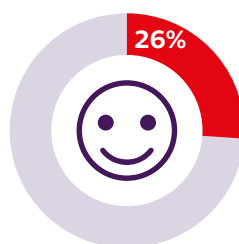
## 48%

of businesses looking to make spending cuts



## 11%

state Covid-19 has had no impact on business



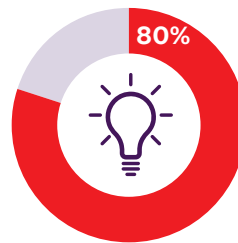
## 1 in 4

businesses say pandemic has had a positive impact

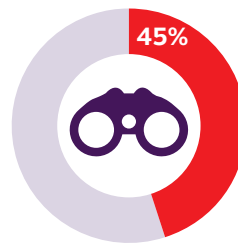
# Out of the pandemic, new opportunities arise

Up and down the UK we've seen businesses diversify, either to survive during Covid-19 or to help fight the pandemic's spread. For example, brewers and gin distilleries have found a new use for ethanol supplies by making and distributing hand sanitiser. Manufacturers with 3D printers have made much-needed PPE and face shields. Food companies, pubs and restaurants have started up new home delivery or take-away services.

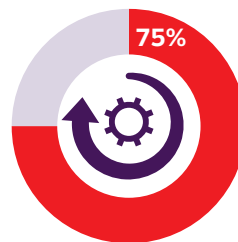
9 out of 10 businesses in our survey have had to adapt the services their business provides in some way as a result of the pandemic. 79.6% of businesses are seeing new opportunities arise out of Covid-19, with nearly 46% actively pivoting their businesses to take advantage of these. 19.4% say they have made **major** adaptations to their business models.



**80%**  
of businesses seeing  
new opportunities arise



**45%**  
looking to diversify into  
new markets



**3/4**  
have had to adapt the  
services they provide

# 03

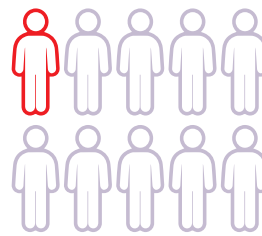


## To furlough or not to furlough?

One of the first interventions by the UK government to support businesses during Covid-19 was the Job Retention Scheme, or furlough scheme as it's become known. Announced by the chancellor on 23rd March, 140,000 claims were made on the day the scheme went live. By April 20th the British Chamber of Commerce 'Coronavirus Business Impact Tracker' revealed that 71% of respondents had furloughed staff. As of August 9th, 2020, approximately 9.6 million jobs, from 1.2 million different employers, were furloughed in the UK (Source: Statista)

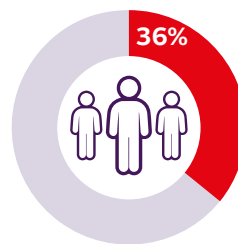
In our survey, one in ten businesses have had to furlough over half of their staff, whereas 36% have introduced no furlough at all. This would suggest our survey respondents have shown greater resilience to the impact of the pandemic than the national picture.

The UK government is estimated to have spent £34.7 billion on the furlough scheme, with that figure expected to rise to £80 billion by the time the programme stops in October 2020. Over 90% of businesses in our survey are satisfied with the government support packages available – which is nearly double the 46% of the population as a whole who think the government is handling the issue of coronavirus “very” or “somewhat” well. (Source YouGov).



### 1 in 10

businesses have furloughed over 50% of staff



### 36%

businesses have furloughed no staff



### 92%

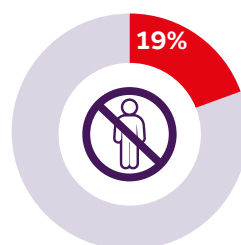
satisfied with government coronavirus support

## 04

# Hiring not firing

The overall nationwide picture is of rising unemployment and businesses halting or slowing recruitment, with some sectors understandably harder hit than others. The FT, for example, reports 'a hiring freeze across the City of London as companies put expansion plans on hold or scrap them altogether'. In IT, Information Age magazine (May 20) revealed 38% of tech companies across UK and Europe were freezing most or all tech recruitment during Covid-19. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has warned that UK unemployment could rise to 15%, even if a second coronavirus wave is avoided.

Across our survey the recruitment outlook appears more positive. Only 17% of all respondents state they have introduced a hiring freeze. 28% say they are continuing to hire as normal. Remarkably, over a quarter (27.2%) of our region's businesses say they are having to accelerate recruitment to keep up with demand. In addition 1 in 5 businesses surveyed have added temporary staff specifically because of Covid-19.



**19%**  
introduced hiring  
freeze



**27%**  
accelerated  
recruitment



**18%**  
have added  
temporary staff



## 05

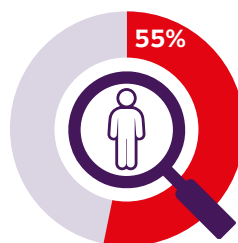
# Quality not quantity

Across the UK the number of people claiming universal credit - a benefit for unemployed people as well as those on low pay - rose to 2.7 million in July, up by 117% since March, suggesting there is a growing pool of candidates for businesses to recruit from. However, candidate quality is still key, as is the time it takes to find the right person to fill a role.

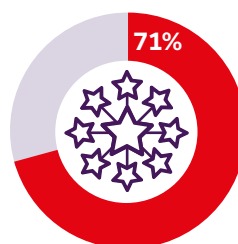
55% of businesses in our survey say they use recruitment agencies, with 71% of those respondents stating that the quality of candidates and the agency's understanding of their business as the main reason why. 7 in 10 businesses believe recruitment agencies reach a wider talent pool and half believe engaging with agencies enables them to identify the right talent.

For those businesses not using agencies, reasons include having an in-house recruitment function and trying to recruit themselves account for 46% of responses.

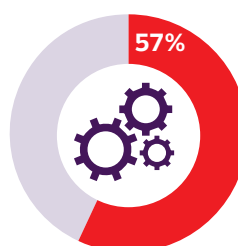
Yet with many offices still closed and social distancing in place, 57% of businesses surveyed say they have had to change their hiring process. For example, 34% would consider virtual onboarding and 25% expect to do so soon.



**55%**  
of businesses surveyed  
use recruitment  
agencies



**71%**  
believe recruitment  
agencies reach a wider  
talent pool



**57%**  
are changing their  
hiring process as a  
result of Covid-19



# Summary

Unsurprisingly, our survey adds more weight to the newspaper headlines and the avalanche of statistics that tell us it's tough for businesses out there. Yet even in spite of lockdown, social distancing and entire sectors, such as hospitality and travel, being mothballed during the pandemic, there are signs of remarkable resilience, with businesses adapting and even thriving during these times.

The winners during Covid-19 are urgently seeking more staff to meet orders, deliver new products and services and keep the country moving. The loss of good, experienced people in one business or sector could be another's gain. Finding new ways to work, and the hiring and onboarding of new talent are all up for grabs.

During the last major squeeze on jobs and the economy research suggested 16m of us already have transferable skills that could lead to a new career. At the same time World Skills London, a skills showcase, suggested UK adults could have second skills estimated to be worth more than £7.6bn.

However, recruiting the right people is challenging, time-consuming and frustrating at the best of times. Made even worse by unscrupulous agencies who'd rather shift the people on their books than find the right individual for the role. Right now, while your business is adapting to Covid-19, that's something you can't afford.

At RE: we never forget that our success depends entirely on enabling you to achieve your business goals. So whether it's a short-term contract or exciting career opportunity, we've been offering employers and employees a better way of doing things since 2001.

And with seven specialist recruitment divisions as well as Onsite & Overseas operations, we've much more to offer employers and candidates alike, including innovative ways to interview, hire and onboard recruits in the current challenging times.

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**If you'd like to discuss any of the results in this survey, or your current recruitment opportunities, contact:**  
**[marketing@rerecruitment.com](mailto:marketing@rerecruitment.com)**

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# Your Business, Your People Survey 2020

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## FULL RESULTS

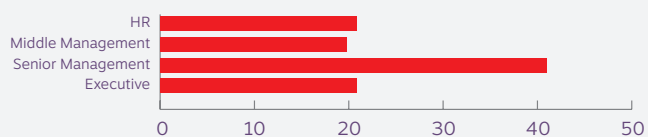
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Our survey was conducted among 103 businesses during the period 23rd July to 16th August 2020.

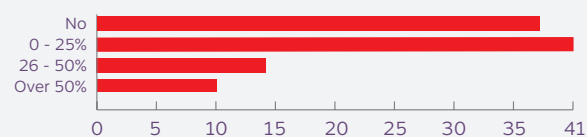
The following pages include the questions asked and the responses in full. If you require any further information please contact:

**[marketing@rerecruitment.com](mailto:marketing@rerecruitment.com)**

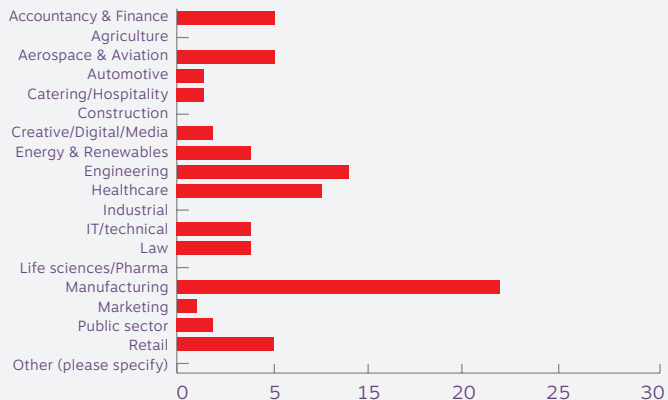
### Q1. What is your role?



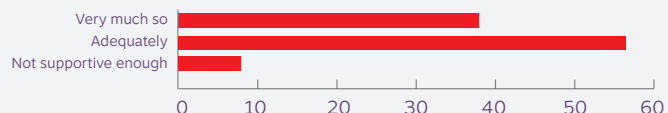
### Q8. Have you had to furlough people?



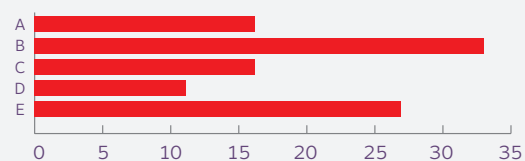
### Q2. What sector is your business in?



### Q9. To what degree are you satisfied with the support from the Government?

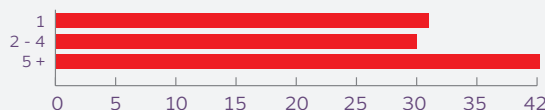


### Q10. What impact has Covid-19 had on your business, if any?

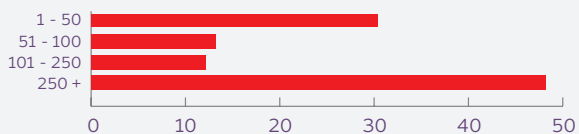


A - It's had a significantly disruptive impact and we're having to find ways to cut costs in our business  
 B - It's had some impact on our business and we're having to make some cuts  
 C - It hasn't impacted the business yet, but we're anticipating it will hit us further down the line  
 D - We haven't seen any real change to the business and don't foresee any changes coming  
 E - It's actually had a positive impact and the business is expanding to meet demand

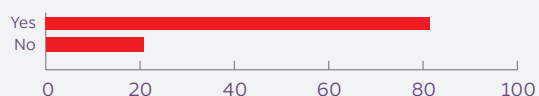
### Q3. Number of sites



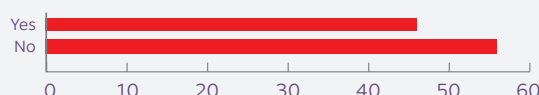
### Q4. Number of employees



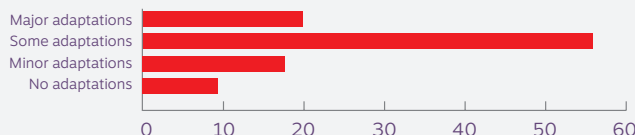
### Q5. As a result of the current pandemic are you seeing new opportunities arise?



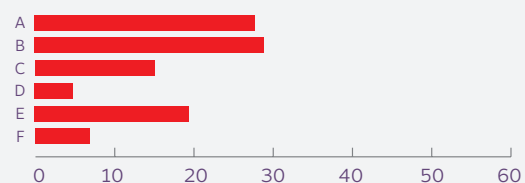
### Q6. Are you looking to diversify into new markets?



### Q7. To what degree have you had to adapt the services you provide?

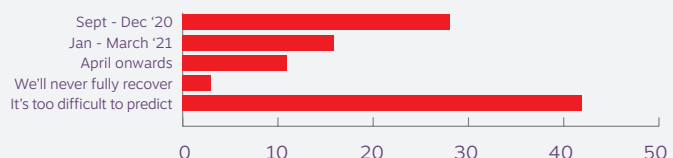


### Q11. Have you implemented a hiring freeze?



A - No, in fact we're having to accelerate recruitment to keep up with demand  
 B - No, we're continuing to recruit as normal  
 C - Yes, across all roles  
 D - Yes, across all replacement roles  
 E - We have an interim solution only while things are uncertain  
 F - Not applicable

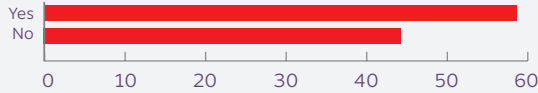
### Q12. When do you expect that your business will be back to normality ('normal' being delivering the same level of business as pre-Covid)?



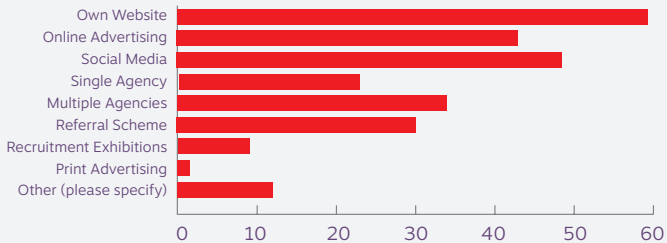
**Q13. Have you implemented any new roles/opportunities because of Covid19?**



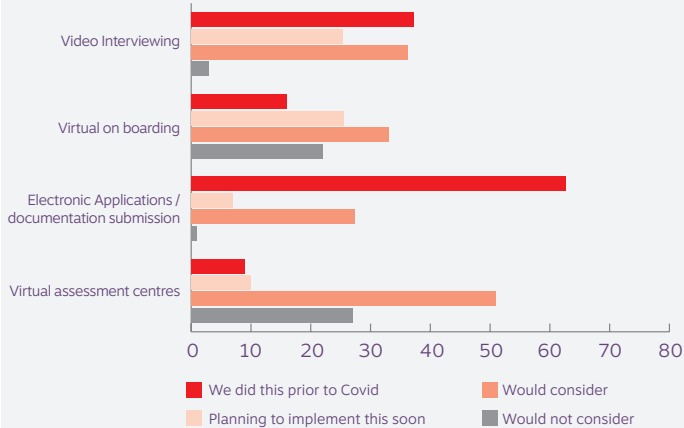
**Q14. Has Corona Virus changed your hiring process?**



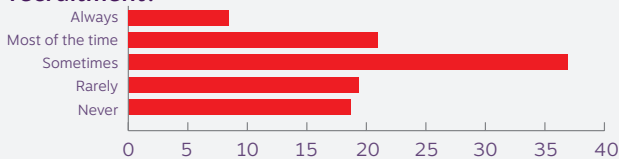
**Q15. When recruiting, which of these approaches do you take?**



**Q16. Which of the following virtual interview processes would you consider?**



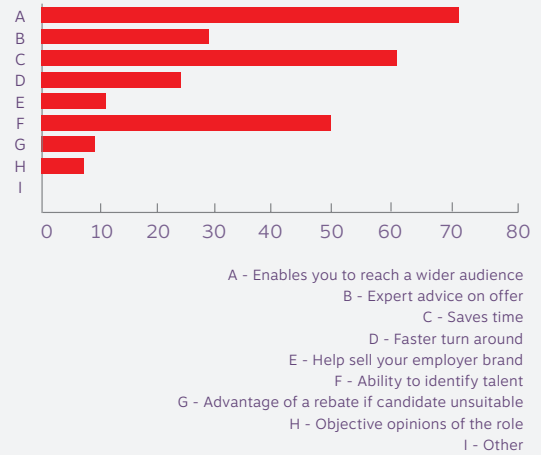
**Q17. Do you currently outsource your recruitment?**



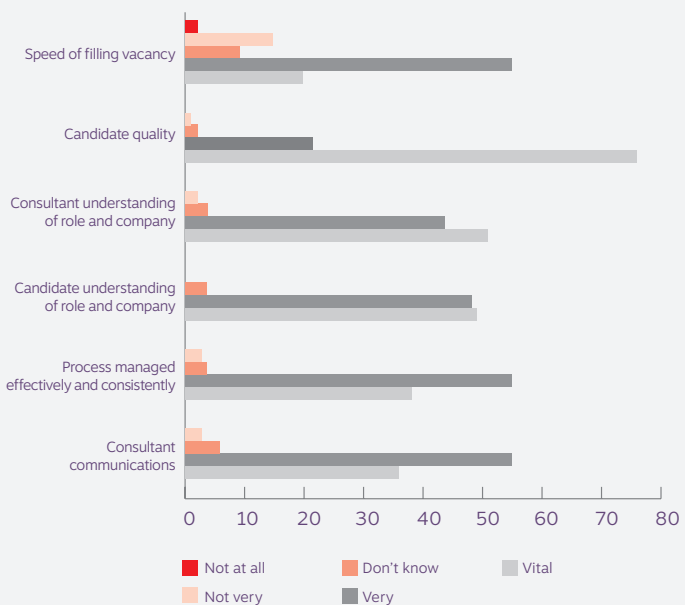
**Q18. What is the reason you use your existing recruitment agencies?**



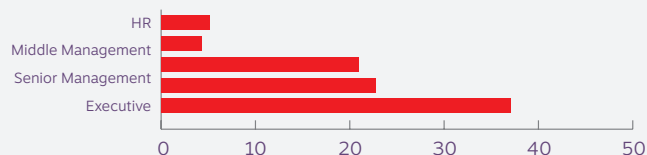
**Q19. What do you think are the advantages of engaging with a Recruitment Company?**



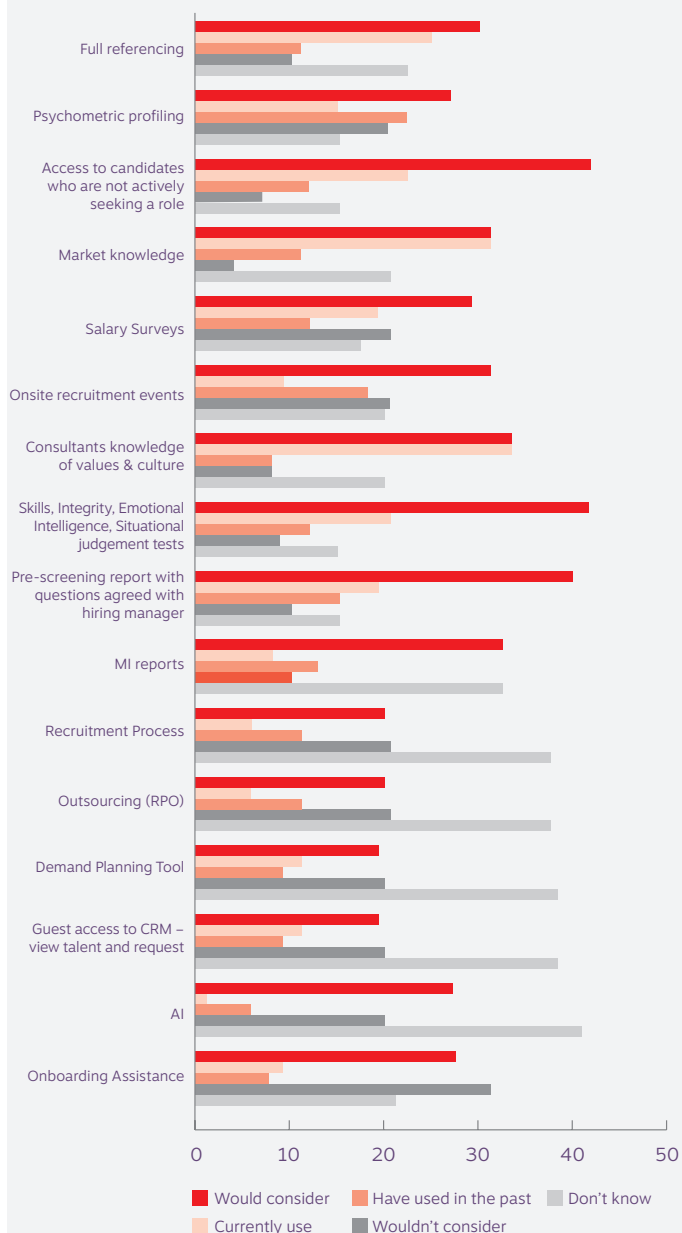
**Q20. How important is the following when outsourcing recruitment?**



## Q21. If you don't use recruitment companies, why is that?



## Q22. Could any of the following add value to your recruitment process?



## Q23. What, if anything, could a recruitment agency do to make your hiring experience better?

Ensure they understand our company and the type of industry that we work in

Keep the level of interaction required to achieve the end goal to a minimum so we can stay focussed on the day job.

Listen more. With a small business, recruitment is not something that is constantly happening and with a small team it is vital to recruit staff that 'fit in' with the current team. We've been presented with unsuitable candidates before which just wastes time.

Better consultants insights into firm culture

Answered in previous questions

"Knowledge of immigration laws and legal issues.. Quicker action completion

Less cold calling. Understand company requirements better.

From some recruitment agents I get speculative emails written in a tone alluding to us being old friends, even though I have never spoken to them before. I hate the false bravado. I appreciate it is a few giving the rest a bad name, but because of this the number 1 for me is integrity. Also someone who listens, and is prepared to say "actually, I don't have anyone who is right".

Feedback process consistent with our requirements

Consistency in communications and building a real partnership with the business

Better Communication.

I expect an agency to: Do what they say they will do, be honest and open, they understand what the business does and how it works (invest their time in getting under the skin of the business - the good the bad and the indifferent), work in partnership, don't send speculative emails/CVs, just keep in touch not in your face!

Communication

Reduce fees

Fully understand the requirements of the job and culture/industry to help fill with the right candidate

Reduce fees

My company prefers to manage their own hiring

As yet in current role there is nothing more my agency could do

Listen, understand requirements, provide potential candidates that fit role properly

Understand our business

Send fewer but more ideal candidates that have done their homework.

Not a lot really, I have used my recruiter for many years over several companies. She knows me, and my current organisation / team well

Agreeing check in points during the process so diaries can be managed and quality time to discuss candidates rather than phone calls either at a time when you have other commitments / meetings or it's rushed

Communication with the client at all times.

Competitive pricing

Difficult to say as we have little experience of using an agency

not sure

Be cheaper

Engage with our HR team to agree rates, allow Divisional Directors to avoid handling agencies

Single Business Relationship contact, one who knows our business and culture and doesn't change every 6 months.

Be honest. Too many over promise and under deliver.

Truly understand our business and culture and sell us as an employer as if they are part of the business. Really support us to hire diversity

Full transparency with candidate and also with customer

Consistency & cut the BS.

Reach more people

Honestly and integrity when proposing Candidates.

Not sure

Strong filtration of candidates - sometimes they are not suited for the role & feel that fundamental points had been missed in initial engagement

Communication

Reduce pricing

Get the right person in front of me with the right expectations on both sides at the right time.

Nothing currently

Greater pool of candidates submitted.

Identify talent nationally and undertake shortlisting process

It's a tough market out there for Agencies, now more than ever - I like to work with an honest agency, I know a placement is a fee but a lot of unnecessary work goes in when candidate isn't fully prepped on the role and multiple agencies submitting same candidate. Like to work with an Agency who has good relationship with candidates, not just submit for a fee.

Have a specialist with knowledge in my industry

I'm happy

cut the cost, but make sure every candidate is interviewed prior to sending them over, as this definitely has slipped, and does not always happen.

Not sure

Speed of turnaround. Good vetting of candidates before sending CV's over that look somewhere in the ballpark for what is being asked for.

Engage often, communicate effectively, reliable, understand the sector.

Comms

Honesty

Handle the entire process whilst consulting the company

# Get in touch

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