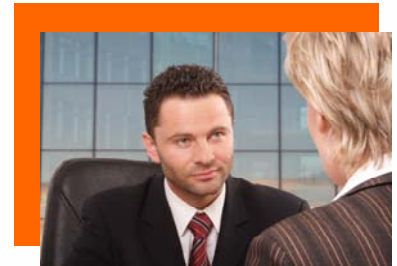


Getting the right person for the job

**What is important when recruiting for a top level position?
Does your recruitment process tick all the right boxes?
How do you get the best person for the job?**

Background

Following Torbay Council's 'poor' CPA rating in 2002, the Council underwent a significant change programme which led to it being re-classified as 'fair' in 2004. Whilst their services were rated well by the community, overall the Council was rated poorly by the residents. These results clearly showed that there was a gap in what the Council do compared to how they are perceived. The focus on how the Council operated had to change - more emphasis needed to be on the Council listening and communicating effectively with the public, stakeholders, partners, as well as visitors. To achieve this, the Council decided to recruit for a new post of Director of Customer Services who would be responsible for improving how the Council interacted with the public, providing a customer experience which is second-to-none and achieving a better reputation for the Council locally and nationally.



The Solution/Process

Q. Learning were appointed as recruitment consultant for this position; their vast experience of working with Directors in local government and their knowledge of the skills and qualities required for this role made them the perfect partner. Q. Learning were involved throughout the entire process - including sending out information packs, handling applications, performing the initial "sift" of applications, recommending the format and questions for each stage of the interview process, undertaking the long list interviews and facilitating the two-day short list interview process.

The job was advertised in the Sunday Times, Guardian and Public Agenda. Applicants were asked to register for an information pack which included the background to the appointment, key developments and ambitions for the Council and the Person Specification.

Over 250 people registered and 96 applications were received. The first criteria for sifting were that the application was customised for this position and that it was well presented. Next, applications were assessed against the "essential" criteria within the Person Specification and, finally - due to the overwhelming response - applications were also checked against "desirable" criteria from the Person Specification.

From the 20 possible candidates offered to the Council by Q. Learning for long list, 10 were invited to a two-hour informal interview with Q. Learning. This focused primarily on their future plans if they were offered the position

Q. Learning then wrote a report giving feedback on all ten candidates together with recommendations for short list and the Council's Recruitment Panel accepted the recommendations.

Day 1 of the short list process started with candidates making a scenario-based presentation; this was followed by a media interview with a reporter from a local newspaper. The day ended with a formal dinner facilitated by Q. Learning with each candidate receiving individual feedback.

Day 2 began with candidates making a short presentation on a subject selected by the Recruitment Panel the evening before and concluded with a final question and answer session.

"I built really good rapport with Q. Learning. They coached me to ensure I performed as well as possible and made the interview a genuine learning experience for me."

Sarah Ward, one of the short-list candidates

Outcome

At the end of Day 2, the Recruitment Panel agreed which candidate to appoint. The successful candidate - somebody who seeks and enjoys new challenges - was delighted to be offered this exciting new opportunity.

Paul Lucas, Strategic Director, was very impressed with the candidate report: "If Q. Learning could be this perceptive about our internal candidates who made it through to long list interviews, then we had no doubt they were similarly perceptive about the other candidates."

"Q. Learning did a fantastic job from start to finish, especially with facilitating the short list process. They understood how important it was for us to find the right person - in terms of attitudes and behaviours - and not simply somebody with the right background. I was so pleased with the way they handled this recruitment campaign and I asked them to make the first contact with the candidate we wished to appoint."

Elizabeth Raikes, Chief Executive

Q. Learning delivers:

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Brand Development

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