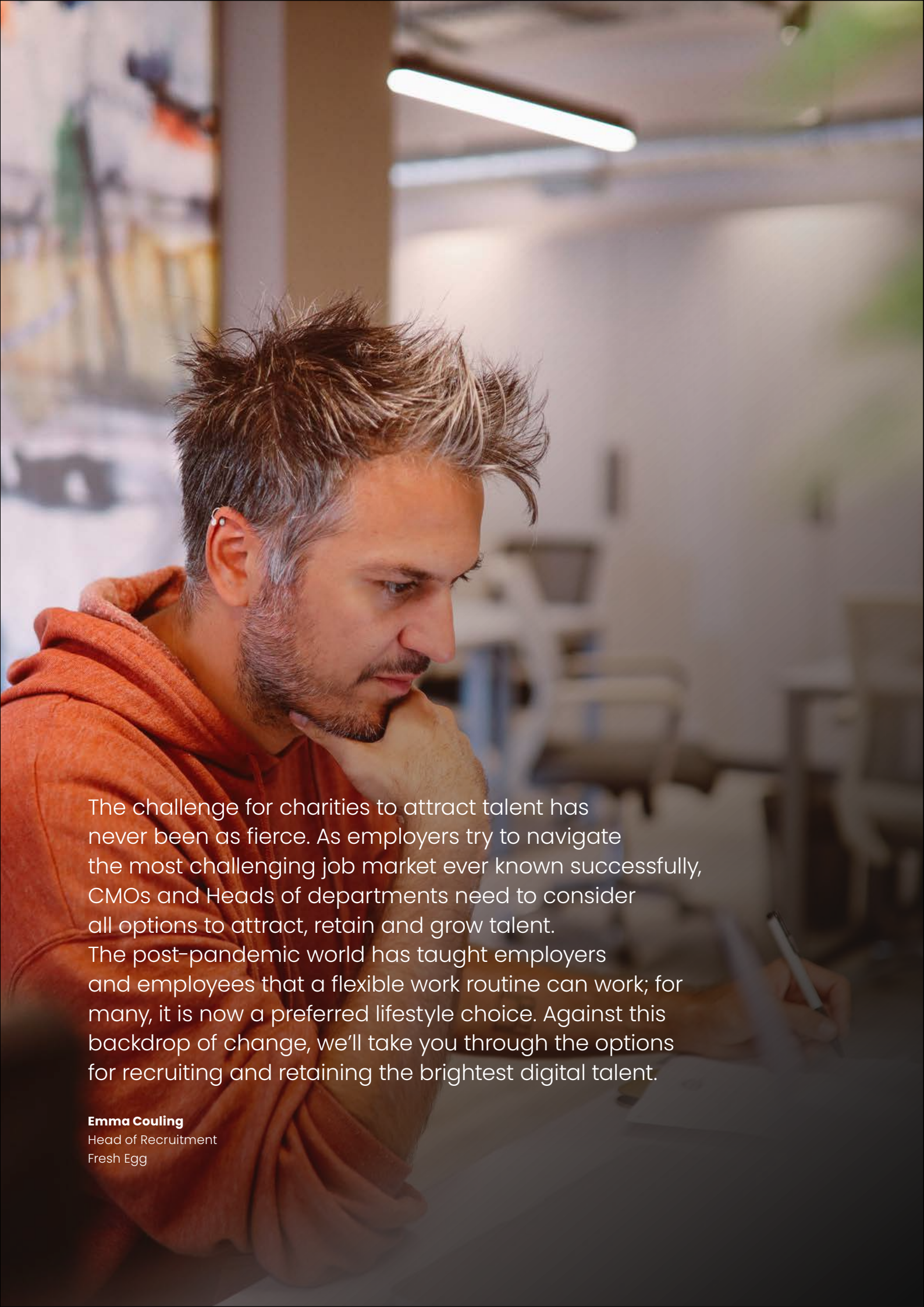CharityWise.
BY FRESH EGG

White paper

Recruiting digital talent

A guide to recruiting and retaining the brightest digital talent in the charity sector.
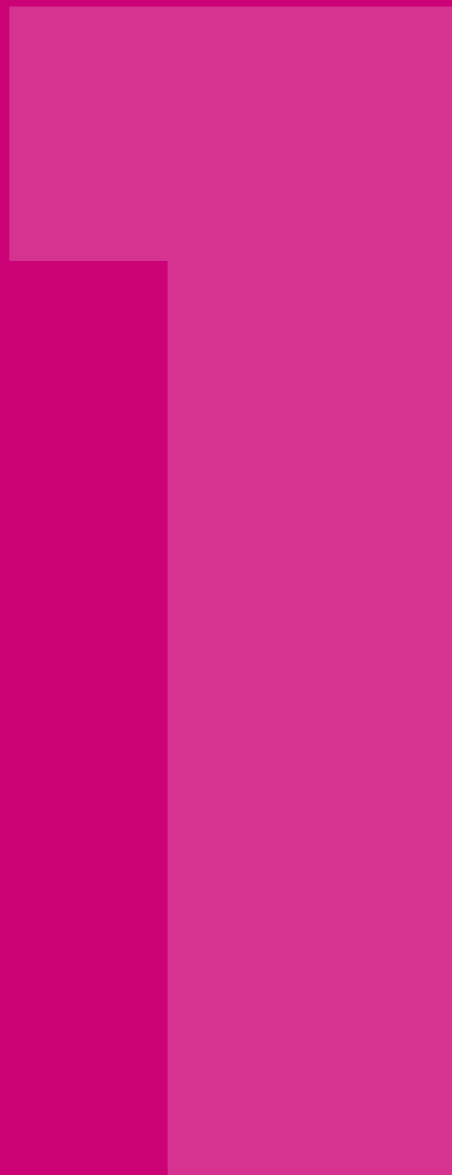
The challenge for charities to attract talent has never been as fierce. As employers try to navigate the most challenging job market ever known successfully, CMOs and Heads of departments need to consider all options to attract, retain and grow talent. The post-pandemic world has taught employers and employees that a flexible work routine can work; for many, it is now a preferred lifestyle choice. Against this backdrop of change, we'll take you through the options for recruiting and retaining the brightest digital talent.

Emma Couling
Head of Recruitment
Fresh Egg

Contents

Introduction

1

Recruiting digital talent

As the importance of digital increases across all industries, more employers recognise the need to grow their digital capabilities to retain any competitive advantage.

The problem is there is a genuine disconnect between this demand and the availability of sufficiently skilled digital talent. A reality illustrated by the fact that the UK government introduced a Global Talent Visa in 2020 to encourage digital technology workers from overseas to come and work in the UK - one of only three industries identified.

With more businesses looking to develop and grow their in-house digital teams to keep pace in this fast-moving digital era, this talent gap is only widening. According to the Major Players Salary Survey 2022, the creative industries sector will grow by over 26% by 2025, adding 300,000 new roles and suggesting that the digital industry will lead the post-Covid recovery in the UK.

Recruiting in the charity sector presents several unique challenges that organisations and hiring managers must navigate.

These challenges can make it more difficult to attract and retain qualified talent.

Some of the key challenges include:

• Limited Budgets: Many charities operate on tight budgets, which can restrict the ability to offer competitive salaries and benefits. This can make it challenging to attract top talent, especially in competitive job markets.

• Competition for Talent: The charity sector often competes with other sectors for qualified candidates.

Charities must compete not only with other nonprofits but also with for-profit organisations for individuals with relevant skills and experience.

• Mission Alignment: Finding candidates who are truly passionate about the organisation's mission and values can be challenging.

• Skills and Expertise: There is a digital skills shortage across most technical specialisms and this has been the case for the past few years. Combine that with other factors affecting recruitment in the sector and it's a very small talent pool available.

• Diversity and Inclusion: Ensuring diversity and inclusion in the workforce is essential, but it can be a challenge in the charity sector, which may have limited resources for diversity initiatives.

• Compliance and Regulation: Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, such as fundraising regulations and reporting, can be burdensome for charities and add complexity to recruitment.

To overcome these challenges, charities can employ several strategies, including offering competitive non-monetary benefits (such as flexible schedules or opportunities for skill development), investing in robust recruitment processes, fostering a positive organisational culture, and utilising creative methods to attract and retain talent.

Additionally, building a strong employer brand that highlights the organisation's impact and values can help in recruiting individuals who are aligned with the charity's mission.

Fresh Egg recognise the challenges that the charity sector faces and can work with you whether it be at the very start of the process, working out the dynamics of your team, writing technical job descriptions, recruiting, and supporting throughout the interview process.

Find out how we supported RSPCA recruit people into key digital roles as part of their digital transformation aspirations.

Find out how we supported RSPCA recruit people into key digital roles as part of their digital transformation aspirations.

Case Study - Recruiting key digital people for the RSPCA

"Fresh Egg helped us to build a strong, successful, expert in-house team with confidence. The team took the trouble to understand the change that we needed in our digital capability and to craft the right roles and requirements. Their technical knowledge and experience was invaluable in helping us to compare candidates and ensure we made good choices. Our digital team is going strong!"

Tracey Pritchard
Director Of Engagement and Income Generation
RSPCA

Defining digital talent

Digital talent is more than being a whizz on the keyboard or knowing your way around a website. More than ever, experts in specialisms such as CRO, SEO, UX, user and audience research, paid media, social media, content marketing, web development, and analytics combine technical skills with business acumen.

Companies don't just want employees who know how to use specific tools. They need agile, collaborative people who can bring insight and add value to the business. Talent with so-called 'soft digital skills', such as customer-centricity, critical thinking and clear communication, are especially in demand.

Businesses want to employ experts, but a good cultural fit is also relevant. Still, as is currently the situation, there is a chronic lack of brilliant digital talent to satisfy demand. While this is a massive benefit for people seeking work, it presents challenges to employers looking to recruit into crucial roles.

Market turbulence, challenges and changes

The recent past leaves today's digital recruitment market in a unique place. Recruitment for digital talent has always been competitive, and then COVID changed everything. Even an optimist would have to admit it will never return to the halcyon days of pre-March 2020.

2

The most challenging jobs market ever

Across all sectors, today's job market is a challenge. With many current and future employees enjoying the benefits of working from home, it is fair to say a total return to the office has been sluggish.

A survey undertaken in February 2022 and published by the Office for National Statistics highlights some of the challenges employers face:

• Many people who worked from home due to the pandemic plan to continue doing so

• More than 8 in 10 people said they planned to continue hybrid working between their homes and usual place of work, with the most common working pattern being to work mostly from home

• The percentage of hybrid workers has risen from 13% (February 2022) to 24% (May 2022)

• The percentage of people planning to return to their place of work permanently fell from 11% (April 2021) to 8% in February 2022

Other industry stats that compound the issues:

• 61% of industry professionals say the biggest challenge is finding qualified hires

• 37% of respondents stated finding full-time talent with the right skills is a challenge

• 27% said onboarding new talent in a timely fashion is challenging

What does all this mean? It's a challenging recruitment market, and there are no signs the current struggles will ease anytime soon.

In what could be a silver lining for employers, analysts predict that AI adoption could be utilised by organisations and reduce staff turnover by as much as 35%.

Flexible vs Hybrid working – a quick recap

Flexible and hybrid working terms have been used extensively in the last few years as businesses have had to reevaluate their working practices due to the pandemic.

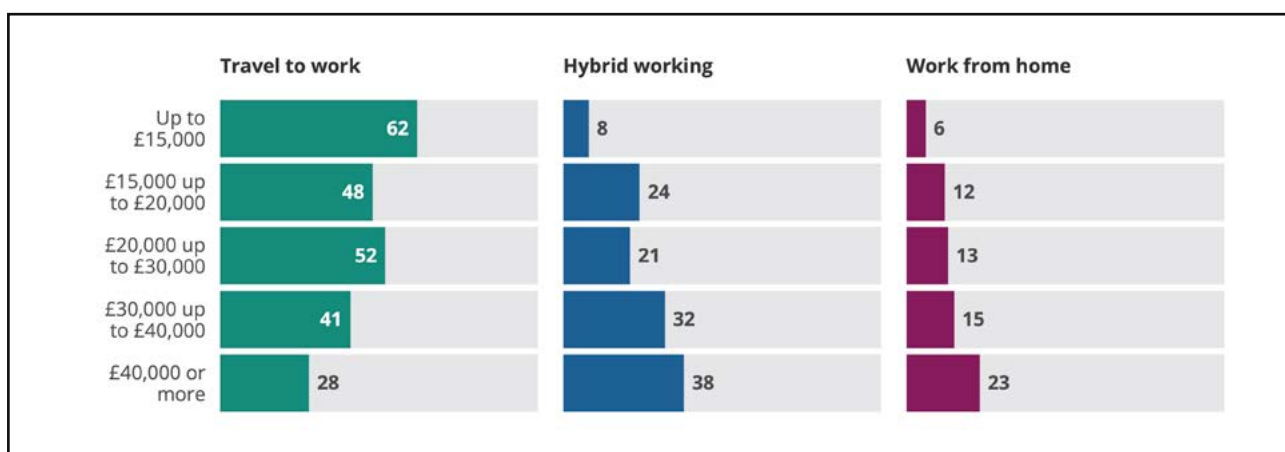## While used interchangeably, flexible and hybrid are different

• **Flexible working** - can be used to describe any type of working pattern different from your existing one. A flexible working arrangement is agreed upon between the employer and individual employee and might include a change in working hours, start and finish times or work location.

• **Hybrid working** - is used to describe when employees spend time working from home and the workplace. It only refers to flexibility regarding the place of work.

Hybrid nuances

• Hybrid working is more of a challenge for employers with a workforce in higher income brackets.

• High earners are more likely to adopt hybrid working patterns.

• Hybrid and home-working increases by income bracket.

More than a third (38%) of workers earning £40,000 (or more) undertook hybrid work between 27 April and 8 May 2022, meaning they both worked from home and travelled to work.

Workers in this income group were the only ones for whom hybrid working was the most common working pattern. They were also more likely than other income groups to work from home exclusively. Source: ons.gov.uk

	Travel to work	Hybrid working	Work from home
Up to £15,000	62	8	6
£15,000 up to £20,000	48	24	12
£20,000 up to £30,000	52	21	13
£30,000 up to £40,000	41	32	15
£40,000 or more	28	38	23

The digital industry leads the way

If any industry were ever going to disrupt the 9-5 status quo, it was always going to be digital. This disruption is a problem for agencies and businesses with digital teams.

After all, what can you do at the office that you can't do at home? The answer is not a lot. While the early stages of the pandemic were surreal and a scary time, those working in digital settled quickly into the new working routine (In fairness, there was already a base of remote workers).

Employees enjoyed the benefits of working from home, such as spending more time with family and having more opportunities to enjoy activities and hobbies, even lumbering out of bed just before needing to start work. For many, it was a refreshing change from the norm.

With the pandemic accelerating digital adoption, and businesses employing more digitally skilled people, there is this ever-widening gap in market expertise. Adam Stafford, Fresh Egg CEO, explains, "The reality is to stay relevant, businesses need to adapt to a hybrid flexible way of working". We will explore some critical considerations for businesses considering a hybrid working model later in this guide.

Top tip

Now more than ever, it's critical to learn what motivates your talent and what they are looking for in life and how they want to work.

Benefits for people returning to the workplace

It's not all a one-way street. There are tangible benefits for employees returning to the office (even if they don't quite appreciate it).

Workplace benefits

• **Collaboration** - Individual working is fine, but occasionally, there is no substitute for getting things done collaboratively. Brainstorming sessions and fact-finding workshops work better when people are together, not to mention the effectiveness of working with a work buddy to complete a task.

• **Learning** - It's easier to learn when everyone is together. Whether that is planned learning sessions as a collective, overhearing colleagues, sharing knowledge, or simply having the ability to pop over and see someone to ask a question, it's a little easier when everyone is around.

• **Socialisation** - Having those little chats around the coffee machine is great. Remote working doesn't cut it for those random chats that can make a big difference in someone's day.

• **Coordination** - Whether it's team, project or client meetings, being together can be a valuable forum to check that everything is going ok and things are on track. It isn't easy to substitute group energy.

• **Well-being** - Working from home is all well and good, but variation is healthy and breaking up the week and getting out of the house to a different environment is an important factor for both health and well-being.

It's too quick to discount returning to the office when there are tangible benefits for getting people together. There is no right or wrong way to approach it. It is individual to each organisation. It will be interesting to see if future studies of hybrid working highlight the benefits to people getting back together and, more importantly, any positive benefits to mental health.

Getting people back to work, forcing the issue

Did we say force? Don't force! You definitely can't force a full-time return to the office. There is no question that getting the team back together brings energy, a vibe that is sadly lacking when working remotely. If employers take that approach, it leads to talent unhappiness and, ultimately, an exodus.

It's a tricky balance for employers, after all, offices are an expense, and in a world of rising costs, there will be some employers whose accountants will be laying out the folly of keeping the office.

The cost of living crisis may accelerate a return to work

Conversely, the cost of living crisis may accelerate a return to the office this winter. After all, why would employees pay to heat homes, charge devices, make hot drinks and use the microwave etc., when they can do it for free at the employer's expense.

In the post-covid world, will more talent turn to work freelance to support their work/life balance?

A recent poll with our Fresh Egg Experts highlighted that 80% of current contractors thought more digital professionals would choose this way of working in the future. But while flexibility is (obviously) attractive to some people at specific points in their careers, so is stability. Freelance life is not for everyone.

How to get around the talent problem

We've established employers are facing severe recruitment challenges, but that is not to say there aren't ways and means to change things positively and move vital project backlogs and tasks forward.

Create a digital recruitment strategy

If you are replacing talent, strengthening the team you already have in place or building a digital team, you first need to define the structure of that team and decide what type of roles you need to bring in to benefit the business.

Why do you need to define a recruitment strategy?

It's simple - the wrong hire can be costly.

When you factor in the average cost of recruiting, the time and resources it takes to find and train a candidate for a role, and the inevitable associated productivity loss – it's not a minor inconvenience. It hurts in many ways.

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation estimates the cost of a bad hire to a business to be three times higher than the salary paid at an average of £56,676.

The cost is one element, there is the negative effect it can have on a company's overall performance and morale. So having a robust, carefully considered hiring strategy is essential.

"As a first step, you need to identify your hiring needs. Look at where your business is and what you're trying to do. With input from your current digital/ marketing team, evaluate the structure, expertise and capabilities of your existing workforce. This exercise will help you determine any gaps you need to fill, what type of skills and experience you need to bring on board, and how best to do it. Involve your HR team and other stakeholders from across the business throughout the process, so everyone understands what you want to achieve long term."

Emma Couling
Head of Recruitment Services
Fresh Egg

Using the RASCI matrix (Responsible, Accountable, Supportive, Consulted, Informed) will help you map this out. This well-established management technique describes team members' tasks and roles in delivering on a project or process, identifying areas of responsibility and reporting lines.

Not only will using this technique help you spot any workflow gaps or inconsistencies, but it will also help you determine where and how any new hires will work within the current structure. If you've previously always outsourced digital, we recommend using the RASCI matrix.

By first identifying your needs like this, you can then go on to develop a talent strategy determining whether you should hire, borrow or train to enhance your digital strengths. We'll explore these options, explaining the benefits and key considerations.

Free download

A guide to in-housing and creating a digital centre of excellence

You can read more about using the RASCI matrix in our free white paper, which is an essential resource for anyone looking for in-house digital services.

Download now

Expand your talent search

With remote and hybrid working becoming more commonplace, the competitive nature of the industry demands that employers now look beyond their traditional hunting ground in pursuit of new talent.

Thanks to progressive working practices and effective communication technologies, geographical barriers no longer need to stand in the way of the right hire. Although it does mean you are now competing with even more brands and agencies to secure the best of the best, along with possible area salary weighting.

Hiring team members working from multiple locations, maybe even different continents, requires some flexible thinking. For example, will company culture suffer by adopting this policy and working remotely/independently? Are time zones an issue? How will collaborative working work?

For remote/hybrid working models to be successful, employers need to be prepared to offer various work options, such as a work-from-home schedule, flexible hours or, in some cases, relocation assistance. Some challenges need to addressing directly. For example, how do you build a team with solid connections and maintain a positive workplace culture when your people don't always work side by side, and in today's working world, if at all? These aspects all need consideration in your digital talent strategy.

Top tip

Hybrid working gives you access to a global talent pool. But it's worth considering that if your new hire is not within a realistic commutable distance from your business, it may impact team integration in the future.

Making hybrid working work

If you're looking to introduce hybrid working (it's likely you are already operating a form), you must establish clear boundaries and requirements from the start. Doing so ensures everyone understands what to expect regarding how and when they deliver their work and what their new working routine will look like.

In a recent PwC survey of their employees, 77% said they preferred a mix of in-person and remote working, which is higher than the global average.

This result illustrates that the desire for a better work-life balance has become a key driver for many current (and future) employees. Hybrid working gives people flexibility while still allowing them to collaborate in person and feel part of a team.

Processes that have always been in place when everyone worked in the office need attention for hybrid workers, so be open to new approaches or tools that might make life easier for everyone.

You also need to ensure you have the proper infrastructure set up so that staff can work effectively whether at home, in the workplace or on the go - remember, it is an employees' world in the digital industry now.

Key factors to make hybrid working successful

1. Communication: Employers must provide plenty of opportunities for connection and collaboration, whether in designated social workspaces in the office or via virtual team coffee breaks, meetings and one-to-one check-ins. Regular communication, including casual 'water-cooler' style chats between colleagues, is vital for maintaining employee engagement and a sense of community, monitoring performance and keeping projects on track.

2. Team management: Managing a remote team requires a whole different skill set. Managers need to establish guidelines and expectations for remote workers from the start. The criteria might include their availability to answer calls during working hours or participate in video conference calls without interruption. You may also want to revise performance metrics and implement different review standards.

3. Technology and infrastructure: You may need to invest in more efficient software platforms and communication tools to facilitate easy remote working or additional equipment such as laptops, desktops or phones to enable employees to communicate and collaborate effectively. If the investment required for this would be significant, you should consider whether it's cost-effective for your business to introduce a hybrid working model.

4. Legalities: It's possible to undertake hybrid working on an informal basis without a need to alter employment contracts. However, contracts should also state a contractual location. This aspect does not necessarily change due to hybrid working, but employees who work permanently from home would usually list their home address as their workplace. This last point could be important from an HMRC or expenses point of view or when requesting attendance to a meeting within a 'reasonable distance'.

5. Employee well-being: The consensus is employees working from home are often happier and more satisfied with their jobs. But some individuals may find the lack of daily socialisation and team bonding a challenge. Everyone is different and will require different levels of support, so leaders need to be visible and supportive. Create an open-door policy, letting employees know you are available for unscheduled chats when required. Make days when team members are in the office an opportunity to check in and see how they are doing, rather than just cramming their schedule with back-to-back meetings. Consider offering managers training so they have increased awareness of potential signs of poor well-being or mental health.

Filling the talent gaps – do you hire or train?

Upskilling your teams

One solution to plugging a skills gap is to upskill your current employees. Yes, it may take longer to reap the rewards of training someone compared to hiring someone who knows how to do the job from day one. But the people who already work for you have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of your organisation, products/services and the team that no new hire can match.

Investing in the upskilling of employees who have shown a desire to learn and progress within your company will help them to gain an even greater understanding of your business and improve morale and motivation.

The candidate's willingness and potential for upskilling is critical when hiring talent. In a study by PwC in 2020, 77% of the 22,000 surveyed said they would be willing to upskill to make themselves more employable.

So when it comes to training versus hiring, it shouldn't be an either/or consideration - the two options need to work together. For organisations to thrive during this time of digital transformation, they need to invest in digital talent and create a working environment that stimulates learning and growth by providing ongoing training and development opportunities for their people as part of a more comprehensive talent retention strategy.

The benefits of upskilling current team members

- Better team member retention, engagement, motivation and reward
- Promotes a culture of learning and development
- Boosts workplace morale
- Fills skills gaps
- Rewards existing knowledge
- Reduces disruption
- Builds a more flexible team
- Creates a higher standard of work
- Increases productivity
- Stronger employer/employee relations
- Better client/customer engagement

Risks associated with training current team members:

- Change is not always welcome
- Cost implications
- Possible flight risk/poaching

The alternative to a permanent hire

Utilising freelance and contractor talent

If your organisation has struggled to fill positions, it may be time to consider a different solution while you continue your recruitment drive. If, for example, there are backlogs with critical infrastructure projects or roadmaps, this could be a pragmatic way forward.

Utilising freelance/contractor talent enables employers to quickly scale a digital workforce to meet demand during peak times without the financial and time commitment of a full-time hire. And despite the introduction of IR35 in April 2021, post-pandemic, the freelance economy is booming as more highly skilled workers turn to self-employment, motivated by the desire to set their working schedule and work from wherever they want.

"Outsourcing work to freelancers is an efficient and cost-effective way for businesses to tap into specialist services as and when they need them. With no training requirements, the right contractor can hit the ground running on a project and allow your business to maintain workstream momentum. A solid network of trusted, reliable people you can use for special projects is an invaluable resource."

Emma Couling
Head of Recruitment Services
Fresh Egg

Common misconceptions about working with contractors

• It takes ages to get contractors onboarded.

Not always. It depends on your recruitment resource. We can place contractors to work alongside your existing team in a matter of hours.

• There are issues with IR35.

Not for short-term projects and not when using the correct criteria when working with an outside expert.

• It's time-consuming to find specialist contractors.

Not if you work with the right supplier. For example, our contractors (Fresh Egg Experts) undergo a rigorous QA process, with each specialist exhaustively interviewed and vetted by our experts.

• It disrupts the current team.

We've not come across this. If anything bringing in motivated talent provides a lift as your team receives help moving projects forward.

• It's time-consuming working with HR to onboard contractors.

If you deal with a recruitment agency, this may well be a problem. As a digital agency, we have a different (and straightforward) approach to the challenge. We integrate contracted expert support as part of a working MSA with little fuss and maximum results.

• It's expensive to hire contractors.

The answer is no if your competitors outperform your organisation because you have too many stalled tasks/ projects. Contractors offer a flexible solution with relatively short notice, an agreed notice period, reduced hiring and training costs, and overheads.

Should employers use the freelance talent pool?

Against record-high digital job vacancies and a shortage of appropriately skilled people - YES. An increasing number of companies are getting creative and looking instead to freelance talent to plug a temporary skills gap. 80% of organisations say they have difficulty filling openings due to an ongoing shortage of skills (Monster).

• Hiring digital talent is taking longer than the median average hire time of 36 days (LinkedIn)

We have helped many of our clients do this when they need help keeping vital projects on track while searching for the right permanent team member.

Top tip

If you are struggling to hire permanent staff, consider our Fresh Egg Experts to help with critical projects or to progress a stalling roadmap on a short-term basis.

Our optimal hiring process

Eight-step guide to hiring greatness

If you are looking to recruit new talent and have identified who and what your business needs are, here's how you should approach building a first-class digital team.

1   **Write an attention-grabbing job description**

2   **Tell your brand's story**

3   **Set a competitive salary, and don't forget the perks!**

4   **Get the word out**

5   **Time to hire**

6   **Screening candidates**

7   **The interview stage**

8   **Closing the offer**

1

Write an attention-grabbing job description

A brilliant job description needs to define the following clearly and concisely:

• Job title and position within the organisation

• Main objectives and responsibilities

• Required or desired skills and experience

• Salary band and benefits

While some things, such as relevant technical competency, may be non-negotiable, try not to be too definitive in your wish list. Not only will it shrink the available talent pool, but
it also often pays to think flexibly.

Consider how a candidate can add value rather than just focusing on what's missing from their CV. Could training and peer support compensate for a lack of experience?

Top tip

Be flexible in your thinking. Someone who might not have the right experience on paper may tick many other boxes - bringing a great work ethic, fresh perspective, or motivation to learn and grow. Effective candidate screening is essential.

2

Tell your brand's story

The fiercely competitive digital marketplace is about much more than just pushing the role you're looking to fill. When talking through the process of digital in-housing with our clients, we always say you need to lead with the opportunity.

By this, we mean that from the start of the recruitment process, you need to demonstrate to candidates what your organisation can offer them.

You could do this by telling them about:

• Perks and benefits like family leave packages

• Flexible/hybrid working arrangements

• Learning and development opportunities

• Company values and culture

Essentially, candidates want to know what the broader everyday employee experience is like, not just what their job would be.

Use a job description to promote all the reasons why a candidate should choose to work with you over one of your competitors or, indeed, a digital agency.

You might highlight the following:

• Promoting your organisation's fantastic collaborative workspaces

• Discounted gym membership

• Emphasis on work/life balance, training, and career progression opportunities

• Diversity or sustainability credentials

Taking the time to establish a positive employer brand and defining what 'opportunity' you can offer desired candidates is a long-term strategy. It will help differentiate your company from other employers and improve your ability to attract and retain talent.

Top tip

Remember, applicants are likely to do their homework and research your organisation on social media or by reading reviews on sites like Glassdoor and Google. So make sure your owned media tells a compelling story.

3

Set a competitive salary, and don't forget the perks!

When it comes to setting a salary, it's all about balance. It needs to be competitive while staying within your budget to attract candidates of the right quality (and enough of them). Ensure you research thoroughly to understand what you need to pay for your ideal candidate (because you can be sure your candidates will have done theirs).

Remember that work/life balance, workplace culture and career growth opportunities will be primary drivers for many candidates. Consider what you can offer to address these non-financial motivations and find out what other businesses and agencies provide. Many digital companies have led the way in this area, offering desirable staff incentive programmes to retain their talent, and you are competing with that.

Incentivise salary packages with non-financial perks and benefits, such as an extra day off for birthdays, flexible working or an emphasis on training and career progression. Perks like free fresh fruit or leaving work early on a Friday are relatively cheap and easy to implement. They may make the difference when your preferred candidate is choosing between you and another employer.

Knowing the market means you can adapt your offering as needed. Make sure you research what package your competitors are offering, not just in your immediate locale. Remember, the boundaries have changed.

Document this information and review it regularly. If budget restrictions exist, use the perks and benefits you offer to help sell the opportunity to potential candidates.

Free download

Use our free template to plot your benefits against your competitors

Download now

4
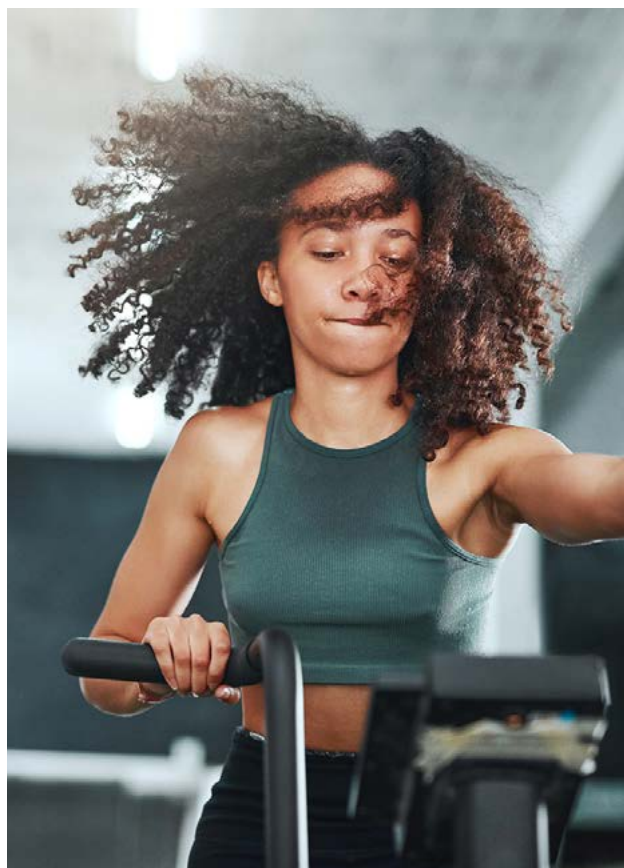
Get the word out

Of course, all this groundwork is worthless if you look for candidates in the wrong places. Posting a job ad on social media sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook (particularly within networking groups and communities) will increase visibility and help you connect with passive and active candidates.

Employers need to consider their candidate audience is active on social media, as are recruiters and competitors.

These stats from Infinity Social Media, Jobcast and Betterteam highlight the need to be mindful of social channels:

• 94% of recruiters use or plan to use social media for recruiting

• 70% of recruiters plan to increase their investment in social recruiting

• 49% of employers who use social media found improvement in candidate quality

• 59% of employees said that their company's social media presence was one of the reasons why they chose to join their organisation. (Betterteam).

• 94% of professional recruiters are on social media to post jobs and network with their extensive community (Betterteam).

When posting about a job opening on your organisation's LinkedIn page, don't forget to share within your private network and ask colleagues to share. You can also use LinkedIn's targeted job listing and messaging templates to help reach the maximum number of suitably qualified applicants.

Other job posting sites with broad reach are Glassdoor and Indeed, and don't forget that more locale-specific, specialised sites exist too. For example, in Sussex, we have WiredSussex, which provides a great platform to connect with other professionals in the local area. Paid job boards may also be relevant to your cause.

Other considerations to help you reach candidates:

• **Schema** - Do your job pages contain schema? Sites like Glassdoor utilise job schema to gain additional real estate in search. If your job pages don't, speak to your SEO team or SEO agency about integrating the required code.

• **Job boards** - Are there free/paid job boards you can post?

• **Peer accounts** - Are there industry peers/accounts who will promote the job vacancy for you?

• **Communities** - Are there Slack communities you can join to share job openings?

Adding job schema to your job listings is a no-brainer.

When presented by Google, the page translates to the following with schema.

5

Time to hire

A shortage of available talent and huge demand means a good candidate on the lookout for a new opportunity won't be short on offers. It takes time to hire, particularly in specialist areas (anywhere between three to 12 months, in our experience).

Ensure your hiring process is smooth, efficient and well-planned. If the process during which a candidate is processed, assessed, interviewed and offered a job is too slow, you risk losing them to a competitor. Being well prepared should mean you feel confident in evaluating candidates without resorting to another interview.

While delays in fulfilling a crucial position are undesirable, any CEO would rather wait to make the right hire than bring the wrong person on board (with all the associated costs). This factor is where using a contractor can help keep things on track until a permanent hire joins the team.

6

Screening candidates

Clients looking to build an in-house digital team may not have the in-depth knowledge of a specialist area needed to assess a candidate's skill level or experience. It's often an area where businesses fall short when hiring digital talent.

What can you do to avoid this common pitfall?

If you do not have the technical expertise in-house to vet candidates, one solution is to bring in outside help during this crucial phase of the recruitment process. We strongly recommend this for recruiting technical-based roles. Remember, the wrong hire is a costly exercise and can affect morale, as well as the organisation being back to square one with recruiting for the role.

We regularly help our clients in this respect. Our technical experts work alongside the recruitment team to evaluate and screen CVs, assessing candidates' skills from a commercial working perspective and only sharing with clients the applicants they believe have the correct skill set and commercial knowledge to do the job. This approach saves valuable time, enabling our clients to start initial conversations with suitable candidates early in the process without delay. The moral of this story is don't be afraid to ask for expert help.

7

The interview stage

The interview stage is a crucial way to assess candidates and find out if you're the right fit for each other. But in this much-changed recruitment market, remember that they are also evaluating you - and with demand for digital expertise far outstripping available talent, the candidates have the upper hand.

So, just like the candidates, you need to be prepared. It shows respect if you are familiar with their CV, so do your homework. You don't have long to gather the information you need to decide on someone, so you must ask the right questions.

Think about what you need to find out about their background, experience and motivations for pursuing this opportunity. Prepare a list of questions to refer to during the interview if required. Ensure you stick to a consistent format for all candidates to compare them fairly.

When recruiting for technical positions, involving someone who speaks the same language as your candidates at the interview stage not only adds credibility to the process, it's essential. It demonstrates to candidates that you take the role and their specialism seriously and gives them a chance to ask specific technical questions about the role and workflow practices or systems that you may not be able to answer.

Our technical experts regularly sit in on interviews and provide post-interview feedback, set digitally-focussed tasks for candidates or draft model technical interview questions and answers for our clients to refer to during the interview process.

Remember to use the interview to sell the opportunity to candidates and match their identified drivers. Leave time at the end for them to ask questions and provide as much detail as possible when you answer. Not only will this give a great insight into how they think, but it will also be your final chance to explain why working for your company is so great during the interview. You don't know who else is waiting to snap them up if they're good, so get them excited.

Our top tips for getting the best out of interviews

1. **Be ready** - Always start the interview on time. It's a simple courtesy.

2. **Research the candidate** - there is nothing worse for the interviewee than the interviewers not knowing their career history.

3. **Include C-Suite members** - Doing so highlights the organisation is taking the hire seriously.

4. **Integrate technicians when relevant** - When hiring for technical jobs, ensure someone is available to assess the candidate properly.

5. **Show you care** - Delve into why they are looking to change job and why your organisation is the right fit for the next stage in their career.

6. **Watch the clock** - Everyone's time is precious. Keep the interview to the established timeline.

7. **Answer the candidate's questions** - Always leave plenty of time for candidates to ask you questions.

8. **Wow the candidate!** - Don't forget, you need to impress during the interview as much as the candidate.

8

Closing the offer

As we've said, great talent doesn't hang around (especially in the current climate). If you have decided you want to make an offer to a candidate, try to make the process as quick and painless as possible. If your screening and interview processes are thorough and well-planned, you shouldn't need to resort to endless rounds of interviews. If not, another recruiter might get in there first.

Hopefully, the interview process will have helped you identify what their drivers and reasons for moving jobs are, making it less likely for them to decline a well-thought-out job offer.

Summary

A whole new ball game

Recruiting the right person for your organisation with the right mix of skills, experience, enthusiasm, and drive was rarely ever easy - in 2024, it's a whole new ball game.

The current digital talent drought, set against the growing in-house trend and preference for remote working, means there is no scarcity of choice for top talent. To secure (and keep) the best people, you must first map out precisely what your business needs and create an opportunity to cut through this crowded market and engage suitable candidates.

Whether you need help identifying your business's skill gaps, support during the candidate selection process or are looking for a temporary resource to fulfil essential projects, we can help. Our digital expertise and years of experience will help you manage your digital recruitment challenges and support you every step of the way.

We can even help onboard a new employee with bespoke training to fill in any skill gaps and provide learning and development support and career mapping services to ensure you can retain and grow talent.

If you find roles challenging to fill, consider working with outstanding talent who can come in, roll their sleeves up, and help with roadmap challenges and projects.

Find out more about our recruitment services, or contact our specialist recruitment team.

Remember, applicants are likely to do their homework and research your organisation on social media or by reading reviews on sites like Glassdoor and Google. So make sure your owned media tells a compelling story.

Other content you may find helpful:

Essential tips for hiring digital talent

Building digital teams with our in-housing expertise

How to prioritise digital marketing tactics

Other resources

---

thebridge.social/4-key-digital-careers-recruitment-challenges-and-how-to-address-them

monster.co.uk/advertise-a-job/resources/recruiting-strategies/how-to-hire/challenges-hiring-it-talent

aihr.com/blog/digital-recruiting-challenges

zoho.com/blog/recruit/top-digital-recruiting-challenges-in-2022.html

celarity.com/specialty/job-description-template

econsultancy.com/2022-trends-winning-the-war-for-digital-talent

fitsmallbusiness.com/career-change-statistics

apollotechnical.com/hybrid-working-statistics

ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/ishybridworkingheretostay/2022-05-23

Notes

CharityWise.

**Digital learning for charities,
direct from the experts**

www.getcharitywise.co.uk