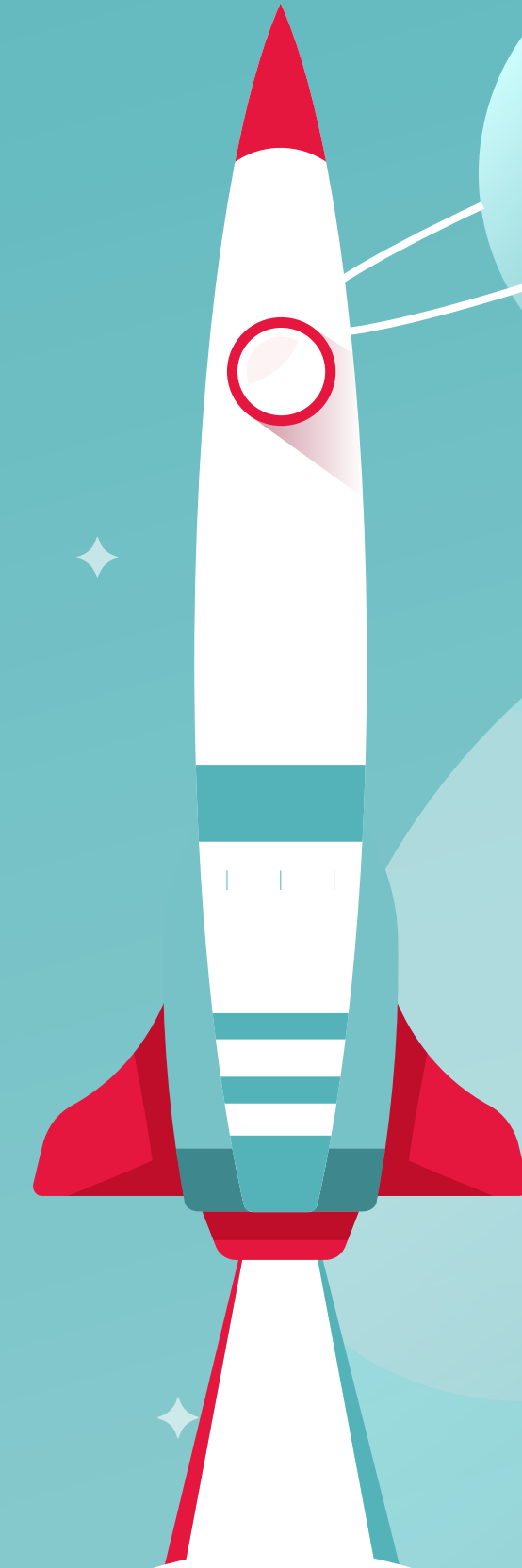access
freedom to do more

The Recruiter's Guide for a Strong Start to 2021

Now is the time to put into practice the learns from last year's challenges to make 2021 a stronger year for your recruitment business.

Discover the latest trends relating to candidates, clients and tech to help kick-start your productivity and efficiencies to support you whilst the Covid-19 pandemic continues to linger.
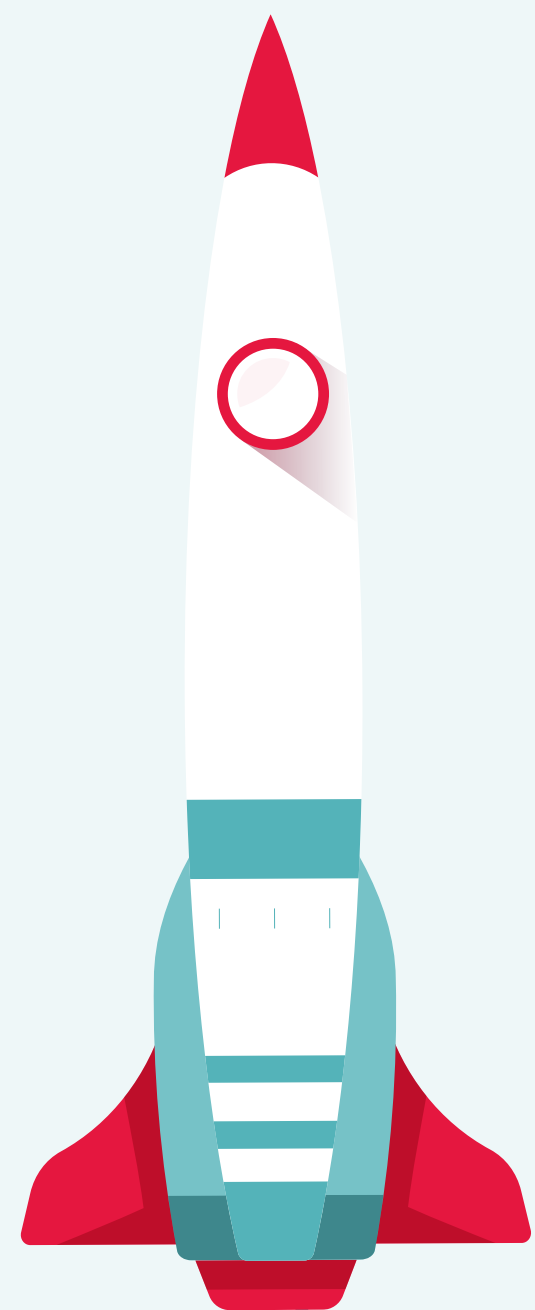
What do recruiters need for a strong start in 2021?

For a strong start to 2021, recruiters need to wear various hats and position themselves as an attractive commodity. No matter your niche, there are skills that can help you improve and be the best consultant you can be this year.

Think like a marketer

Great recruiters need to understand how to sell their roles and clients, using the latest marketing tactics.

LinkedIn has powerful tools for recruitment including data analytics and other HR essentials. But most importantly, it has a steadily growing engagement level – which means that candidates won't just view a post, but will actually click on it.

If you write your job adverts with a marketing hat on too, you will attract the right candidates. To do this, you must understand what appeals to candidates. The most useful question that you can ask yourself is, "if I were a potential employee, why would I want to apply for this job?". Consider the keywords you're using and include the ones you believe a candidate would use to search for the role.

Focus on the candidate experience

Think about the full candidate journey. From the minute a job lands on your desk, to receiving an offer through for them - what's the experience like that they receive from you? It's important to make sure that the full process is seamless and that you're guiding candidates through every step. Even if you don't manage to help them secure their ideal role, they will remember a great experience and potentially recommend you to others.

- How easy are your jobs to find online? Are they Google optimised?

- Is it easy for them to register with your agency? Do they need to download any software to complete a remote registration? <u>Can they Apply with LinkedIn?</u>

- What documents do they need? Have you explained what they need in advance?

- What's their CV like? Do they need any help to improve it?

- Are they prepared for a video interview?

- How quickly do you respond to candidates with interview feedback?

- What's their lasting impression of you? Are they asked to complete a customer service survey? Or given details of your social media channels to follow?

Position yourself as an expert

Everyone's a bit confused about everything at the moment. With constantly changing rules and guidance, it's important you stay on top of government guidance and the news. Become the go-to person for career advice, as well as the industries you're recruiting for.

Work on your soft skills

Emotions are running high for a lot of people, even more so if they've been subject to furlough or a redundancy process. They might be sad, stressed, angry or just feeling quite deflated. This is your opportunity to practice some empathy and understanding. Although recruiters can often be focused on sales skills and numbers on the board, it's important to remember that you're dealing with another human being.

Perhaps the most important soft skill for 2021 will be agility. If the year is certain to deliver one thing, it's likely to be more change. Be prepared to learn new skills to keep at the top of your game and ahead of the competition.

Getting the most from your talent pool

Given the recruitment industry is all about placing people, your talent pool - or candidate database - should be your most well-cared for asset. So why do so many agencies fail to nurture this vital resource?

Why you should invest in developing your talent pool

With a well-maintained talent pool you are more able to recruit efficiently and respond swiftly to your clients' needs. Here's why:

- Your recruitment process does not have to start from scratch every time

- You have a ready-made list of candidates that applied for previous roles to search from

- Pre-selection is short-circuited through existing information stored in your recruitment CRM

- Your cost-per-hire reduces as you don't need to use external paid sources, such as job boards

- The information about potential clients withing candidates' CVs and career histories is immense.

Your talent pool is all about preparation and potential. These are candidates who already live within your CRM and have been through your process, making finding a job for them even easier. If you have also already undertaken compliance and background checks they are effectively waiting to walk out of the door.

How do talent pools reflect on your employer brand?

Having a talent pool can have a positive influence on your employer brand, if it's treated in the right way. Candidates that have received a positive experience with you, even if you were unable to place them, are more likely to return to you in the future, recommend you to others, and possibly even write a positive review.

Strengthening connections within your talent pool

Even though you are dealing with 'passive' candidates, regular communication is essential.
A systematic approach to building up and segmenting your future talent pool is crucial to make sure the right message hits the right people at the right time. Through regular touchpoints you continue to present yourself as a relevant agency able to help them secure their next role or assignment.

Consider a regular candidate newsletter, supported with on-to-one outreach via SMS and phone. Areas to cover could include:

- Targeted open jobs, as well as offering job alerts via your website

- Birthday greetings

- Invitations to recruitment fairs or events

- Feedback on your own recruitment process and recent successes

- Industry news and updates

- A referral programme.

Measure your success and set goals based on your objectives, according to the types and numbers of candidates you most want to attract. Develop a communication strategy to connect with your passive candidates and you might never struggle to fill a role again.

Creating a smooth candidate experience

The most successful consultants look for ways to connect with candidates personally throughout the recruitment process. No matter what market you're operating in, top talent is top talent. Staffing firms that stand ready to deliver a strong customer experience will win out.

Candidate attraction

The first interaction a candidate has with you is usually when they review a job advert. Note advert, not a job description. You need to show potential candidates why this could be their dream job. What does it offer them in terms of career challenge and reward. Don't just list out a long list of requirements and responsibilities as emailed to you by your client, you need to make it shine. Highlight the company culture, the staff perks and their diversity and inclusion policies.

Consider how you can best promote the role too. It's not just about posting it onto job boards and waiting for candidates to come to you. Actively promote the role via your own website that should be Google-optimised, as well as via social media, showcasing the best parts of the job.

The application process

When a candidate applies to your agency, they have shown a willingness to be considered for a role. But this doesn't mean they're 100% sold on it, or right for it. You need to evaluate their suitability, whilst assessing their potential match for other open vacancies or for clients you represent. Probe for information that wasn't included in their initial application to open more avenues that will help you place them. Most importantly, ensure that everything is recorded within searchable fields within your recruitment CRM, otherwise the information gathered was in vain.

Interview preparation

Find out how the interview is going to be conducted and prepare the candidate accordingly with a thorough brief. How they present themselves may differ depending on whether it's over the phone, in person or even via Zoom.

With so many interviews taking place over video now, it's crucial that your candidates feel confident. Suggest helpful tips or point them in the direction of free resources, as well as potential interview questions and coach them through tricky responses.

Lasting impressions

Once a candidate has been placed, that shouldn't be the end of their journey with you. Check in with them at the end of their first week to see how they are doing. Even better, send them a card congratulating them on their new role.

Encourage them to complete a review of your agency on Google or Trustpilot, or a personal recommendation on your LinkedIn profile.

Essentially consider how you would want to be treated as a candidate – with respect and regular communication – and you won't go far wrong.

Keeping your recruitment team motivated

There's no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has plunged various industries into a time of crisis. No matter how well you run a business, external forces will test you, your culture, and your resolve. Leaders are constantly processing the future, and your employees are watching to see how confident you are and how clearly you see the situation. They look to you for emotional fuel and signs that everything will be OK.

Motivation is not black and white, and you can't expect your team to feel on top form at all times. But, there are strategies that can help you inspire your team and ensure everyone is well looked after.

Celebrate their achievements

Whether it's a minor win or a huge victory, take the time to celebrate as a team and acknowledge the work that went into it. By recognising a job well done, you're giving your team the impetus to continue to work hard. Make the time to acknowledge your teams' personal highs too - remember their birthday, their work anniversary and other project milestones.

Continue professional development

Provide training opportunities which will help your team perform better and help them feel more motivated. Many employees are struggling with imposter syndrome at the moment, second guessing their abilities. Re-energise them to bolster the skills they already have and those they could develop to improve their performance.

Ensure they know how to use all the software and tools to the best effect such as your recruitment CRM. Lunch and learns can be a great way for teams to share knowledge and best practice tips and tricks, as well as another opportunity to connect.

Stay in touch

Anxiety is running high amongst teams, especially those more used to seeing each other on a daily basis. Make sure you're checking in with them to review their work tasks and mental wellbeing and offer support if their confidence is wavering.

Take the time to understand the level of contact each team member needs. Some people will be happy with a team meeting once or twice a week, others may prefer a ten-minute catch up every morning to run through what they're doing that day. It's a delicate balancing act when it comes to communicating in the current climate. No one wants a manager who's checking up on them every five minutes, but it's important you know how your team are faring – and this may change from day to day.

Be flexible to their needs

With schools closed, a small child will inevitably pop up on a video call from time to time. A team member may prefer to go for a walk in the middle of the day when it's still light, and then work a bit later in the evening. Flexibility at the moment is key to keeping your team motivated and accepting that we're all having to do things differently.

Team motivation is critical to your business. By communicating effectively and providing support when things get tough, you can rest assured that they will remain engaged. Not just today, but in the months

Managing client relationships in a remote world

You're working from home and it's unlikely you will see clients face-to-face for quite some time. So, what can you do to maintain and build your client relationships during this time?

The same principles still apply when you're trying to build rapport or pitch yourself to a new client remotely. You're just building relationships in a different way - over the phone, video or email.

Whether in person or not, what is a constant is the need to make sure you're offering value.

Provide transparent communication

Having a system and a routine for how you keep in touch will offer some consistency and certainty. You don't want to bombard your clients during an already stressful time, but you also don't want to sporadically check-in months apart.

Ask your clients how they'd prefer to catch up with you. Would they prefer an email or a phone call? Maybe they live their life on Whatsapp or are new-found fans of Zoom. Perhaps there's a time of day that is better – first thing before they get caught in meetings, or on a Friday afternoon? Work out what works best for them and track in your recruitment CRM with the relevant alerts to make your life easier.

Focus on building trust

Before you pick up the phone or send that email, don't focus on the sale, focus only on building trust. Reach out to your clients and prospects when there is nothing in it for you. In the current environment, show your clients that you want to understand what is most important to them. Then help them with that if you are able to.

Offer value and knowledge

Could you offer free online training, webinars or relevant insights about the market? If you are a member of a trade body, such as the REC, TEAM or APSCO, keep abreast of their bulletins and industry reviews so you can talk knowledgeably about matters such as IR35 and the likely impact of Brexit on Right to Work checks.

Share relevant articles, guides, factsheets, infographics or videos. The current situation has brought considerable new challenges which businesses haven't had to deal with before. Advice and guidance from consultants will be greatly appreciated.

Keep things positive

More than ever, now is the time to build human relationships with candidates, clients and your colleagues. You don't need to pretend like everything's okay at the moment. You can be positive and uplifting without being unrealistic about the situation. While everything is still filled with uncertainty, let your clients know you're here for them as a reliable resource.

Ways to improve business and consultant productivity

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, millions of people were already working from home. But in the last year, many more have been forced to work from home to reduce the spread of infection. As remote working becomes the accepted norm, recruitment agencies are facing a very strange test of their productivity.

No matter what business you're in, every minute counts. There are around 40 hours in the working week per employee and making these hours as productive as possible is essential to your bottom line. In the recruitment industry, just like everywhere else, increased productivity is key. It could put you ahead of your competition, or the lack of it could see you fall behind.

As automation takes a firm hold, the effective adoption of your recruitment CRM is essential to keep up. Not only in terms of making your volumes of data organised and accessible, but by bringing additional value to speed up processes and free up your time. Ultimately, you need to reduce, eradicate or automate time-consuming tasks to enhance your productivity.

So many crucial, yet routine tasks can be completed quickly and easily through tools such as screening software for better worker compliance management. Not only does automation simplify and streamline the recruitment process, but it also increases the accuracy of the data because there is less scope for human error.

Which tasks can be automated?

Virtually every stage across your agency and recruitment lifecycle can be enhanced through technology – even more so if the platforms are integrated from front to back office operations including:

- Automatic Google for jobs optimisation
- Multi-job posting to job boards
- CV parsing from web applications to your CRM
- Searching your database through intuitive search
- Scheduling temps into shifts across multiple clients
- Right to Work checks
- Automated compliance expiry alerts
- KPI reporting and analytics

Tasks involving critical thinking and human intuition should therefore be the focus for consultants and managers. When the technology works best, it gives you freedom to do more.

Have you got the right tech for your business?

The pandemic has put into sharp perspective how essential it is to have the right technology in place with robust support and security. Technology has been elevated from a digital-first approach to cloud everywhere, for everyone.

The big benefits of harnessing the right technology for your business are that it facilitates:

Proactive sourcing allowing you to leverage the assets within your own candidate database (and thereby reduce your cost of candidate attraction).

Improved consultant retention and billing – the two are intrinsically linked, and both are key success drivers for your business.

Professional business image - your teams will judge you by the tools you offer them, your consultants and clients by the accuracy and ease of transactions, especially when it comes for example to how they are paid or billed.

Raised productivity – your website parsing CVs directly into your recruitment CRM that is integrated with Right to Work and other compliance checks and feeding into your pay and bill system. Sounds great, right, so what is stopping you?

Superior candidate experience – evidence with a better website navigation and registration process (such as being able to Apply with LinkedIn), adopting mobile solutions to improve worker communication.

Collaborative working - team building becomes easier when everyone is working from the same system with greater visibility and opportunity for collaboration.

Better insights –meaningful reporting and analytics using the data within your recruitment CRM should give you a steer on what and who is doing well and where you have opportunity for improvement.

Innovation – new technologies, such as offering your temporary workers the ability to draw down on what they have already earned, will set you apart from your competitors.

Accelerate candidate attraction and client engagement

As the main hub of all inbound traffic, your website should represent your brand and messaging, as well as being fully optimised to help attract and convert both candidates and clients. With more time on our hands, now could be a good opportunity to conduct a website audit to check whether your digital footprint is sufficient to give you a strong start this year.

With the mindset that your website should be a revenue generator, consider whether it is promoting you to your best potential, and reducing your spend on other candidate sourcing, such as job boards.

Don't stick with just any CRM, get the right CRM

If your chosen CRM is no longer making your people as productive as they should be because it isn't responsive or intuitive, it's time to take a look at what else is out there that could help you perform better. The very purpose of recruitment software is to find, manage and process your candidates faster than your competitors. It should be working as a lead generator helping you to build and maintain client relationships. Each business is different and therefore your CRM has to be right for your own specific goals, service and operating style.

Learn more about how **Access Recruitment CRM** can get you off to a flying start.

Use analytics to make data-driven decisions

We live in a time of data and information, so using analytics should now be a number one practice for all agencies. Implementing the right business intelligence software will give you key insights about your business quickly. Many CRMs will link analytics software so that you can customise dashboards and gain visibility on all recruitment metrics, such as KPIs, interviews booked, placements made and registered applicants.

Compliance peace of mind

Recruitment used to involve vast amounts of time poring over CRB checks, bad passport photos and old records to ensure candidates were squeaky clean. Now screening software offers much more than just a way of replacing an arduous admin task. It actually improves your time-to-hire, onboards candidates with less resource and a better digital experience, and keeps you safe from hefty legal fines.

Access Screening automates the whole screening process (including Right to Work and background checks) in just minutes, eliminating the possibility for human error. Discover how Access Screening helped Rullion to reduce the time taken to perform background checks by 53%.

Improve integration with your back office functions

The systems and tools your back office rely on should be able to integrate with your front office technology. The disconnect that can often happen between billing and non-billing individuals in a business is largely fostered by miscommunication and separate working habits. It's crucial to bring both departments together with the right technology, so that they are working from integrated systems. Less time will be lost chasing invoices, working through miscommunications and chasing one another. Software such as Access Pay and Bill is IR35 ready and will keep control of client billings, contractor payments and wages accurately.

Engage and retain the best workers

Gain competitive advantage with an enhanced candidate offering to attract and retain your temporary workers. Not only do you retain workers, which is important in skills short industries, but you are able to offer more consistent levels of service to your clients by placing candidates that have successfully worked you before. Access EarlyPay is new to the industry and gives temp workers flexible access to their earnings with on-demand pay. What's more, it's cash neutral with no impact on normal payroll processes.

Access Recruitment offers an unrivalled portfolio of recruitment technologies.

Whatever size your business is or aspires to be, our cloud software covers the entire recruitment lifecycle, available as integrated or standalone solutions. **Click below to find out more.**

Pay staff and bill clients efficiently with Access Pay and Bill or managed service

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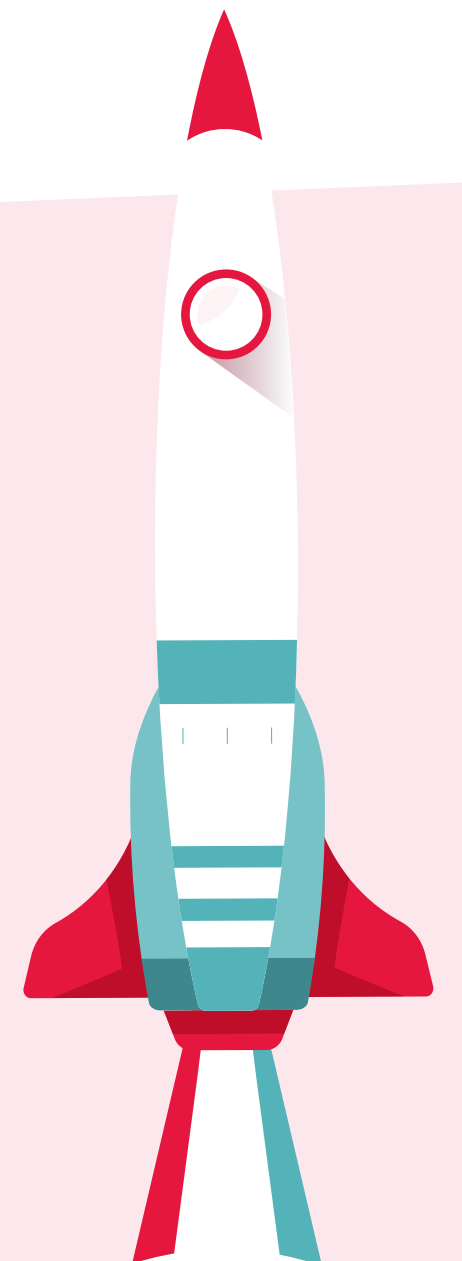
About Access Recruitment

Access helps the UK's top agencies to simplify the everyday running of their recruitment business to fuel efficiency and productivity, control costs and enable growth. By bringing together best of breed products onto one platform we take care of everything from sourcing, screening and attracting the right candidates, paying workers, contractors and candidates right through to billing clients and managing cash collection. This connected and collaborative way of working brings together every department within your recruitment business – giving you the freedom to focus on clients and candidates.

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