



Online Accounting Software

# BUILDING YOUR TEAM GUIDE

Building a team can be one of the most demanding aspects of running a business. As your business grows, so inevitably does your need for more people, but hiring the right team can be a challenge for companies, big or small. If you run your own business you might be used to doing everything, but you can't carry on being a jack of all trades for ever if you want to grow. At some point, you're going to need some help.

### Taking the plunge

As your business expands, you'll need to take on staff or train your existing workforce in order to meet demand for your products or services. It might be that you already have employees and are looking to expand the team, or you're a sole trader thinking about taking on staff for the first time. Building a team will allow you to delegate responsibilities and take advantage of new and different skills.

It's vital to get your team right as this will define and shape the future of your business. It can also be a bit of a headache and a drain on your valuable time. The recruitment process needs a lot of attention. But putting in the extra time and energy is likely to pay off in the long run.

When making the decision to recruit, there are some important factors that you need to consider, such as the legalities, the financial implications and timing. Timing is all-important. If you recruit too early, you might be faced with cash flow problems. Too late and you may be unable to meet demand for your products or services and miss out on new business opportunities.

You don't need a big recruitment budget or HR department to find new people, but it's important that you develop a brand people will be attracted to.

Don't underestimate the power of your brand when it comes to recruiting the right people. Done right, your brand will promote you and your business all day, every day and reach out to your community and beyond.

Check out our [Top 10 Branding Tips Guide](#).

## Steps to building your team

The challenge is building up a team that is financially viable for your business. It's important to set the right framework, hire good people and trust and support them to succeed.

1. **Business goals.** First you need to define your goals and establish where you're going as a business. There might be an opportunity you want to make the most of or a problem you need to solve.

What does the company do well? What does it need to start doing better? This will help you think about the type of employer you want to be and develop an employer brand which candidates will aspire to be part of.

2. **Your company culture.** The team you build will help establish the culture and tone of the business. It's important to establish some values to guide your business as it grows that employees can share in.

Employing a team that shares in your vision will be important if you want them to share your passion and drive to build the proper foundations for a successful business.

Make sure you convey your brand values. What does your company stand for? Why would people want to work for you?

3. **Skills.** Identify the skills, disciplines, competencies and qualities your team needs to have to help you achieve your goals. Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. Are you getting bogged down with the finances, but don't have a head for figures?

It might be time to employ someone to do this. The time saved could well be worth the money spent. For some, taking on an apprentice allows a business to benefit from the skills employees develop as they train both on and off the job.

You can also improve the range and level of skills in your business by training up existing staff. And giving staff new training opportunities can increase their loyalty to your company and improve their productivity.

- 4. Behaviours.** Once you've decided what skills you require you should also think about the behaviours that will be conducive to a positive team dynamic. Set some ground rules on how you expect the team to work together, communicate, plan, meet and so forth.

You can review and refresh these expectations as your business grows and also use them as a point of reference to resolve any misunderstandings that may arise.

Great teams are made up of people who complement each other, so don't be tempted to employ candidates just because you like them. If you use the above as a guide you'll hopefully end up with candidates that fit with your business needs. Make sure the people you have in mind share your ethos, rather than hiring someone who just wants a job.

### Rewards and benefits

To create the right working environment and to motivate your team, you need to think hard about the rewards and benefits that matter to them. It's not always about pay – you need to get to know your employees and find out what makes them tick.

Make sure what you're offering is competitive, but also consider alternative rewards such as extra holiday, training, trips away or gym membership. Other factors to consider are the importance of recognition, responsibility and progression.

### Finding the right people

This is critical - plan ahead – don't wait until you're desperate for staff. If you've already started to build a team, look at existing employees who might have the required skill set or could be trained to take on a new role.

Ask existing employees and contacts to recommend people and use social media sites. LinkedIn is particularly relevant if you are looking to fill a professional services role.

Develop relationships with recruitment agencies to make the most of their resources but bear in mind that recruitment agencies can charge up to 20% of the employee's first year's salary.

## Job descriptions

Once you've identified the type of people you need, you can start to think about the job description. It's important to be honest, clear and accurate on what the role entails and the skills and expertise you're looking for when advertising for a role.

There's no point attracting potential candidates, only for them to then decline an offer because it wasn't quite what they were looking for. Stress the opportunities and be clear on career progression. What can you offer talented people to make them want to work for you?

## The recruiting process

Recruiting can be time consuming if you don't have someone with sole responsibility for it in your company. You might want to engage a recruitment agency to assist in advertising, attracting the right candidates and sifting through CVs of potential candidates, which can all take up valuable time.

## Contract types

You don't necessarily need to take on full-time or part-time employees to grow your business. Alternatives include fixed-term contracts, agency staff, freelancers, consultants or contractors.

Remember that as an employer, the tax and employment responsibilities you have for your team will depend on the type of contracts you give them and their employment status. Talk to your financial advisor if you've any doubts so as to avoid a costly mistake.

Additionally, depending on the type of contract, you'll have certain obligations around working hours, staff dismissal and redundancies, resignations, dismissals, redundancy pay, statutory leave and time off, for example paternity, maternity, sick leave and holiday entitlement.

Check out our [Human Resources Guide](#). It's a really useful HR checklist for small businesses.

## Employer responsibilities

Some key considerations when employing staff, especially for the first time, are set out below.

- **Salary and payroll** – if employing full-time or part-time staff, you'll need to agree a salary (at least the National Minimum Wage) and set up a payroll to help you manage tax and national insurance contributions.
- **Work eligibility** – you'll need to check if someone has the legal right to work in the UK.
- **References** – obtain references from previous employees and carry out employment checks as necessary.
- This is especially important where your employees may be people working with children and vulnerable adults, in which case the Garda Central Vetting Unit will deal with requests to provide information on certain prospective employees.
- **Employer insurance** – you need employers' liability insurance as soon as you become an employer.
- **Job descriptions** – send details of the job (including terms and conditions) in writing to your employee (if you're employing someone for more than one month).
- **Health and safety** – understand your obligations around accidents at work, health and safety laws and workplace conditions.
- **Pensions** – employers with at least one member of staff now have pension responsibilities through pensions auto-enrolment.

## Building your team – a checklist

Think about the skills and expertise your business will need in the future to meet your goals.

Plan ahead to find the right people at the right time.

Don't forget about your existing staff.

Think about the type of employer you want to be and the values your staff need to share.

Set ground rules about the type of behaviour you expect from staff.

Create appropriate awards and benefits, not just pay.

Be clear and honest about job descriptions.

Get help with the recruitment process if you can.

Consider different types of employment contracts and remember your responsibilities as an employer.



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