

Mitchells & Butlers

Mitchells & Butlers is the leading operator of managed pubs and pub restaurants in the UK. With around 2,000 outlets offering food, drink, entertainment and accommodation in prime locations across the country, Mitchells & Butlers market leading brands include All Bar One, Vintage Inns, Toby Carvery, Ember Inns and O'Neill's, together with some of the most classic and historical pubs in the country.

Mitchells & Butlers employ over 44,000 people in a customer service focused business that relies on the quality of its people to contribute to the company's overall success.

In November 2007 the organisation went live with a new online recruitment system, developed in partnership with Changeworknow, who were chosen for their expertise in designing brand enhancing online application processes and delivering bottom line business results.

Alison Bance, HR manager for Mitchells & Butlers, talks about how the new online recruitment system has **significantly** changed the way the business attracts and recruits talent.

"Before the launch of our online system we used a mix of paper based applications, enquiries from job boards and speculative CVs. This approach meant we needed to manage a range of application formats and in many cases we didn't even have the same basic information on each candidate," she explains.

An internal working party revealed a lack of consistency when it came to screening candidates - along with a process that placed very high administrative burden on the HR team.

High numbers of poorly qualified candidates was also a problem and

many candidates who were invited to interview did not attend, adding unnecessary costs to the process.

Online recruitment offered the business the opportunity to hire better quality applicants and position Mitchells & Butlers, and its many brands, as a good employer and a great place to work.

"The solution we adopted needed to be the 'best fit' for each brand, each of which had their own recruitment priorities. Internal consultation was paramount to our success and flexibility from the solution we chose was critical." explains Alison.

Developing an organisation wide system that would serve all the brands was going to mean doing things differently. Changeworknow led the change process in conjunction with Alison. Area managers and recruitment managers representing each brand got involved in developing the candidate specifications which ensured the behaviours and skills required for working with each Mitchells & Butlers' brands were incorporated.

"This was probably a bigger challenge than we anticipated," admits Alison. "So it was important to make colleagues within the business aware of the benefits they could expect from an integrated approach to online recruitment."

Adopting a candidate focus

At the head of Mitchells & Butlers' online recruitment system is a clear focus on the needs of candidates. Online questionnaires allow candidates the means to quickly assess their suitability for the roles in which they are interested make a choice whether or not to apply.

The Mitchells & Butlers HR team also developed a 'candidate charter' which they proactively use to monitor and manage their own performance. For example, ensuring they respond to applications received within 48 hours, and contacting candidates with the outcome of their interview within the same timeframe.

"We are open with candidates about our charter and commitment to them and are focused on how we can get better at recruitment. The data from the online system is critical in helping us achieve this objective," says Alison.

Measuring the recruitment results

The online recruitment system at Mitchells & Butlers has already delivered **significant** results.

In the 12 months up to January 2009 over 22,000 candidates started to apply online for a role with the company. Following immediate feedback on their suitability **58%** of applicants decided not to continue with their application. The result was 9400 qualified and suitable applications received at a rate of approximately 765 per month.

Further results can be seen below:

- The number of vacancies across the business has reduced on average by 100 per month.
- Recruitment agency costs have reduced by £55,000 in the last year.
- Average time to hire reduced by three weeks.

"Our new approach to online recruitment has also delivered positive change within the HR team," says Alison. *"The new system has given the team more control over their work and the candidates they are working with. Now when applications are received there is a structured way of managing them."*

- 95% of hiring managers felt the new recruitment process was as good as or an improvement on the previous process.

Candidates also seem to like the system. *"I like that you receive feedback from your application immediately, as then if you do not meet certain criteria you know you will be unsuccessful and do not get your hopes up,"* says one prospective employee.

The recruitment team are receiving feedback too, *"Candidates are openly telling us that our recruitment process is slick and that they want to work with us. Because of the new recruitment system we can offer candidates an interview very quickly which ensures there is a real professionalism and efficiency to our approach,"* says Alison.

In conclusion

"We are using our online recruitment system to our advantage now. We are able to see which brands are the most popular and in turn can direct our attraction strategy appropriately. We just couldn't do this with our previous, paper-based system. We can also generate manpower planning reports to gauge the number of candidates approaching us and assess exactly who we have in our talent bank," say Alison.

The future of Mitchells & Butlers' online recruitment is very positive. *"The culture at Mitchells & Butlers is one of challenging ourselves and seeing how we can do things better. With our new and successful approach to online recruitment we can continue to do this whilst continuing to attract the best candidates to the business,"*

