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# the employment offer

**EMPLOYERS ARE FINDING** it increasingly difficult to source skilled staff to fill vacancies within their organisations.

While there are still good quality candidates available, employers need to approach the employment process seriously and resourcefully to ensure they are maximising their chances of attracting and securing the best candidates for available roles.

The strong demand for experienced event professionals means that employers in the MICE industry no longer have the “upper hand” when it comes to recruiting candidates. Candidates are now demanding better working conditions, higher salaries, competitive benefits, bonuses and flexible working hours. In addition, the best candidates are often considering multiple employment offers so employers need to know how best to approach applicants when making an offer of employment.

Before making a recruitment decision, employers need to carefully assess any interviewed candidates against their selection criteria. Employers should also carry out reference checks on those applicants considered most appropriate for the role. Create a shortlist of candidates in order of their suitability, taking into consideration notes taken during the interview, reference check results and colleague input where appropriate. The benefit of creating a shortlist is that in the event that the most suitable candidate declines a job offer, employers can refer to this list for other possible contenders.

Making an employment decision should ideally take a few days only. Employers no longer have the luxury of spending a large amount of time mulling over potential candidates because the skills shortage means that applicants will be considering multiple positions and equally likely to be considering multiple offers of employment. Employers need to be decisive and maintain momentum at this time. Delaying the recruitment decision can send a negative impression to the market, but more importantly, candidates will very likely lose interest and secure employment elsewhere.

It is also important to maintain contact with candidates during the decision making process. Employers should provide a realistic timeframe of when candidates can expect to receive feedback on their application. Also, it is important to contact candidates who

have been unsuccessful and remain professional and helpful at all times – who knows, they might end up being a client, colleague or even a superior in the future! However, it is a good idea to delay advising other shortlisted candidates of a recruitment decision until the new recruit is secured in writing. Keep in touch with other shortlisted candidates during this time, and if your first choice ultimately declines the role you can then approach other options on your short list.

Once you have selected your preferred candidate for the role, you should let the successful applicant know that the job offer is subject to any applicable conditions placed on your hiring decision. For example, reference checking, health screening, proof of education/identity documents, etcetera. By doing this, you can ensure that you secure a candidate without timely delays and still have the option to retract the offer if unexpected issues do arise.

An employment offer can be made verbally, by letter or via email. If you are going to make a verbal offer, it must also be confirmed in writing to establish that an employment relationship exists. Assuming that all goes to plan and the candidate accepts, an employment contract should ideally be drawn up and signed by both parties.

The employment contract should clarify the employment terms and conditions. Make sure your new employee understands their job classification/title, job responsibilities, working hours, wages/salary and any other benefits, award classification and conditions if applicable, superannuation entitlements, the commencement date (and finishing date if it is a fixed term contract), any probationary period, notice periods for termination of employment, as well as any specific workplace rules and procedures. This contract should be signed by the employer and the successful candidate should formally accept the offer by signing a copy of the letter and returning it to you before employment commences.

Employers need to utilise these steps when making an offer of employment if they want to maximise their chances of securing the best available candidates in an increasingly competitive market.

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