



DTI

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL SERVICE LAY MEMBERS

Case Study

Organisation

The DTI on behalf of the Secretary of State were responsible for the recruitment and appointment of Lay Members for Employment Tribunals for the previous and the 2005 campaign. Following a tender process NRG Group were selected to work in partnership with DTI to project manage and deliver the 2005 campaign requirement of 377 appointments across 32 regions of the UK. (Future campaigns will become the responsibility of the Department of Constitutional Affairs, DCA).

Employment Tribunals are a judicial body established by law and play a distinctive part in the British justice system and aim to provide speedy, accessible justice. They play an integral part in the provision of fairness at work and the enforcement of individual employment rights. The work of the tribunals is supported by the Employment Tribunal Service ETS. The Council for Employment Tribunal Members (CETMA) provide individual lay membership support.

Lay Member appointments are voluntary with a commitment of a minimum of 15 sitting days per year. Renewal of appointments and numbers come around every three years. Prior to 1999 appointments were made on nomination or recommendation resulting in members coming from similar backgrounds and age groups. The 1999, 2002 and this 2005 campaign aimed to improve representation to match the diversity of the UK working population and claimants. The attraction and selection process is now broader and although these appointments do not come within the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments they are being made using a process which broadly follows the Commissioner's Code of Practice as best practice." This included evaluation of a candidates application for selection as competency based rather than solely on an individuals work history.

The Business Requirement

The key challenge set for NRG by the multiple stakeholders, DTI, ETS, the ET President for England and Wales and the ET President for Scotland was their very strong desire to continue to see significant improvements in current member profiles to reflect the diversity of claimants.

The attraction strategy clearly promoted the opportunities to include key under-represented groups such as gender, age, minority ethnics, disabled, religious backgrounds and Welsh speakers. As well as drawing from people who were not necessarily fully conversant in employment law but had hands on experience of every day workplace issues either from the employee or employer perspective, irrespective of size of organisation, status or hierarchy.

NRG Group were further challenged to provide all relevant campaign management information, recruitment and diversity statistics in clear and concise formats to all stakeholders. As well as keep all candidates fully informed throughout and provide necessary feedback and management of any resulting issues.

The NRG Solution

With a very tight time scale to plan, organise, update and implement the recruitment attraction and selection process, NRG appointed a Senior Project Manager and experienced team. The team had a window of approximately six weeks to pro-actively promote and generate awareness of the campaign. Contact was made with all large public and private sector employers, every regions County Councils and Small Business links, Trade Unions, Professional Bodies, Minority Ethnic, Women's, Gay and Church groups. All communication was supported by a fully informative dedicated website with links to every organisations own intranet and websites. The site additionally allowed for a registration of interest to be logged and download of application pack.

A comprehensive advertising campaign covered national press and in those areas that had previously produced lower interest the local press was also used. In addition professional, ethnic and saga publications together with radio carried further advertisements. Banner web advertising was included on a variety of sites to hit as many under-represented groups as possible, again with links back to the dedicated site for more information and application.

Dedicated telephone response management and web application allowed for 19000 registrations of interest, issue of 10,000 applications and return of 3407. Notably the emphasis put on ensuring candidates were fully informed and able to self screen against relevant criteria and skills resulted in close match and good quality applications with significant representation from the targeted groups.

Fully qualified and trained assessors sifted the applications against the given criteria and competencies outlined in the application information pack. This was very strictly adhered to, with very tough and high benchmarks set to reduce what were essentially very good relevant applications down to 899 for assessment and interview. Allowing approximately 2.5 assessment interviews to one appointment.

The organisation, full support and convening of the assessment/interview boards, (ETS Chairman, existing Lay Member and a DTI person) together with allocating candidate appointment slots was planned and carried out both timely and efficiently. Feedback from both the boards and the candidates was very encouraging and well received.

Each stage of the recruitment process was fully audited for quality and compliance by senior NRG staff and all stakeholders together with an independent Project Manager appointed by DTI.

Management and statistical information was collated and available at each agreed stage showing the full diversity breakdowns and outcomes to employer and employee side merit list for each region. These merit lists formed the basis of recommendation to short list for final ministerial approval by the SOS.

All candidate communication and management through the lengthy flow of the recruitment process to offer of appointment or non-appointment, including complaints, appeals and compliments was conducted efficiently and professionally.

The Business Benefit

The DTI Recruitment Team, whilst fully able to effectively recruit singular or small scale exercises, recognised the implication of managing the high volume of interest to these appointments. As well as the requirement to ensure fair treatment of all applicants as individuals.

NRG Group were able to provide this high profile, high volume campaign with a dedicated qualified and fully trained team of people able to manage the wide diversity of candidate's from application to appointment. Technically supported by a full call management telephony system, electronic and on-line application facility and project specific recruitment database.



The DTI appointed an internal Project Manager to work closely with NRG Group and were confident that the infrastructure around the campaign provided an independent and consistent evaluation and selection process which followed the OCPA recruitment guidelines. The service level to all stakeholders was continuous, effective and well received.

Importantly, the cost of the service provision was controlled and budgeted for throughout the campaign.

A full campaign report was completed, which provided all the information and statistical data for all stakeholder evaluation and publication.

Cathie Haugh, DTI Recruitment Manager, Employment Tribunal Lay Member, 2005 recruitment campaign, said: "This has been a very high profile and demanding campaign requiring careful candidate management and clear communication throughout. NRG Group have demonstrated their project management capability and ability to be innovative in the attraction strategy resulting in a significant improvement in diversity at appointment."