

## HM REVENUE AND CUSTOMS

### *Case Study*

#### **The Organisation**

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) was formed on 18 April 2005, following the merger of Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise Departments. HMRC is responsible for collecting the bulk of tax revenue, as well as paying Tax Credits and Child Benefits, and strengthening the UK's frontiers. NRG Group started working with Inland Revenue in January 2002 prior to the formation of HMRC, during a period of significant change.

With over 40 million customers HMRC receives more than 40 million telephone calls per year. This huge demand means constantly seeking new and imaginative ways of working with customers to provide them with a friendlier and more effective service.

Following a successful pilot site, 6 new Contact Centres have been opened since early 2002; now employing over 3000 Customer Contact Advisers throughout the UK. The opening of these Contact Centres together with the expansion of existing contact centres and administration centres for the implementation of the Tax Credit system has been one of the largest ever Public Sector recruitment programmes.

#### **The Business Requirement**

HMRC recognised that to recruit high volume staff and to meet opening dates would put a tremendous strain on HR departments. Therefore, it was essential to bring in recruitment partners with the commercial knowledge and expertise of recruiting and assessing a high volume of candidates for the new sites. The ability to be flexible and adapt proven contact centre recruitment methods and processes to meet the Civil Service Commissioners Recruitment Code was a major requirement to ensure fair and open competition reflecting the UK's very diverse population.

Following a very thorough tender process, NRG Group was selected on its proven track record and ability to be all of the above. Additionally, we were able to introduce technology which, would for the first time, capture and manage on one database the full recruitment process and deliver comprehensive management information, including diversity statistics, at each process stage of the campaign.

#### **The NRG Solution**

With a very tight time scale to plan, organise and implement the first recruitment campaign, NRG set up a project team of experienced recruitment specialists to work closely with HMRC Human Resource staff and an Occupational Psychologist.

#### ***Selection process design***

HMRC look for people best able to do the job based on knowledge, attributes and abilities, in addition to formal qualifications: this needed to be reflected in the assessment and selection process. Core competencies for both the role of Team Leader and Contact Centre Adviser were matched to suitable competency based assessments and interviews, which were thorough, fair and fun to deliver and participate in as well as reflecting the candidate's ability to do the job.

#### ***Responding to changing needs***

An unexpected challenge was faced following the opening of the first four centres at the end of 2002 and early 2003 when the new tax credit technical system was unable to meet public demand. NRG supported the full process and delivery of 2500 Administrators to fixed term appointments, working part-time, outside of business hours wherever seats and terminals could be found available throughout HMRC nationwide sites.

2004 saw the opening of two new Contact Centre sites in a very challenging and immovable timescale set by the Government. Location agreement, building refurbishment, technical installation and recruitment of 1200 staff was successfully completed in just four months of intense activity. NRG's proven robust recruitment process, skills, knowledge and confidence to achieve, ensured that quality, delivery numbers and timescales were not compromised.

### ***Multi-level recruitment***

Not all projects are high volume: specialist exercises to carry out specific middle or senior management roles have also been successfully carried out by NRG specialist consultants.

### ***Project Management***

For each regional project all applicant information is captured on a client specific recruitment database and progressed throughout each stage of the process with all candidate communication and management recorded. Call handling and telephone interviews are closely monitored and recorded for consistency and performance management in line with the Data Protection Act. Management information and statistics are produced and monitored daily to ensure campaigns are proactively kept on track for delivery. Management reports are presented to HMRC at agreed stages or on demand.

### ***Assessment centres***

Dedicated mobile teams of trained and qualified NRG Assessors work across the sites continually, carrying out up to 48 individual assessments and interviews each day. A demanding and strenuous task, but one which proves very rewarding in successfully meeting required numbers for take up duty dates. Consistency and quality are continually maintained through continuous training and monitoring of the teams, as well as through regular audit procedures being carried out by both NRG Connect and HMRC auditor teams.

### ***Summary of Achievements***

An indication of the scale of recruitment NRG Connect has processed from February 2002 to December 2005 is:

- Over 100,000 telephone enquiries have been received
- Over 60,000 applications have been processed
- Over 40,000 telephone interviews have been carried out
- Over 25,000 assessments and interviews have been carried out
- Over 25,000 references have been requested and followed up
- Over 9000 permanent or fixed term appointments have been made UK wide
- Currently 68% of applications are made and returned electronically

To date (December 05) projects have been delivered constantly at all levels of appointment, each one presenting new challenges in terms of geography, timescale and individual site needs.

### ***Business Benefits***

Working in partnership with both HMRC Human Resources and HMRC Contact Centre team, NRG Connect has not only *met target numbers and deadlines* for start and go live dates, but have considerably contributed to HMRC's goal to mirror the full *diversity* of the public they service.

Both *internal and external applicants* have been processed, which has provided the mix of skills and experience needed to deliver a step change in the way HMRC communicates with its clients.

Working in partnership with NRG Connect has *given HMRC the confidence* that effective solutions and resources can be implemented and achieved whatever the nature and scale of their recruitment needs.

NRG Connect's rapid understanding of HMRC's service requirements has enabled us to be best placed to assist with additional recruitment of *senior appointments* as well as deliver Team Leader, Agent and Administrator roles.

**"HMRC has worked in partnership with NRG Connect to open a number of our Tax Credits Contact Centres across the UK and continue to work with them to ensure all centres are fully staffed. They have already recruited thousands of people for us, working to extremely demanding timescales to deliver our requirements on schedule every time"**

Karen Shepperson, HR & Learning Business partner for Contact Directorate