

How to ensure that the employer hires the right person

Case study with the Royal College of Physicians



Karen Haynes writes: The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is the leading body for physicians in the UK and internationally, with 36,000 members, over 400 staff, and a 500-year history. A patient-centred and clinically led organisation, the RCP's core mission is to improve patient care and reduce illness.

Linda Asamoah is Director of HR at the RCP. In this interview she gives an insight into successful recruitment to a role that required some skills in short supply, and how FJWilson helped by 'getting into the DNA of the organisation'.

KH: *Was the Learning and Organisational Development (L&OD) Partner role a challenging one to fill?*

LA: In the sense that we needed to re-advertise, yes. The role is split 50:50 between LD and OD. When we first advertised there was no shortage of candidates with 'LD' skills, but getting the 'OD' part was more difficult. We didn't appoint.

I learned two things from this experience. First, the need to be really explicit about our wants and needs. Secondly, that we did need someone with demonstrable ability and experience in OD.

KH: *At what stage did you engage FJWilson?*

LA: The second time of recruiting. It was a new move for us – we'd not worked with FJWilson before.



KH: *How did you find FJWilson's approach?*

LA: My point of contact in the FJWilson team was the Resourcing Manager, Dilly Clack. Dilly asked really searching questions about the role. Who will the person have to influence and negotiate with? Who will they need to demonstrate their skillset to? And so on.

This helped me think about what I *really* wanted. Would I be comfortable with someone who was more a learning facilitator than an OD specialist? Why was the role important in an organisational context?

Dilly was the only person who asked such in-depth questions. She made sure of getting a 360-degree appreciation of the role, the team, and the organisation.

KH: *How did that knowledge of your needs translate into supply of candidates?*

LA: Dilly presented a good selection of candidates who has been screened and briefed about both our vacancy and the RCP.

We had a telephone discussion stage before selection for face-to-face interviews. Of course, some candidates had experience that didn't match what was needed here. A good number we wanted to see as soon as possible!

The market was moving so quickly and we risked losing people with the OD experience we were seeking.

KH: *So how did that need to move quickly inform the interview process?*

LA: We needed a faster process that enabled quicker decision-making. I gathered a pool of interviewers – a diverse panel. We aimed to get candidates in for interviews the same week if possible.

It was a break with our convention, but we ensured fair assessments. We had to be agile – quickly assembling people from the pool of panellists. FJWilson were very responsive to this schedule.

The candidates we saw at interview were all good people – any could probably have done the job. With FJWilson putting forward so many strong candidates we were now in a position to find the *best* people with the *best* organisational fit.



KH: *And you've now appointed one of those candidates?*

LA: Yes – after some negotiation.

FJWilson played a part there too. We had advertised the role as fixed-term and four days a week – because we'd dropped a part of the job description that didn't sit well with the rest of the role. However, I always had the option to make the post full-time in the future if organisational circumstances changed.

The candidate who proved the best person for the role was uncomfortable with the idea of moving from a full-time post, perhaps especially as the role also involves a future relocation. She was someone who Dilly had approached about the role and had not really been really looking for a move at the time.

FJWilson provides user feedback after the interview stage. Dilly's feedback about the candidate's reservations was really useful. We could see that, for the candidate, making the adjustments that the role required were real considerations. But to lose her would be a massive miss – so what could I do?

I thought about the issues Dilly had discussed with the candidate and fed back, such as the scope for working from home – and about what leverage I had to make adjustments.

The revised offer that I was able to make in the end made enough of a difference – our preferred candidate accepted the post.

KH: *A lot of hard work paid off in the end...*

LA: Yes, and I'd definitely recommend FJWilson as a search agency – I really enjoyed the 'boutique experience' and appreciated Dilly's (and the FJWilson researcher team's) tenacity. I'll certainly be coming back to FJWilson to help with future recruitment.