



ROBERT WALTERS WHITEPAPER

THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE CULTURE IN RECRUITING TOP TALENT

ROBERT WALTERS

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INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE CULTURE IN RECRUITING TOP TALENT

Finding people who not only possess the skills and experience to excel in a role, but who are also a good cultural fit with their employer is the ideal that hiring managers strive for when recruiting. However, questions around what constitutes company culture and how to communicate it effectively when recruiting remain a challenge.

Employers need to understand which aspects of a company's culture matter to professionals and identify how they can meet these needs to attract top talent. Clearly and effectively communicating the working culture of your business throughout the recruitment process is vital to finding candidates who will thrive within your organisation.

Based on a survey of over 1,000 professionals and hiring managers across the UK, this whitepaper identifies the aspects of company culture that have the greatest impact on the satisfaction and productivity of staff and explores the strategies that employers can use to identify and attract candidates who will embrace the culture of their company.

ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS

Robert Walters is a specialist professional recruitment consultancy, working with businesses of all sizes as a trusted recruitment partner.

With an international network of offices spanning 28 countries, we are perfectly positioned to help you find the very best skilled professionals. In the UK, we recruit specialists on a permanent, contract and interim basis, in the following areas:

- Accountancy & Finance
- Banking & Financial Services
- Executive Search
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Legal
- Procurement & Supply Chain
- Projects
- Secretarial & Business Support
- Tax
- Treasury

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Great Place to Work® UK is a consultancy specialising in workplace culture, helping to create exceptional, high performing workplaces where employees feel trusted and valued. They run the Best Workplace™ awards which enable the organisations they work with to celebrate their achievements, build their employer brand and inspire others to take action.

KEY STATISTICS

90%

of employers say it is very important to find candidates who are a good cultural fit

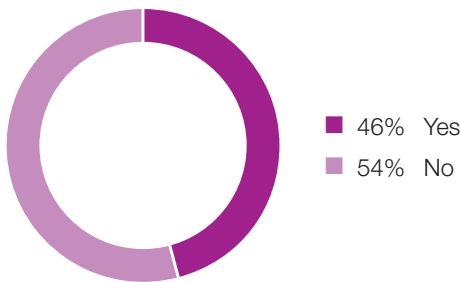
73%

of professionals have left a job because of poor cultural fit

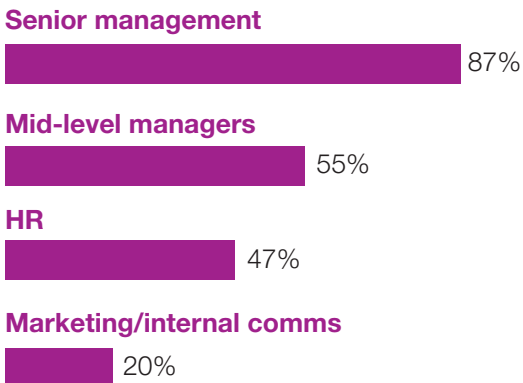
82%

of professionals have worked for an organisation where they disliked the company culture

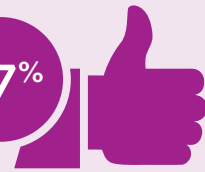
Do you engage recruitment firms to identify the qualities required for cultural fit?



Who should shape workplace culture?



87%



OF EMPLOYERS OFFER INDUCTION TO NEW STAFF ON COMPANY CULTURE AND VALUES

But...



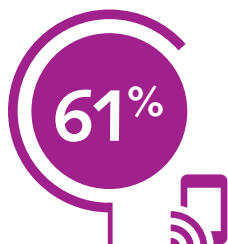
67%

OF PROFESSIONALS FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN MISLED ABOUT COMPANY CULTURE DURING THEIR INDUCTION

HOW DO PROFESSIONALS RESEARCH COMPANY CULTURE?



ASKING DURING THE INTERVIEW



FINDING MEDIA ARTICLES ABOUT THE COMPANY



USING ONLINE EMPLOYER REVIEW SITES



TALKING TO SUPPLIERS/PARTNERS



WHAT IS WORKPLACE CULTURE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Identifying what constitutes the “culture” of an organisation can be challenging. Broadly, the culture of an organisation can be described as “the way we do business”. This manifests as the values that underpin the way the business is run, impacting on the work environment, management, leadership, communications, workplace practices and a host of other factors.

For hiring managers, the challenge is both to understand the culture of the organisation (and what it strives to embody) and then to source people who are a match for that culture and share the same values.

The impact of good cultural fit

98% of employers and 97% of professionals agree that cultural fit between professionals and employers is important. This demonstrates that employers are right to place an emphasis on finding staff who are a good cultural fit, as professionals also consider it highly important.

Employers have many reasons to ensure that they find candidates who are a good cultural fit for their organisation. 81% of hiring managers believe that candidates are less likely to leave when working for an organisation where they are a good cultural fit and 85% believe that they will perform better at their job.



Richard Boyd
Associate
Director at
Robert Walters



Employers should not assume that finding someone who is a good cultural fit simply means recruiting professionals who are similar to their current staff. Finding new candidates who are a great cultural fit does not mean sacrificing diversity, but rather finding professionals from a range of backgrounds who share the values of your organisation.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A GOOD CULTURAL FIT?

90%



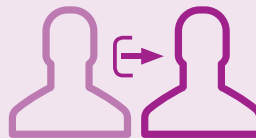
GREATER JOB
SATISFACTION

84%



IMPROVED JOB
PERFORMANCE

81%



LESS LIKELY
TO LEAVE

78%



INCREASED RESPECT
FOR THE COMPANY



90%

of employers say it is very important to find candidates who are a good cultural fit

CASE STUDY: BELRON - AUTOMOTIVE



Belron make use of the online platform Talent Rocket which allows them to search for candidates based on a specified cultural fit. Their recruitment process involves an assessment centre which includes a presentation, competency based interview and a role play or group discussion, as well as online questionnaires which assess personality preferences.

Candidates are also given the opportunity to come into the business and meet current employees and are encouraged to meet staff from across all levels of the business. Successful applicants who secure a role with the company are given feedback on why they were selected to ensure that they join the organisation with confidence and a sense of belonging.



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING YOUR WORKPLACE CULTURE?

Both employers (96%) and professionals (98%) agree that businesses have a responsibility to invest in their workplace culture, developing a clear set of values upon which to base practices, as well as reviewing these policies as the business grows and develops.

However, one of the biggest hurdles employers face when looking to build or develop their workplace culture is identifying the role played by different key stakeholders within the organisation in driving cultural change.

By creating a clear process for developing and implementing company culture employers can help to ensure that staff across the business are engaged with the organisation's ideals.

While senior managers are broadly perceived to have the most prominent role to play in shaping company culture, developing policies to reflect these ideals will require engagement from a wide range of stakeholders within the business.



Lucy Bisset
Associate
Director at
Robert Walters



Both employers and professionals regard shaping and developing company culture as a responsibility shared among the entire business, with every member of staff having a role to play.

Businesses should consider embracing this attitude by ensuring that all staff feel able to contribute to workplace culture and are encouraged to share their ideas and perspectives on how best to demonstrate and implement the company's core values.



WHO DO EMPLOYERS AND PROFESSIONALS THINK SHOULD SHAPE WORKPLACE CULTURE?

Senior management



Senior management are perceived as having the greatest responsibility for determining company culture.

Mid-level managers



Mid-level managers can reinforce the culture and values of the company, both through the way they interact with their teams and when recruiting new staff.

HR



HR teams can play a pivotal role in developing effective policies to implement the objectives and values in terms of company culture set by senior management.

Marketing/internal comms



Marketing departments have the opportunity to communicate company culture to current staff as well as to new potential hires.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKPLACE CULTURE IN ATTRACTING AND RETAINING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Given the importance professionals place on company culture, employers should consider the prominent role that their workplace culture can play in attracting and retaining the right professionals.

However, it is also crucial that employers recognise which aspects of company culture are most important to their employees and focus their efforts accordingly. By developing strategies to deliver on the needs of candidates in terms of company culture, employers can attract and retain professionals who are a good fit for the organisation and will deliver results.

WHAT MATTERS TO CANDIDATES:



LEVEL OF COLLABORATION



REMUNERATION PACKAGE



TRANSPARENT DECISION MAKING BY MANAGEMENT

In some cases employers misjudge which aspects of company culture are most significant to professionals. 77% of employers think social activities are important to candidates, but just 62% of candidates agree.

Similarly, while eight out of ten employers think that how performance is measured and rewarded is very important to candidates, just six out of ten candidates agree.

The broad range of what professionals value in terms of company culture compared to what employers consider important highlights the variety of areas which are encompassed by company culture.

Employers should consider the various policies and standards which make up their company culture and consider how these can be promoted or modified in order to ensure that they attract the best talent.

WHAT EMPLOYERS THINK MATTERS:



LEVEL OF COLLABORATION



HOW PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED AND REWARDED



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT/PROMOTION



Ahsan Iqbal
Associate Director
at Robert Walters



A positive company culture can offer employers a significant advantage when looking to attract top talent, but employers face the challenge of identifying which aspects of company culture matter most to professionals.

By encouraging current employees across all levels of seniority to share their thoughts about the organisation's culture, employers can gain valuable insights into which areas require their attention to attract top talent.





BUILDING A REPUTATION FOR HAVING A POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

To attract top calibre professionals employers must focus on first developing a positive workplace culture and then building a reputation for being a desirable place to work.

With candidates putting considerable emphasis on the company culture of a potential employer, businesses should consider taking advantage of a range of tools and communication strategies to build their reputation.

Employers can explore the potential to communicate their company culture during the interview process through current staff who are not directly involved in the hiring process.

90%

of professionals have researched the culture of a company before accepting a role

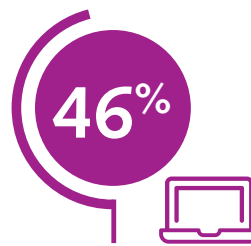
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TALKING TO SUPPLIERS/PARTNERS

By giving prospective candidates the opportunity to meet their future colleagues during the recruitment process, both applicants and employers can gain valuable insights into whether or not that professional is likely to excel within the company's culture.

Despite the advantages of giving candidates the chance to meet their potential colleagues to gain a better understanding of company culture, 33% of employers still do not offer this opportunity. 48% of professionals have never been given the chance to meet potential colleagues before being offered a role.



Habiba Khatoon
Associate Director
at Robert Walters



Given that the vast majority of candidates will research the culture of an organisation before accepting a role, employers must consider how their company is perceived.

As employer review sites become an increasingly popular resource, employers may need to monitor any reviews they receive and respond to any criticism in a constructive and professional way. While not every potential employee will be an appropriate cultural fit for your company, providing considered responses to online feedback demonstrates your willingness to engage with your staff and shows that the culture of your organisation is a priority for you.





48%

of professionals never met their colleagues during the interview process



CASE STUDY: WORLD WIDE TECHNOLOGY – IT AND TECH

World Wide Technology (WWT) assess all potential candidates based on a job performance matrix, measuring employees' rating for potential against both the job requirements and core values to identify applicants who possess a hybrid of both.

These candidates are then interviewed by the HR team who ask behavioural-based questions to explore the candidates' ethics and ideals to see how they would conduct themselves in various situations. This helps to determine whether the applicants will be a good cultural fit both within the specific team and the organisation as a whole. Potential colleagues will also interview the prospective candidates, before convening with the HR team to discuss whether the candidate is a good fit.

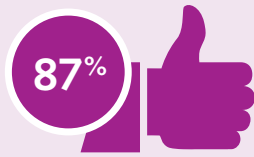


COMMUNICATING THE RIGHT MESSAGE WHEN RECRUITING AND ONBOARDING

While communicating the values and culture of an organisation to prospective candidates can help employers to secure staff who are a good cultural fit, induction into the company's culture should continue throughout the onboarding process.

By working with recruitment agencies to identify the qualities a professional will need in order to be a good cultural fit for the role, employers can help to ensure that they receive a shortlist of candidates who will thrive in their workplace.

However, more than half of employers (54%) do not take the opportunity to use recruitment agencies to help them define appropriate qualities relating to cultural fit for a role.



87%
OF EMPLOYERS OFFER INDUCTION TO NEW STAFF ON COMPANY CULTURE AND VALUES

But...



67%
OF PROFESSIONALS FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN MISLED ABOUT COMPANY CULTURE DURING THEIR INDUCTION

While many employers (87%) say that they take steps to ensure that new members of staff understand the values and culture of the company during their induction, two thirds of professionals (67%) say that they have been misled about company culture during the onboarding process.

This is despite the fact that employers already widely recognise the importance of cultural fit when considering long term retention and career development.

98% of employers regard cultural fit as important when considering an employee for promotion to management. Considering cultural fit from the outset of the recruitment process is vital for long term staff retention and effective legacy planning.

The most common area in which candidates felt they had been misled about company culture during their induction was with regards to the responsibilities or focus of the role (61%). By giving current staff in similar positions the opportunity to speak to potential new team members, employers can help to avoid this issue by ensuring candidates can gain insights directly from staff who can give them information on the nature of a role.

More than half of professionals (53%) also say that they have been misled over the potential for career progression within a role.

HOW ARE CANDIDATES MISLED ABOUT COMPANY CULTURE



To avoid new starters feeling that they have been misled in these areas, employers should consider offering clear criteria as to what will be expected of them if they are to be promoted and achieve the career progression they want.

Disappointment over work life balance not meeting expectations has been an issue for 45% of professionals as well. If the company has implemented flexible working initiatives, policies regarding how they should be offered and organised must be clearly communicated, with mid-level managers being made aware of how these initiatives will work and communicating this to their teams.

Encouraging management to lead by example also has the potential to be effective in normalising flexible working policies; if senior staff are using flexible working policies then junior staff may be more likely to follow suit.

98%

of employers believe cultural fit is important when considering a member of staff for a management role.

However...

54%

do not engage recruitment firms to help identify which qualities are needed to ensure a candidate will be a good cultural fit when hiring.





INTERVIEWING FOR CULTURAL FIT

By building a reputation for having a positive and well defined company culture, employers are likely to attract professionals to whom their culture appeals. However, it is still important to ensure that interview processes are able to identify whether or not a candidate will be a good cultural fit within the organisation.

Employers recognise the importance of cultural fit when interviewing candidates, with 91% saying that they interview professionals based on cultural fit as well as suitability for the job function.

However, employers should consider whether professionals believe that businesses are taking sufficient steps to identify cultural fit in candidates. While 77% of employers say that they ask candidates questions to identify cultural fit during interviews, just 56% of candidates say that they were asked questions about cultural fit during the interview process.

Does your company use psychometric testing to assess cultural fit?



- 18% Yes
- 31% No, but we would like to
- 51% No and we have no plans to do so



Janine Blacksley
Associate Director
at Robert Walters



Identifying whether or not candidates will be a good cultural fit for the organisation can be one of the most challenging parts of the interview process. Unlike gauging technical skills or experience in a particular field, identifying whether a professional will thrive in your environment can be difficult.

Given the huge impact cultural fit can have on employee productivity, employers should consider using all the tools at their disposal to identify whether candidates will be a good fit for the organisation, and assessments such as psychometric tests can be a helpful tool for some businesses.



While employers frequently have clear strategies for identifying the technical competencies they look for when interviewing candidates, strategies for identifying whether the candidate will be a good cultural fit for the company are less thorough. Employers may want to consider dedicating a specific stage of the interview process to identifying whether a candidate has the qualities that will make them a good cultural fit.

Candidates strongly favour employers conducting interviews for this purpose (83%) but just half (51%) say that they have had a job interview which focused on discussing and identifying cultural fit.

Employers should also consider other tools that can help identify cultural fit beyond straightforward interviews. Less than a fifth (18%) of employers use psychometric tests or other external examinations to assess candidate cultural fit. While 31% say that they would like to use these techniques in the future, 51% say that they have no intention of doing so.



64%

of professionals hated coming into work due to poor cultural fit

CASE STUDY: THINKBDA - ADVERTISING AGENCY



To give prospective applicants and candidates a flavour of what it's like to work at Thinkbda, they created a 'Be Amazing' page on their website. Potential employees can access the page and read quotes from current team members. They can also access links to their profiles and read about their likes, dislikes and things they couldn't live without.

Candidates can also view a list of benefits about working for Thinkbda and read job specifications and descriptions to get a good idea of what they look for in their teams. As well as this, they can view videos of team members which give potential applicants a further flavour of what Thinkbda's team, culture and work ethic are like.



THE COSTS OF POOR CULTURAL FIT

Despite employers stating that they are already taking steps to assess candidates on whether they are a good cultural fit for the company, 82% of professionals say that they have worked for an organisation where they have disliked the working culture.

Finding professionals who are a good cultural fit with their employer can improve job satisfaction and yield significant benefits for the business. However, employee performance and job satisfaction suffer when the employer and employee are a poor cultural fit for one another.

82%

of professionals have worked for an organisation where they disliked the company culture

How does poor cultural fit impact professionals at work?



James Murray
Associate Director
at Robert Walters



Poor cultural fit can have a serious impact for employers and professionals, lowering productivity, damaging the morale of the team and ultimately driving employees to leave the company.

Employers should consider how to develop and implement a strategy not only to identify whether a candidate will be a good cultural fit during the interview process but also how to address any issues of cultural fit with current employees.



Three quarters (74%) of professionals said that they felt demotivated when working for an organisation where they were a poor cultural fit. Almost half (47%) said that they struggled to work effectively.

Perhaps most critically for employers, over two thirds (69%) said that they wanted to leave the organisation as soon as possible.

While employers recognise the significance of cultural fit in ensuring long term retention of staff, it is apparent that many still struggle to identify whether or not professionals will be a good fit for the company prior to them joining.

Employers should consider taking advantage of the full range of tools available to assess whether a candidate will be a good cultural fit as well as exploring strategies for communicating their company culture to potential employees so that they can determine whether the organisation is right for them.

How do employers think professionals are impacted by poor cultural fit?

☹️ **82%**

Being less effective in their role

☹️ **78%**

Disharmony among other staff

☹️ **72%**

Feeling isolated

☹️ **71%**

Their performance suffering

☹️ **61%**

Being less influential

☹️ **43%**

Leading other colleagues to resign

Employers are also aware of the impact poor cultural fit can have on professionals and their colleagues. 82% believe that it can lead to workers being less effective in their role and 88% of employers believe that poor cultural fit could lead professionals to leave their organisation. Professionals largely agree, with 73% saying that they have left a job due to poor cultural fit.

The impact of poor cultural fit can even extend beyond the member of staff in question. 43% of employers believe that having a member of staff who is a poor cultural fit could lead other employees to resign and 86% of employers say that poor cultural fit has led to conflict within their organisation.







KEY FINDINGS



1 Recognise the importance of cultural fit

Professionals and employers agree that finding staff who are a good cultural fit can improve productivity and long term staff retention, yielding significant benefits for the business. Employers should consider whether they are making it a priority to find candidates who are a good cultural fit during their recruitment process.



2 Identify who drives company culture

Confusion exists among employers and employees around who is responsible for developing workplace culture. Ensuring that employees at all levels feel able to play a role in shaping workplace culture can help improve engagement and satisfaction, ensuring that the company culture continues to evolve to reflect the changing needs of professionals.



3 Understand what matters to candidates

Employers are aware of the importance of workplace culture when recruiting, but many misjudge which aspects of company culture matter the most to professionals. Maintaining a thorough awareness of candidates' priorities will help employers develop their strategies and policies to be most effective.



4 Communicate your company's culture to potential employees

Candidates want to know about company culture before accepting a job offer. Employers should emphasise company culture in job adverts and consider the importance of tools like Glassdoor and how they spread the reputation of the company. Ensure that candidates have a clear picture of the company's values and what working there is like.



5 Be open and clear regarding your company culture when recruiting

Two thirds of professionals feel that they have been misled about company culture during the recruitment process. Employers should look to promote the strengths of their company culture to candidates while still ensuring that they are honest and open about the realities.



6 Give potential staff the chance to learn about your company culture

Employers widely believe that they are interviewing for cultural fit, but almost half of candidates say they have not been asked questions about company culture during job interviews. Businesses should consider reviewing their interview processes to ensure they are giving candidates adequate opportunities to learn about the company culture.



7 Ensure staff feel free to discuss company culture

Employers and professionals alike recognise the serious impact poor cultural fit can have on the performance and happiness of staff. Ensuring that employees feel able to raise issues regarding the working culture of an organisation and that these are dealt with effectively is vital to ensure that staff are as effective in their roles as possible.



ABOUT THE ROBERT WALTERS INSIGHT SERIES

This whitepaper is the ninth in the Robert Walters Insight Series. The Insight Series is a range of thought-leading whitepapers aimed at assisting employers in their recruitment strategies and helping them address key talent management issues. To register your interest in future topics, please email contact@robertwalters.com

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To discuss this whitepaper, request other titles in the Insight Series or talk about your recruitment needs in more detail, please contact your Robert Walters recruitment consultant, email us at contact@robertwalters.com or get in touch with one of our offices below:

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