

How to make sure your cleaning business survives Brexit

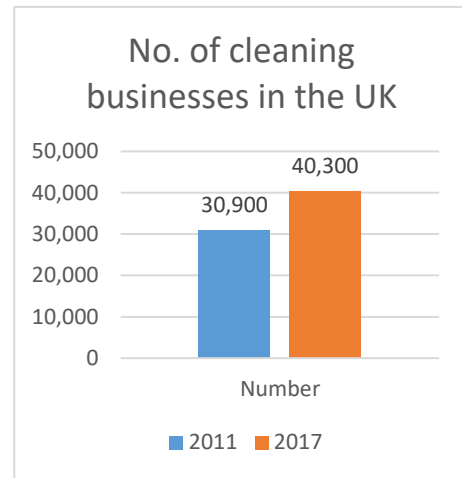
As an industry that predominantly hires European nationals, UK cleaning businesses need to revamp their recruitment tactics to tackle the likely post-Brexit labour shortage.



Nearly a quarter of all cleaning jobs in the UK are filled by non-British employees – a large chunk of whom are from Europe, according a 2017 report by the British Cleaning Council. The UK's eventual exit from the European Union (EU) will pose a threat to Britain's cleaning industry if free movement across borders is not agreed and access to workers becomes restricted. A limited workforce will mean higher competition for workers and could translate to higher wages.

Already, the pound has become weaker since the vote to leave the EU, pushing up wages. The report also stated that between April 2015 and 2016, wages in the industry grew 6.4% compared to 2.3% respectively. In an industry where wages make up a significant portion of all costs, it is unlikely that businesses can afford to keep pushing up wages to attract new recruits.

Every year, more cleaning businesses spring up. In six years, the number of businesses increased by increased by 30%, to 40,300 according to the report. The industry employs 700,000 individuals across the UK and employment growth in the sector is strong at 10% but so is the demand for qualified individuals. More than half of cleaning employees occupy “elementary roles,” which do not require high qualifications. Despite this, 26% of unfilled vacancies in the sector are because of skills-shortage. Clearly, the lack of qualified individuals also pose a problem. In my many years of successfully helping over a 100 cleaning businesses, these are my top tips to attract the right person for the job:



1. A crispy clean advert – Your advert helps deter unsuitable applicants and saves you time. These are essential points to cover in your job advert:

- *The right person:* Identify key requirements and leave out the rest.
- *The right medium:* Which job advert landed you the right person in the past? Where was it placed?
- *The right title:* Put yourself in their shoes and think of a job title that would appeal to them.
- *Targeting:* Customise your advert to reach individuals with the right salary range, location and availability.
- *Attraction:* Identify what makes your company a good employer. Your advantage could be: better job security, job satisfaction or earning potential.
- *Your image:* Be aware of your reputation as an employer. If it is bad, use your advert to address it. If you have a reputation for low wages, clearly state what you offer to compensate for that.
- *Optimise your advert:* A short crisp advert gets more clicks than a long job description.
- *Don't deceive:* Be honest about what salary, benefits and training you offer. Misleading applicants will harm your brand especially in an industry that thrives on word-of-mouth.

2. Get seen as much as possible – Get your adverts to as many suitable candidates as possible

- *Job board advertising:* Be on at least 80% of premium and smaller job sites to get a good audience mix and keep applications rolling in. The ThatRecruit.com platform plugs you into over 200 job boards which is a good start.
- *Visibility check-up:* Make your job adverts continuously visible perhaps by using featured adverts, premium adverts, 7-day auto refreshes and sponsored campaigns.
- *Get back applicants you lost:* A staggering 70% of applicant start but do not complete their applications for various reasons. Rectify this by adopting a regimented program of web service automation, retargeting, a-b testing, heatmap analysis and CRO implementation of the apply pages.
- *Tap into the passive market:* These are potential candidates within or outside your organisation open to opportunities or a career change but are not actively searching. Find them through CV databases, social media, outdoor advertising, local/national press and display advertising.

3. Show off – In a competitive market, it is vital that you stand out among competitors.

No matter the job, a candidate will always prefer an employer that appears legitimate and professional, especially online.

- *Google your brand:* Address any negative results immediately. Make sure your achievements as a brand and employer show up.
- *Your website:* Your corporate image hinges on your online presence, beginning with your website. In addition to job vacancies, use it to showcase your brand: have employees contribute pictures, blogs, anything that paints you as a good employer. If the budget allows, hire an employer brand specialist such as Employerly to manage your online reputation.
- *The power of Facebook and Twitter:* Make sure your social media presence is alive and well-maintained. Address any negative comments immediately and engage your employees in relevant conversations. Use your social channels to promote jobs and anything that makes you a great employer.

4. Quickly follow through with applications – Your brand is not the only broom in the closet, so quickly replying to a suitable candidate is essential in them choosing to worth for you.

- *First contact:* An auto-email is the first step in establishing communication, whether or not the candidate is ideal. If a call fails, leave a voicemail, email and even a text message, that clearly communicates the job that the individual has applied to and how to reach you. If all methods are exhausted and they fail to get in touch, you can remove them from your list.
- *Avoid automated screening:* Avoid CV screening, automated telephone/video interviews and any candidate engagement through mobile apps – these are unreliable and ineffective.
- *The sweet spot:* Identify when, during a 24-hour period your applications generally tend to roll in and arrange to have someone deal with them.
- *Have a feedback process:* All applicants should be invited to participate in your feedback programme to identify what works and what needs improvement.

While the list is long and somewhat technical, cleaning businesses cannot afford to lose out on suitable candidates. Recruitment is essentially about people and adapting to changing needs in an uncertain economic environment. If we can help at all don't hesitate to drop us a line.