

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Having read the recent letters by Charles Breese and Malcolm Howard which were of great interest, I considered more closely the brief aspect of employment offered to the young, either directly without higher education qualification, or, to those who have graduated from universities. For both of these categories of employment there are essential elements, on one hand the desire by some to be moulded into a skill and make a valuable contribution, or, as desired by others, to contribute by utilisation of an education to demonstrate the alternative path of personal development.

However, the letters convey the current inherent problem which exists within most companies, the means of recruitment and its adequacy. In both cases, unless I have misinterpreted, it should be possible to gain employment by any good recruitment system which gives an equality to the job applicant. However, what is noted is the success achieved by Mr. Breese for his son and alternatively, what appears the concern Mr. Howard expresses in respect of graduates and particularly how they are selected. In all of this, whilst some companies are giving a thought to a practical approach for certain jobs and this is welcomed, maybe others are being too selective and the possibility exists that the recruitment system for both elements and specifically some graduates, is not because of a low standard in all cases but the methods being used for recruitment.

In this I have a particular issue, as someone in the 1970's who recruited mainly new staff to start up the initial operations of a major successful oil field in the North Sea after the platforms were installed, I have the belief the online recruitment system now used is presenting a serious problem. This is because the system as used by major industries becomes useless if a company wants to seriously and quickly develop an output. Specifically, the programmes which exist and are time consuming and generally speaking often reject potentially good people because they are not able to satisfy the inherent "tick box" method incorporated as a part of the system.

The underlying "tick box" system is, I believe, derived from a survey or poll method of analysis which has been developed for computers and enables the creation of an anomaly for ease of rejection. As such, the computer is unable to understand in the case of recruitment, the human factor relating to the job being created. Hence, we have a situation which discriminates if the conditions of the "tick box" are not met, as against easily granting an

interview in which the candidate may have been able present themselves in a way which demonstrates they could achieve meeting the job requirement.

It follows, if you reject applicants too easily, this has a major effect on a developing company who may require both practical and academic input from staff for the long term. Also, it may exhibit itself by the constant complaint of being unable to obtain adequate staff to meet the needs. In turn, there is an added adverse effect for shareholders who have put at risk their finances in the company investment and do not get the rewards expected because of a misplaced recruitment system.

To prove if this is correct, why not ask any major company director to apply for a job by the online system and answer the questions truthfully. With this, aim for checking if the underlying "tick box" can ensure they satisfy the job specification correctly. Also, in the final instance, ask them whether, or not, they became directors by applying via an online system, or, if they were asked by other means to fill the post.

This now brings me back to my young son, who has received little help or interest from major companies in the engineering field, although he has applied to many companies and has a MEng. Electrical and Electronic Engineering and a PhD. Engineering Science, plus, has the practical skills directed by myself. I having been an HM Royal Dockyard time served engine and machine fitter, with a degree in engineering from a so-called top UK University. The outcome as indicated, has been an online system which has proved an obstacle in all respects for this son, whereby the "tick box" condition is not met and no invitation interview has taken place.

However, I have another son, somewhat older, with a degree in accounting and economics, who has never filled in online system application and now by invitation, is a CEO of a very sound and respected large private holding engineering company with wide ranging expertise and a very large workforce.

It follows, when a company in which an investment has been made, bleats it cannot obtain the right people, check out with them their methods of recruitment and question why they have a problem in obtaining upskilled personnel. After all, it may be your investment money and time they are wasting is caused by the wretched modern online recruitment system now being used by British and inward investment companies.

R. D. V. Kite