

BAA is the world's leading airport company. It owns seven UK airports and has management contracts at a number of international airports. A third of BAA staff are employed in airport security, and they have their own 460 strong fire team who provide airside support. They are one of the largest commercial landlords in the UK, providing commercial accommodation for around 900 airport retailers and are one of the construction industry's largest clients, continually investing in new, often state-of-the-art buildings such as Terminal 5 at Heathrow.

The Business Challenge

With a new Finance Director in place and pressure on profits, BAA decided to implement a change programme for its finance function. Margaret Ewing, the Group Finance Director brought in Hunter Roberts to help instigate the change programme. All transactional roles were to be transferred to a business support centre in Glasgow, whilst new positions were created for a number of Planning and Performance Managers and Decision Support Analysts. This created multiple vacancies across BAA airports in the UK including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Southampton.

Margaret wanted the finance department to be an integral part of the airport management teams, adding a commercial perspective to help plan the businesses more effectively. She was insistent that the finance teams should help managers analyse and interpret financial information, to help them make sound decisions quickly. Her aim was to get the finance department to be seen as business partners and internal consultants. This involved significant changes in roles and responsibilities in Finance. It was important to manage the internal recruitment processes effectively and at the same time to carry out external recruitment for roles where skills were lacking internally. BAA wanted Hunter Roberts to manage the communications process to ensure an understanding of the change strategy and aid a smooth transition.

The Solution

Hunter Roberts worked with senior managers at BAA to define the finance roles they needed and analyse any gaps in capability. Hunter Roberts helped the senior team to define the culture they wanted to create within the finance function, to draw up job descriptions and identify the desired behaviours required from new staff.

All current staff were assessed for their roles in a robust assessment procedure, and placed in appropriate new roles where applicable. The skills gap analysis highlighted a number of positions that needed to be filled externally and Hunter Roberts managed the whole of the recruitment

process in conjunction with a recruitment agency, processing CVs, conducting telephone screening and face-to-face interviews, and putting candidates through the assessment centre.

Measuring Success

All the identified new roles were filled successfully by well qualified and experienced candidates. The initial target was a ratio of one successful candidate to every four screened assessment centre applicants. Hunter Roberts achieved a 1:3 ratio by ensuring all the stages of the recruitment process were managed robustly and effectively.