

PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES

How a leading independent practice of engineers, planners, scientists and economists went from recruiting with email and spreadsheets to a unified ATS & Recruitment CRM.

An interview with Emma Chorlton, Recruitment Business Partner, PBA.

Who are Peter Brett Associates?

"PBA is an independent practice of engineers, planners, scientist and economists. We deliver major construction, development and infrastructure projects. We have 16 offices in the UK and a growing number in Europe. Currently, we have over 700 employees, and we have ambitious growth plans."

Describe the recruitment function at PBA?

"There are two of us working full time in recruitment. We work closely with our hiring managers across the business. We also manage a Preferred Supplier List of agencies."

What are your biggest recruitment challenges?

"We work in a 'skills shortage' market, especially for our senior and experienced hires who are tough to recruit. But we also have graduate, apprentice and placement programmes – so we need to manage volume recruitment too."

You recently implemented an ATS & Recruitment CRM, how were you managing your process previously?

"In Outlook and spreadsheets! Quite honestly, I never knew where I was with each campaign! We knew we needed to improve our candidate experience. In a skills shortage market, we weren't showing candidates enough love. We weren't communicating with candidates through the process unless we were progressing them to interview and this was damaging our employer brand."

Managing a Preferred Supplier List

"Also, we manage a PSL, but we were not able to control submissions from our agencies, candidates



would just arrive in our inbox. I've worked with several ATS systems in previous roles, so I knew what I wanted from a functional point of view, we looked at ten different systems before we chose Eploy as our supplier."

What were the key things you were looking for in an ATS?

"We wanted something that could be seamlessly integrated into our website and provide a simple application process. It also needed to be mobile optimised – that was critical to helping us recruit in such a skills shortage market."

Improving recruitment reporting

"Also, I needed excellent reporting capabilities; previously I had none! I was relying on my gut feel and instinct. But I work with a team of engineers...they love a good statistic and metric...it's much more compelling than listening to a recruitment manager moaning at them if I can back it up with data insights! "



Maintaining the personal touch

"Also, we didn't want to automate everything. We still wanted to engage with candidates directly. We didn't want to lose our personality – as a business we are friendly and approachable, and we want our recruitment process to reflect that. So, it was important we can identify the candidates we need to focus on directly."

How long did the ATS implementation take?

"Just 12 weeks! We worked closely with Eploy on the project plan, to make sure we could keep on track and accommodate things like annual leave. The agile nature of the project plan allowed us to flex it – for example, we could upload data and unit test it in stages through the process, rather than leave everything to the end before testing. This helped to reduce the impact on operational activity."

Preparing for implementation

"I had done a lot of preparation up front, documenting our processes, etc. What I like about the team at Eploy is they really 'get' recruitment. So, we had a lot of conversations about how we could align our processes to get the best out of the system. We didn't want to be all "this is how we do it here" we were prepared to look at better ways that would help us speed up the way candidates move through the process."

Involving users in the testing process

"We also worked closely with our hiring managers and PSL agencies – and involved them in the testing process – we wanted all our stakeholders to be on board."

What have been the main results of the project?

"Quite simply, it's revolutionised our world! I now know exactly where I am at with each of my vacancies, I've got traceability of all my candidates and can report on application statuses – I have Eploy Dashboards that help prioritise where I put my time."

Delivering a great candidate experience



"I'm no longer nervous about our candidate experience, we've got a clean and simple online process that doesn't deter candidates from applying, they can also complete it on mobile too."

Managing volume recruitment campaigns

"For our graduate programme – where we get over 3000 applications, we used Eploy's Discover tool – which lets us build our own screening forms and scoring methodology – we implemented a traffic light system that visually highlights the most suitable candidates so we can follow up quickly with them. This is important because in our market the best candidates are likely to have several offers on the table – so we must get to them quickly."

Dashboards that deliver recruitment insights



"Eploy's Dashboards and metrics are great too. I went from no reports to reporting on anything. And not just top-level metrics like Time to Hire and Time to Offer – now I can see time at each stage in the process, identify the bottlenecks and then work with hiring managers to unlock them."

Secure access to Equal Opportunities info

"Also, we have better visibility of our equal opportunities data. But importantly, we can restrict who in the business can see sensitive candidate information – most ATS systems we looked at couldn't do this."

Improved hiring manager engagement

"Hiring managers are getting engaged more. They now have a straightforward and intuitive portal where they can quickly go in and update the status of candidates and move them quickly through the process. And we can see exactly how long candidates have been at 'hiring manager review!'"

Effective vendor management

"We've even had great feedback from our PSL agencies who have complimented us on how clear and easy the agency portal is to use. We can now control which jobs we release to agencies and we have full visibility of the candidates they submit...no more duplicates!"

Speeding up time to authorisation

"We've now got an authorisation process for requisitions that automatically chases authorisers, and we have a customised offer process."

"Since we implemented Eploy our vacancies have doubled, I can't imagine where we would be without it!"

What are your future plans?

"There's still lots of features in Eploy that we haven't started to use yet. It's got a fantastic Onboarding module that will speed up our offer process with electronic document creation and signing. And the system has useful talent pipelining tools that will help us compete in an extreme skills shortage market."

Configurability without increasing costs

"One of the great things about the system is its configurability – if I need to change something, like a workflow or a drop-down box – I can do it myself. I've worked with other systems where if you wanted any changes the costs soon start to mount up. And even if I have a more complicated request their support team is responsive, usually actioning it the same day."

About Eploy

Eploy is the complete cloud-based recruitment platform for modern in-house recruitment teams. Eploy combines Applicant Tracking, Recruitment CRM, Talent Pools and Analytics into a unified web-based platform integrated seamlessly with your website to provide an excellent candidate experience.

Finding and recruiting candidates who are the perfect fit for your roles is always challenging. Fortunately Eploy's world-class recruitment software makes it much, much easier.

We've been helping leading companies move to the cloud and recruit faster and smarter since 1998.

Eploy is precision-engineered to work on every platform and add value to every stage of the recruitment journey. Eploy automates and simplifies recruitment processes to help you attract, engage, recruit and onboard candidates quickly. As Eploy is also your full talent engagement platform you can manage your relationships with candidates, departments and hiring managers better. With a high degree of measurability, you can track and analyse your recruitment performance, quality, costs and timescales accurately.

Our cloud-based recruitment platform is reinforced with market-leading mentoring and cross-sector expertise so you get the training and support you need to achieve a powerful commercial advantage.



Faster, Smarter Recruitment Software

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ECS-PB-01-00