



## CASE STUDY:

# wren KITCHENS

Introducing a revised direct recruitment model and adapting to business needs.

Wren have 8,500 employees in both UK and USA, having scaled from c2500 UK employees in July 2017 when Jonathan Simmons joined as Head of Recruitment Operations to create and build a recruitment model and team.

Recruitment has ramped up due to the success of the business and its US expansion. Further growth is also on the horizon. Supporting Wren's goal to pursue growth is the need for passionate, talented people to join their team, so managing recruitment effectively across the company is vital.

### Leading the way

Prior to the creation of the Wren recruitment team, vacancies were advertised only on the careers site, with minimal access to job board searching, no ATS in place and a heavy reliance on agencies for recruitment. Wren has successfully turned this around to a model focused on direct recruitment using the Eploy platform.

Wren's recruitment team implemented Eploy's cloud-based e-recruitment platform, candidate portal, hiring manager portal and onboarding portal to streamline their internal processes and make it easier for talent to apply for jobs and join the Wren family. Putting the candidate first is a priority, and Wren has achieved this through a seamless candidate experience at every stage when searching and applying for roles and finding out more about life at Wren.

Wren Kitchens, the UK's No.1 kitchen retailer, is a passionate family-owned British manufacturer and retailer of fitted kitchens.

Since their launch in 2009, their goal has been to be number one in all aspects of their business and the markets they operate, relentlessly pursuing excellence and growth.



## Uncovering the recruitment challenges

Wren controls the full supply chain, so a large recruitment team consists of business partners recruiting within specific business areas encompassing Retail, Manufacturing, Engineering, H&S, Product Development, Security, Transport/Logistics, IT/Tech, Customer Service, Marketing, Installations and Trade.

During the pandemic, Wren has depended on the internal recruitment function to source talent to fuel the company's growth consistently. In addition, with homeowners using their time in lockdown to focus on home improvements, demand for Wren's kitchens went to levels never seen before.

Wren needed to recruit new employees to keep up with the demand and fill key vacancies with talented people quickly and efficiently.

### Recruitment challenges they needed to overcome included:



The need to recruit a high volume of new starters across all business areas with minimal agency spend.



Focusing on Diversity & Inclusion within the overall recruitment strategy.



Addressing a lack of talent in some business areas, for example, Tech/IT, and geographical pressures associated with scarcity of some talent segments in the Humber region through introducing an Apprenticeships and Early Careers strategy.



Improved efficiency across the recruitment process, especially around offer to acceptance.

## Implementing a new way of working

Wren implemented Eploy's complete ATS and Talent CRM with a full implementation service to align with how they wanted Eploy to work for the business.

The team reviewed the needs of each business area and reflected the recruitment process from application to onboarding accordingly by creating and adapting workflows within Eploy.

Eploy's flexible workflows were designed for the candidate's differing requirements and best experience and provide ongoing flexibility to make changes as the business needs.

### To address the specific challenges that Wren was experiencing, the team tackled this head-on using Eploy's complete ATS and Talent CRM and award-winning fully customisable dashboards to:

- Understand recruitment activity
- Drill down on sources of where the best hires come from
- Improve time to hire to mitigate losing candidates through the recruitment process
- Improve the onboarding processes, aligning them to each business area
- Understand careers site traffic

As well as the self-service features you'd expect from a modern ATS, like intelligent, automated job alerts and interview scheduling, Wren required tools to nurture talent relationships and empower hiring managers with functionality for improved visibility and engagement.

### Addressing the challenges

As well as the self-service features you'd expect from a modern ATS, like intelligent, automated job alerts and interview scheduling, Wren required tools to nurture talent relationships and empower hiring managers with functionality for improved visibility and engagement.

**“Our approach has helped hugely in reducing the agency spend and cost per hire whilst improving our direct sourcing model and overall brand awareness. In creating and managing a hierarchy of desired skills within Eploy we can quick match candidates to relevant vacancies and are confident that our target list of passive candidates is engaged and ready to be approached”.**

- Jonathan Simmons, Head of Recruitment Operations.

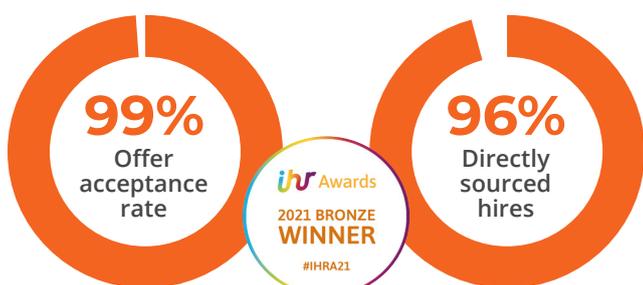
Using Eploy’s Hiring Manager Portal provides a simplified, mobile-first experience that minimises effort and maximises decision making. Hiring Managers can see a ‘task-based’ dashboard of everything they need to do to keep the hiring process on track and reduce hiring time. Working together consistently and efficiently delivers the best candidate experience.

**“We have developed and embraced the Eploy ATS metrics & dashboard capability, tracking key metrics and recruitment performance that enables us to collaborate better as a team and quickly troubleshoot any delays in the process with candidates, contracts and activity across the recruitment journey. Before Eploy, Wren Kitchens had very little recruitment performance data and now have an abundance of metrics. We know our time to hire is now 27 days which is lower than the industry average for many of the areas we recruit in. It is an achievement we are proud of.”**

- Jonathan Simmons, Head of Recruitment Operations.

## Results

Wren has delivered an improved internal recruitment model using Eploy, recruiting 3257 new starters despite a challenging business year worldwide. They recruited and onboarded 2590 new employees in just 4.5 months which is a phenomenal effort by the team.



The business has continued to sell record levels of kitchens, open more UK showrooms and branches into the USA, resulting in the recruitment and onboarding of 2344 new employees into the business YTD. However, when recruiting and retaining new employees is a stark reality for many, 92.7% of those new Wren employees are still with the business.

The business has incorporated a D&I strategy, and the recruitment team supports this by automatically and securely gathering data during the recruitment process. Eploy dashboards are set up to monitor KPIs and report on the impact of key metrics such as diverse candidates ratio, conversion ratios and diverse candidates to offer. Importantly, with Eploy’s enterprise data access features, Wren can fully control that only the right, authorised users can access any sensitive personal information. When the recruitment data and spend was presented to the Board of Directors, the feedback of how the recruitment team coped with the demands of the business during a pandemic was extremely positive, emphasising the great job that the team delivered in challenging circumstances.

The recruitment team will soon complete the Apprenticeships and Early Careers team programme to develop their early careers recruitment strategy further. The Tech Graduate programme has seen over 100 graduates within the tech graduate programme across 14 different schemes into the business - a positive achievement with the deficit of tech talent in the UK and more pertinent to the Humber region of the UK Headquarters.



- **Improved efficiency** across the recruitment process. 2020 saw the average time to hire fall to 27 days across all departments, including an Offer to Acceptance ratio of 99%. In addition, Wren now track Time to Hire for each department, allowing swift identification of any business areas that need improvement.

- The need to recruit a **high volume of new starters** across all business areas with minimal agency spend effort was achieved. As a result, cost per hire across all business areas was just £228.36.
- **Agency spend reduced significantly**, and just 4% of new starters come through the agency channel.
- In a highly competitive employment market, the retention of new starters after their first 6 months for 2021 is 92.7%.
- **Candidate communication has improved** across the candidate journey by making emails and SMS more engaging and aligned to the brand and specific business areas.
- The recruitment team now works with each hiring manager who has a new starter to create a **tailored induction programme**. The decision was made to be fully transparent with each new starter and share their induction plan with them before they started to make them feel more prepared and at ease for their first day.
- Wren redesigned their onboarding process to begin when they make an offer of employment. The recruitment team make the initial offer, and the hiring manager now follows up with either a congratulatory call or email to make the new starter feel valued. In addition, if the new starter has a notice period, they will get a call or email to 'check in' each week.
- Alongside **revamping the onboarding process**, Wren also launched a **New Starter Feedback Survey**, sending it to new starters at the end of their first week.
- Introducing an **Apprenticeships and Early Careers strategy** addresses future talent requirements in certain business areas. This will be further supported by launching new recruitment websites for UK and USA businesses to support the focus on a direct recruitment strategy and early careers Tech Graduate programme.



**“Within Eploy we can quick match candidates to relevant vacancies and are confident that our target list of passive candidates is engaged and ready to be approached.”**

*- Jonathan Simmons  
Head of Recruitment Operations,  
Wren Kitchens*



## 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.



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