

HOW SME'S CAN ADAPT TO THE CURRENT RECRUITMENT LANDSCAPE:

Flexible working to enhance
attraction and retention



Effective strategies for hiring in today's competitive market

Contact Us



Emma@flexmatters.co.uk
Lorraine@flexmatters.co.uk
07810 541599



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ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY IS DRIVING EMPLOYER CAUTION

Decline in Recruitment Activity

Economic uncertainty leads to sharp drops in permanent placements and temporary billings among SMEs.

Candidate Availability

Candidate availability improves due to redundancies, but hiring demand remains low amid employer caution.

Softening Pay Growth

Employers hesitate to raise wages due to financial pressures, NI, living wage, and inflation, causing slower pay growth in SMEs.

SMEs Facing Economic Sensitivity

SMEs are cautious with hiring due to limited financial buffers and sensitivity to economic changes.



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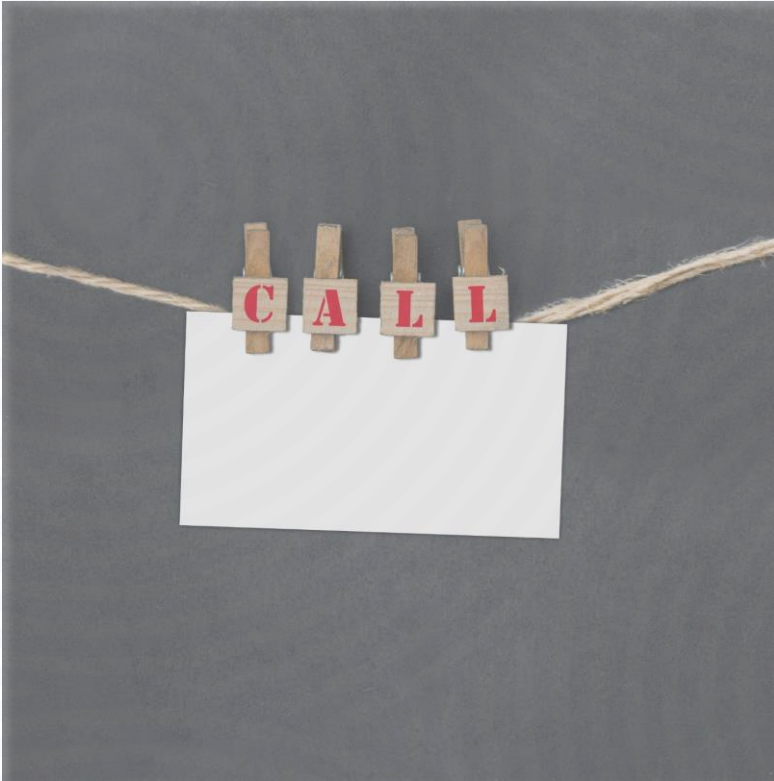


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TALENT SHORTAGES REMAIN A KEY CHALLENGE



Persistent Talent Shortages

SMEs in the UK face ongoing difficulty filling roles due to a shrinking labour supply and high job vacancies.

Demographic and Health Impacts

An ageing population and long-term sickness reduce the pool of available working-age individuals for employment.

Skills Mismatch Issues

Gaps between employer needs and job seeker skills hinder effective recruitment efforts in SMEs.

Impact on SME Growth

Unfilled vacancies force SMEs to operate below capacity and delay growth plans amid constrained resources.

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EMBRACE FLEXIBLE WORKING MODELS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN

Broaden Talent Pool

Flexible working models enable SMEs to access a wider range of candidates beyond geographic limits.

Enhance Work-Life Balance

Offering flexible arrangements to individuals seeking a better work balance, including parents and caregivers, breeds loyalty and wellbeing.

Increase Employee Satisfaction

Flexible arrangements foster trust and empowerment, leading to higher satisfaction and retention.

Support Inclusivity and Adaptability

Flexible work supports inclusive participation and prepares SMEs for future employment trends.



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PARTNER WITH SPECIALIST RECRUITERS

Be More Human – Use AI in the Right Places

Make recruiters your partner to support Human Resources for the long game.

Access to Niche Talent

Specialist recruiters provide SMEs strategic access to unique talent pools and market insights.

Fleclible Work Matchmaking

Recruiters understand flexible work nuances and align candidates with suitable employers effectively.

Impact on SME Growth

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INVEST IN UPSKILLING AND TRAINING FOR RETENTION

Addressing Skills Shortages

Investing in employee upskilling helps SMEs fill skills gaps and meet evolving operational needs effectively.

Use your HR team and recruitment partners

To interrogate and identify transferable skills so training is bespoke and money well spent

Methods of Upskilling

Apprenticeships, online courses, and in-house training build critical competencies and foster continuous learning.

Benefits to Business and Staff

Upskilling enhances employee engagement, loyalty, and aligns skills with strategic business goals.

Sustainable Workforce Development

Nurturing talent internally reduces hiring costs and builds a resilient, adaptable workforce for future challenges.

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STREAMLINE RECRUITMENT PROCESSES – BUT DON'T FORGET TO BE HUMAN!

Technology can Enhance Hiring

Leveraging ATS and AI tools automates resume screening and interview scheduling for faster hiring BUT it might save time but who is losing out. Treat with caution!

Improved Candidate Experience

Streamlined recruitment ensures transparent communication and respect for candidates' time, boosting employer brand.

Operational Efficiency Gains

Automation reduces administrative tasks, allowing hiring managers to focus on strategic recruitment decisions, BUT automate the right things!

Competitive Talent Acquisition

Fast, seamless hiring processes help SMEs attract high-quality candidates in a competitive job market.

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FOCUS ON EMPLOYER BRANDING

Importance of Employer Branding

Employer branding is essential for attracting and retaining talent in a competitive recruitment environment.

Showcasing Company Culture

Highlighting company values, mission, and unique benefits helps SMEs differentiate from larger competitors.

Authentic Storytelling

Using employee testimonials and behind-the-scenes content humanises the brand and resonates with candidates.

Leveraging Digital Platforms

Social media and company websites are key channels to communicate the employer value proposition consistently.



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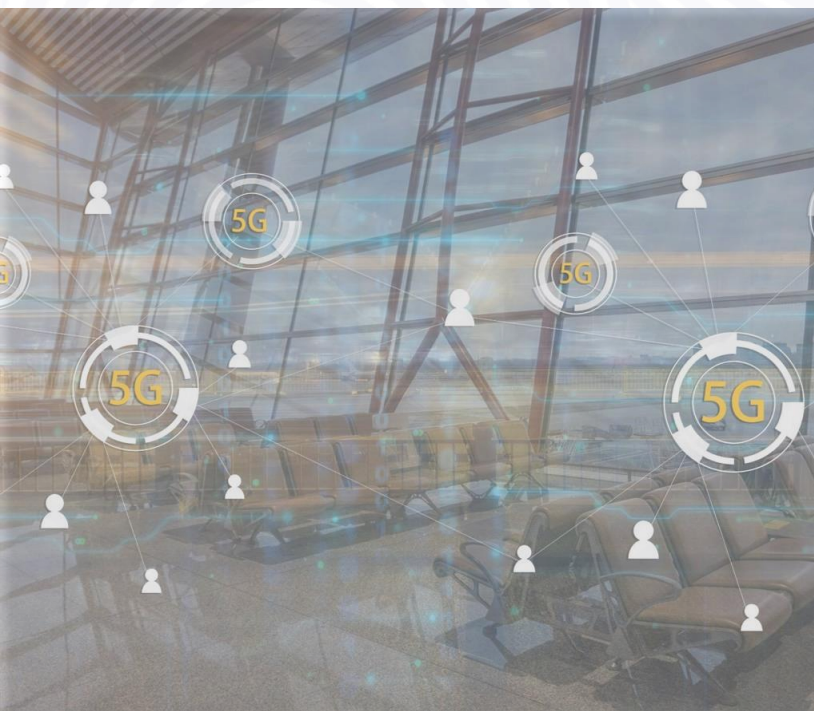




HOW AI IS RESHAPING THE UK RECRUITMENT MARKET UK STATISTICS AND TRENDS

Transforming hiring processes
with intelligent automation

AI ADOPTION TRENDS AND EFFICIENCY GAINS



Rapid AI Adoption in Recruitment

AI use in UK recruitment tripled recently, with 30% of employers and 90% of large enterprises adopting AI tools.

Generative AI Integration

45% of UK organizations are integrating or testing generative AI for advanced recruitment tasks beyond automation.

Efficiency and Cost Savings

Recruiters save up to 18% of their workweek and cut hiring costs by up to 71% using AI-driven automation.

Candidate AI Tool Usage

46% of UK job seekers use AI tools like CV builders and chatbots, reflecting greater candidate comfort with AI.

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AI-DRIVEN INNOVATIONS IN RECRUITMENT

Automated CV Screening

AI scans thousands of CVs quickly using contextual matching, reducing bias and streamlining the hiring process.

Predictive Analytics in Hiring

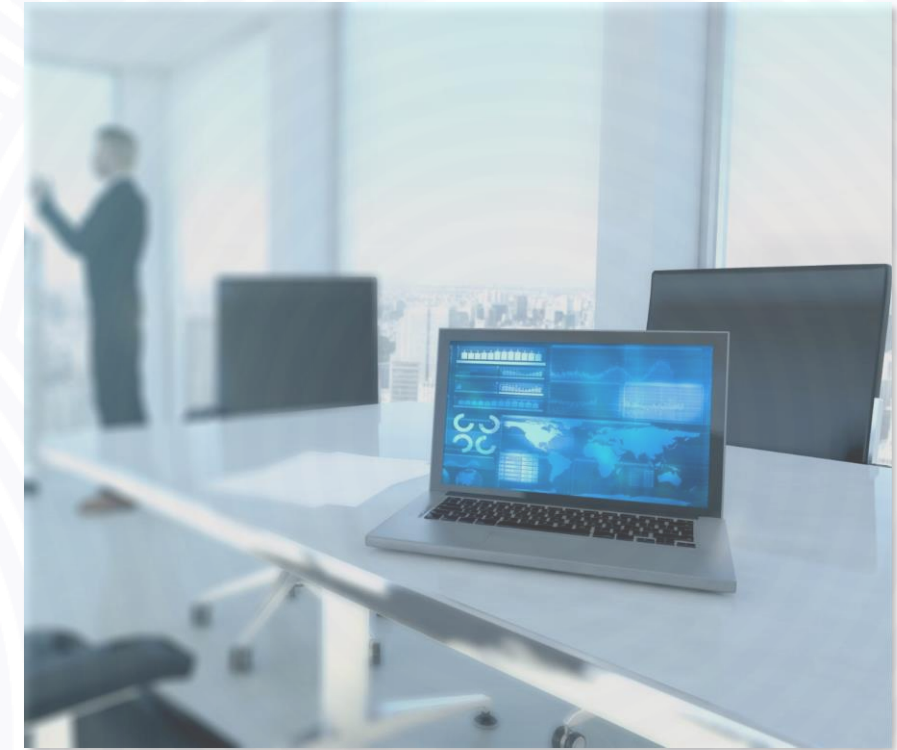
AI analyses historical data to predict candidate success and improve retention.

Enhanced Candidate Experience

AI chatbots provide 24/7 support, improving communication and candidate satisfaction.

Skills-Based Hiring

AI matches candidate skills over job titles, promoting diversity and broadening talent pools.



BUT WHAT ABOUT HUMAN INTERVENTION

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EMPLOYER BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING IN THE UK

Enhancing Productivity and
Employee Satisfaction



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TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION

Importance of Flexible Working

Flexible working is vital for attracting talent and addressing skill shortages in the UK job market.

Employee Turnover Impact

Over one million UK workers left jobs due to lack of flexible options, showing shifting employee expectations.

Benefits of Flexible Arrangements

Flexible work enables better work-life balance, increasing satisfaction, loyalty, and reducing recruitment costs.

Competitive Advantage

Employers offering flexible work attract and retain talent, fostering a committed and stable workforce.

Sourced from the CIPD, ONS, REC 2025



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PRODUCTIVITY GAINS

Positive Productivity Impact

Flexible working improves or maintains productivity in 41% of UK organisations amid economic uncertainties.

Strategic Sickness Absence Response

Flexible working helps mitigate productivity losses caused by sickness absence by allowing adaptable schedules.

Reduced Commuting and Energy Management

Flexible work reduces commuting time and helps employees optimize energy levels for sustained performance.

Enhanced Organisational Resilience

Productivity gains from flexible working enhance operational efficiency and competitiveness in the market.

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REDUCED ABSENTEEISM & HEALTH COSTS

Reduced Absenteeism

Flexible working policies help lower absenteeism by enabling employees to better manage health and personal responsibilities.

Improved Employee Wellbeing

Flexible work arrangements improve wellbeing, reducing burnout and long-term health issues among employees.

Cost Reduction for Employers

Lower absenteeism reduces direct costs like sick leave and indirect costs such as decreased morale and service quality.

Sustainable Workforce

A healthier work environment creates a more sustainable and efficient workforce with higher satisfaction.



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COST SAVINGS

Reduced Overhead Costs

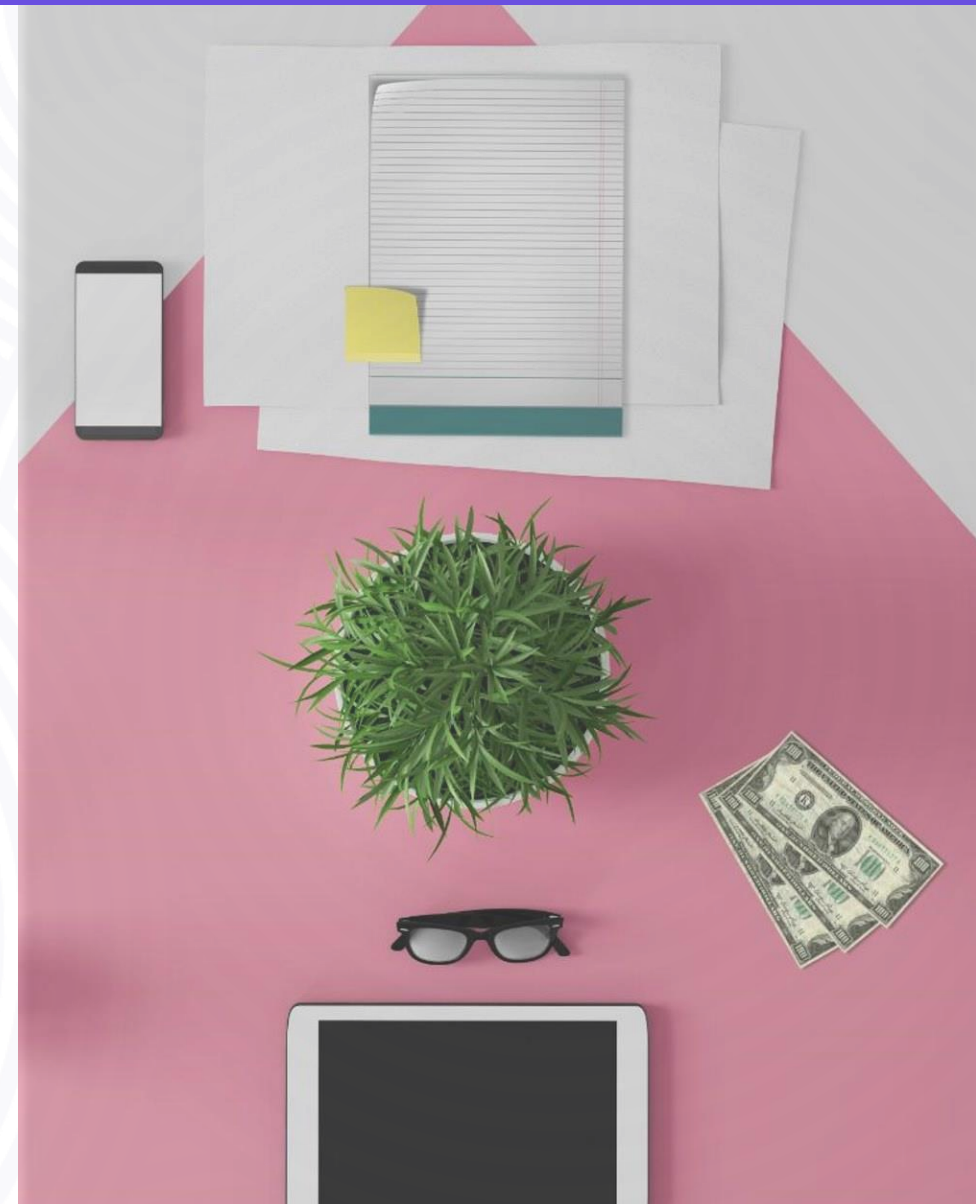
Flexible working reduces the need for large office spaces and lowers rent, utilities, and maintenance expenses.

Lower Recruitment Expenses

Improved employee retention through flexible work decreases recruitment, onboarding, and training costs.

Operational Efficiency

Flexible working enables employees to work during productive hours and avoid commutes, boosting efficiency.



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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Flexible Work Benefits

Flexible working arrangements help attract and retain diverse talent by accommodating varied life circumstances.

Inclusive Workforce Participation

Flexibility removes barriers for parents, carers, older workers, and those with disabilities to fully engage at work.

Enhanced Innovation and Performance

Diverse and inclusive teams foster better decision-making and drive business success and innovation.

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EMPLOYER BRAND & ENGAGEMENT

Flexibility Attracts Talent

Flexible work arrangements are valued more than salary by many job seekers, enhancing employer appeal.

Employee Trust and Morale

Employees granted flexibility feel trusted and valued, leading to higher engagement and morale.

Stronger Employer Brand

Positive perceptions of flexibility strengthen employer brand and aid talent attraction and retention.

Productivity and Innovation

Engaged employees tend to be more productive, innovative, and committed to organizational goals.



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CONCLUSION

Benefits of Flexible Working

Flexible working improves talent attraction, retention, productivity, and reduces operational costs for UK employers.

Addressing Workforce Challenges

Flexibility helps tackle absenteeism, wellbeing, and diversity challenges highlighted by CIPD and REC research.

Strategic Importance

Adopting flexible work arrangements fosters inclusive, engaged, and sustainable business growth in evolving labour market.

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