

What we've learned about recruiting visitor-facing staff

Practical tips on how to pick people who will work well with visitors

When you're advertising the role...

Think more broadly than qualifications – museums are an informal environment where **communication** is more important than knowledge.

Advertise widely to change any impression that museums are elitist. Use free advertising where possible.

Do all you can to attract a **wide range of applicants** – think creatively about where you might find interesting candidates.

During the interview process...

Test the skill you are looking for during the interview. If you seek presenters, ask for an impromptu demonstration.

Get existing staff involved in helping you by organising a 'meet and greet' and asking for their impressions of the candidates (later!).

Telephone interviews are not enough. You need to **meet** candidates to get a proper impression of their communication skills.

When making your choice...

Think about the current team's skill gaps and look to fill these – languages, performance skills etc.

Look at the make-up of your current team and see if you can further **diversify** through recruitment in terms of age, gender or race.

Consider someone's future potential – even if they don't score most highly, they may gain hugely from an opportunity, and develop into a **really good investment**.

Try not to be swayed just because someone can cover the hours you need. Keep your standards. The rest of the team will be working with the new recruit all day.

Further resources:

Contact us on learning@sciencemuseum.org.uk for details of our training courses:

- **Learning in Museums** to find out more about how museums promote informal learning.
- **Audience Awareness** to find out how visitors really use museums.

Read about the kind of science questions children really ask by reading this article by Glenn Murphy, former Science Museum manager of interactive galleries:
www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/jun/16/science-lessons-inspiration