**PWC introduces flexible recruitment programme to attract top talent**

In August 2018, professional services firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) brought flexible working to the forefront of the employee experience by introducing it into the job application process itself with the launch of its Flexible Talent Network.

Priscilla Baffour, diversity and inclusion manager at PWC, says: “There’s a misconception around working at PWC that you have to work full-time, nine to five, and we felt we were missing out on top talent. So, we wanted to bust that myth, and we also believe that the nature of our business can accommodate highly flexible working arrangements.”

The Flexible Talent Network applies to prospective employees in the UK, where PWC already employs 18,000 staff. In the first two weeks after its launch, approximately 2,000 individuals registered for the flexible recruitment programme.

When a candidate registers, they state what working arrangement would suit them. This might include working one week per month, seasonally, at the weekends only, or having reduced hours to accommodate [family commitments](https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/benefits-for-carers/).

If the candidate is a good fit from a skills perspective, PWC investigates whether they match any open vacancies and whether the structure they have asked for can be made to work.

“Parts of our business are very cyclical,” notes Baffour. “So, it suits us to have perhaps seasonal [employees] who would be prepared to work for us in busy times, and then [enjoy having time off](https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/employee-wellbeing/), perhaps to [look after family](https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/benefits-for-carers/).”

Baffour notes that a heavy investment in technology has helped facilitate flexible and remote working. Meanwhile, an ability to hold potential employees on the books in case their talents are needed in the future allows PWC to deploy individuals effectively where they are best suited, and where their needs can be accommodated.

“But, unlike the gig economy, we’re making sure we’re really clear about the arrangements that they desire and that we can accommodate,” Baffour continues. “They’ll have a proper contract in place and they’ll have proper, well-documented terms and conditions.”

PWC relies on the professional resource management function it introduced around five years ago to handle the different needs of its many clients. This function now helps ensure that employees working flexibly are properly deployed. The sheer variety of client needs, in fact, lends itself to a workforce with diverse working patterns, notes Baffour.

“The whole future of work is changing and the workforce of the future [is changing],” she says. “Our clients are changing in terms of what they need, when they need it, and how they get it delivered.”

While the size of the organisation may lend itself to finding roles for those with diverse needs, it can also create pitfalls, which have had to be taken into consideration for the flexible recruitment programme to be a success.

“The bigger the organisation, the more complex its client base is,” warns Baffour. “If [we have] got lots of people working lots of different patterns and needing to meet different client demands, how do you put that together?”

The answer, she explains, lies in having a plan, and being committed.

Baffour concludes: “Make sure [the organisation has] both a team and probably some systems to help with thinking through how to put together teams. [Employers] need to have the confidence [to] pull that together, and make sure [they have] got good continuity.”