



CASE STUDY

OLSEN ACTUATION

Interviewing and selecting candidates with Olsen Actuation

Sci-Tech Daresbury's RADAR Talent and Skills strategy, which at the core revolves around support in attracting, developing and retaining talent, is helping to take the burden out of the sometimes-complex world of talent and skills. Recruitment, according to Joanne Lawes, Operations Manager at Olsen Actuation, is one such burden.

The 10-strong company, offering all-electric linear actuation solutions for industry and which is based in The Innovation Centre, has been receiving support from the Sci-Tech Daresbury Independent Skills Broker since 2018. January 2019 saw Olsen extend their support requirements linked to its interview and selection process and as a result the support it has gained is helping to transform the business.

“ Recruiting people can be quite stressful and it can be difficult to choose the right candidates for interview, but this process is now fun. ”

– JOANNE LAWES,
OPERATIONS MANAGER

Olsen Actuation was founded 10 years ago by CEO, Piers Olsen and has been based at the Innovation Centre for three years. The company signed up to the RADAR Talent and Skills programme towards the end of 2018, when staff numbered just three people including new-in-post Joanne.

“ As a small company we need help to grow, fortunately there is support here on campus for us to access. We started the process as a trial, however, so successful has it been that we are continuing to use it. Previously we used the very formulaic 1-2-1 interview process following CV assessment, which can be hit or miss, but this programme has turned around our approach. ”

It is important to us that new colleagues work well together and that there is a cultural fit, the help and advice we received means we now start with group sessions so we can see what potential employees are like working with each other, using the revealing and entertaining Obelisk test.

We then use personality tests to discover what kind of person the candidate is, their communication and learning style, what motivates them to work plus there's a technical test to ascertain they can do what they say they can. We have found that these tests reveal the leaders, the thinkers, the initiative takers, the visual and verbal learners and whether they are willing to take feedback and consider others' ideas.

Very simply, we can gain an idea of how they think and feel before they join us. It also helps us at the formal interview stage, and it's worked really well. The first time we ran with this, I was looking for one account manager and we selected five strong candidates and actually identified three as suitable who were hired as a result of this programme. ”

– JOANNE LAWES

DOUBLED IN SIZE

It means that Olsen Actuation has more than doubled in size in less than a year. Joanne has also retrospectively used the tests on established members of the team to aid their personal development.

“ I feel that this new selection process has given us a more cohesive team, while keeping the core of the organisation happy. We are all more clearly working to a common goal, communicating better and understanding precisely what is required of each other, and this of course helps with staff retention. It's what every company needs to thrive and grow. ”

– JOANNE LAWES

Talent and skills support is a key element of the support function on campus at Sci-Tech Daresbury and is open to all.