

# Business Leaders Zoom Call Report



euro projects  
recruitment

For a confident future

## *Building Value & Profit in 2021 - with Winning Recruitment Techniques*

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#### Sources:

SMMT

Euro Projects Recruitment

BBC

REC

KPMG

## Introduction

5th July 2021

### Welcome to our latest Business Leaders Zoom Call.

Another announcement from Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected later to outline our next steps out of current restrictions, although Covid cases are rising again post lockdown.

UK vehicle production in May remained 58% lower than May 2019, with 2021 production down 22% overall. The recovery of car production is however hampered by a shortage of components, in particular semi-conductors. Most encouraging however is the increase in the production of Electric Vehicles and news last week that Nissan is set to create 900 jobs at it's new £1 Billion battery plant 'gigafactory' in Sunderland. It is estimated a further 6,200 jobs will be created or safeguarded in the supply chain as a result of this investment.

Semi conductors are currently not the only thing in short supply, as our own recruitment figures during Q2 of 2021 are 40% higher than Q2 2019 and demand for people has created a dramatic swing in the employment market.

2019 felt depressed due to Brexit uncertainty and consumer confidence has surged since the relaxation of lockdown restrictions, creating a demand for products, services and people.

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**EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE**  
**HELEN DYKE,**  
**SENIOR ASSOCIATE SOLICITOR**

We've been regularly reviewing the trickle of COVID-19 related employment claims which have been decided by the employment tribunals. So far, there's been a very low success rate amongst employees. The published cases indicate that tribunals are taking a fairly robust attitude towards health and safety issues in the context of coronavirus. However, we've just spotted a new case - Gibson v Lothian Leisure - where an employee successfully persuaded a tribunal that his concerns about the safety of his workplace rendered his subsequent dismissal automatically unfair.

Gibson, a chef was brought back to work during the pandemic and living with a shielding parent had vulnerable dependent. His employer was not following precautions sufficient to guarantee his safety and was dismissed when he refused to work. The tribunal awarded total damages of £20,000, so not a cheap case to lose.

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102h22h/covid-19-employee-who-refused-to-return-to-work-to-protect-his-vulnerable-father>

We have created a 'toolkit' to help organisations understand and implement an agile or hybrid working pattern. It is free to our clients, or we're offering a discounted fixed fee for Euro Projects contacts.

The agile working toolkit includes:

- A detailed checklist of issues that businesses need to consider before deciding on and implementing a policy;
- Precedent agile / hybrid working policy which businesses can adapt for their organisations;
- Precedent contractual clauses covering: changes to working arrangements, data protection, insurance, expenses, health and safety and more;
- Letter to staff introducing the hybrid working policy and explaining how to apply;
- FAQs on agile/hybrid working and flexible working which explains some of the trickier issues.

We've also created a flexible working toolkit as, in most cases, asking for agile working is a flexible working request under the statutory scheme. That's available for a separate fee.

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102h205/are-you-thinking-about-adopting-an-agile-or-hybrid-working-pattern-weve-created>

More employees are asking for hybrid working and there is still a requirement to maintain flexible hybrid working, particularly if employees suddenly need to isolate and until work from home restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, trying to train new employees is challenging and doesn't easily fit the working from home model.



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Working from home flexibility:

Candidates are now expecting this a lot more – a year ago probably only around 5% of businesses offered this, now the majority of candidates ask this question.

By offering the hybrid option you can open up your commute zone and location radius of the candidates you are looking at.

A lot of employers are currently trying to find the balance of flexible and hybrid working between new employees coming in and the employees they have already.

Candidate Selection:

Candidate availability in the current marketplace is more complex, my major observation is that most companies have gone through some form of restructuring and redundancy with roles or people who were surplus to requirements. There was a definite trend to remove the low performers, who are now out of work, and as the market has picked back up and employers are looking to recruit, it is even more important to have a really robust selection process.

One way to manage this problem is getting us to do a soft reference with the candidate, following this up and helping to mitigate the risk. A reference process in the SME world can be very different to a corporate and where a good person has been made redundant, a small business will usually want to help their former employee and provide a quality reference to help them out.

Candidate Attraction:

It's a more informed decision than ever before for candidates, they want to know answers to detailed questions such as Capex spend, financial backing, who was placed on furlough.

Use tangible facts to attract candidates – not a bland job spec or simply say "we want to double the turnover of the business". Candidates want to know if they are going to be safe when joining a new business and that you have a detailed plan.





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Luke let me come to you next, you also manage a lot of contract recruitment projects, how has Covid impacted this and what other wider changes are you aware of?

- Firstly, on the contract side of things, there was an initial surge in contract recruitment as companies were testing the water with the recovery but not wishing to over commit. Since then we have seen far greater confidence from employers wanting to recruit for permanent roles. There will always be a need for specialist contractors to perform projects and those people preferring this way of working but as well Covid, we have had changes to IR35, which has reduced the appetite for some employers to use contractors.

On the wider picture of recruitment...

- We are seeing that companies have a lot more clarity when it comes to recruiting, in terms of the shape of the position and the competencies and characteristics of the candidates they wish to appoint. I feel this has been because of business owners and leaders evaluating their businesses over the last 12 months and making clear decisions on how they want to move forward, making sure they have the right people sat in the right place on the bus.
- The overall speed of recruitment projects has increased. At least the first interview stage is being conducted virtually (unless there is a practical assessment), therefore it is a lot easier to find a one hour time slot to conduct a Teams Interview, rather than a candidate having to book annual leave to attend an onsite interview. This leads onto the 3rd observation...
- As first interviews are taking place a lot earlier in the recruitment process the momentum of the recruitment process has positively increased. It really helps with candidate attraction if the process is nice and slick, and you can move from reviewing CV's to interview stage within a matter of days. You have still got to ensure you robustly assess candidates to mitigate as much risk from the process as possible but having that momentum can be the difference between a really good candidate joining your business rather than the competition.





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Ian, if you can now come to you, I think you also have some observations around the pace of recruitment now too..

Candidates appreciate getting involved more quickly, but they don't get as much out of a video call as the employer – they still want to see the facility, meet the team, get a feel for the culture, so you need to balance the speed with also getting them interested in the role.

Candidates are now a lot more relaxed with the video side of interviewing, they can drop on quickly, know how to use the technology and dress more appropriately. There is certainly less concern about the technology, which previously dominated the experience. Candidates on a video interview can now concentrate on the interview and not the technology.

In manufacturing and certain regions more associated with heavier industry there is still a real appetite to get on site quickly and see people face to face.

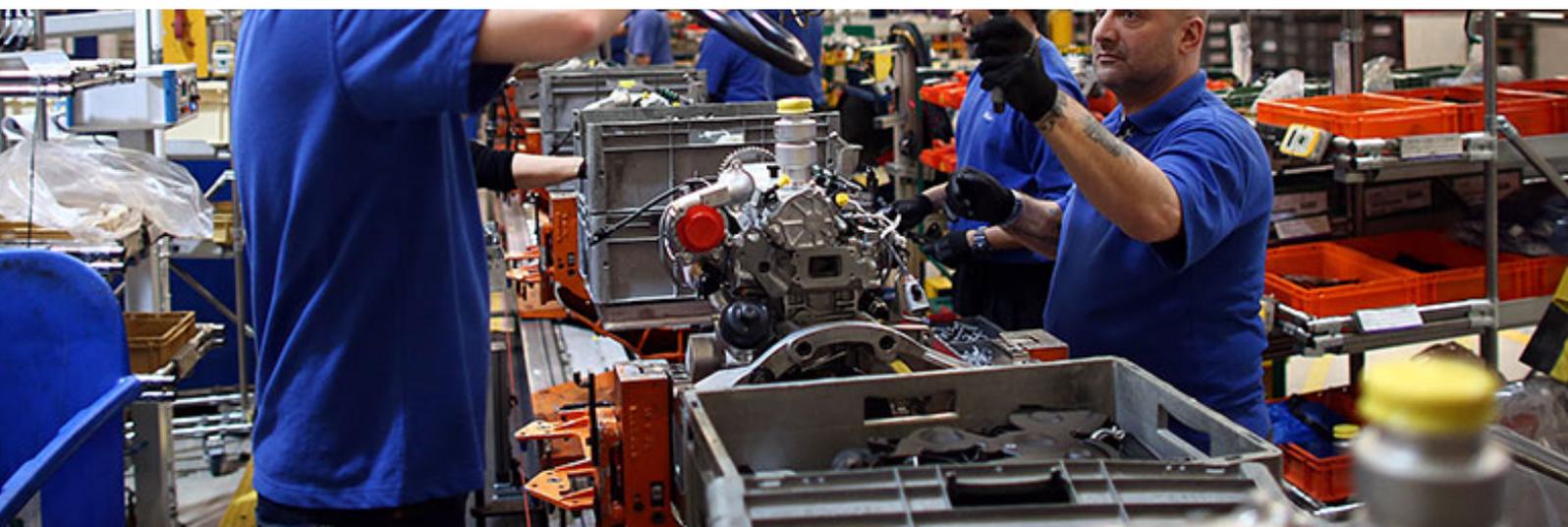
Virtual is a supplementary thing but you still need to see people face to face as part of an interview process

Candidate selection:

Going back 18 months, if we presented a candidate who had moved jobs quite recently it would have been a red flag, but now with Covid / Brexit these moves are more common – doing references, and having a more robust selection process makes sure you can tell the difference between the genuine people who have been unlucky and the job hopping candidates.

There is a constant reminder to employers that the competition for their candidate is any other job that is out there which the candidate may consider, that is what they are competing against.

It is also worth considering that after a period of reflection about life, many people are looking for something different to the tried and tested career they might have previously been on, but if you are willing to compete you have a better chance to secure the person you want.





STEPHEN BROWN  
MD  
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RECRUITMENT



For a confident future

Key learning from today's discussion about the reality of the post-pandemic employment market and how it differs to the previously known world is a stark reminder that being able to adapt at every level across your business will be the difference between the winners and losers as we move ahead.

Ensuring your business is doing everything possible to retain and attract the best people with the best talent is critical and any business still playing a defensive strategy is at risk of losing its top performers.

## JOIN US AGAIN...

Please join us again on **19th July 2021 at 2.00 pm** for 30 minutes to share the latest news affecting your business and to hear how to ***Build Value & Profit by Developing an Employer of Choice Brand***

Your Zoom Call invitation for this event will follow next week.

### HOW ELSE CAN WE HELP YOU?

**IF YOU HAVE A ROLE YOU WOULD LIKE US TO HELP YOU TO RECRUIT FOR, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR REGULAR CONSULTANT, ME, OR IF YOU'RE NEW TO US VIA THE DETAILS BELOW:**

**EMAIL: CUSTOMERS@EUROPROJECTS.CO.UK**

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