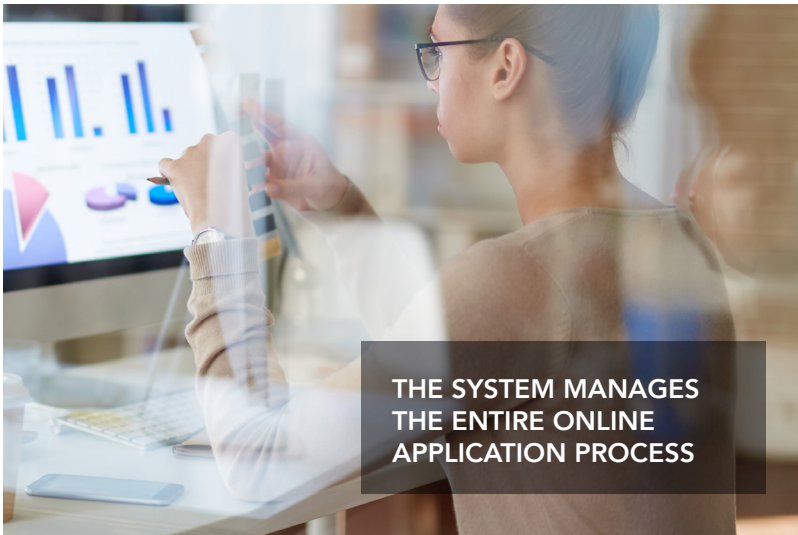


## CASE STUDY

### HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

# TOPLEVEL SPEEDS AND SMOOTHS RECRUITMENT FOR HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND WITH ONLINE JOB PORTAL



THE SYSTEM MANAGES THE ENTIRE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS

Toplevel has helped the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) save time and money with a secure online Job Portal that provides more effective support for the organisation's recruitment process.

The system, rolled out in 2009, manages the entire online application process, from posting recruitment advertisements and accepting applications online through to reporting on equal opportunities data.

Staff can review applications as they come in, allowing them to begin their initial sift before campaigns close, and can use the system to record their decisions. Password protection ensures applicants' data is only seen by the relevant recruiting managers and members of

recruitment panels, while automatic redaction of identifying information helps HLF to run a fair recruitment process.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up by Parliament in 1994 to distribute a share of the money raised by the National Lottery to projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom. As well as being the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, it is also a leading advocate for the value of heritage to modern life. It currently allocates grants to new projects totaling around £255 million a year, and has awarded some £4.7 billion to more than 32,000 projects across the UK since it was established.

## THE REQUIREMENT

HLF employs around 235 staff, who work at regional and country offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow and nine English regions and at its head office in London. With staff turnover of around ten per cent, the organisation recruits 25 to 30 new staff each year, with recruitment campaigns attracting anything from a handful of online applications to well over 200 responses. HLF also regularly uses open advertisement to recruit members to its 12 regional and country committees, which make decisions on grant awards of between £50,000 and £1 million. Previously, HLF made use of a third-party service to handle recruitment campaigns that allowed candidates to apply both online and by post. HLF's Head of Personnel, Iain Bailey says there were several shortcomings with the way the service worked.

In particular, applications were only passed on to HLF after the closing date –usually two to three days later–unless HLF made a special request, for which it would pay a premium. HLF was therefore unable to look at any of the applications and begin its sift until after the closing date, even if a recruitment campaign proved especially popular. "We therefore wanted to replace a system that was time consuming, costly and very slow with one that would provide a faster turnaround and give us the ability to sift applications as they came in, as well as allow us to automatically redact equal opportunities information before the first sift and report on that more easily," Bailey explains.



“

We therefore wanted to replace a system that was time-consuming, costly and very slow”

IAIN BAILEY  
HEAD OF PERSONNEL, HLF

## WHY TOPLEVEL

Toplevel was already working with HLF to develop an online process for grant giving. "Because we didn't necessarily need to go out to tender for the project, and because we didn't want to reinvent the wheel, we decided to explore what a partner already familiar with HLF could do for us on the operational side," says Bailey. "We had two or three meetings with Toplevel in which we explained our requirements

and what we wanted to achieve.

Toplevel quickly came back with a model for the Job Portal that demonstrated they understood our needs, as well as showing us examples of similar systems they'd delivered. They also offered us a very competitive price for the development and hosting of the Job Portal because it could be co-hosted alongside the existing grants solution."

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We decided to explore what a partner already familiar with HLF could do for us on the operational side"

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## EASY TO MANAGE, EASY TO USE

With HLF giving the go-head, the Job Portal went live within just a couple of months and has now been in use for around three years. While the solution is provided as a hosted service, all day-to-day operations are managed entirely in house: the personnel team can set up new recruitment campaigns (including determining whether applications can upload supporting documents), draw on an archive of previous campaigns to quickly re-advertise a job or create an amended version of an advert, set up new job categories which help job seekers narrow their searches, and edit standard information, such as a "Working for us" page which provides background information on HLF, all without needing to engage Toplevel.

Applications can be monitored on screen as they come in, allowing HLF to begin its initial sift while the campaign is still running, and staff can note in the system if they think an application should be rejected at this stage. During this initial sift, the Toplevel solution automatically hides all identifying information about candidates, such as name, contact details and equal opportunities information, helping HLF to run a fair recruitment process. Built-in reporting tools then allow the personnel team to quickly report on equal opportunities issues.

Another key feature of the system is that it provides government-strength security for applicants' data. While the personnel team can look at any application for any job, a separate password is created for

each job that only allows applications for that job to be viewed. This can be given to the recruiting manager and to other members of the recruitment panel.

For applicants, the system provides wizards that guide them through completing the form, with context-specific help. They are able to save part-completed applications and return to them later, and review the whole application before submitting it. They can also register to receive alerts of new vacancies, as well search jobs by category.



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We can shorten the timescales and arrange interviews sooner"

IAIN BAILEY  
HEAD OF PERSONNEL, HLF

## BENEFITS

All of these features have resulted in a recruitment process that is more time efficient for everyone involved and allows a faster turnaround. "Because we can track applications during the campaign, we can shorten the timescales for the sifting process and therefore arrange interviews sooner and get people in post more quickly," Bailey explains. "The process is also less paper-based and onerous for the personnel team, with the system providing time-saving features like being able to reuse work carried out for previous campaigns, rather than having to start from scratch. It's also excellent for archiving, because everything is online, while the built-in reporting means we can easily extract and report on equal opportunities data."

Bailey says the system has also been well received by recruiting managers. "They feel more involved in the

recruitment process from the beginning and that they have more flexibility and control over how they manage the process," he points out.

"For example, if a recruiting manager is very busy, she can ask her office manager to monitor applications as they come in, and she can choose when to allocate time in her schedule to review applications herself."

In addition, the solution is also cheaper to operate than the previous system and more environmentally friendly, since HLF no longer needs to print out and distribute hard copies of applications. Following the successful roll out of the Job Portal for staff recruitment, HLF's Secretariat has also now adopted the system to handle committee and trustee appointments.



“  
With the Toplevel system,  
I feel we are in control”

IAIN BAILEY  
HEAD OF PERSONNEL, HLF

## FIRST-CLASS SUPPORT

“With the Toplevel system, I feel we are in control,” Bailey concludes. “Before, we were beholden to our supplier. Though we had a service level agreement in place, there were often problems, such as applications not being delivered to us. In contrast, I can’t fault the support from Toplevel. The times we’ve had issues have been very few and far between, but if we do telephone the helpline, someone will either help us there and then or, if the issue is complex or difficult, give us a timescale for getting back to

us – and they always respond within that timeframe and resolve the issue.

Toplevel has also made it easy to ask for and get amendments to the system, such as changes to the application form to reflect new legislation.”

In fact, he says, Toplevel has often gone the extra mile even when an issue falls outside the scope of the support contract. For example, he explains, “we had an issue getting data for our Annual Report for 2010 using the reporting tools in the system.

Toplevel investigated and explained that we couldn’t get the data in the way we wanted from the system because we’d made some changes to our application form in the middle of the year.

However, they told us to leave it with them and they would manipulate the data into the form we needed. Within an hour, they got back to us with exactly what we wanted. We didn’t ask them to do that: they offered, even though it wasn’t an issue they’d created. This is a clear demonstration of how the support from Toplevel has always been A-1.”

## TOPLEVEL – Secure online case management

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