



“ WITH PEOPLE FIRST, WE’RE TAKING A MODERN APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION – IT’S A GREAT PLATFORM ”

TONY COCCA - SENIOR PEOPLE BUSINESS PARTNER, ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST



CUSTOMER
Essex Wildlife Trust



SECTOR
Charity



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
200



PRODUCTS SUPPLIED
People First

ABOUT ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

As a leading conservation charity, Essex Wildlife Trust is committed to protecting wildlife and inspiring people with a lifelong love of nature. Founded in 1959, the Trust manages 8,400 acres of land across Essex.

TRANSFORMING PROCESSES

**“It’s engaging, it’s effective and it’s accessible”
– Tony Cocca, Senior People Business Partner, Essex Wildlife Trust.**

After implementing People First, the Essex Wildlife Trust saw several efficiency boosts, speeding up and simplifying a range of HR processes. But it was the Recruitment and Onboarding modules where Tony saw the most profound transformation happening.

Before this, the Trust was using a manual approach to recruitment, where managers were using spreadsheets and paper applications to shortlist candidates. This made optimising each step nearly

impossible, and the whole recruitment process was inefficient.

He knew that when it comes to establishing a strong employee experience, a smooth recruitment and onboarding process is key for engagement and brand reputation. A structured approach can help with this, as it ensures everyone gets the same experience, and this is built within People First. Each applicant could be guided from step to step, without adding loads of admin burden to applicants, HR and line managers.

Individual jobs have already seen an increase in applicants as a result, but this hasn’t led to

an unmanageable deluge of applicants to trawl through, as the CV parsing tool maps CV's uploaded to their online application before answering any supplementary questions.

Each job could be set up with the skills needed, and CVs automatically checked for skill matches, providing an overall percentage score. This helped filter out completely unsuitable applicants and ensure the best talent would get the most attention. Once a candidate has joined the team, they then move into the onboarding process. Again, Tony and his team are

able to attach certain documents to certain roles, so getting each new hire set up on the system and ready to hit the ground running is incredibly helpful in new starters engagement.

"It definitely helps with People Management, because it's supporting managers in their processes," says Tony, **"Yes, that is an HR function, but so much of onboarding is about the relationship between the manager and the new member of staff starting off on the right foot. People First helps us support our line managers."**

EMBRACING CHANGE

From signing a contract in February of 2023, the system was running and delivering exceptional results in less than six months.

Tony worked closely with MHR who were on hand to answer any queries as well as facilitate any changes needed before, during and after the process. **"MHR has been fantastic, the team is very engaged and helped us get results...adding in supplementary questions was our team's idea, for example. Any queries we've had have been actioned or are in the road map."**

Feedback has already been extremely positive from the team, with high levels of buy-in from managers, even in the short time since implementation.

They're particularly responding to the modern, accessible design as it requires very little training to get comfortable with - especially for people who are used to social media interfaces.

Word's gotten out about the engaging power of People First beyond the Essex Wildlife Trust team. Tony notes, **"I've taken about several calls now, from other Wildlife Trust teams asking about People First."** When the benefits are so clear, it's easy to see why other teams are curious to learn more about the solution at Essex Wildlife Trust.

"It's simply a very good platform. The updates come through every two weeks. It's a great all-round solution for a lot of organisations."

KEY BENEFITS

- Number of applications for each role has nearly tripled without compromising quality of candidates
- Time to hire and quality of hire is improving, helping the trust secure the best talent
- Fast responses to any queries or requests giving the team complete confidence in the system
- High buy-in levels from line managers improving relationships between them and new hires
- Improved efficiencies across the organisation, speeding up a range of HR processes without creating more admin



"AS A ONE STOP SHOP PACKAGE, IT'S A REALLY GOOD SOLUTION"

TONY COCCA