

LEV Job Market

2023



SALARIES?

ROBERT BOSCH

"I don't pay good wages because I have a lot of money; I have a lot of money because I pay good wages." -

TEAM BUILDING?

RICHARD BRANSON

"Hiring the right people takes time, the right questions and a healthy dose of curiosity. What do you think is the most important factor when building your team? For us, it's personality."

THE TINDER EFFECT?

SCOTT WINTRIP

"Dating and hiring have a lot in common."

LEV

JOBS

FREE-TO-USE JOB-FINDER WEBSITE

LEVJobs.com remains a free-to-use (no strings, never any fees) advertising website dedicated to employers looking to fill job vacancies in LEV-related topics. Job seekers may also place adverts free of charge (load CVs etc).

Click the link to go to website:-

<https://levjobs.com>

The Shrinking Labour Market?

UK Job Vacancies peaked at 1.3 million in January this year.

The [LEVJobs.com](https://www.levjobs.com) website has historically hosted at any one time - somewhere around 4 to 6 LEV-related job vacancies.

For the past 12 months that has averaged at 24 vacancies.

End Apr 23 = 33 current LEV vacancies!

Clearly for many companies it is becoming harder to recruit staff to fill the vacancies.

One reason for this - very obvious - is that there are fewer people available to employ.

Since the ending of COVID restrictions the number of people available in the labour market has apparently reduced by some 662,000 (1.9% of the market)

The reasons are not simply due to foreign-born workers having gone home (post BREXIT/COVID) but predominantly due to the number (487,000) of under 64 year olds who have become economically inactive.



In addition, there has also been a significant rise in the overall number of students entering tertiary education.

And, finally - for whatever fundamental reason - there has been a rise of some 256,000 people too unwell to work (and this figure is not accounted for wholly by COVID impacts).

These losses from the job market have caused a 'domino effect' and the LEV sector has not been immune to these adverse changes; indeed, in early 2023 it is clearly suffering from an acute labour shortage.

And, that is not likely to improve in the short term.

Economists describe what we are experiencing as an "*adverse supply shock*".

Employment Costs Rising

Rising inflation has inevitably had an impact on wages but interestingly - thus far - increases in average wages are lagging the inflation index by a few percentage points.



However as has happened in other industries - this very tight labour market has resulted in higher costs and again we are seeing this being replicated in LEV sector salaries.

Competition between employers for good quality staff has raised salary expectations significantly in the past 12 months.

As an Employer these costs can only be justified - firstly, if you have the right candidate - and secondly, if these additional costs can be passed on to the customer.

Customer Resistance/Customer Expectations?

There have always been customers who will look only at the lowest price offering - come what will.

Very dangerous.

This type of approach carries with it high reputational and financial risks.

See separate Newsletter on “Competency” where we discuss the liabilities potentially awaiting this type of client!



Clients are commonly resistant to increasing costs from LEV suppliers - even where they are aware of the risks described above.

But there appears to be another reason for resistance.

And, that relates to professional *trust*.

Put into simple terms - we expect our Doctors to know more about our illnesses than we do (even with the help of faithful Google or ChatGPT!) - and we put *trust* in their abilities.

This can be replicated in the LEV sector where the Seller (the LEV service/equipment supplier) knows more than the Client - particularly in regard to the requirements and technical aspects of the service they provide.

The client '*trusts*' the LEV supplier.

However we are beginning to see a general 'downtrend' in this 'trust' relationship.

Around **2010** our typical OXYL8 course attendees - came 5% from Client companies and the remainder from LEV 'practitioners'. In **2022/23** - that figure has changed and can be nearer to 40% Client company delegates.

Clients are becoming more LEV 'aware', becoming 'wiser' (not all but in general - certainly a clear shift in that direction). Together with increasing HSE 'pressures' on Duty Holders (client companies) this rising awareness/enforcement twin combination is leading to a weakening of the traditional Client - LEV Contractor 'trust' bond.

Losing 'trust' suffers the risk of losing the client.

Read the above line again. It is important to understand this.

At the very least diluting "*Trust*" introduces significant resistance to project cost increases from the LEV suppliers.

This weakening of the trust 'bond' has certainly contributed in some cases to increasing scrutiny by the Clients on such matters as Supplier 'Competency'.



Interesting 'Factoid'. Janet Yellen's (US Treasury Secretary) husband won a Nobel Prize in 2001 for his economic paper on this subject of commercial 'trust' (it was one of the shortest economic papers to win the Nobel prize) and was entitled - "*The Market for Lemons*" 😊

The upshot?

In 2023 - Clients will more often resist fee increases.

Clients are also - scrutinising the 'claimed' competencies of their LEV Suppliers/Contractors.

In this they are most certainly 'encouraged' by HSE.

The strong Client/Supplier 'Trust' relationship has to be maintained.

"Darwinism" is as important today as it was when published in 1858 - and it applies to the LEV Sector! 😊

Those who adapt and embrace the changes will survive and prosper.

And those who do not - and lose the Trust of their clients?

Well, they are heading for extinction 😞.



Employing in a Tight Market

The Employees Perspective

Why do Employees leave a job? Apparently the most common reasons are:-

- Better Opportunities. ...
- Seeking More Flexibility. ...
- Feeling Under-Appreciated. ...
- Lack of Feedback. ...
- Negative Work Culture. ...
- The Job was Unsuitable. ...
- Physical Work Environment. ...
- Lack of Stability

Note: salary/remuneration did not feature in the top 8 reasons most frequently given for leaving

That is not to say that the level of remuneration being offered is not important.

It is - but in a competitive market for new recruits - giving due consideration to the above bullet points is critical.

On salaries - and from a review of the recent job adverts on LEVJobs.com - we have the following **(typical) remuneration levels being offered:-**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| • LEV Technician/Entry Level | £23k - £29k |
| • LEV Practitioner/Consultant | £30k - £45k |
| • Senior LEV Specialist/Consultant | £45k+ |
| • HSE Specialist Inspector | £47k+ |

First up Consider what steps you should take to ensure you keep the good staff you have?

Second When recruiting - study the bullet list at the top of this page - and use it to make your job offer attractive.

Salary is certainly important - and especially so in these inflationary times - but employees will not stay if the other elements in the list are not addressed.

The Employer's Perspective

What do Employers look for when engaging staff? Online research provides this list -

Employers want the prospective employee to show:-

- They're Enthusiastic
- They're Adaptable
- They're A Team Player
- They Ask Good Questions
- They Admit To Mistakes
- They're Willing To Learn
- They're Resilient
- They Can Put Skills Into Action
- They're Ambitious
- They're Confident

The **skills** part comes way down the list and is non-specific.

For me, I'd say that the most important factor was **'personality'**.

Qualifications, skills, competencies can be easily grafted on to the right person!

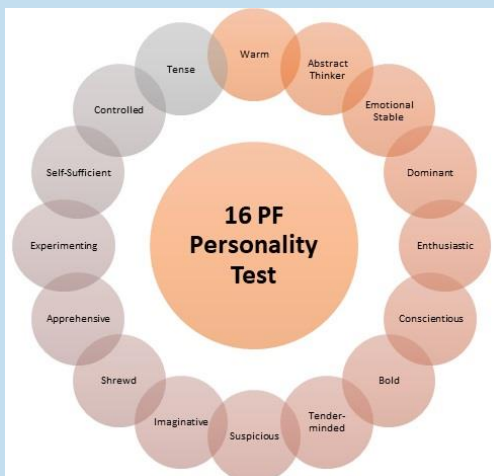
But, if the 'personality' is wrong

So,

At Interview Are they What they Seem?

In the past we've used the **Cattell 16PF Personality Tests** - and the results have been, on some occasions, eye-opening and saved us from making expensive mistakes.

In other words, the prospect's **personality** was not what we thought from their performance at interview



For a bit of fun - try a free 16 PF test here:

<https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/16PF.php>

You might get some surprises 😊

For serious recruitment - I'd always engage the services of a specialist competent in administering and assessing Personality Tests.

Warning!

It goes without saying that you should never make your decision solely on Personality Profiling (that too is dangerous) but do use these simple (and often free) tests to aid your recruitment decisions.

Look/Think Outside the Box

When I look back over the years - some of our best team members came - not from the traditional LEV sourcing sectors - but from (sometimes) 'odd-ball' backgrounds.

We had amongst our 'stand-out' staff members; a postal worker, a chicken slaughterer (true!), ex-military, a book seller, supermarket delicatessen counter assistant, welder, veterinary assistant etc etc.

Others in the LEV Sector of whom I have personal knowledge and - again - these are 'stand-outs' in LEV - have come from - Retail Sales, Food & Beverage, Gamekeeping, Maths Teacher (you know who you are 😊) etc.

Yet - the LEVJobs adverts appear to focus only on LEV-specific skills with minimum LEV qualification requirements (eg P601 etc).

In our opinion - focussing too hard on this often leads to crashing on the alter of disappointment!

Some (Obvious?) Conclusions

- The LEV Job Market is tight. And it will remain so for the foreseeable future
- Salaries being offered have increased significantly over the past 2-3 years
- The better employees are drifting towards the better employers (no surprise there)
- Clients are getting wiser. Trust is being eroded.
- Walk away from the clients who only engage the lowest price offering
- Some LEV Sector operators are heading for extinction
- Upskilling is inevitable. The business is on the move from being considered a "Trade" to a "Profession"
- Seriously! Employing and retaining new staff is expensive (and it's not just the salaries) - so consider why staff you engage would want to stay with you over the medium to long term?
- Always conduct "EXIT Interviews" and don't take 'hurt' from the feedbacks but learn from them
- Reconsider your criteria for engaging long-term members of your Team. Consider undertaking Personality Tests on potential recruits
- Look outside the usual LEV recruitment 'technical pool' areas
- Use <https://levjobs.com> if you are a Job Seeker or have a Vacancy to offer (it's entirely free and no strings).

- But - when placing job adverts (or your CV) - [seriously](#) consider how - taking all the above into account.
- In the current jobs climate, you must make your CV/Job Offer really '[Sparkle](#)'.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Bill Conall".

bill@oxyl8.com

17th May 2023