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How do I find staff without paying the fees of an agent?

Ask James



James Caan

be suitable; try Enternships.com which connects students with small firms, or Wexo.co.uk which is similar and matches employers with those looking for work experience.

■ For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to standard.co.uk. His new book, *Start Your Business in 7 Days*, will be available from March 1

Dear James

My husband and I have a small cleaning and property business and would like to employ someone to help grow and run it, perhaps a graduate. Where does one find someone without huge agency fees?

Alex Daly, Guardsman Cleaning

If this is about "running" your business then no one will do that better than you. But if you need help you must assess the risk, especially when employing someone less experienced than you. For example, what's the cost to you if it goes wrong?

It sounds as if you need someone who has work experience rather than a graduate. If you are thinking about "growing" your business then that's about selling and you need someone with appropriate skills. If it's literally "running" the business, then that's an operational function and involves IT, HR, health and safety, etc. You need to identify what the role entails. Crystallise the requirements and then put it into a proper job description.

If you don't have a budget then start with social media – a very powerful tool for recruitment. You could also contact universities directly as they have news boards and e-newsletters you can use to alert students to your vacancy. There are also online recruitment firms which offer a cost-effective flat rate.

If you simply want someone to help with basic duties then a graduate may