Fantastic employees and where to find them

Lucy Crompton-Reid - Wikimedia UK
Claudia Garad - Wikimedia Österreich
Sandra Rientjes - Wikimedia Nederland
So you think you need staff....

- There are not enough volunteers to do the work
- There are certain tasks the volunteers don’t like to do
- Special skills are needed
Are you ready to become an employer?

- Do you know enough about employment law, health and safety, taxes?
- Do you have management experience?
- Can you offer an acceptable working place?
- Will you be a good boss?
A bad boss

• Is rude or disrespectful to/about staff
• Does not communicate
• Does not stick to agreements
• Does not let go
• Knows everything better
• Changes his/her mind frequently
• Takes all the credit and none of the blame
• Thinks staff should be grateful that they have a job
A good boss....

• Makes clear what is expected of staff
• Gives staff the appropriate ‘tools’ to do their job,
• Creates a safe working environment
• Trusts staff to do the job properly
• Knows how to delegate
• Gives honest and timely feedback, including praise
• Only interferes when it is necessary
Before you start hiring

• Prepare your organisation/board – fill gaps in knowledge, experience, expertise
• Set up a governance + management structure
  – Review your processes (programmes, communication, finances, planning)
  – What responsibilities & mandates will the staff have?
  – Create rules for board-staff communication
• Prepare your community
What staff do you need?

• Which tasks will the staff do?
• How many hours/week?
• Can you create one or more realistic and coherent workpackages?

• Permanent or temporary?
• Have you considered trainees, secondments, outsourcing, consultancy?
• Salary?
What kind of staff do you need?

- Skills and competencies
- Work experience
- Education
  (reality check: salary!)

- Personality

- Wikipedian??????
Always/never hire a Wikipedian

Always, because
• Knowledgeable, network, trusted by community

Never, because
• Line between work and hobby gets blurred, loss of status as Wikipedian

When hiring a Wikipedian: agree on the rules and write them down
Admins and ArbCom members: probably not a good idea.
Challenges for staff new to the movement

- Wiki-code
- Wiki-way of working
- Communication processes and structures
- Volunteer – staff dynamic
- Dealing with wonderful, but complex, people
- Rudeness, verbal abuse
What you can do to keep staff (safe)

- Develop introduction programme for new staff
  - Skills
  - People
  - Culture
  - Structures and processes
- Appoint Wiki-mentor for first months
- Find a buddy: a staff member with some years experience
- Regularly check in with staff member how introduction is going
- Regular and constructive feedback
- Be a good boss!
Warning: hiring staff is addictive....

- Work will expand: there is always a little too much work for the number of staff you have
I don't have any formal training for the position, but I've read all the relevant Wikipedia articles.
Employment models for lean organizations

James Petts, CC-BY-SA 2.0
The first employee

Three common models
● Executive Director
● Office Manager
● Program Manager

What to consider:
As soon as there is more than one staff member, there should be clear hierarchies!
Flexible staffing models I

Temporary team members
- Internships
- Integration Programs
- Volunteer (European Voluntary Service)
- Community Service as an alternative to military service

What to consider:
All of those models come with requirements concerning a proper working environment. There is also an expectation that these staff members learn something and receive training - they are not just cheap labour. You need to invest time in training and management.
Flexible staffing models II

Outsourcing
- Contractors and freelancers
- Companies (e.g. book keeping, graphic design)

What to consider:
A distributed team needs sound processes, roles, and communication structures. Longterm contractors should also be integrated (e.g. social events) and appreciated.
Managing a bigger team

Opportunities
● Increased capacity
● A range of skills, experience and knowledge
● Higher reach, impact and profile
● Less reliant on unpaid volunteers and trustees

Challenges
● Resources! Salary costs, office costs, training, travel etc.
● Impact on programme budget and support functions
● Organisational structure - teams, line management
● Relationship with volunteers and trustees will change
What needs to be in place?

- Robust HR practices including equal opportunities recruitment and effective line management
- Formal staff reviews/appraisals
- Training and development programme
- Clear policies and procedures
- Good internal communications supported by regular staff meetings, team meetings and 1:1s
- Strong financial management including budgeting, monitoring, reporting and accounting
- Three or five year strategy, business plan and annual delivery or activity plan, which translates into individual staff work plans
Changing dynamic...

...between staff and board

- Moving from an operational board to a governance board takes time and patience
- It won’t suit everyone...some trustees want to get stuck into delivery, which isn’t their role
- Try to identify specific ways in which trustees can support your programme, as volunteers
- Keep board and subcommittee meetings focused on strategy, financial management, organisational development, policy and high-level programme discussions including progress against targets
- Ensure the ED has an adequate Scheme of Delegation for both financial and strategic/policy decisions