Is Your Recruiting Function Running on All Cylinders? Look Under The Hood With A Recruiting Process Audit

By Tom Darrow

Is the War for Talent at a cease-fire? No! The war has not ended but it has changed forms. Certainly, there is an abundance of talent available in today's market. Recruiters who had trouble finding qualified candidates just two years ago are now buried in resumes. But, the fight for the best talent remains and this war will never end.

For most companies hiring has slowed or a hiring freeze is in place, but hiring for critical needs and some replacement hiring continues.

During the dot-com craze, recruiters had their hands full in production – filling slots. Many recruiting managers wished they had time to improve their recruiting process but the need seemed secondary to the pressure from management to fill slots. Now that hiring has slowed, it's time to assess whether your recruiting function is running on all cylinders in preparation for the competition that will resurface as the economy rebounds. An effective way to improve your recruiting process is to look under the hood by performing a Recruiting Process Audit.

The Steps of a Recruiting Process Audit:

Step #1: Decide who will perform the Audit
The Audit can be done by someone within the company or someone from the outside. If the budget can be secured, an outside recruiting consultant is ideal. An external consultant will:
1. Bring an independent/objective viewpoint
2. Add recruiting process expertise that may not be available within the company
3. Have the time to dedicate to the project as internal staff are focused on other initiatives

Step #2: Assess the Recruiting Model
Is the recruiting function and process properly aligned with the business structure and process? Should the recruiting team be centralized at corporate, decentralized and in the field, or a combination? How are the recruiting process steps divided amongst the recruiting team, HR, the Hiring Managers, outside contractors or search firms, and technology?

Step #3: Assess your Process
Meet with the recruiting team, key Hiring Managers, key executives, a sampling of new hires and others. Ask them to describe the process they use to hire, and in the case of recent hires, what was the process they just went through? Are the stories consistent? Where are the break points? Where is time and money being wasted? What sourcing strategies work the best? What are their recommendations for improvements?

Step #4: Assess your Technology
Do you have an applicant tracking system? Is it cost effective? Is it really being used to its capacity (most use about 40% of the overall functionality)? Do you use an assessment tool to prescreen?

Step #5: Assess your Recruiting Team
Do you have the headcount to effectively facilitate the hiring needs? Are the recruiters adequately trained and at the experience level needed to perform to expectations? Do you supplement with contract recruiters when hiring volume increases? Do you utilize researchers to enhance the sourcing pipeline?

Step #6: Review Your Metrics
What metrics do you track? What do they say about where improvements need to be made? What sources are the most fruitful? Where is the process being unduly slowed? How does quality of hire compare to the past? What is causing attrition and at what tenure are employees leaving (if during the first 90-180 days, it could be a recruiting issue, if longer-term, likely a management or other issue).

Once complete, a Recruiting Process Audit will provide the basis for fine tuning the process. Ultimately, it will lead to an increase in quality of hire and a decrease in cost per hire and time to fill. Also, it will enhance the reputation of the recruiting function in the eyes of management as a strategic business partner. Remember, the war for talent has slowed, but it continues. Don't get complacent and let your competition win the war!

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