

HIRING

Relationship Is Key When Courting Recruits

This is a challenging time for corporate recruiters. Jobs are in abundance – there are more positions open than talented people to fill them. Competition is fierce among companies for the best and the brightest candidates, and those candidates are becoming more discriminating.

While the state of the job market is constantly fluctuating, savvy corporate recruiters know the tight labor market is here to stay.

In this challenging market, what can corporate recruiters do to bring hiring success to their organizations? Here are some best practices to help corporate recruiters adapt and thrive.

Partner With the Hiring Manager. Now more than ever, corporate recruiters need a solid relationship with hiring managers. Recruiters should strategize with the hiring manager to see how they can work best together to achieve a common goal.

Corporate recruiters should also make a point to understand the needs of the hiring manager and his or her department. The ability to work as a team can ensure hiring success.

Educate the Hiring Manager. Most recruiters know the new state of the job market, but many hiring managers and company leaders are still unaware of the challenges of finding the best employees.

Corporate recruiters need to change company leaders' perceptions of the hiring process and help



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them realize what they are up against – the hiring pool is shrinking, there is a candidate shortage and there is increased competition in the marketplace. Recruiters need to keep abreast of changes in the job market and relay those changes to hiring managers.

Sell the Organization. One of the benefits of having a close relationship with the hiring manager is the recruiter can gain a keen understanding of the organization and what can be offered to candidates – not just in terms of salary and benefits, but also the corporate culture and career advancement opportunities. The better a recruiter knows the organization, the better she can sell it to prospective employees.

Corporate recruiters also need to let hiring managers and company leaders know how to sell them-

selves. During the interview process, they should talk up their strengths, pinpointing what makes their organization unique and why it is a great place to work.

There needs to be a consistent message from everyone involved in the hiring process so candidates aren't getting conflicting messages from different interviewers.

Expedite the Process. Organizations no longer have the luxury of dragging out the interview process to find the right candidate – they may risk having qualified people scooped up by another organization. Corporate recruiters and hiring managers also need to realize the importance of keeping candidates informed along the way. If the timeframe for the hiring process changes, let them know.

Be More Flexible. Today's job searchers are typically employed and have trouble taking time off for interviews. If possible, group together several interviews and make sure key company representatives are available during that time. Flexibility sends a message to candidates that the organization values their time.

Dispel Myth of the 'Perfect' Candidate. Another area where flexibility is key is in the quest for the ideal candidate. Help hiring managers redefine their idea of a perfect employee. Some organizations have become so rigid in their standards, they are letting talented people slip away.

While certain technical skills are

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essential, urge organizations to prioritize their wish list and look at the big picture. Is the candidate a problem-solver, a critical-thinker, a good fit for the company culture and enthusiastic about the job? Instead of saying, "This person won't work because..." say "Is there a way we can make this person successful at this organization?"

First Impressions Are Critical. Traditionally, only candidates were concerned with making a good first impression: Dress well. Be early. Be prepared. But it is becoming increasingly important for representatives of the hiring organization to make a good first impression, too.

Hiring managers should prepare by having the job description and the candidate's resume on hand, and be able to answer questions about the company and its policies.

It is a mistake to have a junior person who isn't familiar with the position or the organization conduct the interview, especially for a

senior-level job. This sends a strong message to a candidate that the position isn't valued at the organization.

Make an Offer They Can't Refuse. When it comes time to make an offer, recommend the hiring manager or a senior-level person do the offering. That person should not just discuss salary, but the entire compensation package including benefits, vacation, profit sharing and other perks. This stage in the process should have a personal touch, where the hiring manager expresses excitement about the possibility of the candidate joining the company.

Don't Let Them off the Hook. A crucial juncture in the hiring process is the time between when an offer is made and when the person starts. This is when candidates often get counter offers from their current employers. Ward off the lure of counter offers by keeping in contact with candidates and inviting them to meetings and social events to give them a feel for the organization.

Help Them Get Onboard. The first days and weeks after a person starts a new job is a common time for buyer's remorse ("maybe my old job wasn't so bad."). Have greeters assigned to welcome new hires, show them around and make them feel comfortable. It also helps to have an agenda or training program for the first few weeks so new hires know what to expect and can get ramped up and productive more quickly.

Today's tight labor market calls for some innovative and strategic recruiting strategies. Successful recruiters know candidates who don't feel valued from the start will take their skills and expertise elsewhere. But working closely with hiring managers can ensure the process runs smoothly – and can bring valuable new hires in the door.

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