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8 Reasons Managers Struggle to Find the Right Talent

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Securing skilled workers is getting more complex and challenging than ever before. The evolution of work today has caused many employers to revisit their talent acquisition strategies, adopting new methods for securing the talent they need to succeed.

Companies are investing in the tools and technologies they need to keep pace with constant change in the digital era, but they need more than just the right technology. They need to leverage that technology to enable the right people to do the right things in an ever-changing workforce.

As organizations further increase their hiring activity, low unemployment means they will have to work harder at hiring and keeping quality talent—particularly as employees gain more options and confidence to change employers.

What do today's job candidates lack?

According to an article on Forbes Advisor, 36% of HR leaders say they don't have the resources to recruit top talent, while 30% of new hires leave within the first 90 days. Despite the difficulty in hiring the right people, it's difficult to find candidates that are the perfect fit.

The top areas where today's candidates *fall short*:

- Relevant on-the-job experience
- A strong work ethic
- Industry knowledge & soft skills

When it comes to specific industries or level of talent, the 5 most challenging positions to recruit and hire for today are:

- Information technology
- Executive talent and leadership
- Sales and marketing
- Engineering
- Manufacturing & logistics

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8 challenges in recruiting workforce talent

1) The millennial challenge

Millennials' restlessness creates unique challenges, as these workers are more accustomed than older generations to jump from company to company.

Today's workforce is transient.

Younger generations in particular do not often stay with an organization for more than two or three years. They are always looking for the next thing. Here is what appeals to them:

- **Sense of purpose**
  Millennials want to work for an organization with a purpose, and be a part of something bigger than profit making.
  They are just as interested in how a business develops its people and how it contributes to society as they are in its products and profits.
- **Career development—more than a training program**
  Emphasizing what your organization is doing around career development will help you attract millennials. If you don't have anything to relate, start making changes so your company is better aligned with the wants and needs of the today's workforce.
  Millennials value work-life balance. In addition to competitive salary, consider perks such as telecommuting, flexible hours, comp time and more vacation days.

2) Fewer applicants

According to SHRM, 92% prospective applications never complete their online application – impacting organizations' ability to make a quality hire. One reason might be the application process itself. If the process is too extensive or confusing, it can increase abandonment rate, leading to a lower volume of applicants.

According to Pew, nearly 80% of job seekers conduct searches online today, and one-third rank it as their most important resource. Posting online seems like a "*no-brainer*."

Lack of supply for too much demand.

Unfortunately, finding more applicants isn't as easy as simply optimizing the application forms and posting jobs online. Instead, here is what you need to focus on to get more candidates:

- **Keep an open mind**
  The 'ideal' might not exist, so try to keep the description as open as possible. What are the 'must haves' and 'good to haves'. Prioritizing these might help open the field up to a wider range of potential (and good) hires.
- **Be efficient in your processes**
  Time is of the essence! Delay in the process is the other main reason why employers lose out on the people they want to hire— employers with the most efficient processes are the most successful in hiring the people they want.
  No matter how aspirational your brand is, few applicants are going to be impressed with waiting a few weeks for feedback, or will want to hang around 6 weeks for a decision.
- **The devil is in the detail—provide quality briefings that sell your firm**
  Make sure you provide applicants and your recruitment consultants with quality information about the vacancy and which sells the business, not just the day-to-day of the job.
  Information about the firm's history, clients, achievements, people and company culture are all helpful to give applicants a true picture what it is like to work for you.
  Get creative with the format and language and make sure you are highlighting the unique benefits and opportunities the position and business offers employees.

3) Lack of experience

One of the most common pain points amongst HR professionals: an applicant with a great skill set who lacks the work experience needed.

50% of respondents to SHRM's study agreed that lack of experience amongst applicants has made their jobs more difficult.

It's easier to fill a job when a large population of the workforce will likely have the skills and experience you require.

Each day, nearly 10,000 baby boomers retire from the labor force–that's 4 million highly-skilled workers each year!

As younger workers enter the workforce with skill sets in emerging fields and industries different from their predecessors (e.g. UX and UI design, front and back-end development, product design, etc.), companies are lacking access to more traditional skilled workers (e.g. project, account, and marketing managers). Here's how you can solve this problem:

- **Create mentoring programs**
  One strategy to compensate for a lack of experience and skills in a candidate that would otherwise be a great hire, is to provide mentoring, education, and training programs.
- **Double check the ATS results**
  Unfortunately, many candidates who have excellent qualifications, but didn't put the proper keywords on their resume, are left out.
  Perhaps the candidate has 4 years of experience instead of the arbitrary 5 you listed. Be cautious with Applicant Tracking System (ATS) results. If you aren't getting enough candidates, take a second look at those your ATS rejected.
  If mandatory qualifications are required, consider engaging a staffing agency to ensure each applicant undergoes a thorough screening and skills assessment, and you get only the top-qualified candidates.

4) Fierce competition

While the number of employment opportunities is increasing, the skills gap remains.

Therefore, many hiring managers and executives are constantly competing over the same, shrinking pool of talent.

Today, hiring companies must compete online, in print, and in person in order to find the right talent that not only fits their skills requirements but their company culture as well.

Recruiting has become a demanding full-time job that few companies–outside of major enterprises–have the manpower for. Here's what you can do to overcome this obstacle:

- **Enlist staffing agencies**
  To gain the needed skills and talent for particular roles and functions, HR professionals can enlist the help of staffing agencies who specialize in temporary and contract workers.
- **Opt for skill-based hiring**
  The contingent workforce allows companies to "switch to skills-based models for hiring"—a strategy 60% of employers currently implement, and 57% plan to use in the future.

5) Lack of understanding around what employees want

People want job security. Although this cannot be guaranteed, it's something employers should be aware of. People still look for the basics when they join an organization.

According to State of the Global Workplace, 2022 report by Gallup, only 21% of employees feel truly engaged at work. Unfortunately, the cost of disengaged employees is estimated to be $7.8 trillion globally in lost productivity. Here's how you can refrain from becoming a part of these statistics:

- **Understand employee engagement drivers**
  While engaging every single employee probably isn't a realistic goal, engagement measures are designed to quantify employee involvement, enthusiasm and commitment to their work, co-workers, and employer.
- **Actively seek employee feedback**
  Creating an open, anonymous way to provide feedback gives you an opportunity to keep your finger on the pulse of how your workforce is feeling, and what can be changed to make it even better. Consider suggestion boxes or employee engagement surveys to help ensure voices at all levels of the organization are heard.

6) Specific, narrow skill set required

Typically, it's easier to fill a job in a non-technical, operational discipline. The more technical you get, the more difficult it is to find candidates that match well.

Consider the engineering field; it's relatively simple to find an engineer.

However, engineering is a field with countless disciplines and sub-disciplines and finding an engineer that fits the precise needs of your organization might be more of a challenge.

If you're searching for any type of software developer or software engineer, you're feeling the effects of this as well.

- **Create a talent management strategy**
  Having the right people in the right positions at the right time requires a well thought-out talent management strategy for building a more agile and adaptable workforce.
- **Promote employee development**
  On one hand hiring new people with a very narrow skill set might solve an immediate problem, but could leave you in the lurch when new challenges arise.
  Instead, many companies are now strengthening their existing employees with additional skills.
  Encourage people to develop a wide knowledge of technologies to enable career development and be ahead of trends and innovation.

7) Culture quirks

If you've ever worked for a company with several cultural "quirks," this point doesn't require much explanation. You know the quirks when you see them.

The quirks make it potentially difficult for a new hire to assimilate into the culture. As a result, the more of those quirks that exist, the harder it may be to fill the job opening.

On the other hand, recruiting and hiring for organizations with lots of flexibility and perks is generally easier.

- **Offer competitive employee value propositions**
  Perks such as nap rooms, free food, and pet-friendly policies, have raised the bar for many companies. While Gen Xers value control and compensation, millennials are all about how it feels—driven by how well their team works together, how supported and appreciated they feel, and how much possibility they have.

8) Brand name recognition

Generally, the more well-known the company or the brand, the easier it is to fill a job opening. Imagine the volume of resumes Fortune 500 companies receive daily.

However, companies don't necessarily need national recognition. If your company is well-known regionally, that can make hiring easier.

What's the word on the street about what it's like to work for your organization? If your company or brand is well known, but not for a good reason, that can make filling open positions tough (think Enron, Firestone, and GM).

A bad reputation doesn't mean people won't want to work for your organization, however, it does usually mean the candidate pool gets smaller, making it more difficult to fill job openings.

- **Assess your online reputation**
  Look at websites like Indeed to see employee reviews of your organization to get a sense of where your reputation stands.
  If what you hear is negative or inaccurate, consider ways to re-establish your brand by presenting at conferences or participating in relevant press arenas and LinkedIn groups.

To better understand your workforce, company culture, and employee engagement, check out Sogolytics's Employee Survey Solutions.

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