Title:
Retooling The Hiring Process For Today's Market

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Summary:
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Article Body:
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One key to properly retooling will shift the current focus from experience to talent. This fundamental change will be precipitated by the need to develop talent as opposed to hiring experience. The experienced candidate will become a product of a supply and demand marketplace. There will be more demand with less supply which leads to increased wages. The highly successful, extremely experienced candidate will be able to take a free agent approach to their job search. They will be able to select from multiple offers and leverage the best overall package.

There is nothing new in this market-driven scenario except for one item. The supply will be greatly diminished which will put incredible pressures on the compensation packages. However, companies will have an alternative to the bidding war – hire for talent and develop for strength.

This shift in hiring focus will require an "outside the box" approach to candidate screening. The first step will be to wean the process off of the 20th

century approach of placing an ad, receiving and reviewing resumes and qualifying candidates with a face-to-face interview. This 3 step process is riddled with vulnerabilities.

First off, the sheer number of responses will surely decrease let alone the quality of the applicants. Gone are the days of simply placing an ad in the Sunday edition of the local newspaper and collecting the overwhelming responses. Some online ads return volumes of resumes, but the applicants' qualifications are often completely misaligned. Properly written online ads provide fewer responses but a higher quality of fit to the position.

Second, the majority of resumes (some statistics state >75%) contain embellishments of some form. Using these embellished, sometimes fictional documents to sort applicants is similar to building your house on shifting sands. The entire premise is flawed from the start. The resume elicits experience-based decisions which are less than reliable. The applicants' embellished industry experience is weighted grossly higher in comparison to their true talent and abilities.

Finally, face-to-face interviews are needed in any hiring process, but again, they tend to be used out of sequence for an effective process. Society of Human Resource Management studies have shown that interviewers make candidate decisions within the first 7 minutes of the in-person interview. We are all susceptible to internal biases and blind spots. No interviewer is completely objective.

The aforementioned hiring approach was widely followed in the last century. The onslaught of the Internet, decreasing worker populations and exploding job productivity requirements have made successful hiring the key component of the 21st century.

Retooling a complete hiring process requires a company to release outdated, stereotypical approaches and embrace the tactics needed in today's market. There are 3 steps all companies can integrate into their process today to begin the shift towards a reliable and repeatable hiring strategy.

Phone Screen. This article discusses new approaches to hiring and then leads off with a retro tool! Perhaps we should consider the phone screen a lost art. Oh, but how effective it is. In our own practice, we do not assist companies in hiring salespeople without using the phone screen. In fact, we use some variation of it for all positions – it is that effective. This approach removes many biases that naturally occur in a face-to-face meeting. An effective phone screen can be accomplished in 15-20 minutes which allows for many more to be

completed in a day versus the traditional 1 hour, in-person interview.

The phone screen allows the hiring manager to get a better understanding of the applicant's thought process, composure, communication ability and even, to some extent, their fit to the position. This tool is vastly more effective for pre-screening candidates than sorting resumes into yes and no piles.

Job Rewards. Remember the days when newspaper ads were riddled with acronyms and abbreviations to save on cost? There were literary artists who could describe an engineering job in 50 words or less. Those days are gone, yet we still see the occasional online ad written in that manner. One might as well place "dinosaur" in the ad's title.

Today's young job seekers value balance in their work life. Their rewards are less centered on material wealth accumulation. They still work to earn money, but they are greatly influenced by the job's rewards. How will they personally grow in the position? What skills will they develop? How would you describe the company culture? These topics can easily be added to any online job posting since space is no longer a fiscal limitation. The candidates who respond to this information will have a strong interest in learning more about the role and typically will have a reinforced skill set that matches the position's needs.

Objective Assessments. There are amazing tools available in the market today that will measure intrinsic traits in a candidate that not even the most skillful interviewer can ascertain. As previously stated, all interviewers bring biases to the process. Two techniques to limit these biases are the incorporation of objective tools and the delayed introduction of an interviewer's bias into the process.

Candidates should be assessed before an in-person interview. The EEOC encourages this approach in all hiring processes. A validated assessment tool given to viable candidates provides a strong insulator for any hiring process. The tests do not introduce biases and generate objective information.

A secondary, powerful benefit to using assessments before interviews is that it changes the focus of the in-person interview. The interviewer now has reliable data about the candidate that can be explored within the context of the interview. The interview is shifted from the candidate mindlessly regurgitating previous work experience to an exploration into their talent areas and potential vulnerabilities in direct relation to the position for which they have applied.

Most companies have seen the significant shift in hiring that has occurred with the advent of Internet-based technology over the past 10 years. This fundamental

realignment has already rooted itself into the economy. The next seismic shift is already underway as the Baby Boomer generation begins its exit from the full-time workforce. Companies that adjust their hiring process and adapt to the changing landscape will ensure their success in the evolving 21st century marketplace.