

When is Strategic Recruiting™ appropriate?

By Alan Davis

The Six Most Common Scenarios...

Our development of Strategic Recruiting™ in 2005 sparked a tremendous response and has been widely adopted by our clients. Although many recruiting campaigns remain tactical in nature, the need for this new strategic approach continues to grow at a rapid pace.

Simply put, Strategic Recruiting™ identifies specific barriers to recruiting the best talent and develops a compensating plan of action. The most familiar scenario is when you need to have a pipeline of candidates for future hires and you know that pipeline won't be there unless you create it.

Given the rate at which demographic shifts are draining the talent out of the pool, you might argue that Strategic Recruiting™ is no longer an option, it is becoming a necessity.

In many discussions on this subject, I have found that the quickest way to understand when you should invest time and money in Strategic Recruiting™ is by looking at specific situations.

Here are six occasions when you should apply this process. .

- For positions where the departure of a key individual could create vulnerability in the business.

This is not restricted to the executive level. We are frequently required to have pre-qualified candidates in the pipeline for technology-specific or knowledge-specific positions

- For positions with non-existent or under-qualified candidates in the succession plan

The need to recruit may not be immediate, but the longer the decision to recruit is left, the worse the problem becomes. We have been



involved with a number of our clients in reviewing the succession management process and filling major gaps in expertise pro-actively rather than re-actively.

- For positions where a surge in competitive hiring is anticipated.

This is becoming both more common and more acute as the predicted critical skill shortages become a reality. For some skill sets, there just isn't enough talent to go around and whatever talent is available is being sought by multiple hiring companies at the same time. The only answer is to court the candidates beforehand so that they are pre-disposed to join you when you're ready.

- For developmental positions where the internal turnover is predictably high.

This is common in areas such as finance and engineering. Top new grads are hired in at entry level with the knowledge that, within a relatively short span, they will be moving up through the organization as part of a pre-determined career development path. Although the turnover is high in these positions, it very positive turnover as the talent is not being lost to the organization. What it does is create an opportunity to hire strategically and to build a pipeline of talent, rather than start a new search every time an opening occurs.

- For positions which are consistently difficult to fill due to a limited candidate pool.

More and more, we are being asked to search on a world-wide basis for skill sets which rarely change within a client's organization. For these limited supply candidates, the Canadian talent pool is simply not deep enough. The rationale for Strategic Recruiting™ is that we are constantly fishing from the same talent pools in the same talent organizations year over year. In the long term, it is more economical to scope out the most likely candidates at the same time, even if many of them are not yet ready to move or sufficiently qualified when we first call them. They go into the pipeline as high potential future hires and the relationships with these candidates are managed in such a way that future engagements become natural.

- For future skill sets which may not exist in the organization today.

Many technology-driven businesses (fewer and fewer businesses are not technology driven these days) take great pains to do manpower forecasting and to predict skill sets which may be required 3-5 years in the future. If there is no internal talent capable of being developed, a



clear business case can be made to recruit strategically from the outside in order to acquire these skills in the requisite time frame.

The process of Strategic Recruiting™ is not complex. It's simply requires that the recruiter recognizes and communicates with the candidate that the client organization is interested in them. No pressure is put on the candidate to provide a CV if the timing is not right for them. The recruiter's intent is to gather sufficient data about each candidate to be able to judge whether or not there will be a future skill set match.

Once this intent has been established, the key to recruiting successfully is to maintain the relationship with the future candidate in a non-intrusive way. When the timing is right for the candidates, they know who to call and, in many cases, will be already pre-conditioned to accepting an offer which meets their career goals

This new style of recruiting relies on sophisticated databases which incorporate contact management features and are accessed by the recruiting firm and the client. The candidates are aware that they have been identified as high potential future hires, and all of the contact with them is with their permission.

The talent wars which were being spoken about in the 90s are back with a vengeance and the work force demographic studies get scarier and scarier. Those organizations with the best and most strategic talent acquisition will win.

All of our articles, including our Recruiting Best Practice Series, can be found on our website at www.alandavis.com/htmlsite/articles.html

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