Overcoming the Challenges of Attracting the Right Talent for Today’s Workforce

Identifying Key Candidates & the Driving Factors That Generate Their Response.
Across the board there is an overall imbalance of talent. This results in the increased challenge of identifying talented candidates who possess the required skills for the opportunities in the market.

THE CHALLENGES OF IDENTIFYING TALENT

Even as the unemployment rate lingers around 9%, we continue to see a significant lack of available talent. Given the shallow pool of qualified candidates, we believe this statistic to be distorted. Our studies indicate that less than half of the current unemployed population has earned a four-year college degree or acquired the certifications needed for available positions in today’s job market. Job seekers with a degree and skill sets in areas such as Accounting & Finance, Information Technology, Engineering, Human Resources; have good opportunities available and the unemployment outlook isn’t nearly as bleak.

As employers search for more technical candidates with a very specific set of skills and experiences, the odds of locating that “perfect candidate” becomes more challenging than anticipated. Given the current state of the employment market, the challenge for employers is attracting the right talent, with the desired education, experience and value to their organization.

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Patty Comer
- Principal Partner of AccruePartners

Likewise, job seekers are forming their own set of stringent requirements for potential employers. Candidates who are currently working and only passively seeking new employment can afford to be very particular.

As for the candidates who possess the technical skills, education and/or certifications that are actively seeking, they are finding the job market can easily produce multiple and competitive offers – allowing them to hold out for a position that best fits their desired criteria.

“Coaching candidates on the best move for their career has become an ongoing effort with high performers and they are aware of their value, thus weighing many factors in each opportunity. These decisions are incredibly important. We take each career move very seriously in order to ensure that our candidates are positioned to reach their greatest potential,” states Patty Comer, Principal Partner of AccruePartners.
PLAN AHEAD TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES

Planning ahead is the first step in finding the right talent for your organization. Look beyond your organizational needs today – anticipating what the role will look like in 6 - 9 months. By visualizing how the role will evolve, you can implement a more focused strategy towards making the best possible hire for the role today and in the future. Develop an organization chart that helps you understand your gaps, threats and high potential employees. "Many of our clients are calling us to go over organizational chart planning and gain our input on difficult-to-fill positions. These are areas that we help identify and prepare a time line for effective hiring practices as well as locating qualified candidates that meet the wants, needs and desires of the employer." - Amy Pack, Principal Partner of AccruePartners

Planning ahead will also allow for the evaluation of the most technical aspects of your organization and create a succession plan for critical roles. This will minimize loss in productivity due to employee turnover. Additionally, invest in key players and the recruiting of candidates who can quickly step into roles in the event of unexpected turnover.

Most importantly, start your recruiting process early. Plan for a search to take an average of 6-8 weeks. In effort to ensure that you are hitting your productivity goals begin your search 2 months prior to the time you are budgeted to have the position filled. Companies that plan ahead have their pick of the best and brightest. Realize that if your position is newly created that it may create another set of issues in gaining agreement from those involved in the selection process. Those positions can take as long as up to one business quarter to identify the right profile. Retooling the needs and job description can critically delay the hire. Newly created roles in a hiring environment are similar to a shopping experience – you don’t know what you want until you see a range of what is available to buy. Planning ahead will minimize the pain.

ATTRACTING TALENT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION

Talent is attracted to companies that have a compelling story and solid track record. To draw a candidate’s attention, focus on the growth and milestones that have been achieved, acquisitions that have recently been made, investments in technology, the company’s current market positioning and the leadership along with benefits/culture. Be prepared to talk about recent promotions or relocations to offer possibilities for advancement to your performers. Determine what differentiates your organization from competitors and use that in your recruiting process. Job seekers are interested in more than just the job description; they want to know everything the job and the company has to offer them. "Recently, I had received an offer and the company did not agree to pay for my educational cost of $7000 due back to my current employer upon resignation. Before accepting the offer I looked at the overall base increase, my new insurance cost and bonus potential. This caused me to pause and really question the offer before accepting." Recent candidate with offer from a client of AccruePartners

Use social media and engage your marketing department to ensure that your message is consistent in recruiting efforts through your own sources as well as recruiting firms. Candidates intensely research LinkedIn, Google Reviews, Glassdoor.com and others – seeking comments, reviews or opinions about your company, products and it’s people. This is a shift that is only going to become more apparent by both employers and candidates in 2012 and the internet allows for us all to be scored, ranked and reviewed.
“AccruePartners focuses their efforts on raising the performance and job satisfaction of candidates through development and affirmation, improving the odds that they feel vital to the future of the business.”

Beth Simonetti
Baker & Taylor

Career growth is crucial to attracting top level candidates. Talented candidates desire opportunities that increase their level of skills and offer career progression. An organization’s investment in technology has proven to be a popular attraction for candidates, as it allows candidates to stay abreast of the latest technology and continue to improve as new platforms and versions are released.

Captivated candidates also desire a clear, efficient interview process. Throughout this process, the “A” talent should be courted & treated well. If you don’t, your competitor will. A drawn out process with limited communication can create challenges and many times cause a candidate to become disengaged. Should there be delays of any kind, the hiring managers should stay engaged with the candidate and HR department. During this process, strong and continued communication is critical. We are seeing more social setting interviews such as lunches or after-hour events to ensure a fit exists outside of the normal corporate interview process. Candidates and clients alike are looking for a long-term relationship that is both mutually beneficial and engaging.

WHAT IS DRIVING TALENT TO LOOK?
Over the last 3 years an uneasy state of the market had talent in a “holding pattern.” A recent positive turn in the economic outlook has led candidates to gain confidence. Many factors are attracting talent to search for new employment such as the stress of doing the job of two or more workers, lack of leadership, growth opportunities, and an absence in the investment of technology. Other motivating factors include a lack of job flexibility, limited benefits package, and a general lack of appreciation and/or communication.

Talented candidates may encounter unique opportunities that emerge from common job searches. One such opportunity is the newly-created role, where the hire is typically not what the organization had anticipated; rather, the job evolved as talent was interviewed. Another unique role is one of blended skill sets – combination of roles created in high growth companies with no need for two individuals to handle the tasks. The newly created roles can be some of the most challenging positions to fill as these jobs tend to evolve as candidates are interviewed and selected. Candidates have to demonstrate fluidity in the interview along with their ability to be fluid in their next role. Providing this exposure during the interview has proven to be very valuable.

CONCLUSION
The imbalance of talented applicants for the open positions in today’s market is a consistent hurdle for actively searching employers. Overcoming this hurdle and attracting the right candidate requires an organization to evaluate, identify and find the right mix of driving factors that will generate a response. Captivate the best and brightest talent by starting your recruitment process early with AccruePartners. We’ll strive to provide unique opportunities to connect with the right talent to help your organization thrive.