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## Talent Acquisition: Markets May Vary but Fundamentals Remain the Same

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Does this scenario sound familiar? An HR manager lists a job requiring unique language skills in a country where the company has never done business before. The HR manager struggles to find good candidates when few people have ever heard of the company and are reluctant to sign on to a firm with no local reputation.

At first glance, you might think that I'm referring to a US company breaking into the Japanese market, but in reality, this scenario applies to any global company doing business outside of their native headquarters. The fact is that all companies struggle with the same challenges. Fortunately, there are some key recruiting tenets that apply in all scenarios.

### Develop Relationships

You can generally break candidates down into two categories: active and passive. Active candidates are the easiest to locate because they are actively searching for a position. The trick in landing these candidates is first making it easy to find them, and second ensuring that they are attracted to your firm. Ask the following questions: What distinguishes your company from your competition? What is it like to work for your organization? In order to attract prospects, it's important to tell a story about your firm so a candidate can visualize what it's like to work there.

Passive candidates are more challenging to identify and reach. As a start, it's still important to build your company story and communicate why your organization is an attractive place to work. It's also important to find ways to tap into organizations and networks that cover the talent pools

that you're targeting. If you hire a lot of engineers, it's essential to identify local, regional, and national engineering groups and make sure that your company is visible with these groups. Attend conferences or user groups, sponsor events, make a presentation, serve on the board, or tap the group's job board.

Also consider building relationships with a select group of recruiters who specialize in your target industries. One of Indeed's growing client segments is the recruiting industry that utilizes Indeed's position as the leading job site to attract talent. Recruiters are industry experts and are paid to recognize and develop a strong talent pool.

An employee referral program is another good way to attract passive candidates. Your current employees are an excellent resource for future employees. They have hands on knowledge of a huge talent pool. Build a referral program that makes it easy for employees to track open jobs and recommend candidates for positions. Reward employees for their efforts. A strong referral program not only brings new candidates to your attention, but it's also a good indication of an organization's strength. What better measurement of employee happiness than recommending your firm to a friend or colleague.

## **Build Your Brand**

When firms enter new countries and markets, one of the strongest ways that they can attract talent is to build their brands in those places. It helps tremendously if potential employees have heard of your organization and know something about your business model, culture, and overall value proposition. Indeed started a global brand campaign in key countries in 2014, which included television ads and media outreach. We found that this greatly aided our recruiting efforts in those countries as it improved overall awareness.

From a human resources perspective, one of the most important branding opportunities is the career section the company website. It's important to give some thought to how you tell your company story. Pictures and videos work well. For example, Indeed hires a lot of engineers, a very competitive discipline. It's important that Indeed distinguish itself from other employers. In order to do this, Indeed developed a video on the "day in the life of an Indeed engineer." The video illustrates what it's like to actually work at Indeed and helps connect us to candidates

who are likely to be good fit.

A social media strategy is also an excellent way to reach both active and passive candidates. It's important to have a presence on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Show pictures and share stories that illustrate your organization's value and culture. Celebrate successes and provide examples of ways in which employees are treated well. Let the outside world know when employees participate in 5K runs or volunteer at homeless shelters.

This is a particularly successful strategy to attract younger workers. An Indeed report, *Three Generations of Talent: Who's Searching for Jobs Today*, found that millennials (21-30 years old) have a greater interest in jobs that revolve around community and social services. This is consistent with findings that millennials want to find more purpose in their careers either from the job itself or through companies that offer robust corporate social responsibility programs. Targeted social media programs, including videos and pictures, are a great way to highlight your organization's greater "purpose."

## **Retain Talent**

Once you've hired the right people, it's important to retain them. Develop a proactive employee retention program. Create a culture and environment focused on career development and train managers to discuss career paths with workers. Map career paths for all departments and identify and invest in future leaders.

One tenet that varies from country-to-country is how long workers stay with an organization. While workers in Japan tend to commit to and stay with a single or very few organizations throughout their careers, workers in the United States and other countries tend to move from job to job at a quicker pace. This is particularly true of younger workers, with millennials changing companies more often than previous generations. In fact, many workers start looking for a new job or new role in their organizations after two years. What makes them stay? A well-defined career path and the promise of new opportunities.

## Measure Success

The final ingredient in attracting and retaining employees is measurement. Find ways to measure your efforts to determine what works and what doesn't. Learn from your mistakes.

Track your rates of success in all of your efforts. Are you able to more effectively convert candidates to employees through social media, recruiters, or through trade associations? Which candidates end up being the most successful employees? What is the success rate of your employee referral program? How does that stack up to your other outreach efforts?

And, don't forget to continually garner input from employees on how they view your firm. How do you stack up against the competition? Do they have suggestions on ways to improve? Are they thinking about leaving? An employee engagement survey is the final piece in the puzzle. It's a way to make sure that all of your hard work in finding the right people pays off.

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He serves on Indeed's senior leadership team and is responsible for aligning human resource goals with the strategic direction of the company. He oversees all human resource functions, including talent acquisition, employee retention, compensation, benefits, and training.

Mr. Wolfe has over 15 years of experience as a human resources executive having served as a VP and SVP at number of well-known companies, including Match.com, Orbitz, Conde Nast and Ticketmaster. His specialties include talent acquisition and management, succession planning, performance management, and leadership development. Mr. Wolfe has overseen global human resource programs and has worked successfully in a variety of industries and cultures. He holds a bachelor's degree from Nova Southeastern University in Florida (US).

*This column has been posted to the website of Recruit Works Institute.*