

Finding The Cream of The Crop

You should constantly be looking for quality talent. Expecting the right person to quickly find you at the moment you need them, among a mountain of competing ads and opportunities, is a huge gamble.

When positions open at your organization, you should already have a talent pipeline flowing with leads that you can tap into. By continuously seeking, or sourcing, talent, you create a supply line of viable prospective candidates allowing you to avoid long delays in filling your open positions. After all, open positions are extremely costly.

GROWING YOUR TALENT FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Sourcing your talent pool should always begin with a review of the current talent within your own organization. If you evaluate, assess and re-review your current talent base regularly, you will avoid the knee jerk reaction of placing an adv. on Monster.com the second after your best employee turns in his/her two weeks' notice. There are huge benefits to hiring from within. Internal candidates already have an understanding of



your organization's culture, mission and goals. Top that with the fact that opportunities for advancement and skill development are two key aspects of building job satisfaction with employees. In other words, if they know there is room for them to grow and advance within your organization, they'll be happier and stick with you. You simply need to learn how to effectively assess their potential for advancement.

Who's ready for promotion? Who could soon be ready for promotion with a little training? A well thought out assessment process allows leaders and hiring teams to set aside emotions and preconceived notions, both good and bad, and hire from within based solely on a candidate's skill set and other qualifications. It also lets your employees know they were at least considered and properly evaluated before you went outside the company to fill the position. If you start looking outside for talent the minute you have a new position open, and overlook the relationships you have with current employees, loyalty drops...fast! When your in-house talent knows you are fair and balanced in your final selection, they are much more likely to respect and support the hiring decision.

EFFECTIVE SOURCING NEVER ENDS

The bottom line is that talent has to be assessed on a person by person basis. Each prospect has to be evaluated on their own individual merits, no matter where they are coming from. As a hiring supervisor, manager, director or VP, or human resources person tasked with hiring responsibilities, you are the talent scout. It's ultimately your responsibility to always keep your eyes and mind wide open to talent. To become a pro at talent scouting, you should maximize your time spent at activities, clubs and events by putting an extra focus on sourcing while you're there. There's a word for this active networking sourcing technique. It's called narrowcasting. The intention of narrowcasting is not necessarily to find someone with previous experience in a job or position or even someone who already has all of the knowledge and skills required, but rather to find someone who thinks and acts like those who are most successful in the respective job or position. For example, recruiters looking for sales professionals might look into populations that routinely exhibit enthusiasm and an ability to perform consistently under volatile conditions. Recruiters looking for nurses might evaluate interpersonal attributes such as risk avoidance or patience and tolerance for elementary school teachers. As competition for talent has increased, a large number of organizations have successfully used narrowcasting to fill their ranks. Firms like Home Depot and GE have targeted former soldiers because of their discipline. Firms like Wal-Mart have emphasized hiring retired persons because of their maturity and perceived genuineness. The best way to identify narrowcasting talent pools for skills and attributes specific to your organization's needs is to approach individuals in your own organization who have the skill sets, work ethic, and personality traits that you want more of in your organization. Ask them, "How would I find you again?"



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TECHNOLOGY MAKES NETWORKING A BREEZE

Most of us have gotten quite familiar with the global storehouse of knowledge and the ability to find it, sort it and manage it on the web. We even go to the web to fill our need for a sense of community. As a result of this drive towards the Internet serving community interests, networking has emerged as a natural and powerful offshoot of the evolution of the Internet. It has taken on a whole new meaning and even has a new category, social networking.

Social networking used to mean going to the PTA, asking for referrals at church on Sunday, going to a rotary meeting, or hanging out at your kids sporting events or even at the country club. Today social networking is global in scope, can be very specialized, and continues to rapidly evolve. It's important to learn how to use social networking tools and websites as another source for prospects. Below is a sample list of the types of social networking sites that can be used for sourcing talent. Through review and frequent use, you'll figure out which sites are best for reaching the networks of people that best fit your talent pipeline needs.

- **LinkedIn** – Network through colleagues, classmates and clients.
- **Plaxo** – An online address book and social networking service that provides automatic updating of contact information. – Facebook – Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people.
- **MySpace** – A social networking website with an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and more. – Eons – An online community for spirited Baby Boomers who want to explore their passions, keep in touch with friends, and connect with interesting people.
- **Twitter** – A social messaging utility for staying connected in real-time through textbased posts of up to 140 characters in length.

Although the Internet is chock full of really exciting networking opportunities, it's important to remember that some of the best networking is still done face-to-face or over the phone. None of the social networking tools available today should be considered a substitute for traditional networking and in-person communication. There's just no substitute for picking up the phone and calling or better yet scheduling an appointment for lunch with someone whom you're trying to convince to interview with and/or join your organization.

THE PROS AND CONS OF HIRING RECRUITERS

The right talent is critical to the success of any organization. But in the world of search, talent is only half the story. The ability to identify talent also requires resources. Recruiters can play an invaluable part in helping you find, organize and manage sources of talent. Whether you use internal researchers and recruiters (within your HR department) or you outsource to the many available external search consultants who provide these services, it's important to understand how to partner productively. Recruiters are an investment, not a transaction. The key to successfully working with an executive search firm is finding someone who understands your industry and niche. Take time to find those who really understand your marketplace and the positions you need to fill. Be loyal to a select group of recruiters and watch your efficiencies rise. Turn a few researchers and recruiters into your personal disciples and your organization's greatest evangelists. Now that you have a strong understanding of sources and techniques you can use for sourcing prospective candidates make sure to organize your computer and your desk to effectively collect the inflow of prospective resumes that are sure to come!