

## THE RECRUITING BLACK HOLE

Don't let your talent acquisition initiatives fall in

BY CHRIS CARMON

**Like** most professions, there are countless recruiters to choose from when help is needed to fill a critical role in a business. An effective recruiting partner is one that will drive the best talent to your door, serve as a trusted advisor for your management team and expand your corporate branding to the passive talent pool. Companies should create a benchmark to measure which recruiters will maximize recruiting efficiencies and reduce hiring costs.

The following are a few guidelines to boost your recruiting platform and more effectively evaluate recruiting partnerships so you can avoid the "Black Hole."

■ A recruiting partner is much more than someone who finds you the talent. They are an ambassador as well as a reflection of your business to the talent pool. It is safe to say that a business doesn't have just anyone selling their products or services, so why would a company settle for just anyone representing and selling the business to potential talent? Ask a potential recruiter for both client and candidate references. Make sure they have a track record in your industry and in the specific functional role.

■ Use recruiters who have industry expertise, depth and a professional team. Once again, the recruiting firm is an ambassador for your business.



Ask to meet the research staff and anyone else who will be involved in the search process. You have to look behind the curtain to clearly see the team that is working on your search. This investment of your time will save countless hours in the future. This meeting will tell the company very quickly if the recruiting firm is professional, as well as whether or not they have the capacity and expertise to successfully represent your business.

■ Ask the potential search firm about their methodology for search and performance milestones. A great recruiter can articulate their methodology for how they recruit top talent and how they will communicate progress throughout the search process. This communication should include things such as performance milestones or checkpoints,

interview protocols and techniques, written progress report and candidate summary report formats. Their search methodology should have the flexibility and means for recalibration or redirection of the search for unforeseen challenges that arise.

■ An effective recruiting partner works on a select number of searches to ensure that they fill your role. Ask the recruiter how many searches they are working on and what resources they will allocate to your search. Recruiting partners should also be quick to say "no thank you" to the client if the search is not a good fit for their firm or they cannot dedicate the proper resources to complete the search in a realistic time frame.

■ Recruiting fees come in all shapes and sizes and you get what you pay for. Fees ultimately should be commensurate with the resources allocated, challenges of the role and urgency. It is important to know where a role fits in this equation to then identify the right recruiting path and subsequent investment. Every company wants to save money, but evaluating the cost of a hire is much more than looking at the recruiting fee. Ensure you conduct an honest

assessment of true costs for a given search including: your internal capacity to recruit for the position, cost for not having the person in the seat (usually grows with time), strategic milestones you need to hit which require the person in the seat and the talent pool size for the given role. This will help you to identify the most effective path for your talent acquisition efforts.

■ Vendor policies and supporting contracts should address fees, performance guarantees, candidate guarantees and confidentiality. Establish policies that are mutually beneficial for you and your selected recruiting partners. A clearly defined vendor policy with supporting contracts will protect your business from unsolicited resumes and hold all members of your team accountable to a defined protocol.

Today, more than ever, companies have to have the best talent in every seat and need to get that talent their as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. As we kick-off a new year, take an honest look at your talent acquisition process to ensure that both internal and external efforts maximize your short and long-term hiring strategies. <<

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