



EMPLOYER OF CHOICE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Whether the employment market is flat or buoyant, high calibre employees will never be short of a job offer. So it's essential that you have a plan in place to ensure that your offer will be the one they accept. We've prepared a checklist of strategies to give you the best chance of success.

Before you even begin the sourcing process, it's important to get some housekeeping done:

- Ensure that you have a current, realistic job description prepared (see our publication on **Creating Effective Job Descriptions**). This will provide you with clarity about the ideal person you are seeking, and minimise the effort and time taken in briefing your recruiter
 - Do your homework on salary/rates. There are many factors to consider, including:
 - internal salary banding data resultant from formal job grading systems;
 - parity/equity with similar internal roles;
 - budgets;
 - current market salaries and any variances which may exist for your industry. Does your company participate in benchmarking surveys to gain access to relevant benchmarking data? You may set targets about where you want your salaries to sit, for example you may aim to pay in the 65th percentile of the benchmark for that role;
 - recognition of skills the incoming incumbent will bring; and
 - salary review periods. For example, if the role has no regular review period this may impact the amount on offer.
- We recommend having an ideal salary range in mind. That is, you may find a less experienced person with great attitude and ability who costs you less, but in whom you will need to invest some additional training or coaching costs. Alternatively, you may find a highly experienced 'top end' person who will cost you more, but will add more value to the business, or become profitable in a much shorter timeframe. Flexibility is important, as no two applicants are exactly the same.
- Get full authorisation and sign-off to recruit the position. Finding your dream employee then having the salary knocked back from senior management doesn't send a good message to the market about your company.
 - Understand the recruitment process. How many interviews will applicants need to attend? Who will the interviewers be? Are they going to be available or are they just about to take six weeks' holiday? Will psychometric assessments be part of the process? If so, which ones, and do you have a provider organised?

- Does your recruitment process allow you to move quickly if you find your ideal applicant? Responsiveness is critical, as good applicants will always have more than one iron in the fire. Similarly, a lengthy and complex interview process can be off-putting.
- Decide on your sourcing strategy. Have you advertised internally or sought employee referrals first? Will your internal HR team be competing with recruitment agencies by going to market at the same time? Will you retain one trusted recruiter exclusively (this option can often provide more competitive rates) or will you go out to a number of agencies at once?
- Be clear on your value proposition. Why would someone who is excellent in their field choose your company over your competitor's? What do people like about working for your company? What additional benefits or career development opportunities are there which set you apart?
This is becoming increasingly critical in the highly competitive IT sector, particularly if your salaries are not at the top end of the range.
- Are your interviewers the best ambassadors for your business? It is not uncommon for high calibre applicants to withdraw from the recruitment process after an interview because they felt the interviewer couldn't really explain key facts about the role, wasn't sure about the questions they were asking, or just didn't 'sell it' well.
It is essential that anyone meeting with prospective employees has undergone interview and selection training, and is fully conversant with your value proposition.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO INTERVIEW!

- Try and use a friendly, conversational style. Cold and intimidating interviewers never produce good results – it becomes a test of how well the applicant responds to difficult situations rather than assessing their ability to perform in the role for which they are applying. It's documented that people perform at their best when they feel relaxed and comfortable.
- Use a mixture of preferential, behavioural and situational questions. Firing off a long list of 'tell me about a time when...' questions doesn't create a great applicant experience.

- For contract roles, interviews are typically half an hour in length, and an hour for permanent roles. This may increase for senior positions. Have your interview questions ready, and use the same questions for each applicant, so that you can compare 'apples with apples'. Be sure that your interview questions are valid for the specific skills and experience required for the role, and are non-discriminatory.
- Don't grab a colleague to sit in on an interview at the last minute. This will be off-putting for the applicant, and if your colleague isn't fully briefed on your strategy they won't be able to add any additional value.

- Try to stick to a maximum of two interviewers at any one time. Panels of three or more people will make the most robust person distracted, and impact their performance.
- Start to create the psychological contract with the applicant immediately. Use 'you' language when talking about the role. For example 'You will be responsible for our billing team', as opposed to 'the incumbent will responsible for our billing team'. This makes the applicant picture themselves in the role, and begins to create the connection.
- Share information with the applicant about you personally: what is your role, how long have you been with the company, what is it that you like about working here?
- Ensure that the applicant will meet their direct manager as well as their peers or team mates throughout the interview process, so that they can get an indication of what it will be like working with these people every day.
- Show the applicant the physical office space where they will be sitting. The picture they are building of themselves in this role is now becoming a powerful attraction tool for you.
- Provide honest feedback about where you are in the recruitment process – you've still got four more interviews to conduct over the next week, so you don't anticipate making a final decision until the end of the month. This kind of transparency is highly valued by applicants.

MAKING THE OFFER

- We do believe in love at first sight. Once you know you've found the right person, work proactively to move to offer stage as quickly as possible. Don't skip any steps, and ensure that the applicant is being 'kept warm' while you complete your due diligence
- Consider having the direct manager make the offer personally. Statistics show that acceptance rates increase significantly when offers are made by the line managers themselves as opposed to HR. Even if you're working through a recruiter this should be possible. Just discuss it with them first, and email written confirmation of the offer you will be making

ONBOARDING

- It's not over 'til the fat lady sings! Competition is becoming increasingly fierce for good people, and stories of employees accepting counter-offers after they've already accepted a role are only too common these days.
- Once your applicant has accepted, have a regular communication strategy in place to make sure they are being 'touched' frequently, particularly if they have a long notice period to serve before starting.

You can 'touch' the employee in many ways:

- Sending out a pre-employment pack including all relevant contacts, the job description, annual reports or company information, and an employee handbook which outlines hours, parking, pay cycles, organisational structure, salary reviews, bonus or commission structures, employee referral schemes, reward and recognition programs, closest post office, dry cleaning, bank, chemist, gym and more
- Provide them with any reading or preparation they can undertake prior to commencement
- Sending a 90 day plan, outlining what they can expect during their induction, and what the milestones for their first 90 days in the role will be

- Allocating a buddy, of whom they can ask any questions they may not have felt comfortable asking at interview, and making sure that the buddy has weekly contact prior to starting, and for the first few months after starting
- Inviting them to attend any social functions prior to commencing
- Let them know about dates for any upcoming conferences or out-of-hours events – functions, seminars, breakfasts etc

- Everyone remembers their first day! Be sure that you have a robust induction program in place. This is your opportunity to create a great first impression. Imagine someone's surprise arriving at a fully decked-out workstation, their business cards in their folio, their computer logged in and ready to go, and a welcome card signed by their team mates. Conversely, I'm sure we all remember starting in jobs where we had no computer access, no chair, no position description... enough said.
- Don't overwhelm them on their first day. The first day should be about welcomes, introductions, safety inductions and office tours, company overviews, and providing an outline of how the rest of the induction program will work. We recommend setting aside the first week for induction, and including a mix of systems training, company processes and methods familiarisation, meetings with key stakeholders, and strategy and planning.
- Plan a team lunch for their first day
- Remember to keep 'taking their temperature'. The attachment formed in the first 90 days is extremely important. We recommend scheduling reviews with the line manager weekly for the first month, and then monthly until the end of probation.

Good luck!