



Recruitment trends direct from Vegas

Factor these international recruiting trends into your strategies in 2013.

By Elvira Riccardi

Vegas lights – enough to engage any “Millennial”, “X Gen” and “Baby Boomer” – provided the backdrop for one of the best international recruiter seminars this year. This article is a short synopsis of a series that will, over the next months, unpack key insights, topics and trends that the world’s thought leaders in recruitment shared at the conferences I attended this year.

Conferences like the Recruiting Trends Conference 2012 held in Las Vegas, spanned four days of intensive seminars as well as small group workshops, and covered topics that included basic recruiting, talent acquisition leadership, social media in recruiting, the right metrics, employer branding and quality of hire.

Massive corporates like Zappos shared their HR strategies with the audience. Speakers included Mark Murphy CEO of Leadership IQ, Anna Brekka, Senior Director of Recruiting Trends, both highly respected HR thought leaders in the US.

The best thing about these conferences is that they force one to make time to listen and learn. Yes, the information is available through webinars and the Internet but, while information today is highly accessible to most people, time is a problem. How much time do you set aside to read and learn and how often do you get a chance to follow through?

Here, to help you, is an overview of some of the salient points that emerged at the Vegas conference.

Hire for attitude

“Don’t tell me what to do, and don’t tell me what to say ...” Don’t you just love them? But employees who think they know everything cannot be taught.

In his presentation Murphy, cites coachability as

a major trait shared by high performers, as is being highly collaborative and being able to take criticism and learn from it. Murphy established these (amongst others) as success factors by doing a research project with line managers on the traits of successful hires compared to those of failed hires.

In his study on why new hires fail based on a sample of 20,000 employees, he found that an unacceptably high, if expected, 46% of new hires fail within the first 18 months. The really big surprise came from the fact that only 11% of these failed due to lack of skill. He further noted that line managers are influenced by the content of a resume, that is, they are so impressed by what's on paper they are biased when interviewing the candidate. This causes them in many instances to subconsciously lead the candidate to the answer they want to hear – for example, “Team work is very important in our environment, would you consider yourself a team player?”

When I address hiring for attitude in more detail in a future article, I will share with you a few very valuable interview tips that are sure to turn your interviews into successful hires. This part of the conference was truly inspiring to me and, with all my years of interviewing experience, I really thought I had this skill nailed down ... Not a chance!

Get back to basics

“Left, right, left, right, right, right” ... Recruiting boot camp teaches that there is only one way of doing things – the right way.

Loading a job spec onto a job portal does not a recruiter make! It takes working the job spec, understanding what the line manager requires, understanding the cultural fit of the organisation, actively sourcing for the role, properly screening resumés, submitting only the top three candidates to line management and, in so doing, reinforcing the value of a true recruiter.

The full recruitment process rests on simple fundamentals that form the basis for any

successful hire.

Various bad practices, such as recycling “standard” job templates created years ago, for instance, have found their way into the recruitment process, usually in the misguided interest of reducing time-to-fill. It may be the latest buzzword in recruitment in corporations today, but this almost exclusive focus on time is proving to be at the expense of the quality of hires made. A study performed on the health industry in the UK showed that the risk of low quality hires is a matter of life and death.

It is not only at a cost to quality but, often and paradoxically, to time as well. How often, for instance, is a job reopened because, only on interviewing, does the line manager realise that essential skills have been omitted from the job requirements? For instance, a new technology which is vital to the success of the incumbent taking up a role as IT developer may have been overlooked because job requirements are not drawn up with care.

In the interests of balancing time-to-fill and quality of hire, we need to revisit the basics of recruitment and examine the impact of taking shortcuts on the outcome. Recruiters used to be called consultants for a reason, it is the lack of a 20 minute consultation which often costs a corporate weeks to fill an urgent vacancy.

Ensure a great candidate experience

“I’ll be back.” Are you ensuring that any interaction with your brand, results in a desire to engage?

Ever thought of potential hires as potential clients? How many applicants walk through your doors on an annual basis for interviews or engage with you via a technology platform of their choice, in search of a career? There must be thousands!

Consider any of South Africa’s largest telecoms – every candidate who walks through the doors owns a cell phone. How many candidates leave

after an interview at any one of them seriously considering changing networks? The days of business units working in silos is history and has been for some time. Are you playing ball when it comes to creating “one experience” throughout your organisation?

Corporates need to widen their horizons when it comes to employer branding. Currently, most corporates are brilliant at selling the perks and benefits that are on offer once an employee takes up employment with your company. What are you doing about the many more that don’t get offered employment? You need to ensure that every person that engages with your company leaves the premises not only enthralled by the possibility of employment with you but also the thought that if they don’t make it this time, they will do whatever is necessary to be part of the business or, at the very least, be so impressed by your brand that they will consider it top of mind when next in the market for one of your products. Integration with the marketing department as well as line managers is crucial to achieve this objective.

Take a fresh look at HR analytics

ADAT – a conundrum. Muddled, inaccurate DATA can cause more damage than no data at all.

“There has been a significant shift in HR leadership, with a new breed of executive coming into HR from Finance and Operations. The new leaders bring data-driven techniques along with them – and they are quickly changing how HR does business.” (Deloitte: Workforce analytics)

Information is vital in any business today, regardless of size or industry. When looking at your data reports, does the tale they spin ring true when compared with your bottom line? What metrics do you track and what is the value of these vs those you do not and should be tracking?

In “hiring for attitude”, for instance, we talk about failed hires. Have your MIS team done deep dive analyses into the last eighteen months’ hires, calculated your miss hires and the potential cost of

loss suffered by your company? You might well find the results more debilitating than taking ten days extra to make a good hire!

In my follow-up article on HR analytics, I will be discussing the value of choosing the right metrics and limiting these to a few highly effective measuring tools. The hardest thing about data analysis is not getting lost in loads of data with no end result in site.

Learn how to engage with “Millennials”

“So, what’s your handle, huh?” Does your company speak “Millennial”?

Are you up to speed with the latest technology? Our children are being schooled on iPads, so imagine what they will be like when they graduate university. The need for technologically-based communication and incentives is essential. The days of keeping up are behind us – the forerunners in this space will be the forerunners in the race for the ultimate skill.

We have heard the discussions around the different generations for a while now. Whilst the Baby Boomers are entering retirement age, the Millennials are the graduates of this decade, and this particular generation does not like being micro managed at all. Flexible working conditions are key and job challenges and learning experiences essential.

A follow up article will look at inspiring ways to engage the Millennial generation.

In closing, I must say that by far the most burning issue that corporates indicated concern over was quality of hire and how moving away from the fundamentals of recruitment basics was costing corporates far more in the long run than working a job requirement in line with those basics. ■

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