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Successful Talent Acquisition in Australia

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Background

Recruitment in Australia has evolved significantly over the last 15 years due to technology being developed for internal recruitment.

The recruitment market is very transparent in terms of demand and supply of skills. Social media, job board aggregators, digital targeting and business networking products, have enabled any hiring process. Hiring managers either in Australia or abroad can understand the market and access the required skills. Products such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Indeed, Careerone all enable organisations to access talent. Hiring managers do however need relevant recruitment processes, logistics and infrastructure to convert candidates to employees.

Recruitment Strategies for Australia if You Live Abroad

It is easy for anyone to recruit in Australia but there are a few things you must know to be truly successful. Key in any recruitment strategy is to understand the:

- mandatory skills and competencies required of the prospective position;
- value proposition (how candidates benefit from undertaking the job) of the position as it relates to candidates;
- optimum way to source candidates with the required skills who will fit your organisational culture;

- realistic time frames required to convert employees from candidates;
- existing infrastructure at your disposal to undertake the recruitment process;
- services that can be acquired to recruit the skills on a just in time basis so that you can maximise revenue and minimise costs.

This is not an exhaustive list but if this is clearly understood from the outset then there is a high chance of success.

Identifying Candidates with the Mandatory Skills, Competencies and Value Propositions.

Understanding the qualities that will enable your employee to be high performing employee is critical in making a successful hire. These qualities may be different in Australia from Japan. However, understanding and valuing the differences should lead to a high performing long term employee.



Understanding the mandatory hard skills and experience such as project management methodologies, use of financial packages, successful sales skills, expertise in packages such as Excel are important and easy to identify. To determine how important these skills are I recommend you ask yourself the following questions:

- If the person does not have that skill or experience can they undertake the position?
- Can that skill be readily taught or learnt?
- Do you have the infrastructure and the time to train the person?
- Are any of the skills readily substitutable with other skills?
- Does that mix of skills readily sit in one person?

If these questions are considered and your answers reflect reality you will gain a higher quality employee in less time.

What is not as readily understood are the soft skills required for the person to be successful. Soft skills are capabilities such as the:

- ability to deal with adversity;

- degree of conceptual reasoning;
- amount of resilience and adaptability; and
- ability to work remotely without supervision.

These soft skills are generally not seen as a high priority during the recruitment process and yet are the reason most employees leave jobs.

To validate what hard and soft skills are required I would recommend:

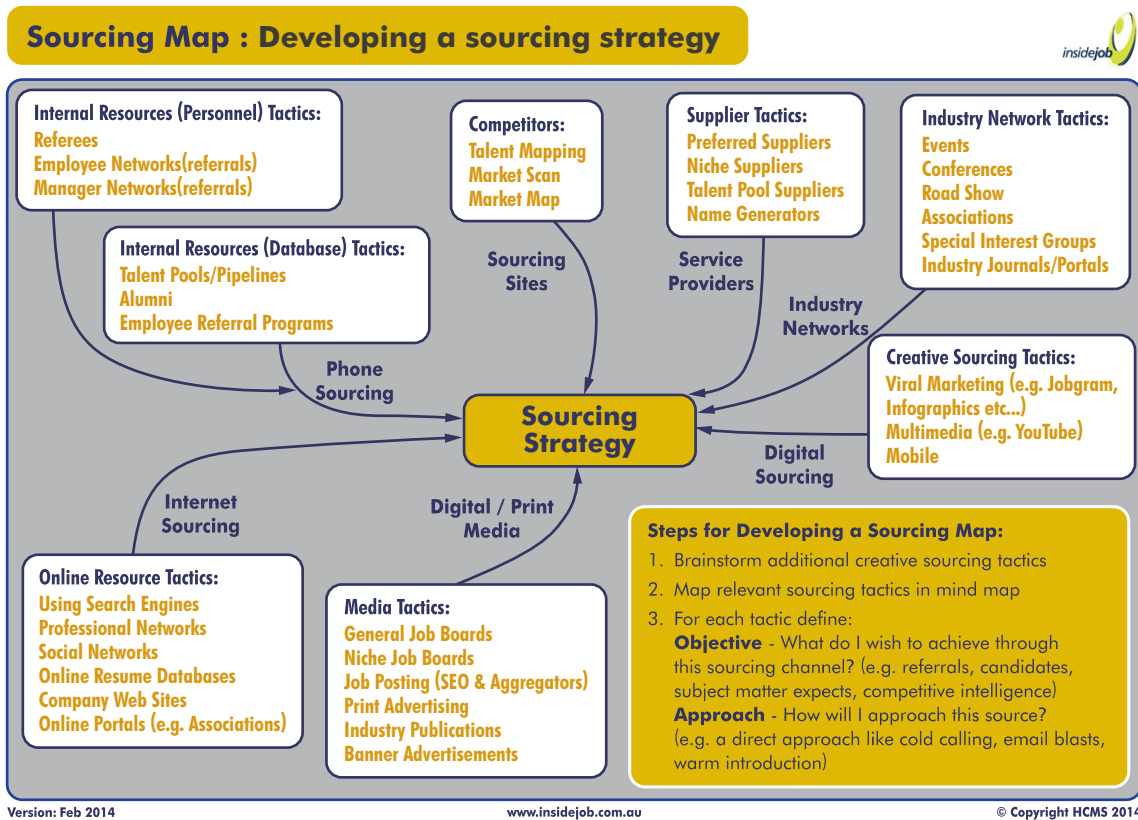
- Sourcing similar local job briefs from the internet and validating them against your requirements;
- Understanding the types of organisations looking for this type of talent and bench mark your offering against their value proposition (it's always good to know how you compare to your competition);
- Speak to subject matter experts in the profession and ask their opinion on what it takes to successfully to this job;
- Ask subject matter experts who was the best person they knew who could do this job;
- Gain referrals from your employees and their networks such as LinkedIn (many organisations such as Deloitte use their employees networks).

If you undertake this suggested process you will ensure that your offering is realistic and attractive to candidates.

Optimum Ways to Source and Engage Candidates

Developing a sourcing strategy is a really good place to start once you know what type of candidates you are looking for. This need not be a complicated document but it should be a plan of the sourcing channels that you will use to access the candidate market. Some channels will be better than others, for example if I was looking for a qualified CPA Accountant I would prefer to advertise on the CPA Society's job board before trying a generalised job board.

Creating a mind map makes your sourcing plan easy to understand. It enables you to clearly understand your approach to sourcing candidates. Outlined below is a typical sourcing plan. These are generally prepared by a recruiter.



Your objective in sourcing is to gain quality candidates with the least amount of effort, time and cost. Asking subject matter experts how they found jobs or where they would look for jobs will give you a clue as to how quality finds jobs. Understand what channels will yield lots of low quality candidates is important. Try and avoid these as they create lots of work for little return. If you follow the advice above hopefully this will not occur.

Let's look at an example, if you were looking for a sales professional in Australia an example of sourcing channels may include:

• **Online Resource Tactics:**

- **LinkedIn** has plenty of great sales people as part of the network. They can be found using the advanced search feature or using Google to access LinkedIn. The sales people typically will be active in LinkedIn discussion groups. They can also be found using Google to search in LinkedIn.

- **Indeed** has a large database of candidates and is free to access, which is definitely worth trying. You can include the location of the position and then add types of positions.
- **Professional Networks** most professional associations offer a job board service or a way to access their members with positions. Many sales people will belong to a network such as the Australian Institute of Management (AIM)
- **Conferences** reviewing the conferences where similar products or solutions have been exhibited will include both sponsors and the names of the relevant sales people to contact.
- **Specialist Recruitment Agents** are also a valid channel and can provide quality candidates. While this is an easy channel to access you will need to pay about 12%-20% of the employees first years' salary as a fee. The recruitment agent will also have the required infrastructure, networks, database and technology to enable the process. One specialist sales recruitment agent is Sales Staff.
- **Internal Channels**
 - **Employee Referrals** were mentioned previously this is a high quality channel and should lead to high quality candidates;
 - **Previous Silver Medallists** – Candidates who just missed out in previous recruitment assignments with your organisation should be considered again. If these candidates were suitable but missed out due to there being limited positions available they should be approached again;
 - **Referees** – Referees for successful candidates may also be considered for the position or approached to see if they know other candidates.

As can be seen the above starts to form a credible way of identifying and accessing future sales talent. Using a multi sourcing channel approach will yield a high chance of success. It is important to note that if you have approached a quality candidate but could not recruit them on this occasion; it is wise to ask them if you can re-approach them again in the future.

Converting Candidates Into Quality Employees

It is important to provide a recruitment process in keeping with the type and level of position. Again if you are unsure on the type of recruitment process, looking at the career page of a competitor and see what type of recruitment process they provide will be of help. Some interesting sites to look at include:

- Westpac Bank- carefully explain processes for different positions.
- Deloitte provide real job previews of what it is like to work at Deloitte.

Using a Video Interviewing approach is a good option to consider. Products such as Montage, Sonru and Vieple all offer software where you can set the interview up in advance and candidates can take the interview in their own time. A hiring manager can review these interviews and decide who they may wish to consider.

Online testing has become the new norm and is now widely accepted for both volume and specialist positions. These tests can be taken at any time by candidates and measure key candidate competencies that are useful in making hiring decisions and also later in the management of the employee. Many organisations can provide online assessment including, TestGrid, Revelian, Hay Group, and many others.

If you would like to use a recruitment agent to manage the end recruitment process there are many quality agents that have offices in both Australia and Japan. Some recruitment agents operating in both countries include Hays, Manpower, and Robert Walters.

Conclusion

The most important part of a recruitment assignment is, understanding what type of person and what skills are required, knowing the market for those skills and sourcing where there are bountiful quality candidates. If an organisation gets this right there is a high chance of gaining a quality candidate.

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Trevor Vas is a well known Australian HR thought leader. He focuses on issues of leadership, talent management, contingent workforce management and recruitment strategy. He writes extensively about the state of talent management in the Australasian Region.

Trevor is also the Director of ATC events, which has brought thousands of delegates the latest thinking on what's new, now and next in recruitment and talent management. His strong industry connections ensure his ear is always close to the ground on the major trends set to affect the future work both in Australasia and across the globe.

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