IS RECRUITMENT BROKEN

OR JUST OUT OF DATE?

How to Modernize Your Hiring to Supercharge Growth

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Introduction

Recruitment and retention is key to your business growth. Whether we are in boom times or recession there is always a shortage of highly talented people at all levels. It is therefore an area of competition that your company should master in order to compete. And yet, "recruitment is broken", or so say many on the subject. What do they mean?

What they seem to mean is that the recruitment systems that companies use no longer work well; that candidates are treated poorly thereby damaging company employer brand; recruitment companies offer a poor and expensive service, and the results that employers get are inconsistent at best.

Is this a new phenomenon or has it always been thus?

The truth is that it probably always has been an area of human resource management that is in urgent need of a rethink. Most employers have not yet woken up to how bad their recruiting systems are, and how easily they can be improved. We use the word "systems" advisedly, because the real truth is most companies' approach to recruitment, selection and retention has anything but a systematic approach. What definitely *is* new is the plethora of approaches that companies can use to compete in this essential aspect of business growth. Genuine professional talent management is still in its embryonic stages in almost all companies. Recruitment is part of this, and of course one of the reasons why many consider recruitment to be "broken" is because there is little connection to retention, but more broadly a disconnect to other strategic areas of business.

Essentially, most recruiting and retention strategies used by companies are not in the least strategic.

They are fundamentally basic, badly integrated, and completely inadequate for the times that we live in. One of the fundamental reasons many companies' recruitment processes are not competing is because they are still employing and displaying attitudes that in reality were poor quality in the past, and completely inappropriate for the future, and their attempts to use modern technologies and methods are inept and amateurish, with a focus on completely the wrong metrics.

The current recruitment market is massively different from what it once was. This offers both opportunities and threats.

However, whether we look at the most modern methods of recruitment, or the more traditional, the root cause of the "broken recruitment" problem is a lack of focus on how to achieve a system of excellence that outperforms your competitors. Sadly, most employers do not know what good looks like, let alone "excellent" when it comes to hiring systems and processes, and the recruitment industry that ostensibly supports this effort does not, for the large part, have the guts to tell their clients what really needs to be done! There appears to be a non-symbiotic relationship between employers and the recruitment industry. In many, if not most cases, it is a relationship of supplier and purchaser rather than partner/advisor. If you are not receiving the recruitment service from either your internal or external partners that you think you deserve, it is not necessarily the case that recruitment is broken per se, but it is probably the case that YOUR recruitment systems are almost certainly sub-optimal.

One area that we will focus on heavily through this book is a clear philosophy to drive growth through your organization; make it your top strategic objective to *hire* and then *retain* **high performers**. A complaint from many hiring managers and HR professionals is that the quality of people they see is not meeting their expectations. Paradoxically, we will be encouraging you to be even more demanding in what you require. This might suggest you will make your task even harder, but this will not be the case if you follow the principles we outline in the following pages.

The market for high performers in all sectors is what recruiters refer to as "candidate led". This means that it is a "sellers-market" for their services, and, as already mentioned, it is really immaterial whether we are in a boom time or a recession. The reason for this is that in recession people are more cautious and less likely to move, so while there may be a larger number of people "between jobs", there will still be a very limited availability of high performers.   If you are an employer that wants such high performing growth supercharging people, you are going to have to work hard to attract them, and if you do not, your competitors will take them instead!

The internet and social media platforms that are now part of our everyday lives mean that the way potential applicants interact with possible employers/recruiters and vice versa is completely different to what it was ten years ago. If you *are* still using the methods you used ten years ago, then as suggested a few paragraphs ago you are at a disadvantage. If you are

adapting to the new environment, you need to understand how to do this optimally.

You will also be wise to understand the pressures that the new recruitment environment places on your existing staff. As it becomes easier for your best staff to be found by other employers, how do you ensure they are not tempted away? Afterall, you will not grow your business if having hired the right people you lose them in short order! It is certainly a broken system that hires great people and then lets them drift off before giving a clear return on investment.

One of the major obstacles to success is not only that many companies' line managers are unaware of the current dynamic in the recruitment market, but also that they have had minimal training or experience in how to interview and select. How broken is that? It is quite extraordinary that such a mission critical skillset for any manager or leader is left so much to chance. How many other management functions are carried out by individuals that have little training or instruction in that function? Not many perhaps.

If you are in charge of P&L for your business unit or company, and you are not a trained accountant, the likelihood is that you will have had at least received a training course in "finance for non-financial managers", or something of that type. If you need to do presentations to internal or external customers you will have been on presentation skills courses. And as for general leadership and management, it could be argued that you should be continually learning and developing yourself in this area if you have line management responsibility for others.

This book will help to address this gap, demonstrating best practice and most up to date principles for recruiting with a focus on accessing high performers and how to engage with them.

Interview and selection process improvement, when combined with a strong retention strategy is one of the most significant but straightforward management improvement processes that you can implement.

Whatever type of people you hire, whether they are people with a commercial target, such as lawyers, accountants or salespeople; or perhaps they are bench scientists working on a time critical project, the difference between poor performers and overperformers may well be the difference between overall success or failure of your business or organization.

The baseline quality of your team, and therefore much of its performance, is dependent on two straightforward factors: *how they are selected and how they are led*.

Leadership has had much written on it, and we will not be covering that here. However, how can you have a decent team to lead, if you haven't selected them well in the first instance? This book will take you on a journey that will demonstrate the value of a modern, outward looking and proactive selection process that will result in you hiring much higher-quality,

higher-performing people and, subsequently, greater success for your organization. Those higher quality people we will refer to as High Performance Talent or HPT. This does not mean that we are only referring to geniuses, or super people. We are simply referring to those that are consistently at the top end of their professional capability when compared to their peer group.

Can all organizations aim at such groups?

Yes, definitely!

If you want to see increased productivity through improved talent there are a number of key elements that need to be grasped:

- Accessing High Performance Talent needs to be a key strategic objective of the organization that is prioritized to the very top of the leadership team, and "buy-in" achieved right through the organizational structure.

- People are not commodities, the highest quality people need to be competed for. The best candidates have the pick of employers, not the out of date attitude that believes it is the other way around.

- A robust process must be put in place to ensure that consistency is applied throughout the recruitment program, across the organization and outcomes are measured.

If the principles given here are followed, you will save many hours of lost time and lost productivity in the future, that would have been caused through taking the wrong approach, interviewing the wrong people and worse still, hiring the wrong people.

When these principles are applied, your recruitment processes will be far from broken or out of date, they will be high performance. High Performance Hiring processes will lead to High Performance Talent being attracted to your organization and supercharging its future growth.