Talent Acquisition Programme of the Year
Anheuser Busch InBev and Pinstripe & Ochre House* – EMEA

A summary of why this customer relationship should be considered for the award

Anheuser Busch InBev is one of the top five consumer products companies in the world generating annual revenues approaching a staggering $40 billion and employing around 150,000 people. To ensure that the quality of its talent attraction and talent management remains at the very highest level the company had successfully partnered with outside experts in North America and in 2010 began looking for a similar arrangement for its European operations. After a very rigorous assessment process Anheuser Busch InBev entered into a three year relationship with Pinstripe & Ochre House, which has brought it cost savings, reduction in times to hire, consistent high quality of recruit and a compelling employer brand through the creation and implementation of imaginative, yet always delivery focused initiatives and programmes. On the basis of this the company has extended the relationship for at least another three years.

At least three significant problems or issues that the buyer and provider together overcame in the course of delivering service and the methods or practices used

1. Because of the very diverse nature of Anheuser Busch InBev’s European region (which also includes non-continental elements, such as Cuba), local business units had developed their own individual approaches to talent attraction and acquisition leading to inconsistencies and a lack of uniform employer brand or employer value proposition. This in turn had led to a lack of clear and measurable information about such key elements as cost per hire and time to hire and concerns that the actual quality of hire might not be at optimum levels across the region.

2. The company has had a long history of sourcing and recruiting newly graduated MBAs from top business schools around the world to create a pipeline of high calibre international talent with the potential to fill senior management positions. However, as the MBA employment market began to shift towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, with many of the best b-school graduates turning to options in new technology companies, such as Google and Facebook or choosing to follow the entrepreneurial route, there was concern that the company was not engaging with top schools and their students in the most effective and co-ordinated manner.

3. The company was keenly aware that in many areas of talent sourcing it was facing, and would continue to face, increasing competition for the best people. And it also understood that it needed to get on the radar of potential hires at the earliest possible opportunity to give it competitive advantage in the ‘war for talent’ and to allow it access to individuals who, whilst not required
immediately, might allow it to develop new territories and new product and service lines in the future. However, the reality of the current picture was one of relatively short-term staff planning and, consequently, of tactical, as opposed to strategic hiring.

The approaches and/or programs initiated through the relationship and how results were measured

1. Given the dual nature of the challenge – namely to bring consistency to volume and specialist non-volume hiring – Pinstripe & Ochre House proposed and instituted a two pillar delivery system. This was made up of dedicated onsite recruiters focused on a number of key geographical markets in the region, such as the UK and Germany, supported by a Pinstripe & Ochre House centre of excellence based in the UK, but with in-depth expertise of all the target countries and fluency in local languages. This gave Anheuser Busch InBev the support, not only of a focused delivery team, but also of a wide range of specialists who brought their expertise to such key issues as community building, optimum use of social media in specific target groups and countries, and the development of employer branding messages which retained the key elements of Anheuser Busch InBev’s business and people philosophy, but which also embraced local cultural, social and political influencers. Furthermore this more centralised model provided ABI with all the management information it needed around the effectiveness of the hiring process, such as time to hire and cost of hire statistics. In order to ensure that Anheuser Busch InBev received best return on its investment, mass ‘business as usual’ recruitment was heavily based on ‘self-service’, underpinned by easy to use technology, while more business critical hiring was localised, closely involved

ABI management on the ground and was increasingly oriented towards a talent pipelining, strategic approach.

2. Because the attraction and hiring of the very best new MBAs was becoming increasingly challenging given the competition from non-traditional players, such as the new technology companies, Pinstripe & Ochre House identified that constant, relevant engagement with target schools and specific students was not only desirable, but essential. Pinstripe & Ochre House therefore worked with ABI to identify and agree target institutions and individuals and the recruitment team then took over liaison, messaging and assessment. This now ensures that ABI has direct access to the most desirable candidates in every graduating class and is able to put over a compelling and successful employer value proposition.

3. Every company, whatever its size, is faced with the ongoing dilemma of balancing its immediate people needs with the necessity to develop a robust and effective talent planning strategy. One that is aligned to the long-term needs and goals of the business and which often needs to open up access to new and previously untapped professional communities. Pinstripe & Ochre House is helping ABI to move to address through the development of a talent pool programme, which reaches out to both active and passive candidates, both outside and within the company, to create pipelines of talent read for access as specific needs arise. Known as the ‘Hot Tub’ approach, the model uses a very wide range of tools to engage with these internal and external target communities such as the Anheuser Busch InBev intranet and career site, job boards, and advertising, employee referral programmes, alumni programmes, ‘silver medallist’ programmes focused on near-miss candidates, targeted search campaigns, open days, events,
professional networks and social media platforms.

How the relationship has contributed to advancing the practice of recruitment

In summary the relationship has delivered the following for Anheuser Busch InBev:

a. An outsourced expert recruitment function fully integrated with the in-house HR function and covering both volume and non-volume hiring
b. Coverage across all of the company’s European region based on embedded recruiters in key markets and a centre of excellence based out of the UK
c. An enhanced MBA recruitment programme capable of sourcing students from the world’s top business schools
d. Up-to-date and accurate management information
e. Ongoing consultancy on best practice in the hiring industry
f. Better engagement with hiring managers to ‘win hearts and minds’
g. In excess of 550 hires per annum
h. Reductions in time to hire and agency use. Raising of level of internal hiring
i. Dedicated executive search capability
j. Robust and effective ATS
k. A ‘shared risk’ model with Pinstripe & Ochre House fees directly linked to the achievement of agreed KSLs

One or more testimonials from the purchaser of services and/or a third party (e.g., external to either nominated organization) providing evidentiary confirmation of the nomination

“Perhaps the real test of any business relationship is whether you want it to continue or not. So perhaps it’s enough to say that the success of the first three years has prompted us to sign up for another three.”

“What Pinstripe & Ochre House has brought to our recruitment processes is excellence. They took a model that had too many different country or unit based approaches and have introduced consistency – in terms of employer brand, of the way we assess and treat candidates, of key management information. “

“What is so impressive is, not just how much they understand our business, but how they have become an extension of our business. Whenever I think of them I don’t think of an outsourced provider, I think of them as my recruitment department, yet a recruitment department that has better access to external best practice than any internal function I can think of.”

“Their ability to deliver, to make the hires we need when and where we need them, is of course vital. But so is their flexibility, their willingness to get done whatever is necessary, to advise and guide, to provide insight into what is going on in the wider talent market. This is simply not a client-supplier relationship, it’s something much more, much better.”

Toon Van der Veer, Director of People Continuity and Internal Communication

Be sure to provide details around the nominee’s impact and the resulting outcomes, using specific numbers and metrics (where possible)

As noted earlier Anheuser Busch InBev felt that ongoing information about its recruitment performance had not met its demanding requirements before it entered into the relationship with Pinstripe & Ochre House. The provision of accurate and timely management information was consequently deemed a priority in the new model.

The reporting has highlighted the following tangible improvements in the talent acquisition process:
• Reduction of time to hire from 35 days in 2011 to 25 in 2013
• Percentage of hires sourced internally raised from 40% in 2011 to 51% in 2013
• Fully operational ATS – Lumesse TalentLink – implemented to accelerate assessment and improve candidate experience
• Percentage of vacancies outstanding after 60 calendar days reduced in key regions from 59% in 2011 to 10% in 2013
• Reduced agency cost 35% 2013 versus 2012
• Hiring manager interview training implemented across Western Europe to raise quality of hire and improve candidate experience

*Pinstripe & Ochre House has taken on the new name, Cielo*