

REIMAGINING TALENT ACQUISITION FOR SMBS



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Small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) with 15,000 employees and less are the engine of the U.S. economy, but in a tight talent market, many are struggling to hire and retain top-performing employees. A recent study from LinkedIn found that the majority of SMBs (84 percent) struggle to find enough people to interview and hire for open positions. Seventy-three percent are challenged by competing with better-known companies for talent, and 75 percent are unsure if candidates will succeed in the role, even after the interview.

In this interview, Tim Oyer, vice president of sales at Advanced RPO, shares some insights that mid-sized organizations can leverage to improve their hiring outcomes in a competitive marketplace.

Q What are the biggest challenges that SMBs face in talent acquisition?

A While most SMBs have an HR infrastructure, many do not possess talent acquisition (TA) subject matter experts or the resource capacity to manage the hiring process for any number of requisitions. Many of these organizations are heavily reliant on recruiting agencies and are forced to funnel excessive spend into recruitment. Others are self-taught without a true understanding of what winning TA looks like or the impact it can make to the business. Still others have no TA function at all and face a constant turnover of contract recruiters that deliver sub-par candidates. In all of these scenarios, the biggest challenge is an undefined TA platform and the failure to consider talent acquisition as a key business priority.

Most companies just don't have a modernized TA process. Today's candidates are in the drivers' seat but traditional recruitment processes weren't built for the modern candidate's expectations. Employers need to design a hiring process that is efficient, mobile friendly, and delivers the concierge treatment to job applicants. Clinging to old fashioned methods halts the success organizations can have with these individuals.

Q How can SMBs stand out when competing with large corporations for top talent? What are some actionable strategies?

A Today's success stories are focused on one thing: recruitment marketing. SMBs often struggle to compete with Fortune 100 corporations and trendy startups, so it is essential that their hiring process highlights the unique attributes that drive people to a smaller company. This is where many TA teams fail; organizations frequently don't take the time to define what their ideal candidate looks like, develop an EVP to attract these candidates, or build an effective communication strategy.

The reality is that job seekers want to make their mark in an organization and work shoulder to shoulder with the executive team. A small company is uniquely positioned to provide the agile work environment, adaptive and flexible culture, and open-door policy with top decision makers that will appeal to these candidates. Hiring teams need to hone that messaging and get it out into the marketplace while highlighting their unique culture and work environment.

One simple way to do this is by integrating videos into the careers website. Videos that feature a spokesperson are the best way to capture the unique work environment, provide validation of what the organization represents, and connect with a candidate on a personal level. They also help people understand the roadmap of the organization: this is our vision, this is our purpose, here's how we're getting there, and this is the impact you can make if you join.

Q What technologies can smaller companies use to improve the reach and efficacy of their TA team?

A An applicant tracking system (ATS) is really the backbone of the hiring process, but to improve the reach of their communications, organizations also need to make sure their process is mobile-friendly. Some of the capabilities they should offer are self-scheduling interviews, video interviewing, and texting.

To get this right, TA leaders need to understand the communication preferences of candidates in each demographic. For example, 70 percent of job seekers respond to texts in less than 12 minutes versus several days to respond to an email. However, not everyone is open to a texting relationship with a company that is trying to recruit them.

Q How can companies with few TA resources make a big impact in recruitment? What should their areas of focus be?

A Winning hiring programs have a defined, metric-driven process with disciplined execution. The first step to success is making certain that you have executive buy-in and that all hiring managers understand the approach and the overarching goals of the talent strategy. TA and HR teams both need a seat at the table to define the critical business initiatives for the company in the next three years and align the talent strategy to those goals.