

# A RECRUITER'S GUIDE ON HOW TO NAB THE BEST TALENT

Sourcing talent is harder than ever in today's competitive job market. Story by **Roxanne Calder**

Hiring has never been tougher. As a recruiter of more than two decades, I have experienced many employment cycles, with this the hardest yet. Sourcing talent in the Covid environment is confounding. It demands broad intellectual inquiry, a full focus, all our ingenuity and wits and then more again. Your faith and understanding of human behaviour is tested, and even your energy zapped. There isn't a magic answer, but there are some well-honed tips to navigate this cryptic talent problem.

**ACCEPT THE REALITY:** The shortage of skilled workers is not just for the short term. Don't ponder when it might improve, for the answer is: not any time soon. This has been an ongoing issue in Australia well before the pandemic. The other reality is the need to compromise. There is no "perfect candidate" any more. Change your view and perspective on what ideal is. Rather, accept our new realities and move ahead with creative thinking for a solution-based strategy.

**VIEW TALENT THROUGH A DIFFERENT PRISM:** What does your business really need? Retire the wishlist and focus on critical needs as well as the transferable and trainable skills. Cutting out the peripheral opens up your candidate pool and enables swift decision-making. Consider an audit of your workforce. You may have hidden talent under your nose. Appraise their profiles and conduct reviews to uncover the skills, desires and aspirations of your team. Look to upskill, train, transfer, promote and second.

**LET GO OF ANY BIAS AND OUTDATED BELIEFS:** We all have them, but if you want to outwit this talent conundrum, have a fresh approach and forget what worked before. Consider wildcard candidates, those with different backgrounds and experience from what you typically consider but who potentially can do the job. The best candidate in today's market will have transferable and enterprise skills, great attributes and a winning attitude. In removing bias, look to relatively untapped but talented market segments, such as youth, our ageing population, students through internships, return-to-work mums with part-time work and job shares. Even consider global pipelines. Remote working has thrown open the international door for new hires. Time zones are a barrier only if you see it that way. Turn it to your advantage.

**ARCHAIC PRACTICES:** The days of asking your candidate why they should be hired are long gone. Instead, ask why prospective new hires would want to work with your business. Sell your value proposition. Are you offering what employees are seeking? Your processes should enable and improve businesses. If your recruitment processes no longer provide benefits, abandon them. If your process is four interviews over two weeks, ask why. Your prolonged interviews could be costing you not only candidates but also brand reputation. If your process really needs more than one interview, ensure they are in sharp succession. It's about speed and efficiency in a hyper-competitive candidate market.

**WHEN AT OFFER, CHECK SALARY IS AT MARKET:** This is not the time to save a few dollars by lowballing the offer. Your potential new hire will have other job opportunities. Offer, ideally on the same day as the last interview or, if you are brave, in the interview. Delaying an offer may undo all the hard work in getting your dream candidate this far. Have contracts on the ready and issued on the same day as your offer.

**YOU HAVE YOUR NEW STARTER – OR DO YOU?** This is the finetuning part. Keep in touch throughout your new starter's notice period. Despite resigning, people change their minds and accept counter-offers. Don't discount other job offers coming through. The war for talent is fierce and these are standard tactics. It is not personal, they will tell you. And even after your new employee has started, it is still not a done deal. You can expect prospective employers to continue to contact your employee with opportunities. This typically occurs within the first three months when new employees are the most vulnerable, so make sure your onboarding is on point.

Staff have always been the No.1 pain or gain for businesses. Today's competitive workforce sourcing world is more complicated, intricate and unpredictable than ever. Start with accepting the reality and the rest will follow.

*Roxanne Calder, author of *Employable: 7 Attributes to Assuring Your Working Future* (Major Street, \$29.95), is the founder of EST10.*



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