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HR in the Gulf Region: **BEST IN CLASS RECRUITMENT**

By Dave Millner

MR. MILLNER: Hi, I'm Dave Millner. Today my thought is about best in class recruitment. Now why talk about recruitment selection just at a time when maybe this isn't always a key activity for a lot of organizations in the gulf? I guess the answer is because the smart organizations across the gulf region are at this very moment reviewing their recruitment processes so that when they want to recruit again later in the year or maybe next year when times are becoming a little more positive, they have a process that ensures they don't take on somebody else's problems, that dreaded thought of the low performer. Now attracting, motivating and retaining its employees is one of the key issues that all organizations face, irrespective of the climate in which they operate within. Any organization that wants talented people must have a clearly-defined recruitment strategy that ensures it gets the best people and bases it upon best practice processes and procedures that ensure consistency and fair treatment for all those involved.

Now first of all, the organization needs a clear recruitment policy. Why do I need that? Well, this shows all the hiring managers the aims of the processes, the practices to be followed, and the way in which the processes are to be managed. It's so easy to forget that making any hiring decision is a critical business decision. It's not just an HR process any more. You've really got to make sure you're using clear and defined job performance criteria. It helps you to know what you're looking for, and then helps you decide how you want to assess your candidates. Now at the heart of any processes is the organization's competency framework. This is there to identify those key behaviors that are required for successful job performance. This means that assessments are not only relevant to each role, but are also objective and consistently assessed. I guess the question I leave with you is, does your organization's competency framework, does it measure superior performance?

The other thing you need to think about is the hiring managers. Are they trained and are they knowledgeable in the process? Do not accept the usual, "Oh well I've been interviewing for years. I don't need any training." It's those people that have been interviewing for years that need the training the most. Your hiring managers must have the necessary skills and experience to, not only carry out your assessments objectively, consistently and competently, but they are representing the organization. They are selling the organization to the candidates and they have to be on the ball. They have to be the best you can get.

Now I appreciate the building structure into any recruitment process. It's frustrating, but time and time again it's been proven that the best performers are recruited using more objective assessment methods. Structured processes enable candidates to be measured against the objective requirements of the role and the organization, as well as looking at what is the fit between the candidate and the organization. And this happens irrespective of the recruiter or the location where the process is being undertaken. Simplicity is crucial though. The simpler the solution, the more effective it will be. It needs to sell the organization, you'll brand the candidate, and you've got to make sure that the hiring manager complies with the process and makes sure that you've got all the information and data that the process has enabled you to collect. Maverick recruiters just don't work anymore. And with the cost of making a bad decision, equaling at least 1½ times the salary of the recruit, you cannot allow hiring managers to do their own thing anymore. It just doesn't work.

Now, technology significantly improves the efficiency of the process. Systems now exist that are easy to use, can do with much of the workload and the administrative burden, and can also enable assessments to be taken online via other testing or indeed via online interactive simulations have now started to become available. This also ensures that candidates can be assessed objectively and fairly and that you have the information before you actually meet them. It may sound weird, but do spend time providing feedback to candidates, both successful and unsuccessful. Now this doesn't need to take a lot of time. But apart from helping the candidates to understand why or why not they didn't get the job, it also helps to strengthen the organization's recruitment brand. And it generates positive exposure of the organization as an employer of choice. And remember, for some organizations, the people that you've rejected, they are still customers.

Now accurate information is vital. The information that's captured during the process, it must be used to make decisions and it must be kept to support the decisions that are being made. All hiring managers must take notes and record information in a standardized way to comply with the various legislative requirements that different parts of the world require. Importantly, the retention of this data allows the process to be reviewed to make sure that you're continuing to recruit talented people who perform once they've joined your organization.

I think most organizations recognize that people are critical to business success and that their skills determine an organization's competitive advantage. The recruitment process within an organization is absolutely vital. It must be seen as a business critical process. It's not an HR process any more. Implementing a recruitment strategy will ensure the organization will actively manage the talent from the recruitment stage onwards. And it ensures that the hiring manager sees just how important this process is to achieving business success. It's not just about filling a vacancy as quickly as you can. It's about the quality of the hiring decisions.

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