

### The Big Idea

If you don't fancy reading this report, here it is in couple of sentences:

Hiring needs change, big change. The Human Resource industry is too stagnant for its own good.

If you focus on basics- speed, collaboration and effectiveness when hiring your results should increase dramatically.

Its not how many candidate you have. All that matters is who is looking right now and how fast and effectively you can make decisions to determine whether you want this person before you hire them as a new employee.

## **The Beginning**

Why is it that in the majority of organizations, there is a distaste with HR? Clearly everyone at some stage in their career has been burned. I have heard many stories about recruiters, manager, candidates showing abysmal behavior when it comes to the touchy issue of hiring. But within those charred fingers and angry phone calls, there is always a great story of success. There is a story of where it worked. Where the candidate was a great fit for a company, HR acted quickly, the recruiter was honest and the candidate loved the job. A match made in heaven?

You see, HR is a strange industry. In the majority of companies HR have a bad reputation. This goes for internal and external HR (especially recruiters). Everything is done to avoid dealing with HR. The reason this is so is due to communication. On the outside it appears as if they are doing nothing. Little is visible apart from sign up of a new employee or emailing a CV through. But trust me, from first hand experience Internal HR people and Recruiters are very busy people.

The fact is that the HR industry relies on speed and opportunity, yet very few hiring managers understand this. If an opportunity arises regardless of the time of day one has to practically act immediately.

The pressure to maintain targets in a market that is purely based on chance (that chance being the meeting of a great candidate) is very intense and often people leave HR due to disenfranchise.

## **Where are we Today?**

We use systems, information systems that store resumes from candidates, reference checks and phone numbers. We decide to capture all candidate on our systems (sometimes even asking them to enter information). We have CV's going back 10, 20 years old. This is redundant.

The only thing that matters is who is available now. Who is looking now. Who wants to work for your company now. Who can start right now.

Hiring needs to change and I believe that the systems are the first step to driving the change.

I have studied the hiring industry, spoken to recruiters, candidates and those hiring employees. One thing is clear: All Systems have to operate with speed.

Often the decision to proceed with a candidate has to occur in less than 24 hours after receiving a resume. That's right, not even a day. Why? If you have a hot candidate you need to operate at speed to maintain and generate their interest as they most likely will be looking at many other opportunities. Have you ever played phone tag with an agency or a candidate? Not pretty, all too common and increasingly delays the hiring process.

But is speed everything? What about quality of decision? The way hiring is executed is important too.

One man's trash is the next man's treasure. Quality is truly in the eye of the beholder.

As you went into that last interview with a candidate were you on exactly the same page as your colleague whom interviewed the candidate yesterday? Did you even know how their interview went? What about the person whom screened their CV? What was their opinion of this candidate?

I have personally seen situations where companies and managers had absolutely no idea what they wanted. Often its like leaving success frequency down to pure chance. There simply was no teamwork, leaving the business to chance.

Currently employers often delegate responsibility of hiring to a single person. That single person has the weight of expectation on their shoulders to find a dynamite candidate. The problem with this approach is that it rarely works. Rarely does a perfect candidate come through the door and rarely will you find them. They probably went to your competitor, yes, your biggest competitor. This is because you are relying on one person rather than a group of people, which is like having all your eggs in one basket. Often the person responsible for hiring has other commitments and if at any time (almost guaranteed) these take priority then you will have times where no-one is managing your companies hiring. And how do intend to get that "crucial to your business" new employee? This is because hiring is a conversation. A conversation between:

- candidates
- employers
- recruiters
- Internal staff
- friends
- referrals
- acquaintances

Why is it then that all current applicant tracking systems have no means to build or track a conversation? You cannot have a conversation with a CV, Key words, skill list, or a database. You definitely cannot have a worthwhile conversation with one person doing the hiring. You are simply spread too thin. This is because the number of conversations you have about hiring is important. Each conversation whether it scoping, interviewing or just general discussion adds to the effectiveness of hiring new employees. You gain different perspectives and are able to view the candidate from new angles. More input is better than none at all.

We arrive at the end of this year with financial turmoil, uncertainty and a projected "recession". How about you start 2009 hiring the best candidates available?

So, how do you hire at speed and collaborate while not sacrificing effectiveness of hiring? I would like to outline strategies for this in the present market as we head in to 2009.

## Strategies for 2009

### Better Candidates through Collaboration

What makes a great candidate? After all, we all have our own views/requirements. It is almost universal that a recruitment agent tries to customize their candidate to fit the perceived match of a hiring manager or job description. But what about your team? Does your team's view count? New employees will be working with the team more than the hiring manager. That definitely counts. The point is, that if you do not get your team involved in the hiring process/activity then you will be hiring for yourself and not them.

How can you get your team involved? Collaborate.

#### 1. Allow teams to conduct and attend the interviews

This means they will be more likely to favor a new employee if they had partake in the hiring process. This will also increase buy-in to the hiring process.

#### 2. Gain honest feedback from them about a particular candidate

Anonymous, no strings attached feedback can serve wonders. With no pressure, your employees are more likely to say what they really think instead of what they want you to hear.

#### 3. Treat referrals like gold

If you hired an employee and they are referring someone else, the chances since you liked the employee and people pick friends like themselves then you may have a better system of picking a match here. This should not be something that happens once in a blue moon. All employees should be actively seeking referrals. Using a bounty reward system to encourage referrals, this will motivate your team to become active recruiters.

When hiring with teams you must ensure that they operate at speed. Speed will lighten the load/expectation on HR/Internal Staff.

## **Speed of Hire**

Today it cannot be stressed more that speed is critical to the success of any hire. But how do we increase the speed of a hire? If hiring is left to the last priority you certainly won't have speed. And you won't hire.

### **1. Set expectations**

If candidates, recruiters and advisors don't know what they are expected of, neither will you. Make a plan. Also your team has to be on the same level when hiring. Establish a mutual criteria or measurement point from which you will evaluate a candidate. This could be as simple as a numbered list of qualities and a rating scale beside them.

### **2. Use a system**

The system has to be formalized and reliable. Make sure that everyone knows the rules and everyone sticks to the processes that you have put in place.

### **3. Make decisions and stick to them**

There is nothing worse than a Hiring Manager flip-flopping on decisions about candidates. Decisions need to be made with the best information possible, but don't flip-flop, it sends a bad message to the candidate and everyone else that may be involved.

The bottom line is when everyone is on the same page, arriving at the same criteria, using a good system, it allows for better decisions, faster progress and will increase your hiring turnaround and ratio.

## **Measure Recruitment Agencies and Third Parties**

There are so many agencies around so you must keep track of the good ones. Which ones delivered on what they promised. Where are your best hires coming from?

One action you can take is to measure agencies. Break this down by:

- Resources allocated to the job
- Candidates per week
- Timeframe to complete work
- Responsiveness

Use these measurements to keep the best agencies and drop the not so good ones. Make sure agencies are meeting your agreed delivery criteria. This is a good way to determine whether you actually need to use an External recruiter. If you do, ensure they are performing.

## Quality of Hire

How do we measure quality? As mentioned previously, “one mans trash is the next mans treasure”. One way is to define criteria for each job. Ask yourself “what are the required qualities in this particular job?”

Simplify it, take some requirements you go through in your mind and number them. Communicate what’s on your mind, formalize it so everyone can see and everyone is on the same page e.g a Sales Executive job may look like:

- 1: 5 years experience in the field
- 2 Able to cold call
- 3 Knows TAS or has attended TAS training
- 4 Worked with Government
- 5 Managed a portfolio of over \$2 million dollars

With a clearly outlined criteria for the assessment will ensure you and your team and everyone else involved are on the same path of thinking when accessing candidates.

## Conclusion

With a focus on speed, communication and collaboration you can bring your hiring strategy into 2009 and focus on results over number of candidates / CV’s in your "talent" silo.

Measure your results with these strategies and watch as your hiring ratios improve dramatically.

--Tim de Jardine is the CEO and co-founder of Hirewall, a web-based hiring system designed to focus on speed, collaboration and effectiveness when hiring. For more information visit [www.hirewall.com](http://www.hirewall.com)