



THE WAR FOR TALENT-PART 2

In part 1 we discussed how a relationship with your recruiter should work to provide benefit for everyone in the recruitment process and justify spend on recruitment fees.

What else must you do to attract talent at the interview stage of the process?

A recruitment strategy is a clear plan that explains what roles you'll recruit for, when why and how. It should be tied into your overall firm objectives. Your strategy must be possible to implement and easy to communicate. To ensure that the process is feasible and realistic what should we consider?

Establish and leverage your employer brand.

Because it defines you as a firm and makes you unique. It is a strong indication that your staff are engaged and happy, which enhances your reputation and will help you attract and retain staff. It must be authentic to you and emphasise what it is you value as an organisation. What is it you stand for? It is critical that you connect social causes, diversity, inclusion and sustainability because that is what candidates are looking for.

Improve your job postings with compelling job descriptions.

If you have decided not to use a recruitment firm, then your job postings need to stand out. Many firms now turn to LinkedIn.

In Feb 2022 LinkedIn showed 2,500 roles in the top 100 UK law firms. Of those 2,500 roles, 1,195 had no applicants. It is not because LinkedIn does not work but because the advert does nothing to attract potential candidates.

When advertising on LinkedIn everyone knows who you are as a firm so do not waste half your job advert describing the firm, because the first thing everyone will do is go to every website to find information.

Who writes your advertisement? It usually falls to HR, who post the job description, if it is not attracting attention quickly, try something different, why not have collaboration between HR and marketing to scope a distinctive advert. Tell people about your culture, professional development, how you listen and gain feedback from staff at all levels and disciplines that includes professional business services as well as fee earners and about CSR and ESG. Tell them how you foster a culture of belonging, flexibility, and growth and how you value your people and leverage your employer brand.

Prioritise diversity, equality and inclusion practices

Diverse organisations that attract and develop individuals from the widest pool of talent consistently perform better. Explain how you have a link beyond profitability.

Treat candidates as customers

So easy and so easily forgotten. Do not leave candidates in reception wondering if you have forgotten all about them, you would not consider doing that to a client, why should a candidate be any different? Give those that interview with you the opportunity to go to the market and tell



everyone they really want to work for you because you have left them with that impression, they will do the best PR job imaginable if you treat them well. Remember your reception staff give the first impression of the firm and if they are engaged and upbeat it leaves a favourable impression.

Conduct great interviews

Be prepared, you expect that anyone you are interviewing has done their research and so should you. I have had several Managing Partners tell me that they are embarrassed when partners come into an interview without reading a CV or having thought about any questions, they could ask to get the best out of the candidates and assuming that it will be OK if they “wing it”. Probe but do not interrogate or become aggressive, it is a fine line. Have a set of questions that you can ask everyone, so you have a base line comparison. Your goal is to make the candidate comfortable so that you have a productive, professional conversation.

Look for signs of the candidate’s curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination. Can this person do the job today, and do they have the potential to do the job a year from now, what is it you want them to add?

Ask the candidate how they learn and for their thoughts on where professional services is going. No one can predict the future, but you want someone who is thinking about it.

If the meeting is going well and you believe that the candidate is worth wooing, spend time during the second half of the interview selling the role and the firm.

Do not forget that the interview is a mutual screening process, and you must have compelling reasons for people to join and stay with the firm.

Lock interview times into diaries

Candidates time is as important as yours, especially if they have taken holiday to attend an in-person interview. It is a disaster if it is cancelled at the last minute because a partner hasn’t locked it into their diary and the assumption is made that it is easy for the candidate to reschedule. In reality they will lose the holiday and will be expected to re-book to suit your needs. The implication is that their time is not important and that it is acceptable to cancel on the day.

Our next article will cover retention in more detail.

Please contact Anne Harnetty or Martin Soulsby if you have senior recruitment needs.

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