



## 3 ESSENTIAL STEPS TO COMPETITIVE RECRUITING

There are two fundamentals that smart firms grasp; you cannot achieve worthy goals by paying 100% competitive salaries for 70% of your skill needs and that if you want different talent, you need different and innovative acquisition strategies.

In our work over the last six months as companies seek to navigate intensely competitive professional labour markets with a back-drop of political and economic uncertainty, we identify three initiatives that competitive firms are adopting. Individually, none of these are especially complex but when all are applied consistently, great results can be achieved.

**1. Get ahead of the hiring curve**  
Accurate headcount planning can be a black art, now more than ever before. Business growth for many

firms is dependent on a wide range of largely unknown and unpredictable external factors. While attrition volume can be forecast with some accuracy, too often it occurs in a particularly painful function or skill area.

Get ahead of any planned or unexpected needs by building higher awareness of your most important skill communities or pools. Aside from your detailed headcount plan, develop a simple skills matrix, that broadly projects “the importance of the skill to business objectives and continuity” on one axis and “the difficulty in sourcing the skill” on the other. Concentrate employee marketing / branding exercises towards the skills in the top right box.

Generate marketing assets for your website, for social media

promotion and every available channel to promote a unique awareness of your organisation to that community. Engage with your recruitment partner for these skill areas to develop a flow of market data that keeps you informed on availability risks. Conduct ongoing external analysis of talent pools for these skills or engage a partner in developing a talent map that pulls together potential candidates.

We work with many organisations at this level, investigating and qualifying the likely availability of such talent to help build a confident picture of potential supply.

**2. Vary recruiting channels**  
Many companies make the simple error of assuming all roles can be filled through just one channel and inevitably it breaks down.



Whether it's online advertising, referral and network, career fairs, broadcast media or recruitment and search firms, you need a combination of some or all of these to address your total talent needs.

Roles under €30K PA should be filled by online media platforms and where the volume warrants it, through broadcast media advertising. Positions in the €30K to €70K can often be filled by internal referrals and networks or contingency recruitment firms, unless you have a very specialised skill or regional need. Beyond this, professional search and executive search organisations are the channel for specialised or leadership appointments. These roles are too important to trust to contingency chance.

Develop your organisation's "story". The purpose, culture, people, and future of your firm that positions it as an employer of choice. Communicate your story through these channels, shaped to the target audience.

### **3. Line managers as ambassadors**

Employee communication and engagement rarely feature as KPI's for line managers. It remains true, people leave leaders not organisations. When we engage with target executives during a search for a client, too often the motivation to consider a move comes back to a desire to change their current line leader.

Ample evidence also indicates that during the hiring process, the line leader is the draw to a firm or the reason a candidate declines to proceed.

Set your hiring managers up for success by ensuring they communicate early in hiring processes, how they show respect for their reports, how they engage their team, how they draw on their input and recognise their contributions. If your hiring manager will not engage consistently on these issues, you may have a talent blocker and source of turnover.

Candidates are drawn to leaders who articulate clearly what has to be achieved, how this will happen and the value the new hire will bring to that process. Quality candidates are doing well at their current organisations and engaged in more interesting work than at any recent time. Attracting and recruiting great people is extremely challenging.

Activate continuous branding towards your most important skill, build market intelligence ahead of the need. Build high demand partnerships with suppliers, get your recruitment partner into the middle of your challenge and not sitting on the periphery. Ensure that your internal TA people are truly engaging with suppliers to maximise the dataflow value from those relationships. Review your

interview processes to ensure they promote your organisation and culture in a manner that relates better to target talent than your competitors.

**True competitive edge begins by being able to attract and retain the best there is, not just the best that is easily available.**