

Eight great strategies for better in-house recruiting

By MedZilla.com

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Marysville, WA - April 16, 2004--Unlike the majority of human resources functions, which are detail- and regulations-oriented, recruiting is a creative process. Recruiting is for you, if you like promoting your employer, creating awareness and nurturing the talent you attract.

Creativity and commitment are foundations of your internal recruiting success, says Frank Heasley, PhD, president and CEO of MedZilla.com, a leading Internet recruitment and professional community that serves biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and science. "If you care about recruiting the way a marketing professional cares about making a sale or promoting an image and strive to learn every aspect of what makes employees in specific positions successful, you'll market, rather than shuffle papers—you'll attract and bring in the cream of the crop, rather than candidates who know how to navigate applicant tracking systems. Successful recruiting is not passive profession; it's active and constantly evolving."

These strategies, according to recruiting experts, will help you get the most out of your role as an internal recruiter:

Think like a marketing professional. Learn the fundamentals of image building, campaign promotions, advertising and copywriting; so that you promote the image you want to attract the people you need. Lose any arrogance toward people looking for jobs and make your application process user-friendly.

Care enough to learn ... a lot. Recruiting, according to Dr. Heasley, is not an interchangeable role from one industry to another, especially when it comes to the pharmaceutical, biotech, research and healthcare industries. Know the language your hiring managers would use in an interview and understand how it relates to particular positions. You have to know what things mean in order to design screening questions, as well as talk with candidates; if you don't, you'll miss out of qualified candidates.

Use all the means available to get the right people for the job. It might seem easy to rely on running newspaper ads, and then sit back and wait for your responses, but to find the best candidates requires a proactive approach. Use everything you can, including networking, newspaper, job boards, and job fairs—even a third-party recruiter if the position is particularly difficult to find candidates for, according to Dr. Heasley, who worked for years as a recruiter before launching Medzilla.

Talk to people (and don't rely on technology to do your thinking for you). It sounds so basic, but picking up the phone or personally meeting and talking to potential candidates, hiring managers and others who are integral to your success as a recruiter is essential. Remember, networking is generally what lands the best employees. "It's tempting to try and substitute your applicant tracking system as a replacement for thought. You can't depend on a computer with canned set of questions to screen candidates, because all you're going to get back is a canned set of answers." Dr. Heasley says. "No one can design questions adequately enough for a computer to do that for you, so the results are not going to be what you expect; even worse, the more questions your screening system asks, the fewer people are going to complete the process."

According to Dr. Heasley, you should conduct your search to come up with a good batch of resumes; then, call those people on the phone and actually talk with them.

Give the internal referral program the respect it deserves as a source of candidates; however, avoid becoming too bogged down by the "internal referral program." H. Martin de'Campo, of Humanatek, Inc., a company which provides outsourced human capital solutions (www.humantek.com), says that while internal referral programs are a great source of candidates, they can—by their structure—bog down the recruiting process.

It's not a good thing, he says, if your internal referral program requires that all internal referrals are interviewed as a courtesy. Interviews take time and energy that you don't have—especially if you know just by looking at someone's resume that that person is not right for the job. You might also fall into the trap that you handle internal recruiters with preferential treatment. That can be a legal problem, according to de-Campo. The solution: treat everyone equally and do your documentation. Don't let the interview process become less scrutinizing just because a referral is a friend of your employee's, and don't let internal referrals keep you from catering to someone from the outside who is a real "catch."

Hire great employees; not great candidates. You might be enamored with a candidate because that person seems to know all the buzz words and understands just what to say and what you're looking for. Watch for those, de-Campo warns, who are excellent candidates because they've been through the rigors of interviewing, but are not necessarily great employees. Use assessments and other tools to look behind the fluff.

Start recruiting before you get the requisition. Ron Selewach, founder and president of Human Resource Management Center (HRMC), at www.hrmc.com, says recruiters tend to be reactionary instead of proactive, waiting until they get requisitions to begin the recruiting process.

Concentrate on customer service. Recruiting is a strategic process. Your goal should be to keep good prospects interested in the company until an appropriate opening occurs. Don't forget to offer "customer service" to all those candidates who apply but no positions are available. Finally, following up with recent hires to determine how they're doing and tap them as a source of referrals to other candidates, Selewach says.

"The best recruiters seem to have a deep understanding of their industries and a knack for communicating and selling," says Michele Groutage, Medzilla's director of marketing. "While tied to the HR function, recruiting is a very different animal and should be treated as so."

About MedZilla.com

Established in mid 1994, MedZilla is the original web site to serve career and hiring needs for professionals and employers in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, medicine, science and healthcare. MedZilla databases contain about 10,000 open positions, 13,000 resumes from candidates actively seeking new positions and 71,000 archived resumes.

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