

# Talent Acquisition in a Tight Market

## PRO STAFF

The questions haunting many companies today are, “What talent acquisition strategies do I need now and in the future to reach both active and passive job seekers? What are the practices in place within successful recruiting organizations that can help me improve my company’s recruitment planning process?”

### Effective Recruitment

In today’s employment economy, competition for top talent is fierce. Most importantly, the majority of your potential candidates are already working. This adds complexity to your sourcing strategy, as there is not only a shortage of available workers, but in some industries, the qualified candidates are impossible to reach through traditional means.

Recruiting tactics and sources differ depending on whether you are targeting active or passive job seekers. Passive seekers are best reached through referrals, database mining, competitive intelligence, niche web sites, associations and peer-to-peer networking. This is a sharp contrast to effective recruiting sources for active job seekers - job boards, print advertising, job fairs, radio advertising, company career sites and resume database searches. You need a plan that reaches both active and passive candidates.

### Passive Versus Active, What’s the Difference?

Passive job seekers are those star performers working for your competition. They are usually not interested in spending large amounts of time entertaining new opportunities. The primary difference, other than a longer time to hire, is the necessity for your recruiters to be able to marry what’s meaningful to the candidate with the benefits and culture of your organization. Your company must position itself as the ideal choice for the passive candidate.

Active job seekers are easier to find and often apply for positions directly. Their time to hire period is much shorter and they are usually quite enthusiastic to comply to interview schedules and assessment processes. These

candidates sell their personal value to you, rather than the other way around.

### Path of Least Resistance?

While it is often easier to stick to traditional recruiting sources and screening processes that draw active candidates, this is not always the best strategy. Companies need a blended plan with tactics that reach both the active and passive job seekers.

### Create a Recruiting Plan

To lay the groundwork for your talent acquisition strategy you need a plan. What are your objectives? What are your needs for the coming year? How do turnover and attrition impact your needs to source, screen and bring candidates to the table over the next 12 months? Consider the current labor market, competition for talent, specific skill sets needed, and availability of candidates within those skill sets. After you have clearly defined goals you can determine which recruiting sources will reach your ideal candidates and in what timeframe.

Successful recruiters will clearly communicate their recruiting plan to all involved parties, ensure all messaging is clear and consistent, explain the various approaches for each target, determine appropriate follow-up for each phase, set a timeline for execution, and assign accountability for each step.

### Best Practices - Networking and Associations

Successful recruiting organizations know that access to peer-to-peer networking groups, as well as active participation, is a company-wide responsibility. Contacts for industry-specific associations need to come from those internal associates in similar positions to those for which you are recruiting. Who are your employees meeting? Could the next trade show or seminar put you in touch with an “in-demand” candidate?

### Best Practices - Referral Programs

Provide meaningful incentives for employees who share job opportunities by

creating a customized referral program that allows the referring employee to choose the reward. For some, it may be extra time off; others may be more attracted to monetary bonuses or charitable contributions in their name. In addition, expanding your referral program to include incentives for vendors, customers, and family members will increase your recruitment network and provide access to valuable passive candidates.

### Best Practices - Retention Programs that Sell Your Organization

Attract candidates by including your retention practices in your recruitment messages. What are the intangible advantages of the job or your organization as a whole? Obvious benefits aside, think about professional development incentives, volunteer opportunities, technology, affinity programs, and mentoring as potential perks for passive job seekers. Create a picture of your culture and the value placed on employees.

### Finding the Balance

To implement a successful talent acquisition strategy it takes an understanding of who you need to attract and a recruitment plan to bring those candidates to the table. It may be as simple as maximizing your existing recruitment efforts by adding a few new “best practices.” However, the complexity of the talent acquisition process can be overwhelming and tedious. Professional staffing services and strategic partners such as Pro Staff Talent Management Services can do the work for you by using successful talent acquisition strategies in recruiting plans and then implementing the process.

Looking forward, do you have the resources to meet your future hiring needs? Are your current recruitment processes successfully reaching both active and passive job seekers? Take the time today to ensure you have a sound plan, a proactive approach to hiring and continuous communication to prospective candidates.