RECRUITING AND ATTRACTING
TALENT

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING

AND MANAGING THE

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

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James A. Breaugh, Ph.D.

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FOREWORD

Dear Colleague:

In 2004, the SHRM Foundation developed one of the best resources available for busy HR professionals like you. Recognizing that you have little time to keep up with results of academic research—and, let's face it, some of it is challenging to wade through as well—we created the Effective Practice Guidelines series. This series integrates the latest research findings and expert opinion on how to conduct effective HR practice into a very accessible publication.

The goal of the series is to help you in your role as an HR professional by letting you know which HR practices have been shown by research to be effective. With that goal in mind, the SHRM Foundation publishes new reports annually on different HR topics. Recent reports—all available online—include *Developing Leadership Talent, Retaining Talent, Human Resource Strategy* and *Learning System Design.* You are now reading the ninth report in the series: *Recruiting and Attracting Talent.*

For each report, a subject matter expert is chosen to be the author. After the initial draft is written, the report is reviewed by both academics and practitioners to ensure that the material is research-based, comprehensive and presented in an easy-to-use format. We also include a "Sources and Suggested Readings" section as a convenient reference tool.

Our vision for the SHRM Foundation is to "maximize the impact of the HR profession on organizational decision-making and performance by promoting innovation, education, research and the use of research-based knowledge." The Foundation is also strategically focused on initiatives designed to help organizations maximize leadership talent. We are confident that the Effective Practice Guidelines series takes us one step closer to making our vision a reality. Feel free to let us know how we are doing!

Mary A. Gowan

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Over the years, Professor Breaugh has conducted research on the topics of employee recruitment, selection, work-family balance, turnover and job design. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management, Organizational Research Methods, Personnel Psychology, Human Resource Management Review* and *Academy of Management Review*. His research contributions have resulted in his being voted to fellowship status in three professional organizations.

Among the organizations that Dr. Breaugh has consulted with are Anheuser-Busch, Monsanto Express Scripts, AT&T, Laclede Gas Company, Busch Entertainment Corporation, Farm Credit Banks, the Visiting Nurses Association and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. His consulting work has involved developing realistic job previews, creating selection systems, instituting 360-degree feedback programs, evaluating recruitment strategies, conducting attitude surveys and validating testing programs.

The thoughtful development of a recruitment strategy is critical to maximizing the value of your recruitment activities.

RECRUITING AND ATTRACTING TALENT: A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Hiring talented individuals is critical to an organization's success. But in order to hire the most talented, you must first recruit them. Recruiting employees can be a challenging task. Even in a recession, it can be difficult to fill certain types of jobs,[1] so recruiters have to make important decisions, including whom to target, what message to convey and how to staff recruitment efforts. If not done correctly, an organization's recruitment efforts can produce job applicants who are unqualified, who lack diversity or who may decline job offers. These same applicants may be prone to turnover if hired. A poorly designed recruitment process can miss attractive job candidates—including those who work for competitors—because they never find out that a position is open.

This report presents an effective model for the recruitment process. It offers specific recommendations based on peer-reviewed research and covers interrelated topics, including:

- Identifying who should be recruited.

- Reaching targeted individuals.

- Determining the best timing for recruitment.

- Designing a recruitment message.

- Planning an organizational site visit.

- Evaluating past recruitment efforts.

- Managing the entire recruitment operation.

In order to provide detailed coverage, this report focuses only on external recruitment. *External recruitment* includes the actions intended to bring a job opening to the attention of potential candidates outside the organization and to influence whether these candidates apply, maintain interest and, in the end, accept a job offer.[2] Primary emphasis is on activities under the control of an HR department charged with recruiting new employees.

Figure 1: A Model of the Employee Recruitment Process

```
Establish          →    Develop a              →    Carry Out              →    Evaluate
Recruitment             Recruitment Strategy        Recruitment Activities       Recruitment Results
Objectives
```
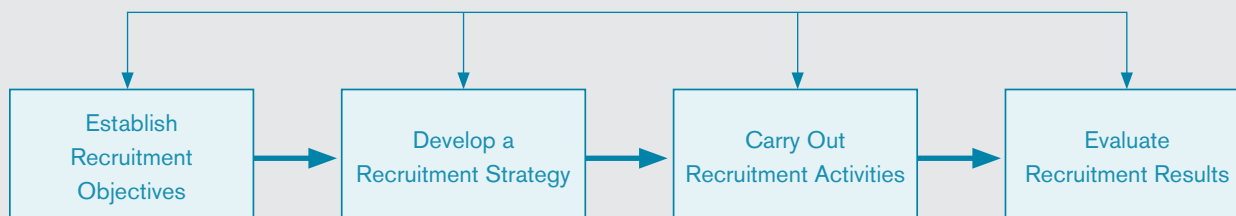
A MODEL OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

What does a model recruitment process look like? By carefully adhering to the steps outlined in Figure 1 and making informed decisions along the way, an employer usually can improve recruitment. Each step is explained in detail below.

Establish Recruitment Objectives. The first step in your recruitment process should be establishing objectives. Table 1 lists several possible objectives to consider in planning a recruitment campaign. For example, if your organization wants to fill three job openings for customer service representatives, you might decide that one objective is a 45-day time frame for filling these positions. One of your most important decisions will be establishing what types of applicants you are seeking—specifically, what type of work experience and skills you are looking for. Most employers focus on pre-hire outcomes, such as whether open positions were filled in a timely manner, but increasingly some also give attention to post-hire outcomes, such as the initial job performance of new hires and their retention rate.

In establishing recruitment objectives, HR professionals should make sure to *seek input from others* who may have valuable insight to contribute. For example, an HR manager in charge of employee selection may have information to share about the skills that should be targeted. You should also seek input from functional managers who will be working with newly hired employees. These managers will have specific information about each job that should be communicated to applicants. By getting input from outside the HR department, you will have additional information to improve the recruitment process, and you will also develop allies who will support the actions taken by HR during the process.

An organization's *employment brand* can help recruit employees—so use it. As explained in SHRM's Spring 2008 *Staffing Research*, titled "The Employer Brand: A Strategic Tool to Attract, Recruit, and Retain Talent,"[3] an organization's brand is "how the organization wants prospective

Table 1: Establishing Recruitment Objectives

- Number of open positions to be filled.
- Date by which positions should be filled.
- Number of applications desired.
- Type of applicants sought:
    - Level of education.
    - Knowledge, skills and abilities.
    - Interests and values.
    - Diversity.
- Job performance goals for new hires.
- Expected new-hire retention rate.

and current employees to see the company" and should be considered in establishing the values you're seeking in recruits—values that match those of your organization. But to use your employment brand effectively, it must be authentic. If it lacks authenticity, new hires are likely to feel deceived, creating morale problems and new employee turnover.[4] In addition to describing accurately what employment with your firm means, it is also critical that the brand be visible to prospective recruits.

There are several strategies for communicating your employer brand: highlight the brand on your web site, describe it in recruitment literature or sponsor college campus events.[5] You may also influence a recruit's view of your brand by the way you treat prospective employees during the application process and interviews. Figure 2 suggests—based on reports from HR managers[6]—that use of the employer brand can be quite beneficial.

Much of what has been written on employer branding concerns large organizations, such as New Zealand's Warehouse Group, a large retailer that uses its web site to publicize its brand, "Start here. Go anywhere." However, as shown in Exhibit 1, small organizations can also benefit from using an employer brand to recruit.[7]

Figure 2: Recruitment Outcomes Resulting From Effectively Communicating an Employment Brand

Recruitment Brand

Accurately Stated

Effectively Publicized

Recruitment Outcomes

- Hiring the right people.
- A greater number of qualified applicants.
- Reputation as an employer of choice.
- Increased number of referrals of qualified candidates.
- Lower turnover.
- Increased number of diverse candidates.
- Higher job candidate job offer acceptance rate.
- Open positions filled more rapidly.

Source: Society for Human Resource Management. (2008, April-June). The employer brand: A strategic tool to attract, recruit and retain talent. *SHRM Staffing Research*, 2.

Exhibit 1: Selling Employee Passion at SFM

SFM is a Minnesota-based provider of workers' compensation insurance. Although it has only 190 employees, the firm has competed successfully against much larger organizations in hiring claims adjusters, underwriters and other specialists. According to Jody Rogers, SFM's HR administrator, using its employment brand— "Employees are the heart of our success"—has been a key to the company's recruitment efforts. In recruiting, SFM emphasizes that its employees are passionate about their jobs and about working for SFM. In order to compete with larger organizations, SFM highlights positive features of the workplace—for example, employees at SFM are cross-trained so they can work on a variety of tasks, unlike larger organizations, where a new hire typically works in a narrowly defined job. SFM's small size creates a collegial work atmosphere where it is easier to get to know people. The firm's small size also allows a single individual to make an important difference. And SFM highlights its high retention rate as evidence that it is a great place to work. Furthermore, in order to have confidence that the employment brand it publicizes on its web site, at job fairs and at campus speaking engagements is accurate, SFM conducts internal focus groups and periodically surveys customers.

Source: Kiger, P. J. 2007. Burnishing your employment brand. *Workforce Management*, October 22, pp. 1-8.
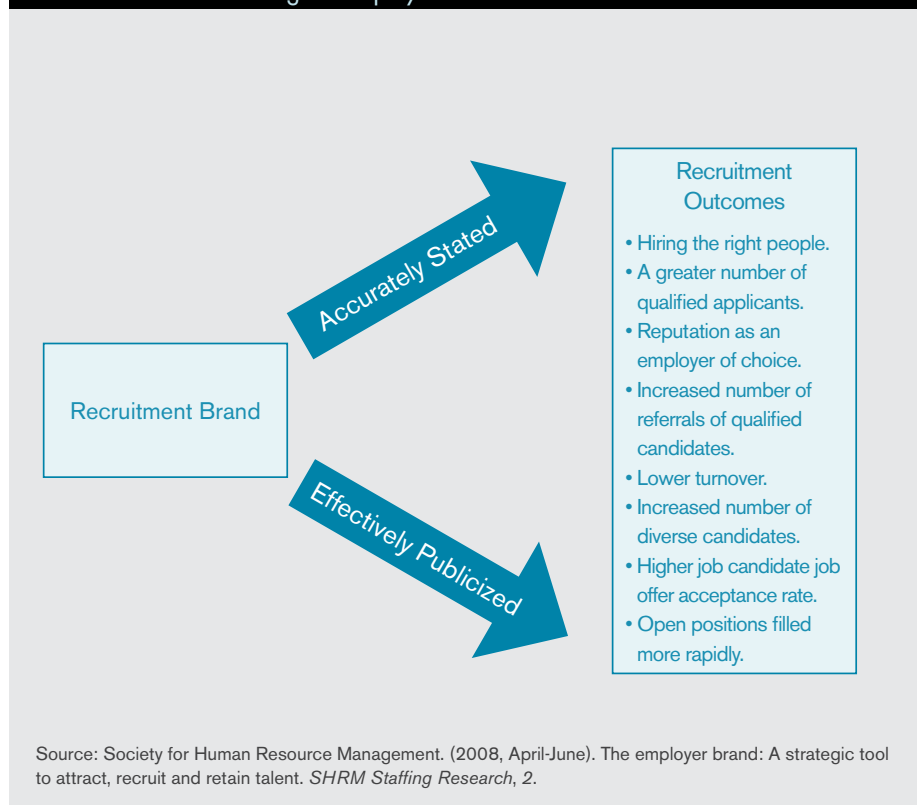
Develop a Recruitment Strategy. Having established clear recruitment objectives, you should next develop a coherent strategy for recruiting individuals to fill job openings. This strategy development phase involves establishing *a specific plan of action* for attaining recruitment objectives. Table 2 details some of the questions your organization might address in developing a recruitment strategy.

In order to answer these questions, it is likely that your organization will need to do some research, and it may be useful to view things in terms of *a talent acquisition supply chain*. The use of the supply chain concept makes sense given that various recruitment decisions will influence such variables as the number and quality of applicants, when they are available, and how they perform if hired.

Researchers use the supply chain concept to discuss how individual recruitment decisions relate to a prospective job candidate's view of the whole process.[8] Among the questions they address are:

- Will a person feel the organization is interested in him or her?

- Does the recruitment message directly address why a person should apply?

- Is the recruitment message believable?

Studies note that many of the tag lines used to convey an employer brand (such as "Join our Team," "Small Company Environment—Big Company Impact," "Imagine Growing Together") will be seen by job applicants as so generic that they will not differentiate an employer from competitors. Researchers also raise questions about the credibility of such tag lines.

Carry Out Recruitment Activities. The thoughtful development of a recruitment strategy is critical to maximizing the value of your recruitment activities. The next step is to carry out the recruitment activities, such as advertising on CareerBuilder, hosting receptions on university campuses—whatever works for your chosen strategy. Details about recruitment activities will be discussed in a later section.

Measure and Evaluate Recruitment Results. Most recruitment managers are concerned about whether their activities result in outcomes that meet their original objectives, but unfortunately, many organizations do not formally evaluate recruitment efforts.[9] In some cases, this is because employers have not gathered data on important recruitment metrics.[10] In other cases, organizations are overwhelmed with the amount of data gathered. Regardless of the reason, this lack of formal evaluation means employers aren't able to learn from past efforts to design future campaigns.

When evaluating its recruitment process, your organization should have two major goals. First, HR usually wants information on recruitment outcomes similar to those in Table 3, so that staff can learn from past efforts and modify recruiting methods in the future, if needed. The feedback arrows in Figure 1 reflect this learning process. Second, HR will want to demonstrate to functional managers that what it is doing is valuable for the organization.[11]

Phillip Morris and PricewaterhouseCoopers are examples of *employers that conduct rigorous evaluations* of their recruitment efforts. Along with other metrics, these companies have gathered data on universities that typically have yielded the most hires, employees who received the strongest performance reviews and new hires who stayed with the organization the longest.[12] Based on this information, these firms have increased recruiting at some schools and dropped others from their recruitment rosters.

Table 2: Key Strategy Development Questions
• What type of individuals should be targeted?
• Where can these people be found?
• When should the recruitment campaign begin?
• How can the targeted individuals best be reached?
• What recruitment message should be communicated?
• What type of recruiters should be used?
• What should be the nature of a site visit?
• What should a job offer entail?

Table 3: Important Recruitment Metrics

- Time-to-hire.
- Cost of filling the position.
- New employee retention rate.
- New employee performance level.
- Hiring manager's satisfaction with the recruitment process.
- Applicants' perceptions of the recruitment process.

Source: Minton-Eversole, T. (2009). Quality measurement: Key to best-in-class talent acquisition. *HR Magazine*, pp 64-65.

Having a computerized a*pplicant tracking system* obviously makes it simpler for an organization to make sense of the recruitment metrics it has gathered. However, even small organizations that cannot afford a computerized system can benefit from gathering and analyzing data on recruitment results. For example, by simply evaluating which sources (job boards, newspaper ads, job fairs) produce the most applicants, an employer may be able to reduce recruitment costs.

In order to thoroughly evaluate your recruitment process, you should go beyond the HR data that are easily gathered. Recent reports have documented the value of *gathering data using nontraditional means,* such as creating phantom applicants who apply for jobs.[13] These "applicants" can provide information about whether an employment web site was simple to navigate, provided useful information and made it easy to submit a resume.

Retaining a consulting firm to evaluate a recruitment process can be expensive. But most organizations—regardless of their size and resources—can improve their current recruitment practices and learn from past mistakes by being more creative in evaluating recruitment activities. For example, your organization could gather information from newly hired employees—or even applicants who were not hired. If you are having difficulty attracting applicants, you could try to contact those who were aware of openings but did not apply.

From the preceding discussion, it should be apparent that there are numerous ways any organization can evaluate its recruitment process. What also should be apparent is that a rigorous evaluation of the process will provide valuable information for a recruitment manager. Figure 3 provides examples of how a thorough evaluation might work.

THE JOB APPLICANT'S PERSPECTIVE

This report focuses primarily on the recruitment process from an employer's perspective, but in order to recruit effectively, you also need to be sensitive to the job applicant's perspective. Table 4 lists a number of job applicant-
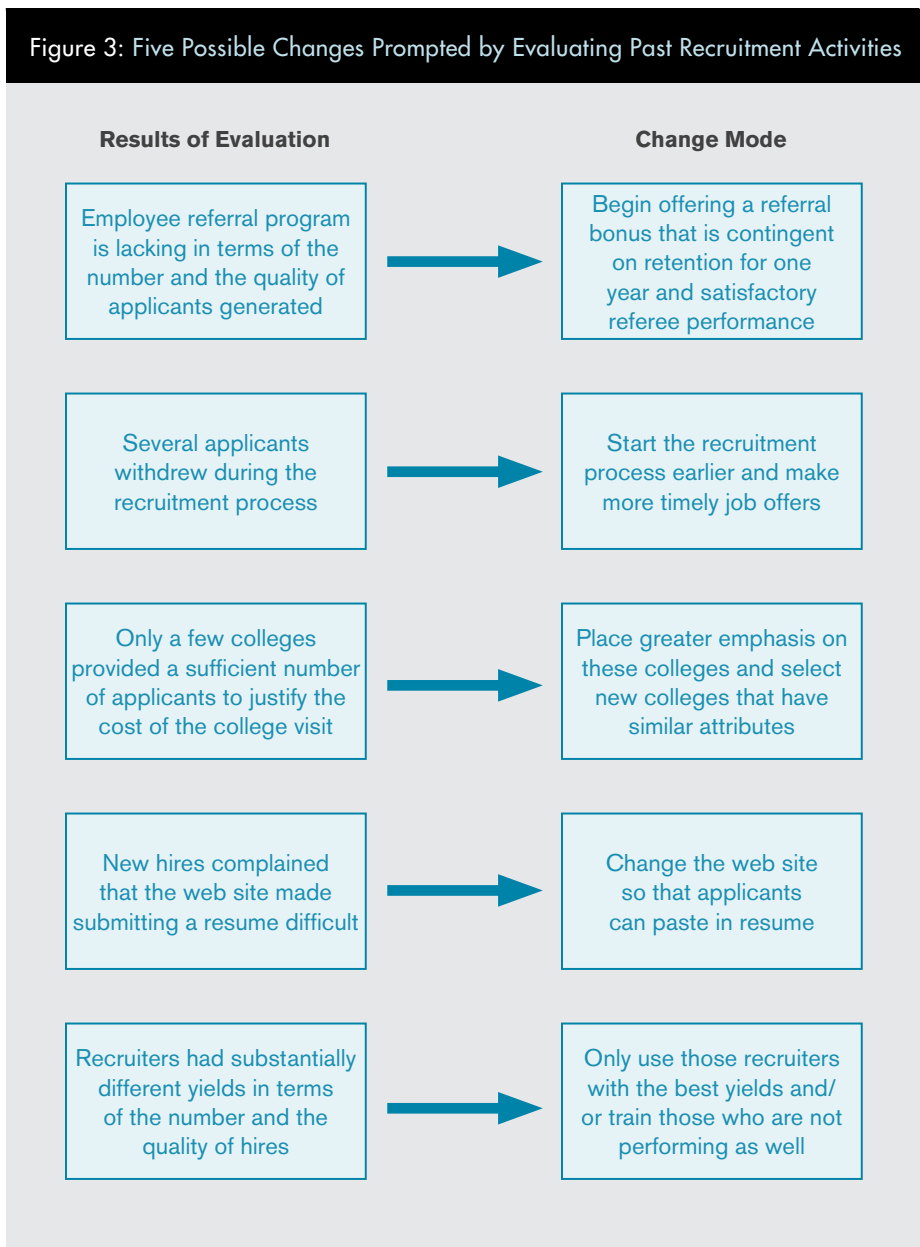
related variables that deserve attention. These variables will be mentioned in addressing specific recruitment topics later in this report.

Attracting the Attention of Targeted Individuals. Attracting the attention of the people you want to recruit is vital to the success of a recruitment campaign. But attracting attention can be difficult, because you may not know how to reach some of the people—including those working for competitors—that you want to contact. And even if you do reach the individuals you are seeking (perhaps by sending information about the opening to their homes), they may not pay attention to the recruitment message. You may need to follow the lead of organizations that have shown considerable creativity in bringing job openings to the attention of those targeted for recruitment, such as placing ads on billboards, in subways and other public spaces.[14]

Generating Individual Interest in a Job Opening. Having brought a job opening to the attention of targeted individuals, your organization needs to interest them in the position enough so that they submit job applications. There are two key variables that can influence a prospective recruit's interest in a job opening. The first of these, position attractiveness, needs little discussion. Such variables as job duties, prospective co-workers, advancement opportunity, compensation, benefits and geographic location are related to position attractiveness.[15] The relative impact of any of these variables in generating interest in a job opening depends upon the type of individual being recruited. Ideally, you will target people who are likely to be

Figure 3: Five Possible Changes Prompted by Evaluating Past Recruitment Activities

Results of Evaluation — **Change Mode**

Employee referral program is lacking in terms of the number and the quality of applicants generated → Begin offering a referral bonus that is contingent on retention for one year and satisfactory referee performance

Several applicants withdrew during the recruitment process → Start the recruitment process earlier and make more timely job offers

Only a few colleges provided a sufficient number of applicants to justify the cost of the college visit → Place greater emphasis on these colleges and select new colleges that have similar attributes

New hires complained that the web site made submitting a resume difficult → Change the web site so that applicants can paste in resume

Recruiters had substantially different yields in terms of the number and the quality of hires → Only use those recruiters with the best yields and/ or train those who are not performing as well

attracted to what you are offering. For example, older employees may attach less importance to advancement opportunity and more importance to job security. In considering what information to highlight about a job opening, try to be sensitive to current conditions. So, although people in so-called Generation Y have tended to have shorter tenure with employers, based upon the Internal Revenue Service's experience at a recent job fair, this generation may now be attaching more importance to job stability.[16]

A second variable that is likely to affect a prospective job candidate's interest in a job opening is his or her

Table 4: Job Applicant-Related Variables That Affect the Recruitment Process

• Attracting the attention of targeted individuals.
• Generating individual interest in a job opening:
   – Position attractiveness.
   – Expectation of a job offer.
• Accuracy of the applicant's position expectations.
• The applicant decision-making process:
   – The decision to apply.
   – The decision to remain a candidate during the entire recruitment process.
   – The decision to accept a job offer if one is extended.

expectation of receiving a job offer. Not surprisingly, researchers have found that people who perceive a greater likelihood of receiving a job offer have greater interest in a job opening.[17] But this variable should not be viewed in isolation. If a position is seen as particularly desirable, some individuals may apply even if the likelihood of a job offer is small.

Accuracy of Applicant's Position Expectations.
In order to generate a large applicant pool and ultimately increase the likelihood that job offers are accepted, some organizations make job openings appear as attractive as possible.[18] But this recruitment approach can result in problems. For example, as they become better informed as the recruitment process unfolds, recruits who were initially interested may withdraw after your organization has expended considerable time and money. Alternatively, some recruits with unrealistically positive job expectations may not become aware of what things really are like until they

are hired and begin working—and these individuals are more likely to quit their jobs than new hires with realistic job expectations.[19] Instead of inflating job expectations, you should increase their accuracy. Later in this report, two different approaches- targeting certain types of individuals for recruitment and providing realistic job information during the recruitment process- are discussed.

The Applicant Decision-Making Process.
During the recruitment process, a prospective job candidate is actively making many decisions, including the first—whether to apply for a position. Besides the attractiveness of the opening and a person's expectation of a job offer, other factors will have an effect, including the ease with which one can apply for a position. For example, is it possible to paste in a resume on a web site or do applicants have to fill in a resume template?

Another decision a prospective new hire makes is whether to remain a job candidate. During the course of

Exhibit 2: Job Candidates' Comments on How Organizational Actions Affected Them

- "They called me regularly to see if I had any questions. That showed they were really interested in me."

- "My mom was ill and I had to cancel a site visit. They sent a huge bouquet of flowers…they made me feel important."

- "Consciously, the recruiter doesn't matter, but I'm sure that subconsciously it does. If a person makes you feel more comfortable, then you'll feel more comfortable about the job."

- "I assumed I was going to get a ding letter, which usually happens when you don't hear from a company within a few weeks. So I started to look at other options, and I didn't take that company as a serious option."

- "…and I thought to myself, if this is the way that they treat you when they are recruiting you, how are they going to treat you once you're an employee?"

- "In explaining the terms of their job offer, [the company] said that they do not have to pay higher because there are five people waiting in line behind me to take the job. Basically, they told me I'm dispensable."

- "I generalize a lot about the company from their representative. If that person is not very sharp, does not seem particularly interested in me, or asks the same questions as every other recruiter, it does not impress me."

- "I think a lot of people look at recruiting practices as reflective of the company, and in many cases that's absolutely accurate. Despite the fact that other factors matter, people do make choices based on how they're treated."

Sources: Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V., LePine, M. A., & Moynihan, L. M. 2003. Individual job-choice decisions and the impact of job attributes and recruitment practices. *Human Resource Management,* 42, 23-37. Rynes, S. L., Bretz, R. D., & Gerhart, B. 1991. The importance of recruitment in job choice: A different way of looking. *Personnel Psychology,* 44, 487-521.

the recruitment process, applicants' perceptions often change. A person who thought he or she was likely to receive a job offer may conclude this is unlikely if an organization does not make contact in a timely fashion after a phone interview. Similarly, an organization that was initially viewed as a backup option may be viewed more positively after an applicant's visit to corporate headquarters. Exhibit 2 provides quotes from job seekers whose perceptions changed during the recruitment process for a variety of reasons.[20]

The final major decision a job candidate makes is whether to accept a job offer. Clearly, the attractiveness of a position is a major determinant, but other factors can also play a role. For example, the time frame for accepting an offer can be important, because often a person may not want to make a decision until he or she has heard from other employers. Sometimes a job candidate's treatment during the process signals to the recruit that he or she was not the first choice, which may make the job opening less attractive.

Figure 4 presents a model of how a job applicant's view of the recruitment process can unfold over time. At each stage, the applicant's decision-making process is influenced by his or her perception of the position's attractiveness, the likelihood of receiving a job offer, a sense of how well he or she fits the advertised position and whether the time frame for filling the position meets his or her needs. These perceptions will change over time, depending upon new information. After researching an organization thoroughly after a campus interview, for example, an applicant may view an organization more positively. Or, having not heard from an organization for a long time after an interview, a recruit may believe that he or she now has less chance of receiving a job offer.

After this short review of the job applicant's point of view, you should see several factors to consider in planning the recruitment process. You may be thinking, for instance, of how you can shorten the recruitment process. The next issues for discussion are specific recruitment topics from the employer's point of view.

Figure 4: Applicant's View of the Recruitment Process

- Position Attributes (e.g., job, organization, community) Not Sufficient Value
- Low Expectancy of Job Offer (not applicable for job offer stage)
- Sense of Person-Job/Organizational Fit
- Time Frame Not Suitable (e.g., position will not be filled soon enough)

No → No → No → No

Employer's Recruitment Action(s) Generate Interest in Job Opening → Yes → Individual Applies for Position → Yes → Site Visit Invitation Accepted → Yes → Job Offer Accepted

WHOM TO RECRUIT? THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF TARGETED RECRUITMENT

In planning a recruitment process, the most important question is, of course, whom should you recruit? How you answer this question will affect:

- How your organization publicizes a position. (If you are looking to hire seniors, you should recognize that they may be less likely to use job boards.)

- What recruitment message you are communicating. (When recruiting your former employees, you do not need to provide much information about the organization.)

- Who your recruiters are. (When targeting college seniors, you should remember that they will want to meet recent hires who attended their university.)

If your organization does not directly address the people you want to target, it runs the risk of missing the very individuals who would make the most desirable employees, including so-called passive job seekers—those not currently looking for a new position.

Unfortunately, there is little academic research that addresses the topic of targeted recruitment.[21] But practitioner reports and recent discussions of this topic do prompt a few good recommendations. Typically, your organization probably focuses on skills, experience, education and other work-related attributes of those you want to hire. Such a narrow focus is understandable, but you—and most employers—would benefit from broadening the factors considered. Why not also consider what types of individuals are likely to be attracted to particular job offers and have values that would fit into your culture.

Position Insight and Self-Insight. No one wants to hire individuals who are not a good fit, either in their skills or their expectations of rewards. Two interesting factors to consider are a job candidate's understanding of what a position entails, or *position insight*, and a candidate's awareness of his or her own talents and interests, or *self-insight*. To maximize both, it makes sense to focus recruitment carefully.[22] Table 5 illustrates that rehiring former employees is likely to result in new hires with the best position insight and self-insight. Former employees have the added advantages of generally needing less transition time to perform acceptably, needing less training, being less likely to quit and sending a message to current employees that this is a good place to work.[23]

Because of firsthand experience doing the job and/or working for the organization, others who are likely to have considerable insight are former interns, temporary workers and those who have worked in similar jobs for other employers. Recruits who have family members or friends who work for the organization also should have greater insight into the workings of a firm than people who lack such a connection.

Factoring in Geography. A factor that has received too little attention is the *geographic location* of a job. RightNow Technologies, a 700-person employer located in Bozeman, Mont., is a good example of an employer that had to address this issue.[24] RightNow had "tapped out the local supply of talent," but it needed more marketing professionals and software engineers to grow. RightNow first tried placing job advertisements in major cities in the western United States. When this

Table 5: The Benefits of Targeting Specific Types of Individuals for Recruitment

	Position Insight		Self-Insight	
	Job Tasks	*Organization*	*Talents*	*Wants/Interests*
Former employee	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Intern	Good	Good	Good	Good
Temporary employee	Good	Good	Good	Good
Family member	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
Similar prior job	Good	Minimal	Fair	Fair
Note: Rankings are relative within a column.				

strategy failed, executives decided they might have more success in attracting former Montana residents to return home. So RightNow purchased a list of alumni from Montana State University. Targeting former Montana residents proved so successful that six other Montana firms followed RightNow's lead, using lists of Montana State University alumni to fill job openings.

Another geographical factor that could influence any organization's decisions about targeted recruitment is the unemployment rate. The city of Denver was having a difficult time filling job openings in its police department. When it heard that the Detroit police had announced layoffs, Denver immediately sent recruiters to Detroit to administer its police exam.[25] Similarly, when Dallas was having difficulty finding police recruits, despite the fact that it paid considerably better than the New York City police department, Dallas began recruiting NYC police.

Aiming for Seniors. Seniors have drawn considerable attention from many organizations, including Wal-

Mart, Home Depot and Borders. Two commonly raised concerns about hiring seniors are absenteeism and higher medical costs. As described in Exhibit 3, these concerns appear to lack substance in some cases. In fact, some data suggest that hiring seniors can result in lower

recruitment costs, lower training costs and better retention rates.[26]

If you decide to target seniors in your recruitment efforts, be sure to consider exactly how you will bring openings to their attention. Although online sites

Exhibit 3: Borders' Experience With Hiring Seniors

In the late 1990s, Borders recognized that a sizable segment of its clientele was individuals over the age of 50. In order to reach out to these customers and differentiate itself from online book sellers, Borders decided to target seniors for recruitment. As of 2005, 16 percent of Borders' workforce was over the age of 50—up from 6 percent in 1998, when the company started targeting seniors in its recruitment efforts. Initially, the company was concerned that this group might have higher medical costs and absenteeism rates. Almost a decade of experience has shown these to be unfounded concerns. Rather, Borders has found that hiring seniors has several advantages. For example, it has found that seniors are less expensive to recruit and train and that they perform at a higher level. With regard to retention, Borders found the turnover rate for seniors to be 10 times less than the rate for those under 30. In order to help it attract and retain seniors, Borders offers a "corporate passport program" that allows seniors to work half of the year in one part of the country and the other half at a store in a different part of the country.

Sources: Freudenheim, M. (2005, March 23). More help wanted: Older workers please apply. *New York Times*, p. A1. Marquez, J. (2005, May). Novel ideas at Borders lure older workers. *Workforce Management*, p. 28.

geared to seniors, such as YourEncore.com, have begun to appear, these may not be the best option. Instead, you might consider working with AARP or other senior-oriented groups, visiting senior-oriented community centers or posting job notices in retirement communities.

Although this report cannot address every variable, the preceding discussion should enable you to make decisions about how your organization can benefit from targeting certain types of people for recruitment.

RECRUITMENT METHODS: HOW TO REACH TARGETED EMPLOYEES

Employers have an almost endless array of methods available for publicizing job openings. The city of Boston has even used billboards to publicize openings in its police department.[27] Given the wealth of information available on this topic in print and on the web, this report focuses on just six major recruitment options: *employee referrals, the organization web site, job boards, social networks, college recruitment,* and a collection of *unusual methods.*

Employee Referrals. In surveys, employee referrals are rated as one of the most commonly used and best methods.[28] Research suggests that using current employees as a source for job candidates is effective for four major reasons:[29]
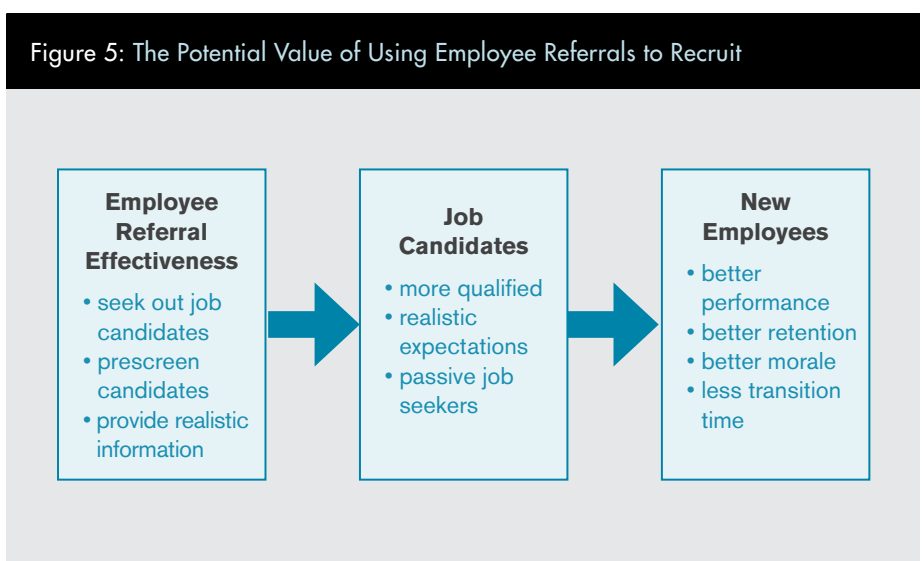
- Current employees value their reputation, so they will only refer individuals they believe would make good employees. This is, in effect, a form of prescreening.

- Current employees are likely to provide those they refer with realistic information about the job, so the prospective applicants will make more informed decisions about whether the position is a good fit.

- Current employees are likely to help the person they referred master the new job once he or she is hired.

- Referrals from current employees are an especially effective way to bring job openings to the attention of people who are not actively looking for a job, but do possess desirable skills, work experience and a work ethic.

Compared with those recruited by other methods, applicants generated by employee referrals tend to have better job qualifications and make better employees—performing better and remaining longer. Even when bonuses are paid for successful referrals, the use of an employee referral program

generally is *less costly* than the use of other methods. For example, MasterCard found that its employee referral program, which pays bonuses up to $3,000, "pays for itself nearly ten fold in terms of the savings in recruitment and retention costs."[30] Figure 5 shows how the use of employee referrals can result in better candidates and better new hires.

However, the use of employee referrals is not a panacea. For maximum benefit, the employee making the referral must be committed to the organization and have sound knowledge of what the job opening involves. So referrals made by people who work in the department with the job opening provide more accurate job information. Another issue you should consider is the diversity of your current workforce, given that a nondiverse workforce tends not to bring job openings to the attention minorities and women. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will look carefully at the diversity of the applicant pool

Figure 5: The Potential Value of Using Employee Referrals to Recruit

Employee Referral Effectiveness
- seek out job candidates
- prescreen candidates
- provide realistic information

Job Candidates
- more qualified
- realistic expectations
- passive job seekers

New Employees
- better performance
- better retention
- better morale
- less transition time

generated by relying on an employee referral program.[31]

Organizational Web Sites. Employers are increasingly using their web sites as a method for recruiting, so it is not surprising that there is considerable research and several practitioner-oriented articles[32] on this topic. In theory, a web site is an inexpensive way to convey considerable information about a job opening. However, before relying too heavily on your web site, you should be confident that this approach will reach the people you want to reach. For example, a small, less visible organization may find that exclusive reliance on a web site will not generate enough applicants. In some cases, an organization may need another tactic, such as a radio ad, to steer people to its web site, or another method entirely. On the other hand, some organizations, such as Southwest Airlines, receive thousands of resumes through their web sites every month.

Keep in mind that there are certain highly desirable web site elements for recruitment (which does not mean that most sites have them).[33] A site should:

- Grab the viewer's attention with effective use of color and an uncluttered design.

- Be easy to navigate with a few clicks.

- Include information important to job candidates, such as duties and location.

- Provide an easy way to post a resume.

- Notify applicants that their resume has been received.

- Explain the next step in the hiring process.

Some organizations have incorporated videos into their web sites, offering a tour of the workplace or presenting a vignette designed to convey "a day in the life" of the firm.

One other important issue in terms of any web site is *whether it is viewed as credible*. Few web sites present negative information about working for an organization, so it is not surprising that visitors sometimes question the veracity of the information. To improve the credibility of your web site, consider noting awards received from external sources, such as "rated a top 100 employer by *Fortune* magazine," providing e-mail addresses or phone numbers for current employees and offering some factual information that may be viewed as negative, such as the high cost of living in your area or harsh winter weather. Although presenting negative information may seem extreme, if it is factual, applicants will eventually find out about it anyway.

Regardless of how carefully your organization designs a web site, *it should be pilot-tested before making it available to the public*. This will let you know whether the site is simple to navigate and whether a resume is easy to submit. Testing is not just for new web sites. An existing web site should be periodically evaluated for outdated information. Any easy approach to such an evaluation is to seek the opinions of newly hired employees.

Job Boards. Many organizations rely heavily on job boards such as CareerBuilder.[34] Many types of job boards exist, but most can be categorized in terms of:

- Geographic focus (local vs. nationwide).

- Specificity (general vs. industry- or position-specific).

- Salary level (open vs. minimum salary).

Each type has advantages and disadvantages. For example, a common complaint about general job boards is that they tend to generate too many potential job candidates, some of whom are unqualified or no longer on the market. In contrast, if you use a local job board, candidates outside the geographic area are likely to be eliminated, reducing the pool of resumes to be screened. By using an industry- or position-specific job board, such as JobsInLogistics.com, it is more likely that job candidates will have industry experience and skills, as well as a better understanding of what a job in the industry entails. In a similar vein, by using a job board that sets a salary minimum, such as TheLadders.com (for jobs paying $100,000 or more), your organization is more likely to locate candidates qualified for higher-level positions.

Although little research has been conducted on the use of job boards, two recent studies are helpful. One study focused on the wording of job advertisements that had been placed on Monster.com in the spring of 2002.[35] Most ads were found to be extremely positive in nature, but failed to provide information that would help an employer differentiate itself from other organizations. For example, only 41 percent of the ads mentioned compensation or benefits, and when noted, it was in the most general terms. The second study[36] examined differences in the applicants generated by general job boards and industry- or position-specific job boards. Applicants

generated from industry- or position-specific boards were found to have a higher level of skill, better educational credentials, but less work experience.

Of course, no one type of job board fits all situations. A recruitment manager should consider the pros and cons of each type of job board and determine if its use will be beneficial. In conducting such an evaluation, consider the likelihood of reaching targeted candidates, the likelihood of generating interest in the job opening and the relative cost-per-hire of using different types of job boards.

Social Networks. Although not widely used yet, social networking sites have begun to attract attention as a means for recruiting employees. Typically, social networking involves one of two strategies.[37] In the first strategy, an employer places an advertisement on a site. For example, Verizon Communication, Inc., began experimenting with recruitment advertisements on Facebook in 2007.[38] These ads, which Facebook calls "sponsored stories," allow an organization to bring job openings to the attention of individuals, especially recent college graduates, who may not be reached as easily through other methods.

The second recruitment strategy is more targeted.[39] Some social networking sites have features that allow an employer to search for individuals who have listed qualifications, work experience or a geographic location the employer is seeking. People who appear to be good job candidates can then be contacted directly. Alternatively, an employer could use its own members

with sites on a social network such as LinkedIn to bring a job opportunity to the attention of all their contacts, who might in turn further publicize the job opening to their contacts and so on. Although research has yet to formally compare the advantages of using a social network site versus other recruitment methods, the use of such sites appears to hold considerable promise. In addition to bringing job openings to the attention of individuals who are not actively looking for a job, by using a social network site, an employer may be able to examine prospective employees' own sites to learn more about them.

College Recruiting. The topic of college recruiting has been well-addressed in several HR publications,[40] so only four issues will be discussed below: selecting campuses, creating a positive campus presence, student internship programs and the influence of recruiters.

In selecting campuses at which to recruit, you should, of course, determine whether the campus offers relevant majors and a sufficient number of students in those majors to make a campus visit worthwhile. You should also consider student quality and diversity. You may want, for example, to recruit at historically black colleges. Other factors worth considering are the number of new hires yielded from a college in past years and how these individuals performed.[41] By carefully analyzing past recruitment results, you may determine that certain colleges have a much greater payoff than others. For example, a less prestigious employer may discover that it makes more sense to recruit

at public universities whose students are not quite as selective in choosing employers.

Ideally, you should build a continuing relationship with universities that yield a good pool of applicants—this includes fostering a good relationship with the placement office, which can result in your campus interview schedule being displayed prominently. Being viewed positively by students and faculty is also important. In order to develop a strong relationship with these campus constituencies, consider interacting with student organizations, sponsoring campus events, underwriting scholarships, getting to know key faculty members, providing co-op and internship opportunities, funding equipment purchases or hosting campus receptions. All these activities will help students view your organization more positively and may create a higher quality pool of job applicants and a higher percentage of job offers being accepted.[42]

In recent years, more and more employers have viewed internship relationships with campuses as particularly beneficial.[43] An internship provides an opportunity for you to assess a student directly—including his or her interpersonal skills, dependability, intelligence and poise—over a period of time in a variety of situations. It also allows a student to get a good view of what working for your organization would be like.[44] If done well, with careful selection, fair treatment and meaningful tasks, an internship program can result in a high percentage of interns continuing on as employees.

The recruiters your organization uses can have a big impact on the effectiveness of your efforts, although this impact will be less significant if students being recruited have had internships with your organization. Of course, recruiters who are perceived as personable, knowledgeable and trustworthy will positively influence job candidates.[45]

When selecting recruiters, remember that they will be viewed by applicants as signals about your organization. For example, an enthusiastic, highly professional recruiter conveys that your firm has much to offer, whereas a poorly prepared recruiter may be seen as reflecting an organization that is not well run. As evidence of the potential impact of recruiters, in one study, 16 of 41 individuals mentioned poor treatment by recruiters as a reason for deciding that an employer they initially favored was no longer a good fit, and an identical number cited recruiters as a reason for changing their initial impression of poor fit to a positive one.[46]

Seeking Job Candidates in Unusual Ways. As already mentioned, employers can benefit from seeking out prospective job candidates who are not actively looking for a job. Focus groups revealed to Cisco that people it would like to hire spent nonwork time at art fairs, home-and-garden shows and microbreweries, so the company used this information to make informal contact with potential recruits.[47] Quicken Loans used an outreach program that involved visiting other businesses. Finding that job fairs, help-wanted advertisements and the company web site did not produce enough qualified candidates

for mortgage banker positions, Quicken Loans recruiters visited stores like Best Buy and restaurants like T.G.I. Friday's. Recruitment managers bought merchandise and ordered meals in search of individuals who stood out because of their enthusiasm and rapport with customers.[48] Cabela's, a retail chain known for hunting, fishing and camping merchandise, took another unique, aggressive approach to find job candidates. Because the firm wanted to hire people with in-depth knowledge about its products who were excited about the outdoors, it focused on its own customers as prospective employees. In the process, Cabela's found that many of its new hires were not looking for a job until the company took the initiative to recruit them.[49]

Clearly, there is no single best recruitment method. Rather, you must develop your own ideal methods by answering two questions: What characteristics are you seeking in new employees and what types of people will be attracted to what your organization has to offer? The answers should lead you toward a collection of recruitment practices that will bring you a strong set of candidates for any job.

THE TIMING OF RECRUITMENT ACTIONS

Both academic research and practitioner reports suggest that the timing of recruitment actions is important. For example, employers that interview earlier in the year on college campuses attract more and better quality applicants compared with employers that interview later.[50] And approximately 50 percent of

the students in one study turned down invitations for a site visit due to late timing.[51] Recently, the Internal Revenue Service reported that by moving up the start date of its campus recruiting, it was able to fill jobs more easily and with better-quality recruits.[52]

Good timing is important not only at the start but also during the entire recruiting process. For example, delays in responding to requests for information from recruits, setting up site visits and making job offers can have detrimental effects.[53] In one study, such delays were found to have the greatest influence on the most sought-after applicants.[54] Of course, some delays are unavoidable, but ideally you should stay in touch with all job applicants, letting them know where things stand.

THE RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

Your recruitment message, or job advertisement, can have a major impact on whether people apply for or accept jobs with your organization and whether new recruits remain after they are hired. Because of this, the topic of shaping a recruitment message has received considerable attention. This report highlights three questions about the recruitment message:

- Does the message present information *important* to your target group?

- Is the information *specific*?

- Is the information *realistic*?

Obviously, certain information in any recruitment message is essential—including details about duties, location and benefits. However, if you are

targeting certain types of people, you should be sensitive to their *unique information needs.* Many seniors apply only for part-time positions. Similarly, parents with young children may be interested in the possibility of working from home.[55] There is some evidence that blacks are more attracted to employers that portray blacks in supervisory roles in photos, but whites in the same study were not affected by the roles of employees in photos.[56] Some of the unique information needs of targeted recruits can be addressed in later stages of the process, but in some cases, potential recruits will not even apply for a position if they do not have the particular information they need, such as the option of part-time work.

Specificity is the second key dimension of the recruitment message. Even a cursory review of job advertisements and web sites demonstrates that many employers fail to provide specific information. Consider the different effects on job seekers of (a) being informed that compensation is "competitive" versus knowing the salary range for a job; (b) assurances that an organization "values its employees" versus being informed that no one has been laid off in the last 10 years; and (c) reading that benefits are excellent versus being told that a new employee gets three weeks of vacation to start. More specific information can lead some people not to submit applications, but these would be people unlikely to accept a job offer anyway. On the other hand, specific information also may result in adding people to the applicant pool who might otherwise not have applied.

Many organizations have tried to convey realistic—not only positive— information, as shown in Exhibit 4.[57]

If you have job applicants with realistic expectations, studies suggest you will see lower turnover, better performance, higher job satisfaction and greater trust of the organization. To get applicants with realistic expectations, you can

use targeted recruitment, as discussed above. You may also use *realistic job previews (RJPs).*

Although RJPs are frequently discussed in terms of a one-time event, such as providing job applicants with a booklet

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Exhibit 4: New York City's Use of a Realistic Message in Recruiting Caseworkers

In past years, the average caseworker in New York City's Administration for Children's Services Department (ACSD) remained in the job for two years, which included five months of training. To address this high turnover rate, which is expensive and also increases the work load of the remaining caseworkers, the ACSD tried to increase the number of people applying for the job. It decided to provide applicants with a better understanding of what they were getting into. The Department placed ads in 500 subway cars. To increase the accuracy of job expectations, one of its sales pitches was:

"Wanted: Men and women willing to walk into strange buildings in dangerous neighborhoods, be screamed at by unhinged individuals—perhaps in a language you do not understand—and, on occasion, forcibly remove a child from the custody of parents because the alternative could have tragic consequences."

Compared to filling other jobs, this is clearly a challenging recruitment situation. However, New York City's approach seems to be working. The first month after it began running ads, inquiries were up about 200 percent. In addition to blunt ads, the city shows applicants for the caseworker position a video that highlights the more difficult aspects of the job. The pitch for caseworkers is intended to be realistic, not negative, so the importance of the position is also emphasized:

"Our job is to keep children safe. You have to be able to walk into someone's home and get them to talk to you. You have to cope with unknown and troubling situations, and figure out the truth. It's all about how to protect a child. It's tough—but it's worth it."

New York City recruiters do not have illusions about how much impact their realistic job preview approach can have. The department commissioner noted that even though they are providing a clear picture of the job, it is still difficult to gauge how a new worker will react when faced with breaking up a family.

Sources: Santora, M. (2008, March 3). To recruit caseworkers, a dose of reality. *New York Times*, B3. Mooney, J. (2008, April 20). The faces of those who knock on difficult doors. *New York Times*, B1.

that describes the job, they are better conceived of as a process by which an employer helps a job candidate understand what a position truly involves.[58] An employer may provide a candid description of a job opening on a web site, along with a description of the organization, and additional information may be provided in a phone interview, during a tour of the work site, in conversations with prospective co-workers and supervisor, or by having a candidate take part in a work simulation. Exhibit 5 describes the experiences of a small inventory-taking firm that experimented with a realistic job preview.[59]

Although providing realistic job information can result in some desirable individuals withdrawing as job candidates, this should not be viewed as a negative. It is quite likely that such individuals would have been unhappy if hired into a job that did not meet their expectations, resulting in turnover or low levels of motivation among new employees. A final benefit of providing realistic information to recruits is that they are more likely to view other job-related information as credible.

OTHER ISSUES IN MANAGING THE RECRUITMENT FUNCTION

Talent management is a critical issue for most organizations. Although an effective talent management program has several components, including a valid selection system, a well-designed onboarding program and effective mentoring, it begins with a well-designed recruitment program. Simply stated, if the "right" people are not recruited, the effects of the other components of a talent management program are limited. A few remaining

Exhibit 5: The Use of a Realistic Job Preview at an Inventory-Taking Firm

A small inventory-taking firm was unhappy with the level of turnover it was experiencing for an entry-level position of inventory taker. Based upon exit interviews, it sensed that job applicants for the position did not appreciate several undesirable aspects of the job, such as the extent of night and weekend work, climbing on ladders, and dust and dirt. In order to address its retention problem, the employer considered using a realistic job preview (RJP).

The firm conducted an experiment. Job applicants were randomly assigned to one of two groups, which were treated identically with the exception that one group received a written RJP prior to receiving a job offer. The information in this RJP was provided a second time orally during a post-hire orientation program.

As expected, the group that received a realistic job preview had fewer applicants accept job offers, but it also had significantly lower turnover after three months, as shown below.

	RJP Group	Non-RJP Group
Applicants rejecting job offer:	27%	0%
Turnover after 3 months:	36%	85%

Source: Suszko, M. K. & Breaugh, J. A. (1986). The effects of realistic job previews on applicant self-selection and turnover, satisfaction, and coping ability. *Journal of Management, 12*, 513-523.

issues will be addressed briefly below.

The Organizational Site Visit. Job applicants are not passive receivers of information. Rather, they actively look for signals about topics of interest: How does a firm treat its employees? Do women and minorities hold jobs throughout the organization? A job candidate's experiences during an organizational site visit have been shown to be very important in forming an impression of an employer and ultimately in determining whether an individual accepts a job offer.[60] If HR has a role in planning the visit,

you should take steps to make it an impressive and informative experience by taking the following steps:

- Be flexible in scheduling the visit to accommodate the applicant's schedule.

- Send relevant materials, including a schedule, company literature, maps, directions and a parking pass, before the visit.

- Recruit a prospective co-worker to host the visit.

- Provide impressive hotel accommodations.

- Make sure that key individuals are available during the visit.

- Pay attention to details, such as meeting the candidate at the airport or greeting him or her at the front door.

Job candidates will probably have questions about the surrounding community—including medical facilities, schools, churches and potential employers for a spouse—so don't ignore these concerns.[61]

Managing the Recruitment Operation. If you are responsible for managing the recruitment function, you know the importance of rigorously and continuously evaluating various recruitment activities. Your research can make you aware that recruiting at certain colleges or placing job advertisements in certain professional periodicals does not make sense. You may also realize that certain recruiters are excellent in terms of filling positions with high-quality individuals or that employee referrals generate the most suitable candidates at a far lower cost than other recruitment methods.

In addition to conducting research on recruitment activities, your organization should stay abreast of the experiences of other employers. For example, you may be able to learn from other employers who are successful in attracting individuals who are not actively looking for positions (see Table 6). This can save you time and expense in coming up with ways to recruit such passive candidates.

Perceptions of the Hiring Manager and Other Non-HR Segments of the Organization. Among the most important recruitment metrics are the perceptions of the hiring manager and other managers outside the HR department.[62] Given this fact, it is critical that these managers be involved in planning the recruitment process and, as far as possible, in carrying it out—by giving talks on college campuses, for example. It is also critical that the recruitment manager be in constant communication with other managers during the recruitment process. A very effective way to convince non-HR managers of the value of the recruitment function is to

translate commonly used recruitment metrics into language they understand. If you can document that replacing the use of job boards with an employee referral program saved $500 per hire and increased the percentage of minorities and women hired by 15 percent, then you will make a strong impression. Showing that effective recruitment techniques affected the turnover rate, as in Exhibit 5, or employee performance may be even more impressive to non-HR managers.
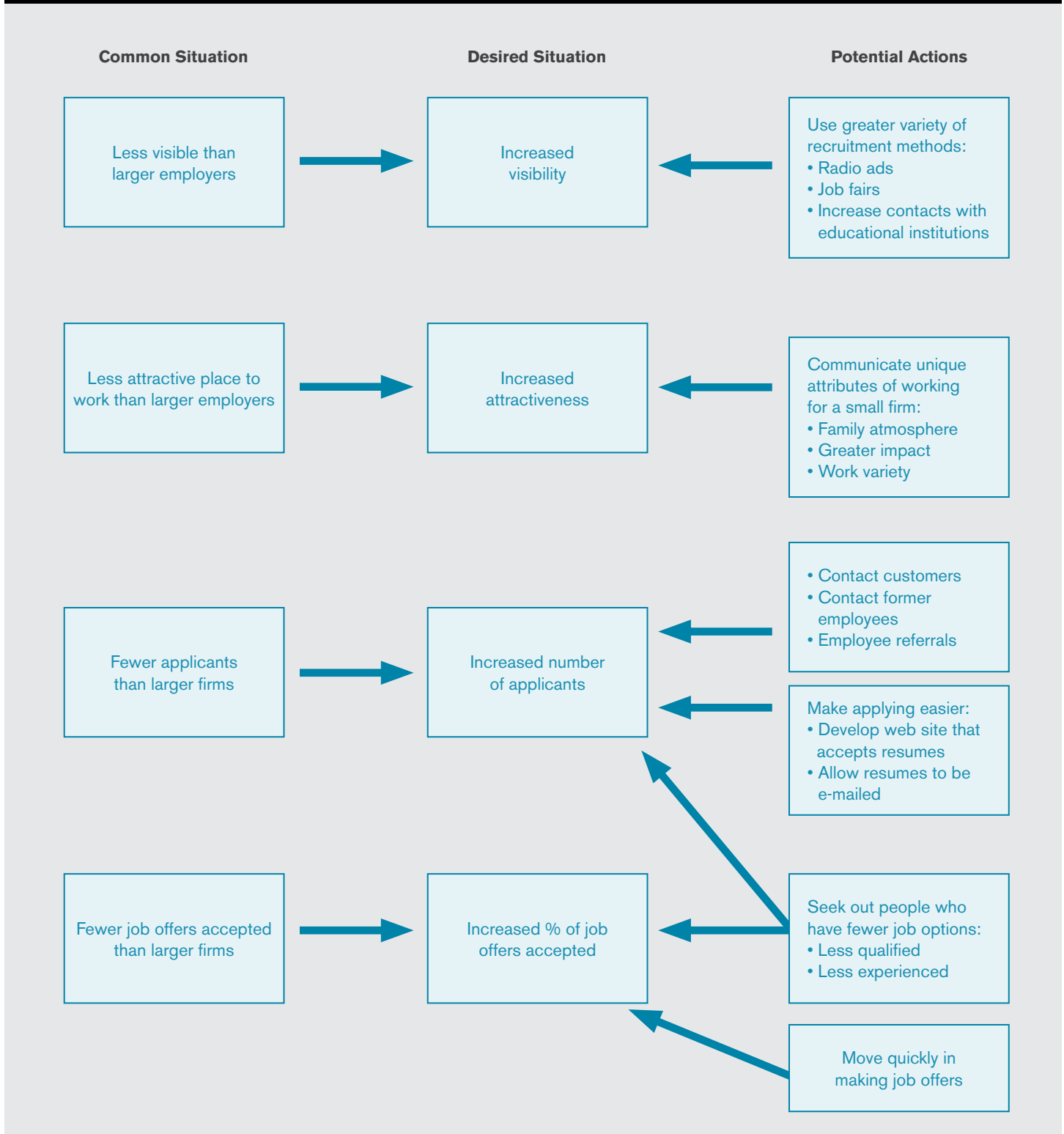
Unique Challenges for Smaller Organizations. Although most of the issues addressed in this report are relevant for any HR professional who is responsible for employee recruitment, smaller firms often confront unique challenges in filling jobs.[63] Figure 6 presents four common problem situations that smaller employers face and possible actions they can take to make the transition from these problematic situations to desired situations.

Some actions your organization can take to become more visible to prospective job seekers include participating in job fairs, which frequently generate a large audience, and working closely with educational institutions. A close relationship with the director of a college placement service may mean that he or she will call a job opening to the attention of job-seeking students. In terms of increasing the attractiveness of your organization, working for a smaller firm can have real advantages, as shown in Exhibit 1, but you must communicate these advantages to prospective applicants. And in terms of increasing the number of job

Table 6: How to Reach Targeted Individuals Who Are Not Actively Looking for Positions

- Use employee referrals.
- Use radio and television advertisements.
- Ask newly hired individuals for the names of potential recruits.
- Send direct mail to members of relevant mailing lists, including professional associations and clubs.
- Place billboard ads in relevant locations.
- Ask individuals who declined job offers for the names of recruits.
- Contact former employees.
- Visit places of business and recreation that targeted individuals frequent.
- Use social networking web sites.

Figure 6: Improving the Recruitment Outcomes of Smaller Organizations

Common Situation	Desired Situation	Potential Actions
Less visible than larger employers	Increased visibility	Use greater variety of recruitment methods: • Radio ads • Job fairs • Increase contacts with educational institutions
Less attractive place to work than larger employers	Increased attractiveness	Communicate unique attributes of working for a small firm: • Family atmosphere • Greater impact • Work variety
Fewer applicants than larger firms	Increased number of applicants	• Contact customers • Contact former employees • Employee referrals Make applying easier: • Develop web site that accepts resumes • Allow resumes to be e-mailed
Fewer job offers accepted than larger firms	Increased % of job offers accepted	Seek out people who have fewer job options: • Less qualified • Less experienced Move quickly in making job offers

applicants, three potential actions may be effective. First, a smaller employer can actively seek out candidates, as in the examples of Cabela's and Quicken Loans above. A small employer also can *make it easier to apply* by making sure resumes can be submitted electronically. Creating an applicant-friendly web site need not be costly. You may be able to hire students at a local college to do the work inexpensively. A third way a smaller employer can increase the number of applications received and the number of job offers accepted is by *targeting individuals with fewer job opportunities.* Look at people who are a bit less qualified in terms of GPA, have less work experience or have another characteristic (such as their age) that makes them less attractive to other employers.

To increase the percentage of job offers accepted, move quickly to extend job offers because many applicants will prefer a certain offer over uncertainty. Another way a smaller firm can find good recruits is *working with a temporary agency* to turn temps into permanent employees.

A very effective way to convince non-HR managers of the value of the recruitment function is to translate commonly used recruitment metrics into language they understand.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no doubt that recruiting the right employees can be challenging, but the rewards of a well-constructed strategy are enormous, because effective recruiting is the foundation upon which any talent management program is built. This report has presented a model of the ideal recruitment process based on academic research and practitioner reports, and recommendations for conducting an effective recruitment campaign. To get maximum benefit from these recommendations, you should customize them to fit your organization's unique situation.

In the end, the key to effective recruitment lies in answering a few essential questions as clearly and in as much detail as possible: *Whom should we recruit? How can we reach these specific people? What should our recruitment message be?* The research and examples of good practices presented here should help you answer these questions in a way that will improve your applicant pool, the quality of the people you hire and even the performance and retention of these new employees.

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Effective recruiting will improve your applicant pool, the quality of the people you hire and even the performance and retention of these new employees.

SOURCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Agnvall, E. (2008). Hiring at-home workers. *Staffing Management, 4*(4): 2-5.

This practitioner-oriented article describes how KP OnCall, a nurse triage call center, was able to go from difficulty recruiting nurses to a waiting list of applicants by allowing nurses to work from home. This change in the work environment also reduced the yearly turnover rate from 23 percent to 3 percent. An important theme of this article is how changes in the work location can dramatically improve the recruiting process.

Albright, W. D., & Cluff, G. A. (2005). Ahead of the curve: How MITRE recruits and retains older workers. *Journal of Organizational Excellence, 24*(2): 53-63.

This case study reports on how MITRE Corporation effectively recruits older employees by relying heavily upon the use of employee referrals and by frequently rehiring former employees. Data are reported that demonstrate the cost savings of MITRE's approach and show its impact on retention.

Allen, D. B., Mahto, R. V., & Otondo, R. F. (2007). Web-based recruitment: Effects of information, organizational brand, and attitudes toward a web site on applicant attraction. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(6): 1696-1708.

This empirical study found that job information and organizational information provided on an organization's web site influenced intentions to apply for a job. This influence was both direct (the specific type of information provided) and indirect (applicants viewed information provided as signaling what other aspects of the job and the organization would be like).

Avery, D. R. (2003). Reactions to diversity in recruitment advertising: Are differences black and white? *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(4): 672-679.

The merits of including pictures of minorities in recruitment materials have been widely advocated. In this study, conducted with black and white college students, the hierarchical level of the minorities was manipulated. The authors found that including pictures of black employees regardless of level had no impact on whites. In contrast, black students reacted favorably to the inclusion of African Americans in advertisements, but only when they were in supervisory-level positions. The implications of this study for recruitment advertising are

apparent. Generalizing from these findings, it appears that including supervisory-level minorities as part of a recruitment team (for example, at a job fair) or as part of a site visit team is likely to be important for an organization that is committed to diversifying its workforce.

Avery, D. R., & McKay, P. F. (2006). Target practice: An organizational impression management approach to attracting minority and female job applicants. *Personnel Psychology, 59*, 157-187.

This article provides an excellent review of empirical research that has addressed the relative effectiveness of different approaches for recruiting minorities and females. In particular, the authors addressed the influence of minorities and women being portrayed in recruitment materials, the wording of EEO statements, and recruiter demographics. The article includes specific recommendations for employers. For example, the merits of recruiting at predominantly minority and female institutions are highlighted, as is the use of minority and female recruiters.

Barber, A. E. (1998). *Recruiting employees: Individual and organizational perspectives.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Readers interested in a somewhat dated but excellent review of academic research on the recruitment process should find this book informative. Barber differentiates the recruitment process into three stages: generating

applicants, maintaining applicant status and influencing job choice. For each of these stages, she reviews empirical research. This research suggests particular organizational actions that are likely to be beneficial.

Barber, A. E. (2006). The hiring challenge: Recruitment in small firms. In J. W. Tansky & R. L. Heneman (Eds.), *Human Resource Strategies for the High Growth Entrepreneurial Firm* (pp. 99-113). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

This chapter provides an overview of several recruitment topics from the perspective of a small firm. Among the topics covered are recruitment sources, conveying a recruitment message and evaluating a recruitment effort. Several recommendations are offered for improving the practices of small firms.

Billsberry, J. (2007). *Experiencing recruitment and selection.* Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Five chapters of this book describe actual experiences of job applicants during the recruitment process. These experiences involve both positive and negative interactions. Recruits described situations in which they were treated with respect and situations in which they were treated poorly. Many of the interactions described suggest that job seekers view interactions during the recruitment process as signals of what working for an organization would be like. The book provides a sense of the importance of applicant perceptions of fair treatment during the recruitment process. It also suggests that many applicants accept

job offers without having a realistic understanding of what a position involves.

Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V., LePine, M. A., & Moynihan, L. M. (2003). Individual job-choice decisions and the impact of job attributes and recruitment practices: A longitudinal field study. *Human Resource Management, 42*, 23-37.

This longitudinal study examines the influence of several recruitment-related variables on job candidate decision-making. Results demonstrate that the decisions made by graduating college seniors were affected by several aspects of the site visit (flexibility in scheduling, how organized it was, the professionalism of the host, the quality of the accommodations). Actions following a site visit (prompt follow-up to applicant inquiries, a timely job offer) were also linked to reactions of recruits.

Breaugh, J.A. (2008). Employee recruitment: Current knowledge and important areas for future research. *Human Resource Management Review, 18*(3): 103-118.

This review article introduces a model of the recruitment process and discusses academic research that supports it. Past research studies on various recruitment topics (such as the use of employee referrals, realistic job previews, recruitment advertising) are critiqued and areas for future research are noted.

Breaugh, J. A. (2010). Improving employee retention through the use of realistic job previews. In R. Watkins & D. Leigh (Eds.), *Handbook for the selection and implementation of human performance interventions.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

This chapter describes in detail: (a) past research on realistic job previews (RJPs), (b) why RJPs are thought to reduce employee turnover, (c) conditions under which RJPs are likely to have maximum impact, (d) different types of RJPs, and (e) specific steps for developing an RJP. Practitioners who are considering incorporating an RJP as part of their recruitment process should find this information valuable as it provides a step-by-step process for developing an RJP.

Carlson, K. D., Connerley, M. L., & Mechan, R. L. (2002). Recruitment evaluation: The case for assessing the quality of applicants attracted. *Personnel Psychology, 55,* 461-490.

This article provides an excellent treatment of the topic of recruitment evaluation. The authors note how infrequently organizations have evaluated their recruitment activities. They also offer several suggestions for rigorously evaluating recruitment activities, including specific metrics to use. They provide a formula for estimating the actual dollar cost of improving the quality of the recruits generated by a well-designed recruitment process. An example of this formula being applied to a hypothetical situation is provided, which should help practitioners who choose to make use of the formula.

Cober, R. T., Brown, D. J., & Levy, P. E. (2004). Form, content, and function: An evaluative methodology for corporate employment web sites. *Human Resource Management, 43,* 201-218.

The authors of this paper analyze the corporate web sites of almost 100 organizations. In particular, they examine the form of the web site (the use of pictures and attention-getting elements), its functionality (the ease of navigating) and the content provided (information about salary, culture). The authors conclude that all three web site dimensions are important to job seekers and that many web sites are lacking in one or more areas. Practitioners who are relatively inexperienced in employment web site design or who seek a refresher article on the topic will find several ideas to consider.

Collins, C. J., & Han, J. (2004). Exploring applicant pool quantity and quality: The effects of early recruitment practice strategies, corporate advertising, and firm reputation. *Personnel Psychology, 57,* 685-717.

Based upon data drawn from 99 organizations and from multiple sources (job seekers, recruiters), the results of this study suggest that early recruitment practices (recruitment ads, employee endorsements), corporate advertising and firm reputation all affect both the size and the quality of the applicant pool. The influence of the recruitment practices was found to vary depending upon an employer's reputation. These results suggest that many of the college recruitment

activities currently conducted by organizations have value.

Collins, C. J., & Stevens, C. K. (2002). The relationship between early recruitment-related activities and the application decisions of new labor-market entrants: A brand equity approach to recruitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87,* 1121-1133.

This study examines the relationship between early recruitment-related activities (sponsorship of college events, word-of-mouth endorsements) and subsequent application decisions of graduate engineering students. The authors report that recruitment activities influenced whether an applicant actually applied for a job through their effect on two dimensions of an employer brand image (general attitudes toward the company and perceived job attributes). These findings suggest that early recruitment activities can have a positive impact on an organization's college recruitment efforts. They also suggest that college graduates are likely to interpret the recruitment actions of an employer as influencing what they think of the organization in general and the job opening being advertised.

Davis, J. (2008). Bringing an employment brand to life. *Journal of Corporate Recruiting Leadership,* June, 3-8.

This practitioner-oriented article offers considerable advice on how an organization can get maximum benefits from using its employment brand to recruit.

Dineen, B. R., Ling, J., Ash, S. R., & DelVecchio, D. (2007). Aesthetic properties and message customization: Navigating the dark side of web recruitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 9*2(2): 356-372.

This empirical study examines the impact of a web site that provides customized job applicant information about likely fit related to factors such as web site viewing time and organizational attraction. Although findings support the value of information customization, results also show the impact of site aesthetics.

Highhouse, S., & Hoffman, J. R. (2001). Organizational attraction and job choice. In C. L. Cooper & I. T. Robertson (Eds.), *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 16*, 37-64. New York: Wiley.

This chapter highlights the importance of considering how job applicants view recruitment information and weight it in making job choice decisions. Basic psychological processes such as framing and negativity bias are discussed, and their relevance for drafting recruitment messages is emphasized.

Hirschman, C. (2003). Incentives for recruiters? Most recruiters don't get incentive pay for superior performance, but some experts say they should. *HR Magazine, 48*(11): 86-91.

This article addresses the use of incentive pay to reward exceptional performance by recruiters. Examples of employers using incentives are discussed, as are potential advantages of using incentives (including the impact on retention). Potential metrics upon which incentives might be based are also noted.

Kiger, P. J. (2007). Burnishing your employment brand. *Workforce Management, 86*(18): 39-45.

This practitioner-focused piece provides a number of examples of companies (Union Pacific, Lubrizol, SFM) that have effectively used their employment brand to recruit. Attention is given to how to develop an employment brand, check its authenticity and publicize it.

Liu, E., & Johnson, S. M. (2006). New teachers' experiences of hiring: Late, rushed, and information poor. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*(3): 324-360.

Many case studies of the recruitment process highlight the exemplary actions taken by the hiring organization. In contrast, this case study of the hiring process for new teachers provides an example of what not to do. With regard to new teacher recruitment, the study highlights how many applicants for teaching positions felt they were provided with insufficient information by the school district.

Raefeli, A., Hadomi, O., & Simons, T. (2005). Recruiting through advertising or employee referrals: Costs, yields, and the effects of geographic factors. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 14*(4): 355-366.

The study reported in this paper compares the recruitment outcomes of three recruitment methods (employee referrals, ads in a national newspaper and ads in a geographically focused newspaper). Geographically focused ads are found superior to national ads in terms of the number of applicants generated, the number of individuals hired and the cost of hiring. Employee referrals are found superior to both types of ads.

Rynes, S. L., Bretz, R. D., & Gerhart, B. (1991). The importance of recruitment in job choice: A different way of looking. *Personnel Psychology, 44*(3): 487-521.

In this intensive study of 41 graduating college students, the authors examine the effects of such variables as employer-hosted on-campus receptions, interactions with recruiters and time delays on job applicant decision-making. Results suggest that recruitment events, recruiters and the timing of recruitment actions can have an important influence on job applicants. For example, it was found that poor treatment by a recruiter is viewed as a signal of how an employer treats its new hires. These authors also report that delays during the recruitment process resulted in applicants losing interest in an organization as a place of employment even when it was initially viewed very favorably. Results also suggest that positive recruitment interactions can cause a job opening that was initially viewed as unattractive to be seen as more desirable. This article is filled with rich quotes from job candidates that should cause anyone with recruitment responsibilities to seriously consider how they go about recruiting.

Rynes, S. L., & Cable, D. M. (2003). Recruitment research in the twenty-first century. In W. C. Borman, D. R. Ilgen & R. J. Klimoski (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology: Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 12, (pp. 55-76). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

This chapter provides a selective review of academic research dealing with employee recruitment (including the use of realistic job previews, the importance of organizational reputation, the influence of recruiters). Based upon past research, the authors offer recommendations for practitioners who are responsible for the recruitment function. They also highlight gaps in the recruitment literature.

Society for Human Resource Management. (2008, April-June). The employer brand: A strategic tool to attract, recruit and retain talent. *SHRM Staffing Research.*

This report highlights the importance of an employer's brand for recruiting talent. It provides examples of organizations that have used their brands effectively, and it offers tips for creating an employment brand. HR professionals reported that the use of an employer brand was related to such important recruitment outcomes as (a) a greater number of qualified applicants, (b) a more diverse applicant pool, (c) an increased number of employee referrals, (d) positions being filled more rapidly, and (e) a higher job offer acceptance rate.

Turban, D. B., & Cable, D. M. (2003). Firm reputation and applicant pool characteristics. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 24*(6): 733-751.

Based upon the results of two empirical studies conducted with graduating college of business students at two universities, the authors find evidence that employers that have better reputations are able to attract more job applicants and higher-quality job applicants.

Turban, D. B., Campion, J. E., & Eyring, A. R. (1995). Factors related to job acceptance decisions of college recruits. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 47*, 193-213.

The study reported in this paper focuses on the site visit experiences of college students. Students who reported liking the host of their site visit (and other aspects of the visit) were more likely to accept job offers. The host of the visit was a prospective co-worker. This likely enhanced the impact of the host.

Yakubovich, V., & Lup, D. (2006). Stages of the recruitment process and the referrer's performance effect. *Organizational Science, 17*(6): 710-723.

This study of independent contractors who worked for virtual call centers focuses on three groups (those who became aware of jobs via the Internet, those who were referred by current employees who were high performers, and those who were referred by current employees who performed less well). As predicted, it is found that individuals referred by higher-performing employees had better credentials and performed better on objective selection measures than those referred by employees who did not perform as well. Those who found job openings via the Internet were the weakest candidates.
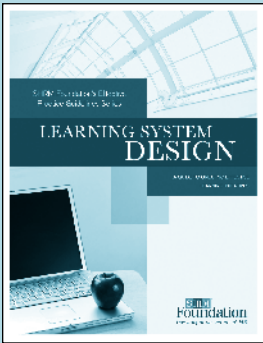
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