5 Breakthrough Approaches to Hiring in the Covid-19 World

How employers are pivoting to get the best workers for this moment, and beyond.

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Remote workplaces, Zoom meetings, a transition to e-commerce: The coronavirus is transforming the way we work faster than much of the business world thought was possible. This shift includes how companies are making hiring decisions.

On the upside, employers have access to a larger talent pool, thanks to changing workplace dynamics and the number of workers displaced due to the economic effects of the virus. But some hiring managers are relying on old-fashioned tactics and sifting through mounds of resumes when the best candidates may still be employed.

Then there is the timing. Before the pandemic, some employers were stockpiling talent, even if their firms did not have any open positions. Today, they are more methodical and prudent in scheduling interviews and making job offers. That's understandable given the uncertainty of the economy, though they may be losing the opportunity to bring the best workers on board.

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Just as executives and small business owners must pivot their operations in this new normal, hiring managers must evolve

their hiring practices, too.

Consider these new strategies:

1. Evaluate your hiring approach

Until March, unearthing top talent was a monumental task. U.S. companies were growing and the unemployment rate was at an historic low. As such, hiring managers enlisted external recruiters on either a retained or contingent search basis. In a retained search, the client pays an advance fee for a recruiter to fill a position as part of an exclusive agreement. Generally, such searches are used for executive-level roles and include candidates who are actively looking for work and also those who are in comparable roles at other companies. Contingent searches are just what they imply, with recruiters compensated when they help their clients secure the next great hire. A third approach is emerging that enables companies to pay only for the services they need while enabling recruiters to take a deeper dive (hence, the research) in matching a candidate's qualifications and abilities with the position. At a time when budgets are tight but the need for talent remains strong, recruitment research equips hiring leaders in making better decisions about how they identify and hire the right people. It also is a strategic process that enables them to fill their immediate hiring needs and develop a talent pool to fill future vacancies.

2. Cast a wider net

Covid-19 has taught companies that they don't need to restrict their hiring to people within a certain radius of their corporate office. On the contrary, the virtual workplace has created an opportunity to cast a wider net, with employees who live in one place while working with a company that has offices in another. Remote work is gaining acceptance among

workers and companies alike: a survey conducted by PwC found that 83% of office workers are eager to work from home at least one day per week. Similarly, employers not only realize that they can transition to a remote workplace when needed, but 55% anticipate maintaining at least a hybrid (remote and in-office) workplace in the future.

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3. Look from within

In a quest to find the best candidates, employers have made a costly mistake by overlooking members of their team who are ready to assume more responsibility, or in some cases, are already doing the job at hand. Harvard Business Review noted that from the end of World War II through the 1970s, corporations filled 90% of their positions through promotions or lateral assignments. That number then dipped to one-third or less, but LinkedIn’s Global Talent Trends 2020 report shows that internal hiring is making a comeback, with 73% of talent acquisition professionals saying it is increasingly important to their company.

4. Recruit for capability

Workers used to be hired based on their skills and experience. These are still important hiring considerations, but think about how many of today’s jobs did not exist five or 10 years ago. From alternative energy and mobile applications to social media and self-driving vehicles, new industries continue to emerge, and they require workers who are flexible and capable of mastering new skills. As such, companies that hire based on what workers are capable of learning and how fast they can adapt to change undoubtedly will have an edge.

5. Get the best candidates over the finish line

So, you have found the ideal employee – someone with skills and the ability to hit the ground running, and who believes in your company's mission. But getting the candidate over the finish line may be a challenge. While the pandemic has fortified candidates' belief in what they want in a job, leaving a company where they may have seniority – or better yet, job security –may be risky. This is where good hiring skills come into play – reminding candidates of the career advantages of making a move.

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How the pandemic will continue to transform business remains to be seen. Something that will not change, however, is the need to hire talented employees who keep companies humming now and long after the pandemic has passed.

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