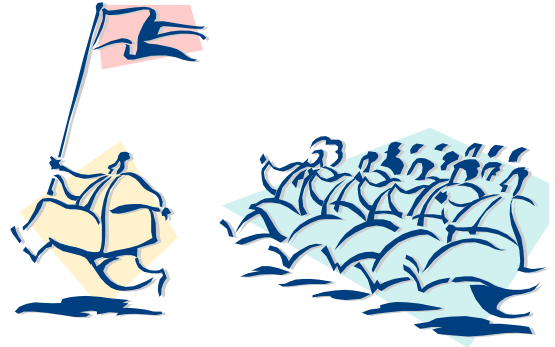


Talent Acquisition

“A plan – why do we need a plan ?”

Some time ago we spent a couple of days locked away in a conference with the HR Directors and people responsible for recruitment and retention in some of the biggest of organisations in the UK. Frankly the amount of company wealth swimming around that room was extraordinary and the speakers were equally impressive, the head of “experienced recruitment” at Price Waterhouse Coopers, the largest professional services firm in the world for example. It is sobering to think of the budgets these people manage, PWC alone need to *recruit* 3,500 people a year!



The ability to recruit and retain the best people was seen as a core competency, not something that would just happen and *effort energy and resource was dedicated to it*. That resource was both internal and by the increasing use of recruitment outsourcing

such as that provided at MBA, as opposed to simple recruitment agencies (that were in fact being used less). The number of suitable candidates, the ratio of hires to interviews, retention rates amongst above average performers all *were key performance indicators for these organisations*. I wondered how many organisations in our sector viewed talent the same way, not as something vested in one or two star performers but as something a company *must* acquire at all levels in order to be a winner itself? Even more worrying we often have potential Clients call and say “We need a (contracts director, sales director or whatever...) NOW who do you have on your books?”. Although we have over 6000 candidates on our database we’d never just send out some cv’s, this approach will not achieve the right results for Clients

who would only rarely achieve their objectives and it doesn’t work for candidates who take a leap from a good job into a new job and then six months later are looking for work either because they don’t want to be there or because they were never a fit in the first place and are being let go.

There was also another factor that stood out for me, ALL the companies put effort into becoming an employer of choice, not a top payer necessarily but a company that people were proud to work for and where they got something back for their investment of time and commitment. Someone said “*employees choose us before we choose them*” and that is our experience as well. Some of the employers there paid minimum wage for some jobs and money was not going to attract people to them. Matching the right person is only part of the battle, albeit a vital part, they have to want to work for you and selling your brand and your company as a good place to work is we’ve found a vital part of



“there is just no argument..... *winning the Talent Wars* is what separates these companies from their competitors and continues to build their brands and their revenues”.

what we do for clients. *That's one reason why our website has always contained a commitment to candidates as well as clients*, the recruitment process must be a positive experience for a candidate and an honest one. Attracting the right talent to the right job at the right company is the key, no one factor can be missed out.

There is no point in paying an inordinate amount to attend these events if you don't take away some 'value' and I think we did. Confirmation that our specialist approach (and we aren't alone!) is something valued by industry leaders and data that proves, as we suspected, that job boards, much touted as a complete solution are but one resource and not the answer in winning talent. Sharing best practice on how to attract the right candidates and win them for your organisation and an appreciation of the difficulties that face employers not just in our sector but across the board were some of the positives.

So what are MBA doing about it with our Client partners in the building products sector?

- A specialist database of in excess of 6000 candidates all of whom have come to us
- Access to search and select potential candidates from the world's largest online CV postings databases
- The ability to attract candidates with job listings that are not just job descriptions
- A 'boundryless' approach to seeking talent
- Specialist understanding within this sector of specific needs and competencies
- A commitment to a partnering approach to helping Clients win the talent wars and candidates find companies and roles they are happy in

We'll continue to focus on our KPI - retention rate and help our clients hit their KPIs we've a passion for our business as our clients have passion for theirs. Success someone once said is about "constancy to purpose".... Sometimes it's nice to have some 3rd party confirmation that the 'purpose' is on the right track!

*Chris Ball is a Director of MBA and a member of the Institute of Consulting www.ibconsulting.org.uk, **MBA Associates Ltd** is a specialist consultancy that partners clients to **Recruit, Retain and Develop Top Performing Teams**. 01242 821 432, info@mba-associates.co.uk or through the website at www.mba-associates.co.uk*

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