

The perfect fit



Recruitment can be a tough exercise – whether it's a role or an intake of hundreds. It is no wonder HR has a raft of third party recruiters to partner with. But as **HRM** discovers, it often takes the perfect partner, to find the perfect candidate match

A well-chosen recruitment partner can save
TIME AND MONEY
for busy HR professionals

experts

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Companies, and their HR teams in particular, are familiar with Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), which enables them to employ third party partners to aid them with their needs, ranging from auditing to payroll. The same kind of relationships can also bring great rewards in the recruitment sphere. Employers are increasingly looking toward third party hiring partners to get the best-fit candidates.

Josh Goh, Assistant Director, Corporate Services, the GMP Group, says recruitment specialists give HR the chance to concentrate on bigger ticket areas. "With HR taking on more strategic roles in business operations, it (can) leave HR practitioners little time or precious manpower to manage recruitment for their organisations."

The appeal of a partner

Saving of time and money are two factors that will always appeal to busy HR teams, particularly when there is a position that needs to be filled quickly.

"Recruiters are meant to decrease the lead time from looking for potential candidates to hiring the most suitable one," Goh says.

But a faster, cheaper hire is not necessarily a better one. Recruiters are also called upon to find better-fit candidates for their clients, using their industry expertise and assessment skills.

Georgie Chong, Executive General Manager of Hudson Singapore, says the best recruitment partners will have extensive databases of potential candidates to match their clients' needs, even if those candidates are not actively looking for new work. "Reputable search firms with a longevity and track record in the market are equipped with a database and in-depth knowledge of the talent pool," she tells *HRM*.

Samantha Chia, Senior Vice President, Group HR, DBS Bank, says her organisation routinely uses third party recruiters for its hiring needs. One of the key advantages found is the wider pool of candidates that these firms are able to tap in to.

"Recruitment partners work with a variety of companies across industries and have an understanding of trends around job descriptions, salaries and other aspects of recruiting," she says.

"Hence, they can provide informal advice on issues like job role, improvement to job environment and how competitive the compensation packages are."

However she cautions that sometimes "placement fees can be significant" when using a recruitment firm.

No bed of roses

However, no partnership is perfect. Some recruiters admit that there can be challenges when hiring on behalf of organisations. Goh says communication issues often arise when hiring managers do not have a

The

The best match

Samantha Chia, Senior Vice President, Group HR, DBS Bank, offers this checklist to finding an ideal recruitment partner

- + Look for a dedicated and qualified team of recruiters
- + Check if the selection method is comfortable for the company's culture
- + Ensure potential recruiters are technologically savvy with tools such as résumé-mining and applicant tracking systems
- + Make sure the recruiter's business values align with those of the organisation
- + The recruitment firm should have a good track record in the subject industry or function

thorough understanding of their staffing needs or are unable to communicate those requirements clearly to recruiters. "For such situations, the HR departments from the client companies are often involved to help problem-solve," he says.

Lynne Ng, Regional Director of Adecco Southeast Asia, says this communication is critical to finding a successful hire. "If recruitment companies and clients are not aligned then one of the common challenges is in the ability to match the right candidate with the right role."

The consequences of a poor hire can vary, but almost always leads to lost time, money and other resources, she adds.

As much as finding the right candidate is time-consuming, so is trying to ensure that candidates remain with their new organisation for the long term. Candidates need a good explanation of what the job entails, especially when it comes to "niche jobs with particular requirements", notes Goh.

"These positions usually see low retention rates of candidates," he says. "We usually counsel (leaving) job candidates to delve into the reasons why they are unwilling to remain in the position, and speak to the hiring manager or HR to find out more about the situation so as to come to a win-win resolution."

Also, she admits that not all candidates presented by the recruitment firms possess the right skills for a position. "We sometimes find recruitment partners pressured to fill quotas or, due to time constraints, may not place enough emphasis on quality."

Such concerns have led some employers to actually help train their recruitment partners in their ideal hiring methods. DBS, for example, provides training for recruiters regarding the company's organisational culture, policies and other requirements. Chia says this helps to ensure a long-term working relationship with its key recruitment partners.

Going for win-win

No partnership will work without good communication and it is essential that companies have a thorough understanding of their hiring needs before bringing in the recruiters. Chong says they also need to be sure they communicate these needs effectively.

"Clients should provide detailed and comprehensive job briefings to allow the recruitment partner to truly understand the multi-faceted aspects of their needs," she says. At the same time, recruitment providers also need to ensure their communication lines are also open.

"Recruitment companies that specialise in particular sectors or functions must constantly stay in touch with candidates to build relationships that enable them to truly understand the candidates' career aspiration and motivation." *hrm*