

firm. Each organization needs to decide, based on its recruiting strategy, budget, and needs, whether an in-house or external agency is better.

Centralized Versus Decentralized Recruitment

An organization can centralize or decentralize the recruitment of external job applicants. In centralized recruitment, one group coordinates the recruitment activities, usually human resources (HR) professionals in the corporate offices. In a decentralized recruitment system, individual business units or managers coordinate the recruitment activities. Although the ultimate hiring decisions reside in the business unit, most organizations centralize the administrative activities associated with recruiting and screening applicants.

One advantage to centralized recruitment is that efforts are not duplicated. For example, when recruiting at a school, only one advertisement is placed, rather than separate ads for multiple organizational business units. Another advantage is that a centralized approach ensures that policy is being interpreted consistently across business units. For example, GM centralized its recruiting system in order to convey a consistent message to applicants.⁷ Along these same lines, a centralized function helps ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Another factor that facilitates centralized recruiting is the growth in staffing software (see Chapter 13).

Some organizations prefer decentralized recruitment functions. Case studies suggest that research and development departments, for example, often develop specialized recruiting practices to attract talent. These strategies are more focused on university recruiting and emphasize projects that are likely to interest highly educated and intrinsically motivated researchers.⁸ One advantage of decentralized recruitment is that when there are fewer people to recruit, placement can take place more quickly than when a centralized approach is used. Also, the recruitment search may be more responsive to the business unit's specific needs because the local managers involved with recruitment may be closer to the day-to-day operations of the business unit than are their corporate counterparts.

Timing

Two factors that drive the decision of when to look for job applicants are lead time concerns and time sequence concerns. As staffing managers have been increasingly called on to show concrete results for their work, the importance of documenting the time to fill requisitions has grown. These deadlines are very important for procedural justice and even legal defensibility, as both current employees and potential applicants will expect the organization to abide by the specified date requirements. Once a goal for the time frame is established, the organization should not pursue a certain applicant before the deadline or consider applicants who apply after the deadline.

Lead Time Concerns. Although managers would like to fill each position immediately on approval of the requisition, this is not possible since recruiters handle a large number of vacancies at any one time. It is possible, however, to minimize the