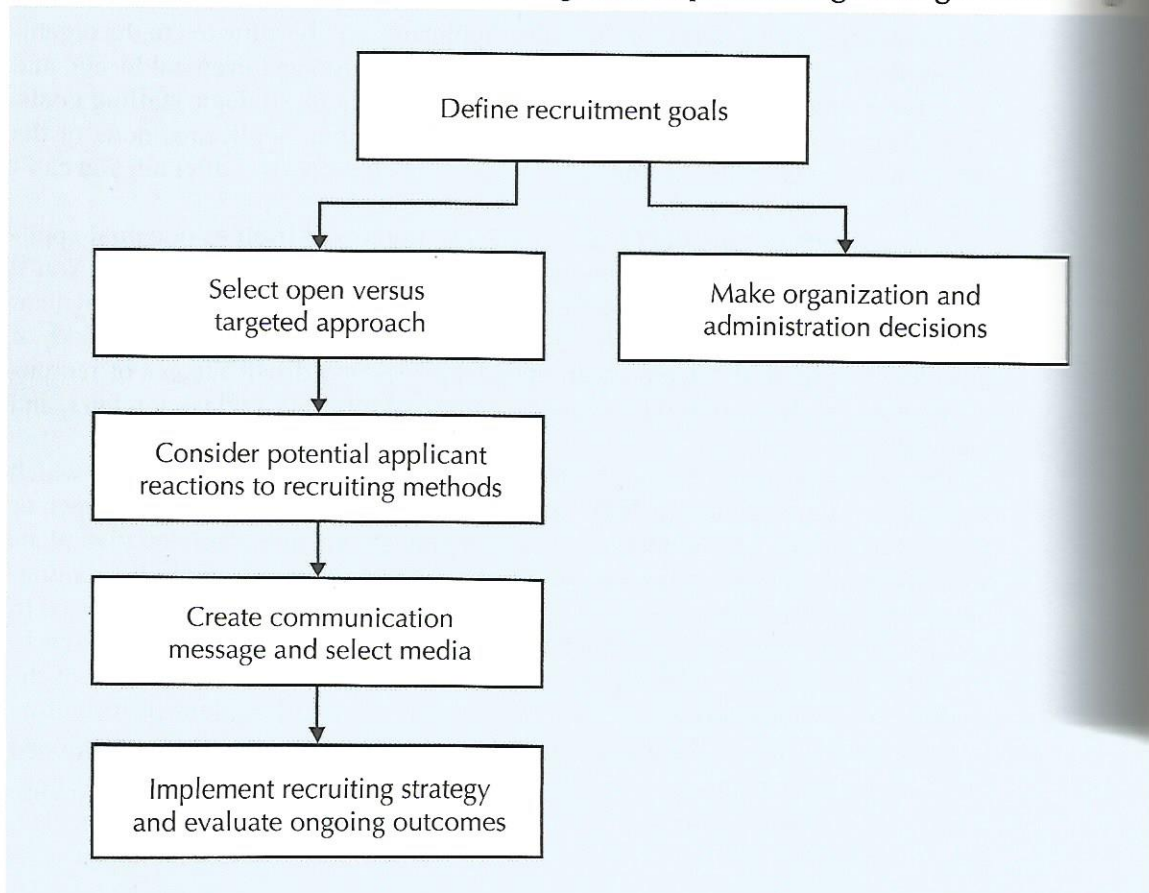


STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT PLANNING

Recruiting is a process that attracts potential future employees who have KSABs (knowledge, skill, ability, and other characteristics) that will help the organization achieve its strategic goals. If strategic goals are going to be fulfilled, each step must flow from the foundation established during the recruitment planning process. Exhibit 5.1 provides an overview of how this process should operate.

Consistent with this model, three issues must be resolved before attracting applicants to the organization. First, the organization needs to define its strategic goals for the recruiting process. The needs that were identified in the planning process will guide the process of identifying exactly what types of employees need to be recruited, how quickly these needs will be fulfilled, and the time frame for the recruiting process. Next, the organization needs to decide how broadly it will

EXHIBIT 5.1 Planning, Communicating, and Implementing Strategic Recruiting



recruit. Finally, organizational and administrative issues need to be considered, including who will do the recruiting and budgeting.

Defining Strategic External Recruiting Goals

Any recruiting drive must begin from a careful consideration of the organization's strategic goals.¹ Defining specific desired outcomes for the process can ensure that the organization can concentrate its efforts on applicants who will contribute most to overall organizational success. The definition of strategic goals includes developing goals for attraction, goals for speed, and a time frame.

Goals for Attraction

Knowing how to recruit effectively and strategically begins by knowing the organization's current needs and future needs. For example, a global computer hardware manufacturer considering international expansion will need to consider what national cultures and languages its employees will need to understand. A pharmaceutical company in a dynamic market will need to think of the expertise of current employees as well as recruits' ability to learn and develop as the business environment evolves. The key issues an organization needs to resolve in defining its goals for attraction involve consideration of the fit issues we have discussed throughout the book.

In terms of person/job fit, the organization will need to determine what types of applicants are most likely to have the required KSAOs identified through the process of job analysis. At this stage in the process, goals should proceed from general statements to specifics. Determine whether you need a highly educated workforce or one with lots of practical experience, and then get more specific about what types of degrees employees should have or specific jobs employees should have previously held. After the KSAOs have been well defined, think about which of the recruiting sources we discuss later in the chapter are most likely to attract interested individuals with the right competencies.

In terms of person/organization fit, the techniques for recruiting should closely match the organization's culture and values. Companies that pride themselves on environmental sustainability and a team-oriented environment want to send a much different message to new recruits relative to companies that promote an aggressive growth and revenue-driven culture. Everything from the areas of the country where recruiting will take place to the types of media that are employed will send a message to potential applicants regarding what the organization's culture is like, so choices about recruiting should always take these considerations into account.

Goals for Speed

While goals for attraction answer the question of job seekers the organization needs to attract, goals for speed answer the question of how fast the organization needs to attract applicants. When an organization needs to fill a position quickly

with an employee who will contribute right away, recruiting will have to focus on methods that contact highly qualified and experienced individuals who are probably doing similar work already. Attracting these candidates does not involve the same strategy that would be employed if an organization wants to attract applicants with raw talent and ability who can be molded to fit the needs of the organization with training and experience.

Goals for speed can also influence the ways an organization recruits in more immediate ways as well. When an organization needs to fill a position quickly, techniques that identify a large pool of interested individuals who want to start right away should be implemented. On the other hand, the organization's long-term hiring strategy should include establishing personal relationships with a broad pool of talented individuals, regardless of their immediate availability, through ongoing networking. Some technology companies start the process of recruiting by providing scholarships and mentoring opportunities for college students, with the hope of identifying and attracting individuals who will be interested in a job when they graduate.

Time Frame

The last issue that needs to be resolved in defining strategic goals is the time frame during which recruitment will take place. This can be particularly important in a legal sense because the applicant pool definition depends on the length of time applicants will have to apply. Defining a time frame means determining how long the position will be advertised prior to consideration of applications, and at what point a final offer for selection tests and interviews will be sent to applicants. During the time-frame goal development phase, general principles for determining how long a job will remain open are considered in light of strategic goals for the recruiting process. Finally, specific decisions about timing are left for the organization and administration phase.

When an organization is seeking applicants for a very specific, in-demand position, the time frame should be similarly specific, with applications accepted only until a firm deadline is reached, after which no other applications will be accepted or considered. When an organization is seeking a larger number of applicants for an entry-level managerial or professional job category, recruiters might attend job fairs and encourage applications from attendees. If an organization has the goal of filling a large number of positions that traditionally have relatively high turnover, such as most sales or customer service jobs, then recruiting may not have a termination point at all. Instead, recruiting will be considered ongoing, as with a policy of "always taking applications."

Open Versus Targeted Recruitment

One of the most difficult aspects of recruitment is knowing where to look for applicants. In theory, the pool of potential job applicants is the eligible labor force (i.e., employed, unemployed, discouraged workers, new labor force entrants, and labor

force reentrants). In practice, the organization must narrow down this vast pool into segments or strata of workers believed to be the most desirable applicants. To do so, organizations can use open or targeted recruitment methods.

Open Recruitment

With an open recruitment approach, organizations cast a wide net to identify potential applicants for specific job openings. Very little effort is made in segmenting the market into applicants with the most desirable KSAOs. This approach is very passive in that anyone can apply for an opening, and all who apply for a position are considered, regardless of their qualifications. An advantage of the open recruitment method is that applicants often see it as being “fair” in that everyone has the opportunity to apply. Open recruitment helps ensure that a diverse set of applicants—including minorities, teens, former retirees, veterans, people with disabilities, and other potentially overlooked employee groups—are given a fair shot at being considered. Another advantage of open recruitment is that it is useful—perhaps even essential—when large numbers of applicants must be hired. The disadvantage to this approach is that a large number of applications must be considered, so it is possible that qualified applicants may be overlooked in the process. Unfortunately, with the growth of web-based recruiting, many employers have found that open recruiting yields too many applicants, making it very time-consuming to review all the résumés and other application materials.²

Targeted Recruitment

A targeted recruitment approach is one whereby the organization identifies segments in the labor market where qualified candidates are likely to be. Often, this is done to find applicants with specific characteristics pertinent to person/job or person/organization match. Some experts propose that a targeted strategy may be more effective because it allows the organization to prepare a specific message that appeals to the audience, rather than relying on a general message that is mildly appealing to some candidates but strongly appealing to none.³

Following is a list of some of the potential target recruitment groups (of course, these categories are not mutually exclusive):

- *Key KSAO shortages*—the objective here is to identify applicants with specific new areas of knowledge or “hot” skills
- *Workforce diversity gaps*—often, one must go beyond open recruitment to reach diverse groups and make special efforts
- *Passive job seekers or noncandidates*—sometimes excellent candidates can be found in “trailing spouses” or other dual-career couples
- *Former military personnel*—especially those with key competencies such as leadership
- *Employment-discouraged*—long-term unemployed, homemakers, welfare recipients, teenagers, and people with disabilities