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Trusted Flexible Resourcing Solutions

WHITEPAPER:
RECRUITING AND RETAINING TALENT:
BEST PRACTICES

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ABOUT STAGE 4 SOLUTIONS

Stage 4 Solutions, Inc. is an award-winning, women-owned and minority-owned consulting and interim staffing firm headquartered in Saratoga, CA, with a presence in over 30 states and offices in Tampa, FL; Columbus, OH; and Harrisburg, PA. We specialize in serving high tech companies, government agencies and healthcare organizations by providing seasoned professionals for both short term and long term needs across marketing, technology and operations teams.

We bring together the right people, processes and skills to help organizations achieve their performance objectives and meet diversity goals. With over 100,000 consultants in our network, we are able to match the best consultant(s) to our clients' needs. Our team's experience spans a wide range of expertise across market segments, industries and technologies. With a 21-year track record of creating success – we deliver multiple qualified candidates for client review within days and our placement success rate exceeds 99%.

We are dedicated to creating true partnerships with our clients built on a foundation of clear communication, trust and respect. Since our foundation, we have served over a hundred companies, from startups to Fortune 100 companies and government agencies. Please check out what our clients say about us by clicking here!

To learn more about how we can help you fill critical gaps, please contact us.

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RECRUITING AND RETAINING TALENT: BEST PRACTICES

There is no doubt that human assets, employees, are the most important asset for any company. Regardless of the company type or industry, it is the employees that create differentiation for organizations and are their strategic advantage.

Management guru [Peter Drucker](#) once said, "The most valuable assets of a 20th-century company were its production equipment. The most valuable asset of a 21st-century institution, whether business or non-business, will be its knowledge workers and their productivity." In today's world, business leaders understand this and realize that the critical factor for growth is attracting and engaging the right people in the right roles. Organizations across industries are experiencing significant gaps in many teams, and employers are facing challenges in attracting and retaining talent. So, what are the best practices to recruiting and retaining talent?

For over 20 years, we have worked with more than a hundred organizations to fill gaps across teams. We find that with the right needs assessment, the right budget, the right marketing, and a realistic view of candidate pools, we are able to bring well-qualified candidates to our clients. In this whitepaper, we share our best practices on how to attract and retain talent.

RECRUITING STRATEGY

Organizations across the world are focused on selling their products and services to customers and spend a great deal of time and effort on marketing and sales strategies to generate revenue. Brand positioning, lead generation, lead nurturing and qualification and customer service all play a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers. So, companies need to think about applying their marketing and sales strategies to their recruiting practices. They need to establish a strong brand that aligns with their values and mission, build candidate "personas" for each job type, build effective marketing strategies to attract talent, understand the channels where target candidates go for job information, then take those "prospects" through the recruitment funnel, convert them to "employees" and retain them by providing a positive experience.

Companies' recruiting strategies must be optimized for the candidate experience. Candidate experience is the candidates' viewpoint of the organization's recruitment process and includes every step throughout the recruitment process, from job application to interview to offer, placement, and onboarding. A positive candidate experience can help you attract great talent and a negative candidate experience can significantly harm your business, especially in today's digital world.

ESTABLISH AN EMPLOYER BRAND

Establishing an employer brand is the first step in a successful recruiting strategy. An employer brand should clearly represent the organization's values, culture, and mission highlighting what would be most relevant to the target audience - the candidates.

Effective employer branding is about positioning the company as an employer of choice, so that it can attract and hire top talent. [Approximately 75% of active job seekers](#) are likely to apply for a job if an employer manages its employer brand. Additionally, the brand can serve to attract those candidates who will better fit into the organization and become long term employees.

DEFINE VALUES/CULTURE

Candidates have increasingly been seeking employers whose mission and values are aligned with their individual values and where they can work together on common goals. They want to connect their roles to a "purpose" and want to know their contributions are making a difference. Employers should think about how they shape the culture to unite the team around a common purpose and have a culture that signifies the importance of each role and how each role ties back to the organization's greater goal.

REMOTE WORK/FLEXIBILITY

Candidates want employers who value balance between work demands and life demands and goals. And, many employers are now offering fully remote working options, and hybrid working choices. Building flexibility into the culture and proving that value by offering remote and hybrid work options for all roles where possible, will make the employer be seen as more favorable. Additionally, for remote roles, employers can draw from a much larger pool of candidates, thereby increasing the top of the recruiting funnel populations.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

In the contemporary organizational landscape, more organizations have begun to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices. Executives are adopting an inclusive leadership approach to create a sense of belonging for all employees. Some of the DEI programs that organizations can introduce are the facilitation of inclusive onboarding, raising awareness about diversity through mentoring, and the implementation of unbiased recruitment protocols. Such programs must go beyond PR slogans and should create real change at all levels of the company.

3rd PARTY REPUTATION SITES

In this digital world, candidates will perform online searches to understand the company's brand, culture, and team structures. Organizations must maintain a positive reputation on 3rd party sites and social media platforms such as Glassdoor, Google Business, Facebook, and Indeed. Employees and candidates write online reviews about their negative experiences more so than positive experiences, so the company must monitor the review sites and respond to all reviews. According to Careerarc's survey of 1200 job seekers, 72% of the respondents shared their poor experience online or in person. Gaining positive candidate feedback is an investment for your company's brand. Companies can create systems to encourage happy employees to write more positive honest reviews about what makes the company great.

DEFINING AND MARKETING ROLES

As the volume of job openings has increased and the channels where job openings can be found have expanded, it has become challenging for employers to capture the attention of job seekers. Given this situation, companies must clearly define their job openings, target candidates, and then market openings to win the right candidates.

CLEARLY DEFINE NEEDS

It is critical to spend the time required to design a realistic role and clearly state the job function and specific responsibilities that the employee is expected to perform. This way there will be no ambiguity about the job opening and it can attract the right kinds of individuals whose skills, expertise, and goals are aligned with the specific role that is being advertised.

The first step is to create a concise and clear job description. A job description is not a simple document to list every single attribute or task, but it's rather a strategic marketing asset to attract the right interest for each opening. An effective job
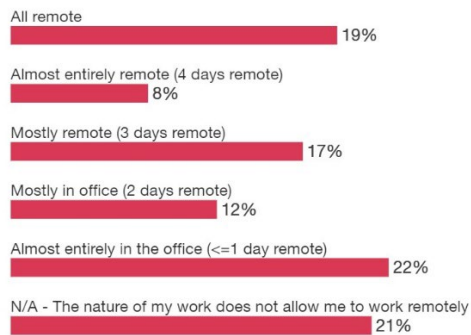
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description should be easy to comprehend and contain specific details to allow candidates to understand the role and assess their qualifications and interest in the role. Since our founding in 2001, we have reviewed and written thousands of job descriptions and it is fair to say that more than 95% of the time, job descriptions are too detailed, too long, and too broad documents that list all responsibilities and all desired skills and requirements. Often, job descriptions are created based on a one-size-fits-all template, a generalized version of a role written from a company viewpoint. This approach fails to grab the attention of qualified individuals, especially passive job seekers. The candidate should easily be able to understand the title, location, the purpose of the role, primary tasks, and key requirements while quickly scanning the job description.

According to a [survey](#) conducted by Monster, 64% of candidates would not be willing to respond to a job description if the title is not clear, 54% would be turned off by the use of jargon in job descriptions, and 23% had complaints regarding spelling errors. According to a study by [Appcast,](#) the ideal length of job descriptions is between 300 to 800 words.

OFFER FLEXIBILITY

For each job opening, companies need to evaluate if the role can be a remote role, a hybrid role, have a flexible schedule, four day per week or some other alternative schedule. Not all roles are the same, and the flexibility offered must match the requirements of the job.

Employee preferences for hybrid work are all over the map

All remote
19%

Almost entirely remote (4 days remote)
8%

Mostly remote (3 days remote)
17%

Mostly in office (2 days remote)
12%

Almost entirely in the office (<=1 day remote)
22%

N/A - The nature of my work does not allow me to work remotely
21%

PwC's [research](#) reveals about 20% of all employees want to work 100% remotely, and 79% of all respondents prefer remote or hybrid work. So, job location and schedule flexibility can be an opportunity to attract top employees.

DEFINE THE "PERFECT" MATCH

For each job opening, a critical should be taken of the required skills versus the preferred skills. Many skills can be learned, so, what is really needed on day one. Organizations want to hire "perfect" candidates for their openings. And, while that may be an ideal goal (though, we maintain that no one is "perfect"), there are issues with such an approach. First, it may be unrealistic to find "perfection"; and second, looking for "perfection" typically means finding candidates who are the "same" as current employees. Such an approach misses candidates with amazing skills and a personality that will work well with current teams, but also offer innovative ideas and new perspectives. Such candidates may outperform others who have the required "skills" by bringing something new to the team. By adopting such a flexible and open hiring approach, you can attract the most talented candidates and build a diversity of thought in your teams.

DISCUSS CULTURAL FIT AND ATTITUDE

While recruiting talent, it is quite common for organizations to ignore the importance of cultural fit between the employer and the employees. Sometimes during the interviews, hiring managers only focus on questions to evaluate skills and background. It is a good idea to also incorporate questions to evaluate cultural fit, to understand the kind of work environment the candidates are most productive in, the ideal management style that keeps them motivated, and the team roles that they like to play. An honest and open discussion with potential candidates is key to understanding whether there is a cultural fit.

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A cultural mismatch can lead to high employee turnover and affect business performance. According to a study by Pew Research Center, 30% of American workers view their work as 'just a job to get them by' and there is no actual cultural fit. The disengagement with work can contribute to high employee turnover. So, it is essential to find the right kind of talent that possesses the necessary knowledge and skills and also is a fit for the company/team culture.

MARKET JOB OPENINGS

Proper visibility is vital to reaching out to a broad range of candidates in the job market. Companies must understand where the target job seekers go to look for new opportunities, and then advertise the job opportunities on the relevant job boards college platforms, and social media platforms. Establishing an employee referral program will also expand the reach by having current employees become brand ambassadors and channels for recruiting.
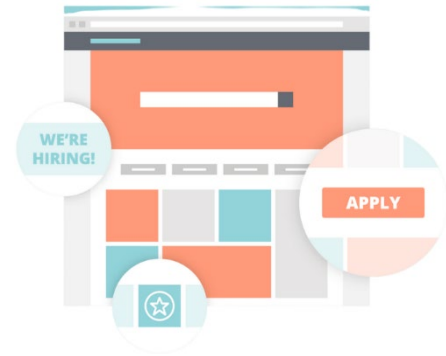
The career page of organizations is considered to be one of the most important engagement points between employers and employees. Having a well-designed and easy-to-navigate career page is a fundamental necessity to provide a good candidate experience. Another key element is the job application form used on career sites. Candidates do not want to spend time filling out lengthy forms and they prefer easy job application options.

It is a good practice to embed the company Glassdoor page in the career site to provide transparency on employee reviews. Displaying testimonials on a company website is a standard practice but candidates care more about the honest reviews posted on unbiased 3rd party sites.

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

It is fundamental to treat candidates with respect throughout the recruitment process and convey the company culture at each step in the recruiting process. It is a demonstration of the organization's behavior and how the candidate will be treated if they were to join the company. Simply by being professional, showing up on time for the interviews, communicating any delays or rescheduling needs in advance, and having a consistent understanding of the role throughout the interviewers make a big difference in the eyes of the candidates.

Interviews are a two-way street and they are an opportunity for employers to evaluate potential employees and for candidates to evaluate the potential employers. Organizations assess the candidates by focusing on their professionalism, comprehension of the job opening, and other attributes. Similarly, candidates evaluate organizations as their potential employers and focus on your organizational culture such as they feel throughout the process.

Culture is conveyed by how a candidate is treated, not by telling them what the culture is. Regardless of the company brand or the corporate values listed on a website, it is the 1 on 1 human interaction that defines an employee's perception of companies.

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RETAINING TALENT

Employees have always been a company's biggest asset and the top-performing employees have a significant impact on an organization's success. Retaining talent is increasingly difficult in the "Great Resignation", so companies need to put more effort into retaining talent than ever before. High employee turnover is costly and can have a significant negative impact. According to a recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national average annual turnover rate is 57% across all industries.

UNDERSTAND EMPLOYEES' NEEDS & CAREER GOALS

It is essential for companies to understand each employee so that a personalized approach can be created for each individual's needs. This insight can help organizations design different programs for different types of individuals their unique needs and wants. Employees must feel heard.

Career development opportunities, flexible work environment, manager relationships, compensation and benefits all make a big difference when it comes to retaining talent. Although many managers assume that compensation is key and the top contributor for employees to stay at a job, each individual has unique motivations. For some employees learning might be key, for others flexible work arrangements may be the top priority. Leaders need to understand what each employee's needs and career goals are and create and foster environments that offer opportunities within the organization so employees can reach their goals within the company. By knowing employees at a deeper level, it is possible to strengthen the bond with the workforce and enhance the ability to retain talent.

ROLE OF DIRECT MANAGERS

Managers play an instrumental role to influence whether their team members decide to stay or quit an organization. The managers within the company need to play a proactive role and ensure that the right kind of support is offered to employees. Managers should interact and communicate with their team members on a regular basis and spend the time to understand the team members' concerns, challenges in relation to training needs, lack of resource allocation or work pressure and also career goals and what motivates them to be successful. Training can be provided to managers to build such management skills which are different than functional skills.

RECOGNIZE AND REWARD HARD WORK

Employers must acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and contribution of employees. Creating a culture of recognition where appreciation is given in real-time and often will enhance an organization's culture and help increase employee tenure. Establishing employee reward programs can be a major source of motivation for employees. Also, encouraging team members to try new opportunities is another great way to recognize them. Also, don't forget the power of a simple "thank you" for the work team members put in every day.

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eNPS TO CAPTURE EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Employer Net Promoter Score, or eNPS, is a scoring system developed to help employers measure employee satisfaction and loyalty within their organizations. Just like NPS (Net Promoter Score), eNPS consists of two-questions; the first question asks employees to rate the company on a scale from 0 to 10 and how likely it is they would recommend the organization as a workplace and the second question is asks for why they chose the rating they did. The survey results can provide important insights relating to employee engagement. To make sure your employees are engaged and happy, it is best to survey employees on a regular basis to capture potential problems and take suitable measures.