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diary

Talent acquisition is not just recruitment

■ Kiran Yadav

Talent is defined as a natural ability to excel at something, especially without being taught; acquiring it certainly is no walk in the park.

In an unusual paradox, despite being a country of a billion people, we are far from winning the war for talent as hiring and training; and retaining people continues to be the single biggest challenge companies face today.

Today, people and not product or process determine the success as well as longevity of an organisation and that does not happen by chance but by a well-designed and executed talent acquisition (TA) and talent management strategy.

The process for TA begins much before the actual recruitment takes place, in fact the cornerstone of great organisations rests on how best their business strategy manifests in their hiring plans and forecasts. The intent has to be to attract and hire the most relevant candidates suitable for the growth stage the organisation is in at that point and invest in building a future pipeline - the strategy should continually adapt and evolve.

Talent acquisition teams execute the defined strategy. As the first contact with potential hires, it is imperative for HR associates to understand short and long term business goals and alignment of various priorities as well as expectations of business leaders. They need to continuously sharpen their saw, leverage technology, have segmented strategies for specific roles and cultivate relationships. TA strategy deployment demands investment of time and effort as it does not end with a tactical agenda of filling positions but nurturing, grooming and being attractive to future talent. Today we are at a juncture where the measure of success for a recruitment team is not the turn-around time alone but the actual candidate experience from the time of first connect till on board. Equally



important in this strategy is management of candidates who are not finally offered a role by the company, they can be the biggest ambassadors in spite of not making it if they cherish the experience.

At the heart of a talent acquisition strategy is predictive analytics which supports sound decision making, help re-adjust and realign the focus basis evolving company needs and reaffirms or rejects notions and views by presenting trends and data. A popular concept catching up today is backcasting which is a data backed approach for future planning and considerations.

To summarise, one can say that organisations need to have a holistic talent acquisition proposition where recruitment is only a part of it and should serve as base for talent management in a seamless manner. Importantly, the strategy needs to adequately account for internal talent first and foremost by ensuring

they are nurtured and trained for higher mandates.

Finally, it's everyone's job. Yes, TA is not limited to the HR domain anymore as lines between functions and roles is blurring. With online portals, social media, referral schemes and alumni networks everyone is both - a recruiter and brand ambassador for the organisation.

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The problem with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat.

>LILLY TOMLIN