

 SHRM Foundation's
Effective Practice Guidelines Series

Talent Acquisition: A Guide to Understanding and Managing the Recruitment Process

Talent Acquisition: A Guide to Understanding and Managing the Recruitment Process

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FOREWORD

Research shows that the success of an organization is closely tied to the quality of its employees. A recent study found that employers who excelled in recruiting experienced 3.5 times more revenue growth and twice the profit margin of other employers. But acquiring the right talent can be a challenge. Employers must decide what type of people they want to attract, what recruitment message to convey and how to reach the targeted individuals.

To help you meet these challenges and recruit the best talent, the SHRM Foundation has created *Talent Acquisition: A Guide to Understanding and Managing the Recruitment Process*. This guide focuses on external recruitment. It shows employers how to develop a focused recruitment strategy that takes into account the job applicant's perspective, targets and reaches specific types of candidates with a well-crafted message, and secures the most highly qualified candidates for the organization.

This report is part of the SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines series, which now includes more than 20 titles. Created in 2004 for busy HR professionals, the series integrates research findings with expert opinion on how to conduct effective HR practice. It provides the tools to successfully practice evidence-based management. Other recent reports include *Leading Change*, *Cultural Intelligence: The Essential Intelligence for the 21st Century* and *The Aging Workforce*. To ensure the material is both practical and research-based, the reports are written by subject-matter experts and are then peer-reviewed by both academics and HR professionals.

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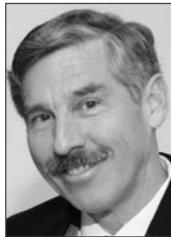
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Organizations Professor Breugh has consulted with include Anheuser-Busch, Monsanto, Express Scripts, AT&T, City of Bridgeton, Laclede Gas Company, Busch Entertainment Corporation, Farm Credit Banks, the Visiting Nurses Association and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. His consulting work has involved developing realistic job previews, creating selection systems, instituting 360-degree feedback programs, evaluating recruitment strategies, conducting attitude surveys and validating testing programs.



The use of social networking websites like LinkedIn and Facebook has grown rapidly for recruiting. In 2009, for example, UPS hired 19 people using such sites; in 2014, it hired 24,475 individuals.

TALENT ACQUISITION: A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS



The success of any organization—whether a small manufacturer or a *Fortune* 500 company—is closely tied to the quality of its employees, which, in turn, is closely tied to its talent acquisition process. The way an employer recruits affects the individuals it hires, the training they need, their initial performance and their retention rate. The topic of employee recruitment has attracted considerable attention.¹ It is estimated that U.S. employers spent \$140 billion on recruitment activities in 2012.² Recruiting processes have a direct impact on an organization's bottom line; a 2012 study³ found that employers that excelled in recruiting experienced 3.5 times more revenue growth and twice the profit margin of employers that were less capable in recruiting.

Acquiring the right talent can be a challenging task. Employers must decide the type of people they want to attract, what recruitment message to convey and how to reach targeted individuals. If done poorly, an organization's recruitment efforts can produce job applicants who are unqualified, lack diversity or may be likely to quit if hired. A poorly designed recruitment process can also miss highly qualified job candidates because they were unaware of a job opening.

This report offers practical recommendations for talent acquisition practices based on peer-reviewed research. The focus will be on external recruitment. *External recruitment* includes an employer's actions intended to a) bring a job opening to the attention of potential candidates outside the organization, b) influence whether these candidates apply for the opening, c) affect whether they maintain interest in the opening until a job offer is extended, and/or d) affect whether a job offer is accepted. Many of these recommendations also apply to internal recruitment (e.g., publicizing job openings to current employees). And it should be noted that promoting from within is often more effective (less costly, results in

a better placement) than external recruitment. However, internal recruitment is not specifically covered here due to the limited research available.

Before getting into the nuts and bolts of recruiting, consider how things have changed in the past few years. Since 2009, the economy has moved from a period of recession to a period of growth, and as a result, it is taking longer for employers to fill job openings.⁴ The use of social networking websites like LinkedIn and Facebook has grown rapidly for recruiting. In 2009, for example, UPS hired 19 people using such sites; in 2014, it hired 24,475 individuals.⁵ Another change is the increased use of mobile technology by job applicants. Today, many applicants apply for jobs using their cellphones.⁶

Although these changes in the recruitment landscape are exciting, recruitment managers should carefully evaluate the pros and cons of new developments before making changes to their current recruitment practices. For example, although social networking sites allow greater

access to passive job candidates (i.e., individuals who are not actively looking for a job), some evidence suggests that passive candidates are more expensive to recruit and, if hired, do not make as good employees as active job candidates.⁷ As another example, an employer with a mobile-friendly website makes it easier for candidates to submit applications; however, the ease of submission could result in many applicants who are not serious candidates for the job. A very large applicant pool increases the chance that an employer will overlook strong candidates. Another challenge is the abundance of information about an organization now available to job applicants. Ideally, having access to more information should allow for better applicant self-selection—allowing people to opt out of applying for positions that are not a good fit. However, some of the information available may be inaccurate, such as negative reviews on Glassdoor, making it tougher for candidates to make good decisions. Determining how to respond to such negative reviews can be a challenge for organizations.

A MODEL OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Figure 1 presents a recruitment process model. HR professionals who use the steps outlined in this model and who make informed decisions along the way can increase the chances of reaching their recruitment objectives. Each step in the model is explained below.

Establish recruitment objectives

The first step in the recruitment process is to establish recruitment objectives. These objectives should be aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization.⁸ For example, if an organization has a strategic objective to be a leader in customer service, this should be kept in mind when deciding whom to target for recruitment.

Ideally, those involved in the recruitment function should have input into key business strategy decisions. If an employer wants to open a new location in an area where labor demand exceeds supply, for example, a knowledgeable person from the recruitment function

Figure 1: A Model of the Employee Recruitment Process

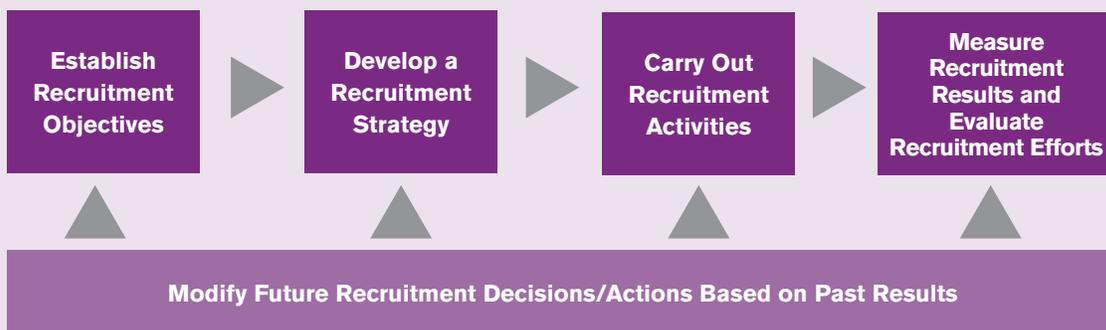


Table 1: Common Recruitment Objectives

• Number of open positions to be filled.
• Date by which positions should be filled.
• Cost-per-hire.
• Number of applications desired.
• Type of applicants sought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Level and type of education. ◦ Level and type of work experience. ◦ Knowledge, skills and abilities. ◦ Diversity (e.g., race, age, gender, socioeconomic status). ◦ Other considerations (e.g., currently employed?).
• Job performance goals for new hires.
• Expected new-hire retention rate.

should explain to hiring managers the need to design competitive rewards packages and to expect longer-than-typical time frames for filling positions.⁹

Table 1 lists several possible objectives to consider when planning a recruitment campaign. For example, if an organization wants to fill three job openings in customer service, an objective might be a 30-day time frame to fill those positions. One of the most important objectives, however, is to determine the types of applicants being sought—for example, the type of work experience and skills the organization needs. Many employers focus on prehire outcomes such as whether open positions were filled in a timely manner, but increasingly, employers are also paying attention to post-hire outcomes, such as new hires' initial job performance.¹⁰

Recruiting managers should ask for input from others in the organization when establishing recruitment objectives. For example, an HR manager in charge of employee selection can share information about the skills the organization needs in new employees. Functional managers who will be working with new employees can be a valuable source for information that should be communicated to applicants. By obtaining input from outside the HR department, recruiting managers will have additional information to improve the process, and they will develop allies to support future recruitment actions.

When establishing recruiting objectives, there are two additional points to consider. First, HR should gain agreement on how the objectives will be measured. For

example, will the quality of a new hire be evaluated based on objective performance data, a supervisor's judgment or customers' ratings?¹¹ Second, employers must be aware of the nuances of specific labor markets. For some jobs, qualified candidates may be plentiful, whereas for other jobs, they may be scarce.

Develop a recruitment strategy

The next step after establishing recruitment objectives is to develop a recruitment strategy to fill job openings. This phase involves establishing a specific plan of action to meet recruitment objectives. Table 2 lists some of the questions an organization might address when developing a recruitment strategy.

Determining the type of individuals that should be targeted for recruitment (e.g., those with certain skills) was initially addressed in discussing the establishment of recruitment objectives. With regard to strategy development, an organization should further specify the type of job applicants it wants. For example, does the organization want to recruit recent college graduates, individuals who currently work for its competitors or members of some other distinct group such as military veterans (all of whom may have the skills established as recruitment objectives)? Until an organization identifies the type of individuals it wants to recruit, it will have difficulty making informed decisions about the other strategy-related questions in Table 2. To answer these questions, an employer may need to do some

Table 2: Key Strategy Development Questions

• What type of individuals should be targeted?
• What recruitment message should be communicated?
• How can the targeted individuals best be reached?
• When should the recruitment campaign begin?
• What should be the nature of a site visit?

research, such as evaluating past recruitment efforts to determine what sources of recruits worked best in the past.

Carry out recruitment activities

The thoughtful development of a recruitment strategy is critical if an employer is to derive maximum value from its recruitment activities. Having established a coherent strategy, the next step is to carry out recruitment activities—like advertising a job opening on the organization's website—that are consistent with the strategy. Details about recruitment activities are discussed in later sections of this report.

Measure and evaluate recruitment results

Effective measurement is vital to determining whether recruitment objectives have been achieved, yet many organizations do not formally evaluate their recruitment efforts.¹² In some cases, this is because they have not gathered data on important recruitment metrics.¹³ If a formal evaluation is not conducted, then employers are not able to learn from their past efforts and design better recruitment campaigns in the future. The experience of the energy management firm Opower demonstrates the benefits of evaluating past recruitment practices.¹⁴ Opower found that employee referrals and former interns were two times more likely to remain with the company for more than two years than individuals coming from other sources. Although many employers do not currently evaluate their recruitment

Table 3: Important Recruitment Metrics

• Time-to-hire.
• Cost of filling the position.
• Yield ratio for each recruitment method.
• New-employee retention rate.
• New-employee performance level.
• Hiring manager's satisfaction with the recruitment process.
• Applicants' perceptions of the recruitment process.

Source: Minton-Eversole, T. (2009). Quality measurement: Key to best-in-class talent acquisition. *HR Magazine*, 64-65.

practices, the growing use and availability of talent analytics is expected to change this in the near future.¹⁵

Organizations should have two goals in mind when evaluating the recruitment process. The first goal is to gather information on outcomes such as those listed in Table 3, so they can learn from past efforts and modify recruiting approaches in the future (the feedback arrows in Figure 1, on page 2, reflect this learning process). The second goal is to demonstrate to functional managers that recruitment efforts have bottom-line implications for the organization.¹⁶ For example, providing hard data to senior management on the cost savings of filling positions in a timely manner could help justify additional resources for the recruiting function.

Vanguard and Facebook are examples of organizations that conduct rigorous evaluations of their college recruitment efforts. These companies gathered data on which universities yielded the most hires, the most productive employees and the employees who were retained.¹⁷ As a result, they increased recruiting at some schools and dropped others from their recruitment rosters.

Johnson & Johnson¹⁸ has also made effective use of recruitment data. It found that its practice of favoring experienced job candidates over recent college graduates was not appropriate given that new graduates performed as well as more experienced individuals and stayed on the job longer.

To thoroughly evaluate a recruitment process, organizations should go beyond data on outcomes such as time-to-fill or first-year retention rate. Rather, they should also gather data that reflect key elements of the recruitment process itself. An employer could gather that information by asking new employees such questions as:

- Was the website simple to navigate, and did it provide useful information?
- Were inquiries responded to in a timely fashion?
- Were you treated well during your visit to headquarters?

There are numerous ways an organization can evaluate its recruitment process. Figure 2 provides examples of how evaluating past recruitment outcomes might lead to changes to improve the process going forward.

Figure 2: Six Possible Changes Prompted by an Evaluation of Past Recruitment Activities

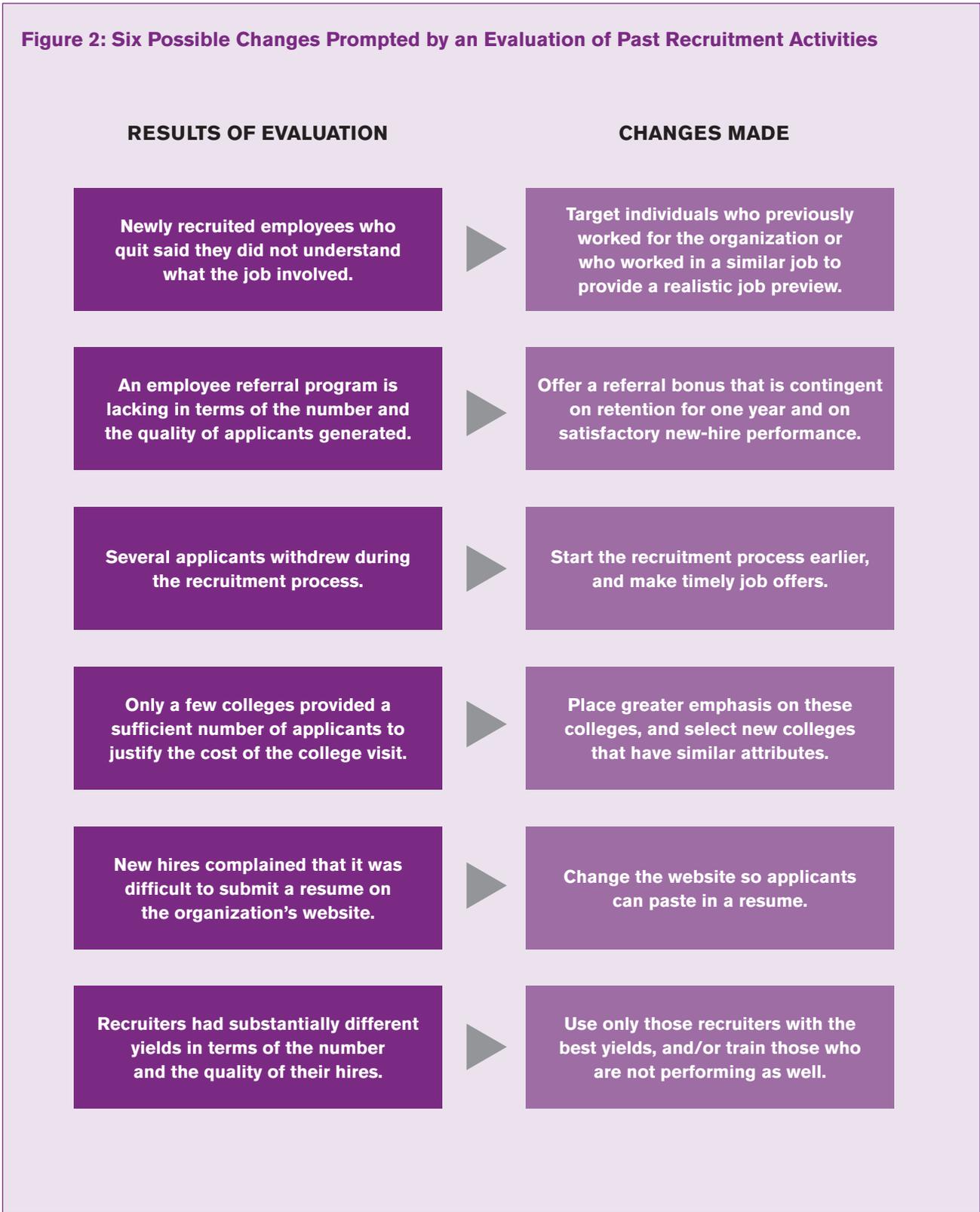


Table 4: Job Applicant-Related Variables that Affect the Recruitment Process

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting the attention of individuals targeted for recruitment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating individual interest in a job opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Position attractiveness. ◦ Expectation of a job offer. ◦ Alternative opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy of the applicant's expectations concerning a job with an organization.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant decision-making process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The decision to apply. ◦ The decision to remain a candidate during the entire recruitment process. ◦ The decision to accept a job offer if one is extended.

THE JOB APPLICANT'S PERSPECTIVE

In addition to focusing on desired employer outcomes during the recruiting process, to achieve the best results, it is also helpful to understand the applicant's perspective. Table 4 lists a number of applicant-related variables that deserve attention.

Attracting the attention of targeted individuals

Though it may seem obvious, successful recruitment campaigns are those that attract the attention of the right applicants. Some employers, such as a highly visible organization with a positive reputation, may easily attract qualified applicants for their job openings. But many companies have difficulty reaching the intended audience, for example, if candidates are happily employed elsewhere. Social networking sites have made it easier for employers to attract the attention of individuals they would like to recruit even if those individuals are not actively looking for a job.¹⁹ In some situations, though, an employer's targeted audience (e.g., retirees) may not

have a strong presence on the Internet. In such cases, employers should change the way they recruit specific audiences. In an article for *Forbes*, Amy Rees Anderson²⁰ offered five creative recruiting approaches, including running short videos featuring job openings before movies.

Generating interest in a job opening

Once an organization has the candidate's attention, it needs to give the person a reason to apply for the job. Table 4 lists three variables that can influence a prospective recruit's interest in a job opening. The first variable is position attractiveness. Job duties, compensation, benefits and geographic location are related to position attractiveness. The impact any of these aspects have depends on the type of person being recruited. Ideally, recruiting managers target people who are attracted to what they are offering. For instance, for retirees who are considering returning to work, the ability to work part time may make a position more attractive. Some employers even tailor the job to the target audience. For example, to make their positions

more attractive to recent college graduates, PricewaterhouseCoopers is helping new hires repay their student loans.²¹

The effect generational differences may have on what constitutes job attractiveness has recently received a lot of attention. For example, some research shows that Millennials are attracted to socially responsible organizations that offer such things as flexible work schedules, work/life balance and the opportunity to work on meaningful tasks.²² However, other experts have questioned the extent of generational differences.²³

In addition to position attractiveness, a person's interest in a job opening is affected by his or her expectation of receiving a job offer. Not surprisingly, people who believe they have a good chance of receiving a job offer show more interest in the job.²⁴ This variable should not be viewed in isolation, though. If a position is particularly desirable, individuals may apply even if they believe the chance of receiving a job offer is small.

A third variable that influences job interest concerns other alternatives a person has or thinks he or she will have. These alternatives include remaining employed in his or her current job, the likelihood of an alternative job offer, returning to school, or retiring. Research²⁵ has shown that individuals who perceive more alternatives to a job opening are less likely to be interested in it, especially if one or more of the alternatives are seen as being more attractive than the opening under consideration. The importance of this finding is addressed in the next section on targeting certain groups for recruitment.

Exhibit 1: Job Candidates' Comments on How Organizational Actions Affected Them

- “They called me regularly to see if I had any questions. That showed they were really interested in me.”
- “I had a terrible experience with one job interviewer. He was rude, childish and not that professional. I was offered the job but declined the offer.”
- “My mom was ill and I had to cancel a site visit. They sent a huge bouquet of flowers . . . they made me feel important.”
- “Consciously, the recruiter doesn't matter, but I'm sure that subconsciously it does. If a person makes you feel more comfortable, then you'll feel more comfortable about the job.”
- “I assumed I was going to get a ding letter, which usually happens when you don't hear from a company within a few weeks. So I started to look at other options, and I didn't take that company as a serious option.”
- “In explaining the terms of their job offer, [the company] said that they do not have to pay higher because there are five people waiting in line behind me to take the job. Basically, they told me I'm dispensable.”
- “I generalize a lot about the company from their representative. If that person is not very sharp, does not seem particularly interested in me, or asks the same questions as every other recruiter, it does not impress me.”
- “I think a lot of people look at recruiting practices as reflective of the company, and in many cases that's absolutely accurate. Despite the fact that other factors matter, people do make choices based on how they're treated.”

Sources: Ali, A. A., Ryan, A. M., Lyons, B. J., Ehrhart, M. G., & Wessel, J. L. (in press). The long road to employment: Incivility experienced by job seekers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*; Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V., LePine, M. A., & Moynihan, L. M. (2003). Individual job-choice decisions and the impact of job attributes and recruitment practices. *Human Resource Management, 42*, 23-37; and Rynes, S. L., Bretz, R. D., & Gerhart, B. (1991). The importance of recruitment in job choice: A different way of looking. *Personnel Psychology, 44*, 487-521.

The accuracy of an applicant's expectations about a job also merits attention. Applicants often have inaccurate expectations about a job they have applied for. In some cases, this may be because the employer made a job appear as attractive as possible to broaden the applicant pool and to increase the likelihood that a job offer will be accepted.²⁶

This recruitment approach can cause problems. For example, as candidates with inflated expectations learn more about the organization and the position during the recruitment process, some may withdraw their application later in the process after the employer has expended considerable resources recruiting them. Some candidates with inflated

expectations may become aware of what things are really like after they are hired and working—these individuals are more likely to quit their jobs than new hires with realistic expectations.²⁷ Employers, then, should ensure that applicants have realistic expectations of the job and the organization. There are two different approaches for doing so: targeting certain types of persons for recruitment and providing realistic job information during the recruitment process; both approaches are discussed later in this report.

In addition to the attractiveness of the job opening and a person's expectation of a job offer, other factors have an effect on whether a person applies for a job, including the ease with which one can apply for a position. Another decision a candidate makes during the recruitment process is whether to remain a job candidate. Over the course of the recruitment process, applicants' perceptions frequently change. Several factors can influence whether an applicant remains interested in a job opening. For example, a person who thought he or she had a good chance at receiving a job offer may lose interest if the employer fails to make contact in a timely fashion after an interview. Alternatively, an organization that was initially viewed as a back-up option may be viewed more positively after an applicant visits corporate headquarters. Exhibit 1 provides quotes from job seekers that show how various recruitment actions play a role in whether the organization is successful in filling job openings with desirable applicants.

The final decision a candidate makes is whether to accept a job offer. The attractiveness of a position is clearly a major determinant, but other factors also play a role. For example, the time frame for accepting an offer can be important because the candidate may not want to make a decision until after he or she has heard from other employers. Sometimes a candidate's treatment during the recruitment process leads the person to believe he or she was not the first choice, and this may make the job less attractive.

process can unfold over time. The applicant's decision-making process is influenced at each stage by the position's attractiveness. At some stages the likelihood of receiving a job offer affects the decision process, as does how well he or she fits the advertised position and whether the time frame for filling the position meets his or her needs. These perceptions can change over time, depending on new information received (like reading a positive review of the employer on Glassdoor), the timing of recruitment actions (not hearing

from an employer for several weeks after a job interview, for example), and other events (such as receiving an attractive job offer from another organization). To be more specific, an employer's initial recruitment actions, like contacting individuals on a social networking site, may result in some individuals applying for the position and others not submitting an application. For those who apply, some may decline an invitation for a site visit (or a telephone interview or online testing) as a result of new information acquired about the employer or delays in the

Figure 3 presents a model of how an applicant's view of the recruitment

Figure 3: An Applicant's View of the Recruitment Process



recruitment process. Other candidates may accept the invitation for a site visit. For those receiving job offers, some may accept them. Others may decline job offers because the compensation was inadequate, the job offer start date was unworkable or some other reason. (For a more detailed discussion of applicant decision-making over the course of the recruitment process, and how it interacts with organizational actions, see the paper by Carlson and Connerly²⁸).

Considering the job applicant's perspective can provide helpful insights, such as ideas for shortening the recruitment process. Now let's return to the employer's point of view.

WHOM TO RECRUIT? THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF TARGETED RECRUITMENT

In planning a recruitment process, a crucial question that needs to be answered is *whom should you recruit?* How this question is answered affects:

- What recruitment message organizations communicate. For example, when recruiting former employees, employers do not need to provide much information about the organization.
- How the organization publicizes a position. For example, recruiters looking to fill positions with older workers should recognize that they may be less likely to use some forms of social media.

Relatively little research has addressed the topic of targeted recruitment.²⁹ However, combining the existing research with practitioner reports on this topic allows for some good recommendations. Employers usually focus on skills, experience, education

and other worker-related attributes when deciding what group(s) to target for recruitment. Such a narrow focus is understandable, but employers could benefit from broadening the range of factors considered. Looking at the job applicant's perspective offers insight into other factors to consider in deciding whom to target for recruitment.

Position attractiveness

Research shows that job candidates evaluate the overall attractiveness of a job opening based on the desirability of the attributes it offers, their likelihood of receiving a job offer and the number of alternative options they have. A detailed discussion of the various attributes that make a job offer attractive is beyond the scope of this report. However, here are a few issues to consider. Because it is difficult to change individuals' attitudes about an organization,³⁰ it makes sense to target individuals who are positively predisposed to working there. These may include people who previously applied for a position with the organization,³¹ people who follow the organization on social media,³² current customers of the organization (targeting customers will be discussed shortly), people who will not need to relocate³³ and people who are similar to current employees.³⁴ Of course employers must be sensitive to diversity issues when targeting people similar to the current employee base; however, done in the right way, this can make a position more attractive.

To increase an individual's expectancy of receiving a job offer, employers should be clear in recruitment communications about what the ideal job candidate looks like.³⁵ To minimize a person's perception of having better alternatives to the job opening being

considered, an employer may want to target candidates who have few alternatives. For example, when filling lower-level positions, organizations like Oenida Airport Hotel Corporation and Dave's Killer Bread have been successful by targeting the long-term unemployed and individuals with criminal records.³⁶

Position insight and self-insight

No employer wants to hire people who are not a good fit in terms of their skills and their job expectations.³⁷ Two factors to consider in recruiting are a candidate's understanding of what the position entails (position insight) and a candidate's awareness of his or her talents and interests (self-insight). To maximize both factors, it makes sense to focus recruitment carefully. Table 5, on page 10, illustrates that recruiting former employees who have performed well in the past is likely to result in new hires with high position insight and self-insight.³⁸ Former employees also generally need less training and are less likely to quit.

Former interns, temporary workers and candidates who have worked in similar jobs with other employers are also likely to have considerable position insight and self-insight.³⁹ Recruits who have family members or friends who work for the organization also should have greater insight into the workings of the organization than people who lack such a connection.

Four specific groups are considered next to highlight the value of making thoughtful decisions about targeted recruitment. The general principles presented in examining these groups should allow employers to generalize results to other potential groups.

Table 5: The Benefits of Targeting Specific Types of Individuals for Recruitment

Group Targeted	Position Insight		Self-Insight	
	Job Tasks	Organization	Talents	Wants/Interests
Former employee	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Internship	Good	Good	Good	Good
Temporary employee	Good	Good	Good	Good
Family or friends	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
Similar prior job	Good	Minimal	Fair	Fair
No group targeted	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal

Note: Rankings are relative within a column.

Targeting customers

A number of organizations have targeted their customers for recruitment. Ikea includes career information at the bottom of packaging cartons for its products.⁴⁰ Wells Fargo advertises job openings on its customer receipts.⁴¹ Cabela's, a retail outdoor chain store known for hunting, fishing and camping merchandise, recruits customers because they are a good source for candidates with in-depth knowledge about its products and they are excited about the outdoors. Not only has Cabela's successfully hired several customers; it discovered that many of its new hires were not even looking for a job until the company took the initiative to recruit them.⁴² Targeting customers can be a particularly effective strategy for small organizations because their customers are usually easy to contact, have a good sense of the workplace and often have a positive impression of working there.⁴³

Factoring in geography

The geographic location of a job is a recruiting factor that has received little attention. In recent years, a number

of employers in low-population states have found it difficult to fill job openings locally. To address this, Wyoming launched a program that reaches out to former residents in hopes of filling critical positions like nurses and teachers.⁴⁴ The state developed a website called Wyoming Grown that lists job openings and asks Wyoming residents to reach out to individuals who may be interested in returning home. Private employers also have taken the initiative to recruit former state residents. RightNow Technologies, a Bozeman, Mont., employer, had "tapped out the local supply of talent"⁴⁵ but needed more marketing professionals and software engineers to grow. RightNow did not have much luck when it placed job advertisements in major cities in the western United States and decided to try to attract former Montana residents to return home. To make them aware of its job openings, the company purchased a list of alumni from Montana State University. The effort was so successful that other Montana employers followed RightNow's approach. Another geographical factor that should influence an organization's decisions about targeted

recruitment is the unemployment rate. The city of Denver, for example, was finding it difficult to fill openings in its police department. When it heard that the Detroit police department had announced layoffs, it sent recruiters to Detroit to administer its police exam.⁴⁶

Targeting seniors

Older individuals are often overlooked as a source for recruits, and this is a mistake. Home Depot specifically targets retired contractors and craftsmen for recruitment because of their expert home improvement knowledge. In a similar way, H&R Block recruits retired accountants to work during tax season.⁴⁷ In addition to having desirable job-related knowledge to share, older workers also offer the advantages of being willing to work part time and not needing health insurance if they qualify for Medicare. Some employers have found that even for those older workers who do not qualify for Medicare, the higher health care costs are offset by lower rates of absenteeism and turnover.⁴⁸ Employers recruiting older workers should carefully consider how to bring job openings to their

attention. Although online sites geared to seniors such as YourEncore.com exist, they may not be the best option. Instead, organizations might consider partnering with AARP or other senior-oriented groups, visiting senior-oriented community centers, or posting job notices in retirement communities.

Targeting for diversity

Many employers are committed to having a diverse workforce because it makes good business sense. If employers want diverse customers, for example, their workforces should reflect that diversity. Other employers seek diversity in their workplaces because they have a sense of social responsibility. Others seek diversity to reduce the likelihood of a lawsuit or to comply with Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) requirements for government contractors. A recruitment process that reaches a diverse audience is a key to attracting a diverse workforce. Despite their stated intentions, though, employers sometimes recruit in ways that actually restrict their audience. For example, an employer that relies on social networking sites may find itself with an applicant pool that lacks older individuals. Recruiting exclusively on college campuses may result in an applicant pool with a lack of minorities (this is less likely to occur if employers target colleges with sizable minority student bodies). Another factor that can result in an applicant pool being underrepresented in terms of minorities is an employer's unwillingness to consider individuals with criminal records for jobs. Although a number of factors should be considered by an employer in recruiting individuals with criminal

histories for positions,⁴⁹ a decision not to hire anyone with a criminal record can be misguided, especially for an employer with hard-to-fill positions. Several employers such as Kahala Caterers and Johns Hopkins Health Systems have found that individuals with criminal records make excellent employees.⁵⁰

Individuals with disabilities is another group employers should consider recruiting. Individuals with disabilities often have a harder time finding a job, so they frequently are easier to hire.⁵¹ More importantly, employers like Giant Food, Citizens Energy Group and Starbucks have found that individuals with disabilities often make superior employees. For example, Walgreens found that individuals with disabilities who worked in its distribution centers performed their jobs as well as or better than other workers and that their absenteeism rate was approximately 30 percent lower.⁵² In terms of the cost of accommodations, the Job Accommodation Network found that for 60 percent of those hired, there was no financial cost to employers. For individuals who do require an accommodation, the cost is typically less than \$600.

There are far too many variables related to targeting recruitment efforts to address in this report, but the preceding discussion should help recruiting managers think creatively about how their organizations can benefit from targeting certain groups for recruitment. As an example of the creativity shown by organizations, Exhibit 2, on page 12, shows the various groups Uber has targeted for recruitment and the ways Uber tries to reach these targeted groups.

THE RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

An employer's recruitment message is a major factor affecting whether people apply for and accept a job. To craft an effective recruitment message, organizations should begin by asking the following four questions:

- Does the message present information that is *important* to their target group?
- Is the information *specific*?
- Is the message *phrased* appropriately?
- Is the information *realistic*?

Different opinions exist about what constitutes a recruitment message. Some experts take a micro perspective and consider each communication with a prospective employee—such as comments made by a recruiter or content on a website—as a separate message. Others take more of a macro perspective and view the recruitment message as the totality of the information exchanges an organization has with a prospective employee over the course of the recruitment process. In this report a micro perspective is taken, but when planning a recruitment campaign, an organization should ensure that the sum of its recruitment messages conveys the overall message it wants to communicate.

Message credibility is fundamental to a successful recruitment effort. To strengthen candidates' perceptions of credibility, recruiting managers should consider three factors. First, recruitment communications have greater credibility if they provide

Exhibit 2: How Uber Targets Various Groups for Recruitment

Group Targeted	How Reached	Comments
Seniors	Works with Life Reimagined, a nonprofit wing of AARP.	Extra income in retirement; reduce boredom.
Military veterans	Attends job fairs for former military personnel.	Flexible work schedule to accommodate going to school or other activities.
Female drivers	Works with the YWCA, uses direct marketing and job fairs.	Safety is a concern.
Teachers	Elicits referrals from Uber drivers.	Opportunity to supplement income during summers.
College students	Visits college campuses.	Flexible work schedule to accommodate going to school.
Competitor's drivers	Hires contractors to ride with Lyft drivers.	Inquire about interest in switching service.

Sources: Asher-Schapiro, A. (2014, November 4). Uber is recruiting 50,000 veterans as drivers. *The Verge*. Retrieved from <http://www.theverge.com/2014/11/4/7150225/uber-is-recruiting-50000-veterans>; Dudek, M. (2015, May 28). Uber wants teachers, and is willing to pay. *Chicago Sun Times*. Retrieved from <http://chicago.suntimes.com/business/7/71/643765/uber-wants-teachers>; Elahi, A. (2015, June 9). Uber aims to recruit female drivers. *Chicago Sun Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.chicagotribune.com/bluesky/originals/ct-uber-ywca-metropolitan-chicago-bsi-20150609-story.html>; Knibbs, K. (2015, July 30). Uber is recruiting bored old people as drivers. *Gizmodo*. Retrieved from <http://gizmodo.com/uber-is-recruiting-bored-old-people-as-drivers-1721165374>; Lipinski, J. (2015, October 29). Uber recruiting drivers at New Orleans colleges. *The Times-Picayune*. Retrieved from http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2015/10/uber_recruiting_college_studen.html; Zillman, C. (2015, June 11). Here's Uber's weird new way of recruiting drivers. *Fortune*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/06/11/uber-video-game/>

some negative information about a job opening, for example “evening and weekend work required”. Second, credibility is enhanced if what is said about a job by different sources (e.g., a prospective supervisor, co-workers) is consistent. Finally, credibility is increased if some of the information comes from sources external to the organization.⁵³ For example, positive reviews on third-party websites are generally seen as being more objective than employer-provided testimonials. Awards from external sources (e.g., *Fortune*) may be seen as very credible sources for judging an employer as a good place to work. Even small organizations can compete for awards, as there are often categories for small businesses.

Many organizations begin to craft the recruitment message by gathering information about the required knowledge, skills, abilities and other

characteristics from the position's job description.⁵⁴ Employers want to communicate job requirements (e.g., skills needed) to prospective applicants, but too often they focus on the qualities they want in an applicant and give insufficient attention to what they can offer an applicant; they forget that recruitment is a two-way street in which each party is marketing itself to the other. A one-sided approach can result in good job candidates losing interest in a job opening. To discover desirable attributes a position offers, employers may need to conduct a different type of job analysis—one that focuses on discovering positive job features that can be used to “sell” individuals on the position while not exaggerating what it offers.⁵⁵

Provide important information

Recruitment messages should

include details about duties, work schedule, location and benefits. If an organization is targeting specific types of people, it should be sensitive to their unique information needs. Parents with young children, for example, may be interested in working from home.⁵⁶ There is some evidence that African-Americans are more attracted to employers that portray African-Americans in supervisory roles in photos.⁵⁷ Employers can address some of the details targeted recruits need in later stages of the recruitment process, but in some cases, potential recruits will not even apply for a position if they do not have particular information—such as the option of flexible work hours.

It can be tricky for small employers to decide what information to provide in early recruitment messages. Organizations want to

attract candidates' attention, but they do not want to lose them without making their best case. In this regard, experts suggest that small employers emphasize the special aspects of working there.⁵⁸ For example, Kayak, a travel planning site trying to recruit against giants in its industry, emphasizes the opportunity to make a great impact on the company and the growth potential of its stock options.⁵⁹

Provide specific information

Employers often provide information in job listings that is too general to attract potential employees. For example, would you be more attracted to an organization that says it "values its employees" or to an organization that lets potential employees know that "no one has been laid off in the last 10 years"? Would a job seeker be more likely to apply to an organization that says its "benefits are excellent," or to one that specifies "new employees receive three weeks of vacation to start"? Of course there is a risk that providing such specific information will turn away some candidates, but those people may be unlikely to accept a job offer anyway. On the other hand, stating such specific information at the start may encourage some good job candidates to apply for a job. Another benefit of providing specific information up front is that it may result in individuals paying more attention to the information presented.⁶⁰

Compensation is important to job seekers, so employers may want to consider providing that information when advertising the position. Most organizations use phrases like "compensation is competitive"

in job advertisements, but how many prospective applicants really know what that means? Some experts⁶¹ have advocated publicizing a salary range. This may seem like a radical step, but because much of this information is now available

on the Internet (Glassdoor publishes salary ranges for jobs with employers), publicizing a salary range allows an organization to appear more open and transparent, and may allow it to correct erroneous information being circulated.

Key Takeaways for Recruitment Targeting

Targeted Individuals	Examples of Possible Recruitment Actions (Applicability will depend on type of job and employer, e.g., hourly versus salaried position.)
Familiar with job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit former employees who previously performed well. Target former interns. Seek individuals who have held similar jobs elsewhere. Recruit individuals who have family members or friends working in the type of job being filled.
Familiar with organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit former employees who previously performed well. Target former interns. Seek individuals who have worked for similar employers. Recruit individuals who have family members or friends working for the organization. Target customers.
Attracted to organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target previous job applicants. Recruit individuals who will not need to relocate. Seek individuals who are similar to current employees. Target individuals who will have a short commute. Recruit individuals who have shown initial interest (e.g., attended a job fair).
Fewer options/likely to accept job offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target the unemployed. Recruit individuals with disabilities. Seek individuals who lack work experience. Recruit individuals with criminal records. Target older workers.

Correctly phrase the recruitment message

Wording matters. Using precise language is essential because the lack thereof could cause qualified individuals not to apply for a job opening or lead to possible legal challenges. Facebook, for example, settled a lawsuit with the state of California on age discrimination when it ran a job advertisement that said “class of 2007 or 2008 preferred.”⁶² Similarly, the phrase “digital native” is frequently inferred to mean that preference is given to younger applicants.⁶³

Employers should steer clear of gender-oriented wording as well.⁶⁴ For example, a 2011 study⁶⁵ found that gendered wording is common (i.e., the use of male-oriented terms such as “decisive” and “competitive”) and that this wording can result in women believing that they do not belong in an occupation. As an example, this study found that an advertisement for a retail store manager was more likely to attract female applicants if the wording was “you will be the *head* of our fast-paced store” than if it stated “you will be the *boss* of our fast-paced store.”

Another study at Hewlett-Packard found that women generally applied for a position only when they met all of the stated job requirements; in contrast, men applied when they met just 60 percent of the listed requirements.⁶⁶ Such results suggest that employers should be judicious in stating job requirements, listing only “must haves” for the position.

The lesson here is that recruiting managers must be careful how they write job advertisements. Although they may not intend to discourage members of a protected group from applying, it can still happen.

Provide realistic information

It is common for new hires to feel that their new job is not what they expected. They may feel they did not do enough research about the job or employer, or they may feel they were intentionally misled by the organization.⁶⁷ Because job disillusionment has been linked to high turnover and poor performance, a number of organizations have tried to improve the accuracy of the job expectations held by new employees. One approach is to target job candidates who are likely to possess accurate expectations. A second approach is to provide a *realistic job preview* (RJP) during the recruitment process. New York City’s approach to recruiting case workers provides an excellent example (see Exhibit 3).

Although RJP’s are frequently discussed as being one-time events, such as providing applicants with a booklet that describes the job, they are better conceived of as a process by which an employer helps a job candidate understand what a position truly involves. An employer may provide a candid description of a job opening on its website along with a description of the organization. Additional realistic information may be provided during a phone interview or a tour of the worksite or in conversations with prospective co-workers. Alternative approaches may better fit a particular job opening. For example, the Idaho State Police reported that having job candidates take part in a trooper “ride along” reduced turnover from 8.3 percent to 6.1 percent.⁶⁸ Other organizations have made effective use of work simulations (e.g., Uber’s “Day in the Life” game⁶⁹). Marriott International used a game called “My Marriott Hotel” to give prospective employees

a sense of what it is like to run a hotel kitchen.⁷⁰

There is always a risk that providing realistic job information may cause some desirable candidates to withdraw their applications, but this should not be viewed as a negative. It is quite likely they would have been unhappy if hired into a job that did not meet their expectations, resulting in greater turnover or low motivation. A final benefit of providing realistic information is that candidates are more likely to view other job-related information as credible.

Your employment brand

Even if you make contact with your intended audience, those targets may not pay attention to your recruitment message—research suggests that people spend less than 80 seconds reading even relevant job advertisements.⁷¹ One way to attract the attention of the right individuals and to get them to spend more time considering your job opening is to have a strong employment brand. As explained in SHRM’s spring 2008 *Staffing Research*,⁷² an employment brand reflects how an organization “wants prospective and current employees to see the company.” An employment brand reflects an organization’s reputation—its values, culture, how it treats employees and their levels of engagement. Every organization has one, whether it is intentional or not. To be effective, an employment brand should be actively managed to convey why potential candidates should be interested in working for an organization.⁷³ To develop an accurate employment brand statement, an employer can gather information from its employees via focus groups, surveys and one-on-one interviews.⁷⁴

Exhibit 3: New York City's Use of a Realistic Message in Recruiting Caseworkers

In past years, the average caseworker in New York City's Administration for Children's Services Department (ACSD) remained in the job for two years, which included five months of training. To address this high turnover rate, which is expensive and increases the work load of the remaining caseworkers, the ACSD decided to provide applicants with a better understanding of what they were getting into. One of its sales pitches was:

Wanted: *Men and women willing to walk into strange buildings in dangerous neighborhoods, be screamed at by unhinged individuals—perhaps in a language you do not understand—and, on occasion, forcibly remove a child from the custody of parents because the alternative could have tragic consequences.*

An unusual approach to recruiting, but one that seems to be working. The first month after ACSD began running ads, inquiries were up about 200 percent. In addition to blunt ads, the city shows applicants for the caseworker position a video that highlights the more difficult aspects of the job. The pitch for caseworkers is intended to be realistic, not negative, so the importance of the position is also emphasized:

Our job is to keep children safe. You have to be able to walk into someone's home and get them to talk to you. You have to cope with unknown and troubling situations, and figure out the truth. It's all about how to protect a child. It's tough—but it's worth it.

New York City recruiters have no illusions about how much impact their realistic job preview approach can have. The department commissioner noted that even though they are providing a clear picture of the job, it is still difficult to gauge how a new worker will react when faced with breaking up a family.

Sources: Santora, M. (2008, March 3). To recruit caseworkers, a dose of reality. *The New York Times*, B3; Mooney, J. (2008, April 20). The faces of those who knock on difficult doors. *The New York Times*, B1.

An effective employment brand must be authentic and consistent with the organization's overall brand. This is particularly true today because information about employers is readily available from third-party sources like Vault and Glassdoor.

In addition to accurately describing what employment with an organization means, it is also critical that the brand be visible and engaging to prospective recruits. The brand can be described on the organization's website, conveyed on social media, featured in television ads or communicated during sponsored events on college campuses. Recruiters also communicate the employment brand directly, by how they treat candidates

during the application process. As Figure 4, on page 16, suggests, the use of the employment brand can be quite beneficial.

To differentiate the employer from competitors, brand tag lines must stand out. For example, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation sells itself as "Adding Tomorrows." Although it may take some work, it is well worth the effort to devise a factual but unique tag line that reflects the organization's brand. Every organization has attractive qualities it can showcase. For example, some people find the idea of working for the federal

government unappealing. For others, though, it means job security, flexible schedules and the ability to telecommute, all positive features.⁷⁵

Most of the research on employment branding has focused on large organizations, but as shown in Exhibit 4, on page 17, small organizations can also benefit from employment brands. Employment brands can also help change stereotypes held about an entire industry. Swedish fashion retailer H&M is an example of such an organization. As reflected in Exhibit 5, on page 17, to attract good workers, it had to change general perceptions of what working for a retailer meant.

RECRUITMENT METHODS: HOW TO REACH TARGETED EMPLOYEES

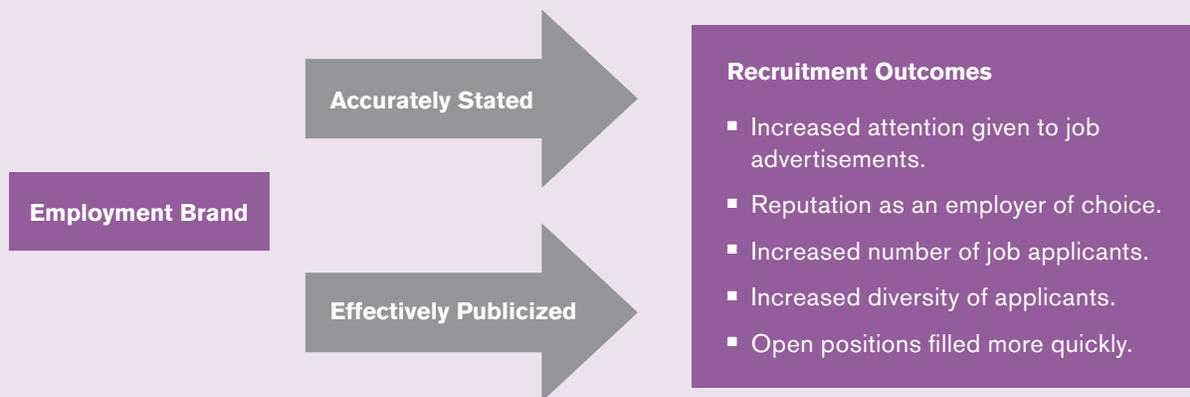
There are several ways to publicize job openings. As previously discussed, Uber (Exhibit 2, on page 12) and H&M (Exhibit 5, on page 17) have used job fairs, employee referrals, in-store advertisements and billboards to recruit new hires.

This section explores the following six major recruitment methods:

- Employee referrals.
- Organization's website.
- Job boards.
- College recruitment.
- Social networking sites.
- A collection of unusual methods.

Employee referrals

Survey results consistently show that employee referrals are the most commonly used and best way to recruit.⁷⁶ Current employees are promising sources for finding new hires for four major reasons:⁷⁷

Figure 4: Recruitment Outcomes Resulting from Effectively Communicating an Employment Brand

Sources: Society for Human Resource Management. (2008, April-June). The employer brand: A strategic tool to attract, recruit and retain talent. *SHRM Staffing Research*; Babcock, P. (2015, October 13). Keeping it real: Getting employer branding right. *SHRM Online*; Allen, D., Mahto, R., & Otondo, R. (2007, November). Web-based recruitment: Effects of information, organization brand, and attitudes toward a web site on applicant attraction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1696-1708.

- Current employees value their reputation, so they generally refer only individuals they believe would make exceptional employees. This is, in effect, a form of prescreening.
- Current employees are likely to provide referrals with realistic information about the job, so prospective applicants can make better decisions about whether the position is a good fit.
- Current employees are likely to help the people they refer master their new jobs once they are hired, especially if they work in the same department.
- Referrals from current employees are an effective way to bring job openings to the attention of people who are not actively looking for a job but possess desirable skills, work experience and work ethic.

Compared with individuals recruited by other methods, applicants generated by employee referrals tend to have better job qualifications and make better employees. Ernst & Young found

that its employee referrals performed at higher levels, stayed longer and better integrated into a team.⁷⁸ An employee referral program is usually less expensive than other recruitment methods even if bonuses are paid for successful referrals. For example, MasterCard found that its employee referral program, which pays bonuses up to \$3,000, “pays for itself nearly tenfold in terms of the savings in recruitment and retention costs.”⁷⁹ Figure 5, on page 18, shows how the use of employee referrals can result in better candidates and better new hires.

For maximum benefit, the employee making the referral must be committed to the organization and have sound knowledge of what the job opening involves. In most cases referrals made by people who work in the department with the job opening can provide more accurate job information. Another issue employers should consider is the diversity of their current workforces. A nondiverse workforce may be less

likely to bring job openings to the attention of minorities and women.

Organization's website

Some employers use their websites as a primary recruiting method, so it is not surprising that there are considerable research and several practitioner-oriented articles on this topic.⁸⁰ A website can be an inexpensive way to convey a lot of information about a job opening, both in writing and through videos. Companies such as Innocent Drinks and Google use videos to provide rich information about what it is like to work there. Before relying too heavily on a website though, organizations should be confident that this approach will reach the people they want to reach. For example, a small, less visible organization may find that its website does not generate enough applicants. In some cases, an organization may need to use a tactic like a radio ad to steer people to its website.

Exhibit 4: Selling Employee Passion at SFM

SFM is a Minnesota-based provider of workers' compensation insurance. Although it has only 190 employees, the firm has competed successfully against much larger organizations in hiring claims adjusters, underwriters and other specialists. According to Jody Rogers, SFM's HR administrator, using its employment brand—"Employees are the heart of our success"—has been a key to the company's recruitment efforts. In recruiting, SFM emphasizes that its employees are passionate about their jobs and about working for SFM. To compete with larger organizations, SFM highlights positive features of the workplace—for example, employees at SFM are cross-trained so they can work on a variety of tasks, unlike at larger organizations where a new hire typically works in a narrowly defined job. SFM's small size creates a collegial work atmosphere where it is easier to get to know people. The firm's small size also allows a single individual to make a marked difference. And SFM highlights its high retention rate as evidence that it is a great place to work. Furthermore, to have confidence that the employment brand it publicizes on its website, at job fairs and at campus speaking engagements is accurate, SFM conducts internal focus groups and periodically surveys customers.

Source: Kiger, P. J. (2007, October 22). Burnishing your employment brand. *Work Force Management*, 1-8.

Exhibit 5: Hennes & Mauritz (H&M), Swedish Fashion Retailer

Common view of retail jobs:

- Short-term positions that involve part-time work with low pay and no benefits (e.g., sick leave or vacation).

H&M's challenges:

- Recruit thousands of employees as it rapidly expands in the U.S.
- Publicize that it offers above-average pay, full-time positions and career opportunities (35 percent of its executives started as sales advisers in stores).
- Communicate that it offers excellent benefits (full-time employees start with three weeks of vacation and seven sick days) and is committed to sustainability (e.g., its use of organic cotton in products).

Approaches to publicizing what it offers employees:

- College campus tours focused on recruiting Millennials.
- Announcements on LinkedIn.
- Displays in its 363 stores.
- Billboards.
- Video testimonials on website.

Source: Malcolm, H. (2015, May 14). H&M to hire thousands through recruiting campaign. *USA Today*.

Research has shown that a website will be most effective if it:

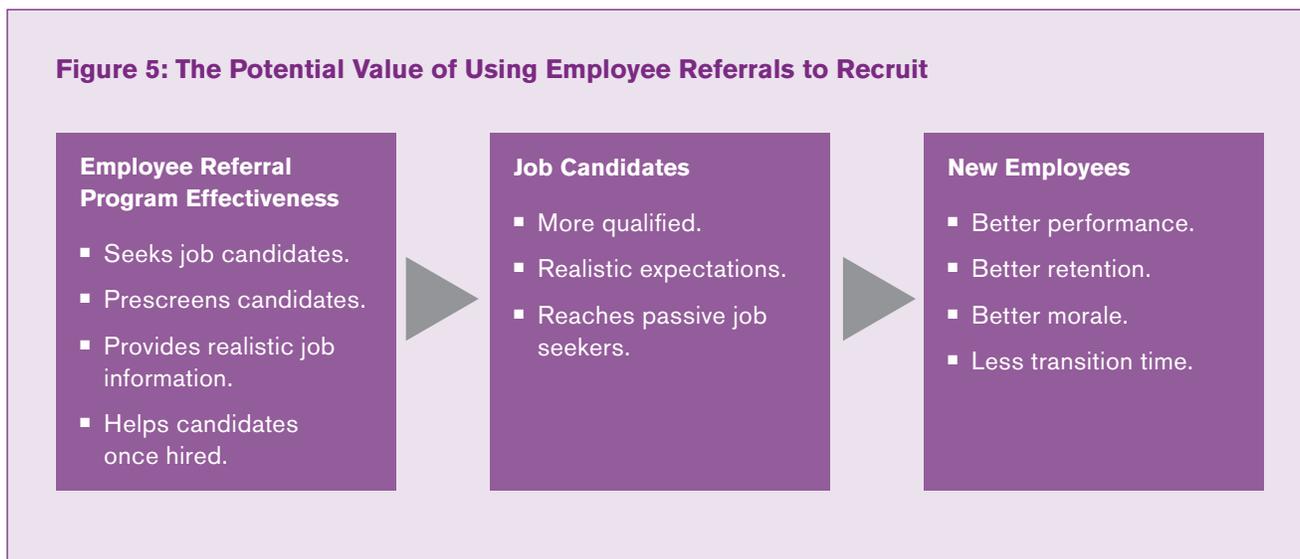
- Grabs the viewer's attention with effective use of color and an uncluttered design.
- Is easy to navigate.
- Includes information important to job candidates, like duties and location.
- Provides an easy way to submit an application.
- Notifies applicants that their application has been received.
- Explains the next step in the hiring process.

Employers should also ensure that the site is friendly to job seekers using smartphones and tablets.⁸¹ Not only should the site allow easy access via mobile technology, but it should also allow for easy submission of an application.

Credibility is another relevant topic in terms of an organization's website.

Few websites present negative information about working for an employer, so it is not surprising that site visitors sometimes question the veracity of the information provided. To improve a website's credibility, an employer could note awards received from external sources ("rated a top 100 employer by *Fortune* magazine"), provide e-mail addresses for current employees who are willing to give testimonials, allow access to employee blogs, cite third-party ratings (how the company is rated on Glassdoor, for example), and offer some factual information that may be seen as negative, such as the high cost of living in the area.

A website should be pilot-tested before making it available to the

Figure 5: The Potential Value of Using Employee Referrals to Recruit

public to ensure that it is user-friendly. And testing is not just important for new websites; an existing website should be periodically evaluated as well. An easy way to test a website is simply to ask new employees for their opinions (e.g., was it easy to navigate?). Even large, successful organizations can identify areas for improvement. For example, a recent study evaluated the websites of *Fortune* 500 companies, and the average grade received was a “C.” Deficiencies found included a lack of information concerning diversity, difficulty accommodating mobile technology, an absence of videos, failure to include employee stories about working there and a failure to tailor portions of the website to different job families.⁸²

Job boards

Although job boards are less heavily relied on than in the past,⁸³ many organizations still use them to fill positions. Job boards fall into three categories:

- Geographic focus (local vs. nationwide).

- Specificity (general vs. industry- or position-specific).
- Salary level (open vs. minimum salary).

Each category has both advantages and disadvantages.⁸⁴ For example, a common complaint about general job boards is that they tend to generate too many applicants, a high percentage of whom are unqualified or no longer in the market. In contrast, local job boards generate fewer candidates. Industry- or position-specific job boards, such as www.HealthcareJobsite.com, are more likely to attract applicants with industry experience and skills, and a better understanding of what a job in the industry entails. Job boards that set a minimum salary offered by a position, such as www.TheLadders.com, are more likely to attract candidates qualified for higher-level positions.

Not all job boards are appropriate in all situations. A recruiting manager should consider the pros and cons of each type and determine if its use will be beneficial. In conducting such an evaluation, employers should

consider the relative cost-per-hire, whether targeted candidates are likely to be reached and whether interest in the job opening will be generated.

College recruiting

College recruiting has been well addressed in many HR publications;⁸⁵ however, four issues are important to highlight: selecting campuses, creating a positive campus presence, student internship programs and the influence of recruiters.

In selecting campuses at which to recruit, recruiters should determine whether a campus offers relevant majors and a sufficient number of students in those majors. They should also consider student quality and diversity. Other factors to consider include the number of new hires yielded from a college in past years and how those individuals performed. By analyzing past recruitment results, organizations may determine that certain colleges have a greater payoff than others.

Ideally, employers should build a continuing relationship with

universities that yield a quality pool of applicants. This includes fostering a good relationship with the placement office. Being viewed positively by students and faculty is also paramount. To develop a strong relationship with these campus constituencies, organizations should consider sponsoring campus events, underwriting scholarships, getting to know key faculty members, providing internship opportunities

and funding equipment purchases. These activities can generate a positive image on campus and should result in a higher quality pool of job applicants.⁸⁶

Many employers find internship relationships with campuses to be mutually beneficial.⁸⁷ An internship provides an opportunity for the organization to assess a student directly—including his or her

interpersonal skills, dependability and intelligence—over time in a variety of situations. It also allows the student to gain insight into the organization. If done well, an internship program can result in a high percentage of interns continuing on as employees.

Recruiters themselves also have a big impact on the effectiveness of an organization's recruiting efforts. Research shows that

Key Takeaways About Developing a Recruitment Message

Message Characteristics	Examples of Possible Recruitment Actions (Applicability will depend on the type of position and the type of individual targeted for recruitment.)
Specificity of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide salary range or actual salary. • Clearly describe job demands. • Discuss benefits in specific terms (e.g., number of vacation days). • Communicate likely work schedule. • Convey “must have” attributes for an applicant to be hired.
Importance of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on job attributes considered significant by applicants (e.g., job duties, work schedule and location). • Provide organizational information considered important by applicants (e.g., employer values, advancement opportunity and job security). • Tailor message to specific information needs of targeted audience (e.g., flexible hours for working parents, ability to telecommute for an employer located in congested areas).
Realism of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide factual information about positive (e.g., exemplary safety record) and negative (e.g., considerable travel) job attributes. • Provide factual information about positive (e.g., commitment to promotion from within) and negative (e.g., history of layoffs) organizational attributes. • Provide accurate information about new-hire reactions to various position attributes (e.g., great sense of satisfaction from serving those in need, sleep problems from working a rotating shift schedule).
Message phrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid wording (e.g., “digital native”) that may suggest a preference for younger individuals. • Avoid unnecessary use of male-oriented job descriptors. • Include phrasing that suggests an inclusive work environment and an openness to all types of individuals.

recruiters who are perceived as personable, knowledgeable and trustworthy positively influence job candidates.⁸⁸ When selecting recruiters, employers must remember that they are the face of the organization to job applicants. For example, an enthusiastic, highly professional recruiter conveys that the organization has much to offer, whereas a poorly prepared recruiter may reflect that the organization is not well run. As evidence of the potential impact of recruiters, in one study, 16 out of 41 individuals mentioned poor treatment by recruiters as a reason for deciding that an employer they initially favored was no longer a good fit, and an identical number cited recruiters as a reason for changing their initial impression of poor fit to a positive one.⁸⁹

Social networking sites

The use of social networking sites for recruitment purposes has exploded in the last few years, with LinkedIn cited as the most used site.⁹⁰ Researchers⁹¹ recently asserted that “technology in general, and Internet-based communication tools and social media in particular, have fundamentally changed the nature of recruitment.” Among the changes cited were a) it has become much easier for an organization to reach passive job candidates, b) an employer no longer needs to weigh the advantages of providing a large amount of information against the cost of doing so, c) it has become easier for an employer to customize a recruitment message targeted to a specific group or even a specific individual, and d) social networking sites allow an employer

to begin building a relationship with prospective job candidates even before the employer has a job opening.

The use of social networking sites for recruitment has also changed what job seekers expect. For example, they likely expect to receive more and richer information about a job opening from an employer and receive this information in a timely manner. Because the use of social networking sites and the specific sites used will continue to evolve and change, only general guidelines for social media recruiting will be outlined here. Numerous references are cited for those seeking a more detailed discussion.⁹²

The most common use of social networking sites by employers is to bring a job opening to the attention of individuals who use the site. In many cases, an individual contacted by an employer may not have been looking for a new position or, if on the job market, may not have been aware of opportunities with that employer. Depending on the social networking site used and the level of service provided, recruiting managers may be able to select the specific type of individual notified about a position.⁹³ For example, some sites such as LinkedIn offer free and subscription services with different capabilities. An employer may be able to screen by location, skills, education, job title, company and time in the potential candidate's current job. Kroger, a retail food chain, uses Facebook to recruit. It focuses on contacting individuals whose zip codes indicate they live close to the store with the job opening.⁹⁴ Such individuals are seen as more likely to be interested

in a job there and less likely to quit if hired.

Because employee referrals are such an effective recruiting method, some organizations have combined the value of referrals with the use of social media. ShoreTel, a communications company, encourages employees to refer individuals in their social networks who would be good candidates for an open position, and it offers employees referral bonuses between \$2,000 and \$5,000.⁹⁵ Opower, a small software firm, holds “Talent Tuesday” meetings with free pizza during which employees search their networks of contacts for individuals who match job openings.⁹⁶ A new feature on LinkedIn allows an employer to search for people who meet its job search criteria (e.g., education and location) and then to check if the selected candidates are first-degree connections of any of its current employees.⁹⁷ If so, the organization can ask the employee to personally contact the prospective employee.

Some social networking sites allow employers to host a career-related website that can provide basic information about the employer (e.g., products and history), a statement of its mission and values, marketing material showing what makes it a great place to work, and a listing of job openings. Many employers include information about charity work they are involved with, upcoming events (e.g., a seminar on a company-related topic such as cybersecurity) and awards they have received. Depending on the social networking site, employers may be able to post videos featuring employees and projects and

provide access to organization-related blogs (a discussion group involving former employees, for example). Each social networking site offers access to different types of information about individuals and different features (e.g., search capabilities), so many employers use a number of different sites to recruit.

Although research has yet to formally compare the advantages of social networking sites versus other recruitment methods, the use of such sites appears to hold considerable promise. In addition to highlighting job openings to individuals not actively looking for a job, an employer may be able to examine prospective employees' own sites to learn more about them.

In visiting an individual's personal website, however, there is a danger that an employer could open itself up to a charge of employment discrimination. A candidate's photo is likely to be displayed online, which may provide information such as the person's race, age and ethnicity. Therefore, it is important that an organization keep documentation about why it did or did not pursue a candidate whose site it visited.

Seeking job candidates in unusual ways

The approaches just discussed often provide a sufficient number of qualified candidates for a job opening. Sometimes, though, an employer needs to go beyond these commonly used approaches. In examining recruitment targeting, H&M's use of billboards and Cabella's recruitment of customers were discussed. Although each of these approaches worked for the

employer using them, sometimes even more creativity is called for. For example, when Quicken Loans' recruiters realized that job fairs, help-wanted advertisements and the company's website did not produce enough qualified candidates for mortgage banker positions, they visited stores like Best Buy and restaurants like T.G.I. Fridays. Recruiting managers bought merchandise and ordered meals as they searched for people who stood out because of their enthusiasm and rapport with customers.⁹⁸ Other ideas for finding suitable recruits include looking at finalists for similar job openings the organization has filled, contacting people who had rejected a job offer from the organization, contacting references for recent successful hires and contacting former employees.⁹⁹

There is no single best recruitment method. Rather, organizations must develop their own mix of successful methods. To help determine the best recruitment methods to use in an organization, recruiters can think about the following questions:

- What characteristics are you seeking in new employees?
- What types of people will be attracted to what your organization has to offer?
- What methods will help you find these people?

If employers are having trouble reaching passive job applicants, any of the approaches listed in Table 6, on page 22, may be helpful.

OTHER ISSUES IN MANAGING THE RECRUITMENT FUNCTION

Talent management is a critical issue for most organizations. Although an effective talent management program has several components, including a valid selection system, a well-designed onboarding program and effective mentoring, it begins with a well-designed recruitment program. Simply stated, if the "right" people are not recruited, the other components of a talent management program will be less effective. The following issues can affect recruiting effectiveness.

The timing of recruitment actions

Research shows that timing recruitment actions correctly can be key. For example, employers that interview earlier in the year on college campuses attract more and better-quality applicants compared with employers that interview later.¹⁰⁰ The timeliness of recruiting is also important to keep applicants interested throughout the recruitment process. One study found that approximately 50 percent of students in the study turned down invitations for a site visit due to late timing.¹⁰¹ Another study found that the longer the delay between the final interview and the receipt of a job offer, the more likely a person was to reject the offer.¹⁰²

Reflecting these results, the Internal Revenue Service reported that by moving up the start date of campus recruiting, it was able to fill jobs more easily and with better-quality recruits.¹⁰³ Kayak also understands the importance of timing in recruiting; it tries to fill job openings within a week to better compete against other firms.¹⁰⁴ AppDynamics

Table 6: How to Reach Target Individuals Not Actively Looking for Positions

• Use employee referrals.
• Use radio and television advertisements.
• Ask newly hired individuals for the names of potential recruits.
• Send ads to members of relevant mailing lists, including professional associations and clubs.
• Place billboard ads in relevant locations.
• Ask individuals who declined job offers for the names of recruits.
• Contact former employees.
• Visit places of business and recreation that targeted individuals frequent.
• Use social networking websites.

has learned this as well.¹⁰⁵ One applicant, who had a dragged-out recruiting process with “a big-data analytics company” reported he went with AppDynamics because its “quickness persuaded him that the business was nimble and really wanted him.”

Filling jobs quickly is not without its downside. A speedy job offer can make conducting background checks difficult, though one solution is to make job offers contingent on “passing” them. For employers interested in filling positions quickly, recent articles¹⁰⁶ have suggested two approaches to consider. First, organizations should keep an active file of applicants who were strong candidates but did not receive a job offer. If they have a strong interest in working for the organization, previously rejected individuals may welcome an invitation to apply for a different position. A second approach is to reach out to individuals who received job offers but rejected them. Circumstances can change, and they may be interested in being considered for a

different position.

Managing the relationship with a job applicant post-application

Once employers have attracted the right applicants, they want to keep them interested in working there, but employers must walk a fine line. As stated by Kreissl, “Employers need to ‘woo’ candidates—without overselling the position or the organization.”¹⁰⁷ Several factors—like whether inquiries are responded to quickly—can affect whether an applicant feels well treated by an organization. One of the most significant factors is the site visit.

Applicants are not passive receivers of information during a site visit. They actively look for signals about the work environment, like how the organization treats its employees, whether the employees seem happy or stressed, and whether women and minorities are well represented in the workforce. A candidate's experiences during a site visit help the person form an impression of the employer and ultimately

determine whether he or she takes the job.¹⁰⁸ The following steps have been shown to make for an impressive and informative site visit experience:

- Be flexible in scheduling the visit to accommodate the applicant's schedule.
- Send relevant materials, including a schedule, brief biographies of the people the candidate will meet, company literature, maps, directions and a parking pass, before the visit.
- Recruit a prospective co-worker to host the visit.
- Provide impressive hotel accommodations.
- Make sure that key individuals are available to meet with the applicant during the visit.
- Pay attention to details, such as meeting the candidate at the airport and greeting him or her at the front door.

An out-of-town job candidate will probably have questions about the surrounding community, including medical facilities, schools, churches, day care or potential employers for a spouse. Do not ignore these concerns. In planning a visit, set aside time so the candidate can tour the surrounding community.

Treating the candidate well during the entire recruitment process is important because it affects the individual's interest in working there, as well as the company's reputation. When social media makes it so easy to communicate instantly with hundreds of people, candidates may be quick to share a bad experience online. For example, in a large study of job applicants,¹⁰⁹ 60 percent said

that if they had “a positive candidate experience,” they would “go out of their way to encourage others to apply.” Conversely, another study¹¹⁰ found that 25 percent of applicants had a bad recruitment experience. Of these applicants, 42 percent said they would never apply to the organization again, and 22 percent said they would tell others not to work there.

Managing the relationship with the hiring manager

Among the most important recruitment metrics is the perception of the hiring manager who, in many ways, is really the recruiter's client. Based on the results of a 2014 study,¹¹¹ it does not appear that recruitment managers are doing very well. The hiring managers surveyed gave an average grade of “C+” to the recruiter's performance. Among the reasons offered in this and other studies¹¹² for poor evaluations of a recruiter were a) not understanding the type of candidate the hiring manager wanted, b) the slowness of the recruitment process, c) not being kept up-to-date by the recruiter, d) the heavy use of e-mail by the recruiter, and e) his or her failing to be proactive in interacting with the hiring manager.

Of course, some of these criticisms may be unfair. For example, hiring managers may be unclear about what they need in a new hire, or they may slow the recruitment process by not acting quickly on reviewing job applications and scheduling interviews. Nevertheless, in many cases, the recruitment manager can do better. Before starting a search, for example, recruiters should work directly with the hiring

Key Takeaways for Recruitment Methods

Recruitment Method	Examples of Possible Factors to Consider (Applicability will depend on the type of recruitment method and the type of individual targeted for recruitment.)
Employee referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current employee is committed to the organization's success. • Current employee knows the job well (e.g., same department). • Workforce is diverse (i.e., a homogeneous workforce can result in an applicant pool that lacks diversity). • Organizations encourage referrals by paying a bonus for new hires.
Organizational website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to navigate. • Accessible via mobile technology. • Attractive appearance. • Up-to-date content that addresses important issues accurately and in detail. • Awards the employer has won are showcased.
College recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company is visible on campus before recruiting season (e.g., provides scholarships, sponsors campus events). • Organization has an active internship program. • Recruiters make a good impression (e.g., use recent hires from the college).
Social networking sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site users include a reasonable number of the individuals targeted for recruitment. • Employers can search the site for certain types of individuals. • Cost of using a site is reasonable.
Other methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use personnel records to make contact with individuals who previously applied for the position. • Use personnel records to contact former employees. • Visit other employers (e.g., a restaurant) to make contact with individuals exhibiting exemplary performance. • Reach out to customers to inquire about their interest in a job.

manager to develop a list of realistic requirements for the open position. The recruiter should take time to really understand what requirements the hiring manager most values (research has shown that whereas 80 percent of recruiters think they have a good understanding of the jobs for which they recruit, only 39 percent of hiring managers agreed).¹¹³ Recruiters should be prepared to educate the hiring manager if his or her expectations are unrealistic. For example, hiring managers often assume that everyone wants to work for the organization.¹¹⁴ Recruiters should also keep the hiring manager informed about how things are progressing throughout the process and seek out information rather than wait for the hiring manager to contact them. They should make sure some of their contacts are face-to-face. In summary, to the extent possible, they should make their relationship with a hiring manager a collaborative one that is based on trust.

One way to develop a sense of partnership is to involve the hiring manager more fully than is common in recruitment activities. Recruiters can see if the hiring manager is willing to:

- Help draft the job advertisement.
- Participate in selecting recruitment methods.
- Staff a table at a job fair.
- Respond to applicant inquiries.
- Give a talk on a college campus.
- Help plan a candidate site visit.

Managing the recruitment operation

HR professionals responsible for the recruitment function have a challenging number of tasks to manage. In addition to those already discussed, three tasks require recruiters' focus: staying abreast of recent trends, responding to unfair criticism and handling legal issues.

To recruit effectively, HR must stay up-to-date with new trends. For example, a new social networking site might reach the targeted audience more effectively, or a current site might offer a new function that could save the organization money. Recruiters might also discover a better way to make the company's website more mobile-friendly. Although the changes occurring in the field can seem overwhelming at times, the good news is that it has never been easier to stay informed of new developments. Professional organizations like the Society for Human Resource Management hold conferences and publish research results explaining what organizations are doing and what works best. The popular press gives periodic attention to recruitment (in this report, for example, several articles in the *New York Times* are cited). Internet sites geared to recruiters, like www.eremedia.com, provide advice on a variety of issues, including recruitment practices and trends. Although it takes time, a recruiting manager can stay abreast of developments in the field for very little cost.

Recruiting managers today must also be aware of what others are saying about the organization in

public forums. Sites like Vault and Glassdoor publish anonymous comments made by job applicants and current or former employees about organizations' hiring processes, cultures and working conditions. Some sites even rate employers based on those comments. Glassdoor, for example, provides numerical ratings of an organization's culture and values, work/life balance, senior management, compensation and benefits, and career opportunities. In some cases, the comments and the ratings may reflect favorably on an organization. If so, this should help in recruiting. If they do not, recruiters may need to act. If the ratings and comments seem unfair, employers may consider asking current or former employees to add their voices. Some sites allow employers to post rebuttals. If the ratings ring true, though, the employer should consider taking action to address the concerns raised. In some cases the recruiting manager may not have the power to improve things, but by sharing the sentiments being expressed with those who have the power to make changes, the manager may be able to stimulate action. One researcher¹¹⁵ reported that in a study of 4,633 random job seekers, 48 percent had used Glassdoor at some point during their job search. A majority said that poor reviews would "dissuade them from applying to a particular company."

Recruiting managers often defer to attorneys or other experts when handling legal issues and government interactions. However, they do have an important role to play in preventing problems from arising.¹¹⁶ In addition to issues

previously highlighted, such as the wording of recruitment messages, organizations should consider a few additional issues. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) may become concerned if an organization's workforce lacks diversity. Because the manner in which an organization recruits can affect diversity, recruiting managers should be vigilant about how recruiting is conducted. For example, research¹¹⁷ has shown that 90 percent of individuals ages 18 to 29 use social networking sites, while only 65 percent of individuals ages 50 to 64 do. Given this age difference, exclusive or even heavy reliance on social networking sites for recruiting could be a concern (some sites also have been shown to have adverse impact in terms of minority use). Some sites in particular have sizable demographic effects. For example, it was estimated that between 30 percent to 42 percent of 19- to 29-year-olds use Twitter. In contrast, of those older than 65, it was estimated that less than 5 percent use Twitter.¹¹⁸ In addressing so-called e-recruiting, one researcher¹¹⁹ called attention to an employer's obligation to be sure its "technology is accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired." He also noted that screening individuals for a job opening by zip code could result in an applicant pool lacking diversity.

For organizations with government contracts, it is not sufficient to develop a representative applicant pool in terms of protected groups (for example, women and minorities). Recruiting managers

should make an extra effort to publicize job openings to other groups such as military veterans, and that may require expanding the range of recruitment approaches traditionally used. One researcher,¹²⁰ for example, noted that attending military career fairs is an excellent way to make contact with veterans.

It is also important that recruitment decision-makers receive prior approval of any plans that may be challenged by the EEOC, the OFCCP or other similar agencies. Consider the case of UPS. In recent articles¹²¹ UPS has received considerable attention for its heavy use of social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) and its targeting of male Millennials. Although legally this may seem dangerous, it is worth noting that UPS also makes an effort to reach out to women (portraying them in videos) and military veterans. It also still uses more traditional recruitment methods. Hopefully decision-makers at UPS have received senior management approval for its recruitment program, given that it could potentially attract attention from government enforcement agencies.

Unique challenges for smaller organizations

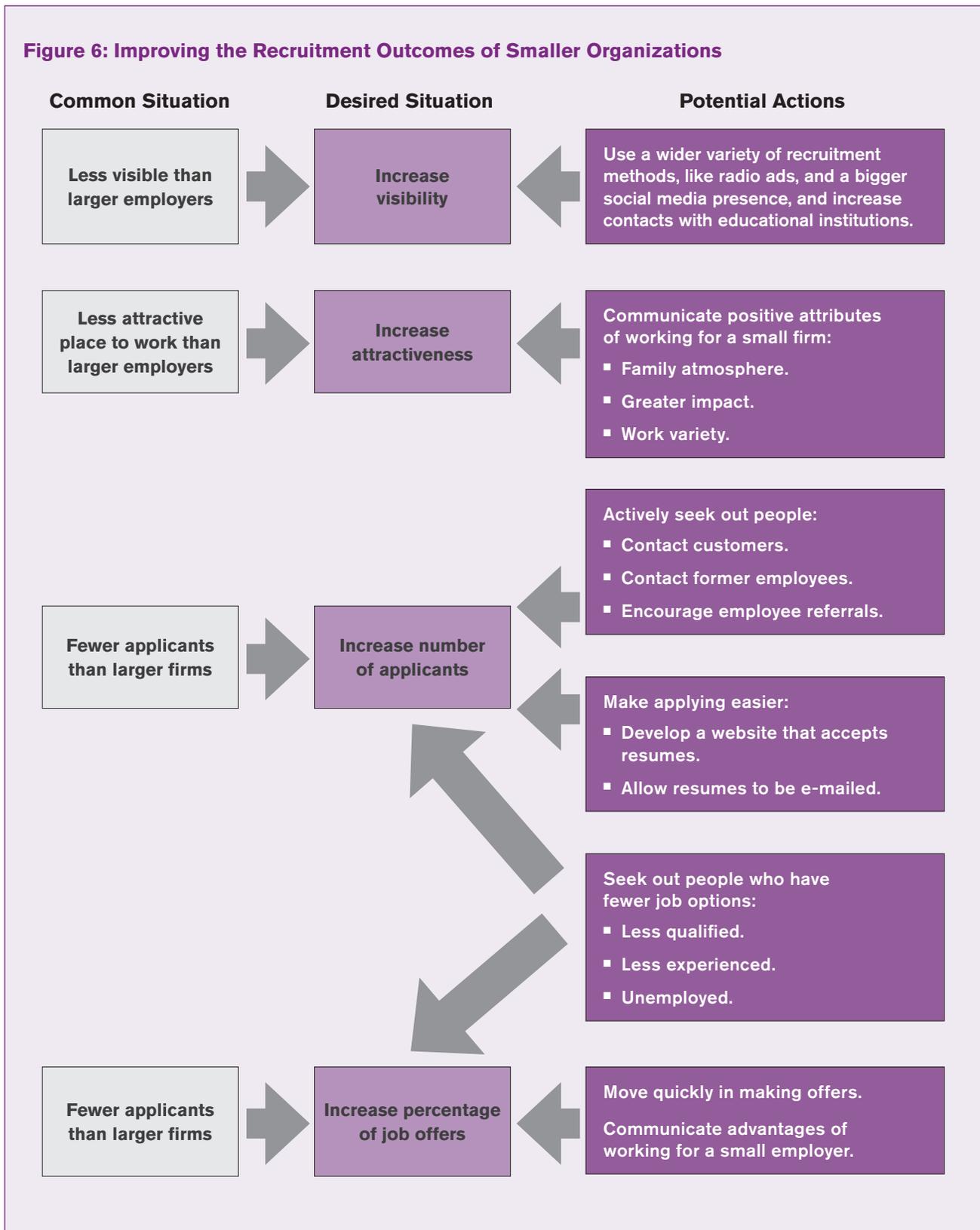
Although most of the issues addressed in this report are relevant for any employer, smaller organizations often face distinct challenges in filling jobs. Figure 6, on page 26, presents four common problem situations smaller employers may face and possible actions they can take to address those.

To help a smaller organization

become more visible to prospective job seekers, recruiters could participate in job fairs that generate large audiences, work closely with educational institutions and develop a close relationship with college placement directors so that they will highlight the employer's job openings to job-seeking students. Alternatively, contacting people through social networking sites may prove valuable. Working for a smaller employer can have real advantages as shown in Exhibit 4, on page 17, but those advantages must be communicated to prospective applicants to increase the attractiveness of the organization. To increase the number of job applicants, a small employer can actively seek out candidates, as Cabela's and Quicken Loans did in the examples discussed earlier. A small employer can also make it easier to apply by ensuring resumes can be submitted electronically. Creating an applicant-friendly website need not be costly; organizations may be able to hire students at a local college to do the work. Another way small employers can improve recruitment results is by targeting individuals with fewer job opportunities. For example, they might recruit people who are a bit less qualified in terms of their grade point average, have less work experience or have another characteristic (such as a criminal record) that makes them less attractive to other employers. Many of these individuals will make very good employees.

To increase the percentage of job offers accepted, a small employer should move quickly to extend offers because applicants often prefer

Figure 6: Improving the Recruitment Outcomes of Smaller Organizations



the certainty of a definite job offer over the uncertainty of waiting to hear from other organizations. Another way small employers can find good recruits is working with a temporary agency to turn temps into permanent employees.

Conducting a recruitment audit

To assess whether a recruitment operation is running well, employers may want to consider conducting a recruitment audit. Table 7, on page 29, provides some general ideas on how to conduct one. However, to derive maximum value from auditing the recruitment operation, an organization should tailor the audit to its recruitment approach. The data generated from a recruitment audit should help decision-makers make changes to improve future efforts.

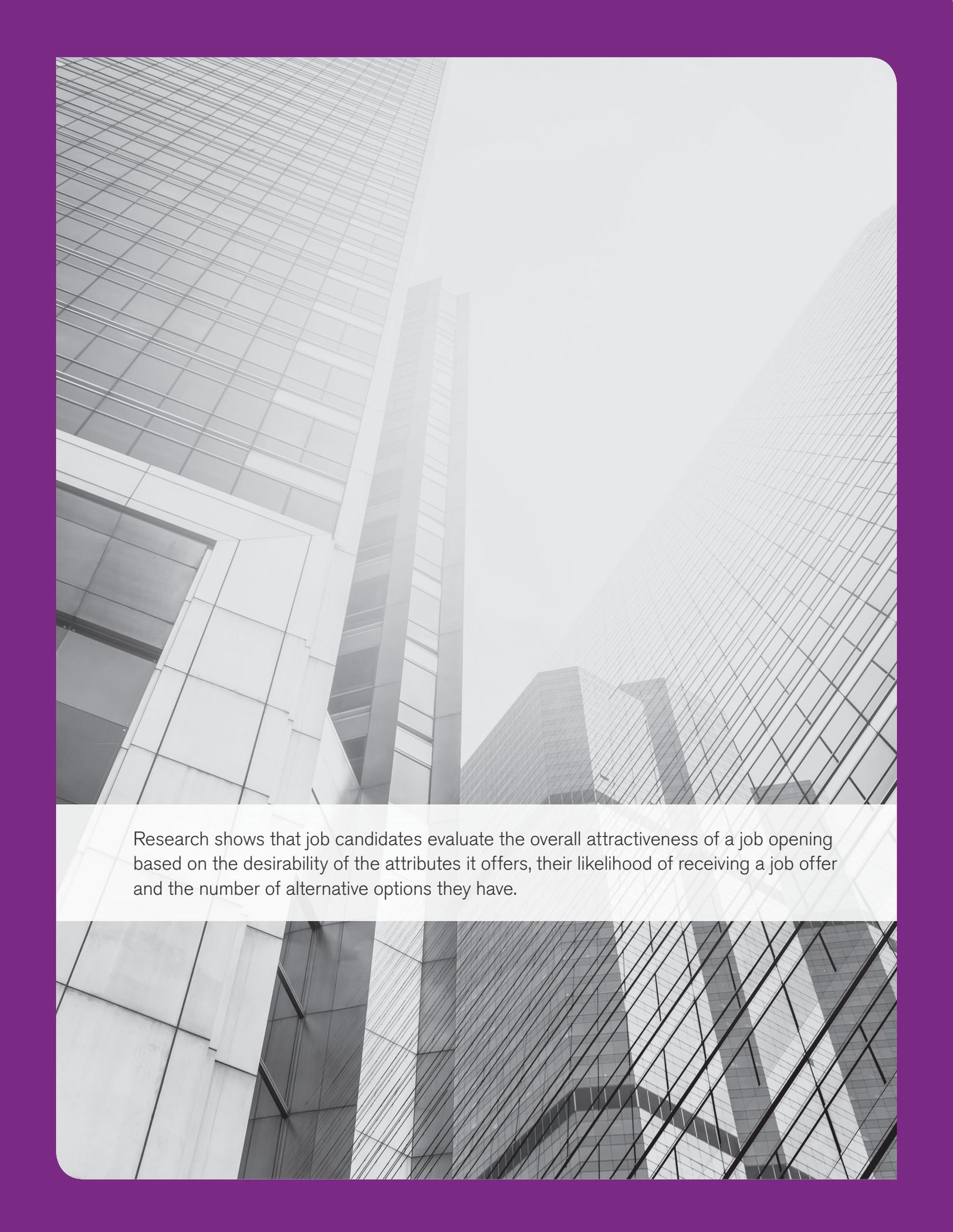
Key Takeaways for Managing the Recruitment Operation

Management Focus	Examples of Possible Factors to Consider (Applicability will depend on the type of factor—e.g., hiring manager—being considered.)
The timing of recruitment actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the recruitment campaign in a timely manner. • Respond to candidate inquiries quickly. • Follow up quickly after each stage of the staffing process (e.g., minimize delay between telephone interview and site visit).
Managing the site visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible in scheduling the visit. • Share information in advance about the site visit (e.g., bios of people who will be on the schedule, schedule of events). • Make sure key organizational members are available for visit.
Managing the hiring manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get agreement up front about necessary applicant attributes. • Keep the hiring manager posted on where things stand in the recruitment process (have some face-to-face interactions rather than relying solely on e-mail). • Involve the hiring manager in various recruitment steps (e.g., drafting the job advertisement, selecting recruitment methods, planning a site visit).
Managing the recruitment operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor what is being said about the organization on social networking sites. • Gather and present data to functional managers concerning the effectiveness of the recruitment operation. • Periodically conduct recruitment audits. • Use audit findings to improve recruitment operations.

Table 7: Conducting a Recruitment Audit

General Focus	Possible Sub-areas	Source(s) of Data
Employment brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility. • Positivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted individuals. • General public.
Recruitment message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific information provided. • Important topics addressed. • Realistic information presented. • Appropriate phrasing. • Credible message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted individuals. • New employees. • Responsible recruiter.
Recruitment method (for each method used)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-to-hire. • Cost-per-hire. • Number hired. • Diversity of applicants generated. • Number of job offers rejected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data kept by HR department.
Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness of position. • Attractiveness of employer. • Requests for information responded to promptly. • Updates provided of where in process. • Site visit professionally handled. • Ease in submitting an application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job applicants. • New hires. • “Phantom applicants” hired by firm to assess recruitment process.
Hiring manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with overall process. • Satisfaction with responsible recruiter. • Quality of applicants forwarded. • Timeliness of process. • Timely updates from recruiter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring manager.
Responsible recruiter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with overall process. • Satisfaction with hiring manager. • Satisfaction with employer website. • Satisfaction with recruitment message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiter.
Active vs. passive job applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-to-hire. • Performance. • Retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data kept by HR department.

Note: In addition to asking for an evaluation of past recruitment experiences, sources can be asked to offer suggestions for improving future recruitment efforts. Where appropriate, the data gathered (e.g., recruitment method or hiring manager satisfaction) could be linked to new-employee performance, retention and satisfaction.



Research shows that job candidates evaluate the overall attractiveness of a job opening based on the desirability of the attributes it offers, their likelihood of receiving a job offer and the number of alternative options they have.



CONCLUSION

Recruiting the right employees can be challenging, but the rewards of a well-constructed strategy can be enormous, because effective recruiting is the foundation on which any talent management program is built. This report presented a model of the ideal recruitment process, which is based on academic research and practitioner recommendations for conducting an effective recruitment campaign. To attain maximum benefit from these recommendations, organizations should customize them to fit their specific situations.

In the end, the key to effective recruitment lies in thoughtfully answering a few essential questions: Whom should we recruit? What should our recruitment message be? How can we reach these specific people? The research and examples of effective practices presented here should help organizations answer these questions in ways that will improve their applicant pools, the quality of the people they hire, and ultimately the performance and retention of these new employees.



Although an effective talent management program has several components, including a valid selection system, a well-designed onboarding program and effective mentoring, it begins with a well-designed recruitment program.

SOURCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Ali, A. A., Ryan, A. M., Lyons, B. J., Ehrhart, M. G., & Wessel, J. L. (2015). The long road to employment: Incivility experienced by job seekers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advance online publication. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000055> The results of three studies demonstrate the dramatic effect that recruiter incivility can have on job applicants. As predicted, attributions that job seekers made concerning an episode of incivility were linked to job seeker motivation and search behaviors.

Allen, D. B., Mahto, R. V., & Otondo, R. F. (2007). Web-based recruitment: Effects of information, organizational brand, and attitudes toward a web site on applicant attraction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(6), 1696-1708. This empirical study found that job information and organizational information provided on an organization's website influenced individuals' intentions to apply for a job. This influence was both direct (the specific type of information provided) and indirect (applicants viewed information provided as signaling what other aspects of the job and the organization would be like).

Avery, D. R. (2003). Reactions to diversity in recruitment advertising: Are differences black and white? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 672-679. The merits of including pictures of minorities in recruitment materials have been widely advocated. In this study conducted with black and white college students, the hierarchical level of the minorities was manipulated. The authors found that including pictures of black employees regardless of level had no impact on whites. In contrast, black students reacted favorably to the inclusion of African-Americans in advertisements, but only when they were in supervisory-level positions.

Avery, D. R., & McKay, P. F. (2006). Target practice: An organizational impression management approach to attracting minority and female job applicants. *Personnel Psychology, 59*(1), 157-187.

This article provides an excellent review of empirical research that has addressed the relative effectiveness of different approaches for recruiting minorities and females. In particular, the authors addressed the influence of minorities and women being portrayed in recruitment materials, the wording of equal employment opportunity (EEO) statements and recruiter demographics.

Becker, W. J., Connolly, T., & Slaughter, J. E. (2010). The effect of job offer timing on offer acceptance, performance, and turnover. *Personnel Psychology, 63*(1), 223-241.

These researchers examined the relationship between a job offer being accepted and the time lag between a job applicant's final interview and an offer being extended. For samples of new college graduates and more experienced employees, the shorter the time lag, the more likely a job offer was to be accepted. Becker et al. also found that for each sample, having to relocate for a new job made it less likely that a job offer was accepted.

Billsberry, J. (2007). *Experiencing recruitment and selection*. Chichester, UK: Wiley. Five chapters of this book describe actual experiences of job applicants during the recruitment process. Many of the interactions described suggest that job seekers

view interactions during the recruitment process as signals of how working for an organization would be like. Billsberry provided a sense of the importance of job applicant perceptions of fair treatment during the recruitment process. He also showed that many applicants accept job offers without having a realistic understanding of what a position involves.

Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V., LePine, M. A., & Moynihan, L. M. (2003). Individual job-choice decisions and the impact of job attributes and recruitment practices: A longitudinal field study. *Human Resource Management, 42*(1), 23-37.

This longitudinal study examined the influence of several recruitment-related variables on job candidate decision-making. Results demonstrate that the decisions made by graduating college seniors were affected by several aspects of the site visit (flexibility in scheduling, how organized it was, the professionalism of the host, the quality of the accommodations). Actions following a site visit (prompt follow-up to applicant inquiries, a timely job offer) were also linked to reactions of recruits.

Brady, P. W., Meade, A. W., & Kroustalis, C. M. (2006). Organizational recruitment website effects on viewers' perceptions of organizational culture. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 20*(4), 525-543. Based on a study that involved college students visiting the websites of employers, these researchers documented the importance of a number of website

attributes. In particular, Brady et al. found that providing information about awards won by the employer was important.

Breaugh, J. A. (2010). Improving employee retention through the use of realistic job previews. In R. Watkins & D. Leigh (Eds.), *Handbook for the selection and implementation of human performance interventions* (pp. 203-210). New York, NY: Wiley.

This chapter describes past research on realistic job previews (RJPs), why RJPs are thought to reduce employee turnover, conditions under which RJPs are likely to have maximum impact, different types of RJPs and specific steps for developing an RJP.

Breaugh, J. A. (2013). Employee recruitment. *Annual Review of Psychology, 64*, 10.1-10.28. This article reviews recruitment research published between 2000 and 2012. Breaugh used psychological research dealing with topics such as selective attention, attitude formation and decision-making to explain why various recruitment actions are likely to have the effects they do.

Breaugh, J. A. (in press). The contribution of job analysis to recruitment. In H. Goldstein, E. Pulakos, J. Passmore, & C. Semedo (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of recruitment, selection, and retention*. New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell. After having addressed how a traditional job analysis process will not provide all of the information that is needed to conduct an effective recruitment campaign, Breaugh described how to tailor a job analysis process so that such information is forthcoming.

Burks, S. V., Cowgill, B., Hoffman, M., & Housman, M. (2015). The value of hiring through employee referrals. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 130(2), 805-839.

These researchers examined the benefits to employers of hiring based on employee referrals. Compared to other types of job candidates, applicants referred by current employees were more likely to be hired, performed at a higher level and were less likely to quit. The lower cost of recruiting by means of employee referrals was an additional benefit of this approach.

Carlson, K. D., & Mecham, R. L. (2013). Research design in evaluating recruitment effectiveness: Past, present, future. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 184-214). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. This chapter examines how recruitment effectiveness has been evaluated in past studies. Based on this review, Carlson and Mecham highlighted limitations of typical evaluation approaches (e.g., a heavy emphasis on applicant attitudes) and discussed how the evaluation approaches used have limited our understanding of the effectiveness of various recruitment practices as the recruitment process unfolds.

Cober, R. T., Brown, D. J., & Levy, P. E. (2004). Form, content, and function: An evaluative methodology for corporate employment web sites. *Human Resource Management*, 43(2), 201-218. Cober and his associates analyzed the corporate websites of almost

100 organizations. They examined the form of the website (e.g., the use of pictures), its functionality (e.g., the ease of navigating) and the content provided (e.g., information about salary and culture). The authors concluded that all three website dimensions are important to job applicants.

Collins, C. J., & Han, J. (2004). Exploring applicant pool quantity and quality: The effects of early recruitment practice strategies, corporate advertising, and firm reputation. *Personnel Psychology*, 57(3), 685-717. Based on data drawn from 99 organizations and from multiple sources (job seekers, recruiters), the results of this study suggest that early recruitment practices (recruitment ads, employee endorsements), corporate advertising and firm reputation all affect the size and the quality of the applicant pool. The influence of the recruitment practices was found to vary depending on an employer's reputation.

Collins, C. J., & Kanar, A. M. (2013). Employer brand equity and recruitment research. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 284-297). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Collins and Kanar reviewed the relatively new research literature on employer brands and brand equity. Major attention was devoted to how an employer brand can affect job applicant decision-making. The authors also focused on how organizations can establish strong brands that should increase the effectiveness of a recruitment effort.

Connerley, M. L. (2013). Recruiter effects and recruitment outcomes. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 21-34). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Connerley reviewed research on recruiter characteristics (e.g.,

demographic variables, training, and behavior) and their association with applicant job pursuit intentions, perceptions of job-organization attraction and job choice decisions with a focus on how and why recruiter attributes could influence a job applicant's experience with the recruitment process.

Devendorf, S. A., & Highhouse, S. (2008). Applicant-employee similarity and attraction to an employer. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81(4), 607-617. Devendorf and Highhouse examined the importance to individuals of having co-workers who were similar to themselves. Based on the results of a study conducted with college students, it appears that individuals perceived having similar co-workers as being a relevant factor in evaluating a position's attractiveness.

Dineen, B. R., & Allen, D. G. (2013). Internet recruiting 2.0: Shifting paradigms. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 382-401). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. In this chapter, Dineen and Allen reviewed research that had been conducted on the use of websites and social media. Particular attention was given to reasons why websites and other new social media approaches are likely to have beneficial effects. The authors made a persuasive case that Internet recruiting has substantially changed the recruitment process.

Gaucher, D., Friesen, J., & Kay, A. C. (2011). Evidence that gendered wording in job advertisements exists and sustains gender inequality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 101*(1), 109-128. The paper reports the findings of five empirical studies that focused on the wording of job advertisements. Taken as a whole, the results of these studies show that gendered wording in job advertisements is common and that it can result in women believing they do not belong in an occupation because of a lack of skill.

Harold, C. M., Uggerslev, K. L., & Kraichy, D. (2013). Recruitment and job choice. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 47-72). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Harold, Uggerslev and Kraichy provided an up-to-date review of empirical studies and theoretical papers that addressed job applicant decision-making. In addition to focusing on factors that can influence applicant job choice, the authors examined factors that can affect other recruiting decisions such as whether to apply for an advertised position.

Kanar, A. M., Collins, C. J., & Bell, B. S. (2015). Changing an unfavorable employer reputation: The roles of recruitment message-type and familiarity with employer. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45*(9), 509-521. Kanar, Collins and Bell used a longitudinal design with job seekers to assess how easily an unfavorable organizational reputation could

be changed. They reported that, although a "high information" communication strategy raises a negative view of an organization, this strategy is most successful for job seekers who are relatively unfamiliar with the employer. For practitioners, the findings suggest the value of targeting individuals who are either positively disposed to an employer or have yet to form an impression of it.

Landis, R. S., Earnest, D. R., & Allen, D. G. (2013). Realistic job previews: Past, present, and future. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 423-436). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. This chapter provides an up-to-date summary of empirical research on the use of realistic job previews as a way to provide applicants with an accurate view of what a job entails. Particular attention is given to why RJPs should work and in what circumstances they are likely to work best.

Mason, N. A., & Belt, J. A. (1986). Effectiveness of specificity in recruitment advertising. *Journal of Management, 12*(3), 425-432. This study demonstrates that job advertisements conveying specific information about the type of job candidate attributes (e.g., work experience) sought can reduce the percentage of unqualified persons who apply for a position.

Miller, J. K., & Gao, G. C. (2013). Recruitment: International and cross-cultural perspectives. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook*

of recruitment (pp. 402-422). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. This chapter covers a variety of cross-cultural recruitment practices. Among the topics addressed are cross-cultural values and their relationship to job choice, employer branding, campus recruitment and social networks. For readers interested in how international or cross-cultural variables might affect the recruitment process, this chapter should provide a useful perspective.

Paullin, C. (2014). *The aging workforce: Leveraging the talents of mature employees* (Effective Practice Guideline Series). SHRM Foundation. <http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/products/Documents/Aging%20Workforce%20EPG-FINAL.pdf>

For the next decade, in many industrialized countries a large number of employees will reach retirement age. This report provides advice on how employers can respond to this trend. Specifically, Paullin addressed the unrecognized value of mature workers and strategies for retaining and engaging them.

Rynes, S. L., Bretz, R. D., & Gerhart, B. (1991). The importance of recruitment in job choice: A different way of looking. *Personnel Psychology, 44*(3), 487-521. In this intensive study of 41 graduating college students, the authors examined the effects of such variables as employer-hosted on-campus receptions, interactions with recruiters, and time delays on job applicant decision-making.

Results suggest that recruitment events, recruiters and the timing of recruitment actions can have a noticeable influence on job applicants. For example, it was found that poor treatment by a recruiter is viewed as a signal of how an employer treats its new hires. These authors also reported that delays during the recruitment process resulted in applicants losing interest in an organization as a place of employment even when they initially viewed the employer favorably. Results also suggest that positive recruitment interactions can cause a job opening that was initially viewed as unattractive to be seen as more desirable.

Selden, S., & Orenstein, J. (2011). Government e-recruiting web sites: The influence of e-recruitment content and usability on recruiting and hiring outcomes. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 19(1), 31-40.

These authors examined the use of websites by state government agencies. They reported that websites perceived as easier to navigate generated more job applications. Selden and Orenstein also reported that websites that provided more detailed content resulted in fewer job applicants.

Society for Human Resource Management. (2008, April-June). The employer brand: A strategic tool to attract, recruit, and retain talent. *SHRM Staffing Research*. http://www.shrm.org/research/articles/articles/documents/08-0201staffinginsert_final.pdf This report highlights the importance of

an employer's brand for recruiting talent. It provides examples of organizations that have used their brands effectively, and it offers tips for creating an employment brand. HR professionals reported that the use of an employer brand was related to such recruitment outcomes as a greater number of qualified applicants, a more diverse applicant pool, an increased number of employee referrals, positions being filled more rapidly and a higher job offer acceptance rate.

Turban, D. B., Campion, J. E., & Eyring, A. R. (1995). Factors related to job acceptance decisions of college recruits. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 47(2), 193-213. This study focuses on the site visit experiences of college students. Students who like the host of their site visit and other aspects of the visit are more likely to accept job offers. The host of the visit was a prospective co-worker, which likely enhanced the impact of the host.

Van Hove, G., & Lievens, F. (2009). Tapping the grapevine: A closer look at word-of-mouth as a recruitment source. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(2), 341-352. Van Hove and Lievens found that positive word-of-mouth recruiting had beneficial effects on reports of organizational attractiveness and actual application behavior. Contrary to expectations, they found no effect for negative word-of-mouth recruiting.

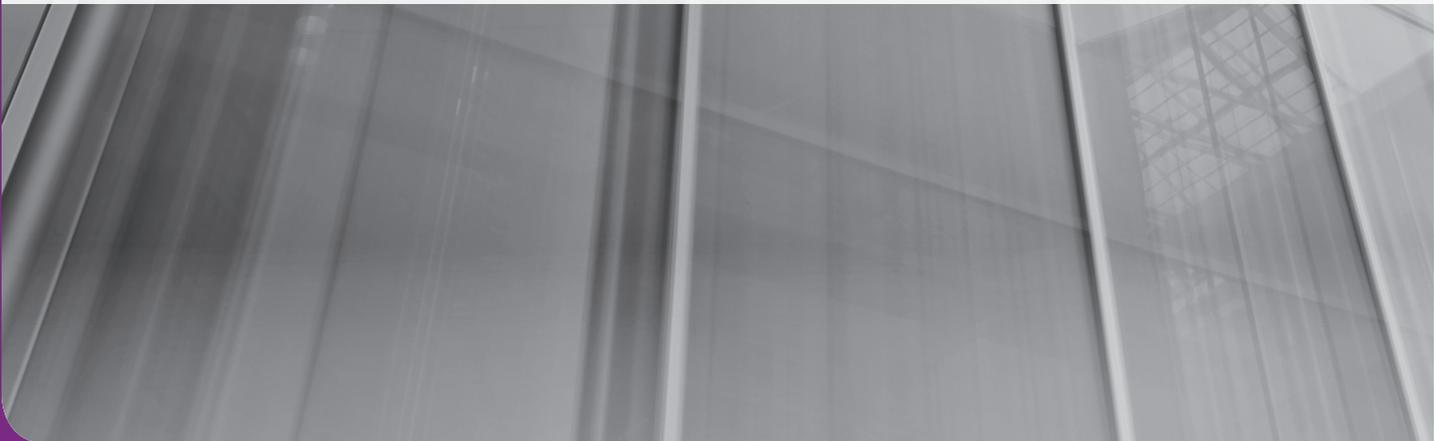
Volpone, S. D., Thomas, K. M., Sinisterra, P., & Johnson, L. (2013). Targeted recruiting: Identifying future employees. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable

(Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 110-125). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. This chapter reviews empirical research that has addressed the targeting of minority job candidates. A unique feature of this chapter is the authors' treatment of how employers may unintentionally send signals that affect minorities' views of them during the recruitment process.

Walker, H. J., & Hinojosa, A. S. (2013). Recruitment: The role of job advertisements. In Y. T. Yu & D. M. Cable (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of recruitment* (pp. 269-283). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. This chapter reviews research on the considerable role job advertisements play, particularly in early stages of the recruitment process. Walker and Hinojosa also discuss a number of theories that may explain why job advertisements have the effects they do.



Recruiting the right employees can be challenging, but the rewards of a well-constructed strategy can be enormous, because effective recruiting is the foundation on which any talent management program is built.





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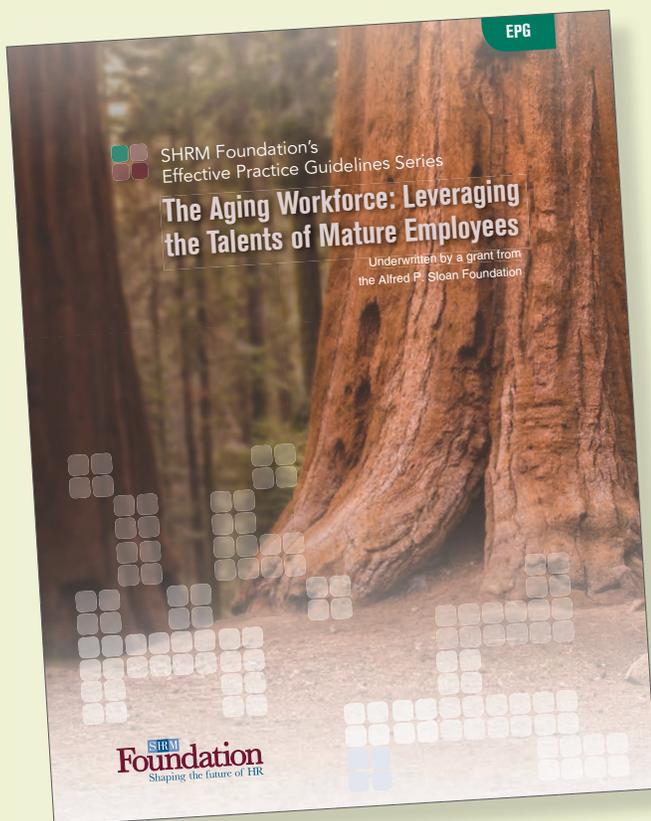


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