

**THE NEW WORLD OF  
RECRUITING AND HIRING TOP TALENT**  
*Joan Brannick, PhD, SPHR*

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. So says Albert Einstein (and many 12-step programs.). In my experience, many companies use this “insanity” approach when faced with the increasing need to find great employees.

There are significant changes occurring in today’s work environment that make it unlike any work environment we’ve seen before. Many companies are, therefore, finding it more difficult than ever to recruit and hire top talent. For many employers, fewer applicants apply for jobs AND those that do apply often meet fewer of the specific job requirements. Many have speculated about the reasons for this situation – impending labor shortage, poor quality education system, ongoing changes in technology that frequently change the skills required to do many jobs, etc. Whatever the reason, the reality is that organizations face a whole new world when it comes to recruiting and hiring top talent. Unfortunately, most organizations use old world thinking (that is, doing the same thing over and over again) to deal with this new world. As a result, they see few, if any, significant changes in their ability to find and hire great employees. This is stereotypical example of the old world of recruiting and hiring top talent which is:

- Think the same, act the same, get the same results.

To meet the challenges in this new world of recruiting and hiring top talent, one must:

- Think differently, act differently, and get different results.

**OLD WORLD VS. NEW WORLD THINKING**

To succeed in the new world of recruiting and hiring top talent, one must move away from “old world” thinking and move towards “new world” thinking. The key differences between “old world” and “new world” thinking are:

<b><i>Old World Thinking</i></b>	<b><i>New World Thinking</i></b>
• Present-focused	• Future-focused
• Telling approach	• Selling approach
• Methods-driven	• Applicant-driven
• Repeat same methods	• Use different methods
• Narrow focus	• Big picture focus

“New world” thinking about recruiting and hiring:

- Focuses on finding a great employee who will serve the organization well beyond today and into the future
- Involves selling the applicant on those aspects of the job and the company that are likely to be most appealing to him or her (this approach suggests applying the same tools to identify and appeal to applicants that you use to identify and appeal to customers)
- Focuses on defining the characteristics and qualities of a great employee and, then, using the methods that are best suited to

provide you with information about an applicant's abilities and aptitudes related to these characteristics and qualities

- Involves identifying your best sources of great employees and tailoring your recruiting and hiring methods to best fit that target audience
- Takes a much broader perspective on finding top talent and it looks at not only the fit between the person and the job but it also looks at the fit between the person, the company, the boss, the coworkers, etc.

### **STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING AND HIRING IN THE NEW WORLD**

Imagine a five-piece puzzle. In the middle of the puzzle is one piece labeled "applicant." It is surrounded by four other pieces labeled the job, the company, the boss, and coworkers. The goal of "new world" recruitment and hiring is to find the one piece (the one applicant) that best fits with all the other pieces. Here are some "new world" strategies that you can use to recruit and hire top talent.

**Target and Market.** Get to know your top employees. To do this, you must do two things. Know who your top employees are AND get to know them. Where did they go to school? Who did they work for before they came to you? What newspapers/magazines do they read (both work-related and non-work related)? What radio stations do they listen to? What hobbies do they have outside of work? What community and/or charity events do they attend? The more you know about your top employees, the more information you will have to help you identify and appeal to great new sources of top talent.

**Define and Refine.** Another way to increase the number (and quality) of applicants for a job is to clearly define AND refine (if necessary) that specific job. A great example of this strategy is the FISH! philosophy that was born in a fish market in Seattle, Washington. The people at Pike Place Fish Market took one of the most unappealing jobs in the world and made it fun and attractive to a whole new group of people. How did they do it? They defined HOW the job should be done using four simple principles:

- Play
- Make their day
- Be present
- Choose your attitude

By defining and redefining how a fishmonger's job should be done, they made the job more appealing to a larger group of people. Next time you're having trouble recruiting and hiring, ask yourself how the job can be made more appealing.

**Own and Hone.** Recruiting and hiring is NOT the sole responsibility of Human Resources. Anyone who has people reporting to them IS responsible for recruiting and hiring. The new world of recruiting and hiring top talent requires that you and your organization help all managers own their role in recruiting and hiring. It also requires that you and your organization provide resources (e.g., training, online resources, books, etc.) to your company's management to help them improve and strengthen their skills in this area.

**Share and Care.** One of the most important and often, most overlooked, aspects of hiring is the fit between an applicant and the coworkers with which they will work. Obviously, employees can be one of your most

effective recruiting tools. By sharing information about their work environment, employees have the potential to attract great talent. Creating other ways to involve coworkers in the recruiting and hiring process shows both the applicant and the employees that you care about them. You can have employees:

- Interview the applicant
- Give the applicant a tour of the facility
- Take the applicant to lunch

Doing any of the above and more allows employees to share important, work-related information with the applicant. By creating ways for this happen, it shows both applicants and employees that you care about them.

**Know and Show.** Organizations that do a great job of recruiting and hiring top talent know their values and they know what makes them unique. Moreover, they find ways to show who they are throughout the recruiting and hiring process. Southwest Airlines and their humorous recruiting ads are just one example. Microsoft latest advertising slogan – Your potential. Our passion. – is another one. Organizations who “get it” know who they are and they use creative ways to show who they are during the recruiting and hiring process.

## CONCLUSION

Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is no way to meet the demands of the new world of recruiting and hiring top talent. You must think different and act different to get different results. What are you doing to think differently and act differently about recruiting and hiring? If you aren't thinking and acting differently, someone

else is and, by doing so, is gathering up all the great talent..

### About the Author

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