

Recruitment In The Global Mobility Industry: Improving HR And Candidate Experience

HR Business Partners and internal recruitment teams are often stuck between a rock and a hard place, trying to balance the changing requirements of business needs with the expectations of candidates. Recruitment teams tend to be responsible for the first impression of the employing company and necessarily represent the organisation's culture, communication, and how the candidate may be treated if and when they are employed.

As operational practitioners in the mobility industry before moving into recruitment, our experience - based on recruiting for our own teams and as specialist providers of recruitment services – suggests that there are a few key areas in which greater clarity and definition would improve both the HR and candidate experience, and ultimately enhance the employer's reputation.

Clarity Around The Role

This is an issue which is not exclusive to global mobility, but is certainly one that crops up repeatedly. While an experienced recruiter may have a clear idea of which functions a Consultant or an Adviser is required to perform, roles which are termed 'executive' can encompass a broad range of operational duties, from largely administrative team assistant roles to a senior leadership functions. While this may not matter a great deal within the framework of the employer's own organisation, it is important that the level of seniority and extent of duties are clearly delineated to potential job applicants. To illustrate, two close competitors in a specialist field of the global mobility industry both employ Consultants and Coordinators, but the roles have inverse levels of seniority and it can take some time to convince candidates that they're not applying for a role that is a step back! The key to clarity is a well-thought out job specification. A specialist recruiter can be helpful in assisting an employer with the clear

description of a role, relative to its place in the hierarchy of the organisation and within the industry. Perhaps most importantly, the process of defining a role specification provides an organisation with an opportunity to think about what it really requires from the prospective employee, and his or her place in the established team. For the professional recruiter, a clear job description is invaluable in discussions with prospective candidates and accelerates the recruitment process.

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Lack of clarity around the purpose of the hire can be a source of frustration for

all involved. For example, when backfilling a role, is the business certain that the role constitutes precisely the same position as before, or have business requirements or the dynamic in the team changed? Perhaps there is now an opportunity to consider something a little different, such as job sharing or project work. When a role is advertised and then seems to disappear, because the hiring manager realises their needs have changed, it can be hard to explain to a candidate what has happened. Indeed, it can make candidates wary of applying for future positions at the same organisation.

For HR, the hiring manager and the professional recruiter, the key is to ensure that all stakeholders are in agreement regarding the intent of the hire, particularly where several parts of the business are involved in the interviewing process. In addition, it certainly assists the external recruiter in driving the hiring project, if it is possible to have open lines of communication with both hiring managers and HR professionals in the same organisation.

Improving The Experience Of The Interview Process

The perceived speed and efficiency of the hiring process has a great deal of influence on how the applicant will perceive the employer's working environment and culture. If a candidate is impressed at interview by a charismatic hiring manager, who assures the candidate that they will have autonomy, control and the capacity to make a big impact on the business, only to have to wait a prolonged time for further interviews to be scheduled or an offer to be made, they are likely to grow dubious about the connectedness of the organisation and may even drop out of the process.

This situation can be avoided by ensuring that the timescales, number of interviews and decision making processes are agreed internally in advance, and then clearly communicated to the candidate. This is a good opportunity to ensure that the process is commensurate to the seniority of the role – a junior, consultant-level role, typically can have a more condensed process, than a senior or managerial role. Should this process be changed for any reason, this

should also be communicated as quickly as possible to the candidate.

Sometimes, and in particular where the organisation runs matrix management structures, several business stakeholders in different areas of the business may wish to get involved in the hiring process, especially if the role in question is senior, or new. Keeping control of the number of interview stages and, if possible, consolidating the interested parties into panel interviews will reduce the time investment of the employer and ensure that the recruitment process is not frustrating for the candidate.

A specialist recruitment company should be expected to conduct face-to-face interviews wherever possible with candidates before submission to the employer, and, where a strong and trusting relationship exists between the business and the recruiter, the initial vetting stage can be outsourced to the agency.

As in everything, recruiting fashions come and go, but, generally, the hiring style that works best for an organisational culture is likely to be retained in the long-term, be it the use of psychometric assessments, competency-based interviews or role-plays. In terms of the candidate experience, it is certainly preferable to have consistency in the approach used by each interviewer. Many organisations have turned towards more relaxed, less formal interviews in recent times: while compliance is key in the mobility world, the industry is ultimately a people-oriented environment, and less formal interview styles can be useful in determining the communication style and approach of a candidate.

It is important, therefore, that hiring managers are guided in the organisation's interview protocol, however relaxed this may be, and do not accidentally stray into inappropriate or irrelevant lines of questioning, for example, around family arrangements, which they wouldn't necessarily touch upon in a more formal setting.

Feedback Feedback Feedback

The professional recruiter can sometimes feel like Billy Crystal leaving Meg Ryan a voicemail in *When Harry met Sally*: 'If you're there please pick up the phone, I really want to talk to you. The fact that you're not answering leads me to believe you're either (a) Not at home, (b) Home, but don't want to talk to me, or (c) Home, desperately want to talk to me, but trapped under something heavy. If it's either (a) or (c), please call me back.' Lack of feedback from hiring managers during the interview process is as frustrating for HR professionals as it is for the candidate and the recruiter. Frank and detailed feedback on a candidate's performance not only shows respect towards the applicant, but also allows the recruiter to refine their own research specifications. Importantly, it

also reflects favourably on the organisation as a prospective employer. One of the advantages of working with a specialist recruiter is that the message to the candidate can be managed appropriately and in a way that hopefully leaves everyone on good terms for future collaborations.

In summary, the common thread throughout, in our experience, is clear communication – in terms of the role, the process, and outcomes, whether they are negative or positive. We hope that the above illustrations can provide support for HR Managers when next reviewing processes with key internal business partners.



SARAH KINNAID

Director Recruitment Services,
Mobility People International
Recruitment Limited.

Sarah has almost 20 years' experience as a global mobility and recruitment professional, successfully managing relationships with mobility, procurement, human resources, operations and finance teams, as well as with assignees. Starting her career as a Mobility Consultant with the Crown Worldwide Group in Paris, France and working as Global Account Manager in Switzerland and the UK, Sarah's roles have included managing global contracts for clients in the finance, pharmaceutical and professional services sectors, where her award-winning teams exceeded performance measurements and secured client references.

Sarah says "Listening to my clients' needs in client services, I established a strong understanding of the importance of having the right team, in place, at the right time: that's really the best way to galvanise partnerships with corporate and private clients."

With an MA Cantab in French and Russian, working in global mobility has matched Sarah's personal desire to work internationally, to service clients and to apply her language and intercultural communication skills.

Tel: 0845 463 8990

Email: sarahk@mpirecruitment.com

Website: www.mpirecruitment.com

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