



Cracking the Hiring Code

RESEARCH SUMMARY
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Introduction

The talent acquisition landscape has undergone significant transformation, making it crucial for organizations to adapt their hiring strategies to remain competitive. The Brandon Hall Group™ research study, *Cracking the Hiring Code*, reveals that while 77% of organizations express confidence in communicating their Employee Value Proposition (EVP), they face substantial challenges in translating this into effective talent attraction. The most pressing challenges include managing remote work policies (50%), navigating competitive market conditions (49%), and addressing talent shortages (39%).

Organizations are responding through multiple initiatives, with employer branding activities and employee referral programs emerging as the top strategies for attracting talent. The research indicates a strong foundation in basic talent acquisition competencies, with communication (75%), critical thinking (65%), and collaboration (61%) ranking as the strongest skills among TA teams. However, there's a clear need for enhancement in areas such as data science (30%) and ideation (16%), which are becoming increasingly crucial in modern talent acquisition practices.

Current State

The contemporary talent acquisition landscape reveals a complex interplay between organizational capabilities and market demands. While organizations demonstrate strong confidence in their EVP communication, with 77% reporting moderate to very high confidence levels, the reality of talent attraction presents significant challenges. Remote work policies have emerged as the primary challenge, affecting 50% of organizations, closely followed by market competition at 49%.

Organizations are responding through various employer branding initiatives, with

43% Leveraging employee-generated content on social media

40% Implementing responsive careers websites

The competency profile of TA teams shows strong foundations in essential skills, particularly in communication and critical thinking, though gaps exist in more technical areas like data science and project management. This indicates a need for continued professional development to address evolving talent acquisition requirements.

Complications

The talent acquisition process faces multiple layers of complexity that significantly impact hiring effectiveness. The research reveals that 75% of responding organizations manage onboarding through their TA teams, creating intricate challenges in process ownership and transition management. Organizations are actively working to improve candidate experience, with 58% planning to implement streamlined application processes and 51% focusing on candidate-centric practices.

The study shows that integrating technology remains a challenge, with 41% of organizations still not utilizing AI in their talent acquisition processes. Additionally, the research indicates that collaboration between TA teams and hiring managers requires significant improvement, with only 47% providing interview training and resources to hiring managers. These complications are further compounded by the need to balance multiple improvement initiatives while maintaining daily operations.

Implications

Current talent acquisition practices and their associated challenges point to several critical areas that organizations must address:

- ◆ Organizations that maintain the traditional customer-service relationship between TA and hiring managers risk prolonged hiring cycles and reduced quality of hire.
- ◆ The lack of structured interview processes in many of organizations impacts consistency and fairness in candidate evaluation.
- ◆ The 41% of organizations not utilizing AI in talent acquisition may face competitive disadvantages in screening efficiency.
- ◆ Limited data analytics utilization affects strategic workforce planning capabilities and recruitment ROI measurement.
- ◆ Integration challenges between recruitment and onboarding processes affect new-hire retention and time-to-productivity.

Critical Questions

Current talent acquisition practices and their associated challenges point to several critical areas that organizations must address:

Is the organization's EVP compelling, effective, and attractive to the talent it needs to hire?

Is the organization taking a strategic approach to employer branding?

How well is the organization leveraging the connection between TA and onboarding?

Is the organization treating hiring managers as true collaborators rather than customers?

How effectively is the organization using technology and data analytics to drive continuous improvement in talent acquisition?

Brandon Hall Group™ POV

To address the critical questions, Brandon Hall Group™ recommends the following strategies:

Ensure a Strong, Compelling and Attractive EVP

Organizations must move beyond basic EVP communication to implement continuous feedback loops that incorporate insights from candidates who are not hired, exit interview data, and competitive analysis. This approach ensures the EVP remains relevant and compelling, adapting to evolving talent expectations and market conditions. Success requires regular validation through multiple data points and swift adjustments to maintain competitive advantage in talent attraction.

Maintain Strategic Focus on the Employer Brand

Rather than pursuing every possible branding initiative, organizations should adopt a targeted approach focused on critical talent segments. This involves careful research into candidate preferences and behaviors, followed by measured implementation of specific strategies. Success comes from testing approaches, measuring outcomes, and scaling effective methods while quickly abandoning unsuccessful ones.

Create Seamless Integration Through New-Hire Onboarding

Leading organizations are transforming the recruitment-to-onboarding transition by developing integrated success metrics spanning from offer acceptance through the first 90 days. This includes creating engaging pre-boarding experiences and implementing joint dashboards to track candidate-to-employee conversion quality. The approach reduces new-hire attrition while providing valuable insights for recruitment strategy refinement.

Leverage Data to Drive Continuous Improvement

Success in modern talent acquisition requires sophisticated use of technology and analytics. Organizations should focus on developing predictive analytics for candidate success while ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces human decision-making. This includes implementing real-time performance tracking and integrated data flows across talent systems, with careful attention to both traditional metrics and more sophisticated indicators of hiring success.

Treat Hiring Managers Like Partners, Not Customers

Organizations must shift from treating hiring managers as internal customers to establishing true strategic partnerships. This involves creating joint accountability metrics, conducting regular talent planning sessions, and collaboratively designing interview approaches. The partnership model leads to better hiring decisions and stronger long-term talent outcomes through shared responsibility and aligned objectives.

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