



Recruitment transformation: Forging a new path for talent acquisition

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Recruitment transformation: Forging a new path for talent acquisition



The secret of
change is to focus
all of your energy,
not on fighting
the old, but on
building the new.

~ Socrates

It has been more than two years since the outbreak of the pandemic, and things have started to return to normalcy. Countries have begun to open their borders and it is back to business as usual for many. Yet, there is no denying that not all things can go back entirely to pre-pandemic ways.

Businesses, for example, continue to look for solutions in the digital space to address

their ever increasing demands, be it in the areas of sales and marketing, project and HR (human resources) management, team communication, or branding.

And, why not? Digitisation has many merits to boast of, and once its benefits have been savoured, no one is about to let go of it in the foreseeable future.

Summing up the recruitment scenario of 2021



The last decade has been called the “digital era” of the recruitment profession

The last decade has been called the “digital era” of the recruitment profession. Think back to hiring practices just a little over 10 years ago, and then look at the current recruitment scenario. The changes are monumental, more so over the last two years.

The commute to campus, waiting for one’s turn to be called in and coming face-to-face with the interviewer — all these seem like a thing of the past. Today’s buzz word for hirers is “virtual recruitment”, magnified manifold by the pandemic. The trend is here to stay according to industry experts.

Challenges

How to get sales volumes up? How to get new business? – these were not the questions companies worried about in 2021. It was the year that saw

organisations face staffing challenges. Their anxiety was about sourcing top talent, skilling and upskilling them.

Steep recruitment volumes

A sharp escalation in job openings translated to high recruitment volumes across industries and sectors.

The IT sector hired nearly 4-5 times their regular numbers, and other industries about 2-3 times.

The VP of a reputed Indian-based IT firm said that the company hired more people in the first nine months of 2021 than they did in the previous two financial years put together.

Hiring of this magnitude has put a stress on the recruitment system such as never felt before.

Summing up the recruitment scenario of 2021



Sourcing candidates from a lower experience level translates into sound long-term strategy.

What created the demand?

Industry experts attribute the sudden surge in openings to these factors: high attrition, heavy investments coming in, acceleration in the startup ecosystem and digitisation of industries leading to technological adoption.

Entry level hiring too saw a steep rise. The reason? Companies were banking on freshers for the next level of growth.

How industries coped

The pandemic was instrumental in disrupting many things about the functioning and operations of businesses.

Companies had to devise innovative ways to acquire new talent:

- Remote hiring replaced in-person hiring.
- Virtual platforms for recruiting became the go-to solutions.
- Companies moved closer to

employees, to tier-2 cities, rather than having employees move to big cities.

- Flexible working options, such as permanent work-from-home, were offered.

What trended

Experts say that some form of virtual hiring was always present (even before the pandemic broke out) in some industries, at least in the initial stages like conducting remote assessments before landing on campuses; and phone screening and video conferencing before face-to-face interviews. But hiring managers were comfortable only after meeting candidates in person. This mindset saw a makeover.

The last two years have seen the recruitment scenario move from fragmented digital approaches to a completely virtual one.

Summing up the recruitment scenario of 2021



The way interviews were conducted and follow-up processes carried out, was a key factor in creating a positive impression in a competitive market

So what were the trends of the year gone by?

Remote interviewing:

Till 2019, a huge focus of recruitment was the location of a recruitment drive. It decided where the candidate had to go for the interview. With the pandemic making travel difficult, remote interviews became the only option. Platforms that were used for interviews ranged from simple video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to more specialised interviewing platforms.

Candidate experience:

"An ear for the employee" was a key focus area for companies. Companies that showed empathy, cared for their employees' health and well-being, promoted work-life balance among their people and gave them a positive experience, were successful in retaining valuable talent. This give-a-good-experience privilege also extended to candidates.

The way interviews were conducted and follow-up processes carried out, was a key factor in creating a positive impression in a competitive market, and instrumental in attracting the best of talents.

Adopting inclusive hiring practices:

Evidence shows that companies that can recruit and manage a diverse workforce have a clear competitive advantage. So then who was tasked with making the workplace inclusive? The recruiters. A recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that nearly 57 per cent of recruiters have strategies to attract diverse candidates. The strategies included leveraging job boards, providing targeted internships and offering diverse mentorship programs, recruiters rose to the challenge.

AI:

Numerous sectors have benefited from the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence)! Why not the recruitment profession? Preselection software applications powered by AI improved ways to identify talent, were unbiased in candidate selection and gave useful insights into a candidate's likelihood of succeeding in a role; and recruiters took full advantage by leveraging them.

New insights, new learnings



From process-
centric to people-
centric — the
recruitment
landscape
witnessed a
change in focus.

People engagement

Hiring people remotely was a lesser challenge than engaging them. This new challenge saw organisations setting up offices in tier-2 cities which was a more sustainable way to engage (by encouraging them to work-from-office 2 to 3 days in a week) than the alternative (asking new hires to relocate, which in the current situation was a huge challenge).

Change in focus

From process-centric to people-centric — the recruitment landscape witnessed a change in focus. Scheduling interviews is no longer about the availability of the hiring manager alone. Candidates availability is just as important. Earlier, a candidate had to fit in into the hiring manager's schedule.

Limited bandwidth

As hiring volumes increased, it became clear that an organisation did not have the necessary bandwidth to carry out all interviews internally. So, seeking external help was the wise thing to do. External recruitment also came with added benefits: feedback from an external, unbiased interviewer gave companies the ability to use the candidature across job applications; video recordings of interviews allowed hiring managers to review candidates at a convenient time.

2022 and beyond: Igniting new trends



Experts opine that tech adoption in hiring is set to continue.

At the end of every year, recruitment teams strategise for the next 12 months — re-evaluating and resolving current recruitment issues and making plans about where to source top talents from. It is imperative that they stay on top of hiring trends to address critical gaps in skills.

The more willing they are to shelve traditional approaches in favour of emerging trends, the better they are placed to stay competitive.

Experts opine that tech adoption in hiring is set to continue. Even when the pandemic ends or comes under control, a lot of changes that happened in the last year are here to stay, especially in the areas of recruitment process, people management and people engagement. All the best practices that evolved out of the pandemic are also going to continue their presence through this year.

Automation to combat high volume hiring

Specialised interviewing platforms have stepped in to help cope with the

high demand in specific skills. They offer a full solution to hiring needs in contrast to the fragmented solutions, available earlier.

Bots that guide, schedule and remind

Bots are all set to guide a candidate through job search, auto schedule interviews, trigger messages and emails (to both candidates and HR) to make sure they show up at the right time for the interview.

Specificity-centred hiring

There will be no more “jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none” hiring anymore. Henceforth, it is going to be all about hiring for specific roles and focusing on the right profile. Assessment tools, AI, and data analytics will assist to achieve results to this effect.

Focus on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion

DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) will continue to be a priority for recruiters. Through various policies such as remote working options, creating paths for women on a career break

2022 and beyond: Igniting new trends



to return to work and providing more flexible work options (like temporary work, part-time work or fixed term contracts), companies are set to sway more diverse talent and boast of an inclusive work culture.

will include brand research and outreach so that they can adapt policies and benefits to address the current market needs and increase talent acquisition.

Focusing on branding solutions

Hiring for the last two years has been faceless. Focus areas for companies

Conclusion



Virtual recruitment platforms today are replicating many of the physical interfaces like lounges, meeting rooms, chat rooms etc.

Candidates walk in, wait, look up content, read and interact with fellow candidates in a virtual environment just as they would in a physical one.

The advantage of a virtual environment lies in its ability to map and a candidate to an available panel, optimising time. The recruiter's time is freed up to focus on more important aspects such as making the necessary connect with

the candidate, focusing on giving the candidate a good experience and in general lifting the whole recruitment experience.

Recruitment, in the current times, is not limited to talent acquisition alone. It is about being a supportive workforce expert.

As Lawrence Bossidy, former COO of General Electric says, "Nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day, you bet on people, not on strategies."



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