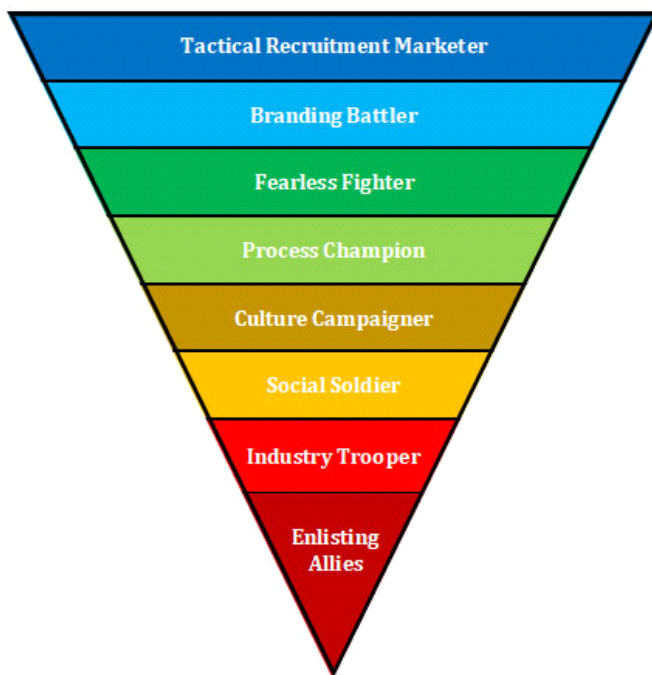


Features

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2019 Recruiting Maneuvers

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Are you ready to implement new recruiting strategies and become a “warrior” in 2019? Or will you be left behind your competition? Make planning and preparedness your goals for the recruiting year ahead of you. The following eight concepts will help you become the recruiting warrior you were destined to be.

Tactical Recruitment Marketer

As a direct consequence of the labor shortage, it's time to think cleverly and approach recruiting with a marketing attitude vs. a traditional approach. Failing to plan and develop a strategy that combats old fashioned “Now Hiring” signs, or copying and pasting job descriptions into a job posting could very well lead to recruitment defeat.

The first move is generating interest from a candidate.

Be thoughtful and calculating, so when a candidate hears about your tactical recruitment campaign, they automatically want to engage with you and find out more about what it might be like to work for you.

For example, we had great success with the tagline “Now Training Horticulturists” for hiring within IGCs, specifically geared towards seasonal retail staff in addition to greenhouse workers. Make it about people, not jobs. Who doesn't want to become a Horticulturist?

Branding Battler

Let's talk employer branding. If you're going to win your recruiting battle, understand that employer branding truly translates into your company's reputation. Have you looked at a site like Glassdoor to see what past and current employees are saying? See a few things you wish weren't there? Fight back and ask your current happy employees to hop on and give their thoughts on why they love working for your company.

In one of our recent surveys of more than 21,000 potential job seekers, we found that 75% of all candidates will research a company's reputation before they'll even say yes to an interview or meeting, and 80% won't accept a job with a company that has a bad reputation.

Fearless Fighter

Be a fearless fighter with referrals. We're in the battle together; collaborative thinking is crucial. Recruiters and HR departments need to band together with all departments within the company. Ask for help. Have employees post on their own social media engagements such as Facebook and LinkedIn, and reward them for their efforts. Perhaps offer a \$100 referral bonus upon hire and another \$100 after successful completion of the first 90 days of employment. The "referring warrior's" job is to bring the candidate to the table; it's the company's job to engage, hire and retain them.

Figure out who might be a great spokesperson in your company and make them an "outside" fearless fighter. Having recruitment cards on hand while out shopping or at the local coffee shop is an easy way to let a potential candidate know that their service was outstanding and that the company represented on the card thinks like they do. It's an easy, comfortable way to applaud a person's efforts without striking up a full conversation while the potential candidate is working.

Process Champion

STOP asking for traditional resumes; instead, look at LinkedIn profiles, or ask a potential candidate to briefly describe themselves and their experience in an email. Give them questions to answer and engage with them. Passive candidates (those not seriously looking) may not have their resumes updated; insisting on one and forcing a candidate to take the time to create one could have them reconsider their interest.

The nitty gritty, including references, can be obtained once the candidate is actively involved in the hiring process. Don't be afraid to change your process, even if you've been doing it the same way for years. Specifically, if you're in a market where you receive very few applications, don't hesitate to put a phone number in your ads asking a candidate to give you a call. Share the responsibility of talking with potentials with several managers, but most importantly, get back to the candidate ASAP.

Culture Campaigner

Battle your competitors with content regarding your culture—video content that is. The word culture is EVERYWHERE, but how do we show it? Video. Get that smartphone out and show a potential candidate the uniqueness of your company—show the team working on a Habitat for Humanity project or having a blast at the company bowling outing.

At HireHorticulture.com, one of our customers posted the manager breaking out in dance at the cookout as he cranked up his music from Venezuela. Another customer embedded a video with their job posting showing the entire staff at a ball game eating hot dogs with their families on a sunny day. On the flip side, if you have a video on your career page that's eight years old, now is the time to update. Make sure you're putting a direct link in your ad for potential candidates to click right through—our analytics show 86% will click to watch.

Social Soldier

Utilize everything the Internet has to offer. Looking for a grower? Turn to niche job board sites for when horticulture experience is a necessity. Use the bigger job boards for less experienced roles and think about it differently. We have a love/hate relationship with the Post-and-Pray method—this means post and sit back and wait for resumes to pour in. Have some fun with recruiting and envision yourself as a type of Internet intelligence officer. Understand the science behind posting ads. Candidates want to FEEL what it's like to work at your company; it's your job to portray that with your words. Tell your story, talk about just how awesome you are and what makes you ridiculously cool.

Look for job boards or posting sites that are interactive with their candidates. Ensure they have a wide reach with

social media, are in constant communication with candidates and are watching their own analytics in order to give you advice on how trends look within your geographic region. Don't shy away from soldiering on your own. Reach out to potential candidates on social media sites, send messages via your LinkedIn connections, run an ad on Facebook, and be ready to answer and respond to comments.

Industry Trooper

Think of other industries where skills might transfer over and go searching there. We're hearing over and over about the shortage of younger folks joining our industry; that, unfortunately, means we must work even harder. I've had great success in finding customer service/sales folks for IGCs in the hospitality and tourism industry. A restaurant worker is used to working long hours, weekends, standing on their feet, physical labor, and above all, delivering great customer service. Greenhouse workers? Go after folks working in the manufacturing world. Incoming Section Growers? Check out recent graduates with chemistry and/or biology degrees.

Enlisting Allies

Last, but not least, when all else fails or you just find yourself running out of time, enlist allies. Bring a contract recruiter in-house temporarily, hire a recruiting coach and use full-cycle recruiters for the confidential or senior roles. Time is money, and if you've determined your time is better spent being on the front lines in another area of the company, hire it out.

Cheers to 2019 and I wish you spectacular recruiting success! **GP**

Suzanne Kludt, PHR, is the founder of www.HireHorticulture.com, a niche job board with a wide range of services for the Horticulture and Landscape industries. For the last 13 years, she has (and still holds) the title of HR Director and Senior Recruiter for Al's Garden and Home in Portland, Oregon. Email her at suzanne@HireHorticulture.com.