



How Does Your Business Rate on Talent Attraction & Retention?

Talent Attraction & Retention is the number one people issue businesses face. A Bus Depot provides an unusual yet powerful analogy of what CEO's and businesses can be doing to increase talent attraction and retention of top performers.

What bus? Where?

The heading refers, of course, to the subject of Jim Collins best selling business book, 'From Good to Great'. " It is here that he communicates the idea that getting the right people on the bus, and the wrong people off the bus is fundamental to any businesses' success.

The book follows a group of companies over a period of many years and examines the characteristics of those companies that went from good to great.

It then details what these smart businesses did to attract and retain top talent.

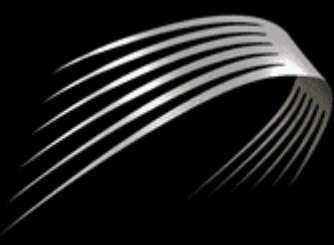
Specifically, it maps out three stages, each with two key concepts. The key concept and take away when it comes to talent, is "First who.....Then what

Without exception, the successful companies described by Collins in his book ensured they had the most talented people on the bus and then worried later about what positions they would occupy. Their premise? That talent will invariably provide the best return.

Given the popularity of the book and the fact that, in the last few years, many companies have used it as a central plank in their change management strategies, it would be reasonable to assume that its practices had been adopted by HR departments and recruitment companies across the country.

A few companies have done so. The majority have not. It is still common practice here to use electronic word matching software to "match" candidates' CVs with job descriptions. This is simplistic and, more often than not, ineffective in developing a meaningful shortlist of the right candidates for the job.

When it comes to the so called Talent Shortage or War for Talent, the most vital take-out from the book is: attract the top talent to your business first and then find the right position for them.



Would they get on your bus if you offered them a ride?

The short answer to this is: how did you ask them?

A while back, businesses had the luxury of being selective about who they wanted to let onto their bus, they held all the power.

Even with the current global downturn, the power has still largely shifted to the job seeker, who is now looking around the bus depot at all the various bus ride options.

Today's job seekers rightly want more information up front before they are prepared to step aboard. For example: who is driving the bus, who else is on the bus, what the trip will be like and the benefits offered during the trip.

In fact, there is so much choice, that it is difficult for many of the buses to be seen by the job seekers given all the competition.

Take a step back and look at your business from a prospective job seekers' perspective. If your business was one of those buses lined up at the depot with thousands of other buses, would you get on? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Because there are talented job seekers doing just that with your business right now.

Let's take the bus analogy just one step further. Think of HR as the ticketing booth or ticket person who has the first interaction with job seekers who connect with your business.

- How do they come across?
- Are they friendly, knowledgeable about the bus service and the businesses history?
- Do they take questions and provide meaningful answers?
- Do they engage with the customers or come across as unprofessional and bored?.

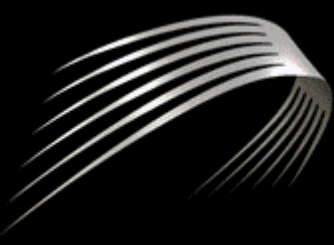
In short, when the customer arrives at the window, is there an "out to lunch" sign blocking the view ?

The reality is that the first contact most job seekers have with your business is with your HR department. If their first impression is of a badly written job ad, , an application they submit that is never acknowledged, or, even worse no-one to speak with before they submit their application,, then they are unlikely to sing your praises.

All aboard...

Despite some initial mishaps, you have managed to lure the prized candidate on board. They have listened to your ticketing people who have made the bus ride and destination sound really enticing.

However, when they get on the bus they find an off-hand conductor who grumbles about their ticket not being correct and doesn't know where to put them.



After a long wait - the high achiever is directed into a space at the very back with no window (as was originally promised). They sit down and wonder again if they have made the right decision.

Relating this experience back to your recruitment process, it is highly likely that many job seekers have a similar experience when they connect with your business. Some will stay and go along with it, as they are not sure what else to do. Others will up and leave very quickly.

Look at your business and how you attract and retain top talent. Is your business doing enough of the right things to entice talent to come onboard and stay onboard, or are you just going through the motions and wondering why you are not getting the right results?

Time to re-think the process.

HR under the microscope – asking the right questions to get the right people.

The most fundamental questions for senior management when considering how to get the optimal result from HR is what are they currently doing and why ?

Some examples:

- **Are they focussed on attracting top talent or on building up databases of resumes?**

If your HR department is not actively developing relationships with those applicants whose resumes your database holds then vital resources are being wasted. And if they are not being measured on this, you might want to re-examine your metrics...

Chances are your business has spent thousands, hundreds of thousands, or indeed millions on building up databases of people who once wanted to work for your business,

Do they still want to work for you? If you have done nothing for them since they applied the answer may well be a resounding “no”.

If automated, your system may not have matched their resume against a job description at the specific point in time. If this is the case chances are they will never come up in a system match, and as such your business will never benefit from their talent.

This person who once wanted to work for your business, now does not.

Worse, they are likely to tell others (be that online or face to face) about the bad experience they had dealing with you

Indeed, there are numerous websites that exist to do just that, get information from those who have dealt with or worked for major organisations and share it. www.glassdoor.com is a case in point.



- **Does the business have a clearly defined and consistently communicated employer value proposition?**

According to a recent survey by Chandler Macleod, only 29% of organizations have developed a formal Employment Value Proposition (EVP).

Therefore 71% of businesses are unable to consistently and effectively communicate a meaningful message that entices talented job seekers and encourages current employees to stay.

Can you imagine a business not having a brand value proposition for a product or service – not being able to consistently articulate why people should pay for their products or services?

And yet, the majority of businesses still continue operating without an effective EVP in an overcrowded and competitive job market.

Your EVP needs to be relevant and consistent.

If those who are communicating with potential job seekers in your business are sending out different messages of what your business has to offer, or cannot communicate why a candidate should work in your business, then they are wasting the candidates' time and damaging the business.

- **Are your best HR people in the front line to interact with top talent when it wants to connect with your business?**

First impressions count! They say in the interview process that the interviewer decides within the first few minutes.

Today, the job seekers are just as likely to be assessing the interviewer and if your HR people are not top shelf, it is unlikely that the top talent is going to be excited about working for your business.

Alternatively, the hiring manager will have to do an exceptional job to make up for the “not so positive” first impression.

There are some fantastic HR people out there, and we hope that your business has some of these gems.

Where possible be sure to put your best and brightest in front of the talent you are looking to win over and bring onboard. Relegating the task to the most junior HR person is an act of self sabotage.

- **Are you equipped to find the best candidates with your current structure?**

A recent survey by ZDnet reported that 81% of salary earners prefer to go direct to the business.



Therefore outsourcing a core function of your business appears to be off-putting for the majority of top talent. That said, this is a difficult one as some businesses simply don't have the resources to do it themselves.

For others it may be that they have the resources, however the resources are focussed on the wrong things i.e. growing big databases of obsolete resumes.

Do you have an internal HR and or Recruitment team? What are their key functions? Is attracting and retaining top talent the priority of this area?

And, most importantly – how do you measure their success ?

- **How innovative and progressive are your HR department?**

A recent survey by Chandler Macleod has confirmed that the majority of HR Departments engage in traditional and outdated hiring approaches. They go with what they know and have done before as opposed to trying new things.

In an age where change is a given and the demographics of the workforce so varied, businesses that have a traditional HR department will not attract the top talent they are invariably after.

Some questions to ask are: How open is your HR team to new technology and new ways of doing things? What have they implemented or introduced lately that is progressive and bringing about real value and significant results for your business?

- **How much time and money is spent on Employer Branding?**

Today businesses need to be marketing their Employer Brand and their employee value proposition 24/7, be that in print, online, radio, through stories and anecdotes, PR and so on.

It is not simply a matter of marketing your products and services. Real time and money needs to be spent on marketing your Employer Brand.

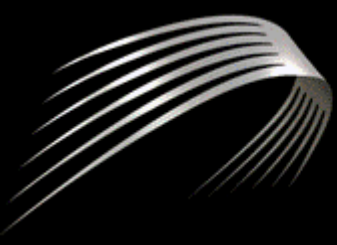
Today your Employer Brand is what job seekers in the market define it as.

It is up to you to ensure that you are generating appealing and consistent messages that define your business's brand.

Many companies are amazed to find that their perception of their business is entirely different to the market's perception.

To re-iterate – your EVP is a vital weapon in the war for talent.

Which brings us back to where we started. Getting the right people on the bus to ensure your businesses' ongoing success.



SIX FIGURES
CONNECTING EXCELLENCE

As we noted in our first piece from this series: without exception, the successful companies described by Collins in “Good to great” ensured they had the most talented people on the bus and worried later about the details.

Ask the right questions, find the right approach and you’ll ensure your business has a smooth ride ahead.



Kelly has been specialising in the arena of Human Resource Management, Recruitment and Career Counselling for close to 12 years. Initially focusing on commercial recruitment, and later moving into corporate Human Resources working with the likes of Ernst & Young and General Electric. In these roles Kelly was exposed to best practice HR and developed a true passion for Human Resources Management.

In 2008 Kelly launched Six Figures www.sixfigures.com.au the premium job site for \$100K+ jobs, a site created to provide job seekers with a trusted online source to find six figure opportunities across all industries and professions. The site offers businesses a new targeted channel to connect with six figure job seekers, utilizing current technology to feature job opportunities and information about the business in a way that appeals to today's high salary earners.

Kelly's experience working across HR, Recruitment & Career Coaching has provided her with a solid understanding of what the job market looks like, what employers look for and the common experiences and challenges they face.

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