E-RECRUITMENT: AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH STUDY OF PARADIGM SHIFT IN RECRUITMENT PROCESS

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Abstract

There is no doubt that people are the most valuable assets for every organization. It needs people who can help the organization create benefit and ultimately achieve its goals. The right recruitment strategies hold the key for success for any organization. Today's cut throat world with demand for highly skilled professional and access to the latest technology has opened a new horizon of opportunities for the human resource manager . E-recruitment helps reach a wide variety of employers as well as prospective candidates spanning geographical boundaries and is so much quicker, easier, cheaper and efficient than traditional means. E-recruitment facilitates 24 x 7 accesses and pick over out the unqualified candidates in an automated way. Despite the challenges of a lower Internet penetration, time consumption, unable to dependent solely on the online, room for impersonation, duplication of resumes by

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job seekers, and importance to conventional recruitment methods, online recruitment is likely to pick up momentum. With the convergence of greater connectivity, more cost effective software solutions and ever more competitive business environments, human resource departments face a new challenge. Thus, the aim of this paper is to discuss the origins of e-recruitment and to explain the importance and challenges of e-recruitment in emerging economies like India.

Keywords: E-recruitment, Internet, Organization, Non- Conventional, Competent.

Introduction

There is no doubt that people are the most valuable assets for every organization. It needs people who can help the organization create benefit and ultimately achieve its goals. Human resource management includes several activities and today acquiring and retaining the employees is the biggest challenge. The right recruitment strategies hold the key for success for any organization. Today's cut throat world with demand for highly skilled professional and access to the latest technology has opened a new horizon of opportunities for the human resource manager . The recruitment landscape both internationally and in India has changed significantly in recent years. "Every sector, every job, and every function, was, is or will be disrupted by Internet." Recruitment before nineteenth century was based on the apprenticeship system. Online recruitment has now become a significant part of the recruitment strategy for a wide range of organizations world-wide, in addition to becoming an increasingly popular method for job-seekers in searching and applying for jobs.   E-recruitment is the process of use of the internet for attracting, hiring and retaining job seekers. The growth in the e-recruitment has been fuelled with the adoption of technology by prospective employers and Internet penetration. The internet penetration in India is increasing and has incredible potential. According to a study by NASSCOM, there are about 18 million resume's floating online across the world. Organizations have cut costs by almost 80 per cent over traditional recruitment modes by moving over to the online recruitment process.

Concept of E-Recruitment

E-recruitment is an online recruitment where the recruitment is done through electronic resources. It utilizes the web based tools, techniques and technologies. When employers want to fill the slots hurriedly, they prefer e-recruitment in place of traditional recruitment. E-recruitment is also known as internet recruitment. E-recruitment may also be called emerging recruitment, evolving recruitment and effective recruitment. E-recruitment process involves the elimination of unsuitable candidates through automation process. There are resume scanners that filters automatically online and provides the right candidates to the employers on platter.

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It is useful when there is sudden shortage of skilled manpower and also if the company bags a new contract and if it wants job seekers with specific skill-set, mindset and tool-set then e-recruitment is the only solution.

E-Recruitment Process

On the whole, the recruitment process consists of three stages, namely, registration and administration of selection, academic competence test, and interview. The registration process is an online system. On the other hand, the assessment test is paper-based. Besides do online registration, applicants can access the results of each stage of selection and knowing the latest developments of the selection process through the official website. The applicants just browse the internet and visit the official website. Before filling the registration form, the applicants have to download information about job vacancies and requirements. After meeting the requirements; the applicants can continue to the next step. They just click the registration icon that appears on the homepage and follow the instructions on how to register. First, every applicant should answer some questions to access the online application system. Second, the applicants must fill the registration form with their personal profile, educational background, and the job position. Finally, the applicants will get the online registration code if they meet the requirements. In the next stage, the applicants must send their resume and other documents through Post Office Box address. The committee will validate their data and publish the written test announcement through the website. The applicants who pass the written test will have an interview with the committee as the last stage. The applicants, who are accepted, will be announced through the website.

Forms of E-Recruitment

Forms of recruitment can be broadly categorized into two. One is centralized and the other is decentralized. Centralized recruitment is in action when the organization is having a centralized power structure and the departments are not involved in decision making, it is only concentrated in one central department. In government organizations it is visible, like in State Bank of India. Advantages may be control of the administrative costs, standardization in the process, minimizes biased choices, experts are involved. Decentralized recruitment is having authority to each department to choose their staff. The companies who are geographically spread or very big in size will find this form convenient. In the era of globalization anyone who is interested in corporate world is aware of these sites. Using internet prospective applicants could search for positions in which they were interested. Contact with employers directly is viable. Feasibility of email overruled the use of telephone, fax or mail and the companies

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started accepting application through email. Recent trend of recruitment is e-recruitment, where the process of recruitment is automated. The automation began in 1980 but was systematized in 1990. Methods of e-recruitment are many, among those the important ones are:

Job Boards: These are the places where the employers post jobs and search for candidates. Candidates become aware of the vacancies. One of the pitfalls is it is generic in nature. Special skill candidates can be searched by certain job boards.

Employer Websites: These sites can be of the company owned sites, or a site developed by various employers. For an example, Directemployers.com is the first cooperative, employer-owned e-recruiting consortium formed by Direct Employers Association. It is a non-profit organization formed by the executives from leading U.S Corporations.

Professional Websites: These are for specific professions, skills and not general in nature. For an example, for HR jobs human resource management sites to be visited like www.shrm.org. The professional associations will have their own site.

Advantages of E-Recruitment

Knowledge workers have several competitive advantages. They are aware of the latest tools and technologies. They stay ahead of others in terms of knowledge and performance. They stand out from the pack. E-recruitment is a boon for both the knowledge workers and employers. The organization can immediately get the right talent. Conventional recruitment takes lot of time in recruiting the potential hires. However, the e-recruitment saves lot of time for both employers and job-seekers. E-recruitment bridges the gap between the employers and job seekers. It provides wider scope, choice and opportunities for both. There are no middlepersons involved. It saves time, money and energy. It provides round the clock services. It is indeed win-win for both employers and employees. The advantages of the e-recruitment are:

Cost Efficient: Advertisements in internet when compared to newspaper, magazines, and employment agencies is greatly cheap. As in the other sources continuously one has to revise the advertisement, for example a company wanted their ad to appear on every Sunday for a month thus was suppose to pay for four advertisements. But for internet it is not applicable.

Time Saving Device: Time to deliver to communicate is minimized by this. Response is direct and immediate without any delay. Beforehand the postal services, fax was one way communication and was time consuming. Phones

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provided two way communications but resume management, communicating worldwide were not possible.

Widens the Search: In the era of globalization, the reach cannot be restricted at one place. It provides global reach that also within a fraction of second. Truly the process supports the definition of recruitment by creating a vast pool of potential candidates.

Provides Clarity: Advertisements in employment news, newspapers, and magazines will have word limit, thus sometimes is misinterpreted. For an example, a company advertisement announced vacancy for computer skilled person which was interpreted as MIS job which was rather a job for computer skilled receptionist. The advertisement was not clear enough to explain the full profile. In internet the word limitation is not there, the idea, opinion, profile can be expressed as anyone like.

Scope for Better Match: Information in detail is provided with clarity therefore suitable candidate match is possible. The search is widened link with other websites are possible, these attracts the candidates and after the job profile matches, the candidates apply.

Standardization: The information of the candidates is collected in a standard format. Besides collecting the data it also consolidates information received from various sources.

Reservoir: It acts as the reservoir of information. From the job profile to candidate profile is available along with past applicant data.

Lessen Paper Work: As the data collection, filing, administrative work are done electronically thus paper work or documentation has been lessened.

Roadblocks in E-Recruitment

The current website security system can be overcome by intruders or hackers. This would cause system errors and could even make the site inaccessible to the applicants. The limited or unstable internet connection interrupts the registration process especially in some provinces that lack of internet coverage. The applicants often face problem with the internet connection when accessing the application system. Bad internet connection will hamper the registration process and adversely affect the applicants. The impact of this connection problem is a decrease in number of applicants. The recruitment committee and the IT consultant cannot overcome this problem because it is the authority of the Internet Service Provider. Moreover, the worst impact is the failure of data and

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information transmission from the applicants. The IT consultant has designed the application program to allow high number of users to access this system. However, the application system has limited license for users so it can disturb the system while the number of people who want access the website is higher than the license quota.

E-recruitment is still in nascent stage and it takes time to penetrate. There is still low computer literacy. At times the employers lose the right candidates. Several people don't provide adequate information online as they are not computer savvy. There is also duplication of resumes by job seekers. There is possibility for passive resumes being uploaded. Besides there is no much of authenticity as background checks are not involved immediately. Despite the challenges of a lower Internet penetration, time consumption, unable to dependent solely on the online, room for impersonation, duplication of resumes by job seekers, and importance to conventional recruitment methods, online recruitment is likely to pick up momentum.

Trends in E-Recruitment

Company and the prospective employee can communicate with each other via the blogs. Thus blogs, podcasts, vodcasts are being considered a tool of e-recruitment. No more the process can be blamed for being one-way communication like mails, faxes only being speedy as done electronically. Podcasts are the services of digital media files. Vodcasts are the video podcasts. History states that employers had the privilege to be selective in hiring process, especially in screening resumes but were not always fair. Because of the time constraint it was not possible to go through all the applications. Today the candidates can choose their employers as not only the financial state is known to them but also the culture is known. Print ad is phasing out due the popularity of search engine ads. Pay-per-click is not only convenient but also more attractive. Job boards are embracing RSS feed. Hotjobs, Google deserves special mention. Google offers one to upload the jobs on Google base even when one doesn't have their own site. RSS can be read using software "RSS reader". It is a family of web feed formats use to publish frequently updated works. Such as blog entries, news headlines in a standard format.

Suggestions for Effective E-Recruitment Process

- The organizations should be concerned about various factors. Among them most important are return on investment (ROI) should be calculated to compare the costs and risks. It facilitates to evaluate benefits and to calculate the estimated return.

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- Recruitment policy should be flexible and proactive, to adapt market changes. The companies will have their own mix and match sources according their objective. The guidelines to be provided in the policy.

- Unemployment rate, labour turnover rate are considered. As the whole process depends on the availability of candidates in the market. For every post, position it is not viable to spend too much of time. These rates will determine whether to be stringent or lenient.

- Impact of supplying compensation details to be considered. That is the wage, salary, benefits, when disclosed on line then it should follow the legal norms. Chance for negotiation will not be there. Compensation rate of the company not only reaches to the candidates but will be known to all.

- Precautions to be taken for resume screening. Words that discriminates gender, age, religion, etc. to be avoided.

- Review the results periodically and also update regularly to achieve a better result. Otherwise pool of candidates will remain static and will not serve the purpose.

- Organizations need to selective while choosing the sites. It refers to whether it is required to be giving to the job search sites like www.monster.com or in their own site. When special skill candidates are searched then generic job search sites to be avoided.

Conclusion

Traditional methods should not be replaced by the e-recruitment, it should supplement. The loopholes of e-recruitment can be covered by the traditional methods and recruitment process will be faster, global due to e-recruitment. The objective of any recruitment is to recruit the right candidate for the right slot. Keeping the current trends in view, emphasizing on e-recruitment is essential and ideal for effective and efficient recruitment. The days of manual recruitment are fading away gradually as organizations are moving to online recruitment. As change is the only thing constant in this world, there is need to change the strategies in recruitment as well for maximizing the accuracy of right person for the right slot as it minimizes employee dissatisfaction and attrition. When we look at both problems and advantages, we can comfortably conclude that advantages outweigh problems in e-recruitment. The organizations must emphasize on e-recruitment for hiring better talent and must reinvent as per the needs in the 21st century.

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