

The Honors College at the University of Missouri-Kansas City

Human Resources: Ensuring Future Success

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ABSTRACT

Human Resource Management (HRM) is essential to every organization, profit inducing or not. Talent Acquisition within HRM focus on the strategic process that is recruiting and hiring talent to the business. Each area of the organization relies on Human Resources to ensure hired talent is benefiting the organization. This study looks at the roles of talent acquisition, evolution of hiring, and technology used in the hiring process. The purpose of this is to explain how the evolution and technology have impacted organizations To complete this study, past public research was utilized. After further research, it is concluded that the hiring process has drastically changed over the years and that technology has had an impact on the way organizations must recruit and hire new talent.

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Human Resources: Ensuring Future Success

In every major organization, Human Resources (HR) is vital to its success, stability, and growth. Human Resource Management can be defined as, “the process of employing people, training them, compensating them, developing policies relating to them, and developing strategies to retain them” (“Chapter 1: The Role of Human Resources”). Without a strong HR department organizations would not be able to retain current employees or hire competitively. Within Human Resources is the department responsible for seeking out the new hires, Talent Acquisition. As the job force and hiring have evolved, the way that new employees are found and recruited has also changed. Many of these changes are due to technology being introduced into that process. With new technology being produced, the hiring process has drastically changed from word of mouth searching to artificial intelligence doing the search for organizations. This study will explain the industry, show how it and hiring have evolved, and the impact that technology has had on the process.

BACKGROUND ON INDUSTRY

Talent acquisition within Human Resources is crucial to the growth of an organization. Talent acquisition is “the strategic approach Organizations must adopt a new approach in order to gain a competitive advantage that focuses less on filling positions quickly and more on aligning talent acquisition with the business” (Cepin 13). Talent acquisition not only focuses on how the company approaches hiring new candidates, but their strategic approach to meet business growth objectives (Cepin 13). In today’s workforce, it is imperative that organizations stay focused on their strategic plans otherwise firms may jeopardize themselves and lose qualified candidates in the job hunt.

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Talent acquisition and recruiting are terms that are easily confused as they are often used interchangeably. Talent acquisition is defined by Miller as, "utilizing strategic workforce segmentation to assess current and future needs" ("What's the Difference between Talent Acquisition and Recruiting?"). Talent acquisition is the focused, long-term big picture of hiring. They are responsible for ensuring the goals of the organization are met by the recruiting partners.

Recruitment is defined as "a process that provides the organization with a pool of qualified job candidates from which to choose." (*Chapter 4: Recruitment.* 80). A recruiter serves as to "bridge the gap between a hiring manager and their future colleague, helping to create a more cohesive hiring experience" (Peretz). The recruiter is that first point of contact with the potential candidates for any questions they may have throughout the process. In addition, they would be responsible for working with those who have applied through the company's job postings or at a career fair. It is important for candidates to work with somebody on the inside, as they know the culture, how candidates will be evaluated, and different team dynamics and can share that information with the potential new hire (Peretz).

Many recruiters rely heavily on marketing and brand managers to ensure that the company is being advertised accordingly. With a strong company brand, employees will be proud to work for that organization and many will market the company all on their own (Cubukcu). If the company has a negative connotation based on word of mouth or on social sites, the company's hiring pool would be significantly less substantial. Thus, it is the role of marketing and brand managers to ensure the company's image is strong for hiring purposes.

The hiring managers work closely with the recruiters to ensure that they are ready to interview the candidates. The hiring manager will either conduct the interviews themselves or will work to prepare other managers to do the interviews ("How to Become a Hiring Manager").

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This preparation can include creating questions, educating on the job description, and preparing them to administer a standardized hiring exam. The hiring manager is also the point person to extend an offer to the candidate. They also will prepare the onboarding process to start new hire orientation ("How to Become a Hiring Manager").

EVOLUTION OF INDUSTRY

1790 Industrial Revolution. The industrial revolution entered the first phase from 1790 to 1830 ("Economic Growth and the Early Industrial Revolution."). The start of the American Industrial Revolution is accredited to Samuel Slater who opened the first industrial mill in the United States ("Economic Growth and the Early Industrial Revolution."). This mill introduced new technology to get the task done. Another key to the changing economy and workforce in this timeframe was the introduction of organizational strategies to increase productivity. This began with the "outwork system" whereby small parts of a larger production process were carried out in numerous individual homes ("Economic Growth and the Early Industrial Revolution."). In addition to the outwork system, the "factory system" began during the industrial revolution where work was performed in one single location at a larger scale ("Economic Growth and the Early Industrial Revolution.").

Though factories improved work abilities during the first industrial revolution, it was in the second that many workers began to despise them. The conditions and hours were grueling and it began to expose child labor in America. It was difficult as people whom were from rural backgrounds, i.e. farmers, were used to self-regulating their hours based on seasons began to work in factories that were clock-regulated and never changing (Niiler). Factories began quickly mass-producing items such as sewing machines, steel girders for skyscrapers, and railroad tracks (Niiler). In addition to factories, the second revolution's burst of economic production came

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from the railroads. In 1916, the railroad lines expanded to 254,000 miles connecting America and allowing for shipped goods (Niiler). With the changing world during the Second Industrial Revolution it also “led to fears by social critics about the loss of freedom, autonomy and independence that is replaced by boredom, repetition and toil” (Niiler).

Following the Second Industrial Revolution is followed by the Third Industrial Revolution in which “digital communications technology and the internet changed how we transmit information, do business and interact with each other” (Niiler). The technological change was the “advent of programmable automation; that is, machines and processes that can be reprogrammed to perform different operations.” (Helfgott 41). Mass production impacted the organization of work as it became limited by the market management (Helfgott 41). As the emphasis on automation and mass production manufacturing increased, “there has to be greater flexibility in the utilization of the workforce” (Helfgott 43). There became a need for more multiskilled types of jobs and workers, and compensation systems were revised to award workers based on broadening their knowledge bases (Helfgott 43). Thus, encouraging workers to become better educated before entering the workforce.

1950's Racial Discrimination. During the 1950s, the key focus of recruitment within companies was “to identify and develop talent, and make sure that the deserving candidates found the right jobs and were satisfied.” (Partners) The concept of developing talent before finding a candidate a job started what is now known as a recruitment agency. Recruitment agencies, or staffing agencies, were held responsible for placing people into permanent jobs. The agencies staff did this through word of mouth, referrals from family members, or advertisements posted on job boards and in the newspapers.

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This time period of work also gave many opportunities to previously underrepresented workers including African Americans. This is accredited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which “ended segregation in public places and banned employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin” (History.com Editors). Looking at the over-all employment picture, the economic opportunities for this population remained a national problem (Thomas 53). The Department of Labor tells us that in 1950 the median money income for African American families was \$1,869, while it was \$3,445 for white families (Thomas 53). This wage gap is why a greater proportion of African American workers sought employment versus white workers (Thomas 53).

Post World War II, African Americans were able to hold onto most of the benefits they gained from work opportunities (Thomas 54). In this time frame, African American men in Unions increased “from less than 200,000 in 1930 to nearly one and one-half million” in 1953 (Thomas 56). These Unions helped to ensure that all its members were being treated fairly in accordance with different union policy and contracts.

In addition to discrimination based on race, many older aged workers struggled to find jobs should they want to leave their present employer (Malm 247). If an older individual wanted to move from job to job within one organization, it was more likely there would be opportunity. But, by the age of 45, workers would begin to find that they were no longer marketable and over half of the employers would be reluctant to hire someone at that age (Malm 247). Looking at firms by industry and size show that more frequently age is not considered important in the good manufacturing industry, saying they often hire more towards the age bracket of 35-55 (Malm 248).

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1940's-1970's Women Enter the Workforce. For years gender defined professions while men dominated the "gender-free" jobs and women worked only in a "women's" role. These roles often included schoolteachers, librarians, and secretarial jobs (Kessler-Harris 151). These lines between male and female job roles became blurred during World War II when the need for labor encouraged employers to look everywhere, even at women (Kessler-Harris 151). It was in 1942 when most employers begin to fill their empty jobs with women, even in jobs that were a man's role such as shipyards, steel mill, and ammunition factories (Kessler-Harris 153). Women took advantage of the demand for employee's and demanded wages in return for their services (Kessler-Harris 153).

In 1957, the National Manpower Council wrote that they did not generally disapprove of women participating in paid employment, but they had severe reservations of married women with children working outside the home (Kessler-Harris 156). This attitude cause backlash among communities that once supported women. Schools began to "limit the educational opportunities for women, and they underlined public policies that continued to "protect" women against hazardous or "inappropriate" jobs" (Kessler-Harris 156).

It wasn't until 1963 that the Equal Pay Act was amended as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 ("The Equal Pay Act of 1963"). The additional provision was, "[t]o prohibit discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages by employers engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce." ("The Equal Pay Act of 1963"). This ensured that no employer could unfairly distribute wages based on "discrimination between men and women in the same establishment who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions" ("The Equal Pay Act of 1963").

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In the 1970's women found themselves searching out part-time jobs arguing that they would not be disrupting their family and that they would be more involved in their home than in their jobs (Kessler-Harris 158). Many single women found themselves challenging the norm and fighting for roles in fields like advertising and publishing, being willing to accept the lower wages in sacrifice for opportunity to work (Kessler-Harris 158). Though working, the jobs women mostly filled were still what would be considered "women's work" these jobs included: hairdressers, nurses, therapists, waitresses, and typists (Kessler-Harris 158). While it was difficult for a white woman to find work, it was even more difficult for African American and Latina women. By the late 1970's "more than seven out of ten women in the workforce worked full-time" (Kessler-Harris 160).

Today's Workforce. In 1950 nearly 62 million civilian workers made up the labor force, which grew to 141 million in 2000, an increase of 79 million people (Toossi 15). Yet, the growth of the labor is expected to continue to slow between 2000 and 2050 reaching only a projected 192 million, an increase of 51 million versus the 79 million from 1950 to 2000 (Toossi 15). In addition to overall population growth, the population all grew more racially and ethnically diverse as well with an increase in African American, American Indian, and Asian American populations (Toossi 20). Much of this population growth comes from immigrants joining the workforce in America (Desilver). Desilver reported that the Pew Research Center survey concluded that "42% of Americans said the growing number of immigrants working in this country helps not hurts" ("How the Workforce Changed since the Great Recession Began"). Thus, encouraging more diverse workplaces and hiring decisions.

In addition to a more diverse workplace, company culture became an important factor in hiring. Corporate culture is extremely important in order to attract talented employees, the better

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the culture the more attractive the organization to new hires. Culture can be explained through an organization's beliefs and values, norms in the organization, rites and rituals, and habits and expectations (Yarborough). Beliefs and values can be based on the company's purpose and mission but can also be formed by the people that work there and their own personal values. Organizations often also develop norms over the years. These include formal policies or informal standards of behavior (Yarborough). In addition, organizations also develop rites and rituals dependent on the people working. This could include employee of the month, birthday celebrations, or casual Fridays (Yarborough). Finally, habits and expectations are used in the culture to inform the workforce how to behave in areas such as work hours, dress code, email etiquette (Yarborough).

As younger generations join the workforce, ages 21-30, the culture will begin to rise in modern trends. Long gone are the cubicles and closed-door offices, replaced with open seating and standing desks introduced to keep staff happy and motivated during work hours (Deering). The modern workplace is focused more on social collaboration and team's introducing new tools that make it easier such as Skype and shared documents (Deering). With better internet services, smart phones, and online sharing platforms, workers are also able to take advantage of working from home (Deering).

TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORKPLACE

Before technology became a part of the hiring process, most hiring happened through word of mouth, newspaper postings, job boards, and paper applications. Technology has simplified the hiring process for many, but has also brought new ways of hiring and new challenges to overcome in choosing potential new hires. One new way of looking for applicants includes using social media sites and online hiring platforms. Job seekers can now use online

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platforms to check their resume, search for jobs, and apply through a company website. In addition, they can see current or past employees' opinions on the company, salary information, and interview questions that were asked during company interviews online.

Social media can be defined by Dutto as the "production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms" (96). There is growing popularity in looking at company's LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram profiles before even applying. These social networking sites are forcing companies to recognize the potential that they provide in attracting today's generation into the workforce (Dutto 96). The power of the internet, including social networking sites, has given HR professionals the ability to engage with current and potential employees while also marketing their company (Dutto 96).

While the social media sites mentioned above can help market an organization, it can also hinder the candidate during the selection process. Smith says, "they found that 37% of employers use social networks to screen potential job candidates. That means about two in five companies browse your social media profiles to evaluate your character and personality – and some even base their hiring decision on what they find." If a candidate's social media profile portrays something that goes against company values or would be a bad representation of the organization, many employers won't even ask the candidate to interview. Often finding provocative or inappropriate photos or information posted on the candidate's profile caused almost 50% of recruiters to not offer the job to the candidate (Smith). Smith recommends to either ensure that all public social media is working towards a candidate benefit or to keep social media private so that employers cannot base their decision on hiring off of a profile online.

In addition to social media sites, there are websites that focus on helping job seekers look for employment. These can include LinkedIn, Indeed, GlassDoor, and more. These sites are used

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by companies to post their job openings online allowing candidates to then apply electronically. Candidates can submit their resume, cover letter, and profile without stepping foot into the organization. This allows for a faster job search process when on the hunt. Many websites, such as JobScan, will even scan the job posting and a candidate resume to compare how compatible the candidate is for the position based on their previous work and skills. This ensures that job seekers have the best shot at getting an interview for the position.

Digital technologies have begun to shape the talent acquisition field to help employers make better hiring decisions (Shutan 16). The latest in tools include “utilizing data science, artificial intelligence, chatbots, and predictive analytics to improve the hiring practices” and to reduce turnover inside of the companies (Shutan 16). The adaptive tools of artificial intelligence (AI), such as machine learning, can be extremely powerful in making decisions about candidates (Shutan 16). Artificial intelligence has its own language applying statistical techniques through machine learning to improve at performing tasks with experience (Raub 531-532). “Predictive analytics help employers forecast with some degree of accuracy whether a new hire will work out, based on a combination of historical and real-time data,” Shutan says, “It allows predictions to be refined in real time for a more accurate view of what’s most likely to happen in the future.” (16).

Companies are also utilizing Bots to “chat with applicants using natural language processing to interact with candidates and screen them for open job positions.” (Raub 537). Candidates may not even realize that they are not talking to a real person once the machine has started to “learn” more information based on conversations. Software’s such as HireVue are being used to conduct video interviews where companies are then able to analyze the candidates. “HireVue uses voice recognition and facial recognition software in conjunction with a ranking

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algorithm to determine which candidates resemble "the ideal candidate." (Raub 538). If a company can better identify the "ideal candidate" through a software, the recruiters have to spend less time interacting with those who may not be a good fit.

Although these technologies can help speed up the hiring process, narrow down the applicant pool, and eliminate candidates through social media, companies could still miss out on exceptional candidates. When companies rely on software and data to calculate who their perfect candidates are, many superb applicants may fall through the cracks. It is important to be careful in decisions, as machines can develop a bias just as Humans can after determining the "perfect candidate" (Cappelli).

Human resources is the driving force within every successful organization. Over time they have adapted and evolved their recruiting strategies to stay competitive against other organizations. By understanding the background knowledge of their industry, they are able to avoid mistakes made in history including racial and sex discrimination. Technology has allowed for those implicit biases to be removed as artificial intelligence is utilized in the screening process. Every organization is reliant on the hiring of future, competitive talent to ensure continued success within.

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