

Note to Recruiters - It's Time to Unlearn

The industry is heading towards talent myopia. As HR professionals we need to find a way to stop this from happening - even if it means to unlearn what we've learned till date - and bring the human back to human resources.

Having managed recruitment teams closely and basis my multiple interactions with both, talent acquisition professionals and prospective candidates, I see an alarming trend of talent myopia for quite some time now. I thought of calling this out in the interest of the larger eco-system as we together bring the Human back to Human Resources and build progressive organisations of the future.

1. Measuring People's 'Worth' by their Current Salary

How does that accurately reflect past performance or predict future potential? Maybe the person started small, maybe (s)he grew up the ranks, maybe the person did not negotiate hard with their current employer, maybe irrespective of a personally good performance the org didn't do well financially and thus didn't offer salary increases for the past couple of years. Maybe the person joined a boot-strapped venture and voluntarily accepted an equity-heavy offer, maybe their last company shut shop and they had to join another employer at a salary cut to make ends meet, maybe the

person is an entrepreneur now willing to get back to a regular job, the last 'salary' (s)he drew was 3 years back!

These are not made up scenarios, these are real situations that happen to people. Stop mapping salaries to roles, objectively evaluate capability and potential and map the individual to the role instead. Not sure how many organisations would have missed that gem of a candidate because the recruiter operated with this fixed mindset. Some employers even got to the extent of publishing this disclaimer with their job posts - 'only candidates drawing a minimum of X lacs p.a. need to apply!' I cringe every time a read it.

2. The Magical 'Market Standard' of 30%

The assumption that all roles, across all industries for all candidates, is pegged at a 30% premium of their current salary is absurd! Role-specific salary ranges are unique to each company driven by its compensation philosophy. Once you decide on a market percentile to operate at, you stick to it whether the net effective hike to the candidate is 15% or 50%.

You religiously honour it and create a fair, role-specific internal parity. This is how long-term, sustainable HR practices are built that complement the business and organisational growth. I will buy the 30% 'market standard' logic if you show me the unicorn who created it!

3. Not Close-looping Conversations with Candidates

It's surprising to see companies invest millions towards Employer Branding, Workplace certifications and gunning for the coveted 'Employer of Choice' badge. The same companies/recruiters will go incognito when it comes to timely communication with prospective candidates. Trust me, the biggest of brands, the fanciest of employers suffer from this 'malpractice'. Candidates are left in a limbo, interview feedbacks not given, candidates are 'ghosted' by interviewers.

In order to create a great employer brand, intent and ownership is the key. The recruiter, as the only ambassador of the organisation to the candidate, makes or breaks the employer brand through candidate



experience. Especially for the ones who are not selected as they are also extended brand ambassadors to other prospective employees. If not a phone call, an email or even a text should suffice, but do ensure that you close-loop and communicate. It creates a big impact on the employer brand by the smallest of your efforts. No response doesn't default to interview rejection, it actually conveys that you (the employer) do not respect the time and effort of your prospective employee. Candidate experience is as important as Employee experience (if not more). This is basic, this is hygiene if this goes for a toss all other efforts towards building an employer brand will fail. This is your moment of truth, do not commit this blasphemy!

4. Embracing Employment Breaks

In one of my previous columns for the magazine earlier this year, I

presented the case for employment breaks in corporate India. As corporate India, and as a society, we are too judgmental of people. However, as HR professionals, have the discretion to redefine cultures with our hiring strategies and possibly break some stereotypes. The nature of our jobs gives us a platform to actually make a positive difference. Let's take conscious steps to make our workplaces

more empathetic, accepting and appreciative to redefine the 'norm'. Let's not be too quick to judge and open our minds to a fresh perspective, new possibilities and do good by acting in the best interest of not only our employers but the society at large as well. As gatekeepers of Talent, there is a lot that rests on our shoulders. Remember, that we raise ourselves by lifting others.



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