

# HR & MARKETING

## a Marriage of Convenience?

*Quite simply, the methodology that the marketing people down the hall use to produce new customers for your company can also be used to successfully recruit the workers you need to get the job done.*



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**H**uman resource professionals are constantly looking for new ways to help them solve the age-old problems of recruitment and retention. Today's unemployment rate hovers at or below once-in-a-generation lows. Tried and true methods such as print ads and employee referrals, along with newer online methods, are not supplying quality solutions, and the problem may get worse before it gets better.

It's time to break out of the traditional ways of thinking and begin to look at different ways of doing things. Human resources and marketing may have more in common than you think. A walk down the aisle may be just what's needed for a blissful future.

### **WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?**

By now, you probably are asking what all this has to do with your company and the difficulty of recruiting and retaining workers?

Our point is that sometimes it takes a new way of thinking to break out of old, and possibly not very productive, patterns. If you have trouble recruiting quality employees, it's not good enough to say that you need a new answer. That's obvious. What you need is a new perspective, a fresh way of looking at the whole problem or issue.

Here's a true-life example. A regional bank was having trouble recruiting qualified, competent tellers for their branches. They were unable to compete with the wage being offered by the local fast-food burger restaurants, which pay about \$1 more per hour to start.

This article is adapted from a presentation made to human resource professionals by Jerome E. Jaros, NELSON JAROS results-oriented marketing, November, 1999.

Could the bank solve its HR problem by using a solution from a seemingly unrelated area of competence, i.e., marketing? Could the bank recruiter use a standard marketing model to recruit new workers? Could the bank use different thinking to identify its real problem: The need to get jobs done vs. assuming the solution was to hire new, full-time employees to get the job done?

For example, if the real problem is to get the job done not just hire full-time employees, could the bank's HR recruiting efforts be integrated with S.O.P. (Standard Operating Procedure) used by the bank and could interim professionals fill the jobs to get the work done?

Some specific ideas: Could the bank recruit from their customer base by sending out letters or cards asking if customers have ever considered a career with XYZ bank? Could the bank put a recruiting message on the back of the deposit/withdrawal receipts that everyone receives after an ATM, drive-up or teller transaction? Could they use some of the money being spent on non-productive advertising as a bonus pool to award to current employees who sponsor qualified recruits? Of course they could. Your company's marketing department recruits new customers in this exact same way. Why shouldn't human resources recruit new employees and workers using the same "marketing tools"?

Your recruiting problem may be solved in a similarly "easy" fashion. You always hire full-time employees to do your company's work. Do you really need those workers to be full time? We're all familiar with job-share arrangements. Most are usually comprised of two full-time people. Does it have to be that way? Couldn't you use the experience and skills,

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matched carefully and specifically to your project of, say, three interim, contract workers? Why not? You get the job done, you save on costly benefits because the workers are employees of the outsource staffing agency, and the workers leave when the job is complete. You could probably have several teams of interim workers for those projects that just never seem to get done. What's stopping you?

### **THIS COULD WORK!**

In fact, it does work. It works every day. In all sorts of companies. Maybe at your competition? Interim, contract workers are the way that work gets done in today's world.

Today's companies are composed of a core of competent and skilled executives, high-level managers and professionals.

The core is supported and surrounded by two types of outside workers: Task Workers and Project Workers. Task Workers are frequently part-time and are brought in to assist with the administrative activities of the company.

Project Workers are skilled, experienced professionals who come in to a company from outsources that specialize in skilled professionals who provide services that organizations must have to be competitive. Management chooses not to add these people to their permanent payroll and benefits plans, thus realizing a significant cost savings.

### **NOW TO THE MARKETING MODEL**

Examine the Marketing Management Model on the opposite page. Your interim outsource company should be **Researching** the marketplace for the best and most skilled professionals to accomplish the jobs you need performed. This must include both active and passive job seekers. There's a lot more expertise out there that can be found and/or moved to action by good marketing.

In their research phase, marketing people find out where there may be unmet needs for things that people do not even realize they need. That's why recruiting using the marketing model should focus on both active and passive job seekers. The passive recruits may not "need" a new position, but good research may put them together with an excellent opportunity.

When you want to market a product (consumer), you research and find people with certain demographic and lifestyle characteristics. When you recruit, you (1) identify and establish solid performance and/or experiential characteristics for your employees; (2) obtain some consumer research; and (3) recruit people who are similar to good employees you already have. Basing your search and recruiting efforts on hard data is tantamount to having researchers qualify recruits based on a benchmark scoring system. Marketing people do this when they are trying to research who will be good customers for their companies.

When you're recruiting, don't just recruit based on geographic area. Why not expand your area of market segmentation? Target a different demographic snapshot. Why hire tellers in a bank from the high school co-op program when you can go to the local AARP meeting to find people? They may be older in years, but many are still young in outlook and have the skills to do the work you need. And they may not be looking for a full-time job. Or, recruit those candidates who may be looking for a job but never thought about a bank and who have good personal skills in dealing with people and situations.

### **STP**

Marketing people see a big difference between marketing and sales. To paraphrase marketing guru Ted Levitt: "Marketing is getting into people's hearts. Sales is getting into their pockets." That definition is as good a reason as any why HR pros should look to their marketing brethren for some new solutions to the recruiting/retention problems that are dogging them today.

Good marketing strategy is based on identifying not just who you can sell to but who you can satisfy in a superior way. To be more productive, good recruiting must apply the same concepts to its efforts. Automatically placing an ad in the paper at \$5,000 per insertion may bring you quantity but not quality responses. The same effort through on-line sources may result in the same quantity over quality. But recruiting efforts that are aimed at a specific target segment of people who meet your research criteria will give you quality over quantity.

Targeting a niche and delighting that niche is how and why your company's marketing pros become successful. Positioning your company's job offering

# STANDARD MARKETING MANAGEMENT MODEL



MARKETERS HAVE A MINDSET JUST AS ATTORNEYS, BANKERS AND ENGINEERS HAVE THEIR SPECIFIC MINDSETS. Marketers see the marketing management process as consisting of five basic steps:

**R = Research**, i.e., market research

**STP = Segmentation, Targeting & Positioning**

**MM = Marketing Mix**  
popularly known as the 4 Ps  
—product  
—price  
—place  
—promotion

**I = Implementation**

**C = Control**  
getting feedback, evaluating results and revising or improving STP strategy and MM tactics.

Effective marketing starts with **R**esearch into a market that will reveal different **S**egments, consisting of buyers with different needs. A company is wise to **T**arget only those segments that it can satisfy in a superior way. For each target segment, the company must **P**osition its offering so that target customers can appreciate how the company's offering differs from competitors'. **STP** represents the company's strategic marketing thinking.

Next, the company develops its tactical **M**arketing **M**ix, consisting of the mix of **p**roduct, **p**rice, **p**lace and **p**romotion decisions. The company then **I**mplements the marketing mix. Finally, the company **C**ontrols measures to monitor and evaluate results and improve its STP strategy and MM tactics.

SOURCE: *Kotler on Marketing: How to Create, Win and Dominate Markets*, Philip Kotler, 1999, The Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, NY

as a "value proposition" supplying a main, central benefit will give prospects the reason to become "customers," i.e., employees.

## THE MARKETING MIX

The Marketing Mix consists of what marketing pros call the 4 **Ps**, i.e., **P**roduct, **P**rice, **P**lace and **P**romotion. The **product** satisfies a need or want. It is offered at a **price** that will move the target market to action. It is offered to the market through/at a **place**, i.e., a method of distribution. And it is **promoted** by a variety of means. The Marketing Mix is subject to one of the great "buzzes" in the discipline today—marketing metrics.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL

Accountability via marketing metrics means very simply that are you getting a return on what you've invested in your marketing efforts. Now that you've

strategized your recruiting effort, you must manage its implementation by asking yourself, "Does the position we offer to the target market create interest in the recruit's mind to "purchase" our position? Are we using the proper means to distribute information to the target market about the position? And, are we integrating all relevant options to promote the position to the market? If your results aren't what you planned, then feedback mechanisms in the implementation and control stages will help adjust your efforts to improve your odds for success.

Consider the marriage of convenience between HR and marketing so that you can use the tools of the marketing trade **R STP MM I C** to help you recruit new and retain existing employees. All you have to do is to think of your prospective existing employees as customers, treat them like customers and use the marketing model as your guide. ■

## Where Does FLEX EXEC'S MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS Fit In?

Since 1990, FLEX EXEC'S MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS has been working to help our clients break out of the traditional ways of thinking about the World of Work. Today there are different ways of doing things, and we are on the cutting edge of these new ways of thinking about business and work.

FLEX EXEC'S places interim executives, high-level managers and project experts. Many of these skilled professionals possess knowledge and expertise gained in functional areas, such as human resources, finance and operations.

FLEX EXEC'S is *the* source for interim placement, executive search and human resource consulting.

If we may assist you in making your next project a success, or if you have questions or concerns about interim placement, please call us. We can help.

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