

FOUR TIPS ON RECRUITING A-LEVEL CANADIATES

In a McKinsey's War for Talent 2000 Survey it was revealed that top performers outperformed average performers by up to 67%. But with the current shortage of talent in key roles – especially in sales, engineering and technical roles – many of my clients confide that they would settle for “B” or even “C” candidates.

A-level Talent in the job market is becoming increasingly rare and the situation will likely get worse before it gets better, with 40% of the North American workforce reaching the traditional retirement age by the end of the decade.

That said, when A-level candidates do walk in the door, are you putting your best foot forward? Outlined below are five steps you can take to ensure that your recruitment process accommodates and impresses A-level candidates.

1) **Be Transparent:**

Let A-level candidates know who they will be meeting with during the course of the interview process. How many interviews will there be? What is the process regarding testing, assessment, reference and background checks? And let them know when you hope to have a final decision made. An added advantage to this approach is that, by getting stakeholders to commit to a timetable, you expedite the decision-making process, which is needed with highly sought-after candidates.

2) **Be Candidate-Centric:**

From a candidate's perspective, the interview process is a one-way flow of information that requires the candidate to offer up a lot of detail without receiving much in return. Treat A-level talent like a customer and remember that customers have the option of going with one of your competitors. Spend a great deal of time understanding candidates' needs and addressing any concerns that he or she might have. Get a better understanding of the competitive situation, how the job-search is going and how your company's opportunity compares to others.

3) **Be User-friendly:**

While many companies promote flexibility and work-life balance to attract talent, these values are not always reflected in their selection process. Make an effort to meet A-level candidates when their schedule can accommodate it. Don't force them to lie to their current employers to meet you during business hours. There are only so many doctor's and dentist appointments that a person can have. Always thank A-level talent for taking time out of their busy day to meet you.

4) **Employ a user-friendly testing process:**

Many companies incorporate some form of assessment or testing into the selection process. If done properly, this can reflect well on your organization and be leveraged to position your company as progressive and objective. If this is done poorly, the opposite is true. Here are some general guidelines when administering tests to A-level talent:

- the candidate should not be ambushed by the assessment – they should know in advance why they are being assessed.
- the time spent being assessed should reflect the job – senior-level candidates may be expecting a two-hour assessment process – entry-level candidates are not.
- review assessment results with A-level candidates
- use assessment results to discuss the candidate's motivational needs, preferred leadership style and how your company can accommodate them.

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