

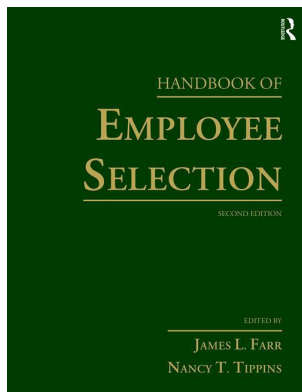
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James L. Farr, Nancy T. Tippins, Walter C. Borman, David Chan, Michael D. Coovert, Rick Jacobs, P. Richard Jeanneret, Jerard F. Kehoe, Filip Lievens, S. Morton McPhail, Kevin R. Murphy, Robert E. Ployhart, Elaine D. Pulakos, Douglas H. Reynolds, Ann Marie Ryan, Neal Schmitt, Benjamin Schneider

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ATTRACTING JOB CANDIDATES TO ORGANIZATIONS

ANN MARIE RYAN AND TANYA DELANY

Recruiting is more complex today than it has ever been. Technology promotes finding skilled, cost-effective talent in all corners of the world, enabling globally integrated workforces. However, to be successful, corporations need recruiting models that accommodate growth markets and mature markets, entry and experienced professionals, and a wider array of jobs and career paths. Corporations must also develop successful recruiting strategies to secure hot skills or market value skills. Recruiting models must leverage global best practices while complying with local legislation and managing local cultures. Recruiting must involve ways to process candidates through hiring quicker than ever while managing greater volumes of applicants than in the past.

The ability to attract individuals to work at organizations is a topic of perennial research interest. Major reviews of the research on recruitment appear periodically (e.g., Barber, 1998; Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Ployhart, 2006; Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Cable, 2003; Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980; Taylor & Collins, 2000), including a recent handbook (Yu & Cable, 2014). Given our space constraints, in this chapter, we look at current questions regarding applicant attraction arising from recent workplace trends as a means of framing a practical research agenda for the future. Specifically, we address what is known and what we need to know about applicant attraction in light of globalization, advances in technology in recruitment, and organizational efforts toward more strategic talent management.

We have organized our review from a more traditional recruitment process perspective into the three stages of reaching potential applicants, maintaining applicant interest, and securing offer acceptance (Barber, 1998). Our focus is more specifically on research and practice advances over the last five years, since the first edition of this volume. Because considerably more research and practice advances have focused on the first stage of reaching applicants, we devote much of our space to that stage.

REACHING POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Traditionally, human resource (HR) efforts at recruitment have placed a heavy emphasis on how to create awareness of opportunities among desired potential applicants. Today's modern recruiting model focuses on recruiters being marketers. The goal is to attract qualified candidates to an employer brand and convert them into applicants. Most of the research on generating interest in job openings relates to (a) who provides information (i.e., recruitment sources), (b) what information is provided (e.g., how much specificity, how much realism, creating brand equity), and (c) how to best provide information to catch attention (i.e., advertising and websites).

From Whom/Where Do Candidates Obtain Information?

Although it is a long-held belief that quantity and quality of the applicant pool are affected by the source of recruitment information and the nature of the information, research on recruitment source effects on applicant pool quality often yields unclear results (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000). Because job seekers often obtain information from multiple sources (Vecchio, 1995), and the same source can be used by job seekers in different ways (Rynes & Cable, 2003), pinpointing specific source effects may be challenging. More importantly, consideration of how source often is confounded with content (specifically, content realism and valence; Barber & Roehlig, 1993) is needed. In general, credible and closer ties have greater influence, particular with regard to how negative information is considered (Keeling, McGoldrick & Sadhu, 2013). Referrals are generally believed to yield higher-quality applicants and offer acceptances; however, work by Pieper (2015) suggests that referral hires from high-performing employees perform better but have higher turnover than those from low performers.

The ability to understand source effects is changing as companies are using Big Data to assist in understanding sourcing strategies (Walker, 2012). For example, Xerox cut attrition rates at call centers by 20% by using Big Data tools (Walker, 2012). IBM analyzes sourcing channels in terms of offer acceptance, candidate onboarding evaluations, as well as first-year performance and employee engagement. Gartner Research predicts that Big Data in recruiting will be a \$232 billion industry by 2016.

The most common sources are changing. Organizations are leveraging current employee and company alum networks to spread vacancy information and to tap potential talent (Caers & Casteleyns, 2011). According to LinkedIn, social professional networks are the fastest growing source of quality hires. Reportedly, 73% of 18- to 34-year-olds found their last job through a social network (Medved, 2014), and 21% of candidates say they found their best job through a social network (Jobvite, 2014). However, social sources (e.g., employer review sites such as GlassDoor, LinkedIn, company Facebook groups, industry-specific job seeker sites, blogs, etc.) also have become an easily available resource for candidates to learn about a company (Chauhan, Buckley, & Harvey, 2013). Because candidates have greater access to information, they build their own understanding of a company, not just based on the information the company publishes. Thus, organizations are focused on developing “social recruitment” strategies with a consideration of the dynamic nature of social media content, which is not entirely in the organization’s control.

The availability of information has also changed things from the recruiter’s perspective. The proliferation of available information about candidates has made it possible for recruiters to match a person’s professional and personal fit more closely to the company’s opening and corporate culture, respectively. People analytics’ tools and techniques (i.e., Big Data) allow firms to develop a much more complete profile of a candidate—far beyond a brief introduction letter and resume. While the research on social site recruitment is still emerging, there are some takeaways. For example, while third-party websites (e.g., Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com) can generate many low-quality applicants, they do also provide about as many high-quality applicants as do organizational websites (Talmage, 2012). Another example is research on the effective use of online social networks, which shows that recruiters who have secured a central network position as a connector and who brand themselves well (in addition to employer branding) are most successful in attracting quality candidates (Ollington, Gibb, & Harcourt, 2013).

Although the overall conclusion of research is that source can play an important role in applicant initial attraction, there is now a much greater awareness of the variety of sources a candidate can draw from, the fluidity of information from those sources, and the relative influence an organization has over the information from these sources. However, while there has been a flood of articles in the last five years about the potential of social recruitment, critical evaluations of the effectiveness of different strategies are still sorely needed. At a practical level, VanHoye (2014) suggests that organizations must collect information on “what is being said about them, by whom, to whom, and through which media” (p. 264). He also suggests that organizations attempt indirect influences on word-of-mouth communications by rewarding current employees for positive referrals, using credible testimonials of current employees, and

making sure that when recruiters do actively participate in social channels, they are transparent about their role and affiliation. Perhaps the greatest shift is that companies now understand that all employees are recruitment ambassadors, and they must work to ensure that all are prepared to engage with potential candidates, not just designated recruiters.

What Information Are Candidates Obtaining?

Cable and Turban (2001) described an applicant's knowledge of the company as having three dimensions: *familiarity* (awareness), *reputation* (global affective impression, brand), and *image* (attributes associated with organization). They argued that these, in conjunction with a job seeker's values and needs, will determine attraction. Thus, researchers have explored what specific organizational attributes are perceived most favorably. For example, achievement, concern for others, honesty, and fairness are seen as the most salient work values, and their effects on applicant behavior have been established (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987), as has the value of portraying an organizational culture as supportive (Catanzaro, Moore, Marshall, 2010). Individuals are attracted to an organization if they feel that it invokes prestige and impresses others and/or allows them to express their values (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007). More recently, research has focused on how portraying specific values (e.g., social and environmental responsibility; Gully, Phillips, Castellano, Han, & Kim, 2013; Tsai, Joe, Lin, & Wang, 2014; Zhang & Gowan, 2012) or organizational policies (e.g., mandatory and binding arbitration [Bernardin, Richey, & Castro, 2011], work-family policies, employee development policies [Casper, Wayne, & Manegold, 2013], and diversity policies [Avery et al., 2013]) in websites and advertisements might affect attraction. Values emerge as important in recent surveys globally. PriceWaterhouseCooper's 2011 Millennial Study of more than 4,000 Millennials in 75 countries found that just over half of this population reported being attracted to employers because of their corporate social responsibility position, with 56% being willing to leave an employer that did not have the values they expected. The report also found that 44% of those questioned said competitive wages made an employer more attractive, the second highest proportion for any factor given. The biggest draw for Millennials, however, was the opportunity for career progression—52% said that they felt this made an employer an attractive prospect. These results were replicated by IBM's 2015 findings of more than 9,000 potential candidates in more than 30 countries reporting their top three factors important in determining an organization's attractiveness were (1) meaningful and impactful jobs, (2) innovative products and services, and (3) opportunities. In sum, research has converged on showing that there are universally favored attributes as well as specific value matching underlying how recruitment content affects attraction.

What about information valence? Studies suggest that the presentation of negative or realistic information will have differential effects on different categories of job seekers (e.g., those with less prior job experience [Meglino, DeNisi, & Ravlin, 1993]; higher-quality applicants [Bretz & Judge, 1998; Thorsteinson, Palmer, Wulff, & Anderson, 2004]). Further, Highhouse, Stanton, and Reeve (2004) found that negative information about prospective employers is discounted more than positive information. Also, lack of information (e.g., about pay) can lead to negative inferences and lower attractiveness perceptions (Yuce & Highhouse, 1997; however, see also Highhouse & Hause, 1995 and Maurer, Howe, & Lee, 1992). Reeve, Highhouse, and Brooks (2006) also showed that one negative piece of information can affect the accumulated effects of multiple moderately positive pieces of information (i.e., the relative balance of positive or negative information is not as important as the intensity of one's affective response to a piece of negative information). The overall conclusion of this line of research is that although providing realistic information (and negative information) may adversely affect the attraction of some desired applicants, its overall effect on applicant pool quality and quantity may depend on the specifics of the job, industry, labor market, job seekers, and nature of the information.

How can organizations affect their image? As Yang and Yu (2014) demonstrated, recruitment messages should include both need fulfillment and value expression elements to maximize attractiveness. Further, DeCooman and Pepermans (2012) showed that nonprofit ads often

presented more extrinsic value information than did profit-sector ads, highlighting that if certain information is assumed or obvious to job seekers (e.g., that nonprofits have value-driven missions and provide opportunities for value expression), it may help attraction to highlight less anticipated and more differentiating information. One of the most important conclusions from the burgeoning body of research on organizational image is that of the importance of congruity. Baum, Schafer, and Kabst (2015) showed that advertisements that were incongruent with an individual's already established image of an organization lowered perceptions of credibility and attraction. Although the importance of "alignment" of message across recruitment platforms is generally acknowledged, it is important to recognize the role of pre-existing corporate images and how they affect perceptions of recruitment activities. For example, British Petroleum (BP) devoted considerable effort to recapture its place as a premier employer brand after the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico through reports and videos reinforcing its commitment to its employees and to the environment (O'Meara & Petzall, 2013).

How Should Information Be Presented?

In general, technology, and in particular the Internet, has facilitated the capabilities of recruiting functions to reach more potential applicants in less time and for less money; that is, technology exponentially enhances the efficiency of recruiting (Lievens & Harris, 2003). Dineen and Allen (2014) provide a nice summary of how the Internet has shifted the recruitment paradigm by (a) changing the richness of information, especially early in recruitment processes, (b) increasing customization of information, (c) changing from pushing information to job seekers to candidates pulling information, and (d) decentralizing the recruitment function in organizations. Technology can also facilitate the identification of particular talent pools (e.g., communities and other subscriber groups and sites as sources), the tailoring of materials to particular target groups (e.g., different web content depending on answers to a set of questions regarding interests/values), and the inclusion of more information than traditional advertisements (as noted above). Technological advances do not appear to alter conclusions of prior research regarding what influences attraction but do afford organizations greater and more unique opportunities to provide more information in much more efficient and effective ways.

Organizations have noted the downside of using technology in the recruiting process, such as making it easier for applicants to apply to positions regardless of qualifications, creating a greater pool that recruiters must sift through. Another example is provided by Rieucan (2015) in a study of supermarkets in France and the UK, where she noted that proximity to a store was important for early opening hours, yet online applications might lead to more applicants with poorer fit advancing further in a screening process than more local forms of advertisement.

What do we know specifically about information presentation? Cable and Yu (2007) proposed that media richness (multiple cues, language variety, feedback, and personal focus) and media credibility (expertise and trustworthiness) are particularly influential in the formation of applicant beliefs regarding organizations and jobs. Cober, Brown, and Levy (2004) noted that the interaction of form, content, and function is essential (i.e., good content has to be presented in an interactive, navigable, and pleasing way). Key findings in this line of research are that website content and usability play important roles in attraction (Braddy, Thompson, Wuensch, & Grossnickle, 2003; Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, & Keeping, 2003), but website aesthetics are also fairly important (Cober, et al., 2004; Dineen, Ling, Ash, & DelVecchio, 2007; Zusman & Landis, 2002). More recently, Allen, Biggane, Pitts, Otondo, and Van Scotter (2013) found that individuals do pay more attention to text than to graphic images, and that early in the search process the focus is on information on number and type of job openings, organizational information, and geographic location. They also found that design, and in particular ease of use and ability to create a more personal presence, were important in addition to content, although content was more important than design. Similarly, Williamson, King, Lepak, and Sarma (2010) showed that for employers with less positive or weak reputations, the amount of information about company and job opportunities was important to attraction but the vividness of the website was not; however, for firms with good reputations, vividness or amount of information

acted as substitutes, and either could lead to similar levels of attraction, but being low in both led to more negative reactions.

There is growing use of technology to generate applicant interest through new mechanisms: virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), online job fairs (Flinders, 2007), webinars (Mullich, 2004), gaming and online competitions (e.g., L'oreal's business planning contest), and quick-hitting fleeting image ads (e.g., Goldman Sachs ads on Snapchat, Moon & Mzezewa, 2015). There have been several studies on the use of virtual worlds (Badger, Kaminsky, & Behrend, 2014; Howardson & Behrend, 2014) that suggest some caution in their implementation in recruiting as individuals may not engage fully if they expect the technology is difficult to use and that individuals tend to acquire less accurate perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit due to the cognitive load in the media-rich environment. As with any form of technological innovation, ensuring that all users gain familiarity (e.g., practice and instructions) and that the technology still meets the goals (e.g., gaining accurate perspectives of fit) is important.

One key question posed by technological advances is whether information should be customized and to what extent. In the past, considering individual differences in reactions to recruitment materials and selection processes was seen as less practical because developing different content and processes for different types of prospective applicants was seen as resource-prohibitive. Technology allows for a much greater capability for differences in what applicants are provided, and thus there is renewed interest in customization. For example, technology is enabling potential candidates to receive job alerts based on their profiles. When searching for jobs on Amazon.jobs, once a job is selected, the user is immediately provided a list of like or similar jobs that may also be of interest, making it easy for the user to find more jobs of potential interest. Kraichy and Chapman (2014) note that one can customize fit information (e.g., ask questions and give feedback on fit), configure information to preferences (e.g., put preferred information first), or tailor the message style and content. Several studies have shown that providing self-screening information (e.g., assessments of fit with the position in terms of abilities, values, and needs) is seen as particularly valuable by applicants and directly affects variables such as information recall and site viewing time (e.g., Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002; Dineen et al., 2007). Considering that research on organizational image and match to applicant values shows the importance of fit and that Uggerslev, Fasina, and Kraichy's (2012) meta-analysis showed that fit is the largest predictor of applicant attraction, customization to tailor information to applicants and to target compatible individuals would be an effective use of recruitment resources at the early stage. The following box provides a list of company sites that have an interactive tool focused on helping candidates assess fit while provide a unique and differentiated experience.

Interactive Fit Assessments

Accenture: <http://careers.accenture.com/us-en/your-future/HGCYBgame/Pages/default.aspx>

Campbell's: <http://careers.campbellsoupcompany.com/Career-Fit-Tool>

ESPN: <http://espn-careers.com/career-areas>

Goldman Sachs: <http://www.goldmansachs.com/careers/why-goldman-sachs/explore-goldman-sachs-careers-quiz/>

Home Depot: <http://careers.homedepot.com/find-your-fit/>

IKEA: http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_US/rooms_ideas/fitquiz09/

L'Oreal: <http://www.reveal-thegame.com/usa/>

RBC: <http://www.rbc.com/careers/findyourfit.html>

Save a Lot: <http://save-a-lot.com/careers/workinghere/jobmatcher>

U.S. Army: <http://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/help-choosing-a-career-job/by-skills-and-interests.html>

In summary, considerable research advances have been made related to attracting applicants. In particular, technology has changed how individuals are sourced, where they are sourced from, and what information is made available to them. The challenge for practitioners and researchers

is to understand how to best balance providing information in meaningful and engaging ways without overwhelming applicants or having key recruitment messages lost in an increasingly noisy applicant marketplace.

MAINTAINING INTEREST

There are several research topics concentrated primarily on keeping applicants in the pipeline once they have applied. In the past several years, a number of studies have examined what changes after candidates express an initial interest that is important to recruitment.

In their meta-analysis of predictors of attraction, Uggerslev et al. (2012) found perceived fit is the strongest predictor of attraction across stages. With regard to maintaining interest, organizational characteristics and recruitment process characteristics are weighed more heavily and recruiter behaviors weighed less heavily later in the process. Also, perceived alternatives were not a strong predictor early in the process but did become a significant negative predictor later. In an experimental simulation of a multi-stage recruitment process, Saks and Uggerslev (2010) showed that information did have significant effects (positive and negative) at stages subsequent to when it was received, suggesting that some forms of negative information can be “made up for” with positive experiences subsequently (e.g., a personable, informative recruiter after delayed communications) but some might not. In a study of temporal decision context, vonWalter, Wentzel, and Tomczak (2012) found that fit was more influential for distant-future decisions, while pay was more relevant for near-future decisions, and concluded that the differences in time perspectives may affect how job seekers weight factors (i.e., a decision to apply still leaves a job decision in the distant future, where job choice is in the near future). Walker et al. (2013) focused specifically on the maintenance phase of recruitment and showed that treatment received continued to serve as a signal and affect attraction over time. Finally, Griepentrog, Harold, Holtz, Klimoski, and Marsh (2012) showed the importance of organizational identification as a predictor of applicant withdrawal over a three-month period. Their work suggests that organizational socialization begins from the start of recruiting, not just at the time of offer, and can affect applicant reactions and behaviors during the maintenance stage. Overall, these research studies highlight the importance of understanding that what affects attraction might not necessarily be what affects maintaining interest.

Two topics of specific research focus with regard to maintaining interest have been recruiters and site visits. Not surprisingly, applicants prefer and react more positively to recruiters who treat them well and are informative (see Breugh & Starke, 2000 or Rynes & Cable, 2003 for reviews of this research). McKay and Avery (2006) suggested that both encounter demographics (e.g., the vertical integration of minorities in the organization and in the community) and the quality of the interaction between groups, not just recruiter demographics, will affect applicant perceptions of organizational diversity climate and subsequent job acceptance intentions. These researchers also noted that there is likely significant within-group variance among minority job seekers in reaction to these factors, depending on applicant racioethnic identity, social dominance orientation, and other group orientation (McKay & Avery, 2006). In our view, advice to organizations on recruiters remains pithy: treat applicants nicely, make sure recruiters know the jobs for which they are recruiting, and train recruiters. It seems that researchers should focus more on the micro level of interactions between recruiters and applicants to better inform training as to what causes affective shifts among applicants.

Site visits affect eventual choice (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991; Turban, Campion, & Eyring, 1995), but Breugh and Starke (2000) noted that despite awareness of this, little research has actually focused on the details of site visits to guide HR practitioners in what truly makes a difference. One study that does tackle this was by Slaughter, Cable, and Turban (2014), who found that when recruits had little confidence in their initial views, they were much more likely to be affected by the site visit than those who already held strong image perceptions (positive or negative), whose views are less likely to change.

In terms of maintaining interest, advances in technology can enable greater, continued contact with applicants (e.g., e-mail updates on status, job alerts, blogs, candidate communities). However, organizations must be diligent in understanding their applicant pools' preferences and manage technology-enabled communication accordingly. Just as technology can help maintain interest, questions have arisen as to its potential negative effects on retaining applicants. For some, including executives and passive applicants who are not willing to jump through hoops, technology can be viewed as cold and inhuman. Some popular technological innovations may raise privacy concerns if not appropriately managed. For example, the practice of tagging and tracking visitors to corporate career websites and then deploying company ads in other web locations they visit to maintain a company's presence in the job seeker's mind has increased (Ruiz, 2008). Ensuring that personal data on the individual are not captured and maintained, that local privacy legislation is not violated, and that pervasive advertising does not turn off applicants is important.

One area that seems under researched with regard to maintaining interest is that of self-regulatory processes. Recently, Stevens and Seo (2014) summarized the research on job search and emotions and noted the findings regarding motivational regulatory processes and search persistence. This growing body of research focuses solely on the job seeker perspective; we can envision useful research that applies knowledge of self-regulatory processes to understanding how emotions affect willingness to maintain interest in a specific organization, how emotions affect reactions to certain recruitment activities and timelines, and how regulatory processes affect the offer negotiation process.

In summary, recruitment research taking a longitudinal perspective is increasing, and with that increase are new insights regarding how to maintain applicant interest beyond initial attraction. We would anticipate that a consideration of dynamic processes underlying applicant attitudes and behavior changes across recruitment stages will enhance our understanding even further.

ACCEPTING OFFERS

The ratio of job acceptances to offers is considered an important indicator of recruiting success for many organizations (i.e., Do the ones we want want us?). The factors mentioned earlier as affecting attraction are sometimes not as critical to an acceptance: Individuals gather more information, eliminate options on those factors, and change their criteria as they proceed through the job search process. Prior reviews have noted that weak methodologies (e.g., examining intent to accept at early stages of the process) have clouded findings on what actually affects decisions to accept offers. However, several general conclusions have emerged.

What Influences?

Organization characteristics are stronger predictors of acceptance intentions than recruiter characteristics, perceptions of the hiring process, or other variables (Chapman et al., 2005). However, we know that applicants make decisions in stages, first screening incompatible options and then choosing from among surviving options (Beach, 1993), but only a few researchers use a design that affords for this stage processing. Studies exploring "what is most important" to offer acceptance have been criticized for not creating choice tasks that reflect the informational and motivational context of a job applicant who is considering an actual offer. Hence, job choice often is not well predicted because of issues associated with not considering time of measurement (i.e., range restriction on key variables, applicant motivation and information levels).

Two studies took a longitudinal perspective at what predicts job offers. Swider, Zimmerman, and Barrick (2015) focused on differentiation-consolidation theory and applicant fit perceptions over time. They found that job seekers did initially differentiate their PO fit with varied organizations from the start of the recruitment process and that, over time, differentiation increased even further, and that initial differentiation did predict job choice. They note organizations may

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want to do as much as possible to differentiate themselves from competitors and produce positive fit perceptions early on (or produce negative fit perceptions with competitors), and to take steps throughout the process to increase PO fit perceptions (or reduce the likelihood of fit perceptions decreasing). In another recent study, Harold, Holtz, Griepentrog, Brewer, and Marsh (2015) showed that final decisions on offer acceptance were predicted by PO fit but also by perceptions of justice, providing support for suggestions on using job-relevant procedures, providing opportunities to demonstrate skills, granting ability to appeal, treating applicants with respect, allowing for two-way communication, and providing timely and honest communications. In summary, fit perceptions and candidate treatment are clearly a big component of “what predicts” offer acceptance, and those perceptions continue to be malleable throughout the recruitment process.

When Influences?

Timeliness of offer is important (Rynes et al., 1991). Pressures by hiring managers to speed up the recruitment process are not without empirical backing, because one can lose desirable individuals with delays. However, Rynes and Barber (1990) noted that although offers in hand are generally favored over uncertain possibilities from other organizations, this likely varies with quality of applicant, as competitive individuals can afford to wait longer but also may be “snatched up” sooner.

Who Influences?

Although the role of social influencers (e.g., family and friends) in job choice has long been suggested as important (Kilduff, 1990), it is relatively under researched. One exception would be the U.S. military’s long-time focus on influencers of enlistment decisions (Legree et al., 2000) through the Youth Attitude Tracking Study. In practice, the role of influencers is recognized in various employee referral programs as well as in recruitment activities. For example, to obtain a competitive advantage in attracting applicants, a call center in India conducts “Family Days,” which provide members of a potential applicant’s family with an opportunity to learn about the company. The U.S. military developed advertisements specifically targeted at the hopes and concerns of parents regarding military careers (Neal, 2005).

While social influence is important, Kulkarni and Nithyanand (2013), in a study of graduating seniors at an elite business school in India, showed that most individuals do not see themselves as being influenced greatly by their parents and peers, but report that other job seekers are. Their study suggests parents having more influence on job choice with regard to financial issues (e.g., salaries, need to pay loans) and peers having more influence in terms of social comparisons (i.e., what does everyone else see as prestigious or glamorous). Kulkarni and Nithyanand make specific suggestions for organizations to engage with job seekers early on to influence organizational image relative to parent and peer influences, invite candidates to bring guests to open houses or onsite visits, and use individuals from the same source (e.g., same campus, region) as brand ambassadors. In recent years the emergence of social sites that feature reviews and commentary from both current and former employees is creating more transparency, giving candidates additional information, beyond the traditional family and friends’ network, to influence their view of a company’s image.

One study that specifically looked at the role of recruiter in “closing the deal” examined National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) football recruiting. Treadway et al. (2014) found that recruiters who were politically skilled could increase the quantity and quality of those with signed offers when the head coach had strong performance, but those low in political skill could not capitalize on good organizational performance to effectively recruit. One important implication they note is that when high-performing organizations are competing for top talent, recruiter political skills may be a critical determinant of offer acceptance.

In summary, like research on maintaining interest, research on accepting offers has advanced to include more longitudinal studies and more theoretical work on how these decisions are made. A recognition of a broader set of influences (e.g., recruiter political skills, family and friend roles) will enhance our understanding even further.

RECRUITING GLOBALLY

It is critical for an employer to recognize that in a global market, there may be large differences in familiarity, reputation, and image across regions; hence, recruitment activities may need to vary to create the type and level of employer knowledge desired (i.e., a familiar organization with a positive reputation in one locale may have to engage in more and different recruitment activities in another locale). To tap the same caliber of talent in different locations may require different sourcing strategies (e.g., considering technology access, translating materials). Growth markets often require dynamic strategies, whereas mature markets may draw upon more traditional approaches to sourcing applicants. Job market variability across nations likely will affect the number of alternatives that applicants have, how willing and able individuals are to experience delays, and hence, self-selection rates. In summary, global branding and advertising require synthesizing a desired global organizational image with awareness of local customs, needs, laws, labor markets, and language.

One overarching concern with regard to globalization and recruitment is that we lack cross-cultural research on the information processing strategies and needs of job applicants. For example, does the same information serve the same role in input into employer knowledge across cultures? Is negative or missing information considered similarly across cultures? Does the influence of recruitment activity on employer knowledge vary by culture? Do certain cultures attend more to certain information sources or types? For example, referral programs are particularly important outside of the United States. Froese, Vo, and Garrett (2010), in a study of Japanese and U.S. companies recruiting in Vietnam, noted that views of the country and its people have influence beyond employer brand. Further, we lack understanding of the generalizability of recruitment efforts for different job levels in different cultures and markets. For example, sources that are effective in the recruitment of blue-collar workers but not managers in one country may play different or even opposite roles in another country.

One could consider how a cultural lens might affect what is seen as impressive or what values are seen as socially approved (see Miller & Guo, 2014). Indeed, we would posit that although factors affecting what is considered prestigious (e.g., organization rankings, high pay) might be similar across cultures, there may be some differences in what is associated with respectability (e.g., what organizations are seen as good and honorable). As an example, Garcia, Posthuma, and Quinones (2010) examined how statements about how benefits exceed legal requirements affect attraction in Mexico. Although this is an often-used signal by organizations in that specific market, it is important in global recruiting where legally mandated fringe benefits vary greatly across countries. Another example would be to consider media richness and media credibility effects on attraction as moderated by culture. What constitutes a warm recruiter treating individuals fairly may not be the same in different regions, because cultures differ in beliefs regarding the appropriateness of assertive behavior in interviews (Vance & Paik, 2006). Note, however, studies have not evidenced any strong, consistent pattern of relations between type of selection tool and applicant reactions that indicates particular cultural values as key to reactions (see Anderson & Witvliet, 2008, for a review).

Another concern is the need for cultural adaptation in recruitment. The literature on culture and marketing (Hermeking, 2005) has established the need to consider cultural receptivity as well as socioeconomic conditions in designing advertising campaigns (Karande, Almurshidee, & Al-Olayan, 2006); hence, it is no surprise that organizations recognize that recruitment activities and materials may need to vary by country. For example, Baack and Singh (2007) demonstrated that individuals prefer websites that are culturally adapted (i.e., changing content and presentation to fit cultural values of a target country). At first blush, this appears to fly in the face of “global branding,” in which one website and “one image” projected is the goal. However, we

contend that organizations can work to project a global brand image while also making appropriate cultural adaptations. For example, an organization that wants to project an image of caring for the customer can provide culturally appropriate examples of showing good customer service in each location or show photographs of individuals of different nationalities depending on location (Brandel, 2006).

Cultural influences on the relative role of various factors on job offer acceptance need to be examined. We would anticipate, on the basis of our own practical experience and suggestions in the literature, that factors such as pay, opportunities, and signing bonuses would play stronger roles in emerging markets than mature ones where research traditionally has been based. Lucrative job offers are tickets to upward mobility, and so salary plays a bigger factor in job interest in those locations. Potential recruits often are switching jobs frequently in efforts to obtain salary increases. Further, because compensation packages and hours worked vary widely through the world, global recruiting requires adjustments to offers to make them attractive in different locations (Brandel, 2006). We have already noted that the role of social influencers will likely vary with the role accorded to family and friends in a given culture. Hence, although comparative empirical research on offer acceptance and country is not available, existing evidence strongly suggests some differential rating of factors by culture and economic conditions.

Finally, Connerley (2014) notes that greater attention should be paid to the competencies recruiters need for operating in a global environment, such as having a global mindset and cultural agility. Globally integrated software can also help recruiters. For example, IBM Kenexa's BrassRing applicant tracking system has built-in capabilities to meet reporting requirements in multiple geographies and supports different languages (IBM, 2014).

CONSIDERING STRATEGY

At a basic level, organizations have long been interested in recruitment strategy, but as Ployhart and Kim (2014) note, research on strategic issues is limited, with few studies connecting the individual-level variables typically focused on in recruiting research with organizational performance and competitive advantage. Recently, Phillips and Gully (2015) introduced a model of strategic recruitment to provide a lens for considering individual, team, and organizational levels in conjunction with approaches to recruitment.

We can envision ways in which the topic of generating applicant interest might be approached with a consideration of the organization's strategy for talent management. For example, which talent pools is the organization most concerned about retaining and, therefore, for which applicant pools should concerns about applicant quality predominate? Which talent pools has the organization determined to be ones for greater investments in development internally and how might that affect recruitment targets? Although it is easy to see how such questions can serve in a practical way to ensure that organizational resources for recruitment are directed in keeping with strategy, it also may be important to consider an organization's strategy in determining what it considers recruitment effectiveness (i.e., for a given job type, one organization's strategy might suggest that generating strong interest among high talent is critical, whereas another's might suggest that applicant pool quality does not have to be as strong).

Adapting more of a recruiting versus screening orientation is also a strategic decision. Indeed, Dineen and Williamson (2012) showed that firms with a screening orientation reported having higher-quality pools and that when a large labor supply for a job exists and a firm is perceived more positively by applicants, a screening orientation is more likely to be adopted.

Strategic ad placement to attract specific talent pools has often been discussed in the context of recruiting a more diverse applicant pool (see Avery & McKay, 2006, for a review) but can be considered more broadly as a talent management practice of customization. Similarly, whereas targeted recruitment messages to attract minority applicants, targeted campuses in recruitment, and targeted job fairs have all been discussed in terms of attraction of minority applicants (Avery & McKay, 2006), one can envision other targeted messages and targeted sourcing depending on other talent pool targets. For example, technology has enabled location- or context-based advertising on the web in innovative ways (e.g., placing job ads next to specific

types of just-released content on websites). Organizations can send customized text messages to potential applicants at certain universities or belonging to certain professional organizations to advertise openings or events. Obviously, although customization and provision of feedback can be more costly to initiate, the long-run cost savings of creating a more targeted applicant pool are apparent.

Although research on how organizational policies and benefits affect recruitment outcomes is not new (e.g., job security rights, Roehling & Winters, 2000; salary negotiations, Porter, Conlon, & Barber, 2004; work-family balance initiatives, Nord, Fox, Phoenix, & Viano, 2002; affirmative action policies, Harrison et al., 2006), strategic talent management suggests a direct tie of policy/benefit promotion to potential targeted applicant groups to success in recruiting those groups. For example, companies interested in attracting women into occupations where they are under represented (e.g., engineering) may emphasize work-life initiatives (e.g., Casper et al., 2013).

One other take on targeted recruitment and fit comes from research on recruiting and small firms. Greer, Carr, and Hipp (2016) noted that small firms can gain advantages by emphasizing their uniqueness, flexible environments, lowered formality, and greater autonomy, and should be able to attract candidates who fit those preferred working environments with that strategy. They note that while being unique in message content, small firms are likely to imitate larger ones in recruiting practices, and this imitation is related to more successful firm performance.

Of particular importance in strategic talent management is uncovering when and why differential reactions to recruitment activities occur for those with higher potential and/or greater alternative opportunities. The general evidence is that high-quality applicants react more critically to negative information (Bretz & Judge, 1998; Connerley & Rynes, 1997) and to recruiting delays (Rynes et al., 1991). High-quality applicants may differ from low-quality applicants in reactions to specific aspects of the process that are as yet uninvestigated, such as the amount of high-touch recruitment practices used or vertical integration of women and minorities.

Cable and Turban (2001, p. 157) stated that, “There are not recruitment ‘best practices’ across firms” because firms need to assess what employer knowledge their target market holds before developing a recruitment strategy. Approaching recruitment from an integrated talent management perspective suggests a strong shift away from examining what works best across applicants to what works best for specific targets of interest in specific contexts. This is hardly a new suggestion—it has been made by Rynes (Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Cable, 2003; Rynes et al., 1980) in all of her reviews—but the current zeitgeist with regard to strategic talent management may increase the likelihood of the research shift.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have summarized conclusions in recent recruitment research. The box at the end of the chapter provides a list of the key practice implications based on this research. This focus may leave the reader wondering about the pros and cons of more contextualized approaches to researching recruitment that are industry, job-level, geography, or target applicant group-specific. Our conclusion is that contextual factors must be evaluated, but they are not necessarily going to change recruitment theory and models. For example, although we provided numerous examples in this chapter in which culture might make a difference, we also provided numerous examples in which it does not appear to greatly influence research findings and/or practice. Advancements in recruitment research and practice will come from better articulation of when one ought to be attending to these contextual factors and when they can be ignored or only minor modifications in approaches be made.

Another important conclusion is the changing role of incumbent employees in recruiting. Increasingly, organizations are recognizing that all employees are marketers or brand ambassadors, and an effective recruitment strategy engages all employees. Researchers, however, have not attended to this trend adequately and thus have not provided much clarification about how best to execute this strategy. Further, research has not fully attended to the evolution of the recruiter role in terms of skill obsolescence. LinkedIn (2015) states that modern recruiters need

to be data nerds (to use numbers and data to help them make better decisions), researchers (to research candidate pools, employment and skill trends, the competition), and technologists (to leverage recruiting innovations)—roles that are very different from those of a traditional HR recruiter. Talent acquisition companies now offer training for recruiters on the soft skills required for interacting with a candidate (e.g., building relationships, negotiation, selling). These same companies are also including the data insights capabilities into their tools, allowing a recruiter to enhance their use of data to make better decisions.

We have eschewed a traditional review of the recruitment literature for a more focused look at how some of the key conclusions of research should be interpreted in light of the important trends of increasing globalization, increasing use of technology in recruiting, and increasing attention to strategic talent management. Our review leads us to conclude that although organizations are certainly using new practices and adopting new strategies in response to these trends, the research base lags practice in these areas. The following box provides a list of unanswered research questions. Increasing our attention to recruitment processes with these trends in mind should yield more theory-driven practices than those adopted today, while at the same time better informing our understanding of what influences attraction to organizations.

UNANSWERED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are there differences in recruitment source effects across countries because of differences in economies and cultures?
2. Does the role of various attributes of information (e.g., valence, specificity) in attraction vary by culture and economic conditions?
3. Does the use of technology in recruitment only influence the “how” and “amount” of information delivery to potential applicants, or does it also alter “what” attracts applicants?
4. How does job seeker web search behavior influence how to best attract applicants?
5. Are the effects of media richness, media credibility, and specific recruitment activities moderated by culture? When and how should recruitment materials and activities be culturally adapted?
6. How does vertical integration by nationality affect attraction on a global basis?
7. What are the most effective, innovative uses of technology for generating interest among high-quality applicants?
8. How does technology’s role in attraction differ for different job levels and applicant pools?
9. How do organizational recruitment activities vary according to strategic talent management objectives?
10. What is a cost-effective level of customization in recruitment?

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

Reaching Potential Applicants

- Companies today should have some working knowledge of what sources of information are being viewed by applicants and their “social score” in terms of how they appear in online forums.
- Devote time and personnel to managing your employer brand on social media.
- Balance the “sell” with the job and company “realities” by creating a realistic job preview guide inclusive of competitive advantage talking points balanced with the realities of working in the company. Be transparent and prepared. Assume your candidates have researched your company through their social networks.
- “More information is better.” Review job postings to add position- and organization-relevant information. If appropriate, vacancy and/or time scarcity should be emphasized.

- Evaluate an organization's image and reputation, contrast what is found with what is desired, and then develop planned activities to affect images held by job seekers.
- Consider content, usability, and aesthetics in conjunction with one another.
- Messages should be customized where appropriate.
- Applicants should be provided with self-screening opportunities.
- Make efforts to dissuade low-quality applicants in effective and non-offensive ways (e.g., Ikea fit tool).

Maintaining Interest

- Recruiters need to be carefully selected and trained. Remember, in the world of social media, all your employees are recruiters. Prepare them accordingly.
- Site visit features (i.e., how time is spent) need to be investigated in terms of which ones relate to actual offer acceptance.
- Consider how job markets affect the ability to maintain interest, and mechanisms for doing so need to be implemented in hot and/or valued skill markets.

Accepting Offers

- Rather than passively accepting self-selection rates, organizations should investigate reasons for self-selection to uncover whether any causes are problematic or are leading to a loss of desirable applicants. Desirable self-selection should be facilitated through tools that enable assessment of job and organization fit.
- Evaluation of offer acceptance influencers needs to be made with data gathered later in the process as it may be different from what influences attraction.

Recruiting Globally

- Evaluate sourcing strategies in different markets and culturally adapt recruiting materials as needed.
- Recognizing cultural and market influences on the relative importance of factors in offer acceptance is important. Anticipating how market changes will affect recruitment efforts and organizational image can facilitate the effectiveness of future efforts.

Considering Strategy

- Identify pivotal talent pools and use strategic ad placement, targeted messages, and targeted sourcing for those pools.
- A quality ATS to monitor, evaluate, and evolve recruiting efforts is key to success.
- Narrow recruitment efforts through targeting. Focus on the early identification of talent and generating interest in those pools.
- Evaluate how attraction strategies such as inducements can affect internal equity.
- Prepare your recruiters to correctly use data to influence and streamline their sourcing efforts.

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