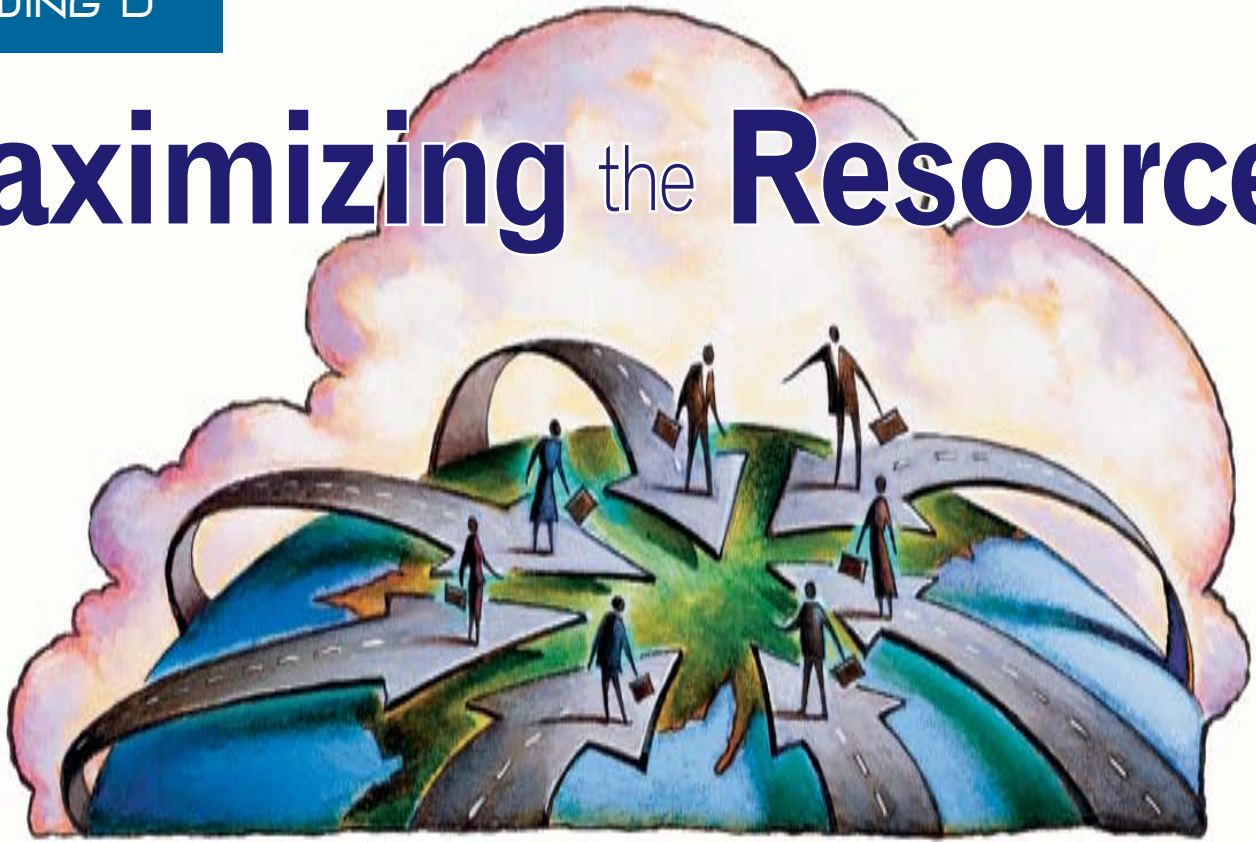


Maximizing the Resources



Part two of this series looks at how professional recruiters add value to your business, beyond filling a position.

By Kelly Green

WITH AN OBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE, recruiters can add more value than just bringing talented employees to your organization. Creative seed businesses are seeking more than a pile of resumes from human resource experts. A good recruiter:

- assists with defining your job needs for today and tomorrow
- assesses your culture to find candidates that fit with your values, your way of doing business, and your team
- helps to assess and realign your organizational chart
- can ensure that your compensation and benefits structure is competitive

Before getting too far down the recruitment road, recruiters should invest time in really understanding your company. “We want to understand where the business is today, where the company wants to be in 5 to 10 years, and how the company plans to reach its future goals,” says Greg Duerksen who works with Kincannon & Reed, an executive search firm that serves agricultural clients. Once Duerksen has assessed the organization, he works with clients to develop a job profile that meets the long-term needs of the business.

Some of Duerksen’s clients have a very particular set of skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics in mind, but after completing his organizational assessment Duerksen sometimes finds that the future direction of the company demands a different type of employee. “In that case, we work with the client to redesign the job profile to fit with the future rather than the present status of the organization,”

he says. “We need to hire for where the company’s going and that’s where our independent perspective can create additional value.”

To make recruitment a win-win for both parties, new staff need to have the personal characteristics, values, and work ethic that fit well with the organization’s unique culture. Laurel Hyde of Scott Wolfe has found during her years of recruiting experience that failures usually result from a mismatch of cultures and communication styles. Hyde invests time in understanding the client’s culture, which includes many things:

- the organization’s values
- the way people work, such as independently or in teams
- how people communicate
- decision making (team versus autonomous)
- how the company perceives employees taking risks

“Once we understand these things, then we go about finding candidates who have the required skills and knowledge, but also the personal characteristics that will fit with the organization,” says Hyde.

A fundamental for executives and managers should be to seek employees that complement rather than mirror their existing team. Duerksen explains that good managers realize their weaknesses and look for employees that will enhance the team. For instance, a visionary and creative CEO may require an operationally-focused CFO to ground the company in delivery of strategies and tactics.

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Expertise to Use

When you hire human resource and recruitment firms, consider getting advice on:

- structure and organization of human resources inside your company
- redefining positions based on long-term goals
- redefining search criteria
- complementary skills and attitudes
- compensation packages
- special incentives for employees

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“Smart companies consider their organizational structure to be dynamic,” says Duerksen. “They look at the strengths, weaknesses, and skill sets of their people and adjust their structure to leverage this.” With an outside perspective, recruiters can help to best position new and existing employees in your company. After assessing your organizational structure and culture, they often can see gaps or better ways of organizing your staff for efficiency and, most of all, effectiveness reasons. In addition, sometimes recruiters find a candidate that could fit into an organization if the structure was slightly repositioned. That’s when having a flexible rather than static organizational structure can be an asset.

Recruiters can also help with your compensation and benefits offering. This becomes particularly important when you are recruiting for a new geography, looking to hire an employee from outside your existing region, or hiring for what might be perceived as a risky position in terms of duration. With their ears and eyes constantly on the marketplace, recruiters know competitive salary and benefit ranges and will also be aware of those extras such as signing bonuses, automobiles, and vacation time that could help you attract the top candidate.

“You have to remember that most often you will be hiring someone who is relatively happy working exactly where they are,” says Duerksen. As a result, you need to know what monetary and non-monetary rewards will be attractive to them. “As a third party, we can first of all help you to set a competitive base and then, through discussions with the candidate, we can help fine-tune the compensation and benefits offering,” says Hyde. Occasionally, that even means saving some salary money.

It takes some creativity, though. For example, some candidates may want self-directed health insurance or pension accounts, so their salary will need to reflect the increased cost to the employee. Others might value flexible work hours or a guaranteed cap on nights of travel. Recruiters will work with both the company and the candidate to negotiate a mutually satisfactory outcome.

Recruiters and human resource specialists bring an objective eye to your organization – be sure to make full use of the expertise you are getting. It might be short-sighted to have them looking only for outside talent rather than looking inward at your structure too.

