

Rewrite the rules of employee recruitment

KARA ATKINSON

In the digital era, fast-paced and competitive business environments reward those who are quick to respond to new opportunities and market challenges. Trust plays a vital role in the success of these initiatives, providing a cornerstone for building strategic partnerships, establishing a reputation and embracing digital transformation.

Today, this once-stable foundation is crumbling under the pressure of royal commissions and large-scale data breaches.

In a survey conducted by *Harvard Business Review*, 63 per cent of senior executives at large enterprises throughout the world stated that trust among people, businesses and institutions has declined during the past two years. Further, after 20 years of research, the Great Places to Work Institute found that experiencing a high level of trust between leaders and employees is the primary defining characteristic of the best workplaces.

When the process for joining a workplace is engineered through a broken recruitment vehicle, trust is difficult to establish.

Leaders deal with subjective candidate vetting; their recruitment firm cuts corners with cursory Google and LinkedIn searches and shortlists only the people on the market at that time rather than a shortlist of the best people.

On the other side, the candidate deals with non-returned calls, the black hole of resume submissions and last-minute internal candidate competition, and an emotional minefield of career guidance from short-term relationships with inexperienced recruitment consultants.

The recruiter deals with outdated, generic job descriptions, usually supplied by their clients, bastardisation of the market by overpromotion of the same role and competing in a time-stamped environment where speed wins over quality

and working for free is the expected norm.

Hiring is never easy. According to a study by Leadership IQ, 46 per cent of newly hired employees will fail within 18 months, while only 19 per cent will achieve unequivocal success. This lack of vision keeps companies from achieving the holy grail of business outcomes, trust

Career ladders are long gone. In the past a person joined an organisation at 21, followed the rules, was promoted incrementally along the way and retired with a gold watch.

As companies have thinned out, leadership positions have disappeared, not to be seen again. Career ladders have been replaced with career pyramids. The further up the pyramid people move, the hotter the competition for the top spot and the failure rates are staggering.

Harvard Business Review puts the failure rate among management hires at 60 per cent, and the consequences of failure derail a once promising career and cost the organisation time, money and trust.

It is time for the recruitment industry to rewrite the rules of recruitment. Not only improve it but, just as Uber did to the taxi industry, they also need to transform and disrupt it. Every recruiter is an "expert non-transactional specialist with a proprietary search methodology who has access to deep global networks".

Where is the recruiter who builds their business, and yours, on a foundation of competence, bespoke communication and trust?

Where are the leaders who understand that a true employee value proposition is not only written in the first line of a job ad but also is permeated through every touch point their prospective employee has?

As Australian networking expert Janine Garner says: "True high performers are like eagles. They want to be surrounded by eagles and fly even higher."

Kara Atkinson is an executive recruitment expert with 18 years' experience.