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Striking Yukon Gold: Sourcing Innovative Recruitment Strategies

[HRVoice.org](#) | November 12, 2014 | [no comments](#)

By Amelia Chan, CHRP

Companies often say people are their biggest asset but their leadership actions don't always match. While it's important for organizations to have great strategies, they mean nothing without the right people to execute and drive them. In order for an organization to tackle the challenges and opportunities in a sustainable way, there must be a resourcing strategy to staff with the right talent.

Many companies recruit and hire to fill holes "in the moment" and don't consider its long-term business goals or the future needs of the organization. This can lead to bad hires, reduced productivity and ultimately, lost opportunities. If your recruitment strategy is not aligned with, and addressing the overall business strategy, you are wasting a lot of time and energy to hire at the expense of retention and engagement.

This truth was driven home for me at a presentation I recently delivered on recruitment strategies at an HRMA workshop in the Yukon. When challenged to think outside the box regarding recruiting strategies, the participants blew me away with the number of potential candidate sources they generated.

With a nudge of friendly competition, we collectively came up with an impressive list of creative sources—and I had come equipped with plenty. Sharing, comparing and daring one another to think as openly as possible, we easily doubled whatever number I walked in the door with through our round robin teams. Naturally, we weren't able to declare any particular winning strategy, but found common ground in a flexible formula grounded in fresh thinking.

Sourcing the right candidates is the key to strategic recruitment. This starts with organizational clarity around mission and values. An employer must be authentic in order to identify the candidates who will be successful in their work culture. Hiring to your business strategy is paramount to ensuring that you are doing more than hiring the best available talent; you are hiring the best available talent with the desired experience and competencies who meets both current and future needs of the organization. The future success of your company depends on it.

In that light, here are four basic questions employers can ask to determine where best to direct their sourcing efforts:

- Who are my target candidates, and what do they want?
- What am I offering potential employees?
- How do I differ from my competitors for talent?
- How do I articulate and leverage my employer brand?

These four questions apply to businesses of all sizes and stripes. Small and medium sized enterprises (SME) often assume that job applicants would prefer to apply to larger organizations. This isn't the case so they shouldn't be discouraged despite the optics. Given that the majority of the workforce in B.C. are employed by SMEs, this is a big misconception.

While larger employers have advantages of greater resources and long term job stability, these aren't the only traits that compel applicants to apply. There are plenty of calibre candidates looking to join smaller organizations. The entrepreneurial spirit of emerging

businesses support the work cultures that motivate such highly-productive, self-driven employees. The key is understanding who fits where. Individuals who thrive in one work environment might struggle in another.

There isn't enough room to provide the exhaustive list from our workshop but here are a few of the less usual places employers can tap into for possible applicants:

- Part Timers/retirees
- Conferences/networking events
- Previously unsuccessful candidates
- Rehires
- Social media campaigns
- High school work experience programs
- Community bulletin boards
- Storefront signs/walk-ins
- Cold calling
- Displacement agencies

On a closing personal note, my visit to present in Whitehorse was in many ways like stepping into a familiar, but whole other, world. The warmth and openness of everyone in that session made it an inspiring adventure. Our fellow HRMA members and business professionals up North showed me how much they loved where they lived and how keen they were to share this with others.

One workshop star in particular presented me with a business card that read, "Yukon...Living the Dream" on the back. For me it summed up perhaps Whitehorse's strongest recruitment draw—its breathtaking beauty is a living lure for the entire region.

Amelia Chan, CHRP, RCIC, is the founder of [Higher Options Consulting](#), a boutique HR and immigration firm in Vancouver. As an entrepreneur with a background from diverse industries, she is passionate about operational excellence and employee engagement. Amelia is a regular contributor to PeopleTalk.

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