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THE ABILITIES OF RECRUITERS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE SELECTION PROCESS AS FACTORS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Abstract

The strategies for recruitment and selection of candidates are increasingly evolving as the main factors for the successful employment of candidates. In a society where companies compete for suitable candidates, recruiters have the responsible role of representing the company and making the first impression. The recruiters are the link between the labour population and the labour market. The abilities that recruiters possess and the selection strategies they use are a crucial part of this interconnection.

The aim of the paper is to analyse what methodology recruiters use in the selection process, as well as the main abilities they must possess as a factor to create a match between suitable candidates and the job position. By studying the point of view of recruiters and candidates, we describe the variety of strategies used in the process of hiring candidates. With the scope of ensuring a positive candidate experience as well as a pleasant recruitment process in a limited labour market such as the current one, recruiters need to possess strong soft skills, especially in terms of communication, active listening, and empathy. When deciding upon the methodology they need to work closely together with the hiring managers and HR managers and choose the most adequate steps such as interviews, personality tests, and various tasks.

Empirical results from the study give a glimpse of the methodology and tools used in sourcing and selecting suitable candidates and provide consideration of other practices to be developed in the recruitment process in order to increase and improve employment.

Keywords: recruiters, methodology, selection, employment

Introduction

In the rapidly changing global business environment, the recruitment and selection process has undergone significant transformations. As organizations strive to secure the most suitable candidates to meet their evolving needs, the role of recruit-

ers has become paramount. Recruiters, as front-line agents in the talent acquisition process, wield substantial influence over an organization's ability to attract, assess, and select top-tier talent.

Therefore, we initiated research aimed to analyse what methodology recruiters use in the selection process, as well as the main abilities they must possess as a factor to create a match between suitable candidates and the job position. The results delve into the multifaceted abilities of recruiters, shedding light on their competencies, strategies, and adaptability in an era marked by technological advancements and changing labour market dynamics. Empirical results from the study also give a glimpse of the methodology and tools used in sourcing and selecting suitable candidates and provide consideration of other practices to be developed in the recruitment process in order to increase and improve employment.

Theoretical background

Recruiters play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between organizational demands and the aspirations of prospective employees. Their competencies encompass a diverse array of skills, ranging from interpersonal aptitudes to the proficient use of cutting-edge technologies. Modern recruiters must possess not only an understanding of the organization's needs but also a profound comprehension of the nuanced aspirations and expectations of candidates. This duality underscores the complex nature of contemporary recruitment, where recruiters serve as conduits for aligning organizational culture, job roles, and candidates' capabilities (Van Vianen, 2000). Recruiters hold the responsibility of harmonizing human resource strategies with business objectives, necessitating a keen awareness of an organization's strategic trajectory. This awareness empowers recruiters to not only assess candidates based on their technical proficiencies but also to evaluate their alignment with the long-term vision of the organization (Mehmood, et al., 2017).

Concurrently, the selection methodology employed significantly influences the quality and appropriateness of candidates selected for employment. In the past, the role of recruiters predominantly revolved around reviewing resumes and conducting interviews (Kinicki & Lockwood, 1985). However, the proliferation of digital platforms and AI-driven tools has ushered in a new era of recruitment practices. Recruiters are now required to harness the potential of data analytics, machine learning, and automation to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their selection processes. Traditional techniques such as interviews and resume assessments remain applicable, yet modern recruitment practices have embraced technological tools and data analytics (Johnson, 2022). This calls for recruiters to go beyond traditional interviewing techniques and be knowledgeable in the utilization of applicant tracking systems, predictive analytics, and online sourcing strategies. Required advancements facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of candidates' skills, technical

abilities, and potential cultural correspondence. Furthermore, such methodologies serve to mitigate subconscious biases and ensure a fairer and more equitable selection process (Newman & Lyon, 2009).

Moreover, the contemporary labour market is characterized by a diverse and globalized workforce. Recruiters are tasked with navigating this complexity by embracing cultural sensitivity and inclusive practices. As pointed out by (Jackson & Joshi, 2011), recruiters need to demonstrate an acute awareness of diversity-related challenges and opportunities. Contemporary recruiters, armed with both specialized expertise and a nuanced understanding of organizational dynamics, are better equipped to devise, and implement selection methodologies that yield candidates who not only possess requisite skills but also resonate with an organization's values and strategic direction. This necessitates the cultivation of interpersonal skills that enable effective communication across cultures, the dismantling of bias in candidate evaluation, and the creation of an inclusive candidate experience (Cole, et al., 2007).

In summation, the abilities of recruiters and the methodologies harnessed during the selection process emerge as inseparable factors profoundly impacting employment outcomes (Mast, et al., 2011). As organizations navigate a swiftly changing landscape, recruiters' adeptness in strategic alignment and the integration of technology-empowered selection processes stand to considerably enhance the quality of their selections.

The subsequent sections of this paper will delve deeper into the particulars of recruiter competencies, selection methodologies, and their combined influence on employment within the contemporary business environment.

Research design

The purpose of the paper is to analyse the main abilities recruiters must possess as a factor to match suitable candidates and the job position, as well as the methodologies and tool they commonly use during the recruitment process. More specifically, we aimed at researching the most significant skills of recruiters that affect the success of attracting and selecting quality candidates, as well as the strategies used during the recruitment and selection process in order to employ quality human capital in the organization.

Communication skills of the recruiters, both in relation to the candidates, and with the clients or the team in which the candidate would work, stood out as the most prominent ones. Besides, other specific skills, such as the one of active listening and creativity in finding the appropriate talent pool were further researching, beyond the general communication capabilities of recruiters. These were all considered as factors that could impact the recruiter's ability to determine the personnel

and candidate values and to understand whether potential candidates would fit the organization's culture.

The conducted research is mainly of quantitative character, focusing on two main research questions. Firstly, the research is intended to provide insight into evaluating the attitudes of the recruiters in relation to the most significant abilities that a professional in this field should possess in order to contribute to employment of suitable staff. Secondly, the characteristics of the selection procedure that recruiters believe leads to successful selection of employees were examined.

In terms of the research methods used, for the purpose of the research, survey with an online questionnaire with 32 questions was constructed, most of which were formatted as Likert scales in addition to open-ended questions aimed at enriching the understanding of the respondents' attitudes.

The sampling strategy was based on convenience sampling, due to the nature of the research requiring the involvement of a particular profile of professionals, i.e., recruiters employed at domestic or foreign companies in the territory of Republic of Macedonia. Though the questionnaire was sent out to approximately 140 recruiters, given the response rate, the final sample consists of 60 recruiters. The questionnaire was distributed in an online manner, through a LinkedIn group focusing on recruitment topics, where the members aligned with the research needs interested in taking part were able to voice their opinions.

Data analysis and interpretation

Having collected 60 responses, the next logical step was analysing the data and making conclusions based on the extracted information. Given that some questions were formatted as Likert-scales with 5 levels, and the rest were open-ended questions, the analysis techniques used were accordingly chosen. As such, the Likert-scale questions were summarized in terms of percentages of respondents agreeing with the statements, and averages could be calculated based on the results.

Qualitative analysis was used for the open-ended questions, meaning that the answers were first categorized, and the most commonly mentioned phrases or sentiments were taken as conclusions.

The first group of questions were related to the extent to which the recruiter should be familiarized with the company. The results were dominantly positive, with 50% of surveyed recruiters saying it is necessary to have complete information about the company they are recruiting for and all its departments, and nearly 47% believing it is necessary to have detailed information. The remainder 3% thought it was enough to have basic information about the recruiting company.

The responses to the second question, regarding the importance of the recruiters' preparedness for occasional changes in the recruitment process, were also distributed between the two highest levels of agreement on the Lickert scale (57%

completely agree and 43% agree with the statement). It seems that recruiters have duly understood the importance of the ability to adapt to changes, which is crucial in today's fast-changing business environment, and especially relevant for the IT sector.

Curious to learn what recruiters think they can do to successfully adapt to the changes in the recruitment process, we asked an open-ended question letting respondents write down their suggestions. The most common ideas included timely and regular communication with the hiring managers, their team lead, their colleagues and even all departments influenced by the upcoming new member. Certain respondents believed recruiters should initiate these changes in an attempt to optimize and improve the hiring processes, while others thought the recruiters' role is to timely detect trends in the labour market and react accordingly. Having this in mind, we can conclude that the ability to openly communicate with different stakeholders and conduct thorough and proper research is of great importance for any recruiter.

Connected to changeability, we wanted to know how recruiters feel regarding the role of learning how to use new technologies and tools in order to keep up with global changes. Again, the majority (60%) completely agreed with the statement, while the remaining 40% chose the second-highest level of agreement.

Graph 1: Attitudes towards new technological tools for adapting to global changes
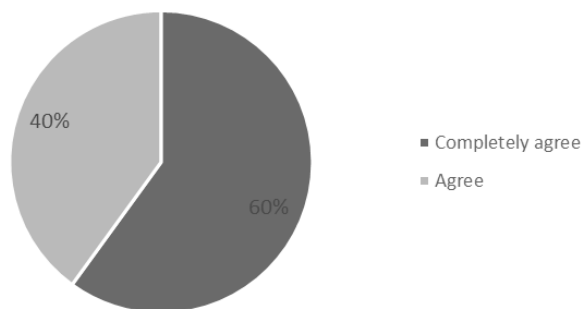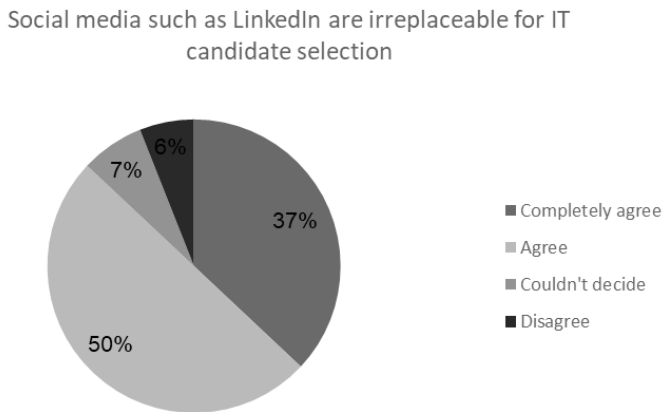

Source: primary data, own research

In order to dive deeper into what exactly could prove to be useful in recruitment, respondents were given the opportunity to voice their opinions via an open question. It seems that the recruiter's most helpful tool is generative AI (such as

ChatGPT), whose application can be very broad; from improving job post text, through creating interview questions or email responses, to even CV analyses. Moreover, Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) were frequently mentioned, along with CRMs, calendar/meeting management software (e.g., Calendly), as well as browser extensions valuable for searching and highlighting keywords. Similarly, paid subscriptions to social network platforms such as LinkedIn, specifically built for recruiters such as LinkedIn Recruiter or LinkedIn Premium, have proven to be very useful in the recruitment process.

Since we expected to receive many answers talking about the importance of LinkedIn in recruitment, we posed a question in the questionnaire asking respondents to which extent they agree that these social media networks are irreplaceable when it comes to IT recruitment. Though the general sentiment was positive (37% completely agreeing and 50% agreeing with the statement), there were also 6% disagreeing that LinkedIn cannot be replaced, while the remainder couldn't decide. It seems that other ways of research and alternative networks are available to certain recruiters, so they don't feel as dependent on LinkedIn as we might expect.

Graph 2: Attitudes toward the importance of LinkedIn in IT candidate selection

Social media such as LinkedIn are irreplaceable for IT candidate selection

Source: primary data, own research

Interested in gathering as much insight into the relationship between recruiters and LinkedIn as possible, we decided it is well-suited to insert another open-ended question, allowing surveyed recruiters to justify their previous responses. From the 36 total responses to this particular question, the biggest takeaway was that LinkedIn is definitely the most popular network for recruiters, due to its rich database, the user-friendliness of the platform, as well as the different filters that can be applied when searching for specific profiles of candidates. However, many recruiters

believe that relying solely on LinkedIn is not the right approach to recruitment, and each determined recruiter should strive to create a unique network of contacts that can be used also in the future. The general agreement among responders seemed to be that LinkedIn is the first choice of many recruiters, but it shouldn't be the only one, as there are other channels (such as Github) and excluding them would mean overlooking many possibilities. Moreover, the effectiveness of LinkedIn mostly depends on the region, the age of the candidate, and the industry for which the company is looking to recruit. For instance, in certain countries, LinkedIn isn't as popular, and more senior candidates tend to be less active on LinkedIn. In terms of industries, it was interesting to uncover that candidate in the IT sector is typically passive and used to being headhunted rather than active job seekers, and they prefer being contacted and communicated with via social media platforms as opposed to being called on the telephone or approached in person.

Thinking more about the different ways of finding relevant candidates, we wanted to know whether recruiters believe personnel can be found in competitor firms. Assuming that competitors would require workers with similar skill sets, it wasn't surprising to see 77% saying that in more than 50% of the cases, this holds true, and 6% saying this is true all the time. Though 5% said they could find relevant candidates in competitor firms in less than 50% of the cases, none opted for "never".

Graph 3: Attitudes towards finding talent in competitor firms

The talent that should be recruited can be found in competitor firms

- True for all cases (100%)
- True for most cases (> 50%)
- Couldn't decide
- True for some cases (< 50%)

Source: primary data, own research

Logically, given the many different software and platforms that make the recruitment process more efficient, we can assume that computer skills are quite important for a recruiter. Unsurprisingly, the majority of responders (58%) completely agreed that recruiters need to have computer skills in order to adapt to today's environ-

ment, and 33% agreed with the statement. There was only one respondent not in agreement with the above hypothesis and four others were indecisive on the topic.

Graph 4: Attitudes towards the necessity of computer skills for today's recruiters

Recruiters need computer skills to adapt to today's environment

- Completely agree
- Agree
- Couldn't decide
- Disagree

2%
7%
33%
58%
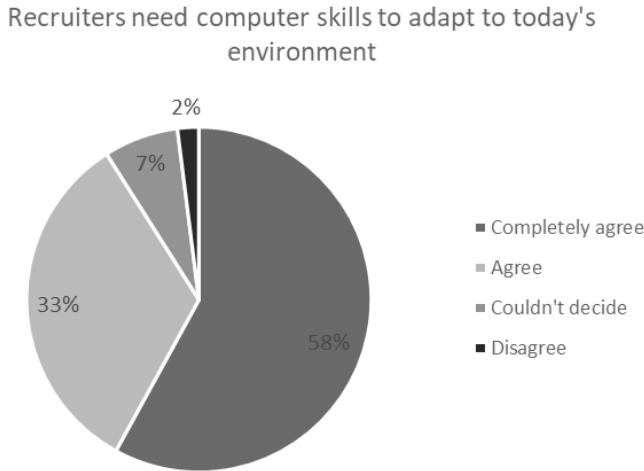
Source: primary data, own research

Similarly, we wanted to discover the attitudes of recruiters towards the importance of profound knowledge of technological tools for effective recruitment work. Aligned with our expectations, 27% of responders completely agreed and 57% agreed with the statement, while only 5% disagreed that a good recruiter should be able to take proper advantage of the available technology.

Graph 5: Attitudes towards the necessity of technological tools in recruitment

Profound knowledge of technological tools is necessary for effective recruitment work

- Completely agree
- Agree
- Couldn't decide
- Disagree

5%
12%
27%
56%
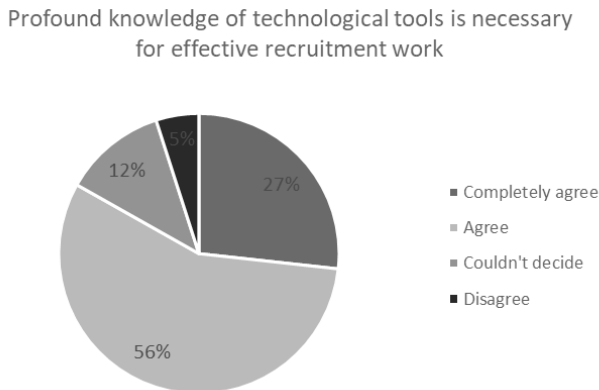
Source: primary data, own research

Technology usage for the purpose of increased productivity and efficiency in recruitment is already imperative today and it is expected that it will become an even stricter standard moving forward. Thinking about the future of recruitment, respondents were asked if they believe that recruitment processes will be facilitated by improvements in technology. The sentiment was again towards the highest levels of agreement, with 30% completely agreeing and 53% agreeing with the statement. The remaining 17% neither agreed nor disagreed, but none disagreed. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that computer skills are of great importance for recruiters, as the difference in efficiency between a recruiter using technology and one not taking advantage of tech tools will be even greater in the future, as technology advances.

Graph 6: Attitudes towards technology improvement's effect on recruitment

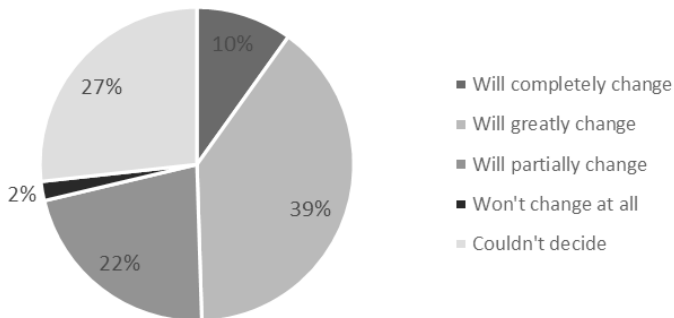Technology improvement will facilitate recruitment
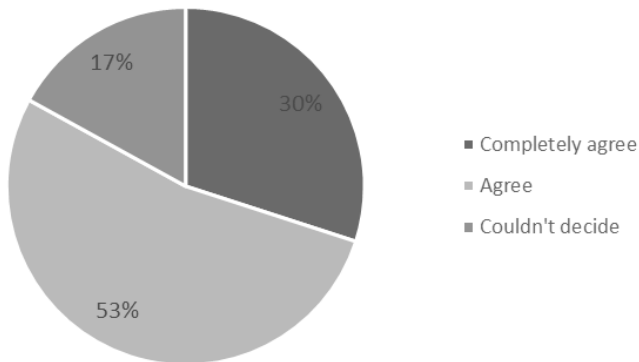
Source: primary data, own research

With the current advancement in technology which enabled the wide usage of generative artificial intelligence tools, it seemed logical to also learn about the attitudes of recruiters towards the changes that AI will bring in the recruitment process. Given the novelty of this technology, the responses were rather scattered between all levels of agreement with the statement that the usage of AI will facilitate and change the recruitment process. While 10% of the surveyed recruiters think AI will completely change the ways candidates are selected and recruited, and 40% agreed that this will bring great changes, 22% of their colleagues are more sceptical, forecasting only partial changes, and 2% believe AI will have no impact on recruitment. More than a quarter (27%) can't tell how big the impact of AI will be.

Graph 7: Attitudes towards the impact of AI on recruitment

Usage of AI will change and facilitate the recruitment process

- Will completely change
- Will greatly change
- Will partially change
- Won't change at all
- Couldn't decide

10%
27%
2%
39%
22%

Source: primary data, own research

Due to the relevancy and recency of the topics related to AI, we decided it would be beneficial to allow respondents to elaborate on their answers to the previous questions. The most common argument against AI being able to replace recruiters in the future was the lack of "human touch" and the uniqueness of human-to-human interactions. Nevertheless, a few responders seem concerned about the future of the recruiting profession, as they believe that up to 90% of recruiters' tasks can be automated and performed faster and better with AI, making recruiter job positions eventually obsolete. The overall agreement is that AI will result in timesaving, as the research of candidates, sourcing of data, sending bulk messages, and screening CVs will be done much faster. Many surveyed recruiters said they believe the soft skills and communication abilities of a human recruiter cannot be achieved by a machine, with some even mentioning intuition in the hiring process as a valuable resource that AI tools would lack.

This leads us to consider the level to which recruiters affect the hiring decision. Here, the answers were very scattered, with 28% of recruiters completely agreeing that their role is important for the final hiring decision, 52% simply agreeing with the statement, 13% uncertain about their ability to influence the final selection of the candidate, and 7% disagreeing that they can impact this decision (out of which, 2% completely in disagreement and 5% in disagreement).

Graph 8: Attitudes towards recruiters' role in making the hiring decision

Recruiters play an important role in making the hiring decision
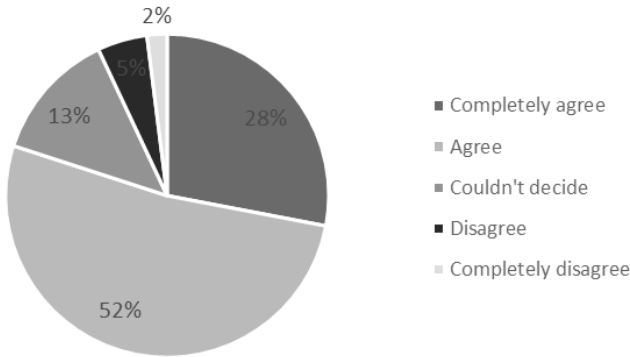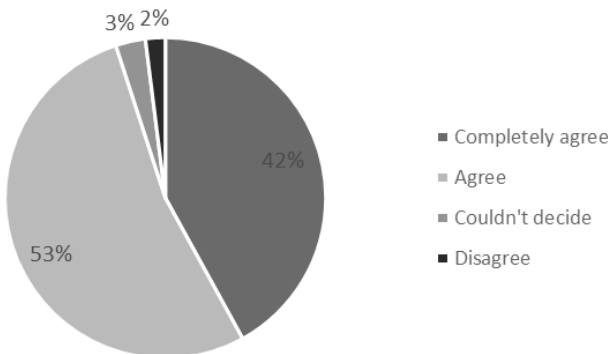

Source: primary data, own research

Furthermore, one could argue that using novel tools and finding the right candidate pool requires creativity, without which access to even cutting-edge technology becomes useless. Therefore, we were curious to know how much recruiters feel that creativity in terms of researching the relevant talent pool is a key part of the recruiter's job. On this, 42% of respondents completely agreed, while 53% agreed, and only 2% disagreed, leaving the remaining undecided.

Graph 9: Attitudes towards the importance of creativity when researching for talent

Creativity in researching for appropriate talent is a key part of recruiter's job

Source: primary data, own research

Besides creativity, it is noteworthy to examine the other skills that are important for recruiters. Communication is one of the skills that immediately stands out when thinking about the top skills a great recruiter should possess. Communicating is a big part of the recruiter's job, whether that means conducting interviews with the candidates, internal collaboration with colleagues in the team to understand the various job positions they are recruiting for, or reporting to the hiring managers. Focusing on communication during candidate interviews, respondents were asked how much they agree that communication is a key skill for recruiters. The vast majority (68%) said they completely agree, and the other 30% agreed with the statement, leaving only 2% to disagree with it.

Graph 10: Attitudes towards the importance of communication skills of recruiters

Communication skills of the recruiter are of key importance when conducting interviews
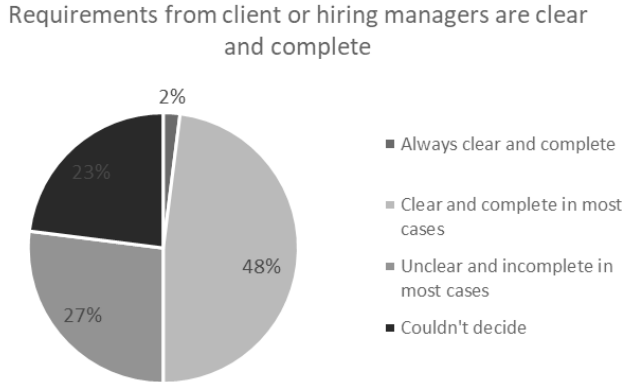
Source: primary data, own research

Moreover, putting an emphasis on the communication between recruiters and clients or hiring managers, respondents were asked to which extent they agree that this collaboration should be based on open communication with detailed descriptions of the job position they are looking to fill. The answers were distributed between complete agreement (67%) and agreement (33%) with the statement.

Keeping in mind the assumable developed communication skills of recruiters and the expected close collaboration with hiring managers or clients, it was interesting to learn that more than a quarter (27%) of respondents find the requirements of clients or managers unclear and incomplete in most of the cases. Only a small minority (2%) said these requirements are always clear and complete, and almost a quarter (23%) couldn't decide on this question. Almost half of the recruiters (48%) receive clear and complete job requirements in most cases. These answers, along with drawing from the previous finding that recruiters believe there should be open communication between the two stakeholder groups, lead us to believe that the communication between

recruiters and hiring managers or clients should be improved and more open than it is in reality.

Graph 11: Attitudes towards the clarity of requirements from hiring managers

Requirements from client or hiring managers are clear and complete

- Always clear and complete
- Clear and complete in most cases
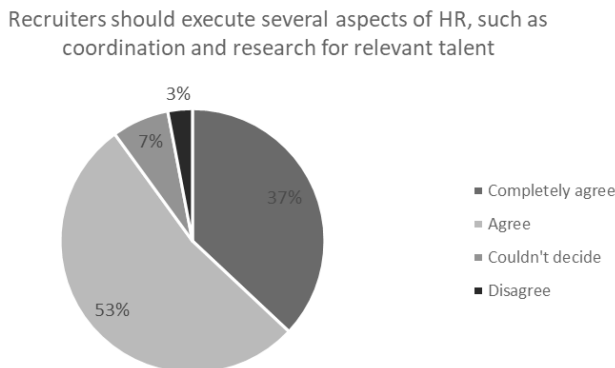- Unclear and incomplete in most cases
- Couldn't decide

Source: primary data, own research

So far, we have researched the attitudes of the recruiters towards the necessary skills they should possess in order to effectively recruit. However, it is important to also learn what the recruiter's job includes, what the recruiters should know or learn, and which methods they should implement to select the proper candidate.

When asked if the recruiter should execute various HRM tasks, among which co-ordinating and researching adequate talent, the general sentiment was positive, with 37% completely agreeing and 53% agreeing with the mentioned statement. Only 3% of respondents disagreed that these tasks fall in scope of the recruiter's job and 7% were indecisive.

Graph 12: Attitudes towards the scope of recruiter's job

Recruiters should execute several aspects of HR, such as coordination and research for relevant talent

- Completely agree
- Agree
- Couldn't decide
- Disagree

Source: primary data, own research

Similar to the findings about the definition of recruiter's tasks, we found that the great majority of surveyed recruiters (95%) believe it is their job to familiarize themselves with the industry they are recruiting for. This resonates with the expectations, as the ways of finding talent, approaching candidates, and conducting the recruitment process may vary between different industries.

Graph 13: Attitudes towards the level of familiarity of recruiters with the industry they are recruiting for
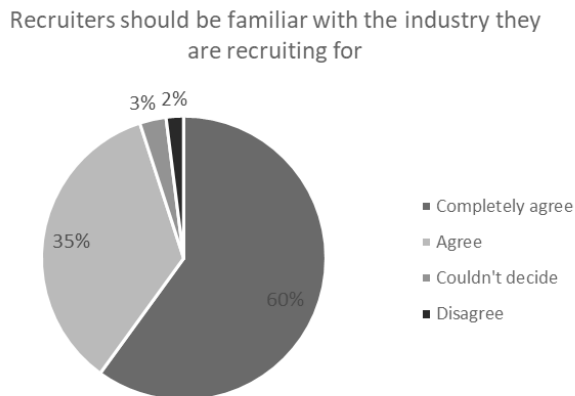
Source: primary data, own research

The above-discussed conclusion can be verified also with the results gathered by asking respondents if the recruitment process should vary depending on the recruiting company's industry (for instance, IT, manufacturing, education, etc.).

Graph 14: Attitudes towards the dependency of the recruitment process with the company's industry
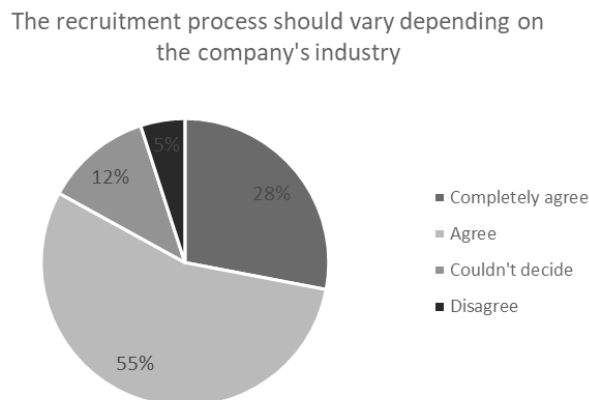
Source: primary data, own research

Almost the same percentages applied, with 5% disagreeing with the statement, and the overwhelming majority (83%) being in agreement about the necessity of establishing different processes depending on the recruiting company's industry.

Conclusion

In the contemporary business landscape, the process of talent acquisition holds pivotal importance for organizational success. At the heart of this process lie recruiters who serve as essential conduits in identifying, evaluating, and selecting candidates whose attributes align with organizational goals. Recruiters, as front-line representatives, bear a multifaceted role that goes beyond administrative tasks. Their responsibilities encompass comprehending the complexities of the job market and identifying the evolving skills demanded by organizations. Simultaneously, the methods employed during the selection process play a crucial role in determining the calibre of candidates selected and subsequently influencing organizational performance.

This paper undertakes a theoretical and empirical exploration of the abilities of recruiters and the methodologies they employ during the selection process, examining how these intertwined factors shape employment outcomes.

The results of the research discover deeper the recruiters' abilities, explaining the best practices that underpin the success of modern recruiters. There were several main takeaways from the conducted quantitative research. Firstly, it became evident that communication skills are pivotal for the success of recruiters. Besides the importance of communication and active listening when conducting interviews with the candidates, the ability to openly communicate with different stakeholders in order to properly understand and define the requirements of job positions is crucial. Secondly, creating the proper talent pool to source candidates from was highlighted by the respondents, mentioning that the ability to conduct appropriate research is of great importance for any recruiter. Shedding more light into the ways recruiters do research of candidates, different channels of data sourcing were analysed. The conclusion was that LinkedIn is definitely the most popular choice for recruiters, due to its rich database and the user-friendly interface and options that the platform offers, however, each recruiter should also strive to create their own network of contacts. The general agreement among responders seemed to be that though LinkedIn is the first choice for networking, it shouldn't be the only one, as excluding other channels completely would mean overlooking many possibilities. Connected to the advantages that come from using technological tools when sourcing the data, analysing the CVs, and organizing the meetings, computer skills were also highlighted as highly important skills for modern-day recruiters which will become even more evident in the future.

In conclusion, the abilities of recruiters in the present context extend far beyond traditional skill sets. As organizations tackle rapid technological advancements and an evolving workforce, recruiters are positioned as strategic enablers of competitive advantage. Their proficiencies comprise a balance of interpersonal judgement, technological savvy, and cultural intelligence.

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