

The War for Talent



A guide to perfecting your recruitment
in a **candidate-led market**

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TALENT

Welcome to the first eBook in our new three-part series on Untapped Talent, with skills shortages being felt across a number of industries and UK employment at record highs, it has never been more important to leave no stone unturned when it comes to finding the right people to drive your business forward.

We believe finding and recruiting candidates from a broader talent pool is crucial against the backdrop of a notable war for talent in the market. This might mean professionals returning to work after caring for children or relatives. It might be employees who could transfer their skills from one business sector to another. It could also be under-represented groups from a gender, ethnicity or age point of view. At PageGroup, we call these professionals 'Untapped Talent.'

With this in mind, we have produced three eBooks to explore this further. In this first edition, we will investigate the war for talent and explain how to perfect your recruitment strategy in an increasingly candidate-led market. We hope that this eBook provides thought-starters on solving some of the challenges that your organisation may be facing when it comes to recruiting and retaining the people you need to facilitate growth and future-proof your business.

We've taken an in-depth look at some of the key issues that businesses are facing in terms of the talent cycle: acquisition, attraction, assessment, and attrition. From our research, we have pulled together the top five problems that businesses may come across when hiring or building their recruitment strategy and we provide practical advice in kind. In addition to this, we have gathered data from 2,000 UK workers to reveal their thoughts on their roles and future careers, in order to get a broader picture of professionals' motivations for staying or leaving their current company.

As the market changes, your recruitment strategies must evolve and adapt accordingly. It is important to ensure that your business is ready to implement change to encourage an improved recruitment process, so that you are best equipped to attract, hire, and retain top talent within your organisation.

Having operated for over 40 years as recruiters, we are at the coalface of employment. It is our in-depth industry knowledge and daily interactions with candidates, and clients alike, that results in an unrivalled awareness of the specific skills needed for roles across a wide number of industries. As your needs evolve, our specialist team is uniquely positioned to help find the right talent in order to meet your business objectives. On behalf of PageGroup in the UK, I hope you enjoy the read.

Nick Kirk

UK Managing Director,
PageGroup

CONTRIBUTORS

The primary stakeholders who have contributed to this eBook are:



Mark Lawson-Jones,
Associate Partner, Page Executive

Mark is responsible for general management executive appointments at Board level and specialises in Marketing and Commercial functions.

He has 12 years of recruitment experience. His focus is on main board and senior management level appointments across consumer, B2B, technology and pharmaceutical sectors. His client base includes both UK and multi-national businesses and those ranging from privately held, owner-driven businesses, through to quoted companies and private equity-backed organisations.



Ben Appleton,
Business Manager, Michael Page

Ben is responsible for senior appointments in the engineering and manufacturing sector, specialising in leadership roles within operations, quality, HSE, engineering, projects, NPD, and technical.

He has 15 years of recruitment experience. Ben's main focus is within FMCG, food manufacturing, and chemical and life science industries in the North-West. His client base includes blue-chip multinational businesses through to SMEs and start-up organisations.

THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY:

Why is there a war for talent?

The UK is currently experiencing record-levels of employment, meaning that competition for top talent is fierce in a candidate-led market. One of the knock on effects of this is skills shortages across a number of key sectors and job roles. According to the British Chambers of Commerce, this skills shortage is “chronic” and it has called on the Government to devise a post-Brexit migration system which enables access to the skills needed at all levels to boost the economy. Apprenticeships have been touted as a viable option to helping close the skills gap, with the Chartered Management Institute suggesting that sectors such as IT and engineering could feel the biggest benefit from investing further in this area.

With all this being taken into account, forward-thinking organisations need to be as proactive as possible to ensure that they are being viewed as a desirable employer of choice. Businesses are under a tremendous amount of pressure to maintain retention rates. Candidates who aren’t happy in a role are unlikely to suffer in silence – they will go elsewhere to find a culture in which they feel happy and valued.

To delve deeper into how the working population really feel, we recently conducted a survey of over 2,000 people, asking them questions around their current satisfaction in role and the push and pull factors that would encourage them to leave a job. The study underlined the three key reasons that people leave a job.



To get a salary increase



Improve work/life balance



To get a more fulfilling role

All industries and functions are affected by the lack of available talent in the market. In our survey, respondents who agreed that they are “happy with their careers” or “satisfied at work” were unlikely to be job seekers, with only 5% and 10% respectively stating that they were looking for new opportunities. However, 18% of respondents are actively job hunting, highlighting that people in work today are still keen to explore other opportunities that are available to them. This eBook will provide recommendations to solve the problems in the areas below and help guide businesses to make the right decisions when recruiting.

The **push** and **pull factors** in moving jobs

The approach to **interviews**

An **unrefined** recruitment strategy

A negative **brand reputation**

A comprehensive **attraction methodology**

The basis of our recommendations were formulated at a roundtable session held at Sci-Tech Innovation Centre, Daresbury in the North West in March 2019, attended by business leaders from a variety of sectors. Combining this research with our unique insight from over 40 years of experience placing candidates across a wide range of sectors, we have identified the key things that candidates are looking for in organisations. We have also pinpointed the key motivators that are influencing them to stay with a business or move to a different role. To provide the most practical advice, we will focus on the four key areas of the talent cycle: acquisition, attraction, assessment, and attrition.

TALENT

Across all industries and sectors a 'war for talent' has been apparent in recent years. Organisations are continually struggling to attract talent from their competitors or other industries. In the uncertain political environment in the UK, it is no surprise that some candidates are feeling reluctant to move roles until the economic picture becomes clearer. However, the world of work carries on, and with that business continues. Businesses can't afford to wait for top talent to be ready to move roles. It is about attempting to attract and retain top professionals with a superb business offering and comprehensive recruitment strategy.



"The war on talent is affecting all areas of the talent cycle: acquisition, attraction, assessment, and attrition. We are now working in a rather counter-intuitive economy that we have the highest employment figure that we've had since the mid-'70s. It transpires some mixed confidence in the economy. What this means is that there is huge competition within the labour market to attract people to organisations."

Not only is it important to recruit professionals with a wealth of experience, but also to develop the millennial generation as they enter into the workforce, as they will ultimately be future business leaders. It's clear that they desire different things from the workplace to their predecessors, therefore organisations will now have to adapt their offering to attract millennial talent to their business.



"It is challenging for young people to stick in a role because they want purpose before they have done or delivered anything. That is why the world is changing and we need to find ways to attract the millennial and future generations coming into the workforce. You are going to have to look at your strategies and think about how you can extend the time your employees stay with you. You need a strategy for the different types of jobs that you will recruit."

In order to thrive in the face of these challenges in the market, it is crucial to understand what your perfect candidate is looking for in a role. By identifying why people aren't leaving their current roles, businesses can look to better align their attraction strategies. Once you have put an effective strategy in place, you will find that you receive more applicants through improved brand awareness, diversity and inclusion, and happier employees at the helm.

THE PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM 1: Unclear push and pull factors

Push and pull factors are the fundamental reasons that either drive people away from a business or persuade them to leave their current role in search of a new challenge. Candidates will have motivators for being in a role, be this salary, personal growth and development, or the opportunity to be involved in something innovative. If these pull factors aren't clear in a candidate's mind, then it isn't likely that they will remain with an organisation for a long period of time. Earlier, we discussed the reasons that professionals want to leave their role. But it is interesting to consider what is keeping people in their current business, to see how you can begin to attract top talent from your competitors. **The key reasons why people are more hesitant to change roles are:**



Inertia – they find job hunting too time-consuming or the prospect of getting a new role is too overwhelming for them to undertake



Uncertainty in the economy and in politics at the moment



They don't know where to start with their job hunt

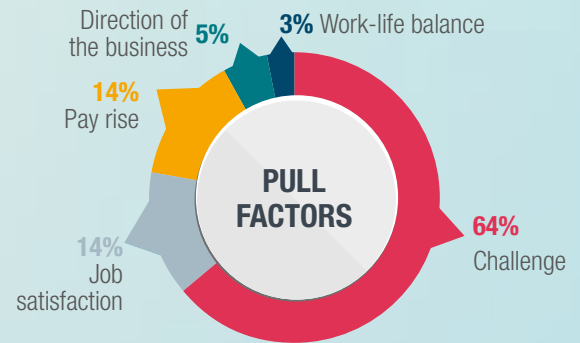
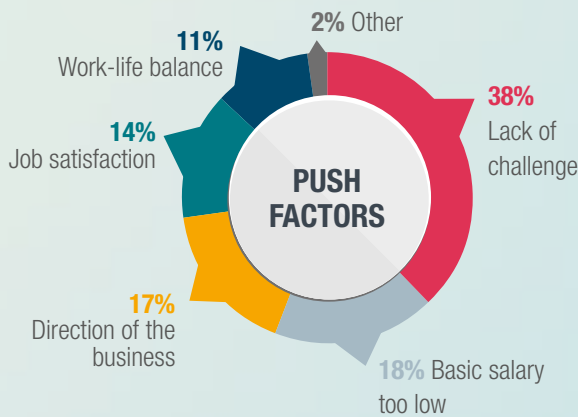


“Understanding the things that draw people in and push them away is important. For most people, it's how they are treated. Push factors are why people leave a job and pull factors are why they are attracted to a particular job. We hosted a survey at the beginning of this year, across the technology, consumer retail, and public sectors. We had 170 people respond across a range of different roles. We found that the biggest motivating factor is lack of challenge, and that's purely down to them not being satisfied with what they are doing at work. Salary is the second biggest motivator. When we ran this survey in 2016, pre-Brexit, salary was number four on this list, and I believe the reason it has gone up so much is the changes in the economy generally, and the need for people to have certainty around their pay. If we look at the other, softer side of things, the direction of the business and job satisfaction, they are all interlinked. If they aren't happy with where they are going then they will be more likely to look elsewhere for employment. On the other hand, if you look at pull factors, challenge is number one. So, if we head hunt for new candidates, they are keen to find out their purpose in their job.”



“You have got to consider what you can offer with your business size, scale, and environment that your competitors can't. Whilst you're not running a negative campaign against their current employer, you are highlighting what you can offer them that their current employer doesn't. You've got to be competitive in your basic pay rate and relatively competitive around any on-target earnings (OTE). After that, you can start talking about your environment, culture, purpose, and values. That's going to be more appealing to these people. You've also got to look at the geography. The reality is that for some administration or call centre roles, people aren't going to travel for an hour. You should be considering what talent you have in a roughly half an hour circle.”

It is worth noting that the below graphs highlight the push and pull factors for a smaller group of individuals. However, the overall feelings of wanting more out of a role are fed through the two survey findings. The uncertainty in the market is reflected in both set of results.



Source: https://www.pageexecutive.com/sites/pageexecutive.com/files/UK_PageExecutive_CandidateSentiment.pdf

SOLUTION 1: Attraction through enhancing your offering

Top talent looks for more than remuneration from their roles. They want to be challenged through their work and feel excited to come to the office knowing that they can make a difference.



“Challenge and purpose are the things that don't affect pay grade in a role. Whether it be a large business or a smaller one you can still create purpose doing the same job. This is attractive to people who are doing a similar job in an environment where it's less purposeful. Good people want to turn up and feel valued. Human nature means we need a purpose. That's why we turn up to work every day.”

It can be difficult to be in the right place at the right time when recruiting for your ideal candidate. It often takes more than money and a solid benefits package to tempt top talent from their current job security. It is important to show them the stability of your organisation as well.



“If you're struggling to find people then it's all about agility and balance in the workplace. For example, if you look at the people in the middle of the generations they desire challenges, a healthy work-life balance, and money – they want to develop their career but have home life responsibilities as well. Considering the 'last in, first out' analogy, candidates want to make sure that a business is settled before joining. Job security is a hygiene factor and is an important element of attraction to make sure your business is secure and well-funded.”

PROBLEM 2: Poorly planned and executed interviews

It is really important to consider the interview process from the candidate's point of view. If you aren't a well-known organisation, then it may be less likely that they know about your mission and values as an organisation. Furthermore, even though testing is a great way to check a candidate's suitability for a role, it isn't always the best way to engage them in your recruitment process.



"You've got to be careful how much you challenge and test people before they are bought into the role. There is an argument for you to get them bought into your organisation first, so they are really excited about it, then test them. If you test people early on and they aren't fussed about the role, then they are less likely to put effort into it. For example, when we recruit for ourselves at Page, one thing that I do with new people in the latter stages is to give them a list of phone numbers to call up. In reality, they aren't customers, but other directors and managers around our business. This puts them in a real-life scenario which gives them a truer sense of the role and us a truer sense of how well they come across in that environment."

PROBLEM 3: An unrefined recruitment process

A long recruitment process is one of the key reasons that businesses lose out on top talent. You may be offering what seems to be a great package – competitive remuneration and benefits, and an attractive company culture – but if you take too long to make a decision and you leave top talent waiting, then it is likely they will have other businesses looking to offer them a role before you do. Not only should you be refining your recruitment process, but you should also be mindful of how you are posting job adverts online.

From our research, and perhaps unsurprisingly, we have discovered that the interview process is the most daunting factor in job hunting. Therefore, it is important that this process is made as smooth and open as possible. This will hopefully dispel any added stress and leave a positive impression with the candidate about your company.



"There were around 13.5 million job adverts posted in the last three months, which equalled to around one million jobs because the adverts are replicated. If you consider that number, you can understand why just advertising a role isn't necessarily going to deliver people, because you are in a sea of millions of advertisements."

SOLUTION TO 2 AND 3: Candidate acquisition through developed recruitment technologies

Recruitment, like everything else in today's age, is being advanced through the use of new technologies. These technologies aren't only useful to recruitment agencies but can be implemented within your business in order to streamline your processes and better track and assess potential candidates. Depending on your industry and sector, your business will benefit from different types of recruitment technology. There are some important things to consider when getting the most out of technology to enhance your talent attraction strategy.

At PageGroup we have implemented Hinterview, which allows us to video interview, as well as record potential candidates speaking to send to clients before they meet with them face-to-face. Clients have also begun using Hinterview to allow the hiring manager to present the role to candidates on video. This adds to the authenticity of the business and creates a more personal interaction between the client and the candidate before they have met. Limiting yourself to text will minimise communication; a small piece of video with someone talking about something passionately is hugely beneficial when attracting people.



"One of our clients produced a video discussing why they were hiring for the job and what they wanted from a candidate. This was around two minutes long, and it ended up being the best job description they gave out because they outlined what they wanted and opened up the dialogue for conversation. It creates an impact for any business if you use your senior team to talk about what you're doing."

PROBLEM 4: A negative brand reputation

Your brand reputation and how you position your business in today's market is crucial to make sure you are being seen and heard by the right candidates, at the right time. Top talent will want to be in an environment that allows them to be explorative in their role and develop themselves professionally. If this is not being broadcast, you may create a negative perception of your employer branding.

It is crucial for all levels of your organisation to be dedicated to positive and truthful brand awareness. If your brand is known as being dishonest or as a company that makes false promises then it will be detrimental to your attraction and retention rates. Candidates are aware when businesses are simply telling them what they want to hear.

SOLUTION 4: Positioning the organisation correctly in today's market



"If you have a brilliant product and you are undertaking market leading projects, then you should be shouting about your exploration. This will attract people that want to have a purpose and show up to work. You're creating an ecosphere in your environment. It's about language, leadership, purpose, values, and communication. This is how you attract people."



"Most businesses are trying to be the organisation that attracts and retains people. The important thing is that everyone in the business has to buy into this. Especially the leadership team and the people at the very top of the business. The average employee base is intelligent and business savvy, they can spot when someone is disingenuous. You actually have to make them believe your offering and business goals."

PROBLEM 5: Incorrect assessments paired with a limited recruitment strategy

A solid recruitment approach and strategy is crucial if you want to attract top talent in today's market. If you are looking to hire for a multitude of roles, it is unwise to attempt to recruit for these professionals in the same way, as this can be damaging to your attraction efforts. Instead, it is important to tailor your recruitment approach to each individual role and the skills needed to perform well in the job.



"You shouldn't have one recruitment strategy for every role in your organisation. Does every role in your organisation do the same thing? Obviously not. Therefore, the methodology should be adapted. Keep your core values in each process: purpose, mission, and values, but adapt to the technical elements and personality types you want."

It can be tempting to hire only from competitors or to solely target candidates that have worked in the same industry to your own. This can be a mistake as even though hiring from competitors is good, and can truly benefit a business, it can sometimes be better to develop your staff internally.



"You think that if you have recruited from a competitor that they should be able to do the job from a technical perspective. But this doesn't always work out. The problem with competitors is that they've grown up with a certain culture, which is not your culture. It's not to say that you shouldn't hire from your competitors – of course you should – but your onboarding process with those competitors, your checks with those competitors, should be thorough. Sometimes, not always, it's better to grow your own. What you lose in industry knowledge, you gain in the fact you can mould them a lot quicker and gain them to productivity. If you are trying to attract them, and they are just interested in moving for money, it's more likely to fail. If they want to come because there's a challenge here that doesn't come with their current environment, you've got a better chance of success."

SOLUTION 5: Tackling your attrition rates holistically

At Michael Page, we have encountered similar challenges to many of our clients around attrition. It is important to us that we are able to help other organisations with retention by passing on some hard lessons that we have learnt from in the past.



"We used to be a very traditional business. We broadly had an even split of gender up to management level and then it decreased. This is due to the fact that women would leave the business to have children and would want to come back, but would be required to work a full week and that sometimes isn't an option. Over a long period of time, we realised that we were training a lot of fantastic women but losing them because we didn't have an environment they could return to. We started Women@Page in an effort to change this. This initiative has seen an increase in the number of female operational managers from 42% in 2012 to 49% in 2018, and operational directors rise from 25% in 2012 to 42% in 2018. That then went into Pride@Page that was around the LGBT environment. That's resulted in us joining groups like enei, and we are gradually changing the perception of our business. Other businesses might offer more remuneration to encourage staff to move to their organisation or remain at their current one. However, this isn't the answer to reducing attrition, as if a candidate doesn't feel enthused by a role or aren't happy in their current environment, they will go elsewhere. Therefore, we have to make it a better environment to be in rather than just throwing money at people. You should look at external bodies such as Stonewall or enei. As something that you should be affiliated to because that's going to help brand association of hosting a more inclusive environment."

CONCLUSION

From our roundtable discussion and recent surveys, we discovered that businesses were looking for solutions on how to interview effectively, and how to get top talent interested in their business enough to move from current roles or to be enthusiastic when applying for a role at their organisation. These problems will not be solved overnight, and every organisation is different. Therefore, all business leaders and the overall organisation should define their pain points in terms of attraction, and create a strategy to eradicate these.

Attracting top talent to your organisation can be difficult if you are an SME, start-up, or a large corporation, due to the market landscape being challenging. In light of this, businesses need to be open to adapting their processes and changing their approach accordingly when it comes to recruitment. You should aim to improve your brand awareness, perfect your recruitment strategy so it is streamlined and efficient, and tap into the right push and pull factors for each candidate. Then you will find that you are attracting candidates with the skills that you need to drive your business forward.

For a confidential discussion about attracting and hiring talent, please contact one of our **specialist recruitment consultants today.**

