



# Recruiting Top Talent Requires More Than a Tweet

by

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“The expectation is that all you need to do is just tweet at them,” said Michael Terrell, Founder of [Terrell Leadership Group](#), in [a recent Podcast](#) on how to recruit Gen-Y candidates. “That’s just not true.”

He’s right. It requires more than a Twitter account or a Facebook page to recruit Gen-X, Gen-Y (Millennials), and their even younger counterparts.

Social media has become the new black in executive recruiting and rightfully so. It’s powerful, highly subscribed, direct, and is capable of quickly delivering high volume and targeted accuracy. Effectively utilizing social media should be a part of any employment recruiting effort. Ignore it and you ignore an important demographic in your candidate market.

But depending solely upon social media to find top talent isn’t a sound strategy. Social media is a tactic. You need a comprehensive recruiting strategy to drive your company forward.

A human resources recruiting strategy is especially important now, as the U.S. economy inches toward recovery and the intellectual foundation of that economy—Baby Boomers—retire at the rate of 10,000/day. According to [a recent report from the Society of Human Resource Management](#), the first wave of retirements has already occurred and by 2020, every member of the Boomer generation will be 55 years old or older. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects that there will be almost 55 million job openings from 2010 to 2020. Almost two-thirds will occur because of retirements. That’s more than 34 million new hires simply to keep pace with where we are now!

Technology and operational changes will certainly impact that number. But there is little doubt that this economy needs talent; talent to replace and talent to transform. Human Resource executives understand this better than anyone. In the same SHRM report, more than half of the respondents cited developing the next generation of corporate leaders as one of the top challenges facing HR executives in this decade.

Compound this challenge with the relatively smaller size of the Generation X population and [the flagging academic credentials of American youth compared to their international peers](#) and those of us in HR face very real, structural obstacles. At a time when top talent is in ever-greater demand, finding that talent is becoming exponentially more difficult.



A strategy for recruiting and retaining talent is imperative. The days of every HR executive, every division, and every hiring manager going their own way on recruiting and interviewing are gone. Prospective employees will connect the dots across the organization. If you don't do the same internally, you're at a supreme disadvantage. Like an integrated marketing plan, a human resources recruiting strategy helps your organization connect all of the dots in talent acquisition. At a minimum, your strategy should address these seven goals.

### **1. Competitive Positioning**

It's important that your external outreach integrates your marketing messaging. For marketing to be effective, it must reflect your audience's experiences. If you promise to deliver something, do so or you undermine your brand. The same is true in executive recruiting. The goal is to obtain the best, most appropriate talent for your organization. How candidates perceive your organization is as important as how you perceive them. Be professional in your interactions. Be on time for interviews. Keep them abreast of the process. Treat them with respect. The payoff is palpable.

### **2. Corporate Culture**

Embrace who you are or take concrete steps to change it. Corporate culture is no longer an internal secret. What happens in your company no longer stays there thanks to sites like GlassDoor, LinkedIn, CareerBliss, and Indeed. Persistently poor reviews on sites like these will erode your executive recruiting efforts. It's also important to understand your company. Is your organizational structure hierarchical or flat? Does your physical environment consist of traditional offices with closed doors and scheduled meetings or are you all allayed in an open design with lots of informal professional collaboration? Does it take time, patience, and paying your dues to move up the career ladder or is promotion predicated largely upon performance? These are a few of the questions you should consider as you search for talent. Understanding who you are as an organization will help you better understand which candidates will help you thrive in the future.

### **3. Internal Coordination**

Most companies invest handsomely in logistics management—the process of getting products and services to their customers around the corner or around the world. But many take an ad hoc approach to talent acquisition—your most important product—with each part of the organization emphasizing different things to a candidate. Don't make that mistake. It's off-putting to candidates when they hear or perceive different messages coming from their company contacts. It's important that everyone across all organizational levels embrace your approach. From the basic tenets of human politeness to a clear understanding of expectations for the position, process and message integration is critical.

### **4. Recruiting Channels**

Job boards, classified ads, Twitter, and Facebook posts all play a role in recruiting. But not every recruiting effort requires each of these tools. Understand which outreach tools are the most effective for different types of positions and target your strategy accordingly. Creative talent looks for information in different locales than financial or operational talent. That is especially true for Millennials who enthusiastically embrace social media. External recruiting partners are a wise investment for some positions but may be unnecessary for others. As part of your recruiting strategy, decide upon your recruiting channels up front. Then implement them as consistently as possible.



## 5. Internal Recruitment

Great companies train and retain great people, supplementing them with external talent to create an excellent blend of innovation, experience, corporate memory, and future growth. Showing that outstanding work within an organization is rewarded with upward trajectory speaks volumes to your employees. Not consistently defaulting to “someone who understands how we work” also sends a strong message. It’s unwise to follow the same processes simply because that’s how you’ve always done things. How you treat people impacts your ability to promote great people. Keep your managers in sync with your recruiting approach and continually look for ways to promote the best internally.

## 6. Employee On-Boarding

Just as integrated recruiting improves your chances of finding the best people, integrated on-boarding enhances your ability to retain the best people. Don’t forget new hires upon their signing an offer. Make their transition as fruitful as you made the interview process. On their first day, present them with their business cards, introduce them to their colleagues, and ensure that their IT devices are fully operational. Following this approach fosters a team environment and enhances your chances of keeping this employee for years to come.

## Metrics for Success

It’s imperative that you measure your performance and clearly tie those metrics to your company’s objectives. Whether it’s the length of your recruiting/hiring efforts, money spent on internal vs. external resources, quality ratings of senior management hires, or retention rates for company employees, tie what you do to your company’s goals and objectives. Doing so makes HR tangibly relevant.

Your recruiting strategy will provide the roadmap for recruiting and retaining top talent. Now it’s time to execute that strategy to address your talent quandary. For the last 5-10 years, companies have chosen—understandably—to reduce expenses by not replacing retiring Baby Boomers or replacing them with far less experienced workers at lower salaries. As the economy warms and the Boomer retirements continue, however, that approach presents competitive risks. Across the U.S. economy, productivity is high. At some point, you need additional resources. Not investing in human capital is a long-term recipe for competitive disaster.

The problem many face is the perception that it’s easy to hire in a time of high unemployment. All that’s necessary is to tweet a job posting and the people will come to you. They will indeed come. But chances are very high that the people you want—the people you need—will not. Top performers aren’t actively looking, yet these are the people you want to lead future innovation.

They require the strategic approach outlined above, including an aggressive social media strategy. They also require a proactive approach. Don’t let individual job openings drive your strategy. Attracting and retaining top talent is a systemic process. It should be built into your DNA.

One group that companies are investing resources in recruiting and hiring is Millennials. They are the largest and most diverse generational population with roughly 95 million members. Through sheer size alone, they will dominate the recruiting process. Be aware of their generational traits but exercise caution in applying them generally to Millennials or any other age group.

Despite all that's been written about the Millennial Generation, attracting them is not about free coffee and frozen yogurt. Top talent has numerous options and the Millennials are no exception. They display an admirable work ethic, often intertwining the professional with the personal throughout the day. But they value a work/life balance more than their older peers. Recognize these characteristics and understand how to leverage that desire. From flexible work hours and telecommuting to team-oriented physical environments and [Bring Your Own Device \(BYOD\) to work](#), a change from the traditional can position your company strongly with this generation.

Similarly, great brands are not as important to Millennials as they are to Boomers. There are more important variables for this generation. An excellent work environment with opportunities for advancement and a mission that matters both trump a strong brand alone. Marquee brands like Apple and Google embrace these concepts and it shows in the consistently high level of talent they attract. They understand that top companies find top talent. Demand is high, especially with the advent of Big Data, and supply is low. They embrace workplace dynamics and use those dynamics to your advantage.

They also embrace social media. The headline of this paper speaks for itself. Simply tweeting job openings will not result in finding top talent. But using social media in your recruiting strategy, relationship building, and professional networking is imperative; especially given the importance of younger candidates. According to [Wanted Analytics](#), a business intelligence firm catering to the HR industry, September saw a 43 percent increase in HR jobs that require social media skills.

That dramatic increase along with a solid demand for HR personnel makes finding top HR talent a challenge as well. Recruiters, Payroll Specialists, Staffing Coordinators, and HR Supervisors are all in high demand. Apply the same approach to attracting top HR talent that you do to the rest of the workforce. Whether you handle recruiting internally, outsource it to an [executive recruiting firm](#), or use a hybrid approach, the same principles apply.

Labor force estimates predict that within the next 10 years, we will have five different generations in the workforce—the Greatest Generation (born prior to 1945), Baby Boomers (born between 1945-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-2000), and Generation Z (born after 2001). It is an unprecedented occurrence. Understanding the characteristics of each age group and how to blend them together to yield optimal results is a significant challenge. A comprehensive human resources recruiting strategy, an understanding of generational dynamics, and quality HR personnel and executive recruiters will give you a competitive edge in the talent recruiting and retention process.

Social media is an important tactic. But it's not a recruiting strategy. *Your strategy should reflect your culture; embrace generational differentiation; tailor recruiting to your organizational needs; and be reflected by everyone.* And that—in 140 characters—is how you recruit top talent.