

Talent Acquisition and Recruitment

Talent acquisition can be defined as a strategic approach to identifying, attracting and onboarding top talent of Human Resources to efficiently and effectively meet dynamic work needs.

The term Talent Acquisition (TA) is often used synonymously with recruiting. However, these are two very different things. Recruiting is a subset of TA, and includes the activities of sourcing, screening, interviewing, assessing, selecting and hiring. In some organizations, this extends to the early stages of onboarding, which then becomes a shared responsibility between HR and the hiring manager, with support from the learning organization.

Talent acquisition is the process of finding and acquiring skilled human resources for organizational needs and to meet any labor requirement. When used in the context of the recruiting and HR profession, talent acquisition usually refers to the talent acquisition department or team within the Human Resources department. The talent acquisition team within an organization is responsible for finding, acquiring, assessing, and hiring candidates to fill roles that are required to meet goals and fill project requirements.

From an HR's point of view:

Talent acquisition as a unique function and department is a relatively new development. In many organizations, recruiting itself is still an indistinct function of an HR person. Within many corporations, however, recruiting as a designation did not encompass enough of the duties that fell to the corporate recruiter. A separate designation of talent acquisition was required to meet the advanced and unique functions. Modern talent acquisition is a strategic function of an organization, encompassing talent procurement, but also workforce planning functions such as organizational talent forecasting, talent pipelining, and strategic talent assessment and development.

So, it is quickly becoming a unique profession, perhaps even distinct from the practice of general recruitment. Talent acquisition professionals are usually skilled not only in sourcing tactics, candidate assessment, and compliance and hiring standards, but also in employment branding practices and corporate hiring initiatives. Talent acquisition as a function has become closely aligned with Public Relations as well as Human Resources. As global organizations need to recruit globally with disparate needs and requirements, effective recruiting requires a well thought out corporate messaging around hiring and talent development.

Recruiting professionals often move between agency recruiting and corporate recruitment positions. In most organizations, the recruitment roles are not dissimilar, the recruitment role is responsible for sourcing talent and bringing qualified candidates to the organization. However, modern talent acquisition is becoming a unique skill-set. Because talent acquisition professionals many times also handle post-hire talent issues, such as employee retention and career progression, the talent acquisition role is quickly becoming a distinct craft.

As a craft, talent acquisition is of course not new; it is the simple process of recruiting good talent to meet organization needs. As a profession, however, talent acquisition is quickly evolving into a unique and important job function.

Recruiting is what many people want to dive into; however, that is what we call putting the cart before the horse. The elements listed above are necessary for doing recruiting well. To use an analogy – the design and implementation of leadership programs is only a piece of a leadership development strategy, following an understanding of work goals, defining leadership competencies, and integrating with other talent management process. In other words, a leadership program is to leadership development what recruiting is to talent acquisition. Alone, neither will drive their highest value to the organization.

So, talent acquisition includes recruiting, but it is inclusive of other strategic elements as follows:

- **Talent Acquisition Planning & Strategy** – ensures work alignment, examines workforce plans, requires an understanding of the labor markets, and looks at global considerations.
- **Workforce Segmentation** – requires an understanding of the different workforce segments and positions within these segments, as well as the skills, competencies, and experiences necessary for success.
- **Employment Branding** – includes activities that help to uncover, articulate and define an organization’s image, organizational culture, key differentiators, reputation, and services.
- **Candidate Audiences** – necessitates defining and understanding the audiences in which an organization needs to source for specific roles. Different sourcing strategies should be applied based on the understanding of the jobs and where the audiences will come from to fill them.
- **Candidate Relationship Management** – includes building a positive candidate experience, managing candidate communities, and maintaining relationships for those candidates not selected.



Within each of these core elements of TA are many other sub-activities and best practices. And, of course, the selection of tools, technology and outsourcing partners is a key element of an organization’s talent acquisition strategy.

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