

*With a surplus of talent in the marketplace, companies should have no problems finding the right talent for the job. However, an influx of available talent can make it more difficult for hiring managers to find that needle in a haystack.*

## How to Find that Needle in the Haystack (When the Haystack Is Overflowing)

Employment news continues to be bleak, while the unemployment rate continues to climb. The government says that the recession should be ending going into 2010, but not before the economy sheds more jobs. This is all discouraging news. But, if you read the latest issue of *Fortune* that includes the 2009 list of the Fortune 500, you will find that not all companies have ceased recruiting efforts. In fact, many companies are still hiring.

One might think that among a surplus of talent on the market, these organizations would find hiring a walk in the park. But, think again. Although the unemployment numbers point to numerous workers being out of a job, it could also mean that finding the most qualified, best-fitted candidate for the position could be more difficult. So just how does a company find that "needle in a haystack?"

To begin with, take a closer look at your job descriptions. Are they realistic and do they provide an accurate portrayal of the qualifications necessary for working the position? Try to be as specific as possible, and for hard-to-fill positions, consider adding realistic job previews to your careers website. These videos will show an employee in action and give a "real life" preview to what the job entails. Realistic job previews may also help weed out those who are not a fit or truly not interested in the position.

Secondly, if you are using an applicant tracking system, make sure that it is optimized to pick out candidates who are qualified for open job requisitions. Applicant tracking systems utilize keyword search to mine resumes residing in the system. Some qualified candidates may be overlooked simply based on the fact that their resume did not contain a specific keyword. Be sure you are utilizing your system to its full capacity and re-evaluate the keywords used in a search.

Try using a narrow search string to identify up to 50 resumes but no more. A good rule of thumb: if you find yourself clicking through more than eight to 10 resumes to identify one fit, adjust your search criteria. Also, avoid the temptation to stop sourcing once you have a few good matches. You've invested the time to narrow your search criteria; why not take advantage of that effort and identify as many possible candidates as you can?

Finally, some positions may be too specialized to rely on traditional resume submission and applicant pools. If niche qualifications, education and expertise are required, then consider going to a staffing agency or recruiter with experience in finding these specific types of candidates. Staffing and recruiting experts offer the advantage of a database of pre-qualified candidates and access to passive professionals who may not be actively seeking a new job but have the right qualifications to fit your needs.

The talent pool is overflowing with workers. Companies that were already facing a shortage of highly skilled workers prior to the recession are finding it even more difficult to find the right fit now. By taking the time to analyze and make adjustments to your recruitment process and tools, you may find it easier to make that perfect hire.