Growing your recruitment business in times of challenge and change

Your guide to staying competitive, agile and open to opportunity

Introduction

Sourcing sought-after talent and skills has never been more critical for your current and prospective clients. **According to PwC**, 77% of CEOs worldwide recognise the ability to source key skills as the biggest threat to their business. Right now, that threat feels even greater in the UK than elsewhere.

As a recruitment business, clients depend on you to find the talent they need, when they need it. The challenge is to source that talent effectively while dealing with unprecedented change.

In this guide, we'll be exploring the key drivers of change in the UK's talent landscape – and how you can evolve your approach to remain competitive, agile and open to business opportunity.

3 Three main challenges for recruitment businesses

UK recruitment businesses face three very significant challenges. Dealing with any one of these would be difficult. Dealing with all three at once can feel overwhelming. However, it's possible to thrive in this new environment by adjusting your approach, and embracing new ways of finding talent, positioning your business – and delivering for your clients. Do this effectively and you'll be able to turn rapid change into an opportunity for rapid business growth.

Three main challenges for recruitment businesses

1. Uncertainty over the UK economy

LinkedIn's latest **Workforce Insights Report** shows a 30% slowdown in inward migration of EU professionals to the UK since the EU referendum. This impact takes two forms: a reduction in forward planning as businesses retrench and focus on immediate needs, and significant changes in the supply of skills as the UK becomes less attractive to international talent. Recruiters must find ways to build sustainable talent pipelines at a time when hiring is fluctuating.

30%
decline of professional migration from the EU27 since the referendum[1]

75%
increase in businesses looking to source candidates from within the UK[2]

[1]LinkedIn Workforce Insights Report, May 2019
[2]Recruiter Sentiment study, May 2019

Three main challenges for recruitment businesses

2. The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation

McKinsey Global Institute predicts that 46% of workplace activities across the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Spain could be automated – and the impact of that automation on recruitment strategies will be unpredictable. Businesses' need to recruit isn't disappearing. However, they will need to recruit very different skills than they did in the past: skills that they have less experience of, and face a lot more competition for.

46%

of workplace activities across the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Spain could be automated

McKinsey Global Institute

Three main challenges for recruitment businesses

3. Rapidly expanding skills gaps

Today's businesses face a challenge that no previous generation has encountered. Within a few short years their future competitiveness will depend on skills that barely exist today. Skills gaps emerge and grow with startling speed. Analysis of LinkedIn hiring data shows that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the second most sought-after skill worldwide today, but didn't feature in the top ten most sought-after skills three years ago. In the age of the skills gap, recruitment businesses will need to think ahead of their customers, predicting demand before it materialises, and arming themselves with insight about rapidly shifting talent pools.

64%

of recruiters say that Brexit is exacerbating skills gaps

Recruiter Sentiment study, May 2019

Step 1

Turning data into a competitive advantage

Three top tips to build a data-driven agency

A new era of talent intelligence is resetting expectations of recruitment businesses. Instincts, experience and intuition still matter – but they matter a lot less if they aren't rooted in the data-driven insights and tools that can help to source the best candidates, faster. Opportunity for agencies will depend on how confident they are integrating data and insights with their existing skill sets. It's not just about automating processes – it's about embedding data-led thinking as a cultural habit.

71%
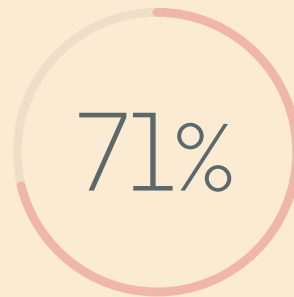
of CEO's see data on talent as a source of competitive advantage

LinkedIn Global Recruiting Trends 2018

Three top tips to build a data-driven agency

1 Prioritise access to relevant insights

Recruiters today have more data available to them than ever. The challenge is focusing on the right data sources – and distilling them into actionable insights. Don't intimidate your employees by dumping data onto them. It's far easier to build a data-driven culture by using intuitive, self-service analytics tools that have immediate and obvious value.

2 Model data-driven decision-making from the top

Having leaders who are confident using data in decision-making sends a powerful signal to employees that you're serious about building a data-driven strategy. This will encourage colleagues to base strategic decisions on insights: whether that's the next growth market for your agency, locating hidden talent pools or identifying client prospects.

3 Build confidence through training

Analytical reasoning is one of the most in-demand technical skills worldwide according to LinkedIn data. By investing in relevant training for employees, you can help make your colleagues more confident using data – and identifying new data sources to use. LinkedIn Learning offers a course on Learning Data Analytics and Executive Decision Making, which explores how to integrate data into the decision-making process.

The Power of LinkedIn Talent Insights: LinkedIn Talent Insights is a self-service analytics tool that gives you access to billions of data points about the global labour market from the daily actions of more than **630M** members and **20M** companies on LinkedIn.

Step 2

Specialising at scale

Three top tips to specialise and scale your recruitment business

Strategic thinking is the key to growth in a new era of recruitment. Your proposition to clients depends on it – and so does your own business planning. Identify specialist areas where you have deep, sector-specific insight that can add real value for clients: it could be software engineers for the finance industry, designers specialising in automotive or project managers for the healthcare industry, for example. You can then focus on scaling your business in these areas, leveraging your understanding of new markets and opportunities.

Three tips to specialise and scale

1   Anticipate clients' changing talent needs

Compare workforce data for companies in your sector by function and location, and track the flow of talent between them. You'll create a clear picture of where each business is growing, which skills it's hiring for, where there is opportunity and where it's lagging behind. Applying your specialist knowledge in this way will help to increase your value to existing and potential clients.

2   Find new markets and opportunities

Use your specialist insights to inform strategic decisions for your agency, whether that's where to open new offices, which businesses to focus your marketing spend on, or how to evolve your offer to anticipate new developments and trends.

[Learn how Russell Tobin reimagined their sales prospecting approach using data](#)

3   Map your relevant talent pools – and predict how they'll change

With the right data, you can gain a complete picture of your specialist talent pools. Identify where the relevant skills can be found, and where they are developing fastest. Then compare this to where the demand is coming from, profiling the businesses most in need of these skills. You'll be able to identify the locations, sectors and organisations most in need of your services, and you'll build up a picture of the most effective strategies for finding the right candidates faster.

The Power of LinkedIn Talent Insights: With LinkedIn Talent Insights, you have access to data on talent pools and companies that can help answer tough strategic questions - and enable you to reach untapped pools of talent before the competition.

Step 3

Building a brand that stands out
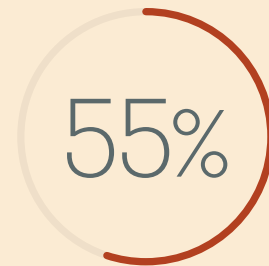
Three top tips to building stand-out brands

Building a brand that stands out

As a recruitment business, your success depends on building a brand with powerful appeal for three important audiences. You need a compelling agency brand that signals your specialist expertise and value to current and future clients. You need an attractive employer brand that can help bring in recruiters with the skills you need to deliver results. And you need a credible recruiter brand that will prime the right candidates to respond when you reach out on behalf of your clients.
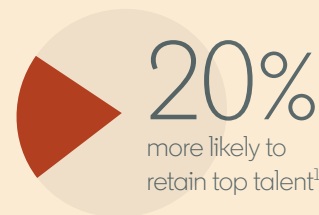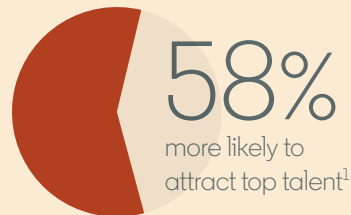
84%
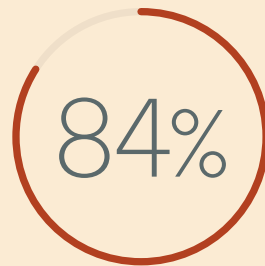
of C- Level executives consult social media channels to help better understand a company they plan to do business with[1]

55%

of decision makers use thought leadership as an important way to vet their potential suppliers[2]

Companies with socially engaged employees are

58%

more likely to attract top talent[1]

20%

more likely to retain top talent[1]

[1] LinkedIn Employee Advocacy Guide
[2] 2019 Edelman-LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Study

Three tips to building stand-out brands

1 Activate your employee network to amplify your brand among relevant audiences

On average, the combined reach of employees' social networks is 10x that of the business they work for. That makes your leaders and employees some of your most valuable brand-building assets. They are also a highly relevant distribution network, as they are likely to be connected to relevant audiences. Activate your employee network by encouraging your employees to use LinkedIn profiles as brand assets. Engage employees with your marketing activity by involving them in content planning – and highlighting when you publish posts they can share.

2 Humanise your brand and build credibility through thought leadership

Work with your agency's leaders and expert recruiters to develop thought-leadership content that delivers value quickly, such as short-form blog posts or video content. This drives engagement while humanising your brand in the eyes of all three key audiences. Concentrate on the recruitment challenges and opportunities for your sector – and build your strategy around the content themes you see your audience engaging with.

3 Tailor your approach to the biggest opportunities – and use paid media to maximise impact

Use real-time insights to tailor your approach to the specific issues that your audience will respond to – whether that audience is candidates or potential clients. Target potential clients with Sponsored Content that highlights a particular skill that you know they need. When it comes to Job Ads and InMails, craft specific messaging for each talent pool, based on your experience of their priorities and motivations.

The Power of LinkedIn's Recruitment Marketing: LinkedIn recruitment marketing products allow you to connect with people throughout their professional journey using career pages, recruitment ads, sponsored content and pipeline builder.

Conclusion

The business of recruitment may be experiencing unprecedented change at an unprecedented rate. However, that doesn't change the unique qualities and value that a recruitment business like yours has to offer.

Your business has always been built on having the right insights and knowing how to apply them. Those insights are only growing in value – and with the right tools you'll be able to generate and apply them faster and at scale like never before. Your expertise can enable you to build a compelling agency brand, find new business, grow the scope of what you do for clients, and recruit more efficiently and more effectively.