

# Working Toward a Coherent Recruitment Strategy

BY BOB ZAHRA

**1 Start Early** Today there's competition from multiple industry sectors for essentially the same, highly qualified individual. All of the following are attempting to draw from the same pool of exceptional talent: annual and perennial producers, pot plant growers, propagators, nurseries, breeders, hydroponic fruit and vegetable producers, cannabis producers (both medical and recreational), urban farmers (including skyscraper-top greenhouses and greenhouses built alongside supermarkets).

Get started. It's crowded. The vacancy that's a problem today may become a bigger problem tomorrow.

## **2 Meritocracy Trumps Cultural Fit**

The truly worthy individual, with a proven history of superior performance, is often more difficult to recruit than the person with whom there's strong personal chemistry. The hiring decision becomes a crossroads and a funda-

mental building block of company culture. Is the culture one of excellence based on merit or is it simply cultural fit—trending, on a bad day, toward a culture of incompetence?

Commit to merit-based recruiting. As has been said before, given time, your company will learn to embrace the top-flight performer, differences and all.

**3 Understand the Candidate** In a social media climate where everything is public, the candidate's confidentiality is paramount. Is it worth the risk for the candidate to open a dialogue with your company? There's no immediate need to change employment. Is it wise to introduce uncertainty into a happy family? To risk a buzz of industry gossip?

Commit to giving the candidate the same respect given your best customer, where carelessness isn't an option. Companies with leaders who value the individual will attract and retain stronger employees. >>>

**4 Be Careful What You Post** The help-wanted posting is your company's first impression, whether it's on LinkedIn, the trade press, job board, etc. For every unqualified individual who forwards a résumé, are there several truly qualified candidates who take a step back, who make an immediate decision that the position and the company isn't for them?

Take a good look at what your help-wanted posting is really conveying about your company to the individual with multiple options, including the option of staying comfortably in the same position.

**5 Be Patient** Don't expect the recruit to respond predictably to your entreaties. While to your company this is certainly an important business decision, it's for the

recruit a momentous question of lifelong consequence. This decision may impact a significant other or spouse, children, extended family, geography and housing, as well as career track and monetary remuneration—a difficult, complex, multivariable equation.

Be patient. Two, good, responsible people can draw different conclusions from the same agreed-upon facts.

## **6 Mission vs. Financial Statement**

The people who built this industry didn't worship a financial statement. They made plenty of money, yes, but they were people of dreams and accomplishment bent on making a lasting contribution with the work of their hands, people of spirit and energy that employees were proud to join in pursuit of a worthy goal.

What does your company offer: the opportunity to invest one's working life in pursuit of a few points on someone else's P&L? Or, in the manner of our industry founders, the opportunity to participate in a grand, uplifting series of life-improving contributions worthy of full, passionate commitment?

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