



Article

The Niche Advantage: Using Niche Staffing Firms for Specialized Hiring

A major local Financial Services Institution was one year into a multibillion dollar consolidation, which would involve several entities and span 50 states. Despite its criticality, the project was at a standstill, facing a tangle of business, technology, regulatory and personnel challenges. The organization needed a Project Manager/Business Analyst who could move mountains – fast. There was no-room-for error in finding a candidate who knew the industry, understood the regulations, knew the client’s products and services and had a proven record of managing complex, large-scale change, and be a good cultural match for the organization. Of course, it would have to be a candidate who would want the opportunity and accept an offer.

High-stakes jobs such as this require an unconventional mix of skills, experience, industry knowledge and organizational fit. What makes it possible for one firm to make a successful placement where other agencies and internal recruiting efforts fail?

Niche experts stay ahead of the curve

When it comes to specialized recruiting, there are advantages to working with a firm which specializes in the vertical market or job function you’re targeting. Firms that focus on a specific niche or industry have better contacts, stronger relationships and more powerful networks than generalists who must spread their resources over much broader territory. Niche firms don’t need time to ramp up; they are already imbedded in your marketplace. You can expect them to be well-versed in the lingo, job requirements and hiring issues for your job opening even before they go to work for you. It makes good business sense to rely on an expert who has the most robust network for your specialty and the insights to know what drives successful hiring for your job function.

Hiring from a very limited talent pool

A niche hiring professional is also indispensable when hiring for a position that requires a unique or eclectic mix of skills. Recently, a major healthcare institution needed a Senior Project Manager who could bridge the gap between their IT organization and their operating room staff and oversee the implementation of a new IT application. The ideal candidate would be a Senior Project Manager with Business Analysis skills who also was a clinician with operating room experience – a combination not typically seen in a stack of IT Project Management resumes.

Identifying candidates with an unusual mix of skills is especially challenging because resumes rarely offer a comprehensive summarization and categorization of skills and experience. Recruiters must ferret out information that is not always apparent on the surface of a resume or in a cursory conversation. Niche hiring firms are better able to read between the lines and make unexpected connections because of their depth of knowledge about a given market and job functions coupled with detailed knowledge of their candidate network. They are generally more up-to-date regarding candidates' specialty skills, personnel movement within an industry, and on market drivers that affect personnel in their target segment.

Specialization saves time and money

Time-constrained managers simply don't have the bandwidth to work with search firms that lack the depth of knowledge or the contacts needed to fill a highly specific job opening. Those who choose to leverage the unique expertise of a niche staffing firm will realize efficiencies throughout the search and hiring process.

A high acceptance rate takes the uncertainty out of your offer

The last thing a hiring manager wants is to invest time finding the perfect candidate only to have them decline an employment offer. Anyone who is about to engage a specialist firm should inquire about their average acceptance rate as well as average time to hire for positions similar to the one for which you are hiring. Success on these metrics is a good indicator of the effort that goes into understanding the candidate's needs as well as the client's.

When you or others in your company have a high-stakes position to fill, remember that the industry experts at Gardner Resources Consulting offer specialized knowledge and capabilities for select positions in healthcare and financial services organizations that is not easily replicated.