



A Study on The Challenges Faced by Consultants in Hiring Talents With Reference to Information Technology (It) Recruitment Industry.

KEYWORDS

Recruitment process, IT industry, human resources, meeting and bridging expectations, success and growth

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ABSTRACT *This study focuses on the various challenges faced by Consultants in the recruitment industry with respect to Information Technology (IT) that is examined from the purview of Human Resource Management. In order to obtain right candidates for the right job various consultants should bear in mind the broader aspects while screening candidates in terms of quality knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes that candidates should have so that companies can recognize such qualities and be willing to hire a talented pool of candidates as per the requirements within the given organization. In order to help support companies in acquiring the right candidates consultancies play a very vital role in assessing and identifying potential candidates where they would be nurtured and groomed accordingly as per the company requirements.*

INTRODUCTION

The essence of the IT industry has grown rapidly over the years. The introduction growth, development and survival of the industry depend on two major factors: **HUMAN RESOURCE** and **TECHNOLOGY** to manage the organization effectively. The Human resource is a vital function and in order to enable this function to perform efficiently, many consultancies emerge as "**Helping Hands**" in **Identifying, Screening & Sourcing** the right and deserving candidates for better employment opportunities with various MNC's. There are various sources to recruit human resources in an organization. The important sources are Consultancies, Advertisements, Campus recruitments, Job portals and Employee Referrals etc. The source of an employee via (**Consultancies**) plays an important role from the organization's point of view. The organization's shell out money from their pockets to acquire the **Best Talent** and hence they always want the best from any source.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

One of the most important sources to recruit people is consultancies. They bridge the gap between the organization and the candidate. They try to match the expectations of both the candidate and the organization. The job of the consultants requires high level of (**Technical Knowledge**) in understanding various technical terminologies along with good communication skills, through knowledge and understanding about the business requirements of the company which are the basic prerequisites for any consultancy. The consultants are the key link between the client, company and the candidates. They have to clearly understand the requirements of both of them. If the requirements do not match, they cannot go ahead and if the requirements match, they have to follow a procedure to go ahead with the recruitment of the candidate. The procedure is quite lengthy and at times takes close to (**2-3 months in exceptional cases**) and in any given event there is no guarantee that the candidate would be successfully placed in the company. In short the role of a consultant is very important as he/she has to bridge the expectations of the candidate as well as the client and overall has to fulfil the objectives of the organization for which they are working.

LITERATURE OF REVIEW

Social networking sites, such as Face book/ Twitter, allow individuals to post and share personal information, which has led many US employers to use social networking sites to screen job applicants (Shea and Wesley, 2006;Withiam, 2011). A reason for using social networking sites is to screen employees so that employers might want to verify information provided by applicants. For example, ADP Screening and Selection Services found that applicants falsify their information on applications, such as their employment record, education, and credentials or licenses (Levashina, 2009). Other reasons for using social networking sites for selection purposes is that social networking sites have some advantages over traditional human resource tools, such as being accessible without costs (Jacobs, 2009) and are perceived to be reliable sources by users (Kluemper and Rosen, 2009).

A recent article by Vyas (2011) has shown the critical role of online recruitment system. Organizations are looking for methods of reducing the time and effort. As per his study, this rush and explosion gave way to job portals to make recruitment more in-house and more effective. Job portals came as a transparent medium between the recruiter and the job seeker.

A paper was recently presented at an international conference by Florea & Badea (2013), which emphasized the manner in which the organizations use technology increases or decreases its positive net effect. The findings suggest that through the Internet, Consultancies and even HR managers can develop an effective recruitment program, which helps manage the highly competitive and time-consuming process of finding skilled personnel.

According to Edwin B Flippo, Recruitment is nothing but the process of searching the candidates for employment and then stimulating them for jobs in the organization. It is the activity that links the employees and the job seekers. It is the pool of applicants from which the new employees are selected. It can also be defined as a process to discover sources of manpower to meet the requirement of the staffing schedule and to employ effective measures for attracting the manpower in adequate numbers in order

to facilitate the effective selection of an efficient working force.

According to David A De Cenzo, The recruitment needs are of three types which are as follow:

(a) First one is Planned Needs: These are the needs that arise from the changes in the organization and retirement policy creating vacancy for new jobs.

(b).Second one is Anticipated Needs: These are those movements in personal which an organization can predict by studying trends both in external as well as internal environment.

(c) Last one is Unexpected Needs: These needs arise due to various reasons like deaths, resignations, accidents, illness, relocation etc.

Taylor, P. (1998). Seven staff selection myths, This article outlines seven commonly held misconceptions about recruitment And selection practices. Areas discussed include the validity of various Recruitment and selection measures (e.g., interviewing, reference checks), the Conditions necessary to maximize the effectiveness of these practices, and Common mistaken perceptions of the interview process. This article is most useful for readers interested in workforce development theory and research.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the recruitment process of the IT industry and to compare the practiced process with the theoretical process
2. To find out the quality of professionals available in the industry and gain a practical exposure and hands on experience of the process and to know the challenging areas of the process by identifying solutions and the areas of improvements to overcome the challenges which are commonly faced by Consultants while searching for candidates.
3. To recommend suitable recommendations if any, from the findings.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

We all know the importance of recruitment in an organization and the role of consultants in placements. Hence, it is important to know what are the major challenges faced by the consultants in the IT Recruitment Industry. The first step in the IT recruitment is to interact with the client and understand their business and their requirements. This can be a major challenge because understanding their requirement may not be that easy, as it requires thorough understanding of the technical and non-technical aspects of the job. The other challenge of the IT recruitment is to bridge the expectation of both the company and the candidate and to match the expectation the consultant has to understand their needs very clearly and then begin together to fulfil their goals and objectives. The IT industry is growing at a very fast pace and the market is booming like never before and due to these factors there are emerging hot requirements in the industry. The factor acts as a major challenge to the consultants as the candidates know that there is a huge demand for human resource in the industry and the supply is not matching the demands and they try to take advantage of this fact by merely trying out their value in the industry and ultimately not accepting offers because they were trying out or testing their own abilities. This is called as candidate shopping. This can upset the consultants and disturb them mentally because of all the hard

work in understanding the requirements, matching them scheduling the meetings between the client and the candidate and conducting all the procedures. If the candidate does not accept the offer it de motivates the consultants. Sometimes the candidate may not accept the offers due to compensation factors or factors related to job profile. Here the consultants can intervene and try to sort out the issues and still convince the candidates to join the company. However, if the candidate is shopping around then nobody can do anything about it. Needless to say the post offers is very crucial. The consultant's job does not end when the offer is made he or she has to make sure that the candidate joins the company. There are various other difficulties in the IT recruitment like scheduling the meetings between the client and the candidate according to their preferences. If the candidate/client cancels the meeting, then rescheduling it and convincing the other party not to lose interest about the meeting, Sorting out issues with the client. Overall there are lot of challenges, which a consultant has to face in the process of recruitment.

HYPOTHESIS

This study is based on a few broad assumptions without which the research would not be complete. The industry is growing rapidly and the market requirements of IT professionals are very hot. This industry is now the "In Thing". Many MNC's have entered into India opening the gates for IT professionals and even the country has human resources in abundance which is comparatively cheaper and smart enough to fulfil the requirements. The demand is the industry for effective and efficient human resource is very high and the supply is very limited. The ratio of demand to supply can be 3:1. It is not that the labour force is not available but the fact is that the quality demanded by the companies is very high. They do not mean to compromise on the quality of the labour. They meant to hire the best in the industry and always perform better. Another fact that forms the basis of the study is that process is very scientific in nature. It is highly systematic and there is no relaxation on the quality aspect of the candidates. Thus all these factors form the basis of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The procedure followed in the organization is systematic. Each and every step in the process follows a sequence. Most consultancies are reputed and established in their own way. People directly apply for jobs to place them in suitable organizations. When the organization receives the CV of a candidate, it is first registered in the database of the company. Once it is registered, any consultant can access it and take it further. The consultants meet with their clients, evaluate the company, and decide upon whether they would like to work with the company or not. If they decide to go further ahead, then they send the organization terms and conditions to the clients and if the client agrees, then the actual process of recruitment beings. Once the terms and conditions are clear, the consultants understand the business and the requirements of the company. They interact with the HR and the technical team to know what exactly they want from the prospective employee.

After understanding the requirement, the consultant comes back and starts working on it. They search for the candidate who could suit the requirements. They can find the candidate either in their own database or through various job sites or through networking or references. When they get the matching profiles, they communicate with the candidate and try to find out what his needs are and

then they try to match the requirements of both the parties. They generate interest in the candidate's mind for the company, if everything works out well, then the CV of the candidate is forwarded to the company. The company can reject or shortlist the candidate for the next process. If the candidate is shortlisted then the consultant has to schedule the meeting of the candidate and client to carry forward the procedure of recruitment then, the candidate goes through all the processes and if he fits the requirements completely, then the candidate is offered the job by the company.

Once the offer is made, the consultant has to be careful because most of the candidates do not accept it and there could be many factors for this. So, the consultant tries his best to ensure that the candidate accepts the offer and joins the company. When the candidate joins the company, the client raises the bill and the procedure is completed.

SAMPLING

With the help of a few case studies, the process can be understood clearly. Case studies actually reveal the benefits, challenges and weakness of the entire process.

Note: The companies are represented with fictitious names and the identity of the candidate is not revealed in any of the following cases.

Case 1:

Consultant "A" received the CV of a senior candidate through one of the job sites. He had 14 years experience his salary was 29 lakhs, and he was in the US for 10 years. He was working in a big organization and he wanted to get into IT Service Company. The salary of the candidate was a concern as the consultant had a feeling that he might not be paid so much and also the position the candidate was going for was the last position in the hierarchical terms. The consultant was advised not to go for it and send the CV. Still, the consultant felt that he could take a chance and he forwarded the CV to the client. He was through with all the rounds but was a reject only because of his high salary expectations and gradually the requirement of the client was coming down. Somehow the consultant interviewed and tried to negotiate between the parties. Finally, the consultancy was able to place the candidate and convince the client and also match the expectations of the candidate. With this case, it can be understood that some efforts and negotiation matters from the consultants can ultimately result in offers and placements.

Case2:

Consultant "B" received the CV of the candidate. At first, he was not too happy neither convinced about the candidate for the position he would be sending the CV as he had very few projects and his educational background was not technical. Overall, the consultant was sure that the candidate might not get through, as even his client was very stringent in the recruitment process. The consultant was advised by the Director to meet the candidate once so that they could understand his requirements very clearly. The consultant felt it was good to meet him once and went ahead and fixed a meeting with him. To the consultants delight, the candidate was excellent in his work. He was very good technically and had good communication skills, which was necessary for the client requirements. Since, the consultant was happy /convinced about the candidate; he went ahead and sent the CV. The candidate went through all the selection processes and ultimately he was offered a place in the company with good salary,

which was higher than the candidate's expectation. **Here, the key factor was the consultant meeting the candidate.** If they would have not met, the consultant would not even send the CV to the client. Therefore, it is very important to meet the candidate to understand him and his requirements clearly.

Case: 3

A consultant received the CV of a candidate who had mentioned that he works for a very good and big company but as actually unemployed. The consultant did not know about this. The consultant was under the impression that the candidate is actually working for the said organization.

The CV was sent to the client. He cleared the first two rounds of selection process and the client realized that the candidate is lying about his employment status. In the third round of interview, the client's employees told the candidate to call up and speak to his present Team Leader. The candidate could not do so as he was unemployed. The client refused to accept such kind of a candidate. This case reveals that in order to be placed in good organizations candidates can go to any extent. There was no fault of the consultants or the client but the candidate lacked ethics and morale.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The various tools used for Data Collection are:

1. Direct Interaction with the Consultants: the researcher interacted directly, face to face with all consultants and gathered knowledge about their experiences. The direct interaction gave a very clear picture about all the procedures that a consultant has to follow in IT recruitment. They shared in-depth requirements of the work and the work environment. It is a source of first hand information. All the queries related to the procedure were answered in details.

2. Personal Experience: To gain practical exposure, the researcher worked with the organization and was involved with the registration of the CV's, gained hands on experience of the various software's of the organization and also worked to know the various procedures followed for different locations and different clients.

3. Questionnaire: With the help of the questionnaire the researcher could gather minute details about the process and gather relevant information.

LIMITATIONS

Even though the industry is booming, there is a lot of demand for human resources. There are a few limitations, which affect the process of IT, recruitment.

Due to demand and requirements, the candidates do not show 100% interest in taking up the offer. They know that they are required and hence they just try to shop around with the offers and try to realise what is their value in the industry. This is the biggest challenge that the consultants have to deal and face with.

There is lot of risk involved in the entire process, as the consultant ultimately cannot judge the candidate's character and personality. He can only check his skills and abilities. However, later, if the candidate tries to cheat the client or the company, the consultant has to sort out the issues.

Demand is greater than supply and the quality of candidates is not up to the expectations of the client company.

Sometimes the process of recruitment takes a very long time, say about 2-3 months and in such cases, it becomes very difficult for the consultant to follow up the schedules and meetings of the client and the company.

Many a times offers do not get converted into placements, which can put down the confidence of the consultants.

Since the requirements are very high, it is quite possible that the candidates can apply to a particular company through different sources and at different times. Therefore, there are chances of clashes of CV's.

Sometimes, it becomes a little difficult for the consultant to convince/explain to a candidate about any particular client company.

ANALYSIS

The data is collected from various sources and based on the sources; the analysis of the data

is designed. The data is systematically classified and analyzed. On the basis of the questionnaire, the data is analysed and explained with the help of graphs. The respondents profile is explained by directly interacting with the consultants and gathering information about their profile. With the help of the direct interaction with the consultants, the researcher analyses the present system of recruitment and its constraints. The data is later divided into major findings from the study where the researcher reveals the main steps in the process of recruitment and based on the analysis, the suggestions and conclusions provided.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic details of respondents on the various parameters like Gender, Age group, Education , Occupation and Income group was described in Table:1 as follows:

Parameters	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	63	63.00
Female	47	47.00
Total	100	100
Age Group		
Below 25	48	48.00
Between 26-35	27	27.00
Between 36-45	23	23.00
Total	100	100
Qualification		
Graduate	61	61.00
Post Graduate	24	24.00
Others	15	15.00
Total	100	100
Annual Income		
Below 200000	19	19.00
Between 2,00,000-3,00,000	21	21.00
Between 3,00,000-5,00,000	32	32.00
Above 5,00,000	28	28.00
Total	100	100

(Source: Primary data)

Table – 1. Characteristics of Respondents:

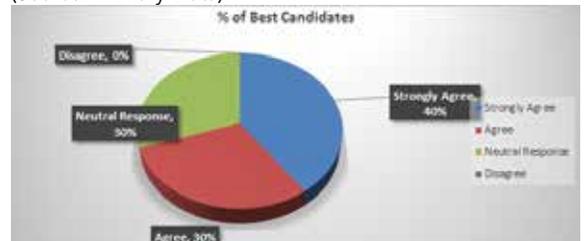
The above table -1 represents that gender wise distribution of respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 63(63%) of respondents were male and 47 (47%) of respondents

were female. Age wise distribution of respondents highlighted the above table. Majority(48) 48% of respondents were in the age group of below 25 years, followed by(27) 27% of respondents were in the age group of up to 26-35 years,(23) 23% of respondents were in the age group of 36-45 years. The above table reveals that educational qualification wise distribution of respondents. The majority (61) 61% of the respondents were in U.G qualified customers, and (24) 24% of the respondents were in the PG qualification finally (15) 15% respondents were in the others. The table clearly shows monthly income wise distribution respondents that 19 % each of the respondents were less than Rs.200000/- monthly income,(21) 21 % of them were Rs.200000-300000 monthly income,(32) 32% of the respondents monthly income Rs.300000 – 500000 and remaining (28) 28% of the respondent's income were above Rs.500000.

Table – 2. Best source to get the best candidates

a)	Databases	20%
b)	Jobsites	20%
c)	Networking	60%
d)	Headhunting	0%

(Source: Primary Data)

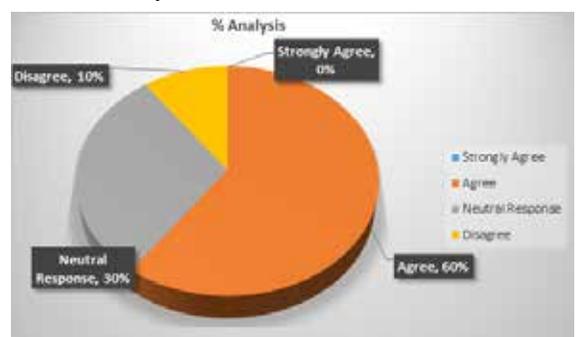


The above table - 2 represents that Best source to get the best candidates distribution of respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 20(20%) of respondents were databases and 20 (32%) of respondents were job sites, and 60 (60%) of respondents were Networking.

Table – 3. Structured and rigid selection process cannot help in selecting the best talent

a)	Strongly Agree	0%
b)	Agree	60%
c)	Neutral Response	30%
d)	Disagree	10%
e)	Strongly Disagree	0%

(Source: Primary Data)



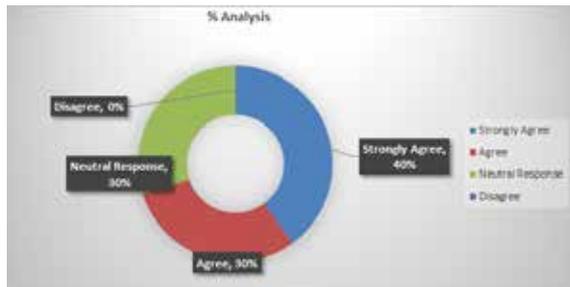
The above table - 3 reveals that Respondent's Structured and rigid selection process cannot help in selecting the best talent Majority (60) 60% of respondents were

agree,(30) 30% of respondents were Neutral Response and (10) 10% of respondents were Disagree.

Table - 4. Meeting the candidate personally before referring him/her to the client helps in understanding his/her needs to a great extent.

a)	Strongly Agree	40%
b)	Agree	30%
c)	Neutral Response	30%
d)	Disagree	0%
e)	Strongly Disagree	0%

(Source: Primary data)



The above table - 4 reveals that Meeting the candidate personally before referring him/her to the client helps in understanding his/her needs to a great extent Majority (40) 40% of respondents were Strongly agree,(30) 30% of respondents were Neutral Response and (30) 30% of respondents were agree.

RESPONDENTS PROFILE

The researcher interacted with the front end and back end consultant to find out the major challenges, their solutions about the present system in the organization and other relevant details.

FRONT END CONSULTANTS

These consultants directly interact with the client to understand their requirements. They first meet with the HR team of the organization and then interact with the technical teams to gather in-depth knowledge about the requirements. After understanding the requirements, they come back and discuss the possibilities with their teams and distribute the requirements to the backend consultants. Then they interact with the candidates about the client company, they go ahead and forward his CV to the client. If the candidate is shortlisted by the HR team for further processing, then they follow up and schedule interviews and further meeting and finally when the candidate is offered a job, they try to ensure that he joins the client company on the specified date. If the candidate is shortlisted by the HR team for further processing, then they follow up and schedule interviews and further meeting and finally when the candidate is offered a job, they try to ensure that he joins the client company on the specified date.

BACK END CONSULTANT

These consultants give support to the front-end consultants. They keep track of all the CV's. They source CV's from their database and different job sites. Their main task is to shortlist the CV's according to the client requirement. Backend consultants cater to the needs of various clients but they do not interact with them directly. They speak to the candidates and gather information from them as to why they are looking for a change, their interests and their basic requirements.

PRESENT SYSTEM

As per the present system the company interacts with the prospective clients and evaluates them based on the requirements. If all is well they send them the terms and conditions of the organization and if the client company agrees to the terms, they start to work on their requirements. The consultants understand the requirements and candidates interests and if both match, they start sending the CV's to the clients. All the CV's should be sent through particular software so that they follow the system of the company. All the consultants have to continuously follow up each and every CV sent to the client and update their status accordingly. The organization follows certain ethics and morals and stick to them. Once they place a candidate in an organization, they do not go back to him and contact him. The consultant's work is to achieve the target that is allotted to them. The target is to generate revenue for the organization by placing candidates. The total amount of revenue set as target differs from one consultant to another.

FINDINGS

1. Networking and employee referrals act as main sources in IT recruitment
2. Meeting the candidates before sending them to the clients for better understanding of his requirements is always preferable.
3. Communication towards both the client as well as the candidate should be very effective.
4. Understanding the requirements of both the client and the candidate is very important for effective placements.
5. Proper co-ordination to schedule meetings and interviews between the client and the candidate is very essential.
6. The consultant has to keep a track of interviews of the candidate and when the candidate is offered a place in the company, he should ensure that he joins the organization during the specified period and y his is a challenging task.
7. In the process, the consultants can learn a great deal about the technical aspects.

SUGGESTIONS

With the help of the major findings, the following measures can be adopted to make IT placements/recruitments more effective:-

The Consultants can prepare their own database with the help of various sources and can use them as and when needed. The consultants can put up advertisements on the internet through which they may get good response. The consultants can speak to the clients and ask them to be flexible in their requirements so that it becomes easier for them to source resumes. The consultants should try to meet all the candidates so that they understand their needs.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE STUDY

With the help of the study the researcher could gather wide knowledge about the process of IT recruitment and the major challenges the consultants face in the process. The study revealed that IT industry is at its peak and will still reach greater heights in the near future as the technology is rapidly advancing. The client companies of the organization are big MNC's and the organization is only into IT related recruitment and has started expanding to ITES recruitment i.e. IT Enabling Services to cater to the needs of BPO's. Overall the researcher could gain an in-depth

knowledge about the software industry its pros and cons and wide benefits of the industry as well as the challenges in having the right candidate at the right time at the right place and importance of perfect placement.

CONCLUSIONS

The consultants are working in a people friendly organization where there is scope for growth and development of individuals. The organization provides opportunity to learn the emerging aspects of technology and new trends. The consultant work under the leadership of a highly monitoring director who encourages the team to perform better and supports them during low periods. Overall the researcher could gather wide knowledge about the IT recruitment process and know the benefits and limitations of the process.

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