

Human Resources and Recruiting During the Recession

By Byron Mackelroy

Defining a clear **human resources** strategy is key to long-term success during the current economic downturn. Some companies have to make the difficult decision of who to let go, while others face the daunting task of sifting through a mountain of job applications for any position they have open.

For those companies scrambling to stay afloat, analyze each job task and determine the business functions that have the most redundancy. Letting someone go is always a difficult decision, so make sure you act intelligently when you are forced to downsize.

Three tips for downsizing:

- If no one is sitting at the tables, make sure there aren't too many cooks in the kitchen. Being manager top-heavy during a recession is a sure fire way to burn through a lot of money.
- Before letting someone go, always ask yourself if the remaining **employees** are the most agile and flexible people you can retain. During a downturn it is critical to think like a small business and stick with the people who can multi-task.
- Talent is talent. If you have the golden goose sitting in an office somewhere, hang onto them tooth and nail. Human capital is your most valuable asset no matter what the situation.

For the growing companies, successful **recruiting** boils down to information management. Hiring managers need to take advantage of the high supply in the job market and pull in the diamonds in the rough that can take your company to the next level. Another strange byproduct of a recession is that top talent tends to be coveted by the remaining healthy companies. Highly skilled candidates can take advantage of the upside down job market and search for higher paying positions elsewhere or counter offers at their current company.

Three tips for companies looking to hire during the recession:

- Keep it organized. More than ever, hiring managers are inundated with applications during the hiring process. Make sure your hiring managers are setup with tools like recruiting software so they can streamline applicant tracking and management.
- Watch out for window shoppers. Highly skilled employees might just be **looking for a job** offer so they can bump their salaries at their current companies. During the interview process do your due diligence to avoid these time wasters.
- Talent is talent. Make sure you utilize your top talent. There should be a clearly defined reason for hiring new people. During economic downturns you need to retain what you have and be extra diligent about who you hire.

Whether your company is feeling the crunch or crushing the competition, many of the age-old human resources best practices still apply. Just make sure you are equipped to handle the rush or know who is going to make the cut. Success always depends on your people.

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