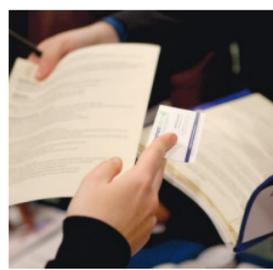


STAFFING FOR CANADA

Winning essays outline 'exceptional experience' with recruitment firms

As temporary workers across Canada celebrate Staffing for Canada Week, the Association of Canadian Search, Employment & Staffing Services (ACSESS) announced the winners of the Staffing for Canada Essay Contest, which drew close to 50 submissions from Vancouver to St. John's. Candidates submitted an essay that described their personal experience with a



staffing or recruitment firm and outlined why they considered it to be a truly "exceptional experience." First place went to Victoria Thomson, About Staffing, Alberta, followed by Morgan Meredith, Peapell & Associates/Supertemp, Nova Scotia, and Lisa Park, TAG Recruitment Group, Calgary. Winning essays can be read at access.org. *Financial Post*

FP CAREERS: PROFESSIONAL STAFFING

Recruitment is NO JOKE

Standup comic proves recruiters aren't cut from the same cloth

BY DENISE DEVEAU

An executive recruiter and a standup comic walk into a bar ...

That's pretty much how Chris Garvin landed a job as a research associate with executive recruitment firm Waterstone Human Capital. A part-time standup comic and a bartender by trade, Mr. Garvin's outgoing personality so impressed David Kinley, president of Waterstone, that he was offered a chance to join the firm.

Having worked in the field for a year now, Mr. Garvin feels he has finally found his calling.

"I did a lot of things before getting into this," he says. "I studied geography at university, travelled to Taiwan, where I taught English for seven years, then got into standup comedy and worked as a bartender."

He contends that diverse background made him the perfect candidate for executive recruiting. "If you think about it, all my previous work involved connecting with people. At school I had to connect with students, in bartending there's a lot of social interaction, and in comedy you have to connect with an audience. So really, this career makes perfect sense."

As a research associate, Mr. Garvin's job is all about people contact. He works closely with client management teams to discuss their needs and learn about their industry and company culture. "Then, my next challenge is to find people that fit those. It's a lot of detective work. But that's what makes it so exciting."

Successful executive recruiters are not always cut from the same cloth, says Marty Parker, chief executive and founder of Waterstone Human Capital. Waterstone's 28-person team come from a broad spectrum of business backgrounds, from pharmaceutical to media to professional services.

"Where they come from is not as important as the attributes they bring. What we look for first and foremost are people that love and appreciate business, like learning about how their culture and how

they work, and have great customer service skills," Mr. Parker says.

They also need to have great judgment. "That's one of those things you really can't teach anyone. And a sense of humour is a great attribute, because it helps you to break down walls with people and make them feel comfortable through the process."

Executive recruitment is divided into two main segments: contingency recruitment, where the job is to find someone as quickly as possible and fees are paid upon placement, and retained recruitment, in which they work on a consultative basis with clients to manage their recruitment processes. Waterstone does the latter.

Given the importance placed on industry experience and maturity, executive recruiting is typically a second or third career choice, Mr. Parker says. "There are very few 20-somethings in this business. You're working a lot with senior executives, so you have to have the sensibility and experience to deal with them."

In most cases, executive recruiters have been in the business a long time and/or come out of organizations where they may have had operations or human resource backgrounds, says Philip Wilson, vice-president, human resources and business development in Eastern and Northern Ontario for Felix Global Corp., an Ottawa-based strategic business consultancy. "These are people with industry-specific knowledge and tremendous networks."

Mr. Parker warns that executive recruitment is not a job for the faint of heart. "This is a very labour-intensive business that demands an enormous amount of drive and energy to succeed. Sometimes you have to push through difficult circumstances or find ways to make something from nothing."

And while Mr. Garvin does the occasional standup gig, he says executive recruitment is where he wants to be. "When I can help companies find candidates that fit with their needs and culture, it gives me a big sense of accomplishment," he says.

Postmedia News



HUGH WESLEY FOR POSTMEDIA NEWS

Chris Garvin says his diverse background is perfect for his career as a recruiter at Waterstone Human Capital.

COMMENT

A talented team knows no borders

Building a successful global workforce needs a solid strategy

VAN ZORBAS
Guest Column

To succeed in today's global marketplace, you need employees with international experience. But a truly global workforce doesn't just happen; it needs to be nurtured and developed as part of a systematic, well-planned human resources strategy.

Setting up that strategy can be particularly challenging for Canadian companies that have not had as much global exposure as their counterparts. But with innovation central to Canada's future competitiveness and prosperity, having employees who can understand other cultures and ways of doing business can be the difference between success and mediocrity for a company. This is especially true at a time of critical labour shortages — particularly in oil and gas, mining and utilities — where the competition for scarce talent with specialized skills knows no borders.

Companies planning an international assignment program, or looking to ramp up existing programs, need to perform an initial business assessment, an important

step that is often overlooked. Managers should consider how the company's investment in such assignments aligns with the expected business benefits and the effect on each employee's career development.

Start by articulating your business and talent management goals, then tailor your investment in each global assignment to the value it is expected to generate for the company and the employee. One way of doing this is to categorize assignments under one of four headings: learning experience,

“Understanding other cultures can be the difference between success and mediocrity”

strategic opportunity, commodity job and skilled position. Then rank them according to the degree of development and business value they generate. Truly strategic opportunities will have high development and business values. Assignments with high development value, but limited business value, can help companies acknowledge rising stars and employees looking for diversity in experience and personal growth.

Decide what proportion of inter-



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Companies planning an international assignment program need to perform an initial business assessment, a step that is often overlooked.

national assignments should fall into each category, depending on your company's current and anticipated business and talent development needs. Then determine which types of employees would be best suited for a particular type of assignment. High potential performers and employees with deep, specialized skill sets would be ideal for assignments that have high business value but relatively low development value, while future leaders and superstars would benefit most from strategic opportunities that let them grow as individuals and deliver big rewards to the business.

Getting the most out of your global mobility program requires some key elements:

Give the full support Employees on international assignments can feel isolated from the home office and need to receive the full spectrum of HR services, as well as help with their physical moves to a new place of work. Also, have a well-thought out plan before they go for what they will do when they return.

Integrate global mobility and domestic talent infrastructures Having the mainstream HR team serve both domestic and international employees helps the global workforce stay connected to the company's talent management processes. It also allows you to develop global mobility specialists within the HR team.

Have a well-developed, integrated technology platform The right technology facilitates employee and manager self-service on HR matters, supports compliance and provides a reporting system that measures and captures program performance. It also gives leaders an integrated view of global talent demand and workforce information, and enables in-depth analysis of expatriate data.

Adapt infrastructure as required Your HR technology infrastructure should include the ability to track, manage, analyze and make strategic decisions about your global workforce consistent with how you manage non-global employees. That said, global employees create additional needs, particularly surrounding compliance issues, which may require specialized internal controls and processes.

Stay connected Sometimes, out of sight can be out of mind. Keeping the dialogue going between those on international assignment and their managers and co-workers at home helps keep global employees plugged in, but also provides opportunities for the benefits of their experience to permeate the home office.

Financial Post

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