By Denise Devuyst

A n 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 native of Ottawa, Garvin is a classic comic and a bartender by trade. Mr. Garvin’s employing firm, Waterstone, recruited David Kinley, president of Waterstone, who knew the perfect candidate for the job.

He contends that diverse backgrounds make him the perfect candidate for executive recruiting. “If you think about it, all my previous work has involved connecting with people,” he says. “At school, I had to connect with students; in bartending, there’s a lot of people coming in and out; and in comedy, you have to connect with an audience. So, 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 step would be to get to know the candidate as an individual,” he says. “What they bring to the table. And that’s a lot of work. But that’s what makes it fun.”

Successful executive recruiters are not always cut from the same cloth, says Marty Parker, chief executive and founder of Waterstone Human Capital. Waterstone’s 20-person team comes from a variety of backgrounds, from pharmacists to media professionals to former bank employees.

“When they come from is not as important as the attitude they bring. What we look for is a person who is energetic and who appreciates business, like learning about how their cultures and how they work, and great customer service skills,” Mr. Parker says. “And when you hire correctly, it takes a lot of work. And a sense of humour is a great attribute, because it helps you to break down barriers and people, and make them feel comfortable in the process.”

In his current role, Garvin’s executive recruitment is divided into two main segments: continuous recruitment, with the job to find someone as quickly as possible to match the needs of a company, and retained recruitment, in which their work is on a consultative basis with clients to manage their recruitment processes. Waterstone does the latter.

“Getting the most out of your global mobility program requires some key elements,” says Van Zorbas, Deloitte Canada Human Capital. “To succeed in today’s global marketplace, you need an executive with international experience. But a truly global workforce doesn’t always happen; it needs to be nurtured and developed as part of a systematic, well-planned human resources strategy.”

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 always 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 experience as their counterparts. But with internationalization 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.recruitment success and failure. A global mindset 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 is keen.

While Mr. Garvin does the occasional executive recruitment, he is more interested in connecting with candidates that fit with their needs where possible. “If there is a sense of alignment,” he says. “People are different.”

Companies planning an international assignment program, or taking a global perspective, 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.

Executing your business and talent management goals, that is your investment in each global assignment to the value it is expected to generate for both the company and the employee. One way of doing this is to categorize assignments under one of four headings: learning experiences, strategic opportunity, commodity job and skilled position. That ranking allows you to develop your strategy and plan your business and talent development in alignment with your global mobility needs.

The dialogue going between those in the talent management and HR departments, particularly around talent management and international assignment, is often increased by the need to receive the full spectrum of global mobility advice. This is achieved by integrating the mainstream HR team with the specialized global mobility team.

Strategic decision-makers need to recognize that any decision about your global workforce is a long-term investment that will require specialized internal controls and processes. If you are looking to develop a global mobility specialist within the talent management team, you need to ensure that the individual is an integral part of the decision-making process, even in the planning stages. If you are currently not engaged in global mobility, take a hard look at your current talent management practices, procedures, and systems.

Looking at the dialogue going between those in the talent management and international assignment, is often increased by the need to receive the full spectrum of global mobility advice. This is achieved by integrating the mainstream HR team with the specialized global mobility team.

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Understanding the different cultures can be the difference between mediocre and successful outcomes.

Conclusions

Companies planning an international assignment program, or taking a global perspective, need to perform an initial business assessment, a 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.

Executives often make the mistake of assuming that international assignments benefit the employee and not the company. But the reverse is true. Companies that invest in international assignments benefit from the broad perspectives and experiences employees gain from working in different cultures, which help them become more versatile and better global leaders.

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NATIONAL POST, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2012

The latest numbers from the Association of Canadian Staffing Industry reveal that the Canadian economy is on solid ground and growing. Employers are hiring at a pace that is surpassing pre-recession levels. It's a powerful good-news story.

Temporary and contract staffing industry trends serve as an excellent leading indicator of the economy, says Bryan Toffey, president of ACESS and regional vice-president of Canadian Staffing Services (ACSESS), a leading provider of technical, professional and industrial staffing services to organizations across the country.

"As companies experience more robust economic times you tend to see an increase in overtime hours of permanent employees followed by the addition of temporary employees, and that's reflected in the April staffing indexes," Mr. Toffey says.

The index polls some of Canada's largest staffing companies accounting for one-third of total staffing industry sales and measures the total number of temporary hours worked month over month. We are clearly back to where we were right before the economy started to tank into the recession and employers were struggling to fill posts. It's very positive news."

Temporary and contract employment is also up in the United States according to the latest numbers from the American Staffing Association. In fact, the need for contract workers has jumped almost 20% since the start of the year. What does this mean for employers and workers? The win-win is flexibility is all.

Aerotek is in a unique position to offer a birds-eye view of the industry and the economy thanks to its national footprint with 12 offices across Canada and its niche services geared to specific vertical markets.

"We have specific divisions that focus on the energy space, engineering, environmental [and technical], for example," Mr. Toffey says. "As a result, we have a broad view of what's happening on the ground. The oil and gas sector specifically in Alberta continues to be very busy. There are a number of capital projects being started that require all sorts of different categories of labour, from skilled trades all the way up to professional engineers. We've seen significant strength in the automotive market as it has come out of the recession and has experienced rapid growth as automakers rush to add capacity. Some of the industries hardest hit by the recession have been the quickest to bounce back, including manufacturing."

The greatest demand is for technical and IT contractors. And this reflects the evolution of the industry and, more broadly, the shift that has taken place over the past 15 years in how workforces are structured. In the early days, industrial and office staffing drove the business, Mr. Toffey says. Today, there is a growing level of sophistication in the industry as customers have moved beyond those traditional temporary needs and are now recruiting for professional and technical skill sets on a contract basis as well.

"When Aerotek first launched in Canada back in 1995, there was little awareness both from a customer perspective as well as a candidate perspective about the contract staffing market," Mr. Toffey says.

"Much of our discussions were around educating people about this market and the benefits of using a flexible workforce and how it can save costs."

Employers listened, and today the contract staffing industry in Canada generates some 15-billion in sales each year. This evolution on the part of employers to a more fluid, cost-effective workforce, one that can expand and contract with the economy, has happened band in hand in parallel with a growing desire on the part of individuals who also want to build more fluidity into their careers.

"The demographics globally and especially in North America lend itself to contract work. As the Baby Boomers are approaching 65, many want to retire. They want to stay in the workforce on some capacity and contract work is an excellent option," Mr. Toffey says.

"At the same time, there is much more of a free agent mentality among younger workers today. Taking on contract assignments is a good way for them to gain new skills and exposure to different companies and new industries without making that commitment of becoming a permanent, full-time employee." It's a win-win. Employers are able to bring in specific talent to introduce skill sets they may not have, in order to build new products or enter new markets, for example, and that same talent is able to sample new industries and gain transferable insights.

Incredibly, that knowledge transfer from contract work to employer often leads to permanent employment.

"This has become a big trend. Our customers see the utilization of temporary and contract workers as a way to hire permanent employees."

"It's a unique value proposition our industry offers. From a candidate perspective, the staffing industry provides access to an otherwise hidden job market. Many employers go straight to their staffing provider because they know we're in touch with the top talent in the marketplace and we are able to source that talent quickly and efficiently. If you're seeking employment or a new career, I would strongly encourage you to speak with an ACESS member staffing firm in order to leverage this hidden market."

Aerotek goes beyond traditional recruiting by matching your unique skills and personality to the ideal situation. And, we're the largest provider of technical, engineering and scientific staffing in the U.S., with an inside track to Fortune 1000 companies. So, we do more than help you get a job. We help you get the perfect job.

To find out how Aerotek can give you an edge in finding the perfect job, call 1.855.290.6555 or visit aerotekcanada.ca.

Why use Aerotek? Let's face it, you're not looking for any job. You're looking for the perfect job.

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