

Finding the right human resources, and retaining them, is a big challenge for any large company, let alone an SME. In addition to being a major cost area, recruitment also requires considerable time and resources to be allocated to it. Despite this investment, companies occasionally end up with bad hires, and this costs them even more since the advertising costs, training costs, loss of productivity, and time spent cannot be recovered.



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How can SMEs hire cost-effectively?

To overcome the challenge of hiring cost-effectively, many companies are now utilizing hybrid recruitment methods – from using multiple sourcing channels for candidates, to using social media for background checks and candidate filtering. While reducing hiring and retention costs is the imperative, companies are also using these methods as a means of improving the quality of their hires.

SMEs face several hurdles in their hiring processes – from small recruitment budgets to lack of resources to source and screen resumes, and limited knowledge in identifying the right talent to lack of incentive for selected candidates to join them. Hiring the right people does not always mean hiring those with high technical ability. It is equally important to find people who are the right fit for the organization, and those who can thrive in the organization's

environment. This is especially true for SMEs where job profiles might not be clearly defined, and responsibilities evolve as an employee progresses in a particular role.

Nearly two in three small and medium sized organizations struggle to source and hire the right talent. Most of these companies do not have the time, resources or processes required to handle their recruitment needs effectively. With millennial job seekers looking for flexibility, quick job offers, and expecting a simple yet effective recruitment process, it becomes important for companies to adopt cost-effective, yet innovative, ways of identifying, engaging and on boarding talent.

SMEs should consider a few or all of these methods to find and hire the right talent in a cost and resource-efficient manner.

Creating a 'Careers' page on their website: Companies can reduce their advertising costs by building a 'Careers' or 'Vacancies' page on their website. Not only does this help a company to advertise their job openings easily, it also serves as a method of collecting

and building a candidate profile database for free. It is also an important branding tool for the company since it helps them to maintain regular traffic to their website, thus also offering an avenue for product or service promotion.

Focusing on employer branding:

Creating a visible and powerful employer brand can help a company in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the top talent. SMEs can make themselves attractive to potential candidates by communicating their commitment to employee growth, promoting work-life balance and employee-friendly work environments.

Finding passive candidates: At times, you might not find the right fit among the active candidates being considered

Using your current employees as ambassadors for your company brand can help you in reaching out to, and influencing potential employees in a highly cost-effective manner. Employee Brand Ambassadors are highly effective in communicating the positive attributes of a company, and can also serve as referees for potential candidates.



for a role. In such instances, hiring passive candidates would be the better strategy in the long run as compared to force-fitting an available candidate to a role. If you feel your business has a brand value, you can identify and reach out to passive candidates who might be open to a switch based on the pull created by your brand or the role that you are hiring for. Social media is always a great tool to identify passive candidates.

Leveraging social media effectively:

Posting your unadvertised open positions on your social media page, and linking them to your company website or official 'Careers' page can help you reach out to thousands of potential candidates. Creating informative social media pages and using them to deliver updates about the company, its products & job openings is a great way of engaging with potential employees. Social media can also be used for background research on potential candidates before they are shortlisted for face to face interviews.

Employee referrals: Using the network of current employees is one of the best ways to hire in a cost efficient way, since it completely cuts advertising costs out. Referral candidates would know of the job requirement in detail, and having a current employee to vouch for the quality of a potential candidate is always reassuring for the organization.

Resume databases: While use of resume databases involves incurring some cost, they can be an asset if used effectively. Job boards can be used to build up an internal database of potential candidates who can then be tapped at a later time when a suitable opening arises. They are especially useful when you need to source a large number of candidates, or when companies are looking for candidates from other locations.

Hiring online not only helps in saving hiring costs and time, it also promotes the employer brand, increases referral traffic to the company website and helps in reaching out to passive candidates.



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Overcome hiring challenges innovatively

Use of tools and techniques like video interviews, hackathons, Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), integration platforms and gamification can help companies in reaching out and they are also appealing to a wider target audience. This is how these tools can help in meeting recruitment challenges in a cost-effective manner:

Online skill assessment tests:

? Helps in objectively assessing the skill-sets of potential candidates before they are shortlisted for further rounds.

? Eliminates the need to accommodate large number of candidates on your premises while you are assessing their suitability.

Online video interviews:

? Helps in avoiding the logistical issues involved in conducting face to face interviews, and also makes it easier for candidates

? Replaces the first round of interviews, thus speeding up the hiring process

Applicant tracking system:

? Helps in streamlining the recruitment process by minimizing the recruitment administration time

? Captures the feedback of the recruiter in a single click, and simplifies data capture

Mobile recruitment tools:

? Helps in improving communication and engagement with potential candidates

? Methods such as use of quick response codes, text alerts, recruitment apps and mobile-optimized websites help in giving candidates a richer experience

SMEs should focus on regularly reviewing and streamlining their recruitment methods. With most of the smaller companies recruiting a large proportion of millennials, technology has always been an asset in overcoming recruitment challenges. Companies need to ensure that not only do they hire the best-fitting candidates, but also enable them to perform their jobs better by helping them to grow in step with the company.

-(Ajay Kolla is Founder & CEO, Wisdomjobs.com)