

Feedback from the Front: 5 Hiring Insights from Executive Recruiters

In June, the Labor Department reported [10 million open jobs](#), and a record ratio of openings to hires. A disappointing [August jobs report](#) has many shaking their heads. Add to this a blur of emotions felt as employees and leaders face return-to-work deadlines, childcare concerns, and the Delta variant, and we have a unique recruiting environment for employers to navigate.

So, what are executive search consultants seeing, and how should you react? I spoke with my DHR colleagues to reflect on #2021recruiting and its impact on clients and candidates alike.

Mental Load of a Lingering Pandemic

Pandemic fatigue is at a peak and candidates are exhausted. And it's about more than the 18 months of at-home juggling and pandemic-induced work pressures. Some candidates are navigating a degree of long-term pandemic-induced trauma. We see exhaustion, feelings of uncertainty, and a need to disconnect like we haven't before. When you meet with a candidate, a simple acknowledgment of the last year and its challenges can be a great way to connect and show your prospective hire that you're aware of our strained times.

Calls for Transparency

After decades of good intentions, many nonprofits have fallen short on their promise to diversify senior talent and staffs are holding leaders to account. We are increasingly supporting clients navigating demands for greater transparency in recruiting – of process, pool creation and selection. More and more, hiring is informed by committees or selection teams, with representatives of a range of staff, leadership, and board members. Lean into the change: increasing the diversity of voices informing the process will lead to more inclusive recruiting practices, which in turn strengthens hiring. It also shares the responsibility of decision making for these hires, which should be a welcome change for leaders.

Evolving Priorities

Compensation expectations are higher, and there are clear differentiators influencing one's ability to demand a higher salary. First among them: lived experience. Organizations are placing higher value than ever on lived experience, though not all are having thoughtful discussions about how lived experience is defined and appreciated.

Second is management: 18 months of remote/hybrid work have challenged our leaders in ways no one could have imagined, and experience inspiring and leading teams is more valuable than ever. Leaders transitioned quickly to remote hiring, but some now struggle to build the culture, relationships and trust that can be so vital to long-term effectiveness. As you begin a search, be aware that these two factors will put pressure on the salary you offer.

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Opportunism

More than ever, candidates are speaking of participating in multiple concurrent searches. With 10 million open jobs and widespread remote work, opting into that initial conversation, and even lengthy interviews, is more tempting and easier than ever. With the future of work uncertain and burnout on high, some are choosing to shop around at a rate we haven't seen before. Pay attention to candidate interest levels and ask those you're most interested in to alert you as other conversations progress.

Location, Location...

While many leaders are eager to bring teams back to in-person, even in a hybrid format, prospective talent is looking to stay close to home. Those who have successfully managed the challenges of remote work have grown accustomed to its pace, others have moved to entirely new geographies. Raise this topic early so that you don't have any surprises as your search progresses.

We will be eager to hear from you as the year comes to a close. How are current hiring trends affecting your open searches? What strategies are helping you navigate these challenging times?

Many thanks to my colleagues MaryBeth Nicholas Cruz, Solade Rowe, Lindsay Landsberg, Brandy Russell, Marissa Morey and Buckner Bell for their input and thoughtful engagement on this topic. **Get in touch with a member of our team to talk more.**

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