AGILE RECRUITING

Hiring in a Complex and Uncertain World

Jens Olberding

BAI press

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Fresh, practice-oriented material on a solid foundation. Fits perfectly with New Work initiatives or simply "just" for more people-oriented, modern leadership and recruitment.

Rolf Götz, Business Development Manager
Acceleration, Cosmo Consult Berlin

Anyone working in an agile context has a great interest that teams help select their own new colleagues. This book describes very clearly how exactly this can be achieved. There is no denying that not only the teams benefit from this, but the entire organization as HR is relieved, hiring decisions move to where they have an impact, and last but not least, applicants gain a much better impression of the potential employer.

Elke Bethke,
Trainer and Agile Enterprise Coach, Freiburg

This book is highly recommended for all those who are engaged in the topic of agile HR, and in particular agile recruiting! The author manages to think agile recruiting further and offers a practical guide for the simple implementation of agile recruiting in the daily routine. The necessary theoretical basis is given space and then enhanced with useful application examples.
A fine book and a good introduction to the topic!

Robert J. Becker,
Founder of Agile HR Coaches, Berlin

As an experienced HR professional in recruitment, I read the book with great curiosity. For starters and experienced HR professionals, it is an exciting book with tips and tricks to rethink recruiting. This requires a mind shift in companies. The examples, outlines and working aids are very valuable to get new/different ideas for recruiting. This book is entertaining, stimulating and really highly recommended.

PhD Friederike Baer,
Expert Talent Acquisition, Deutsche Bahn Frankfurt

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Chapters

This book contains working aids which are available for download. All documents can be accessed via *www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-agile-recruiting*

PREFACE

I have been in the recruiting business my entire professional life and have been entrusted with a wide variety of tasks. Exciting stories could be told. But here I am particularly interested in one of these stories: A division manager approached me with the idea of getting employees from his division more involved in the recruiting process. What a thought. This idea was the first trigger for me to develop agile recruiting.

It actually started with the support and development of my first recruiting team. In the beginning, our goal was simply to hire a new colleague without involving the manager in the selection process. We almost succeeded in this project. However, the selected candidate told us that our team's recruiting process was all well and good, but she wouldn't sign anything until she met her future boss. A classic mistake. In all our efforts to self-organize and enable the team, we didn't think about our customers, the applicants. From that moment on, we started to think about our team's recruiting processes in a more customer-centric way.

That was more than six years ago. As a team, we discovered how much potential our idea had. Starting with authentic and, most importantly, credible communication "among equals", which is possible between applicants and future colleagues, to flexible processes in order to be able to respond to each applicant individually. The agile recruiting approach was born.

The book that you hold in your hands is shaped by these experiences, by practical experience and by working with recruiting teams across a wide range of companies. Thank you very much, everyone. I want to thank two people in particular: Elke, for her ongoing support over the last years, and Rolf, who got the ball rolling in the first place.

EVERYTHING AGILE? NOW ALSO IN RECRUITING?

Is everything agile, now also in recruiting? This question is absolutely justified. Alternatively, at this point, we can also talk about a shortage of skilled workers, globalization, demographic change and an increasingly fast-paced, uncertain and complex world of work. As different as all these challenges may be, they are united by the fact that traditional recruitment by HR and managers is rarely successful anymore.

Moreover: The situation has changed fundamentally. The differentiation of training programs, career paths and job offers has now reached a level that makes a more tailored approach extremely useful.

Therefore: Agile recruiting processes that enable authentic communication with future colleagues are needed. To achieve this, we rely on target group-specific recruiting. In this way, we can adapt our recruiting to the requirements of a group of candidates. And in addition to an authentic approach and communication, we can then provide candidates with improved insights into the company and the future task through greater transparency.

Flexible, anticipatory and initiative recruiting

Therefore, what is needed is a recruiting that can adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of the companies, an agile recruiting that acts flexibly, situationally, anticipatively and proactively to bring about necessary changes.

Our goal with agile recruiting is to refill the company's talent pipeline through authentic and targeted communication with applicants. We counter the - alleged - shortage of skilled workers with competence-based personnel selection and identify not only the best, but the right candidates for the job.

As a result, we make hiring decisions that meet the interests of both applicants and companies and are based on long-term cooperation.

Recruiting is a team sport

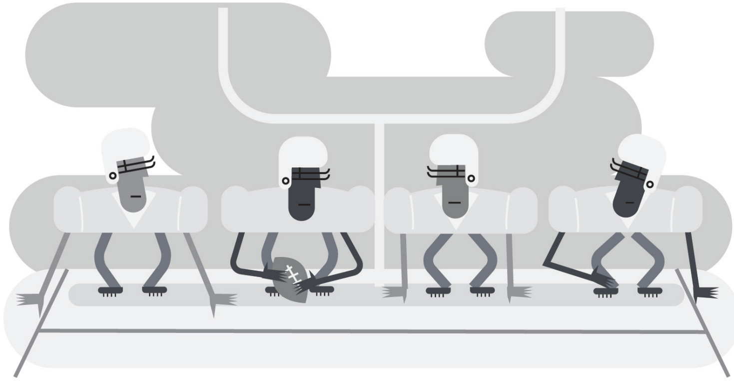
It quickly becomes clear that recruiting is becoming increasingly complex. There are tasks to be performed that are difficult for HR to handle alone or in collaboration with the manager. The challenge is increasing once again as, in view of the rapid changes in the world, the skills of applicants are becoming increasingly important and, at the same time, recruiters are relying less and less on technical qualifications and training degrees (Klein, Euwens 2018).

In addition to competency-based recruiting, the best way to attract talent to a company is through an authentic recruiting process that is tailored to the target group. A target group-oriented recruiting approach goes beyond placing job ads on job-specific platforms. It includes personnel marketing and candidate experience tools, and this extends throughout the entire selection process.

The focus of an agile and authentic recruiting approach is not simply to advertise to the target group, but to tap into the target group with authentic and credible messages - from addressing to onboarding - in order to attract the best candidates for your own company.

This complex task can hardly be solved by one person or one HR department alone. Recruiting has developed into a team sport whose players "pass the balls to each other", and it extends beyond the boundaries of HR departments (Haufe 2015).

Each team member is positioned in the game to make the best use of their skills and have the greatest impact. There is no perfect strategy that can be used in every game. Rather, it is necessary to decide on a situational basis which move is the next right one in recruiting, and how one's recruiting team can set itself up in the best possible way.



Let's compare the recruiting process with American football

In both recruiting and football, the goal is clear to all team members: it's about winning the game. However, at the beginning of the game, how the players will achieve their goal is still uncertain. Of course, each team has a variety of well-trained game moves and knows the strengths of their team members. However, when and how each move is played out, and the individual strengths of each player will be determined during the course of the game.

The exciting thing about American football is that the team comes together after every play and discusses the next step. What may look like a break in play to viewers is actually the heart of the game: The players analyze their previous game moves and recognize what was less effective as well as their actions that were successful in bringing them a step closer to achieving their goal. In this way, step by step, or move by move, the team develops its strategy to win the game.

Applied to the topic of recruiting: The common goal is to fill a vacant position. The team consists of a variety of players in the company, each with their own strengths and special skills. When looking for a new employee, there is also uncertainty in recruiting at first about which strength is best to play with, when to play it, and how much the move will bring the team closer to the goal. A regular team meeting on the current recruitment situation is not only helpful at this point, but also necessary to plan the next move.

In this way, a recruiting team also approaches its goal step by step, by adapting to the individual challenges of filling the open position, and by learning continuously.

No uniform processes

Just like the beginning of any personnel selection, the following also applies in the context of agile recruiting: The focus is on the position to be filled. Only when we know who we need can we find who we are looking for. At the same time, however, it is important to keep the process open - open to new, previously unknown paths.

How to attract the best talent in an employee market? The answer is: by developing self-organizing, interdisciplinary teams. (Olberding 2019)

The similarity between this and team sports is obvious: the team scores on the recruiting pitch - in other words, in every concrete situation – Decisions are made using the previously analyzed and practiced moves - and is supported by the coach.

The team sports analogy shows that a position can only be filled if the talents of the players and the various game strategies are adapted and applied to the situation at hand. Thus, it makes little sense to rely on the same, standardized recruiting process for every personnel search. Even the search processes for identical jobs must offer scope for individualization. Otherwise, it is not possible to meet the requirements of the labor market and the individuality of each applicant.

Recruiting stakeholders benefit from a few levels of freedom that allow them to independently adjust the recruiting process according to the situation without waiting for long decision-making processes and approvals. (Häusling 2020).

This becomes particularly obvious when we compare very different positions. The selection process for a trainee is certainly very different from the selection process for a senior executive. While trainees are recruited at special training fairs and with targeted marketing campaigns, this path does not seem to exist for senior executives. Ideally, people from the management's networks are recruited for senior positions through direct approaches, or by using headhunters.

Framework of possibilities for the recruiting process

Even though different recruiting processes exist for different positions, the selection process for a position should not follow a predefined form rigidly. It is better if the process can be adapted to the respective requirements. When applied to the example of the senior executive, this means that a basic selection process is first created for a specific position. This basic selection process should be understood as a framework of options available for recruiting the senior executive. In the selection process, the people in charge will decide which of the available resources will be used for the next step.

For example, it is helpful for efficient personnel selection not to invite every candidate directly for a personal interview. Interviews are time-consuming for all parties involved and can result in major travel expenses. A face-to-face meeting is not always necessary to obtain the desired information for the next selection step. A recruiting process should therefore not be rigid, but should always allow for a flexible process. The guideline is: stakeholders in recruiting should be empowered to make meaningful and purposeful decisions.

At every stage of the recruiting process, the focus is on gaining knowledge. For this purpose, we are guided by two questions:

1. What information do we need to make decisions in the selection process?

2. What information does the applicant need to consider us as an employer?

The most important things from chapter 1

- Agile recruiting can be adapted to ever-changing circumstances in a flexible and situational manner.
- It relies on competence-based personnel selection and authentic communication with applicants.
- The increasing complexity in recruiting is being countered with self-organized, interdisciplinary teams.
- Recruiting processes are individually tailored to the job and are gradually adapted to the applicants.

Part 1: The basics for agile recruiting

In agile recruiting, we don't re-invent the basics of recruiting. However, they need to adapt in order to meet today's business challenges and changes in the labor market. We will explore this in the Part 1 of this book - and look at agile recruiting from four different perspectives:

The fundamental attitude is to view the applicant not just as an applicant, but comprehensively as a human being, with all his or her abilities and talents.

This attitude includes getting to know the wishes and needs of the applicants and asking ourselves this question: "What does the candidate actually want?"

The changed situation also requires a fundamentally new constellation in recruiting: Instead of the conventional distribution of work, a team is now being recruited. We explain what a recruiting team is, how it functions and is composed - and how the team can operate effectively to meet the new challenges in recruiting.

This also changes the role of HR, who will act more as an expert in recruiting as well as an enabler and supporter.

THE NEW MINDSET IN RECRUITING

A decisive factor in recruiting is mindset. It is crucial to how we approach applicants in the recruiting process. It should be clear to many companies by now that an applicant is not a petitioner who is desperately looking for work.

It is therefore obvious that job interviews should be conducted in an appreciative manner and at eye level. After all, both parties, employer and applicant, have something to offer. A realization that was true even in the days of an employer market, but is even more plausible considering today's applicant market.

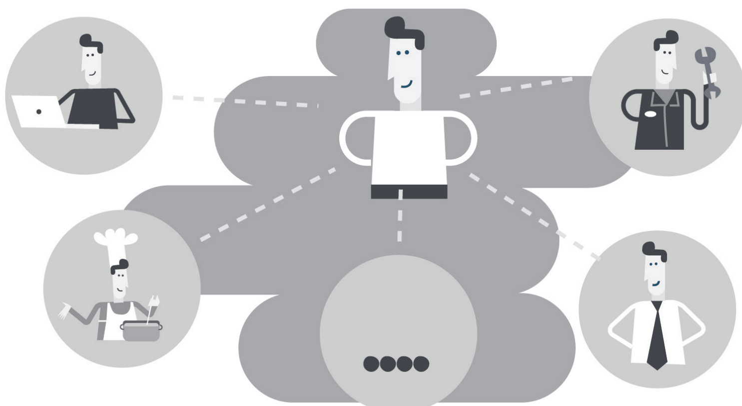
The increasing complexity of our working world also makes it necessary to know the applicant as well as the complete individual with all their skills and talents. Mindset and human nature goes hand in hand at this point.

Human image: Do people want to achieve goals or are they just lazy?

Douglas McGregor showed us as early as the 1960s what influence the human factor has on the management and economic success of an organization. With his theories X and Y, he examined two completely different views of human beings. Theory X assumes that humans are naturally lazy and try to avoid work as much as possible. In contrast to this is theory Y. It assumes that human beings are quite ambitious and do not shy away from voluntarily making greater efforts to achieve meaningful goals. (McGregor 1960)

Since people who are committed to their organization's goals also act in favor of the organization's goals, McGregor favored Theory Y with this work, he may have laid the foundation for today's search for the purpose and the Why of a company and its employees. The fact that meaningful actions and work content contribute to higher motivation and employee satisfaction has been proven by the X-Y theory model. However, the extent to which work content should be harmonized with personal values and life goals will be discussed elsewhere.

For the new mindset in recruiting, we follow McGregor's evidence that everyone is willing to do their best. Every person, every applicant is good. The question is, good for what?



As part of the selection process, it is important to find out the suitability characteristics of the candidate, how and where they can best be used in the company. The positive image of people probably has the greatest influence on the analysis of the necessary suitability characteristics and the selection of applicants in the recruiting process. (Zaborowski 2019).

Hire for talent, train the skills

Hire for talent, train the skills. A nice sentence, which can often be read in this way or a similar one in recent times, and which has received great approval. We can often read this phrase in connection with the term Recruiting Mindset and the demand for a new attitude in recruiting. (Rechsteiner 2019)

Agile teams are often cross-functional and consist of generalized specialists, the so-called T-shaped people. This refers to specialists who are broadly positioned in terms of their skills - which is symbolized by the horizontal bar in the letter T - and at the same time have expertise in their area of specialization - which is symbolized by the vertical bar in the letter T. (Trölenberg 2018)

But what exactly is behind this statement and why is it so important today? What is behind the T-shaped people and how does this relate to the ever-changing demands of a VUCA world? We will explore these questions in the following pages.

What is a cross-functional team? (Storz 2018)

- There are many myths and false assumptions surrounding the concept of a cross-functional team. We would like to clarify the biggest misconceptions directly and explain them further below.
- In a cross-functional team, not all team members are capable of everything and not all team members will do everything.
- A cross-functional team consists of generalized specialists.
- In a cross-functional team, we do not look at the competencies of the individual, but at the overall competence of the team.
- A team of four specialists who are so highly specialized in their field that they are no longer able to exchange information with each other within the team certainly forms a cross-functional team, but probably not a very good one.
- A good cross-functional team consists of generalized specialists. People who think outside the box and learn new things together with other team members. Over time, such a team is able to work together more and more, exchange functions, assist each other and grow.
- For learning and growing together, it is helpful if each team member has their own specialization. Each member brings this specialization to the team to work together towards a common goal. The team thereby combines all the skills needed to achieve the goal.

In agile recruiting, we try - with the knowledge of ever-changing requirements - to combine the classic view with an expanded, yet critical view of requirements and skills.

The extended and critical view examines the qualifications that are actually hidden behind the requirements of a position. Future changes and adjustments which are driven, for example, by digitalisation, by a change in the job profile or by the market, are anticipated and taken into account. (Eger, Frickenschmidt 2016)

In one of the following chapters, Requirements Analysis (Chapter 7), we will look at different methods that can be used to define the necessary talent and skills.

Before doing this, however, it is helpful to address the concept of suitability. Figure 1 on aptitude diagnostics describes aptitude in terms of aptitude characteristics, which are divided into three categories, qualification characteristics, competences and potentials.

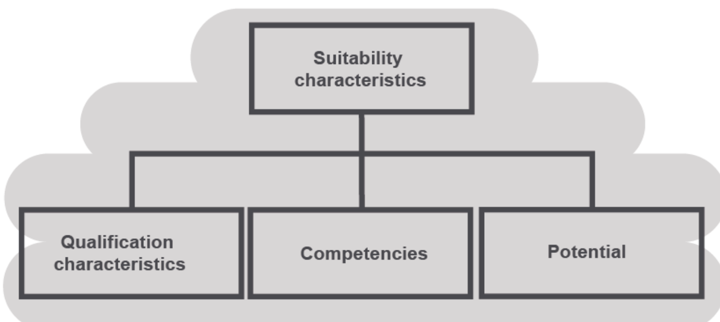


Fig. 1: Three types of suitability characteristics according to DIN 33430 (Ackerschott 2016)

Category 1: Qualification characteristics. They are derived, for example, from training, school-leaving qualifications and studies. They are often seen as a necessary prerequisite to be able to successfully fill a certain position. In the requirements profile, the criterion “successfully completed commercial training” was formulated for this purpose. The good or very good final grade is often added as an extension of the criterion. It is questionable whether and to what extent these qualification characteristics actually say something about the compatibility of the candidate and the position to be filled.

When an industrial clerk has successfully completed training at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, there is a uniform understanding, at least among most personnel decision-makers, of what technical skills have been taught and what can be expected of the applicant. The final grade of the vocational school provides additional security with regard to the quality of the technical skills learned.

If, on the other hand, a Bachelor's degree is involved, there is usually more doubt as to the significance. A Bachelor's degree is the result of an academic education. However, since the changeover to Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Germany, an enormous variety and specialisation of study programmes has developed. Specialisation can be conducive to selecting well-fitted candidates for specialised positions. At the same time, diversity makes it difficult to compare degrees with each other. In addition, there are different standards of quality among the universities and the differentiation between universities, colleges, dual universities and other, mostly non-accredited training companies (and that should apply in all countries).

Other qualifications may include possession of a driver's license or a health certificate. For the position of a Sales Manager, it may be a necessary requirement to be able to drive a car. For employees in the catering or food industry, a health certificate may be a legal requirement for working in this occupational field.

Qualification features are recorded comparatively quickly by means of a requirements analysis. There is some practice among all parties to list professional requirements and verify them in the form of a testimonial or certificate. So, at first, it seems obvious to list a degree in marketing as a requirement for the position of marketing manager, and to also require a few years of professional experience if a more senior employee is being sought for this position.

Nevertheless, at this point, it should be critically questioned which professional requirements are actually hidden behind the requirements "marketing studies" and "professional experience". Degrees can be analyzed in terms of course content and grades for a possible fit to the requirements of the job.

The situation is different with the “professional experience” requirement. Certainly, at this point there is a mention of “relevant professional experience in a similar position”. Now, however, it remains unclear what the requirements of the desired work experience are, and how they can be operationalized. Is more work experience better than little work experience? Then 4 years is better than 2 years in this case. So, is 20 years of work experience in the same position at a company even better? Is it actually relevant in which company the work experience was gained? Are the years spent in a marketing agency different from those spent in a manufacturing company, and how do the years spent as a marketing manager in a government agency compare?

What is already difficult when comparing university degrees can become absurd when comparing work experience - and we understand that qualifications only seem easy to acquireThe characteristics of education and professional experience often create a false sense of security at this point. The situation is different, however, for qualifications that can actually be clearly checked, such as the aforementioned driver’s license or health certificate.

Qualification characteristics are more helpful in requirements analysis and subsequent personnel selection as they make it clear which skills are associated with them. A driver’s license is an accurate example of a clear and unambiguous qualification. Vocational training or a degree are relatively clear when compared to the qualification of work experience, yet these two qualifications are not as clearly and uniformly defined as the characteristic of a driver’s license.

The great danger in preparing a requirements analysis is therefore that the parties involved - often the manager and an HR employee - rely on a supposed clarity and unambiguity for qualification characteristics that does not exist. In practice, for example, it often quickly becomes apparent in a specific case that the manager and the HR employee already have different perceptions of a qualification criteria such as “relevant professional experience”. Therefore, the qualification characteristic should be clearly defined in the requirements analysis beforehand.

Category 2 Competencies. Competencies are less easy to analyze and record when compared to qualifications. While qualifications often represent the result of training or learning a skill, competencies describe the general ability to solve problems and the willingness to do so.

Competencies are not so closely related to the specific requirements of professions or activities. They represent personality traits that can be used to cope with problems and tasks. It is already clear that competencies take on a special significance in cross-functional teams and are crucial for adaptability in an ever-changing work environment. But before that, we would like to illustrate the difference between qualifications and skills with an example.

The qualification criterion "successfully completed commercial training" was defined for the position of a purchasing clerk. Various skills are required to complete an apprenticeship. In addition to willingness to learn, the skills of self-organization, perseverance and various communicative skills can be cited as examples of the skills required to successfully complete an apprenticeship.

The final grade can be seen as an indicator that shows how successful the interaction of the different skills can be evaluated. However, it does not allow any conclusion to be drawn as to how strongly the respective skills came into play in order to complete the training.

For example, a good grade on the final exam can be attributed to the fact that the examinee is particularly good at memorizing information. The exam then shows how well the participant can reproduce what has been memorized. It remains unclear whether the memorized information was well understood or whether it was meaningfully linked to existing knowledge.

However, it is also possible that a test taker passes a test because he or she succeeds in quickly recognizing interrelationships, structures and systems and links them together to develop solutions.

The previously mentioned examples are two completely different skills. Both examination candidates can be successful with regards to the qualification feature "successfully completed training", even with a good or very good final grade. However, in day-to-day work, the two participants are likely to display completely different behaviors - due to their different skills.

The successful interaction of skills can thus lead to the attainment of qualification characteristics. In a professional world where tasks and demands placed on employees are in a constant state of flux, the skills of an employee can consequently be crucial to the success of the job and the company as a whole. In the requirements analysis, it is therefore important to find out the exact skills that are perceived to be particularly important for successful staffing.

For the analysis of skills, the simple and expedient categorization into four skill categories is appropriate. Accordingly, skills can be divided into personal skills, social skills, methodological skills and professional skills. Different skills can be attributed to each of these skill categories. (Berndt 2014)

- **Personal Skills:** This skill describes the attitudes and values that make up a person.

- **Social Skills:** This describes the skills that promote interpersonal relationships; both in private and professional life.

- **Methodological skills:** It includes the ability to apply work techniques and analysis techniques, as well as learning strategies.

- **Professional Expertise:** Ability to link subject-related and interdisciplinary knowledge, to deepen it, to critically examine it and to apply it in contexts of action.

In the requirements analysis chapter, we will once again go into the skills categories and their systematics, particularly in the skills pyramid method, and show a practical way of selecting the right candidates more effectively.

Category 3: Potentials. The ability of a person to cope with previously unfamiliar tasks and to develop further skills is their potential. In personnel selection, potentials are always particularly important when you want to know, not just what an applicant can do today, but what he or she would be capable of doing in perhaps 3 years.

Such an assessment plays a major role in the search for junior executives or in the selection of trainees who are to be prepared for a higher management role as part of a program lasting several years. From the company's point of view, it is understandable that they would like to know at this stage, which people are worth their investment for the future, i.e. which applicants have the potential to become managers.

While the definition and analysis of desired aptitude characteristics is already a demanding task, the great challenge of potential analysis lies in predicting how a person will develop over the next few years. A person's development does not depend solely on his or her personality and abilities, but is influenced by a wide range of environmental variables: Great love, serious illnesses, the death of a trusted person, are life events that significantly influence the development of every person and often steer them in directions that the affected person would not have thought possible before. In addition to private life events, environmental variables can also include economic, political or ecological developments - and also the conditions in a company that form the specific framework for professional development.

Potentials are of great importance for companies and in personnel selection. Apart from the career paths to management described above, it is equally important for companies to know the potential of their own workforce. At a time when customer requirements and sales markets are subject to constant and rapid change, there is a need for employees who are not only adaptable, but who can also grow with increasing complexity and rising demands. It is therefore important for the continued existence and development of the company to ensure that a large proportion of its employees still have "room to grow".

What actually is leadership competence?

The desire for a definition of the term leadership competence is understandable, since it is precisely the managers who exert a decisive influence on the well-being of a company. The only thing that is unclear is what makes a good leader. Almost every company has its own understanding of leadership and cultivates its own individual leadership culture. Leadership styles are definitely subject to trends; hierarchically driven leadership styles seem to have become outdated. Today, for example, we speak of agile leadership and associate it with a dynamic attitude, a mindset that understands change as a permanent condition. Agile leaders are flexible and capable of transforming people, teams and processes. It quickly becomes apparent that leadership is becoming increasingly complex and cannot be handled by a single competence alone. Consequently, leadership consists of an interplay of different competencies, the characteristics of which should be examined in the requirements analysis as a function of each company. A universally applicable definition for leadership competence is therefore not appropriate. Rather, leadership competence is composed of skills in the categories of personal, social, methodological, and professional competence. (Hofert 2018/1)

Conclusion

One of the most important findings from this paragraph is that qualifications can be obtained with the help of competencies. When applied to the concept of cross-functional teams, the competencies of the team members are therefore crucial in order to enable joint learning and growth. Competencies help to learn technical skills to enable better team support and collaboration.

But competencies are not everything. In the sense of the T-shaped people, professional qualifications, i.e. a certain degree of specialization, are also necessary. On the one hand, this specialization helps to achieve the common goal of the team. On the other hand, it favors mutual learning from each other, with each specialist sharing his expertise with his team members. Along the way, in a successful cross-functional team, T-shaped people often develop into Π-shaped people (Pi-shaped people), which are the teammates who have not one, but two specializations. (Hofert 2018/2)

Candidate in focus

One of the four core statements of the agile manifesto states: All activities are clearly focused on the needs of the customer. In agile projects, collaboration with the customer takes precedence over contract negotiations, and the customer is involved right from the product development stage. (Manifesto 2001)

Another core statement of the agile manifesto states that individuals and interactions have priority over processes and tools. It seems obvious to value people more highly than processes and tools. After all, it is people who react to changes in business requirements and adapt and develop processes and tools. In the opposite case, people would stubbornly stick to processes, becoming less responsive to change and customer needs.

Applied to recruiting, this means that the focus is clearly on the applicant. He or she is the end customer of all our recruiting efforts. It follows that our processes and activities in recruiting are not only geared to the applicants, but that they are developed together with the candidates.

The question of what applicants want to know about the company and the job is hardly ever asked by a company. Instead, companies strive to present themselves as good employers and emphasize the aspects that they consider significant. Or they take their inspiration from other companies that seem to be successful in recruiting. This could be observed very well in recent years in the number of benefits offered. Starting with fruit baskets and table soccer, to e-scooters and the regular supply of organic lemonades, there is a lot to choose from.

It is questionable whether the acceptance of an applicant is actually dependent on such benefits. At the very best, the benefits show that a company is interested in the well-being of its employees. The fact that this type of additional service was offered by many companies some time ago could also be interpreted as a sign of a certain helplessness.

To prevent this misunderstanding: Seeing the candidate as a customer does not mean luring them with promises and showering them with gifts. The point is to find out what is important to him. What engages potential applicants and how can an employer provide meaningful support. Many software developers, for example, are afraid of missing out on a current trend at some point, and that they will no longer be up to date in terms of their programming skills.

For many, it is therefore very important to always work with the latest technology and also to be able to try out new things. A wish that probably cannot be applied to all areas of the company. Especially not in areas where consistency is particularly important.

For other applicants, having a reliable employer is important because they may have just started a family and bought a house. Regular salary payments and fixed working hours then becomes more important to an applicant understandably. Consequently, there will continue to be candidates for whom personal development and career are particularly important; others are caring for a family member in need of care, are single parents, or are afraid of an increased risk of infection in an open-plan office and prefer to work from a home office.

Low-threshold hurdle: Make it easy for applicants

If the focus is on the applicant, it is a matter of identifying his or her actual interests. In addition, it is necessary to make it easy for interested applicants to access the company and the contact persons. Contact and application must be the lowest possible hurdle. Otherwise, we are at risk of an applicant losing interest in the advertised position as soon as he or she submits his or her application. Especially at this point, many companies still have great potential for improvement. While no company would think of subjecting customers who are interested in buying to a complicated and time-consuming ordering process, in recruiting it is often not enough to present applicants with a contact person and contact details. In addition, detailed and complete application documents are required in order for the company to even be willing to look at an application. (Kanning 2019)

We need to make it as easy as possible for applicants to get in touch with our company. The basics definitely include listing a representative with contact details in job advertisements and ensuring that this representative can also be reached by applicants. Additionally, it should be made as easy as possible for the applicant to submit an application, such as what is required with one-click applications. A one-click application is designed to allow an applicant to express interest in a job with just one (or at least very few) clicks. A variant of this is that the applicant shares his profile in any of the business networks with the new employer with one click. (Universität Bamberg 2017)

We already talked about the fact that in recruiting, there can be no uniform processes that can apply equally to the selection of all candidates. It should be noted, for example, that not every applicant has a profile in a business network that can be shared with one click. Even today, there are still applicants who prefer to apply by mail with a traditional application portfolio. The new and often simpler paths offered to us by advancing digitization are not used equally by all applicants. Here, too, the focus is on the candidate and companies are required to offer individual solutions.

Be able to respond to each applicant individually

Many companies already consider the various applicant target groups individually - in the areas of HR marketing and employer branding. When addressing and advertising, many companies distinguish between different target groups and adapt their marketing activities accordingly. This is an important and correct step, but it must not end with marketing.

The selection process must also be adapted to the needs of the candidates. Individual differentiation within the respective target groups is also helpful for this. Here, too, it is important to make meaningful and appropriate distinctions for the personnel selection process.

The differentiated view creates a good structure and also enables a detailed orientation. However, it makes sense to continue in this direction, because unlike employer branding, which reaches entire groups with its marketing activities, we are dealing with a 1:1 relationship between company and applicant in personnel selection. This close relationship with our customers not only makes close coordination possible, but also requires an individual approach, tailored to their needs.

Of course, the selection process is still about finding out how well the candidate meets the requirements of the vacant position. The fact that the focus is on the candidate does not mean that we play a *request programme* for him and design the selection process as he would like. The point is to work together to find a way in which everyone in the selection process gets the information they need to make a decision for or against the candidate or the position in the end.

Just like us recruiters, the candidate is on the lookout for helpful information about the new role and the company throughout the recruiting process. This point is often overlooked, as it is the aspect where the candidate often takes the greater risk when changing jobs. Because he is the one who leaves a secure job and embarks on a new challenge in an unknown team.

In analogy to the previous example, let's consider a software developer: Of course, she wants to stay professionally up to date. In addition, she has just started a family - and statistically speaking, this is not unlikely - and is caring for a nursing case in the family. Thus, for the software developer alone, there are a multitude of possible combinations that keep her busy and that she must balance with employment. Ideally, an employer offers suitable solutions that help the applicant to take up a job with him.

Companies are already advertising offers such as flexible working hours and home offices. But it remains unclear whether these offers apply to everyone all the time. For example, it is hard to imagine a receptionist working from a home office. The possibilities of adapting the job tasks to the needs of the applicant must therefore be viewed in a differentiated manner. Applicants are also confronted with the challenges of an increasingly complex and ever-changing world. Thus, it can be assumed that individual solutions are needed, which must be found together with the employer.

Authentic in every step

Selection interviews are usually conducted by an HR employee and the manager. This setting seemed coherent for a long time. After all, the manager knows exactly what she is looking for and which candidate she wants on her team. And HR is there, too, of course. That's always been the case - and it also gives the interviews the serious framework they need. At best, HR can also provide some key insights by asking clever questions about the applicant's soft skills.

But where is the candidate? In the previous section, we focused on the candidate. We will now continue this and look in this chapter at which approach in the recruiting process is right and good from the candidate's point of view and thus ultimately beneficial for the company.

First of all: In principle, there is nothing wrong with the described setting for the interview. Managers, in particular, have a legitimate interest in getting to know their new employee in the course of a selection process and in influencing the hiring decision.

However, in this setting, eye level, authenticity and a credible communication of the task content are often not given. Because from the candidate's point of view, there is almost always a hierarchical gap. Discussions at eye level with the potential new boss and representatives of the new companies are therefore difficult. Even if, at the beginning of an interview, the future supervisor emphasizes that they want to talk to the applicant at eye level.

It is always implicit that there is actually no eye level. In many interviews, the employer offers a discussion at eye level. The interviewer or future supervisor can only offer such an interview if he or she is willing to "lower" himself or herself to the applicant's eye level. Otherwise, it would be a demand for eye level. In this case, we can assume that the demanding party perceives a (hierarchical) gradient and considers his or her position to be inferior.

It is also unclear whether a relationship at eye level between supervisor and potential employee can exist at all. Finally, a supervisor has some power over his or her employees and can make decisions about pay raises, promotions, and passing probation, among other things.

Parity of exchange and actual insights among “equals”.

An equal exchange and actual insights are possible above all among “equals”. This means that future colleagues in particular should be involved in the selection process. This was the conclusion of a survey conducted by the Haufe Group (Olberding 2019/1), which asked its candidates the following questions: What information do they want about a job offer? What criteria are important for them to make a decision? The first responses were job requirements and a specific description of the job. When more in-depth questions were asked, points emerged that were of real interest to the candidates. Here is one example:

A controller was not surprised that he was required to know Excel and to create reports in his job. The decisive factor for him in changing jobs was rather the answers to these questions:

- What is the teamspirit like?
- What does my daily work routine look like?
- What room for maneuver do I have?
- How is the boss?

The questions are legitimate, but hardly anyone dares to ask them in an interview with their future supervisor. Moreover, only the future colleagues can answer these questions authentically.

It is true that the potential future manager can also provide information on the points mentioned, and in fact many applicants even found it important to know what the future supervisor had to say about them. However, questions always remained unanswered and uncertainty persisted. This is because the preconception that a supervisor always speaks favorably about his team and the company shows that the response is not considered authentic.

Yes, it may even be additionally implied that he has an interest in presenting the open position in a good light. After all, he wants to fill it with a suitable candidate as quickly as possible. In the survey, applicants did not doubt the sincerity of the future supervisor, but a certain mistrust nevertheless remained as to whether all facets of the open positions were really addressed.

Another point was that, many applicants did not really want to believe that a manager is actually so familiar with the tasks of his team to the point where he really knows all the challenges of the daily work. After all, the manager's work content is often not in the day-to-day operational business.

According to the study, applicants tried to answer the question "What's the boss like?" by researching within their own network. In some cases, the interview question was rephrased to ask the manager to describe his or her leadership style.

Conclusion

The manager in the selection process cannot be dispensed with. However, prospective colleagues can answer candidates' questions about the task, team and company more credibly and authentically. One reason for this is that these colleagues perform the same or a very similar task in the company. On the other hand, when talking to prospective colleagues, applicants are less likely to assume that they are trying to sugarcoat the open position.

Authentic and credible communication is not just important in the selection process. It is supposed to run through the entire recruiting process and not just start at the interview. Accordingly, it is helpful to establish different ways in the company for employees and, in particular, recruiting teams from the various departments, to convey information from their working environment to the outside world in order to advertise the open position in the team. For example, some colleagues can use the opportunities offered by social networks and report on their work there. Others can ensure the right tone in job postings, and others can act as the first point of contact for interested candidates.

In this way, it is possible to give applicants real and authentic insights into the company in the early stages of the recruiting process.

The most important things from chapter 2

- **The new attitude in recruiting: everyone is willing to give their best.**
- **Every person is good; it is a matter of finding the right task in which they can contribute their skills in the best possible way.**
- **Competency-based workforce selection is the foundation for organizations to remain successful in a more complex and uncertain world.**
- **It's about the applicant, not the process. Recruiting is aligned with the needs of the applicant.**
- **True equality in recruiting is possible among "equals".**
- **The involvement of the team enables authentic and transparent insights into the task and the team.**

WHAT DOES THE CANDIDATE ACTUALLY WANT?

In the previous chapter, we discussed the importance of mindset in recruiting and why we should align our recruiting processes with the individual needs of applicants. Both tasks are complex and not so easy to manage - especially in the early stages of the recruiting process, when we are less likely to be dealing with individual applicants to whose needs we can tailor our selection process.

At the beginning, we are mostly dealing with a previously defined target group. We know the essentials of this target group, so we can align our approach accordingly.

At this point, however, it is not yet possible to adopt a procedure that is customized to the individual applicant. On the other hand, commonalities that apply across the board to many applicants can be observed and classified, e.g. with regard to the motives for an application.

In the following, we will first discuss this in more detail and look at the motives of applicants in order to align recruiting activities accordingly with the most important motives for changing jobs. We then use the 6-phase model of the Candidate Experience to develop a suitable framework for better understanding of how we can individually address the needs of the target group or the applicant within the phases of the recruiting process.

Motives for an application

The motivation of an application is one of the most important aspects of an application. Behind this lies the question of what drives an applicant to act, what motivates him or her. For example, does he consciously work toward specific goals and want to achieve something, or does he want to solve problems and prevent mistakes?

Direction of the motivation

To better understand motivation, we can distinguish, for example, what direction the applicant's motivation isIs the motivation characterized more by an up-to-something pattern or by a from-something-on pattern? (Berndt 2014) Both characteristics are equally important. As a general rule, we tend to evaluate the motives of the towards-something pattern more positively than the motives of the from-something pattern. This may sometimes be due to the fact that in many cases, positive thinking and a certain drive for growth are preferred in selection processes. From the perspective of recruiting and personnel selection, neither of the two motivational directions is to be preferred at first. After all, we are looking for the right candidate for our position. The only important thing for us is to check whether we, or our job and our company, can fulfill the candidate's motive.

In concrete terms, a candidate's application may be based, for example, on the fact that he or she sees the position to be filled as an ideal step for his or her personal and professional development. So, we are dealing with a towards-something motivation.

For another applicant, the motivation for applying for the same job is to have to travel less in the future: Motivation is characterized by an away-from-something pattern.

At first glance, the first candidate appears in a better light; after all, he or she wants to develop and they are pursuing a growth goal, while the second candidate appears to be looking for a less strenuous job. Eventually, he would like to reduce his travel.

However, we cannot deduce from motivation alone which of the two candidates would be a better fit for the vacant position. It would be too short-sighted to favor the first candidate because we judge him to be ambitious and determined on the basis of his motivation, whereas we can interpret a lack of ambition and low willingness to perform into the motivation of the second candidate. The motivation for changing jobs should not be compared and evaluated among incoming applicants. At this point, there is initially no right and no wrong. It is much more decisive for companies to check what the exact motivation is and whether the applicant's expectations can also be met with the vacant position.

Let's try to deepen our understanding of the two applicants and their motivations. When it comes to the motivation of the first applicant, it is initially unclear exactly how and where he or she wants to develop. Is personal development in the foreground? Is the development accompanied by the desire for a significant financial improvement? And more crucially, is the company even capable of supporting the development of an employee in this position? Is there sufficient budget available for a salary increase in the near future?

Let's also develop appropriate questions to better understand the second candidate's motivation. Here we need to clarify: What does less travel mean for him? And is the applicant's low willingness to travel even in line with the open position?

For a successful and long-term cooperation, the change motives of the applicants have to be questioned in detail. After all, these are the reasons why a person is looking for new employment in the first place. If the wishes and needs behind the applicant's motivation are not fulfilled, we can assume that the applicant will soon start looking for a new job again.

The 12 most common motives for applicants to change jobs

Certainly, behind every applicant's motivation to change is a very unique story with individual demands and wishes for the new job. Before we can address an applicant's individual needs in recruiting, we need to grab their attention so they can apply in the first place. This can be achieved by taking a closer look at the most common reasons for changing jobs and specifically addressing these motives in our communications with applicants. Before this, it is necessary to examine to what extent a company is able to fulfill the various motives of the applicants or can fulfill the motives at least better than many other companies.

The following list contains the 12 most common motives that lead applicants to change jobs (Slaghuis 2015). For personnel marketing and for the entire candidate experience in the recruiting process, the motives that a company can fulfill exceptionally well must be identified above all. In terms of authentic and credible communication, these things that motivate applicants to change jobs can be specifically addressed and satisfied in personnel marketing and job advertisements.

- Professional and personal development
- Getting to know a new industry
- Change of work environment (start-up vs. corporate)
- Working in a much more international context
- Desire for a new challenge
- Change for family reasons
- Spend more time with the family
- Put management duties on hold, work more professionally
- Working for a major brand
- Wanting to move something big
- A secure workplace
- Earn more money

Conclusion

Behind each change motive will be a very individual story of the applicant. It is therefore difficult to predict what the applicant expects from his new employer and what is needed to serve these motives. When communicating with the applicant, it is important to find out exactly what is really behind his or her motive for changing jobs.

An applicant will mention some of the listed motives without further ado in an interview, but will initially keep a low profile for others. For example, the desire to reduce the workload while improving salary is often packaged in the statement that the applicant wants to develop. If at all, the point about less workload only comes up via the motive of “wanting to spend more time with one’s family.”

Although these motives for change do not seem to fit our competitive society, they are motives that are human and that probably all of us can relate to. Regardless of our understanding of the candidate’s motives, they are so important to him that he will leave our company again, if he does not find what he is looking for with the new position.

The 6 phases of the Candidate Experience

The recruiting process usually begins with marketing campaigns for employer branding or at least with an advertisement for the position to be filled and continues with a selection process and later onboarding. There are several points of contact between applicants and companies during these steps. The touchpoints - or better: the collected experiences and their perception by the applicant - form the Candidate Experience. The Candidate Experience describes the applicant's journey along the recruiting process. The various touchpoints can be assigned to six phases, as the 6-phase model of the Candidate Experience does (Verhoeven 2016).

Potential applicants don't usually engage with the employer at the time of their application, but beforehand. They are already familiar with the company through personnel marketing activities or by means of a strong product brand. During the course of the 6-phase model, employers and applicants get to know each other better and better. A 1:1 relationship between the two players is then established from the start of the application. From this point on, the expectations of applicants regarding the selection process and direct communication increases enormously and becomes decisive for the success of recruiting.

In the following, we will go into the 6 phases of the Candidate Experience model and specifically highlight important points for agile recruiting.

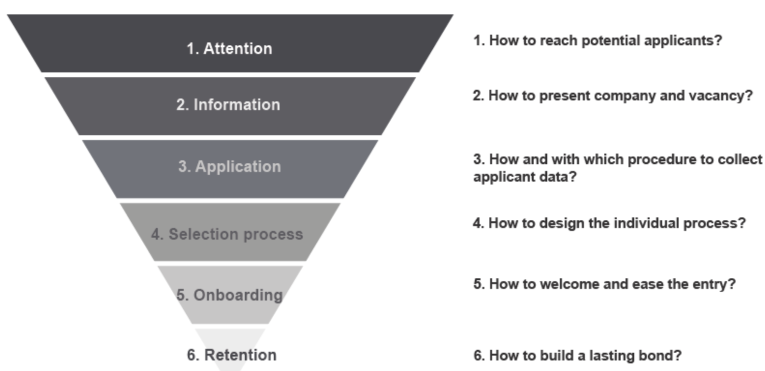


Fig. 2: Phases of the Candidate Experience (cf. Verhoeven 2016, own presentation)

Phase 1: Attraction phase. This early phase includes all activities that make a company visible as an employer. Positive and, above all, authentic press coverage is preferable. In addition to personnel marketing campaigns, it is primarily employee recommendations or non-binding meetings at job fairs and company events, that represent a low-threshold hurdle for initial contact. Job ambassadors who report on the successes of their everyday work in a very authentic and credible way can play a special role.

Phase 2: Information phase. After a successful attraction phase, interested applicants quickly move on to the information phase. In this phase, applicants deliberately go in search of information about the company. Many companies rely on their own career site for this. Another strategy is to focus on the media and portals where applicants are active. In addition to the well-known social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, this can also be Instagram or TikTok.

Phase 3: Application phase. The application phase is arguably the most crucial phase in the candidate experience. After the first two phases have persuaded an interested applicant to want to submit his or her application, the next step is to do everything possible to make it as easy as possible for the applicant to submit his or her application. In addition to a simple and intuitive application process, it is also about the documents and information that an applicant must submit. Complete application documents are not always necessary in the first step. Especially not when you want to make it as easy as possible for the applicant to express his or her interest in the advertised position.

In addition, the manner and tone of communication with the applicant about the receipt of their documents and the next steps are also crucial. In order to continue to appear authentic as an employer, the tone should be consistent with the applicant's previous experiences from phases one and two. Ideally, the applicant will meet faces and names in the application phase that are already familiar from the information phase.

Phase 4: Selection phase. In this phase, companies and applicants enter into a personal dialog directly. The company is interested in investigating the candidate's suitability and the candidate continues to search for information about the job and the company, or compares the information previously gathered with the experience gained so far in the selection process. In terms of agile recruiting, the customer-centric approach begins in this phase at the latest. The employer is the expert at this point and guides the candidate through the selection processBased on the individual needs and characteristics of the applicant, a path is defined that provides both sides with the desired insights and information. The applicant's interests and desires shall be considered at least equal. After all, the goal of a selection process is to decide on the right candidate. The right candidate is one who enjoys his job and feels comfortable in his new team. Only then can a successful and long-term cooperation between the company and the applicant be assumed.

Phase 5: Einschulung. Onboarding begins at the latest when the employment contract is signed. Successful induction is not aimed at the factual transfer of information, but also at integrating the new colleague into his or her team. One in five applicants leaves the company during the probationary period. One frequently cited reason is that the new job or the new employer does not deliver what was previously promised (Lemke 2020). A bitter realization for the candidate and for the company! This is because both sides have previously invested a lot of time and effort to make the best decision. However, if both sides were not transparent during the selection process and did not present themselves authentically, they will receive the receipt for this when the probationary period is terminated. Was the applicant not sincere about his/her qualifications and competencies? Or did the company not provide any real insights into the real working day? In many cases, termination occurs because you somehow imagined your counterpart to be different. The frustration becomes even greater when the interest in the applicant seems to diminish after the contract has been signed and he or she is left on their own from the first day of work. Without making an intensive effort to ensure that the new colleague arrives well, companies also forfeit the opportunity to correct or eliminate unfulfilled expectations and misunderstandings.

Phase 6: Commitment Phase. Successful onboarding goes almost unnoticed into the retention phase. As soon as the new colleague feels a "we-feeling" and is no longer perceived as "the new guy," he has arrived in the company and his team. How quickly the transition from the onboarding to the retention phase proceeds depends heavily on how well the new employee can integrate into his or her new work environment and, conversely, how keen the new team is to welcome the newcomer into its midst.

Joint projects and lunch breaks can help. But they are only really successful if they are undertaken together with joy and out of free will. Dictated guidelines from an onboarding plan are of little help if the team only implements them half-heartedly. In order to intensify and successfully conclude the onboarding and retention phase, it therefore makes sense to involve the searching team into the selection process at an early stage. In this way, they have the opportunity to get to know their new colleagues at an early stage of the personnel selection process and to influence the hiring decision themselves.

Conclusion

A good candidate experience addresses the wants and needs of candidates at every stage. This is a sign of appreciation and shows true interest in the whole person and not just their labor. In addition, a very good candidate experience is characterized by the fact that the employer, team and task present themselves as authentically as possible to the candidates. This promotes open-mindedness on all sides and gives candidates the space to open up and appear authentically as well.

If we fail to make a positive impression on applicants in recruiting, we will not only lose our chance with them, but may also lose it with their friends and acquaintances. Applicants share the experiences they have in the selection process. This applies not only to bad experiences, but also to good ones. Ideally, the company and the candidate should meet in such an open and appreciative manner during the selection process that even in the event of a rejection, the candidate experience is perceived positively by the applicant.

Everyone in a company is needed to make this happen. A positive candidate experience cannot be created by the HR department alone. Instead, it is primarily the players who come into contact with candidates in the recruiting process who are called upon here. This often involves a whole range of colleagues from very different departments working together as a team in recruiting.

The most important things from chapter 3

- **Behind every application lies an individual motivation to change jobs, which needs to be asked about in detail.**
- **Motives for change are neither good nor bad. What is important is whether the applicant's expectations can be met.**
- **The way applicants are addressed depends on the respective target group and should be as authentic as possible.**
- **The 6-phase model of the Candidate Experience provides orientation on how and when to design the most authentic and individual communication possible.**

WHAT IS A RECRUITMENT TEAM?

At the beginning, we already talked about the fact that the challenges in recruiting are becoming increasingly complex and that recruiting is therefore developing into a team sport. It is therefore only logical that companies set up appropriate teams for recruiting.

In this chapter, we look at the players that make up the recruiting team. We then show what to look for when clarifying responsibilities - which is especially important in agile teams - and how the team makes decisions together.

Who is the team?

A recruiting team is made up of a wide variety of employees within a company. Of course, HR is a part of this, but so is the manager of the team in which a position is to be filled. This constellation describes the conventional setting in which most companies are recruiting.

Extended setting

To make recruiting agile, we need to extend the traditional setting. Because - as described above - we are dealing with an increasingly complex task in recruiting that can hardly be mastered by managers and HR alone. Secondly, we would like to respond more individually to the needs of applicants in agile recruiting. And thirdly, we want to provide an authentic insight into tasks, the team and the company. The goal is to ensure that the right candidates choose our company.

Requirement 1: Handling complexity easily. A recruiting team is therefore made up of a company's employees, who can help to reduce the increasing complexity in recruiting, or at least manage it better.

Requirement 2: Provide authentic insight. At the same time, team members are needed to help make the entire recruiting process authentic and transparent

Requirement 3: Exchange at eye level. and who can enter into a direct exchange at eye level with the candidates.

Many of these tasks are the responsibilities of HR. Up to now, we have always talked about HR in general terms, without going into exactly what roles are hidden behind it. HR departments are positioned very differently depending on the size of the company and its specialization. For example, the HR side of the recruiting team may include hiring managers, HR business partners, recruiters, active sourcers, employer brand managers, and other specialist roles. Each of these job profiles is involved in recruiting in different ways and can contribute to the recruiting team.

Not all companies have a large HR team, so they combine several HR roles on one employee or do without such specialization. For this reason, we will continue to refer to HR in simplified terms in the remainder of this book, but we will use this term to refer to all HR roles that can make a contribution to recruiting within a company.

Proposal: Central coordination by HR

The various HR roles are involved to varying degrees in the different phases of the recruiting process.

For a meaningful and targeted use of the concentrated HR know-how, it is therefore recommended that the recruiting activities are centrally coordinated by one person from the ranks of HR, e.g., a personnel officer. In the spirit of the team sports concept, this person can call in the various HR disciplines in a targeted manner and make the best possible use of them according to their abilities.

For example, an active sourcer's expertise is not needed for every job opening, and HR marketing colleagues will be more involved at the beginning of the recruiting process than in the selection phase, when interviews are conducted.

The agile plus: involve colleagues, specialists, customers

The agile recruiting team consists of HR employees on one hand. In addition, there is the manager of the respective departments. (Up to this point, this corresponds to the usual composition.) The agile team is now being expanded by colleagues from the department that is looking for the new employee.

This composition is particularly advantageous within a linear organization.

It makes sense to involve colleagues from the specialist department in the recruiting process who either have a similar function to the vacant position or will work closely with the new colleague in the future. Both pay off in terms of authentic and

and are intended to score points with applicants in the selection process through greater transparency and better insight into the task and team.

In a matrix organization, the team may be shaped somewhat differently. Here, in addition to the team in which the position to be filled is located, employees from other departments and divisions can also be a part of the recruiting team. This is convincing, especially if the employee you are looking for will work in the company across different teams or departments.

For example, if we are looking for a controller for a new production plant, the recruiting team could consist of HR, the executive, future colleagues from Controlling, and the plant manager of the new production facility.

In most cases, a recruiting team will be made up of a company's own employees. In addition, the team can be supported by external service providers such as headhunters or specialists from aptitude diagnostics and competence measurement. These service providers pay less attention to the goal of authentic communication, but should be considered as part of a coordinated and harmonized approach to the recruiting process.

Thinking beyond the boundaries of the company

The same applies when important business customers and suppliers are included in the selection process. In terms of an agile, customer-centric approach, it can be helpful for individual positions to think beyond the boundaries of their companies. Similar to engaging future internal teammates, engaging key customers and suppliers will enhance the collaboration with the new employee and sharpen business relationships.

Build up the process and the recruiting team step by step

For many companies, this may initially be a big step that they shy away from at first. In these cases, it is possible to start with an internal recruiting team. After the positive experiences and lessons, the confidence of a team-driven personnel selection increases.

For example, the next step can be taken by involving customers and suppliers in the selection process. Their role is mostly limited to a simple conversation with the aim of getting to know each other. A simple assessment is then obtained from both sides as to whether they can envision working together.

Admittedly, this sounds a bit like dreams of the future and will be new territory for the company and the customers or suppliers alike.

Let's imagine that we are looking for a key account manager to whom we entrust our two best and biggest customers. The new colleague will spend a large part of his working time with these two customers. He will probably have a closer exchange with them than with the other sales colleagues. Therefore, we should make sure that it is a good fit between these important customers and our new key account manager on an interpersonal level. Surely this can be discovered within the probationary period. However, a probationary period is particularly painful in sales. In addition to a loss of sales, the good relationship with our customers, who do not particularly appreciate frequent changes in contact persons, suffers.

We can look at another example using a construction company. A small construction company builds single-family houses on behalf of a customer. To ensure that this always succeeds in good quality and on time for the completion date, the company has developed a network of craftsmen from the region. It is precisely the cooperation with these subcontractors that makes the construction company successful. Therefore, when looking for a new construction manager, it is critical that this construction manager appropriately cultivates the network of tradesmen and works well with the major trades. Otherwise, there is a great risk that the regional craft enterprises will lose interest in working with the construction company and seek new cooperation partners.

These two examples show that it is advantageous to look beyond the boundaries of one's own company when selecting personnel. In the future, work will be even more interconnected and will take place in the interaction of several and different players in the value chain. Even though involving customers and suppliers in the recruitment process is a big step that still feels strange for companies, HR decision-makers should keep the option in mind. In the specific situation, depending on the position and the company, it is then necessary to find ways of establishing contact between applicants for particularly important positions, as well as decisive customers and suppliers, as part of a selection process.

One recruiting team per department or per division level?

Establishing a recruiting team for the entire company seems unconvincing. This immediately makes sense if you consider the aspect of authentic communication with applicants in the selection process. If we take into account the involvement of the searching team or colleagues from related departments, an approach with different recruiting teams is plausible. However, it must be carefully examined whether a separate recruiting team must also be established for each team in the company. Depending on the size of the team and the number of positions to be filled, an individual decision must be made as to whether each existing team in a company should also provide team members for its own recruiting team or whether a recruiting team can also be established at the divisional level.

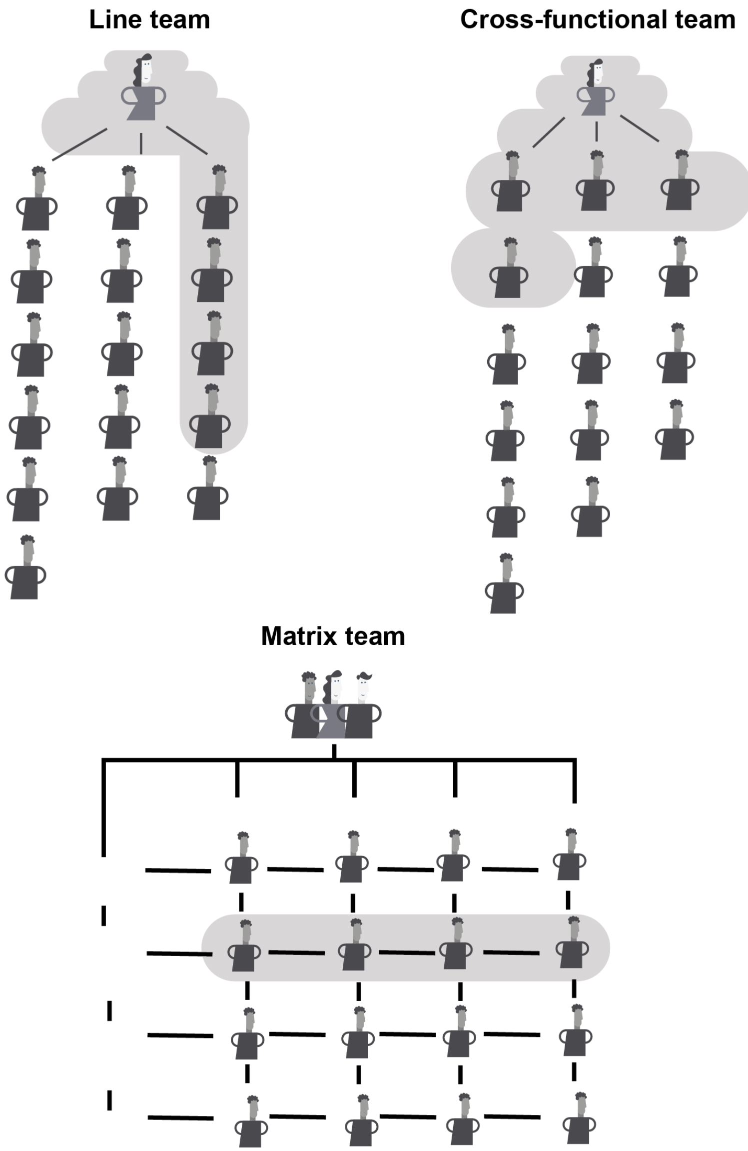


Fig. 3: Formation of recruiting teams in different organizational forms

Another example: The accounting department of a company consists of three teams: accounts receivable, accounts payable and travel expenses. An increase in personnel is not planned for the next few years. Staff turnover is very low; new colleagues are only rarely sought for one of the teams. In this case, it does not make sense to build a recruiting team for each of the three line teams. The relationship between effort and benefit would be so bad that it cannot be justified even with such an important topic as recruiting. For our accounting example, it is therefore advisable to establish a recruiting team for the entire accounting area. The recruiting team can then be made up of people from each of the line teams. Whether each line team provides a member for the recruiting team is an individual decision.

However, the involvement of future colleagues should not be overlookedNot even when, for example, the travel expense reporting team for which a new colleague is being sought, is not part of the recruiting team. In this example, a team-fit interview as described in chapter 10.4 is a good choice.

The optimal team size

The question about the optimal size of a recruiting team is not an easy one to answer. One consideration for the size of the recruiting team is the level of involvement of the various participants along the entire recruiting process. The degree of involvement describes, for example, in which process steps the team members of the recruiting team are involved, and how independently they are allowed to perform their tasks. Another aspect is the number of positions to be filled. If, for example, a division is currently experiencing a strong increase in personnel, it makes sense to build up a recruiting team that is comparatively strongly involved in the entire recruiting process.

Strong involvement of the seeking team can at the same time relieve the burden on HR and the manager. Recruiting processes can accelerate when the executive's schedule is no longer the bottleneck. However, before recruiting can be distributed among several shoulders, it is necessary to prepare the team step by step for its new task.

This contrasts with a department that is less likely to be looking for a new employee. In this case, it must be carefully considered how much the searching team should be involved in the recruiting process and how much effort is useful for the qualification of the individual team members.

For the smallest configuration of a recruiting team, it is recommended to include two other employees from the searching team in addition to HR and the manager. While HR and the executive may already have experience in recruiting, it is often a completely new task for the members of the searching team. This task can be made easier for the two team members by both learning from and with each other during the recruiting process.

Clarify responsibility

The first major step has been taken: we have put together a recruiting team for the divisions and for quite a few teams. Recruiting teams have started to work according to the principles of cross-functional teams. Then everything is actually settled now and the personnel search can begin, right? Basically, this assumption is correct. Nevertheless, the topic of responsibility is so important that we need to take a closer look at it here - and it should also be discussed in the recruiting teams afterwards.

As a reminder, in a cross-functional team (see chapter 2.1) not all team members can do everything, and neither do all team members do everything. After all, we want to make the best use of every team member in the recruiting process. For this to succeed, everyone in the team must be clear about what needs to be done. In a traditional setting, HR steers through the process, coordinates with the manager, and keeps applicants informed of the status of their application.

Even though coordination is to remain with HR, coordination and reconciliation efforts have already increased. Finally, an entire recruiting team now needs to be informed of the current status and the next steps.

For example, let's look at the interview phase in the recruiting process. A decisive factor for the integration of the searching team is to win the applicants for your own company through authentic and open communication. This also means that representatives of the searching team are involved in the recruitment interviews - or even conduct the interviews with the applicants on their own.

It is therefore necessary to keep an eye on close coordination processes, after all, the searching team wants to be informed about the current status of the candidate before the interview and jointly come to an assessment regarding the candidate after the interview. This assessment must in turn be communicated to the remaining recruiting team. At the same time, the effort increases when it comes to making an appointment for an interview and finding a suitable date both in the calendar of the members of the recruiting team and in the candidate's calendar.

Hiring manager to fill a position

For a faster and more pragmatic process, many companies appoint a hiring manager. This function is usually taken over by the manager who is currently recruiting. The hiring manager is responsible for filling this one position and, above all, keeps an eye on the selection process. In many cases, this already begins with the review and assessment of application documents.

In a recruiting team, the manager can assume the role of hiring manager. It is also conceivable for a team member to take on this role. After all, the first thing is for the Hiring Manager to coordinate both the recruiting process and the coordination meetings within the recruiting team.

However, this role can be expanded by having the Hiring Manager also coordinate the scheduling of interviews with candidates. This has the advantage that the applicant and team get in touch and get to know each other at an early stage in the selection process. In addition, this step will positively influence the candidate experience and increase it again if the inviting person is present at the first interview.

At first glance, it seems that we would like to gradually transfer responsibility for operational recruiting from HR to the specialist departments. In particular, correspondence with applicants, writing invitations and rejection letters, is likely to be a large part of the daily work for many HR departments. Correspondence and making appointments are not, per se, work that requires qualification in the HR environment and, strictly speaking, can be carried out in the position of any clerk. Transferring these tasks to the recruiting team should be straightforward.

This step should be taken, especially in companies that want to distribute more responsibility to their teams and to individual employees as part of the agile transformation. Only the responsibility for operational process execution is transferred to the recruiting team. It remains the task of HR to provide a flexible and secure process for personnel selection and to continuously improve it. In Chapter 5, “The Role of HR,” we go into more detail on this point.

In addition to the interview phase, there are many other steps in the recruiting process. Involving the recruiting team can be done in many different ways. It is by no means necessary to place all responsibility on the recruiting team members who are also members of the searching team. Many companies start by deploying recruiting teams for the first time in the interview phase and later assign them further tasks in the subsequent onboarding.

Over time, a recruiting process develops in which the individual members of the recruiting team take on different tasks according to their specializations and have varying levels of responsibility at different stages. In the process, team members learn from each other and share their knowledge and experience. HR in particular is called upon at this point to share its knowledge and make the other members of the recruiting team fit for their new task.

Co-determination in agile Teams

Those who bear responsibility should also have a say when decisions are to be made. A logical consequence, after all, is that you cannot take responsibility for your own actions if someone else is making the decisions for you. In accordance with the agile approach, it must be ensured that responsibility and decision-making authorities are located where the necessary competence is to be found, in order to make the respective decision. (Klein, Euwens 2018).

In agile recruiting, the responsibility and decision-making power lies with the recruiting team. Since this team also includes the executive and HR, the decision-making power seems to remain with the known players. What then is the role of the team in this setting, i.e. the employees of the searching team who are also involved in recruiting?

The more future colleagues are involved in the selection process, the more they would need to be involved in the decision-making process. Otherwise, these team members cannot take responsibility in the different phases of the recruiting process and improve recruiting piece by piece . (Häusling 2013).

We have already listed different factors that influence the level of involvement of the seeking team. It was always important to involve the team step by step. Gradually, responsibility is transferred from the manager and HR to the teammates. At the same time, the team is gradually building up more skills in order to be able to carry out the respective tasks in recruiting and to act responsibly..

The situation is similar now with decision-making. Step by step, the team is more involved at this point. We follow the principle that responsibility and decision-making authority should lie where the necessary competence for these decisions can be found.

Especially at the beginning, when there is still little decision-making authority to be found in the team, involving the team is a sign of the manager's appreciation for his or her employees. If a recruiting team has only just begun to grow, in most cases the competence of the team can still be significantly improved. Therefore, in this initial phase, HR is particularly asked to support the recruiting team in developing the necessary skills. In accordance with the distribution of competencies, HR and the manager bear responsibility and make the decisions.

Step by step - according to the increase in competence - the decision-making power can be transferred to the entire team.

There are several ways to make decisions. Which path is right for the recruiting team depends on the agile maturity of the team and the manager's willingness to transfer responsibility. (Häusling 2020)

The figure "Ways of a decision making" shows six methods on how decisions can be made together. The ways differ in how a team is involved in the decision-making process and how much responsibility is transferred from the leader to the team. For agile recruiting, this results in several possibilities that can be used differently along the personnel selection process.

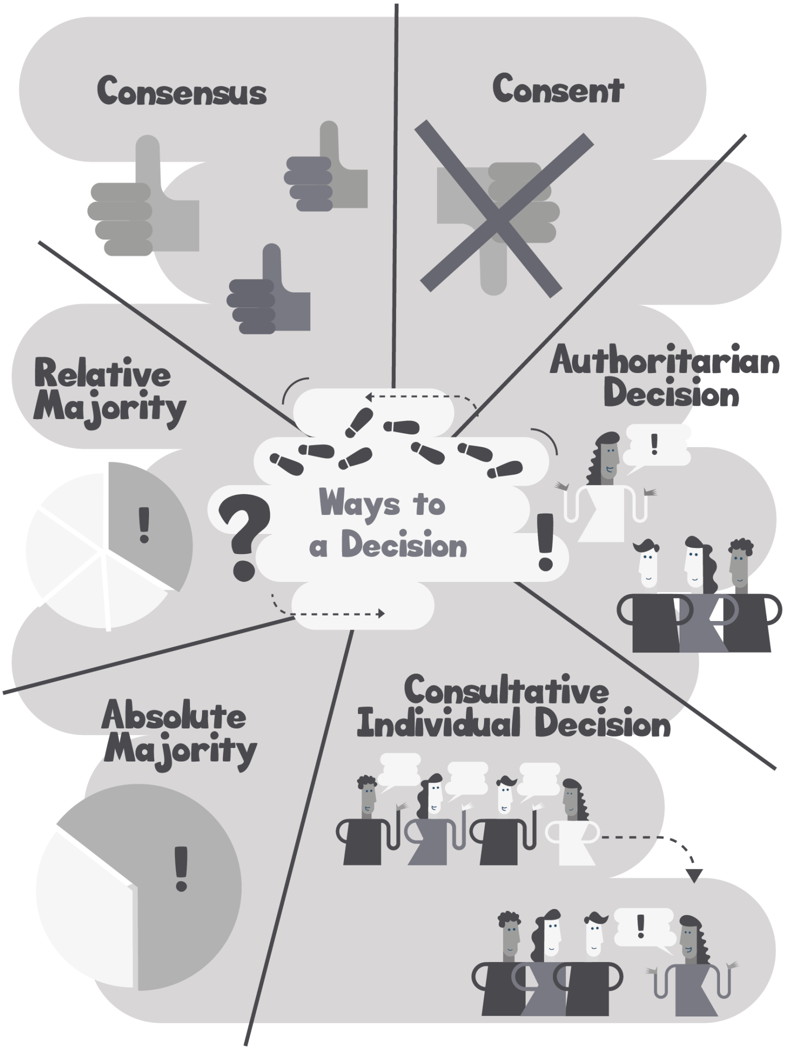


Fig. 4: Ways of making a decision

Path 1: The authoritarian decision

In authoritarian decision-making, the decision-making authority lies solely with the manager. There is no involvement of the team in decision making.

As shown in the figure, the leader communicates the decision they have made to their team. The team must accept this decision and act accordingly. Authoritarian decision making is still on the agenda for many companies and teams.

Managers certainly make their decisions in good faith and will always act in the best interests of the company and their team. However, such an authoritarian and obviously also hierarchical leadership style does not at all meet the requirements of today - and this applies regardless of whether we are moving in an agile context or not.

Not only recruiting, but the entire corporate environment is becoming increasingly complex. A manager is well advised to consider various positions and perspectives in addition to his or her own assessment when making decisions. One option is the consultative individual decision.

Path 2: The consultative individual decision

In the case of the consultative individual decision, the decision-making authority continues to rest solely with the manager. However, she consults with members of her team and others in the company before making her decision. As shown in the figure, the manager solicits opinions and perspectives from his or her team. The manager then makes a decision and announces it to his or her team. Again, the team has no explicit say or ability to have a veto at this point.

Before the manager makes his or her decision, it is important that they listen to their team. Whether and to what extent the recommendations of the team are taken into account in the decision-making process remains at the discretion of the manager. Certainly, hardly any manager will act against the recommendations of their team. Especially not in recruiting, when the team decides against a candidate after a team-fit interview.

The consultative individual decision doesn't just offer the possibility of obtaining different views on a task. The team's recommendations help the manager consider issues and resistance that arise within the team and incorporate them into their decision-making. In this way of decision-making, it is important to communicate the framework conditions to the team in advance.

In order not to arouse false expectations, it must be clear to all those involved that the team is only making recommendations. Whether and in what way the manager takes these recommendations into account remains solely at his or her discretion. What is changing, however, is the way the decision is announced. Compared to the authoritarian decision, the manager should justify his decision - and disclose why he followed specific recommendations and not others.

The consultative individual decision is a good way for manager and team to develop together towards agile leadership and the promotion of self-organization and self-responsibility. On one hand, the manager gains insight into which issues are of concern to his employees and gradually gains confidence in the team's decision-making authority. On the other hand, the team is encouraged to think for themselves and is involved in business decisions. It is now given the opportunity to develop these competencies step by step.

Path 3: The absolute majority

Many people probably associate the term absolute majority with federal elections and politics. An absolute majority requires more than half of all votes cast by those eligible to participate in the vote. This sounds a bit cryptic at first. However, it becomes clearer with an example related to our selection process.

Assuming HR, managers and their entire 8-person team are allowed to vote on whether or not the interviewed candidate should be hired after an interview. Each person has one vote and each vote has the same weight. The vote of the manager does not count twice or as much as all the votes of the team combined.

A total of ten people may vote. Six votes or more will be needed for an absolute majority. This number does not change. Not even when only seven of the ten people were able to vote. With a team of 8, it's not unlikely that someone will always be on vacation, on a business trip, or sick. Even in these situations, the absolute majority is not reached, until a majority of six votes in favor of hiring or rejection has been obtained from the vote of these seven persons.

The absolute majority thus ensures that the interests of all those entitled to vote are safeguarded, even if they are prevented from voting at the time. In our example, if six of the seven people agree to hire the candidate after the interview, the remaining three votes of the absent team members cannot change anything, because the absolute majority has been reached.

In such a vote, the leader relinquishes his/her decision-making power or has the same weight as any other member of the team. For such a far-reaching step in decision-making, special framework conditions are needed in the team and the company.

A team should only be given so much responsibility if they have learnt to make business decisions. It can and must no longer consider only the good of the team when voting. At the same time, all persons entitled to vote must be held responsible for the consequences of their decision.

At present, the absolute majority will probably only be a proven means of decision-making in recruiting in very few companies. At this point, it is rather meant to serve as a suggestion as to what options are available and how involved a team can be in the decision-making process.

Path 4: The relative majority

The relative majority only plays a role if there are more than two options. The option that receives the most votes is selected. For example, if there were three options to choose from, it would be sufficient for one option to attract 40% of the vote, while the other two would each have been chosen by 30% of voters.

With such a distribution of votes, it is not advisable to make a hiring decision. Even if a candidate receives 40% of the vote, that still leaves 60% of prospective colleagues who voted for another candidate. Moreover, in many selection processes it is unlikely to identify three candidates towards the end who are all equally suitable for the vacant position.

The relative majority can nevertheless be helpful in the recruiting process. Especially when the pre-selection involves selecting applicants from the incoming applications that will be considered in the further selection process.

In preparation for the selection process, for example, a recruiting team agreed to conduct a preliminary interview with the ten best applicants so that they could then name five candidates who would be invited to a personal interview. This is an appropriate approach, as recruiting is a time-consuming business.

Now, well over 70 applications have been received for the advertised position in a short period of time. Based on the selection criteria previously defined in the requirements profile, the applications can be reduced to 20 candidates, all of whom seem equally suitable based on the paperwork.

But the recruiting team wants to stick with its decision and conduct a preliminary interview with ten candidates. A decision must be made. At this point, a voting procedure in the sense of relative majority would be helpful. Perhaps in the form of a dot voting.

Preselection by means of dot voting

Each member of the recruiting team receives ten votes, which they can distribute among the various candidates in the form of points. It remains open whether the ten points are distributed among ten different candidates or whether a candidate receives several points from one team member at the same time. Following the voting, the ten applicants who received the most points will be invited for a first interview.

At this point, the manager again relinquishes their decision-making power and joins the recruiting team in terms of the number and weight of their voice. With one decisive difference to the previous example of the absolute majority.

The first selection of 70 to 20 applicants is based on previously defined characteristics from the requirements profile. The manager could therefore already influence the decision by defining selection criteria. In addition, the voting for further selection takes place on ten applicants from a set of seemingly equally good alternatives.

Uncertainty remains as to whether the top ten applicants will actually be selected, but this decision is made based on the experiential knowledge of the entire recruiting team. In addition, the manager can also claim veto power if he or she absolutely wants to see a particular applicant among the top 10.

Extra: Consensus and Consent

Whether decisions are brought about by means of consensus or consensus makes a small linguistic difference, it actually makes a big difference. To bring out this difference neatly, let's look at the two ways of making decisions. Summarized in a nutshell:

- Consensus means: The decision is made when everyone is in favor.
- Consent means: The decision is made when there is nothing more to say against it.

This means that a decision to be made by consensus can only be implemented if there is no veto from those entitled to vote. As soon as just one person vetoes the decision, it cannot be made. Not even if all other colleagues are in agreement.

The right of veto gives power to a minority. A minority can significantly influence the outcome of the decision by means of a veto. It may reject a proposal until the adjustments it requires have been made. If the group does not succeed in overriding the veto, or if one person insists on his or her veto, the decision cannot be made.

Regardless of whether the right of veto is exercised, in practice it usually takes a very long time before a decision can be reached by consensus. All parties involved must have formed an unambiguous opinion at the end. This can involve long periods of searching for information and extensive discussions. If all participants then fail to reach the same result, the content of the vote must be changed and the process starts again from the beginning.

A consensus decision, on the other hand, means that it is not the majority that decides, but the best available argument. If the best available argument stands for the decision being made, it will be made. Decisions can be made quickly this way. In consensus, an objection is not a veto, but an indication that there is still something to be considered. If an objection exists, it can often be integrated into the decision in a number of ways.

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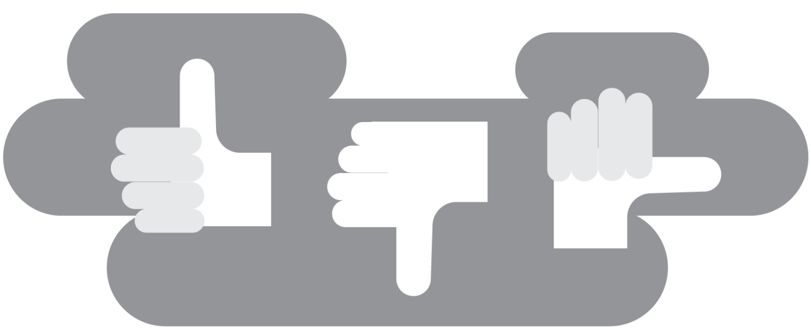
Decisions made by consensus can get better with each objection. Provided that an objection does not include a serious reason against a decision. Whereas, even in this case, the decision improves because it is not made.

The major advantage of decision-making by consent over consensus is that decisions can be made quickly and cannot be blocked by the veto of an individual. Instead of a veto, there are objections that influence a decision with regard to the quality of their arguments.

Here's an example: Following an interview, the recruiting team meets to make a decision for the interviewed candidate and how to proceed. An initial thumb vote can be used to find out if there is already a consensus to hire the candidate. Thumbs up means, "Yes, I am in favor of hiring the candidate", thumbs down means, "I still have objections that we need to clarify before making a hiring decision".

With little effort, this method can be used to locate members of the recruiting team who would like to bring an objection. Each team member raises their objection and together they consider how to resolve that objection or whether it is a serious objection that militates against hiring the candidate. Once all objections and possible solutions have been discussed, there is yet another thumb vote. In this voting, the variant "thumbs aside" is also allowed. This variation helps team members who previously objected to hiring the candidate to show that this hiring decision is not the best from their perspective, but that they will support the decision.



The thumb voting should now come to a clear result. Either all thumbs are up and to the side, allowing the candidate to be hired, or all thumbs are down and to the side, resulting in the candidate being rejected. If the voting result consists of thumbs up and thumbs down, the arguments of the opposing votes are to be examined once again. If the objections are not serious, a decision can still be made by overruling the minority.

For the executive, a consensus decision means transferring a lot of responsibility to the recruiting team. Since she also does not have veto power, the executive must be able to support the recruiting team's decision. This is a big step for many managers, and one that is easier to take if the consultative individual decision method was initially used. This preliminary stage helps the manager to gain confidence in the decision-making competence of his or her employees. At the same time, the team gains experience in making selection decisions and has the opportunity to learn from the manager and HR.

Decisions made by consensus represent a high level of maturity in agile transformation. At the same time, the new colleague selected in this way will find it much easier to integrate into the team. Finally, some of the future colleagues were involved in the selection decision and did not produce any serious arguments against hiring.

Conclusion

The different ways a decision can be made show how a team can be involved in decision making. How much decision-making power is ultimately transferred to the team depends on the maturity of the entire company. In companies with a high agile maturity level, it is conceivable that employees will make decisions on their own responsibility as to whom they want to hire. At the same time, there will be many companies whose executives will want to retain at least some veto power regarding a hiring decision. After all, it's up to them to lead this new colleague and make sure their team performs as required.

One feasible way that enables mutual learning and growth is to move away from authoritarian decision-making processes to decision-making processes that are initially carried out on a consultative basis. In a further step, it is possible to move to consensus decisions as soon as sufficient competencies have been built up in the recruiting team.

It is particularly important to clearly communicate and define the decision-making path at every stage. This must be done at the beginning of the selection process at the latest, otherwise there is a great danger that an expectation of decision-making powers will be aroused, especially among the team members of the searching team, which a manager does not (yet) want to go along with.

If, for example, HR and the manager actively involve the team in the selection process and the team independently takes over part of the respective interviews, the team must then also have the opportunity to share the impressions and insights it gained from the interview with the applicants. If these impressions do not flow into the decision-making process for a rejection or hiring, there will be great annoyance in the team and the relationship of trust between the manager and his or her employees will suffer.

The most important things from chapter 4

- A recruiting team includes all the players who work together to fill a position.
- A recruiting team also consists of employees who will work closely with the new colleague in the future.
- A recruiting team can be created for each department or for each team in an organization.
- Responsibilities must be clearly defined in the recruiting team, and one employee often assumes the role of hiring manager.
- Recruiting teams are given a right of co-determination. At the beginning, the procedure of a consultative individual decision is recommended, which can develop into the procedure of a consensus.

THE ROLE OF HR

In a classic setting, HR is not only responsible for the entire recruiting process, but also for the operational implementation of each recruiting step.

In agile recruiting, the role of HR is changing: HR activities are fully aligned with the needs of customers. And HR's customers are the various departments of the company.

In the context of agile recruiting, HR supports and encourages recruiting teams to achieve their goal. HR becomes an enabler and at the same time, consolidates its expert role by remaining responsible for improving and developing recruiting processes and activities.

Expert role and enabler

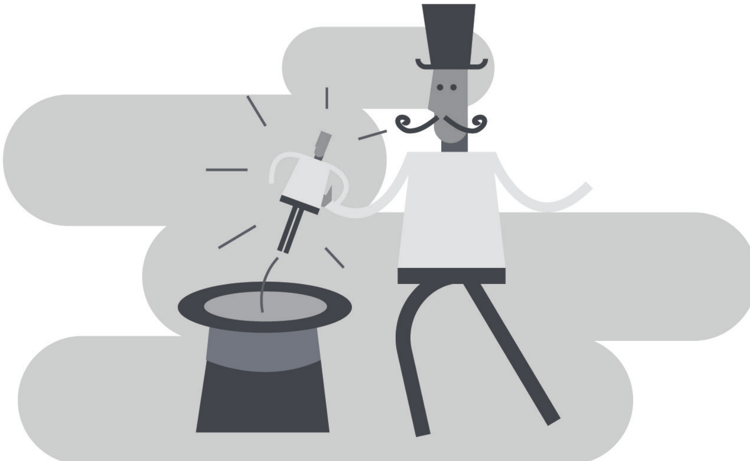
No job interview without HR! This is the self-imposed measure in many companies for quality assurance - or perhaps also for securing the position of HR in the company. The second view may be a bit cynical and may not do justice to the HR's efforts. However, it should serve as a provocative introduction for us to look at the tasks of HR in recruiting through the customer's lens. A customer-centric approach is the basis of every agile project and therefore must also be observed in agile recruiting.

HR's customers are first and foremost the various specialist departments of a company. These areas are supported by HR so that they can achieve the best possible every day. In the context of recruiting, we could also say that applicants are HR's customers. After all, we focus all our recruiting activities on them and try to make our communication with applicants as authentic as possible in order to attract them to our company.

However, it is questionable whether applicants are customers of HR or of the searching department. If we look at the different interests, many things should become clearer. HR's task is to provide the best possible support to the various specialist departments. HR helps to create framework conditions and structures that enable smooth and purposeful cooperation within the company. Developing and delivering recruiting processes and strategies that work is part of this task.

Obviously, it is also of interest to HR that vacancies are filled with the best candidates as quickly as possible. But the applicants themselves are not HR's customers. They are the departments that want to hire a new employee. For example, it is not HR's desire to hire another sales team member, otherwise it would be an instruction from HR to the sales team to hire another colleague.

In practice, it looks like the sales team or the manager reports their staffing needs to HR and asks for support. Often, HR is expected to present the perfect candidate in as few days as possible, who only needs to be quickly approved by the department. Ideally, the new employee will be delivered as ordered, and as quickly as possible and without much inquiry.



The reality is a little different. The responsibility for finding the right employee does not lie with HR alone. The business units must strive to win the favor of their customers, and they are welcome to count on HR's support in doing so. However, the department should be well aware of the wants and needs of applicants seeking employment in accounting.

Responsibility of the department

Here's an example: Let's imagine an accounting department that has simply bypassed digitization over the last 10 years. There is no slide rule, but the accounting software is still from the 90s of the last millennium. Receipts are still filed manually in paper form. The manager is known for his traditional management style. There is a culture of using Mr./Mrs/Ms. Last Name throughout the team and the dress code is business chic, preferably with a tie or in a suit.

These framework conditions should only be attractive for a few applicants. In the highly competitive job market for accountants, it is becoming even more difficult to find a candidate for the company. However, these difficult framework conditions are not the responsibility of HR, but of the specialist department.

Recruiting, therefore, cannot be the sole responsibility of HR. The external impact of a department and the contemporary design of its work content are the responsibility of the respective departments and their managers.

A first step to bring the department closer to its “customers” is to make them aware that they are also responsible for the recruiting success and to involve them more in the entire recruiting process.

Through contact with its target group, the department becomes better acquainted with the wishes and needs of applicants and learns first-hand what is currently available on the labor market.

Improve framework conditions for recruiting.

For agile recruiting, this specifically means that HR creates the best possible framework for recruiting new colleagues. The development and continuous improvement of the recruiting process is the responsibility of HR. Together with the department, the best possible recruiting process is set up for the respective position.

The implementation of recruiting, especially the selection phase, is the responsibility of the entire recruiting team. In this team, HR assumes the role of an enabler. HR supports the team in building the necessary recruiting competencies for an optimal recruiting process and for compliance with set standards for quality assurance and legal compliance.

The development of the required recruiting skills take place gradually, and is adapted to the experience of the team and the next steps in the recruiting process. Let us assume that a recruiting team that is still quite inexperienced is given the task of conducting a telephone interview with individual applications as part of the pre-selection process so that they can then select the candidates who are to be invited to a personal interview (Häusling 2013). With the exception of the HR colleague, none of the recruiting team has ever conducted telephone interviews. The idea is: Right from the start, candidates will have the opportunity to talk to future colleagues and gain real insights. To do this, it is necessary to bring the team into contact with its customers as quickly as possible and to involve them more in the recruiting process.

The HR’s role on the recruiting team is not to conduct the phone interviews, but to act as an enabler to prepare team members for their new role. The HR has to pick up the team members from where they are. For example, an interview guide developed together with HR can provide more confidence in the interview, or the HR can teach team members some basic questioning techniques.

If the team is inexperienced, it is important to carefully consider which competencies must be present and in what quality, so that the inexperienced team members can successfully conduct interviews. Several weeks of training to become a profiler would surpass the set goal. However, the recruiting team will not be able to solve this task entirely without assistance from HR.

Over time, experience and routine increase, in the recruiting team in conducting phone interviews and in HR in coaching recruiting skills. All parties involved learn from each other and can constantly develop their approach and adapt it to the needs of the recruiting team and the applicants.

We must also not forget the applicant at this point. For many applicants, it will be new to speak directly with colleagues from the specialist departments. Completely new situations and questions can develop in the interviews that might not arise in a setting with a manager and HR. How to deal with these situations and how best to answer the applicant's questions is a new task for HR and the entire recruiting team to solve together.

Experts for labor law aspects

Take the hiring process, for example. Hearing the works council and drawing up the contract can remain with HR. The necessary knowledge from the Works Constitution Act and the labor law hurdles when drawing up an employment contract is better placed in the expert hands of HR.

If online assessments and personality tests are used in the selection process, it will be deemed sufficient if the recruiting team is informed about the possibilities of these selection methods. However, deployment and evaluation remain in the expert hands of HR. HR can choose a sensible method in relation to the respective job or hire third-party service providers.

It is important at this point to draw an expedient line. It is in the nature of things that fewer hires are made than interviews are conducted. There are numerous legal requirements and internal agreements to consider when hiring. Building up this knowledge in the recruiting team does not seem to make sense. Especially not when we consider that the legal framework changes frequently.

It may be a little different in the example with online assessments. If, for example, they are used for each applicant as part of the pre-selection process, it can make sense to gradually empower more experienced recruiting teams in this regard as well and increase the level of expertise throughout the team.

Consulting and coaching competence for HR

It's not just the individual members of the recruiting team who need to build and develop new skills. HR also faces new and unknown tasks as an enabler.

For the perfect start in agile recruiting and in building recruiting teams, it is helpful to prepare HR for this new task. The focus of this new task is on consulting and coaching skills, which need to be developed and promoted in a targeted manner. These competencies help the HR, and finally there is a change of perspective.

As a subject matter expert, HR is accustomed to answering difficult questions and resolving complex situations. As an enabler, HR is now required to understand and "pick up" its counterpart. It does little good to tell the recruiting team how something can be done better in recruiting if HR is not able to empower them to improve.

HR's expert advice: "Interviews must follow the structure of Schuler's Multimodal Interview. In addition to the STAR questioning technique, I recommend that you pay attention to the well-known judgment errors and the Pygmalion effect." is definitely true. However, the recruiting team will probably never have heard of Heinz Schuler and his Multimodal Interview as well as the STAR questioning technique. While both can be learned in self-study, it is possible to read about assessment errors in personnel selection, but in order to avoid them permanently or at least to minimize them, a partner is needed to stimulate self-reflection and to question the decisions made.

Consulting and coaching skills are needed by HR not only in the context of recruiting and building recruiting teams. But also, in the context of agile transformation, strategic projects or complex change processes. HR staff are increasingly needed in these areas to help shape business processes and provide support in an advisory capacity. A development that can lead to a new self-image of the HR function.

Conclusion

Developing and enabling the recruiting team is one of the most important tasks of HR in agile recruiting. HR can take on this task because it has the necessary expert knowledge. However, the goal is not to train all members of the recruiting team to be experts as well. A distinction needs to be made between what expertise is needed in the recruiting team so that it can do its job as desired, and what expertise remains with HR as the expert.

In addition to the interview phase, there are many other steps in the recruiting process. Involving the recruiting team can be done in many different ways. It is by no means necessary to place all responsibility on the recruiting team members who are also members of the searching team. Many companies start by deploying recruiting teams for the first time in the interview phase and later assign them further tasks in the subsequent onboarding.

Over time, a recruiting process develops in which the individual members of the recruiting team take on different tasks according to their specializations and have varying levels of responsibility at different stages. In the process, team members learn from each other and share their knowledge and experience. HR in particular is called upon at this point to share its knowledge and make the other members of the recruiting team fit for their new task.

The right degree of self-organization

In agile recruiting, HR continues to be valued for its subject matter expertise. In which topics HR is consulted as a subject matter expert depends on the agile maturity level of the entire company and especially of the recruiting teams. For a smooth recruiting process and a positive candidate experience, the tasks and degree of involvement must be precisely defined in advance.

In various places, we have already talked about the need to gradually introduce members of the recruiting team to their new role. The manager learns to let go and the team members gradually grow into their new tasks. This process is accompanied by HR.

Now is the time to take a close look at the areas in which HR can enable the recruiting team and the degree of self-organization that can be supported by the recruiting team. At the same time, we also keep an eye on what level of involvement is appropriate for the position being filled.

When and how the full recruiting team is involved in the recruiting process can be determined beforehand in consultation between HR and the manager. This is very helpful, especially at the beginning.

If a new recruiting team is set up, this approach gives the manager the necessary confidence to gradually integrate the team into recruiting and hand over responsibility. More experienced teams can talk together about what the team can do more and better to support the recruiting process.

Degree of desired integration

The figure “Enabling a recruiting team” shows four different process steps in which a recruiting team can support the process. In addition, the decision-making process is mapped, i.e. the degree of desired co-determination by the team. Team member involvement can be assessed individually in each dimension. For example, the degree of desired involvement curve shows a desired medium to high involvement of the team for the "requirements analysis" process step, while a rather low involvement of the team is desired for the "job advertisement" process step.

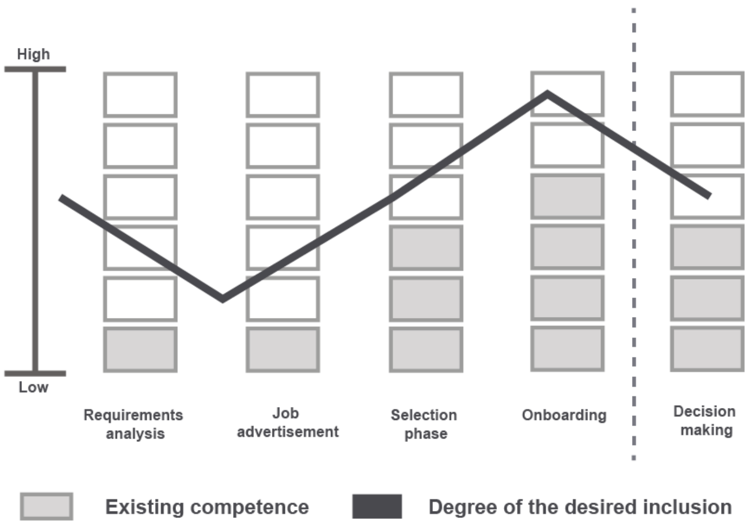


Fig. 5: Enable a recruitment team

Existing recruiting expertise

In addition, the existing recruiting competence of the team members is assessed. Let's look at the "requirements analysis" and "job advertisement" steps again. The skills required for this are currently very poorly developed in the recruiting team. There is a low level of maturity. On the other hand, there is already a high level of competence in the area of onboarding.

The difference between existing competence and desired level of involvement results in HR's task of enabling and coaching the recruiting team towards the target state.

Step-by-step development of recruiting competence

The recruiting competencies in the recruiting team are to be built up step by step. The gap between existing and desired competence in the process step "requirements analysis" is quite high. Therefore, the team cannot initially provide support at the level of maturity desired. This should be clear to everyone involved at the beginning so as not to create false expectations and not to overburden the team. At the same time, the desired maturity level sets the destination of the journey, and HR and the team know which way they still have to go.

The goal is not to always achieve the highest level of maturity of each recruiting skill on the team. There are a variety of factors that influence the ideal maturity level. A few possible factors are mentioned below. This list is intended primarily as a suggestion and help. This helps when it comes to building your own recruiting team and better assessing the skills you want.

Process step 1: Requirements analysis. In general, the team can make a valuable contribution in the requirements analysis. Especially when an identical or similar position in the team needs to be filled. The team can provide insights on day-to-day operational challenges that a leader has moved away from over time.

If a completely new position is to be filled in the team, the team needs a certain amount of foresight and entrepreneurial thinking before it can make a valuable contribution in the requirements analysis. This applies the more if the team is to be developed further in a targeted manner and a lateral thinker is sought who challenges the entire team as a disruptive element.

Process step 2: Selection phase. The team can have a huge positive impact on the candidate experience during the selection phase. The involvement of the team should not be waived at this point.

If there are many positions to be filled in the recruiting team's area of responsibility, it makes sense to aim for a high level of maturity for the selection phase. On one hand, the team gets the necessary practice to improve accordingly, on the other hand, HR and the manager can be relieved.

For many companies, strong team engagement at this stage is also a start to agile team transformation and greater involvement in recruiting. Many recruiting teams start with the selection phase for the first time before they are later involved in the other steps.

Process step 3: Onboarding. Especially in onboarding, a strong involvement of the team is necessary to integrate the new colleague into the new team as quickly as possible. It is therefore not advisable at this point to aim for a low level of maturity. However, whether onboarding can be fully placed under the responsibility of the team also depends on various factors within the company.

Providing work materials, access rights, and other work equipment may be beyond the authority of a recruiting team and may require the authority of a manager. Onboarding is especially suitable for young recruiting teams to continue the work they have started from the selection phase and to learn further by onboarding the selected candidate.

Process step 4: Decision making. One of the most exciting points. The desired degree of maturity in decision-making defines how much the team can influence a decision or even make it alone. The degree of co-determination may differ in the individual process steps. One of the most exciting points. The target maturity level in decision-making defines how much the team can influence a decision or even make it alone.

Conclusion and outlook

In sum, it's a shared learning from each other and trust across all phases of recruiting.

The maturity level for decision making can grow over time. How independently a team is allowed to make decisions ultimately depends on the manager's willingness to delegate responsibility and on the maturity of the entire organization in dealing with self-organizing teams.

The second part of this book deals specifically with the individual process steps. Different ways in which the HR can enable and coach a recruiting team according to the targeted agile maturity level will be highlighted. Decision making is a topic all its own and is important along the entire recruiting process. We have already discussed how decisions are made and how HR can promote the agile maturity of a team in the chapter Decision Making.

Working aids online

In the online work aids, we have placed a blank version of the illustration "Setting up a recruiting team" for you to download. Use the illustration to determine together in the team or in consultation between HR and the manager at which point in the recruiting process the team should be involved and to what extent. The comparison of existing competence and the desired degree of involvement of the recruiting team shows HR where and to what extent the members of the recruiting team should be qualified.

The working aid can be accessed via
www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR

Establishment of a Community of Practice

At the latest when several recruiting teams develop in a company, it is helpful to create a Community of Practice (CoP). Such a community provides the necessary space for mutual exchange and learning from each other.

Enabling the recruiting teams remains the responsibility of HR. A CoP provides a common platform for all recruiting teams. Especially if several recruiting teams are active in the company, an exchange of experiences based on what has been previously experienced and learned can take place within the framework of a CoP. The unifying element is finding the right colleagues for the team and the area. Depending on the target group sought and the maturity of a recruiting team, the approach and search will vary. The exchange about the different challenges helps all participants to reflect on their own recruiting approach and to further improve it.

What is a community of Practice?

"Communities of practice are understood as informal groups of people within an organization who come together on the basis of their expertise and common interests and exchange knowledge, know-how as well as experiences over a longer period of time. Communities of Practice (CoP for short) are where knowledge is generated, acquired and shared." (Schwuchow, Gutmann 2011)

The basic understanding of CoPs is that participants are independent of instructions and intrinsically motivated, i.e. all members participate voluntarily. This corresponds with the view of CoPs that they do not serve the goal of filling a single position as quickly as possible and direct all of the company's forces toward this one goal. Rather, two questions are integral to CoPs and participants:

- How can I solve an acute problem?

- How can I do my job even better in the future?

Acute problems and challenges naturally enjoy priority in a CoP. After all, acute cases are about supporting a recruiting team with an urgent problem and finding a solution together. In many cases, collegial case consultation is an option at this point, or HR can use its expert knowledge to help view and solve the problem from a different angle.

This is how to understand the situation: Is there an acute problem? Or is it a general challenge faced by all members of the CoP?

- A statement such as "We are not receiving any suitable applications for our position!" is generic and does not represent an acute problem, but a general challenge for the entire CoP.

- If, on the other hand, it is a question of having to fill the position of IT security expert within the next 6 weeks, because otherwise security-related contractual agreements cannot be met, we are dealing with an acute problem.

This distinction is important; after all, a CoP is not a task force - and it should serve the function of sharing knowledge, expertise, and experience unimpaired. At the same time, it should also provide real assistance and help develop solutions to problems. Otherwise, members will not get value from the event and will invest their time elsewhere in the future.

Derive recommendations for action, develop innovations

If there are no acute problems, the members try to derive patterns and recommendations for action from their experiences and deal with innovations and development opportunities, give short presentations or invite external experts.

For all this to succeed, a minimum of structure is necessary for the format. In an ideal world, the CoP controls itself completely independently, structures its topics itself, engages in time management, and ensures documentation of topics and approaches to solutions. It is a long way until then. Especially at the beginning, when a CoP is to be newly established, it takes great effort to arouse the curiosity of all recruiting teams about this format and to create helpful offerings.

Let's assume that different recruiting teams have been active in a company for a good six months and now the requirement is formulated that the teams should exchange experiences in a CoP. This step seems to come a bit prematurely. After all, even though the teams should have gained some interesting experience in the past few months, it seems to make more sense for the relatively inexperienced teams to expand their knowledge on the topic of recruiting. And they do so specifically and on the exact topics they are currently dealing with in the recruiting process.

Support from HR

Particularly at the beginning, a certain amount of advance work, e.g. through HR, is necessary. To spark the interest of recruiting teams, short presentations can be given or exercises on key recruiting tasks can be conducted as an introduction to the meetings. These can be exercises on questioning techniques, interviewing or assistance with requirements analysis, which should be of interest to almost all participants at the beginning.

It will take several meetings before there is enough trust between the recruiting teams and they open up as part of the CoP. This time can be actively used by HR to place important topics within the CoP in the form of short presentations and exercises. This makes the CoP a valuable format for all participants right from the start, and HR has the chance to enable several teams at the same time.

Open discussions on virulent topics

In addition to pure knowledge transfer, there are also questions that almost always lead to lively discussions. These include the topics of gut feeling in recruiting, discrimination and diversity in personnel selection, form of address or form of address in applicant communication, and much more.

The above examples are suggestions on how to generate member interest especially when building a CoP for recruiting teams. Especially in the initial phase, teams often find it difficult to talk about their experiences and, above all, their problems. On one hand, the wealth of experience is probably still quite thin, and on the other hand, no one likes to report in the group about topics that have not gone particularly well for them.

The greatest strength of a CoP, however, is that participants learn together from each other. After a good start, recruiting team members in particular should be held accountable to report on their experiences. For example, an experienced recruiting team may report on the onboarding of a new colleague they met earlier in the selection process and where they were involved in the hiring decision. This is a topic of interest to all members and is particularly exciting when the new colleague is already known to individual team members from the selection process.

These reports should also be of interest to HR. Presumably, there are already standards in onboarding. Communicating these and also communicating how they are lived and perceived helps to improve them further.

Collaborative learning can go even further. In response to the question “What to do if the recruiting team regrets a hiring decision and wants to part ways with the new colleague within the probationary period?”, HR is unlikely to have an answer for the time being. Of course, HR has the necessary knowledge to issue a probationary period notice. But what about the recruiting team? What opportunity should the team have to provide and also receive appropriate feedback from the new employee? This is an exciting question, and one to which we have arrived at very different solutions in different companies.

Agenda for a meeting of the Community of Practice

In order to develop a good structure for a CoP meeting, we should not forget that it is a voluntary appointment and participants should accept the invitation out of an intrinsic motivation. At a regular community meeting of, say, 90 minutes, participants will very consciously consider whether to invest that time in recruiting.

We have had good experience with dividing a CoP meeting into two blocks.

The first part can be used - with an impulse lecture or an exercise - to teach skills on a specific topic. Which topics are of interest to the community can be deduced from the general recruiting procedure at the beginning. The necessary skills should be easily conveyed, especially by HR. In addition, at each meeting, members can be asked what topics they would like to have more input on. These topics can then be the subject of one of the following meetings and can also be presented by the CoP participants themselves.

The second part of a CoP meeting can then follow an open format such as Open Space. In addition to the professional input, we create a space in Open Space where all participants can contribute their current topics or even freely share their accumulated recruiting experiences with others. Of course, this part also lends itself to deepening the exchange on the previous technical impulse.

When inviting participants to the CoP, it should be pointed out each time that a distinction is made between the technical impulse and the Open Space. Participants are free to attend the entire meeting or only the part that is currently of interest to them. Such open invitations are probably still quite new for many colleagues in the company. Therefore, any invitation should state that it is welcome to attend the meeting for the technical presentation or the open space format only. This way, CoP members get the opportunity to invest their time in the best possible way and do not feel trapped in endless meetings.

The added value of a CoP develops over time through the open exchange of experiences and learning from each other. However, this is only possible if the members of the CoP get involved of their own accord and want to drive the topic of recruiting forward together within the company. Mandatory appointments and compulsory attendance are therefore just as counterproductive as endless appointments on dictated topics.

Conclusion

The Community of Practice is a format in which knowledge is acquired and shared. It is based on voluntary participation and the intrinsic motivation of all participants. In agile recruiting, the CoP is a format to enable recruiting teams. Initially, it is HR's job to bring this format to life and fill it with professional content. Over time, the CoP may evolve into a self-organized format that can continue to be facilitated by the HR.

What is Open Space?

Open Space is a method of structuring and conducting a conference or meeting. Unlike "classic" conferences, participants have a direct influence on topics and content. To this end, participants are given the opportunity to contribute their own topics and experiences. Each participant is free to decide which topic he or she would like to participate in and where, if necessary. would like to actively participate in a discussion. (T2 Informatik 2020)

Overview: The process of an Open Space

- **Topic collection: Each participant is given the opportunity to briefly present their topic of interest to the group.**
- **Marketplace: the proposed topics are organized and put in chronological order. For example, two 30-minute time slots can be defined in a 60-minute format. Whereby several topics can be discussed in parallel in each time slot. If, for example, three topics are discussed in parallel in each time slot, a total of six topics are offered in the marketplace.**
- **The participants of the Open Space decide themselves on which topic they would like to contribute and form a group together with the topic giver. The group decides together how to organize the group work.**
- **If a proposed topic finds no or very few interested parties, the topic giver is free to drop their topic and join another group.**
- **The law of "two feet" applies. It is explicitly desired that the participants switch between the different topic groups. Especially if they can't take anything for themselves from the discussion or share anything more with the group.**
- **Results collection: Ideally, content, questions and findings are documented in the individual topic groups, which are compiled and briefly summarized in the plenary session at the end of the event.**

The most important things from chapter 5

- Recruiting cannot be the sole responsibility of HR. The departments also have a responsibility to offer an attractive workplace.

- HR is the process expert for recruiting. Processes and methods are constantly being developed.

- As an expert, HR ensures that recruiting teams and departments are empowered to design recruiting processes independently.

- Involvement and empowerment of the recruiting team is done depending on the agile maturity level of an organization and the number of positions to be filled.

- A community of practice enables learning from each other and helps HR and recruiting teams to continuously improve.

Part 2: Agile recruiting - how to proceed concretely

The second part of the book follows the agile recruiting process step by step, from requirements analysis and job advertisement to pre-selection, interview and onboarding.

For each of the five process steps, we present the best methods and models for concrete and effective implementation. We will also give you concrete tips on how to successfully introduce agile recruiting in your company.

To get started, we present two tools that have been tried and tested in practice: The two agile tools PDCA cycle and retrospective will be extremely helpful throughout the recruiting process.

TOOLS FOR A GOOD START

In the second part of this book, there is guidance and help to make the individual steps in the recruiting process more agile. In order to do this in the best possible way, we first look at the necessary tools that we can use throughout the recruiting process.

The PDCA cycle - an important tool

The letters PDCA stand for Plan, Do, Check, Act and it describes a model for implementing change and continuous improvement. These are two things that we also have to deal with in agile recruiting.

On the one hand, the introduction of more agile recruiting processes is a change process in the sense of change management. Existing processes and structures such as the traditional interview setting or the attitude and view of the candidates change. At this point, the PDCA cycle is a helpful tool to measure the development and progress of the desired changes and also to take corrective action if everything does not go according to plan.

On the other hand, the PDCA cycle can be used when it comes to measuring the success and effectiveness of the various measures along the recruiting process. Fast learning is possible, especially through a regular check of previous recruiting efforts. In this way, it is also possible to develop an understanding of which measures are particularly successful and which procedure does not achieve the planned success.

Many small cycles that run directly one after the other are desirable. In this way, it is possible to test iteratively, i.e. in small steps, which approach is successful in filling a particular position.

“Learn from mistakes!” is an often-heard piece of advice. Even if it sounds a little demotivating at first, learning from mistakes is exactly the right approach for complex projects in uncertain and rapidly changing times. There are many more ways to do a thing wrong than right. But most of the time, we don’t understand the best measure for doing something right until after the event. This is exactly where the PDCA cycle comes into play. Its iterative approach with many small learning loops makes it possible to identify successful actions and quickly correct faulty behavior. In addition, we can learn from every mistake what and, ideally, why something is not working. (Rahn 2018)

The PDCA cycle always follows the same scheme. In the following we present what is behind the individual phases and what to look out for. (Kanbanize 2020) For a better understanding, we use the example of a recruiting team that wants to receive more suitable applications with the help of a revised job advertisement.

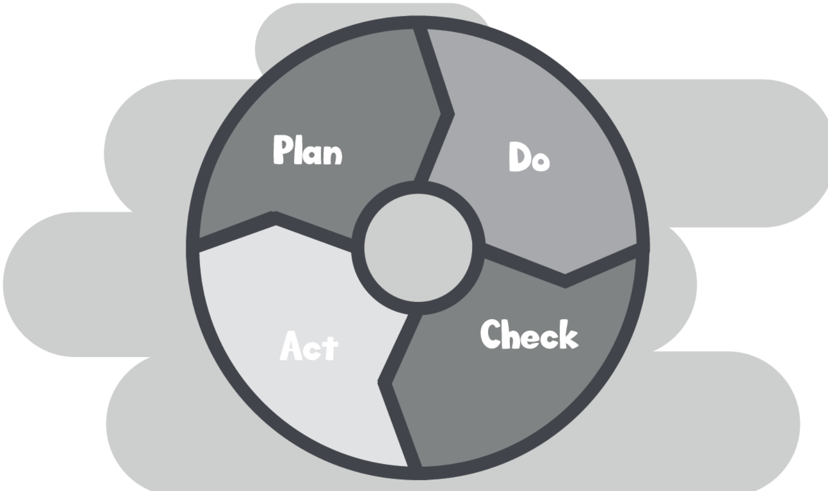


Fig. 6: PDCA cycle

Phase 1: Plan. In the first phase, we plan what needs to be done. However, only the next concrete step is planned. No plan is created for the entire recruiting process from requirements profile to onboarding. In our example, the next step is to create a plan to revise the job ad to achieve the goal of "getting more suitable applicants."

Small steps and the focus on partial goals make even large and complex projects tangible. They help develop a detailed plan with a lower margin for error.

For the planning phase, it is helpful to find answers to the following questions:

- What core problem will we solve?
- What resources do we need?
- What resources do we have?
- What is the best solution to address the problem with the available resources?
- How does our plan help achieve the big goal?

Phase 2: Do. After a concrete plan has been developed, it is time to implement it. In the second phase, we do everything we can to make our plan work.

For our example, this means: To revise the job advertisements, a comparison of the advertisement with the previously created requirement profile was planned. Feedback is now being sought from colleagues in the company about the ad. For this purpose, previously selected colleagues are interviewed who hold a position in the company with the same function as the vacant position.

As we all know, a plan only lasts until it comes into contact with reality. In implementation, the recruiting team learns that the colleagues to be interviewed are on vacation. An adjustment of the job advertisement can only be made on the basis of the requirement profile.

It is questionable whether this step toward improvement will bring the necessary success. Due to the planning in small sub-steps, it is possible to intervene quickly at this point and select other colleagues for the survey. In addition, a decision is pending as to whether the partial step to improve the job advertisement will be put on hold until the colleagues return or whether the survey will be dropped altogether.

Strictly speaking, in this phase we perform a small PDCA cycle of our own, checking and adjusting our actions as we implement them. In fact, however, there is a lot more behind the check phase.

Phase 3: Check. Phase 3, in which one's own actions are reviewed, is probably the most important phase. The aim of the PDCA cycle is to achieve continuous improvement and to identify and avoid recurring errors in a process. Accordingly, in the check phase we check whether our plan worked and whether we achieved our goal.

Back to our example: After the ad has been revised and the job has been advertised, we can now check whether the number of incoming applications has changed. Did more applications come in? Did the number of suitable applications increase?

In addition to the results, the reason for an increasing orde-creasing number of applications is also of interest. What caused the number to change and which of our actions led to an improvement? What do we want to do differently in the future and what do we want to keep?

With the many questions, it quickly becomes clear why the check phase is so valuable and must not be neglected under any circumstances. Agile teams often use the retrospective format at this point. It is specifically designed for analyzing errors and problems and improving team collaboration. In the following section, we present this method in more detail and recommend it for use in the check phase.

Phase 4: Act. In the last phase of the PDCA cycle, we react to the results of the check phase. Ideally, our plan was successfully implemented and the desired goals were achieved. In this case, it is a good idea to adopt the plan and use it again in the future. It can often also be adopted as a basis in the form of good practice for similar projects.

Let's get back to our example. The goal was not achieved, the number of applications has increased, but they almost all do not fit the job profile. In a retrospective, the recruiting team attributed this result to not interviewing employees with similar job profiles. This is the main reason, they conclude, why the newly created job ad is misinterpreted and does not appeal to the target group.

As a measure, it was agreed that in the future, employee surveys may not be dispensed with. Additionally, the team would like to start an experiment and also ask potential applicants for feedback on newly created ads. For team collaboration, it was noted that the PDCA cycle and retrospective should be adhered to in order to further improve collaboration in the newly formed Recruiting.

For team collaboration, it was noted that the PDCA cycle and retrospective should be adhered to, in order to further improve collaboration in the newly formed Recruiting. The loop of the PDCA cycle is run through as often as necessary until all obstacles have been removed and the (partial) project goal has been achieved. Whether or not several runs are required for a set subgoal is of secondary importance for the time being. It is much more important to learn something in each cycle and to continuously improve.

The retrospective - getting a bit better

A retrospective, or retro for short, is a meeting format often used by agile teams. It follows the Inspect and Adapt principle, making it an ideal format for the Check phase in the PDCA cycle. As in the check phase, the achieved work results are inspected in retro (ITagile 2020).

The first step is Inspect: Together, the team examines what went well and why. A team thereby secures its findings and at the same time improves cooperation. The same procedure is used for things that did not go so well: Together, we examine why the planned result did not materialize and what possible causes can be identified.

The second step is Adapt: Measures are derived from the findings of a retro in order to further improve cooperation within the team and to be able to better deal with obstacles and difficulties that arise.

At first glance, the procedure and goal of a retrospective sound quite familiar, combined with the thought "we already do that anyway". Certainly, in many companies results are secured and reasons are found why everything did not turn out as planned. However, the reasons given are often pretexts and are used as excuses. They often serve as justification when a goal has not been achieved.

However, this does not correspond to the attitude and goal of a retrospective. On one hand, all actors are aware that their environment is in a constant state of change. What worked yesterday may already be obsolete tomorrow. Therefore, we approach our goal in many small steps and test whether we are still on the right track. So there is no claim to have a master plan that carries through an entire project. The many small steps lead to a regular check whether the team is still on track with its plans. Each check is associated with a retrospective.

On the other hand, experience teaches that no project can be implemented in reality as it was previously planned - loosely based on Count von Moltke, “No plan survives first contact with the enemy.” Therefore, a retrospective specifically looks for the causes that were not previously considered or that have changed compared to a previous project. There is no search for culprits and no finger pointing at colleagues who could be blamed for a mistake. Rather, we are on the lookout for solutions and new opportunities that will enable us to achieve our goal.

Piece by piece, we can better understand dependencies and interrelationships for our project and specifically address them. Consequently, in a retrospective, the search is not for someone to blame, but for solutions and measures to improve a bit in the next step and to lead one’s own project to a successful conclusion.

Ideally, a retrospective follows each iteration, i.e., each check phase of the PDCA cycle. Each time a plan has been implemented, the results of the work are subsequently considered and evaluated with regard to the achievement of the set goal. What may sound like endless meetings at first is the basis for continuous improvement and, above all, adaptation to the current challenges in recruiting.

Depending on the duration of the iteration, the time required for a retrospective varies greatly. Many will be familiar with the term Scrum. Scrum is probably the most widely used framework when it comes to agile working. It recommends scheduling three hours for a retrospective after a four-week sprint. A retrospective of 90 minutes would be appropriate for a two-week project duration, and 45 minutes for a one-week duration.

The timelines for a retrospective should be used here as a guide for your own plan and your own recruiting team.

They can be shorter or longer and are certainly also dependent on the respective process step in recruiting, the existing uncertainties on the labor market and the experience of the recruiting team. However, this should not be seen as a legitimization to forgo retrospectives and turn down the opportunity for continuous improvement.

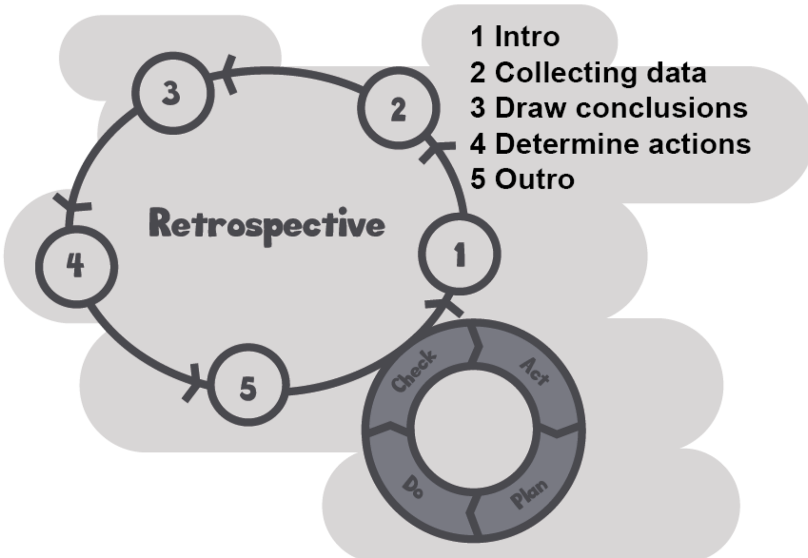


Fig. 7: Retrospective as part of the PDCA cycle

Tips for conducting a retrospective

The retrospective format is designed to give teams the opportunity to continuously improve and adapt their work to current challenges. And it was about having a format where unpleasant topics are allowed to be addressed: Things that hinder collaboration, or things that didn't go well. The goal of a retro is continuous improvement.

To help make that happen, here are the best tips from the field to help make retrospectives a constructive and appreciative place:

- A retrospective should be moderated in any case. Preferably by a neutral person. Agile teams use their Scrum Master for this purpose. However, it is also possible without this role and without this qualification. It is helpful if there is experience in the moderation of meetings.

- It is not only a matter of finding causes and reasons why something does not work. Rather, concrete measures should always be developed on how to deal with obstacles. After all, problems should not only be analyzed, but also solved.

- Do not keep topic memories. Many obstacles can come to light during a retrospective. Prioritize the most important problems and obstacles, which will be provided with concrete measures. All other obstacles are not addressed. Unless they come up again at the next retrospective. A topic repository otherwise leads to focusing on topics that may no longer be relevant in the meantime.

- Regularly reflect on and review measures taken and agreements reached. This applies to insights gained in the project, e.g. on reaching the target group in recruiting, but also to agreements on cooperation within the team. Both are alive and can change over time. Therefore, nothing is set in stone and can be adjusted at any time.

The most important things from chapter 6

- **The PDCA cycle is a method for implementing change and continuous improvement.**

- **This cycle makes it possible to implement projects in small steps and to set up a continuous success control.**

- **The retrospective is a separate format, with the goal of improving team collaboration and increasing the quality of the product.**

- **A retrospective is a suitable format for the check phase of the PDCA cycle.**

THE REQUIREMENTS ANALYSIS

There are a variety of methods, approaches and models for creating a requirements profile. Looking through agile glasses, we will introduce you to 3 methods and 2 models, as well as provide tips on how to apply and use them. The goal is to be able to explore the requirements as well as the sought-after competencies in more detail and to better evaluate them yourself.

We start with methods that are more in line with the traditional setting of recruiting, gradually increase the involvement of the team and additionally broaden the view of the actual requirements of a position. A combination of methods and models is possible. It is important to select an approach that matches the agile maturity level of the organization. If, for example, we are dealing with a strongly hierarchical corporate division, the “competence poker” method described later may not be the right introduction to agile recruiting. The method of questioning experts from the team as a supplement to the intuitive approach of the manager would be the better option here.

So it’s not about always choosing the most agile method with the greatest degree of self-organization, but about picking up the team and the manager where they are at the moment. We now look at how this can be done and what possible starting points might look like.

The intuitive method - free from the gut

Probably the most commonly used method in requirements analysis is the intuitive method. As the name suggests, this method can be used intuitively, which means that no knowledge of the method is necessary. A typical situation in which this informal method is used is when an executive lists the requirements of their vacant position. The requirements are mostly put down on paper intuitively, i.e. from the gut and on the basis of the manager's experience. A critical and analytical examination of the listed requirements rarely takes place. This is sometimes due to the fact that at this early stage of the recruitment process, interviews are still a long way off. The connection between requirements analysis, professional interview and subsequent hiring decision is not yet recognized.

The intuitive approach seems pragmatic and expedient. The results have a high degree of plausibility for all participants, as they are ultimately derived from everyday observations. The disadvantage lies in the lack of a systematic approach. Intuitive listing of job requirements by the manager single-handedly can capture only those requirements that are in the manager's awareness. Changes, trends and innovations in the professional environment of the position to be filled only have an influence on the requirements profile if the manager is aware of them and also assesses them as relevant for the future development of his or her own department.

A first task to improve quality in recruiting may be for HR to remind the executive that a requirements analysis is not conducted solely to create the job advertisement. The aim is to convey that suitability characteristics and their necessary features must be defined in order to arrive at well-founded decisions in the selection process for the right candidates for the company and the position. Another way to improve the quality of the requirements analysis is to have other people besides the manager use the intuitive method to create a requirements profile for the position to be filled. Thus, the assessment of requirements and necessary skills does not consist solely of the intuition of an individual manager. It can be assumed that in this way, changes in the requirements and orientation of the task environment are better taken into account.

Certainly, the intuitive method is not the best choice among the methods of requirements analysis. A more systematic and structured approach, as described in the methods below, is desirable. On the other hand, it is important to work with the existing conditions and, in this case, to pick up the managers where they are at the moment. Agile methods are also characterized by a step-by-step approach. This can also mean that the first step is to obtain an additional intuitive assessment from another manager.

The expert interview - getting a second opinion

It is natural for a manager to create a requirements profile based on everyday observations and plausibility statements. For an in-depth examination of the suitability characteristics qualification, competence and potential, an experienced interviewer is needed to systematically question and analyze the requirements listed by the manager. For example, HR can conduct an expert interview of this kind with the manager. Since in an interview of this kind, primarily technical qualification characteristics will be mentioned at first, then it is the interviewer's task to inquire about and analyze the qualifications in detail. On closer inspection, not all of the mentioned qualifications appear to be critical to success. They were named intuitively by the manager - the expert - because these qualifications "just go with the job" and "because that's the way it's always been." It is also frequently observed in an expert interview that technical qualification characteristics are named, behind which the skills that are primarily important for the job are actually hidden.

Systematically inquiring about and analyzing the requirements does not only increase the quality of the requirements profile. There are also new possibilities for action for the subsequent search and selection of suitable applicants. Breaking down and transferring professional qualification characteristics into competencies and potentials, allows a broader search on the labor market and at the same time a more differentiated view of each individual candidate in the selection process.

The role of the interviewer consists primarily of active listening and asking in-depth questions. Open-ended questions are suitable for this purpose, inviting the expert interviewed to open up his or her view of the requirements further and to think about alternative solutions. The following questions may be helpful:

- What is the qualification behind this requirement? What exactly do you mean by this?
- What exactly does the person have to know in order to perform this task? How do you learn that?

- How could this requirement be fulfilled alternatively? What is better/worse about this alternative?

- What opportunities would we have in the company to train and teach these skills internally?

- What are the competencies and skills they value most in an employee?

- What are the criteria that the candidate must meet in order to fulfill his or her duties? Is there a (legal) regulation on this?

It is advisable for HR to interview other experts besides that one manager. Certainly, the manager's assessment of the requirements carries a lot of weight, but further interviews should still be conducted to allow for a critical examination of the suitability characteristics. In addition to the manager, other subject matter experts in the company can be interviewed, regardless of whether they also have managerial responsibility or not. In this way, a differentiated examination of the suitability characteristics as well as the current and future changes in the position to be filled takes place, along with the development of the company and its markets.

It is also advisable to interview the future team members. The team in particular can describe specific requirements from day-to-day operations, from which particularly important competencies can be developed. Especially when it comes to day-to-day operations, an interview with team members often provides valuable insights that are unlikely to be mentioned in a conversation with a manager. This may be due to the fact that the tasks of a manager are mainly in the area of team management and strategy and less in the specific challenges of day-to-day operations. It is also a good decision to involve the future team in the requirements analysis as part of an agile transformation and associated increase in personal responsibility as well as self-organization capability in the team.

For an unbiased picture of the suitability characteristics, it is advisable to interview various experts individually. This avoids the danger of having various employees hurriedly subscribing to a single opinion during a group interview. This seemingly common consensus prevents the necessary differentiated discussion and the identification of the success-critical suitability characteristics. In the worst case, a requirements profile that is not supported by all those involved is adopted prematurely, and resistance must be expected during the selection process or in the subsequent collaboration with the new colleague.

Systematically inquiring and analyzing the requirements not only increases the quality of the requirements profile. It also opens up new opportunities for action in the subsequent search and selection of suitable applicants. Breaking down and transferring professional qualification characteristics into skills and potentials allows a broader search on the labor market and at the same time a more differentiated view of each individual candidate in the selection process.

The expert interview certainly follows the intuitive method in its prevalence. However, the quality of the requirement profile created rises and falls based on the interviewer's ability to answer questions. It is therefore advisable that the interviewer knows the differences and interrelationships of the suitability characteristics of DIN 33430 and actively deals with current developments on the job market as well as the challenges of their own company. This knowledge combined with an open and curious attitude helps to create a good requirements profile together with the interviewed experts. The interviewer's job can be made a little easier if the interviewer and interviewed experts consider the requirements analysis models presented later in this chapter in advance.

The quality of the requirement profile can increase again if several experts are interviewed in succession. One after the other, to avoid mutual interference. Following the interviews, the various results are considered and compiled into a requirements profile with the executive conducting the search, or in a joint meeting with all the experts.

Competence poker - a playful approach

A more playful method is the competence poker. In this variant of the requirements analysis, the focus is on the competencies. In contrast to the expert interview, the competencies and their importance for the position to be filled are directly evaluated in the competency poker. It is not necessary to convert qualifiers into competencies by asking clever questions. Rather, the players come into direct exchange on the various competencies and approach the required profile with each round of the game.

Competence poker consists of a deck of competence cards. Each card has a competency and, if applicable, a short definition printed on it. As the game progresses, the goal is to assign a point value to each skill. This requires additional playing cards for each player, each of which contains the series of numbers 1 to 10.

Predefined competency cards are easy to find on the Internet with a little searching. The same applies to cards with the numbers 1 to 10. In addition, ready-made, coordinated solutions such as "Perfect Recruiting" (www.jo-agileHR.de/perfect-recruiting) are available on the market.

Working aids online

The method can be tried out simply and easily using templates that are available online from the work aids. See www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR

The gameplay: At the beginning, each player receives a deck of cards with the numbers 1 to 10, the deck of cards with the competencies is provided, and a piece of paper and pencil are required to record the point totals earned.

The first competency card is turned over and placed in the center of the table. The competency and its definition are read aloud. Then all players evaluate this competence by placing one of their number cards face-down on the table, i.e. with the number value facing down. A low score means this competence is rather unimportant for the position to be filled. A high score means that the competence is particularly important to be successful in the position to be filled. After all players have discarded their scores facing down, the cards are then turned facing up, and the point totals are added up and recorded. The discarded number cards are picked up again by the players. In this way, all the competence cards are played through.

It can happen that competencies are evaluated very differently by the teammates. This is not unusual based on results from a different understanding of the requirements of the job and the competencies. Note: If there is a difference of more than 4 points between the highest and the lowest score, the game is stopped and the competence is observed more closely.

Example: The competence "communication skills" receives ratings in the range of 5 to 10. Since the difference between the highest and lowest rating is greater than 4, the game is stopped at this point. Players who gave ratings of 5 and 10, respectively, are asked to explain how they arrived at this assessment. Next, all players score the Communication Skills competency again and then record the point total and continue scoring the remaining competency cards.

Once all competencies have been assessed, the 10 competencies with the highest point totals are identified. The corresponding playing cards are picked out from the pile of cards played through and laid out on the table again. These 10 competencies are considered and discussed together. The goal is to identify similar competencies and combine them into clusters of competencies on the table.

The clustering of competencies should help to be able to jointly name the five most important competencies for the position to be filled in the next step. A closer look at all the competencies acquired then makes it easier to see which aptitude traits have a particularly strong weight for the job or are currently overrepresented.

For example, of the top 10 competencies gathered in the game, three of the ten - communication skills, teamwork skills, and empathy - could form a cluster. By means of a further discussion, however, the participants come to the conclusion that it is above all the ability to communicate that is particularly important for the position to be filled. They see the other two competencies in the cluster as more of a manifestation or side effect of communication skills.

The identified competencies are included in the requirements profile to be created and form the basis for the personnel search.

The hidden evaluation of the individual competencies is a great advantage of this method. In this way, each player gives his own rating for each competency. There is no danger of individual players withholding their assessment from the group, or of players influencing each other by consciously or unconsciously taking their cue from the assessment of others, or of going along with the assessment of the presumed greatest subject matter expert.

Since several players participate in this method of requirements analysis, it is ensured that different expert opinions and assessment of current and future challenges on the position to be filled are taken into account. In addition to the manager, other suitable players include subject matter experts from within the company, team members, and employees from related departments who will be working closely with the person being sought in the future.

In the setting of competence poker, HR assumes a moderating role. Active participation in the game is not advisable, as the people who should play are those who hold positions similar to the one to be filled or who will work closely with the new employee. In addition, the outcome of the game improves if the process of skill poker is moderated and care is also taken to ensure that, in the event of widely divergent ratings, the players with the highest and lowest ratings are given a sufficient audience to explain their assessment before being re-evaluated.

The existing competence set can be further developed and adapted to the needs of one's own company until finally a company's own competence model on playing cards is created. This is a task that can be performed primarily by HR. By moderating competence poker rounds throughout the company, the necessary empirical values are gained.

Tips for the application: For a round of competence poker with four players and the working materials (at the working aids online), 40 minutes should be scheduled. This is a small amount of time when compared to four individual expert interviews. Of course, there will be rounds of the game that take considerably longer, e.g. if the scope of the position to be filled has not yet been fully clarified, the tasks will be subject to a major change, or a function in the company is being created completely from scratch. In such cases, the time invested is particularly valuable. This is because the teammates are encouraged to engage in an intensive exchange - especially via the playful approach and the hidden competence assessment - and thus gain a deeper understanding of the tasks and requirements of the position to be filled, which is shared by all.

The common understanding of the tasks and the requirements profile developed in this way also forms the prerequisite for the entire recruiting process that - e.g. during the interviews and their evaluation - all persons involved have the same or at least a very similar idea of the ideal candidate. This shared view of the right candidate leads to faster hiring decisions and greater clarity about what can be expected of the new employee - an important point for subsequent collaboration with teammates, the manager and with colleagues from other departments.

The competence pyramid - a good basis is what counts

Another way to improve the quality of the requirements profile is to use the competence pyramid model. Unlike the three methods presented earlier, this model is about giving the executive, subject matter experts, team, or anyone who will be interviewed a better understanding of the requirements analysis itself and its challenges. With this background knowledge, it is easier to go beyond pure qualification characteristics in the requirements analysis and to convert requirements into competencies.

To present the model and the requirements analysis, it is advisable to invite all stakeholders together to a meeting. HR's task is to present the competence pyramid model in the meeting and to moderate the subsequent requirements analysis.

First, the different types of competencies of the pyramid model are introduced and differentiated from each other. The "competence pyramid" illustration helps here. The competence pyramid consists of four levels, which are presented one after the other, starting with the lowest level.

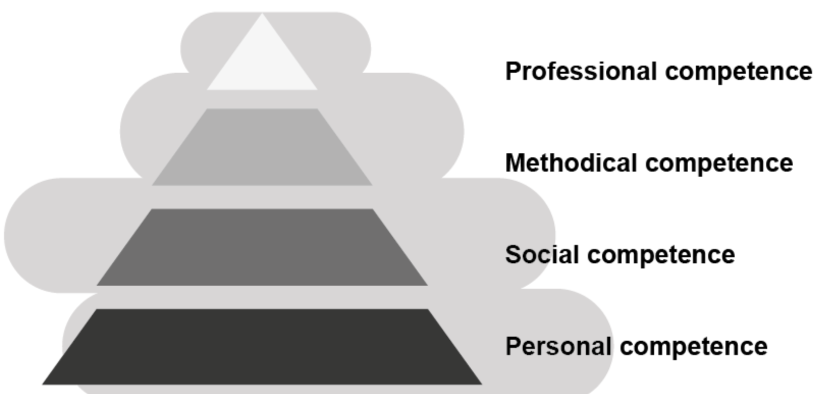


Fig. 8: Competence pyramid

Personal competences: Personal competencies form the basis of the pyramid. They describe attitudes and values that make up a person. Personal competencies are largely cradled and their individual manifestations develop in the early years of life. Personal competencies are largely cradled and their individual manifestations develop in the early years of life.

Social skills: The second level is made up of social skills. They shape interpersonal interaction, both in private and in everyday professional life. Social skills also develop and strengthen quite early in life and reinforce the foundation of our skills pyramid.

Methodological competence: Methodological competence is found one level higher. It refers to the targeted use of all available competencies to solve problems. Methodological competence is closely related to a person's intelligence. Methodological competence is a special competence, because only with its help can further competences as well as specialized knowledge be acquired.

Specialist skills: At the top of the competence pyramid are the technical competencies. These are purely technical skills and knowledge that are generally acquired in the course of training and expanded through continuing education and training. Accordingly, subject competencies are acquired through the use of methodological competencies or, in the form of a final grade, are a quality criterion for how successfully methodological competencies were used to acquire the subject competency.

Let us return to the requirements analysis: The model of the competence analysis is important because the model makes it comprehensible that professional competences are acquired through the use of methodical competences.

And there's more to it than that: Think of the example with the applicants with very good final grades, one achieves the grade through memorization, the other through analytical skills (see chapter 2.1 "Hire for talent - train the skills"). This makes it clear once again why a special look at methodological competence is recommended, because it provides information about how an applicant achieves results and goals.

Some models see methodological competence and intelligence as clearly related: The more intelligent a person is, the better he can solve new tasks and problems. This statement seems plausible. The more skillfully a person can use his or her existing abilities and resources to solve problems, the more successfully that person will master new challenges. Methodological competence therefore plays a central role in today's working world.

In no professional environment can it be assumed that tasks and requirements remain constant and do not change over a longer period of time. Rather, we can observe today how the speed of change is even increasing: We talk about the half-life of knowledge, we are dealing with rapid changes in markets, products and working environments - and recently also with a pandemic affecting all these areas. Our working environment is becoming increasingly complex and uncertain. Adaptations have to be made more and more quickly, and new solutions have to be found. And all of this requires precisely, those skills and competencies in a particularly pronounced form that are described by the term - methodological competence.

As methodological competence builds on a person's existing "resources", personal and social competence also play an important role. For successful problem solving, these two competencies must be present to an appropriate degree. Personal and social competencies form the basis for methodological competency and thus the foundation of the competency pyramid. This foundation develops early in a person, it is deeply rooted in the personality. Such a foundation is difficult to shake or touch up. If methodological competencies can be improved through coaching or even through daily challenges alone, the promotion of personal and social competencies is much more difficult and can go far beyond the normal efforts of standard personnel development.

The following message should reach the participants:

- Professional competencies are the result of the targeted use of methodological competencies. By means of methodological competence, new professional competences can be acquired. In a dynamic working environment, methodical competencies are therefore most important for long-term job success. Methodological competencies can also be developed and trained in a targeted manner.

- This contrasts with personal and social competencies. They are deeply rooted in a person and are much more difficult to develop and train. Since they form the foundation for methodological competencies, care must be taken to ensure that they are of sufficient quality.

Procedure for the requirements analysis: With this knowledge, the actual requirements analysis then begins, which is moderated by HR. The lists are based on the structure of the competence pyramid and contain the personal, social and methodical types of competence.

Working aids online

Competence lists are available for download at the work aids online. See *www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR*

Each participant is given a printout of the competency lists and the task of marking on the list the five most important competencies for the position to be filled. The division of the five most important competencies can be done freely across the three types of competencies. However, care should be taken to select at least one competency per competency type. After each participant has marked his or her five most important competencies, a moderated discussion among the participants starts. Starting with the lowest level, personal competencies, each participant names their highlighted competencies and provides a brief explanation of why they consider this competency to be particularly important and how it specifically contributes to coping with work demands. Questions of understanding from the participants about the explanations are not only allowed, but encouraged. The facilitator records the competencies mentioned on a flipchart, actively encourages the asking of comprehension questions, and also makes sure that no evaluation of the competencies mentioned is made by the other participants at this time. After each participant has presented his or her competencies and they have been noted on the flipchart, the procedure is analogous to the social and methodological competencies and the process described on the basis of the personal competencies is repeated.

Once each participant has named and explained their five most important competencies for the job, the next task is to identify the five most important competencies out of all those mentioned. In this case, too, care must be taken to ensure that each competence group is represented by at least one competence in the result. To this end, the participants discuss openly and freely among themselves. The moderator keeps an eye on the fact that each of the participants is heard in the discussion and supports the discussion by not losing sight of the goal of identifying the five most important competencies.

Once the five most important competencies have been worked out together, a short description can be created for each competency. For example, the communication skills competency should be familiar to each participant. However, it can be assumed that everyone has their own idea of what constitutes communication skills. Thus, for some, communication skills might mean interacting with others in a balance of talking and listening. For others, communication skills represent achieving useful results in conversations. A common understanding of terms is immensely helpful, especially for the subsequent candidate search. Especially if the participants in the requirements analysis are later also involved in the selection process.

Based on the identified competencies and their brief, conceptual description, a requirements profile for the position to be filled can be created and, in a further step, an interview guideline can be drawn up.

Cynefin Framework

The Cynefin framework is another model designed to help requirements analysis participants take an "agile view" of the current and future challenges of the job being filled.

The Cynefin framework can be used to describe tasks, problems, situations and systems at the same time. The model provides a typology of five task situations that involve different approaches to finding solutions.

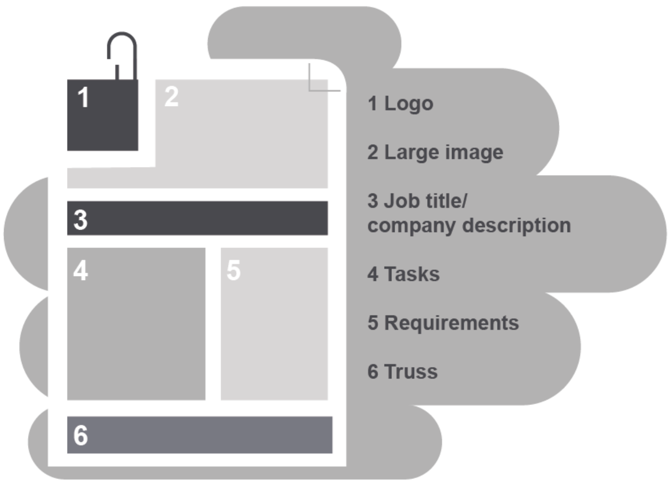


Fig. 9 Structure of an optimal job advertisement (based on Scheller 2016, own presentation)

Cynefin framework was developed by Welshman Dave Snowden. The name Cynefin - a Welsh word -, is difficult to translate into German. What is meant by this is that we have several pasts, but we are not always aware of them. The name is a reminder that all human interactions are strongly influenced by, and often entirely determined by, our experiences.

If we would like to use this model for the purposes of requirements analysis, it is necessary that we first consider the five contexts that the model describes and understand the tasks resulting from the contexts and their solution paths. Let's start at

Context 1: Obvious. Under Obvious, we are presented with an obvious fact. At first glance, you can see that a tire needs to be changed on this vehicle. Not just any tire, but the front left tire needs to be replaced to make the vehicle drivable again. This task is not only obvious, but also easy to solve, since a tire change does not require technical experts.

Context 2: Complicated. This is already the big difference to the second picture above on the right. Under Complicated, we are shown a vehicle with smoke coming out of its engine compartment. Presumably, there is some damage in the engine compartment that needs to be repaired, but exactly what needs to be done is not obvious at first glance. To solve complicated problems, you need a specialist. Even for him, the cause of damage is not obvious. However, he has learned to approach the cause of damage systematically using various test protocols.

Context 3: Complex. While there was a solution plan for the first two problems, in the third field at the top left we are dealing with a complex situation that resembles a ride in the fog. Assuming that a path exists that will lead us to our destination, we drive slowly on the road and on sight. After every meter driven, you have to reorient yourself so as not to lose your way.

Context 4: Chaos. The fourth image at the bottom left represents chaos. While we were still able to drive by sight and orient ourselves by the course of the road when driving through the fog, here we are dealing with a situation whose connections and processes we do not understand. So in this picture it is not clear why a cow is standing on the road and blocking the passage. Do we solve this problem by operating the horn? It is also unclear what will happen the next time we drive down the road. Will the cow be standing there again? Alone or in pairs?

Context 5: Disorder. In the middle we see the Disorder field. This category includes all problems and situations that cannot be assigned to any of the main categories described above based on our current knowledge.

How can concrete requirements be mapped in this model?

Accounting example: In contrast to the competence pyramid, this model does not depict competencies, but rather different types of requirements and work situations. It becomes more understandable if we go through the Cynefin framework again using a concrete recruiting task as an example. Suppose we are looking for an employee in the accounting department. An important task in the accounting department is the account assignment and posting of documents. A task that is clearly regulated thanks to German tax laws and the principles of proper accounting. We can sort this task in the Cynefin framework in the bottom right corner in the Ovious section, because there is only one correct solution way to assign a document. Account assignment and posting of documents is already so standardized in many companies that it is almost fully automated by accounting software.

Of course, there are bookings and issues that are more complex and require more attention. This could be, for example, booking transactions with a new customer from a new, previously unsupplied country outside the EU. Such a posting or the development of a new chart of accounts are tasks that are to be assigned to the Complicated area. These tasks cannot be solved without specialist knowledge from the professional field of accounting. Neither can they be standardized and automated to the extent that they were previously for the tasks we call Obvious.

Let's go to the top left to the complex tasks. The previously described ride in the fog can be transferred to almost any situation in which we communicate with other people. Communication is always associated with uncertainty. We can deduce whether and how our own message has reached the recipient from his or her reaction. At the same time, our interlocutor is again uncertain whether we have understood his message correctly. Step by step, or sentence by sentence, we clear up misunderstandings and approach a common understanding of the issue under discussion. In everyday work, an employee in accounting has to deal with many colleagues from the entire company. Thus, it is the responsibility of the accounting department to reclaim the invoices that have been distributed to the various divisions for countersignature in time for the posting of the month-end closing. It is not uncommon for individuals to have to be encouraged to do this several times. Consequently, an accountant has many more Complicated situations to deal with. Moreover, it is precisely these situations that have a significant impact on the timely preparation of the monthly financial statements.

In the fourth field, we encounter chaos. This includes tasks and situations that are completely foreign to an employee in accounting and for which he has not yet developed any solution routines. This would probably be the case if we gave the employee responsibility for our new product's marketing campaign, or the task of planning the next Christmas party, or providing temporary customer service support for the seasonal business.

Lastly, there is the Disorder field, which contains all tasks and situations that the employee cannot yet classify into one of the four categories. This becomes most understandable when we imagine a trainee on his or her first day. Regardless of what task he is given or what situation he encounters, he will not initially know how to solve the assigned task. For the new trainee, every task therefore initially starts in the field of chaos. Over time, he will learn how to do the different tasks and which of the four different types of tasks he is dealing with.

That brings us back to our accounting employee and the Christmas party example. Organizing the company Christmas party is certainly an unfamiliar task for the accounting department. However, we can assume that our employee develops initial solution strategies comparatively quickly and no longer classifies the new task as chaos, so that this task is now perceived as complex. The same applies to the complicated bookings of the new customer from outside the EU. If more customers follow and these bookings accumulate, this booking process can also be automated and moves into the Obvious category. In this example, things are a little different with communication, i.e. the complex tasks. Certainly, routines and also trust will develop over time in communicating with colleagues, yet it will remain a complex task - even if the fog clears a little.

The Cynefin framework helps to categorize the different tasks of a job. This gives us a fairly quick picture of how demanding the position to be filled is and which tasks and skills are particularly relevant. In our example, communicating or reminding and following up on incoming invoices in the business units is an important task that may be easily overlooked. The timely posting of an invoice can only be done by the employee in the accounting department if the incoming invoice is countersigned and reaches him in time. The timely posting of an invoice can only be done by the employee in the accounting department if the incoming invoice is countersigned and reaches him in time.

In addition, the model shows us learning and development paths. Not every task stays in its category for the long term. Be it that an employee learns to solve and understand new tasks, or that work steps are increasingly easier to control and require less attention due to automation and digitalization. Here, too, the automatic, software-supported recording and posting of receipts is a good example. Tasks that everyone probably associates with the core tasks of an accountant are now largely automated.

With the Cynefin framework, tasks and work situations can also be viewed in terms of how they will develop in the future. Whether this is taking into account economic change, advances in information technologies and digitalization, or simply the possibilities of further automation. Such an assessment is helpful so that employees are sought and hired who will also meet the requirements in a future not too distant.

Using the Cynefin framework in requirements analysis

As in the competence pyramid model, the first step is to invite the people to be interviewed, e.g. manager, subject matter experts, team members, and colleagues with whom close collaboration is to be established in the future, to a joint meeting. In this appointment, HR will introduce the Cynefin framework.

Working aids online

For better demonstration, the illustration of the Cynefin framework is also available online at the work aids. See *www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR*

This is followed by a requirements analysis based on the categorization of requirements described by the model. The requirements analysis is also moderated by HR.

As the Cynefin framework categorizes requirements and situations, the challenge remains to accurately analyze these requirements and translate them into competencies. At this point, the methods presented - expert interview, competence poker and the competence lists of the competence pyramid - can be used as aids. Approximately 30 minutes should be planned for the presentation of the framework and the subsequent discussion. In addition, there is the time for the selected method of the actual requirements analysis.

The most important thing from chapter 7

- **The requirements analysis is and remains the most important step for successful staffing.**
- **Competence-based requirement profiles are particularly suitable for positions and companies that are subject to constant change.**
- **Involvement of the recruiting team and the seeking department is helpful to get a better picture of the actual tasks and requirements of the position.**
- **There are various methods for creating a requirements profile. They are to be chosen depending on the job and the experience of all parties involved.**
- **To begin with, it is helpful to broaden the view of competencies and requirements. Suitable models are the competence pyramid described above and the Cynefin framework.**

THE JOB ADVERTISEMENT

The end of the job advertisement is announced every few years. Be it because the technological possibilities of candidate search are developing so rapidly and offer new opportunities, or because there is increasing reliance on active sourcing and artificial intelligence. There is no denying that automated search processes and direct approaches have now become an integral part of the candidate search process. However, if we look at the development of the number of advertised jobs in recent years, we can observe a significant double-digit increase in job advertisements. In addition, new job platforms are constantly entering the market, such as Google 4 Jobs most recently. It can therefore be assumed that the job ad will remain with us as a recruitment tool, at least in the medium term. (Scheller 2018)

There is nothing wrong with the job ad as a search tool per se. A company uses it to announce that it is looking for a new employee and provides a description of the tasks to be performed and the profile sought. For companies and job seekers, this is a familiar and well-known process. We could almost say that this has always been the case. So the success or the persistence of the job ad should also be that a job ad is expected from the applicant's point of view. The job ad is virtually the gateway for applications. What should change, however, is the content that an ad conveys.

Whereas in the past a job ad often resembled the technical specification of a machine in terms of wording and description, today there are increasingly companies that also see a job ad as a marketing tool and focus more on the applicant. Job advertisements can score points with potential applicants in particular through target group-specific wording and an authentic presentation of the company, team and task. Targeting and approaching applicants may sound familiar, yet we'll go into more depth later.

Almost even more important is also the authentic appearance as an employer. An example: Let's assume a small company with 12 employees is looking for a commercial clerk. The company naturally wants to present itself in the best possible way in the job advertisement. So it takes its company description from the current product flyer and phrases the requirement and profile a little more meaningfully than they actually are to make the job opening sound more attractive. But what's okay for the product flyer won't work for the job ad. When we are dealing with products, services and self-representations of companies, all customers know that they are dealing with advertising. Here, there are certain empirical values about how much faith to give to full-bodied advertising promises.

It's a little different with job ads. For one thing, most applicants are only on the job hunt every few years - if at all. So we cannot speak of experience and routine. It makes a big difference whether sales of a heavily advertised product fall short of expectations, or whether we are dealing with a new job whose described tasks and opportunities have rather less to do with the perceived everyday life of the job holder. We can assume of applicants, at least at the beginning of the selection process, that they are looking for an employer with whom they can plan at least in the medium term. If it turns out that the new position does not offer what the job ad and recruiter promised, dissatisfaction is high and, in the worst case, a probationary period termination is on the cards.

One paragraph earlier, it was stated that job ads will also be used as an advertising tool. They should whet the appetite for the position described and encourage job seekers to apply. And that's where it stays. The same applies to target group-specific design and wording. Here lies the first sticking point. It seems obvious to design different job ads for different occupational groups. An accountant probably wants a different tone of address and different company information than a salesperson. Nevertheless, we can observe that many job advertisements are designed with little focus on the target group and work with a manageable set of text modules. This applies not only to the company description, but also to the formulation of tasks and requirements.

Even under the headings “Your tasks” and “Our requirements” or “Your profile”, it is noticeable that the same or very similar formulations are also often used here. For example, there are supposed requirement criteria in companies that appear in every job advertisement, regardless of whether it is for a position in accounting, marketing or sales. It is particularly clear when it comes to soft skills. The “team player with strong communication skills” who “keeps a cool head even in stressful situations” is in demand in all industries, at all levels and in every position. If we then compare job advertisements from different companies with each other, we can quickly get the impression that recruiters all use the same repertoire of phrases for job advertisements. In addition to the arcane language of testimonials, a nationwide one-size-fits-all approach to job duties and requirements seems to have taken root in job advertisements.

When it comes to designing a job advertisement to suit the target group, there is usually no talk of formulating tasks and requirements in terms of the job. However, since this is done differently in the various displays, we cannot completely disregard this point in the later examples.

Much more decisive, however, is an authentic presentation of one’s own company and the tasks to be performed. An applicant wants to know who is behind a job posting and what to really expect. This already starts with the task. An accountant, for example, is aware that he or she will post and account regardless of the job or company. With this information, we do not add value or gain knowledge on any side or differentiate ourselves from other searching companies. For applicants, information on degrees of freedom, work organization, and team and boss are more interesting. What is the corporate culture like, how formal is it, business attire, or are sneakers okay?

Working this out in a job ad is certainly a greater effort than relying on the existing repertoire of phrases. Does this mean that there must be different job advertisements for different accounting positions? After all, the aim is to present the task and the environment as authentically as possible. Certainly, there will be values and a culture that represent an entire company. However, it is hard to imagine that these values are lived in the same way in every team. We can observe this not only in large corporations that may operate on different continents, but also in the rather small one when we look at different areas in the company or even different teams within one area.

For the accounting position from our example, it may therefore be useful to consider the respective framework conditions. Every leader leads differently and every team has its own dynamics. These points must be emphasized in an authentic job advertisement.

Before presenting various methods for making an advertisement as authentic as possible for the respective target group, we will take a look at an ideal-typical structure of a job advertisement. This structure is intended to provide a little orientation as to which design options are available at which point.

The job advertisement layout - don’t break with habits

For job ads, a common understanding of what the layout should look like also seems to have developed. There are numerous studies and surveys on job ad optimization. If we place the various recommendations side by side, we quickly see that the advice and recommended layouts of the different providers are very similar. Little wonder, it is exactly this structure that all job seekers have been familiar with for years. Every reader of a job posting has learned where to find which information in an ad. This experience creates the expectation of always receiving information about vacant positions in the same form.

Improving the familiar

Even with an agile eye, there is no reason to break with the familiar format. Rather, the aim is to serve the familiar even better and, above all, to check the content to see whether or which information provided is really needed and sought by potential applicants in order to submit an application.

In analyzing the various elements of a job ad, we follow the structure of a typical job ad as shown in Figure 10. For each individual element, we address the most important points from the applicant’s point of view.

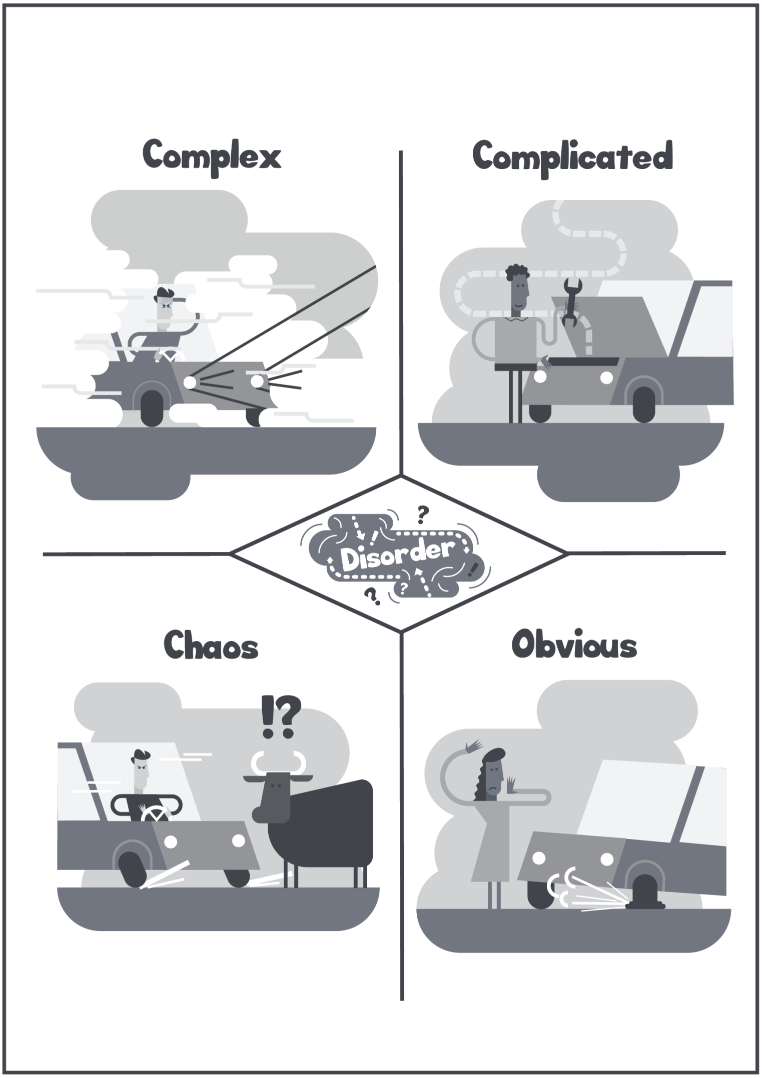


Fig. 10 Cynefin framework

Large image: Images are an important design tool in personnel marketing and must not be missing from a job advertisement. They catch the viewer's attention, convey emotions and can create moods within fractions of a second. Photos with people always attract the most attention. For the most authentic impression possible, purchased images should be avoided and, if possible, images of the company's own employees should be used for advertising. Applicants can usually tell right away whether these are glossy pictures from an agency or "real" people who may soon become colleagues. Ideally, the picture already shows individual members of the future team, e.g. in a typical work situation or with a direct message to the applicant along the lines of "We're looking forward to meeting you!". Advertising your own employees makes the company approachable to the applicant, this can increase the desire to become part of the team or provide clarity that this may not be the right role. Both good and important insights to fill the application inbox with only suitable applications. In addition, it strengthens the team spirit of existing colleagues when they are involved in the search for their new colleague and increases their willingness to quickly integrate the new colleague into the team.

Company description:

It follows in the next place and seems to be essential. Surely it is of interest for an applicant to learn a little more about the company as a whole. It is questionable, however, whether information on market position and company size are top of mind for applicants. It's certainly nice to work for a global market leader or hidden champion. But before looking at the big picture, many applicants are interested in finding out what their immediate environment is like, what the team is like, and what the general conditions are that make up their day-to-day work.

So instead of a company description, a team description at this point would already give potential applicants a good and authentic impression of what to expect in this company. The classic company description can move to the end of the job advertisement or even be omitted altogether. For self-presentation, reference can be made to the company's own website or most companies probably have their own career pages on which they present themselves as employers in detail. This information is usually of interest to the applicant if the task and team have aroused interest in working together.

Tasks: They form a central element in job advertisements. Companies describe what is in store for the new employee and applicants should get a better impression of the job. Companies tend to describe tasks and requirements in a rather technical and sober way. Here, too, the focus is often on professional qualification features, similar to the creation of a job profile. It was already clear from the requirements profile that the purely technical qualification characteristics do little to describe the task to be performed by a position. From the applicant's point of view, these details in the job advertisement also do not provide any real added value. Let's think of the accountant again. The latter is certainly not surprised to read that his tasks include the posting and account assignment of invoices. Certainly, this task makes up a significant part of his work. However, the formulation of task content can also be seen as a continuation of the team description by describing framework conditions, responsibilities and work processes. In this way, the applicant receives in-depth insights into the vacant position and is ideally encouraged to send his or her application.

Requirements: The same thing that applies to the requirements also applies to the tasks. However, it is important to distinguish which requirements are absolutely necessary in order to fill the advertised position and which requirements are more in the nature of a wish of the employer. Applicants read very carefully which requirements have to be met and then weigh up for themselves whether an application could be crowned with success. It is therefore advisable to clearly state the mandatory requirements. All other requirements describing a desired image or the ideal candidate should be stated with care. Otherwise, there is too great a risk that an applicant will compare his or her profile with the ideal profile from the application, and subsequently refrain from applying because he or she does not have all the desired points. Especially in the case of positions where the number of applicants is rather low anyway, the hurdle of a detailed requirements profile should therefore be waived. Only in the second step should a further selection be made depending on the quality of the applications received. At the same time, the searching company should reserve this possibility in order to find out what the current situation is on the labor market for the respective position.

Binder: Perhaps call-to-action would also be an appropriate description. A job advertisement closes with a request to send an application. Who hasn't heard this sentence: "Would you like to work in a young, highly motivated team? Then please apply with the usual documents (cover letter, CV, photo as well as work and school references) and state your desired salary and earliest possible starting date."Leaving aside the legal pitfalls in this binder, it is not necessarily made easy for an interested applicant to express interest. As clearly as the assignment to the applicant is formulated, contacting and applying should be a low-threshold hurdle that can be easily overcome by the applicant: starting with not asking for complete documentation and self-disclosure right away. Especially for positions that are difficult to fill or where few interested parties can be expected, a simple expression of interest and a reference to a profile in the business networks such as Xing or LinkedIn should be sufficient to start a conversation with the applicant.

In addition, it is advisable to name a contact person in the company for further questions, who can actually be reached via the contact details provided and who has the necessary time to answer applicants' questions in detail and at their leisure. Questions about the position and the task can be answered particularly authentically if the future supervisor or a team member is listed as the contact person. In this way, applicants and the department can get in touch with each other at a very early stage and gain a first impression of each other. In addition, companies appear very approachable when contact persons are mentioned by name and a photo of them is also shown.

Looking at these job advertisement elements, it becomes clear what potential still needs to be leveraged in the old classic of recruiting for a target group-oriented and authentic design. A job advertisement is not an order form for a new employee, but an instrument that also has its place in personnel marketing.

With regard to the layout, it should also be noted that design elements, such as the familiar two-column structure for tasks and requirements, are becoming increasingly difficult to implement. This is mainly because multi-column ads fall victim to Responsive Design, the design specifications needed to ensure that job ads can be displayed on mobile devices in a high quality and visually appealing way. The same applies to graphic elements and photos, which cannot always be displayed appropriately in a mobile layout. In many cases, platforms that are optimized for mobile devices - such as Xing and LinkedIn - dispense completely with graphic elements and only display the job ad texts to interested applicants. With the consequence that the text gains even more weight and an authentic and target group-oriented formulation of the job advertisement contents becomes even more significant.

Different methods and ways to the optimal job advertisement

In the following, various methods are presented that are intended to succeed in making the wording of a job advertisement, in particular, more target group-oriented and more authentic. This is a task that cannot be handled by HR alone. Here, too, it is clear that recruiting has become a team sport in which HR steers the process and is called in as a specialist expert as the situation demands. The order of the methods presented is based on the degree of involvement of the department and the target group. The former methods in particular should also be implementable in companies in which recruiting has so far been entirely in the hands of HR and neither managers nor employees from the specialist department have been involved.

Involve the manager

Similar to the requirements profile, this step involves conducting interviews or small workshops with the department that is looking for a new colleague. The goal is to work out together what makes the open position special, which of these special features potential applicants find attractive, and then motivate them to apply. There are various ways to achieve the goal. Let's start with an interview with the manager.

The interview with the manager

This is certainly the least complicated way for all parties involved to design a job advertisement that is authentic and appropriate for the target group. Having previously conducted an expert interview with the executive to create the requirements profile, a further interview can be conducted with the executive on the planned job advertisement. Or both interviews are combined at the same time. The interview is conducted by HR. The necessary knowledge to differentiate between requirement profile and job description is available, as well as the know-how to ask specific in-depth questions. The elements of a job advertisement presented above can serve as a thematic guide for the sequence of the interview.

Team Description: In the interview with the manager, it is helpful to first explain that we want to give the applicant as authentic an impression of the team and tasks as possible. This helps the manager to better answer the following questions and, if necessary, to add further points.

- Please describe your team. What makes it so special?
- How does your team compare to other teams in our company?
- What features of our company are special to your area of expertise and shape your work.
- What challenges does your team have to master every day? Which of these do they manage particularly well?

Tasks and requirements: When describing the tasks and requirements for a job posting, we want to avoid a catalog. The goal is to find an authentic representation of the tasks that occur on a regular basis. We inform the manager about the objective and give an example. This can be the example of the accountant who is not surprised that, according to a job advertisement, account assignment and posting should be part of the tasks of an accountant. Once attuned to the common goal, the following questions can be asked:

- How can you tell that your employee is doing a good job?
- What are the tasks critical to success in this position? How must an employee behave in order to complete these tasks?
- What are the challenges associated with this position and how do you think they can best be addressed?
- What has a successful employee achieved after one year in this position? How do you measure his success?

Binder: In the interview for the binding of a job advertisement, it can be examined once again together how easy the initial contact between the applicant and the company can be designed and how approachable the department would like to show itself to be. It's a position that managers often initially shy away from because they can't estimate the number of incoming calls from interested applicants. From experience, the number of calls is kept within limits. If the manager's busy schedule is not to be strained further, one of the future colleagues can also be named as the contact person in order to get a better impression of the tasks and the company. It is advisable to brief the contacts in the department and the manager for such discussions. A task where HR can share its own experience.

Based on this interview, the next step is to create a job advertisement that provides real insights into the tasks and work environment of the position. It should be noted that it is written in a positive motivational tone. Finally, it continues to be a recruiting marketing tool and is always written with potential applicants in mind. This means that the job advertisement must be worded in such a way that company outsiders understand it and know what is means.

The actual formulation can lie with HR. HR colleagues can also ensure that the wording is legally compliant and complies with corporate standards. However, the job advertisement created in this way must be proofread by the manager before it is published. At this point, it would be even better to ask the future team for feedback on the ad.

Involve the team

Ask for feedback on a job ad: In addition to the manager, it makes perfect sense to also involve the team in the creation of the job advertisement. After all, the team members themselves are part of the target group to a certain extent. As a first step, selected team members will be asked for feedback on a draft job announcement developed from the interviewed manager's responses. In order to obtain differentiated feedback, a short list of questions is used and the team members are interviewed individually. In this way, mutual influence between team members can be avoided. Questions tested in practice are:

- How appropriate do you feel the team description is? What would you like to add?
- Which points in this job advertisement do you particularly like? Which do you find less good?
- How closely do the tasks and requirements match the advertised position? What is missing?
- Would you apply for this position? How do you arrive at this assessment?

Based on the feedback from the various team members, the job posting can be reviewed and adjusted. For this purpose, the feedback from the team members is compared: Was there comparable feedback or suggestions for improvement?It should be noted that team members view the tasks and requirements of their daily work differently than the respective manager. Executives often have other tasks to accomplish and have moved away from operational work over the course of their careers.

The interview with the team

Instead of the interview with the manager, an interview with the team can also be conducted. This is advisable if the manager has distanced himself from the operational work in his team and accordingly views tasks and requirements from a different perspective. Depending on the team size, all team members can be interviewed or some employees can be selected. If a selection is made, preference can also be given to those you would prefer to have more of on the team. The same guiding questions that were used for the interview with the executive are used for the interview. Team members are interviewed individually to avoid mutual influence.

HR erstellt aus den Answers a job advertisement. To check the draft of the job advertisement, feedback can be obtained - as described in above. Feedback can be requested from the entire team, only those previously interviewed, or just those team members not interviewed.

Even though this step primarily involves the team, the manager should not be neglected. They should be informed about the current steps or also be involved in the development of the job advertisement. Thus, in addition to individual team members, the manager can also be interviewed and subsequently asked for feedback on the design. This approach is particularly advisable as long as the recruiting team has not yet gained much experience in its area of responsibility.

Develop target group-specific job advertisements in the team café

The “interview” method does not always succeed in identifying the specifics of a job and the team. This may sometimes be due to the fact that the interviewees have not dealt with the topic much beforehand and are therefore unable to provide well-founded answers. In these cases, the “Team Café” workshop format can help. The team café is a variant of the world café format and is used to facilitate a structured exchange on a topic. In our case, we have two questions:

1. What makes our team special?

2. What are the biggest challenges in our daily work?

Invitation: The entire team is invited to the team café. Whether the manager is also invited should be checked beforehand: If a leader appears rather dominant and the team tends to be reserved in the leader’s presence, the leader should not be invited. An alternative is to brief the executive prior to participation and explain to him or her the connection between intensive team participation, a restrained appearance by the executive for the purpose of a successful workshop, and the result of a job advertisement that is appropriate for the target group.

Procedure: The team café starts by communicating the goal of the workshop to all participants. The three essential points are:

- It’s about finding a new colleague for your team.

- During the search, we want to present the team and the job as authentically as possible in order to find the best new colleague for you.

- That’s why today we want to talk to you about the challenges you face in your daily work and what makes you special as a team.

Afterwards, the procedure of the team café will be explained. The team is divided into small groups. Each group works on a task at a separate table.

Example: We have a team with 12 members. The team is divided into groups. The group size should be between three and five people. In order for the groups to start at the same time, we need a table for each group where one question is discussed and answered at a time. Once each group has written down their answer, they switch tables and discuss the next question - until each group has formulated an answer to each question.

Preparation: In preparation for the workshop, the tasks were formulated and written down on a large sheet, e.g. the size of a flip chart. Each table is assigned a sheet with a task. The individual groups write their answer on the sheet.Thus, round by round, the sheet fills up and at the end of the workshop, all results for a task can be viewed on one sheet.

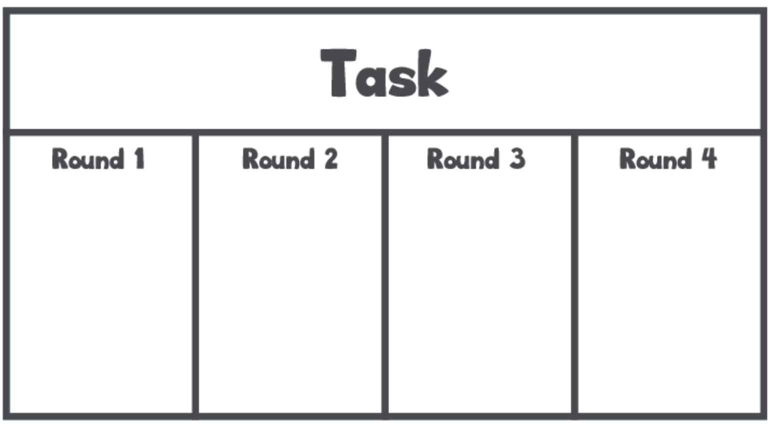


Fig. 11: Team Café Task Template

Task: The questions discussed and answered at the tables focus primarily on two elements of the job ad: Team description and duties and requirements.

The task can be formulated as follows:

- Recall particularly enjoyable and memorable events that you experienced together as a team. Please share at least one of these events with your group.

- In what situations were you most proud to be a part of your team? What were those situations and what makes them so special? Please share at least one of these situations with your group.

- When you look back at the last few years: What have you learned and how have you managed to deal with changes in your professional environment. Please share at least one of these experiences with your group.

- Please recall particularly tricky professional situations that you have successfully solved. What were those situations and how were you able to resolve them? Please share at least one of these situations with your group.

Each task also receives a concretization in the form of a work order. The work order is also noted on the sheet. This ensures that group contributions are noted in each round.

The work order can be formulated as follows:

- If you like, note this event on the task sheet to share with the whole team later. Sie können dabei anonym bleiben. It is not necessary to include your name.

- After each of you has shared and written down your most memorable events in the group, please choose together the event that moved you all the most. Circle this event on the task sheet.

Sequence (continued): The groups were formed, each sat down at one of the tables and now had 15 minutes to exchange ideas on the respective question. The experiences are recorded in writing to be shared later with the other groups, provided that the particular person from whom the experience originated agrees. Just before the time is up, each group marks the example or experience that they find most significant in terms of the task.

For the next round, participants are asked to choose a new table. The groups of the first round can dissolve and form anew. Elaborate procedures for group formation should be avoided. In keeping with the spirit of self-responsibility and self-organization, it is trusted that the team is capable of independently fulfilling the following two requirements:

- Please move to a table you have not been to before.
- Form a new group with team members you haven't talked to yet.

It is not always possible to comply with the second requirement. This is not dramatic. It is important to have a good and self-directed mix of groups at the beginning and as long as it is possible.

Once the new groups have gathered at the tables, the next round starts, with a different set of tasks, but otherwise analogous to the first round. After 15 minutes have elapsed, there is another change of tables and a new formation of groups, and so on. There is one round per table.

The first part of the workshop concludes with the last round. A 10-minute break helps participants recover briefly before continuing.

In the second part of the workshop, the results are compiled and presented. For this purpose, we ask the participants to return to the table where they were in the last round. Each group presents the results from all rounds noted on the sheet, especially the marked events and situations.

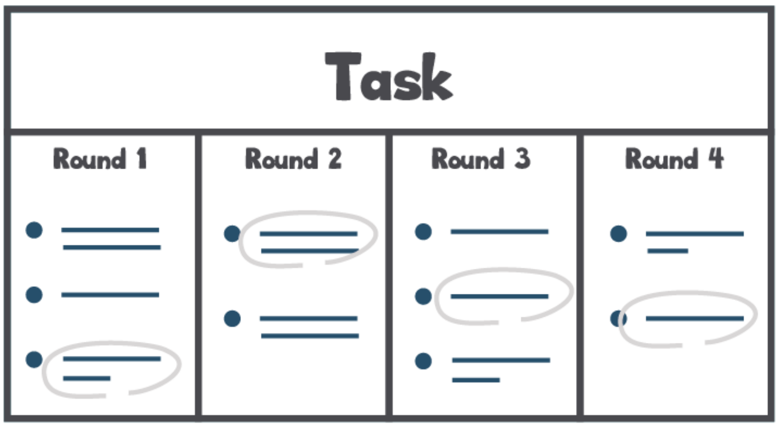


Fig. 12: Task Team Café completed

The first group presents the four marked results for the first task to the team. Afterwards, two questions are discussed in the large team round.

Question 1: Are the results presented representative of the team or everyday professional life? This question can be answered by the team with a simple thumb vote. Thumbs up stands for yes, thumbs down for no. Then the team members who voted no are asked to explain why they think the results are not representative. Often, the explanation still hides valuable and helpful additions.

Question 2: Do the selected answers describe the team or the task well and is there anything missing? Experience has shown that points are rarely added at this point, but it is still advisable to endure an initial silence in the team in order to give more reticent team members a chance to speak up. Afterwards, the presentation of the results of the second task can be continued. The workshop ends after all marked answers to the task have been presented and discussed, deepened and possibly extended by means of the two previously mentioned questions.

Draft job advertisement: Based on the results from the workshop, HR prepares a draft job description. The team or individual members can collaborate on the design. It is advisable to have a final feedback loop with the team and the manager to make sure that the results from the workshop have been correctly interpreted and included in the job advertisement.

Certainly, a workshop appears at first glance to be much more time-consuming compared to the previously mentioned interviews. However, if we consider that we receive information on our questions from the entire team in one meeting, the time commitment for planning and implementation is put into perspective. In addition, we achieve two positive side effects with the team café. On one hand, the workshop contributes to team building or team strengthening, and on the other hand, it is helpful for the further recruiting process to involve the team as early as possible. In this way, we increase the team's willingness to support the further recruiting process. We are also already promoting acceptance of the new, as yet unknown colleague by having the team begin to mentally engage with a new colleague at this early stage of the recruitment process.

The most important things from chapter 8

- **The job advertisement is not the most innovative element of recruitment, but it is the best known and most accepted.**
- **A job posting is not an order form for a new employee. Rather, it should be seen as a personnel marketing tool.**
- **For an authentic design, it is recommended to involve the recruiting team and future colleagues.**
- **The degree of involvement of the recruiting team or future colleagues can be gradually increased by choosing different methods.**
- **A job posting should authentically describe the task, team and company so that the applicant can gain the most transparent insight possible.**

PRESELECTION

The first step in the selection process begins with the review of incoming application documents. It is not that easy to make a selection decision on the basis of an application portfolio.

There is a lack of reliable, valid selection criteria. Final grades and job references give the impression of deceptive security. They evaluate a work performance in the past, in a different team, in a completely different company, and are also influenced by the subjective view of the previous manager. Resumes and cover letters are also always part of the applicant's self-dramatization, who has learned to present himself in the best possible light, not least through application guides. Last but not least, every application is different. They differ, among other things, in the formal design and the level of detail with which the various positions are described in the resume.

Already now the first doubts about the significance of an application portfolio and the comparability of different applications should arise. In addition, assumptions and selection routines have developed over time among personnel decision-makers, based primarily on gut feelings and personal preferences. Selection criteria such as dog-ears in the application documents, clear structure of the resume and facial expression in the application photo are used instead to check the extent to which an applicant meets the personal preferences considered to be generally applicable application standards. Simplified, such a pre-selection is based on the criterion "How well can the candidate apply". However, this procedure only rarely provides information about the fit to the open position.

It is often not recognized that personnel selection is based on personally set standards that have little to do with the actual job fit. Rather, the personnel decision-maker receives confirmation for his approach. After all, he has always done it this way and has always hired the best candidates. This can be seen as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. Nevertheless, the pre-selection of suitable candidates is always associated with uncertainty. For example, if an unsuitable candidate is invited to the interview by mistake, there is still a chance to correct this misjudgment after the interview. The situation is different if one of the few really well-suited applicants receives a rejection at the pre-selection stage and is not invited to the interview at all. Such an error cannot be noticed and corrected later. After all, rejected applicants are not examined again for a possible fit after the rejection.

This error is described in statistics as an error of the 2nd kind. Since this error cannot be corrected in the selection process or is not even noticed, a large potential of good applicants is often lost here.

Assessment of the Applicant as…	Applicant is objective…	
	Not suitable	suitable
suitable	Error 1	right decision
Not suitable	right decision	Error 2

Fig. 13: Mistakes of the 2nd kind in personnel selection (cf. Kanning 2019)

In Chapter 7, "The Requirements Analysis," we talked about why competency-based personnel selection is needed and how to create a competency-based requirements profile. It became clear that qualification characteristics such as degrees and certificates should be taken into account to a lesser extent in personnel selection than is common practice today. The usual application documents, however, consist for the most part precisely of certificates and diplomas that serve as proof of an acquired professional qualification. Therefore, when reviewing the incoming application documents, it is necessary to carefully examine which characteristics are used for the selection on the basis of the requirements profile that has been created.

It is equally important that the right criteria are used for the initial selection. This is where there is great potential for error, because many of the selection criteria used do not allow the conclusions to be drawn about job fit and performance that were initially assumed.

	Validity in %	
Selection method	Estimate of the personnel decision-	Actual
Application documents		
Age	30	>1
Overall grade school	27	2
Overall grade study	35	12
Work experience	54	7
Variety of work experience	52	19

Fig. 14: Validity of application documents (cf. Varelmann/Kanning 2018, modified presentation with rounded values).

The overview “Validity of application documents” shows how personnel decision-makers assess the validity of individual features of application documents. Validity indicates how well the respective characteristic is suited for estimating future success in the job. Even at first glance, it is clear that the estimates of HR decision-makers differ significantly from the scientific studies.

For example, decision-makers assume a validity of 30 for the characteristic of age, but there is hardly any scientific evidence of a connection between age and job success. With a validity of less than one, age is negligible in this case.

Overall, the actual validity of application documents is quite low. It is worth taking a look at the characteristics overall grade study and diversity work experience. The overall grade of studies is especially significant if the studies are not particularly far in the past. Thus, this characteristic is suitable for applicants who are still at the beginning of their professional career, but less so for senior candidates, for whom studies often date back decades. A good or even very good degree can be seen above all as proof of intelligence. Intelligent people succeed more easily in solving new tasks and penetrating difficult issues. This competence is comparatively easy to transfer to new situations and subject areas, so that the specialization of the chosen course of study loses a little of its importance.

It is interesting to note that in the case of work experience, diversity is significantly more predictive of fit and job success than work experience alone. One of the reasons for this is that a wide range of experiences has often given them a better grasp of the facets of a job. Consider a candidate who has been doing the same job in a company for 15 years. Certainly, this candidate has become an absolute specialist in exactly the task he has been performing for years. If this candidate is assigned exactly the same tasks under the same conditions in another company, he or she will also be considered a specialist there and will be appreciated for his or her good work. Apart from the fact that it is very unlikely to find the same working conditions as in the previous position when changing jobs, it cannot be assumed that work content and tasks will not change continuously.

Applicants who have held different positions in their careers find it easier to deal with change and understand interrelationships in their field. If we apply this to the position of an accountant, this means that his suitability is likely to be rated higher if he has held various positions and tasks, such as travel expense accounting, accounts payable and accounts receivable, and balance sheet preparation. The whole thing could be rounded off with a short excursion into controlling.

In summary, we are faced with two main problems in the pre-selection of suitable applicants. On the one hand, the informative value of application documents is generally overestimated and there are only a few valid suitability criteria that can be used for a preliminary selection. On the other hand, a competency-based pre-selection is not possible by analyzing the application documents alone. This problem can be solved differently depending on the amount of applications received.

Preselection in case of high application inflow

If a large number of applications are received, it is essential to make a preliminary selection. The first step is to identify the best applicants quickly and without much effort, so that we can then deal more intensively with the most promising candidates. A competency-based selection is not yet possible at this point, so only the qualification characteristics previously defined in the requirements analysis can be used.

In the most common cases, this is likely to be relevant work experience, specific training and school qualifications. Likewise, there may be other qualifications that are mandatory and easy to check at the same time, such as holding a driver's license or a health certificate.

A look at the overview "Validity of application documents" shows once again that for the pre-selection final grade and above all the variety of professional experience are suitable as selection criteria.

Based on these two selection criteria alone, it should be possible to select the most promising applications from a large volume of applications. All the more so if other qualification characteristics that can be clearly verified, such as a driver's license, are also used. It is important that we use relevant and valid selection criteria at this point in order to conduct the best possible pre-selection. If further selection of the applications received is necessary, additional selection criteria such as language and IT skills can further narrow down the selection. However, we should be aware that these criteria are not always valid and objective.

If, for example, an application mentions good Excel skills, it is not only unclear how these good skills can be compared with the skills of other applicants, it is also questionable whether all applicants use the same standard for evaluation. Consequently, the risk of committing a mistake of the 2nd kind increases when selection criteria are used that are difficult to compare among the applications received.

This procedure can nevertheless be expedient; after all, it is not possible to conduct an in-depth interview with every applicant. For this reason, we make a preselection. However, HR decision-makers must be aware of when and how the quality of pre-selection suffers in order to strike an appropriate balance between expediency and professional staff selection. Depending on how companies are set up technically, modern applicant management systems can also facilitate or even fully automate the pre-selection process. Here, too, it is important to consciously select the parameters for a preselection. Otherwise, we run the risk that an automated approach will be more like random selection than a valid result.

In the next step, it is also advisable to conduct a short telephone interview as part of the pre-selection process and only then decide which applicants will be invited to an interview.

Preselection with low input

When the number of applications is low, we encounter completely different challenges. Although there is a risk of the 2nd type of error here as well, if only a few applicants have expressed interest in a position and submitted an application, there is no further need to pre-select the best candidates. If, for example, only five applications have been received for a position, it makes little sense at this point to select the best. Even if one candidate among these five applications appears to be particularly suitable after reviewing the application documents, it is helpful to conduct a short interview with all candidates in the form of a telephone interview. Finally, the informative value and comparability of application documents are difficult to evaluate. In addition, the time required for five telephone interviews of, say, 30 minutes each, can be considered rather small.

A short phone call is also recommended at this point if an applicant appears to be less suitable based on his or her documents. A short interview can give a better impression of the applicant and the most important requirements can be asked specifically. A decision can then be made as to which candidates will be interviewed in greater depth.

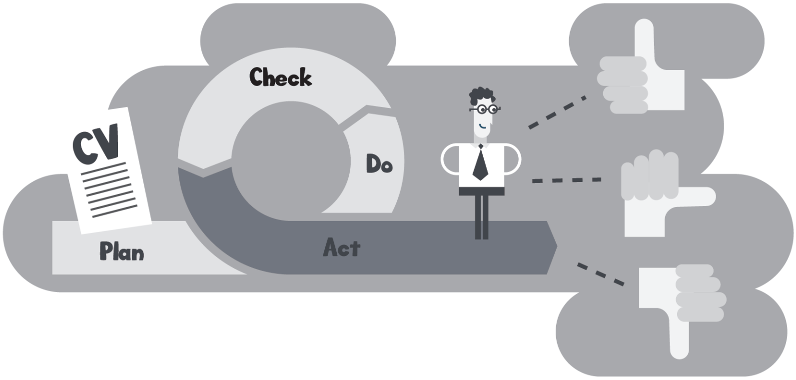
A low level of incoming applications is certainly an unsatisfactory result on its own. This is even more true if the applications received appear to be rather unsuitable. At this point, it is necessary to conduct causal research. This can be done, among other things, during the telephone interview. Applicants can be asked, for example, what impression they gained of the advertised position and the company in the advertisement and which points from the advertisement particularly appealed to them. A comparison is then made between the messages that have reached the applicants and the information that should be conveyed by the job advertisement. It is also necessary to question whether the information from the advertisement is relevant to the applicants and what further information they would like to receive.

Telephone Interview Questions:

- What appealed to you most about the advertised position? What expectations did you have of it?
- What do you think your everyday working life would be like with us?
- What do you like best about the position of ...?
- What questions did you have when you first read the ad?
- What do you want from your new employer?

The telephone interview and subsequent evaluation can be carried out in cooperation with HR Marketing. It seems reasonable to do this for each job individually, or perhaps at the level of individual divisions. Finally, expectations and demands differ within the various target groups. Sales people, for example, want different information about the job and the company than the target group of accountants. The aim of the campaign is to match the company and the job to the respective target group in the best possible way. At the same time, it is important to continue to be authentic and credible. Personnel marketing and advertising must not create false expectations. Dazzling marketing may fill the applicant inbox, but candidates are likely to bail after the first few interviews if they are not offered what they were previously promised.

After the telephone interviews, on the one hand, there should be clarity about which of the candidates appears to be suitable and whether a further interview is worthwhile. On the other hand, some information was obtained on how the company and the job offer are received on the market. After a thorough analysis, it may be necessary to take a step back in the recruiting process and adjust or fine-tune job postings and recruitment marketing activities. At this point, we act entirely in accordance with the PDCA cycle, in which we analyze the new situation and adapt it to the conditions we find.



If our analysis concludes that a low level of incoming applications is due to the fact that we are looking for specialists who are currently particularly scarce or not available on the labor market at all, a revision of job advertisements and marketing activities will have little success. In such a situation, the company has two options. The first is post and pray - that is, wait and pray that a suitable candidate will apply soon. In such a situation, the company has two options. The first is post and pray - that is, wait and pray that a suitable candidate will apply soon. Open positions must be filled as quickly as possible. The findings from the telephone interviews can be helpful here. They reflect the situation as it is. This shows which skills and competencies are available on the labor market. Analyzing the situation is the second option. This may provide indications as to whether and how the requirements profile created should be reviewed.

This is not about softening the requirements profile. Rather, it is a matter of further sharpening the profile and distinguishing between aptitude traits that are mandatory and those that can later be taught and trained in the context of employment. In this way, a company has the opportunity to decide in favor of a candidate, even if he or she is still a long way from the ideal candidate it is looking for.

At the same time, the effort and expense required to further qualify the then newly hired employee can be estimated and evaluated. In line with the PDCA cycle, we therefore go back two steps in the recruiting process and start with the requirements analysis and, if necessary, then go through the job posting process again.

The telephone interview in the preselection

Let’s take the selection process one step further. By now, a manageable number of candidates, with whom further discussions will be held should have been identified. However, before being invited to a personal on-site interview, a short telephone interview is recommended. The term telephone interview is intended to be synonymous with various means of communication, such as video calls, which enable a quick and easy exchange in the selection process.

The telephone interview should be used to identify the preselected applicants with whom more in-depth interviews will be conducted in the interests of efficient personnel selection. After all, interviews are time-consuming for everyone involved and can result in high travel costs for applicants and the recruiting team. To prepare, we choose an iterative approach and ask ourselves what information we still need from the applicant in order to be able to make a better decision about rejection or invitation. Here, too, the basis is the requirement profile drawn up beforehand. In order to speak to many applicants personally, the telephone interview should be structured efficiently and in a resource-saving manner.

On the one hand, this means that the interviewers gain a first impression of the most important competencies for the vacant position and ask specific questions. On the other hand, the necessary qualifications must be checked. Regardless of whether they can already be found in the application documents. This becomes clear in the example of the driver’s license. If the applicant states in his / her documents that he has a driving license, the vehicle class for which the driving license is valid must be asked in the telephone interview. If a car driver’s license is absolutely necessary for the advertised position, it is of little help if the candidate only has a moped driver’s license. The same applies to IT and language skills. Even if business-fluent English skills are stated in the resume, it is advisable to test the applicant’s language skills before inviting them to a personal on-site interview.

A comparison of the necessary qualifications in the telephone interview is comparatively easy. It is more difficult to ask for the required competencies and to establish comparability between the different applicants. Career paths and experience can vary so widely among applicants that it is difficult to apply an objective evaluation standard that is fair to all applicants. Therefore, in addition to standardized questions on qualification characteristics and the most important competencies, each interview should be prepared individually. The preparation is driven by the question of what information is still needed to make a decision about refusal or invitation.

A telephone interview also gives applicants the opportunity to learn more about the job and the company. When planning telephone interviews, it is therefore advisable to allow an appropriate time slot for the applicant's questions. After all, it's not just about how closely an applicant fits a company's requirements. It is also about whether the expectations and the ideas that the applicant associates with the advertised position can be fulfilled by the company. A first short comparison also helps here to check the most important cornerstones and to provide clarity about the task and position. For the next selection step, not only the most suitable candidates are then identified, but also those who continue to have an interest in the new position.

The involvement of the team

At first glance, it seems a little contradictory when we talk about efficient and resource-saving pre-selection and at the same time schedule a telephone interview before every invitation to a personal interview. A recruiting process that directly invites candidates for an interview appears more streamlined. However, this approach also increases the likelihood of inviting unsuitable candidates for an interview who would probably not have been invited after a short telephone interview. On the other hand, in a competency-based personnel selection and in the battle for the best talents, it is essential not to make selection decisions on the basis of application documents alone. Consequently, the number of telephone interviews in the pre-selection process is increasing. A task that cannot and should not always be handled by HR alone.

In the pre-selection process, the team is asked to look for a new colleague. In this step of the recruiting process, too, the team's strength lies in giving applicants authentic insights into the task and the team. Applicants' questions can be answered better and, above all, more credibly in this way than by HR or management. In the involvement of the team in the pre-selection process, we can distinguish different levels of self-organization. The range extends from the involvement of individual team members in the telephone interviews to the complete takeover of the entire pre-selection process.

Stage 1: In a first step of the team's involvement, the pre-selection of candidates can still be done by HR. Of course, this can also be done in consultation with the manager. If a preselection has been made on the basis of the application documents, the team can accompany the subsequent telephone interviews. It provides support above all with the applicants' questions about the task and the team. HR retains the responsibility for conducting the interviews and inquiring about the most important competencies. In this constellation, two employees consequently conduct the telephone interviews. The advantage is that the HR colleague and the team member can discuss what they heard after the interview. The decision on the next step - rejection or invitation - is thus no longer subject to a person's subjective impression.

Stage 2: Greater team involvement may consist of telephone interviews being conducted entirely by members of the seeking team. However, the first step of the pre-selection process still remains with HR and the manager, so that only the candidates with whom a telephone interview is to be conducted, are presented to the team. This step assumes that there is some experience on the team in conducting interviews and using questioning techniques. This experience can be gained by having team members assist with applicant questions during interviews as previously described.

Stage 3: Step by step, under the guidance of HR, further parts of the interview can be taken over by the team members. In addition, each team in a company is likely to have different experiences in conducting interviews. Depending on prior experience and the number and frequency of job placements, a situational decision must be made as to what efforts will be required to get the team ready for the telephone interviews. This also includes teaching basic questioning techniques to be used in the interview. What these questioning techniques are and how they can be taught in an easy-to-understand manner can be found in Chapter 10, "The Job Interview."

Stage 4: Involving the team in the pre-selection process can go as far as giving the team responsibility for the entire process step. In this case, the team takes over the screening of incoming applications and independently decides which candidates they would like to conduct a telephone interview with, and who will subsequently be invited to a personal interview. This requires that the team first receives assistance in reading application documents so that, above all, valid criteria - as described above - are taken into account in the selection of personnel.

The manager can also be involved in each of these steps in different ways. In many cases, the manager trusts the selection decisions of HR and their team fairly quickly, so intensive involvement in the pre-selection process is rarely desired.

Of course, it is helpful to divide the number of telephone interviews among several people. The advantage of involving the team is not only in the relief of HR and the manager. Direct contact with future colleagues is perceived very positively by applicants and leads to a certain bond with the team and the task at an early stage in the selection process. This is an effect that we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 11, “Onboarding”.

The most important things from chapter 9

- **A pre-selection of suitable candidates is hardly possible on the basis of the application documents. If the number of applications received is high, it is advisable to make a preliminary selection on the basis of the application documents. Very close attention must be paid to suitable selection criteria.**

- **Personal pre-selection interviews, e.g. in the form of a telephone interview, are preferred.**

- **The recruiting team can be actively involved in the pre-selection process and conduct telephone interviews as the first step of the selection process.**

- **The degree of involvement of the recruiting team in the pre-selection process can be gradually increased. An experienced recruiting team can perform the pre-selection independently.**

THE INTERVIEW

The interview remains the central element in the selection process. The pre-selection process has previously identified the candidates who appear to be the most suitable for the vacant position. In the personal interviews that now lie ahead, we focus on these candidates and can invest our time in detailed discussions in a targeted manner. In the end, we want to identify and attract not only the best, but the right candidates for the open position.

The difference between the best and the right candidates? What use is a technical genius who masters every challenge with flying colors but is unable to work together with his colleagues, accept framework conditions and embrace the company's values? The employment of such a professional genius is likely to be short-lived. No matter how outstanding the work results may be during this time, they certainly do not outweigh the anticipated unrest in the team and the efforts of a replacement.

An authentic appearance to the candidates is particularly important during interviews. On one hand, we present ourselves to a small circle of potential new colleagues, and on the other hand, the interview is about really getting to know each other. Employers and applicants alike want to be able to look a little behind the facade. Finally, both are moved by what is behind the task or the application in order to be able to make a good decision at the end of the selection process. For the selection of the right candidate, we continue the competency-based selection of personnel and rely on the support of the entire recruiting team.

The distribution of roles in the recruiting team

Here again, we rely on the involvement of colleagues from the searching team for authentic communication. It is certainly also possible for HR and the manager to provide authentic insights into the task, team and company. HR, in particular, should be skilled at presenting job openings and the company in a good way, due to its many years of recruiting experience. The crux, however, is that this information seems less credible when it comes from HR rather than the team doing the searching. During the selection process, it is clear to applicants that HR's job is to attract new employees to their own company. Consequently, applicants assume that HR employees are skilled at highlighting the assets of a job and the company and cleverly concealing less attractive aspects.

Regardless of the truth of this assumption, it causes applicants to somewhat doubt HR's credibility regarding the job and company description. This information can be communicated much more effectively by future team members. From the applicants' point of view, they are less likely to assume that the future team members are particularly interested in presenting the task and the company in a particularly positive light. Rather, the team is able to point out critical aspects without scaring away applicants. The opposite is more likely to be the case. In every company and in every position, there are also difficult situations to master. Every applicant knows that, too. Colleagues from the team can therefore report authentically and, above all, credibly, since they are the ones who have to solve these difficult situations every day.

A similar argument can be made about the role of the manager. It goes without saying that the applicant has a special interest in getting to know his or her future supervisor during the selection process. Finally, in most companies, this person is likely to have a significant impact on personal development and career progression within the company. A good relationship with the boss is advantageous. However, if the manager reports on tasks and the team, the candidate will still have unanswered questions. Although the description of all tasks and processes gives the candidate a good insight, it remains unclear what is really behind them and what the operational process actually looks like. Even if the manager reports the vacancy with the best of intentions, as long as he or she is not also involved in the operational execution, certain doubts and uncertainties will remain among candidates.

The questions on cooperation and teamwork are of particular interest to many applicants. Of course, it is nice to hear from the manager that there is a great atmosphere in the team and that everyone is working well together. However, it is better if this statement is also confirmed by various team members in the interview. Not the least, because the team can also respond to the manager on the issue of cooperation. The question "What's the boss actually like?" is probably on the tip of many applicants' tongues. However, a classic job interview will rarely provide the appropriate setting for such a question. This question is much easier to ask or at least to raise with the team. An answer like "When something goes really wrong, he can get louder. He's just very passionate about it. The great thing is that our boss is always supportive" will help candidates a lot in the selection process. Following the interview, they can then decide for themselves whether they would like to work with a passionate boss or would prefer a sober, no-nonsense manager.

The role of HR

Job interviews have always been the territory of HR. This does not change in agile recruiting. However, tasks and roles are shifting. The greater involvement of the team in the recruiting process at first gives the impression that HR will conduct no or very few interviews in the future. In fact, this notion is not so far-fetched if appropriate interviewing skills are built up among the other members of the recruiting team. This is also true for the team members of the searching team, as well as for many managers. While the latter can be assumed to have a greater experience in conducting job interviews, real skills in interviewing and questioning techniques are rarely found.

In terms of an agile organization, a service department such as HR must set itself up in such a way that its internal customers are able to carry out the necessary work steps in a self-organized and self-responsible manner. It is therefore HR's task to enable the departments to help themselves as far as possible. However, this only concerns the implementation of the recruiting process. The constant adaptation and further development of recruiting is the task of HR. One of HR's goals is to enable the organization to meet its staffing needs. This can refer to the legally compliant design and an efficient process, but also to a target group-oriented and authentic approach to applicants.

On the way to an agile organization, HR's task is to develop departments and recruiting teams step by step. The necessary routine in interviewing can be done by accompanying job interviews, missing skills can be imparted in the form of small trainings.

The degree to which recruiting competencies should be built within the team depends on the desired level of team member involvement in the selection process and subsequent hiring decision-making. If it is the manager's wish that his team be given full responsibility for the selection process in the future, more intensive and longer support from HR is necessary. In many cases, however, the process begins by giving team members significantly less responsibility. After all, it is a learning step for everyone involved when responsibility is transferred. While the leader transfers responsibility to the team and must learn to trust, it is up to the team to take on that responsibility. HR supports this transformation process and must develop suitable ways to provide the best possible support for team and manager while not losing sight of the goal of successful staffing.

Building recruiting skills in the team depends on another factor, the number and frequency of job placements. Basically, the searching team is always the recruiting team. However, the step-by-step development of appropriate skills and the accompanying training by HR should be commercially reasonable in relation to the vacancies in the team. If large growth is to be expected and many new employees have to be recruited in a short time, intensive involvement and qualification of the team is helpful. This contrasts with teams that may only have to fill a position in the form of a succession every few years. The support of the team and the possibility of authentic communication with the applicants should not be waived here either. However, the gradual development of recruiting competencies must be proportionate here and, if necessary, a selection process must be chosen in which the team is given less responsibility.

The step-by-step approach of the recruiting team under the guidance of HR should be regularly accompanied by a retrospective. The retrospective is to be carried out regardless of whether the recruiting team has many or a few vacancies or whether many or fewer applications are received. The aim of the retrospective is to find out how well the goal has already been achieved and what has gone well and not so well in the past few days. This meeting should be moderated by HR, as this is also where the sovereignty over the recruiting process and its improvement lies. In a retrospective, lessons are learned from past experiences and concrete measures are developed to attract the right applicants to the company.

Common problems of recruiting teams - and their solution

Very similar problems often come up in recruiting team retrospectives:

Not voted. A recruiting team often consists of five to seven people from different departments. Constant coordination is not always easy. It is therefore all the more important that the process and responsibilities in the selection procedure are clearly clarified.

No common understanding of the candidate they are looking for. The recruiting team was not always involved in the requirements analysis phase. A common understanding of the candidate profile you are looking for is essential so that the team can make a decision.

Uncertainties in conducting the interview. Recruiting skills are built up in the teams step by step. Accompanying support in conducting interviews and asking questions is necessary, especially at the beginning.

Only unsuitable applications. The causes are manifold and can lie, among other things, in the marketing and the job advertisement, but also in a lack of knowledge in the screening and pre-selection of incoming applications. If there is still no suitable applicant, a decision is needed as to whether the profile should be searched further or whether an alternative must be developed.

Structure of the interview

In agile recruiting, we also follow the recommendations for selecting suitable methods for the interview. A structured interview is essential, especially if several members of the recruiting team are involved in the selection process.

Structured interviews: They are characterized above all by the fact that a uniform interview guide is used. Among all interview forms, the structured interview has the highest validity and thus the greatest predictive probability of selecting the right candidate. The desired goal is that each candidate is asked the same questions so that different candidates can be compared afterwards, thus avoiding bias and judgment errors by the interviewers.

The best way to achieve this is through the use of highly structured interviews. However, this type of interview is perceived by applicants as cool and distant. It is also not particularly appreciated by the interviewers themselves, as it allows little room for individual interaction with the applicants.

Highly structured interviews consequently stand in the way of authentic communication and getting to know an applicant individually with all his or her talents and abilities. Nevertheless, it is necessary to make interviews and thus applicants comparable with each other in order to be able to make a decision for the further process.

Unstructured interviews: In contrast to highly structured interviews are unstructured interviews, a form of interview that is certainly widespread in many companies. Recruiting teams also quickly run the risk of conducting unstructured interviews, especially when there is little knowledge of selection processes and interviews have not been adequately prepared.

Certainly, an unstructured interview offers the most room for an authentic exchange with the candidates and the opportunity to address the candidates' skills and needs on a completely individual basis. However, the validity of such interviews is so low that completely unstructured interviews should be avoided.

	Validity in %	
Selection method	Estimate of the personnel decision-	Actual
Interview		
highly structured	47	33
unstructured	41	4

Fig. 15: Validity of interview methods (cf. Varelmann/Kanning 2018, modified representation with rounded values.)

Semi-standardized interviews: The solution seems to be semi-standardized interviews. They are supposed to combine the advantages of both interview forms: Comparability and authenticity. Certainly, a little structure helps to make the interviews more comparable with each other. It also provides some confidence to the interviewers from the recruiting team on how to conduct the interview. The extent to which the structure of a semi-standardized interview should be based on a structured or unstructured interview depends on the position to be filled and the team searching.

The following example of two completely different positions to be filled should provide orientation.

A large corporation is looking for an additional accounting clerk. The work processes in the accounting department are clearly regulated. There is not only a clear picture of what the new colleague has to do, but also how he has to do his job. Processes and structures must be followed precisely so that all colleagues can work together.

The other company is a small marketing agency that is looking for a new marketing manager. The new colleague is supposed to create a new marketing concept for a client of the agency. With this concept, the customer finally wants to achieve a breakthrough in the Asian market with his new product idea. The agency owners themselves are not yet quite sure what all needs to be included in this concept and how this concept can best be created and implemented.

The more clearly work content and procedures are defined, i.e. the what and how are specified, the more it is possible to model the semi-structured interview on a highly structured interview. In rigid work structures, the individual skills of the applicant play a rather subordinate role.

If work content and processes are less clearly defined, i.e. the what and, above all, the how are less predetermined, the more it is possible to base the semi-structured interview on an unstructured interviewIn this case, the comparability of the candidates with one another suffers. It is hardly possible to define objective criteria for the solution of a new, unknown task that can be used to compare the candidates.

The interviews and the recruiting team

After an entire recruiting team is available to conduct interviews, there are various options for organizing interviews. These can be done in different ways and depend on the agile maturity level of the team or company.

Team-fit-Interview: Probably the easiest way to introduce applicants and the future team to each other in the selection process is the team-fit interview. It can be done as a separate interview part following the traditional interview. Following their interview with the manager and HR, the candidate is given the opportunity to get to know their future team. The team-fit interview takes place without the manager and HR. In this way, an exchange "among equals" is possible and getting to know each other is less perceived by the applicant as another exam situation.

The team-fit interview is about finding out whether the team and the applicant harmonize together. For this purpose, the applicant can be introduced to the entire team or only to individual team members. Since getting to know each other is driven by the question "Dear team, can you imagine working with this applicant?", it is not necessary for the team-fit interview to be conducted exclusively by members of the recruiting team. The team then gives an individual assessment of whether the applicant fits into the team from its point of view. No special recruiting expertise is required for this assessment, so any team member can be involved in this form of interview.

Even if no special know-how is required for the team-fit interview, a briefing of the team is needed beforehand. Especially when it is the first time to participate in such an interview. The team needs to know that this interview is just about getting to know each other. There is therefore no expectation that the team will subject the applicant to another professional examination. For this reason, the team members are not given access to the candidate's resume and application documents. This information already leads to a certain expectation in advance and makes it difficult to get to know each other under the same conditions.

During the team-fit interview, the candidate not only gets the opportunity to get to know his or her future team, but can also ask his or her new colleagues a series of questions. In addition to specific questions about the task and work processes, questions about leadership culture and cooperation are also frequently asked at this point. Questions that were often already discussed in the previous classic interview. The practical answers, examples and stories from the team give the applicant another better impression of the task and cooperation in the team.

Following the team-fit interview, it is advisable to have another brief discussion with the applicant to clarify any new questions that may have arisen or to clear up any misunderstandings. This interview can be conducted by the manager or by HR.

After the applicant has been passed, the team is asked to give feedback. The focus is on whether the team can envision working together. A professional assessment, although often given following a team-fit interview, was not the goal of this interview. Due to the unstructured setup and the often limited recruiting experience of the team, such an assessment should be evaluated with caution.

Even if the question of collaboration can be answered with a simple yes or no, a more detailed answer is desirable. To this end, the team can be asked the following questions, which are primarily aimed at the applicant's personality:

- What speaks in favor of the applicant fitting into your team? What speaks against it?
- What did you like most about the applicant?
- What else would the applicant need to bring to the table to fit even better into the team?

leader transfers responsibility to the team and must learn to trust, it is up to the team to take on that responsibility. HR supports this transformation process and must develop suitable ways to provide the best possible support for team and manager while not losing sight of the goal of successful staffing.

- What helped you get to know the applicant?
- What was in the way of arriving at an assessment?
- What do you want to keep? What do you want to improve?

The team-fit interview can be conducted in the same room as the previously conducted interview. However, a change of room not only provides a little movement, but can also lighten the atmosphere of the conversation if the team's office space or the coffee kitchen is used instead of a meeting room. The change of room underlines the rather informal character of the team-fit interview, loosens up the conversation and also gives the applicant a few more insights into the company.

Two-stage interview

A popular variant for job interviews is to split the interview into two parts. A sensible separation can be made, for example, into specialist interview and social-fit interview. While a technical interview primarily asks about the candidate's technical skills, the term social-fit can be a bit misleading. In this part of the interview, social and personal competencies are asked about, among other things. The social-fit interview therefore differs from the team-fit interview in that the competencies previously defined in the requirements profile are specifically inquired about.

Stage 1: The focus of the interview is whether the candidate can successfully fill the advertised position. There may be minor overlap with the team-fit interview. However, since previously defined competencies are to be inquired about, a social-fit interview can only be conducted by members of the recruiting team who have previously been trained in interviewing and questioning techniques.

Let's take a recruiting team that consists of a manager, HR, and two members of the searching team. Depending on the position to be filled and the skills of the recruiting team, various constellations are conceivable as to how the two-stage interview is conducted. If a team member has a very high level of subject expertise, it is obvious that he or she will be used in the subject interview. Especially when the manager has moved a little away from the operational business over the course of time and is more concerned with leadership and strategic tasks. HR is unlikely to be able to provide much good support in most cases in a purely technical interview. Thus, the technical interview here should be conducted by the team member with high technical expertise and the manager.

The social-fit interview in our case could be conducted by the remaining team member and HR. In this combination, it is also possible for HR to provide assistance to the team member so that they can continue to build recruiting expertise.

Separating the interview means that not all members of the recruiting team need to be present for the entire duration of the interview. At the same time, team members can be deployed according to their strengths in the interview. The subsequent evaluation of the candidate can then even be based on the assessment of four people. On one hand, this requires a great deal of clarity as to what criteria are being sought in the interviews. For this purpose, a meaningful requirements profile from which the criteria can be taken is very useful. In addition, this approach gives us a more differentiated assessment of the candidate's suitability and, in the end, we make a better decision.

Stage 2: In stage 1 of the two-stage interview, the manager and HR are still significantly involved in conducting the interview. In Stage 2, however, they back off and leave the interviews to the team members. In this process, the remaining members of the recruiting team are only given as much responsibility as they can bear, i.e. the manager and HR gradually withdraw. The experience from the first phase helps to better assess how much support the recruiting team still needs and how reliable the team's assessment of the candidate's fit is.

It is entirely conceivable that interviewing is done entirely by the recruiting team without the involvement of the manager and HR. In addition to the authentic appearance during the entire job interview, we thus achieve further positive effects that become apparent later in onboarding, for example.

Another effect that is not directly related to recruitment is evident in the context of agile transformation. If teams are enabled to proceed independently in personnel selection, entrepreneurial thinking and a sense of responsibility also increase in addition to independence.

In the final manifestation of Stage 2, HR's role is to assist the team as a subject matter expert. In the expert role, HR can be called upon, for example, to rethink the interview setting, when further assessment of a candidate for a particular position is needed, or when personality tests are to be used in the selection process.

After the team has been sufficiently empowered to conduct interviews with confidence and aplomb, HR has the task of further improving the process and quality of recruiting. This task lies with HR, as it gets a good impression of what is going particularly well in the teams right now and what improvements are needed by working with the various recruiting teams. In addition to regular feedback loops and retrospectives, a community of practice is also suitable for this purpose (see Chapter 5.3).

For the manager, stage 2 of the two-stage interview is often very challenging. Ultimately, in most organizations, the manager is responsible for hiring. It is not easy to delegate this responsibility to the team and to be responsible for the result in the end. Level 2 can only be reached if sufficient trust has already been built up between the team and the manager in level 1.

The question arises as to whether this step needs to be taken at all.

In an agile recruiting process, a manager must also be allowed to at least get to know his or her new employee or even veto the process. At the same time, every applicant is likely to be interested in getting to know his or her manager during the selection process. So we cannot and should not completely dispense with the executive.

Three-stage interview: Depending on how the selection process is structured, there is the option for the executive to participate in the technical or social fit interview or to secure their own time slot to interview applicants. To do this, we can change the two-stage interview into a three-stage one. This gives the manager the opportunity to speak with each candidate personally. Another variation would be for the team to conduct the two-step interviews first and recommend only the most suitable candidates for a further interview with the manager. These candidates would then be invited back for an interview. In addition to the interview with the manager, it is also possible to clarify any unanswered questions that may have arisen in the follow-up to the previous interview.

Following each interview, whether Stage 1 or Stage 2, it is necessary for the members of the recruiting team involved in the interview to sit down together to evaluate the interview and the process.

In the first step, observations about the candidate are communicated and evaluated for a possible fit with the position before a decision is made regarding acceptance or rejection or an invitation to an interview with the manager.

This is followed by a brief reflection on the interview conducted. Which points went well? Which things do we want to do even better? This is followed by a brief reflection on the conversation. What points went well? Which things do we want to do better?

How do I get a recruiting team ready for the interviews?

If a recruiting team receives an active part in personnel selection, it must be prepared for this task. This is especially true for team members who have never been entrusted with such a task before and have only known job interviews from the applicant's point of view. It is also useful for managers to update their knowledge regarding assessment errors and questioning techniques, as well as the legal requirements for interviews.

The goal of the effort does not have to be to train a recruiting team to be absolute profiler-level experts. Rather, it is about interviewing basics and an awareness of assessment errors in personnel selection. Topics that HR can usually easily communicate and can therefore continue to act as an expert and point of contact throughout the selection process.

There are numerous books and recommendations on interviewing and just as many techniques and methods that can be used. From our experience, the most suitable methods and techniques for enabling the recruiting team are those that are easy to understand and quick to learn. Both criteria guarantee that the methods learned are actually used in the discussions. Moreover, it is precisely the basic techniques that have great effectiveness and a wide range of applications. They form the foundation, so to speak, on which a recruiting team can develop further. To get started, we focus on the basics and equip a recruiting team with the essential tools.

Point out errors of judgment and perception

There are numerous assessment and perception errors. Many HR colleagues will still be familiar with the basics from their studies or training. All these errors are united by the fact that we perceive our environment only selectively and therefore cannot arrive at an objective assessment. In addition, we are shaped by our past experiences, which are incorporated into decisions and judgments.

Everyone has certainly heard that assessments and evaluations are subjective. Also, almost everyone agrees with this point without realizing what exactly is behind the statement. In principle, selective perception is not a bad thing. It helps us to focus on the things that are important at the moment and to filter out of the abundance of all sensory perceptions those that seem relevant at this point in time.

In personnel selection, things look a little different. When it comes to assessing the fit and performance of an applicant, the most objective view possible is needed. Especially when several people give an assessment and then have to come to a joint decision.

Even experienced recruiters or aptitude diagnosticians may find it difficult to arrive at an objective assessment of a candidate. Unlike many others, however, they are aware that the profile they have created of an applicant is distorted by their own errors of judgment and perception. They have learned to deal with this bias and to critically question and reflect on their assessments.

We can achieve something similar with the members of the recruiting team. They, too, will not succeed in freeing themselves from errors of judgment and perception. But we can raise their awareness that we all make these mistakes.

Sympathy: Likeability plays an important role in personnel selection. People who are likeable generally perform better in selection processes. Those who seem unsympathetic to us usually receive a rejection following the interview. The decisive factor for this decision was the criterion of sympathy and not the fit and performance of the candidate in relation to the position to be filled.

Of course, no one wants an unsympathetic colleague on their team. However, this is countered by two points. Firstly, we are looking for a new work colleague and not a buddy with whom we would like to spend our free time after work. Second, our likability assessment is based on a snapshot in time during the interview. In other words, from a situation that is unusual for everyone involved, which leads to an increased level of stress, especially for applicants.

Serious advice to the recruiting team can be that the members pay attention during the interview to whether they rate the applicant as likeable or disagreeable. Even this seemingly small insight helps to put the subsequent joint assessment of the applicant in perspective.

With a little more practice, it is then also possible to address this knowledge in the interview. Candidates who appear likable are usually considered to be more productive, regardless of whether they really are. If a candidate appears to the interviewer to be particularly likeable and he or she becomes aware of this perception, the interviewer is well advised to follow up more often during the interview. For example, if the candidate describes his or her activities in his or her last job, in-depth questions such as “What do you mean by that exactly?” or “What specifically is behind this job?” are helpful. The interviewer learns more about the candidate’s actual tasks, can evaluate them better, and challenges himself by matching the candidate’s fit with his likability assessment.

Interestingly, the opposite is true for a candidate who appears unsympathetic. These candidates are asked much more in-depth and often more difficult questions. This can be attributed, among other things, to the fact that the interviewer is unconsciously looking for clues as to why this unsympathetic applicant is not a good fit. If the interviewer becomes aware that they think this candidate is unsympathetic, they should adjust their interview style and questioning to make it easier for the candidate to connect with them. Looking for common ground or confirming that you have the same appreciation of a presented issue as the applicant can help, for example.

Perceive, assume, evaluate

While the recruiting team can simply be sensitized to assessment errors with likeable and unlikeable applicants in a meeting, the exercise “Perceive, Assume, Evaluate” relies on self-awareness and reflection. Essentially, it’s about conveying the importance of the first impression and how that impression influences the rest of the conversation.

In this exercise, the members of the recruiting team learn about the different assessments their teammates can come to and what evaluation they derive from them. The exercise is to be seen as an impulse to see how differently we perceive our counterpart.

Working aids online

A handout on how to do this can be found online at the work aids. See *www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR*

Exercise

Get together in threes and define the roles together:

- one candidate
- Two interviewers

The two interviewers look closely at the candidate for 1 minute. Pay attention to items of clothing, accessories, jewelry, glasses, etc.

Perception: The two interviewers then agree on a common object on which to focus their joint perception, e.g. the candidate's glasses.

Assumption: Now each of the two interviewers writes down three guesses about this item. One of the three guesses should also be as far-fetched or humorous as possible. Example: "The candidate chose the glasses to come across as particularly intellectual."

Evaluation: For each guess, also write down an evaluation, e.g. "I like the glasses. I think it's great when I can look right at people and see that they're educated."

After the two interviewers write down their three guesses and ratings, they share their thoughts with the candidate.

- Are there any consistent guesses?
- Are there consistent ratings?
- Was an interviewer correct in his or her assessment?

At the end, the candidate resolves and explains what is involved in the item evaluated by the interviewers.

Questioning techniques: SuSiBOL and scale questions

Similar to perception and judgment errors, there are countless questioning techniques that can be used in an interview. We would like to present two of these techniques for use by the recruiting team. The SuSiBOL questioning technique (Siegel 2014) and the scale questions. Both are comparatively easy to learn and can be used in a variety of ways in interviews.

It definitely makes sense for a recruiting team to build competencies in this field. But what we must not forget is our goal of authentic and transparent communication among equals. In a traditional setting, an applicant often encounters an interview expert who, through skillful and targeted questioning, gains almost any information he or she wants. Should a recruiting team also push its competencies to such a level, an interview at eye level is hardly conceivable.Finally, there is then an imbalance between the interview partners. Few applicants will have the qualifications that an experienced interviewer has. When it becomes necessary to question the candidate in more detail during the selection process, the process should be done by HR or by employing a qualified aptitude diagnostician.

The SuSiBOL questioning technique

The SuSiBOL questioning technique is a variant of the STAR questioning technique, which probably has greater familiarity. The idea behind this interview technique is to use five questions to obtain comprehensive information about an applicant's skills and behaviors in a given situation.

This questioning technique is used to inquire about an applicant's past behavior. We follow the assumption that there is a connection between past and future behavior. So there is a high probability that a candidate will behave in the future as he has done in the past.

The challenge is to ask how a candidate behaved in a specific situation. The SuSiBOL questioning technique offers a systematic approach, which is already contained as an acronym in its name. We will explain the exact procedure on the basis of the five steps.

Working aids online

A handout for the recruiting team is available in the online work aids. See www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR

Step 1: Su (Suggestive Statement)

In the first step, we make a suggestive statement about the issue we want to inquire about.

Sample questions

- It happens every now and then that …
- It's almost a daily occurrence in marketing that …
- After all, it's not always easy to …

We then obtain confirmation from the candidate that they are aware of such a situation.

Sample questions

- I'm sure you know this too.
- I'm sure you've experienced this (similarly) before.
- I'm sure you have experience with that as well.

Step 2: Si (concrete situation in the past)

After we have received confirmation from the candidate that he is aware of such a situation, we specifically ask for an example.

By mentally dealing with a concrete experienced situation, the probability is high that the candidate describes the situation and his behavior realistically.

Sample questions

Please describe a specific situation,

- in which you have experienced this before.
- in which you also found it difficult ... .
- in which you have experienced similar resistance.

Step 3: B (Behavior)

Once we have understood the most important aspects of the situation, we focus on the core of our question and find out how the candidate would behave in this situation.

When questioning specific behavior, the candidate also finds it more difficult to give socially desirable answers or even make things up.

Sample questions

- How did you behave in this situation?
- What did you do in this situation?
- How did you go about it?

Step 4: O (Outcome)

It is nice when the candidate can report a positive result. In our question, however, the focus is on the behavior and handling of a particular situation. The result as such should therefore not be overrated in the interview. Its main purpose in this method is to conclude the behavioral question block.

Sample questions

- What was the result?
- How did it turn out?
- What has resulted from this?

Step 5: L (Learning)

After we pay rather less attention to the result, the learning ability is often more interesting. Willingness to learn and change and a healthy self-reflection of one's own behavior are fundamentally interesting in an ever-changing environment.

Sample questions

- What specifically would you do differently in a comparable situation now?
- What is your most important conclusion from this situation?
- How has this affected your approach in similar situations?

One advantage of the SuSiBOL method is that it begins with a suggestive statement. The question "Have you ever experienced that ..." helps applicants and interviewers alike to ask about a specific situation and conduct the interview accordingly. At the same time, the interviewer makes it clear that difficult situations are not unknown to him or her either and creates the necessary space to discuss difficult things as well. A real help for less experienced recruiting teams.

The big challenge lies in asking how a candidate behaved in a specific situation. Experience has shown that we humans are very interested in finding out more about the situation than about its solution. The background could be that we would like to make a recommendation on how to resolve such a situation, or that we want to compare the applicant's actions with our own. Again, an example helps the recruiting team better understand why the ''how'' is at the forefront of this questioning technique.

Example: Suppose we want to ask how an applicant resolved a conflict situation between two colleagues. As a specific situation, the applicant mentions a conflict between Mr. Müller and Ms. Huber. This information may already be enough to ask how the applicant solved this situation. For the competence "Dealing with Conflicts", it should be irrelevant whether it is a conflict regarding the new sales strategy or a deadline postponement in an ongoing project. Also, statements about personality traits of the two actors should be viewed with caution. If the applicant describes that dealing with Mr. Müller is always difficult anyway, this may create an understanding for the conflict with Ms. Huber. It does not include information on how the applicant attempted to mediate between the parties.

The situation is similar with the result. Which result the applicant has achieved in our example is secondary. It is not possible to evaluate the outcome. To do so, we would have to interview the two people Müller and Huber, and we would have to have deep knowledge of the project and the company in which the conflict arose. None of this can be learned in the course of an interview. For this reason, we cannot evaluate the outcome or even make a recommendation as to how this conflict could have been better resolved.

What can be evaluated by the recruiting team is how the candidate went about resolving this conflict. For example, were both people sufficiently listened to, how was mediation done between them, was an attempt made to find a solution that could be supported by both, etc.? It is precisely this behavior that needs to be evaluated following the interview, as we can assume that the applicant will behave in this way in a similar situation in our company.

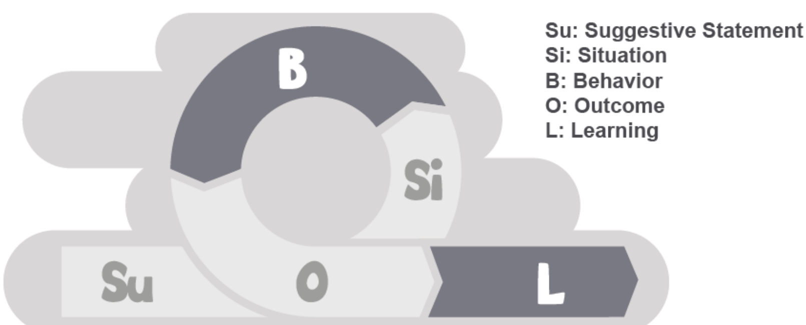


Fig. 16: SuSiBOL-Loop

The scale question

The scale question is another and versatile questioning technique that many may already be familiar with. In everyday life, we are more often asked to make an assessment or evaluation on a scale. This is often done in connection with customer satisfaction surveys and referrals.

However, a scale question has a lot more to offer, which helps us especially during interviews. In addition, it is also easy to learn, making it an ideal addition to a recruiting team's repertoire.

In the following, we present the scale questioning technique in the same way that HR might teach this questioning technique to a recruiting team.

> Working aids online
>
> A handout on the scale question is available online in the work aids. See *www.jo-agileHR.de/bai-aR*

Scale questions are generally used when skills and characteristics are to be surveyed that cannot be measured objectively, such as leadership competence. To this end, the applicant is asked during the interview to make an assessment of his or her leadership skills.

Specifically, we ask him to give a rating on a scale of 0 to 10 during the interview. It is important that the meaning of the ends of the scale are also explained:

Please rate your leadership skills on a scale from 0 to 10.

The 0 stands for "I have no leadership skills at all",

the 10 states "I am one of the best leaders in the whole country".

In job interviews, it can be especially helpful to exaggerate the upper end of the scale a bit. Let's remember that an applicant wants to be on his or her best behavior during the interview. Responses in the 7 to 10 range are therefore common. However, it also takes a little courage and a healthy amount of self-confidence for a candidate to describe themselves as one of the best leaders in the country.

In fact, however, all we want to do with this question is to get some number on which we can base our questioning technique. If, for example, the applicant rates his leadership skills with a 7, our first thought is: Not bad at all. Still some room to grow, but the applicant seems like a good leader that we can hire right away.

What we do not know at this point, however, is how the applicant arrives at this assessment and what he associates with the value 8. Followed by the question of what we - the interviewers - associate with this value. Very likely we have very different ideas at this point, perhaps even within the recruiting team.

Let us imagine that we could have asked this question to Nero, the emperor of the Roman Empire. Very likely he would have given us an even 10, and then had us thrown in the dungeon for this impertinent question. There would then have been enough time to think about different leadership styles.

At this point, at the latest, it should become clear that the applicant's simple assessment of leadership competence does not say much and is of little help to us in the selection process. However, the mentioned value gives us a first orientation point for further questions. In our example, the answer 7 would be followed by the question:

What do you base a 7 on? Or

What does a 7 mean to you?

With the answer that now follows, we learn how the applicant arrives at his assessment and what he understands by good leadership skills. We can then compare these designs with our own requirements and make an evaluation later.

But there is more to a question of scale.

After we have been able to determine 7 as the current value, there is the possibility to ask whether and to what extent the applicant would like to further develop his or her leadership skills. Values slightly below 10 are often mentioned at this point. After all, the applicant wants to show ambition and willingness to develop. Interviewers are likely to be interested in what is still missing to achieve the desired level of leadership competence and how their own company could support the development of the future employee.

For this goal, it is most helpful to ask about the next, specific step in development. Otherwise, we run the risk of getting lost in a discussion with almost utopian ideals and receive mainly hypothetical answers and requests for change from the applicant.

So after an applicant tells us that they rate their leadership skills at a 7 and would like to build them up to a 10, our next question would be:

What would be a next, concrete step to get to an 8?

The jump from a 7 to an 8 is smaller and much more tangible for the applicant. From his answer we can then hear in which fields he would like to develop further and we can assess whether and how we can promote this development. Often, the very points that an applicant perceives as supposed weaknesses are mentioned at this point.

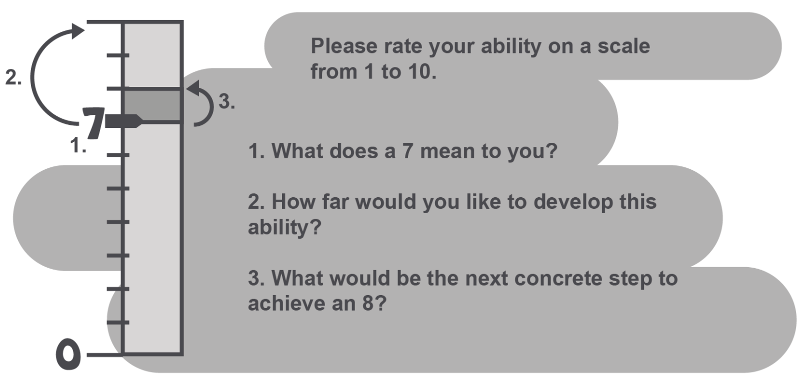


Fig. 17: Flow of a scale question

In the interview, the scale question is a clever way of obtaining information about how the applicant assesses his or her current leadership competence and how he or she arrives at this assessment. Indirectly, we learn from him where he sees his strengths in leadership and why he considers these very strengths important. As we move forward, we learn whether the applicant would like to further develop his or her leadership skills or is satisfied with the status quo. If he wants to further develop his competencies, the question about the next concrete step tells us what development needs the applicant has identified for himself. If we know the development steps we are aiming for, we get a more rounded picture of the applicant's understanding of leadership and his or her current skills in this area.

The most important things in Chapter 10

- **Involving the searching team in the interviews increases credibility and authenticity and improves the candidate experience.**
- **The Teamfit interview is the easiest method for engaging the team in interviews.**
- **Recruiting teams need to be prepared for interviewing.**
- **It is advisable to train questioning techniques and raise awareness of errors in judgment and perception.**
- **The level of involvement of the recruiting team in interviews can be gradually increased. An experienced recruiting team can handle the entire selection process on its own.**

ONBOARDING

Onboarding? Is that still part of recruiting? For many, recruiting ends with the signing of the contract and onboarding begins with the new colleague's first day at work. Only what happens in between? The Haufe Onboarding Survey 2019 (Haufe 2019) reports that 30% of the companies surveyed receive notices from their new employees between the signing of the contract and the first day of work. This makes it clear how important the topic of onboarding is and that contact with the applicant or then the new employee must not be lost in the period between signing the contract and the first day of work.

As part of our authentic and transparent approach to recruiting, we go one step further. Onboarding does not start with the signing of the contract, but already during the selection process itself. Depending on the individual recruiting process, an applicant may have personal contact with his or her potential new team at a very early stage. At the latest during the selection phase with the recruiting team or during a team-fit interview, an applicant gets to know his or her new team. At this moment, all those involved mentally ask themselves the question: Do I want to work with this person? If this question is answered in the affirmative, the first group dynamic processes of team integration and the first onboarding in the minds start (Olberding 2019/2).

If, in the further course of the selection process, a contract offer is made, it will be more difficult for the applicant to reject the offer or even to terminate it a little later. The early contact with the team and the exchange about the task and the company creates a certain commitment and thus an initial bond with the team and the company. Of course, for the most part, several interviews are held for a position and in the end, only one of the applicants is hired. However, early onboarding and the mental integration of the newcomer into the team are possible with any applicant. Only when the offer of a contract is made does it become serious. If all parties involved could already imagine a good cooperation beforehand, the employment contract is the formal confirmation and increases the commitment to fulfill the contract.

Onboarding therefore already begins in the ongoing recruiting process. The aim is to integrate the applicant into the team mentally, to awaken the desire to work together and to bind the applicant to his new team and his new task as early as possible.

In the context of an agile recruiting process, these positive effects arise almost by themselves and alongside. But they can also be actively promoted. For example, by asking questions following the interviews conducted. The following questions can be asked of both the searching team and the applicant:

- Can you imagine a collaboration?
- What aspects of working with your new colleagues do you like the most?
- For experienced teams, we can go a bit further and have the team and applicant work through the following question as part of a team-fit interview:
- What do we want for our future cooperation and how can we achieve this together?

What happens after the contract is signed?

In addition to the positive effects described above, which almost happen by themselves, a concrete plan is needed for what should and can happen after the contract is signed. After all, good onboarding does more than just making the new colleague feel welcome quickly. It also ensures that the new employee is integrated into the team and quickly becomes a productive team member. (Olberding 2019/2)

At this point, we advise an onboarding workshop with the recruiting team and possibly other employees from the new colleague's future team. The goal of the workshop is to determine the optimal onboarding procedure and distribute the tasks among the team.

Surely, in every company there will already be a standard of what is mandatory to do in order to be able to accept a new employee. Starting from entering the master data for payroll accounting and registration with the social insurance agencies, to creating an employee ID card and setting up the workplace or ordering the necessary work materials. Things that are self-explanatory for everyone involved. They just "have" to be done.

It is best to clearly distribute tasks and responsibilities in the onboarding workshop. It is helpful to have a checklist of all the tasks that need to be completed when each new employee is hired. This list should be created by HR and constantly maintained and updated. It should serve as an initial orientation for the recruiting team and the respective departments.

In addition to the checklist, there are numerous other things that make for good onboarding. The following points should serve as a suggestion to make onboarding even better for the new colleague. Depending on the job, the team and the corporate culture, it is important to find out which measures are to be taken, how they are to be implemented and by whom.

The black hole after signing the contract

There are often three months or more between signing the contract and the first day of work. After all, the new colleague has to give up his or her current job and adhere to the agreed notice period - a long time before the new job can get underway. However, contact with the new employee should be maintained at all costs. All the more so if he or she was previously won through an agile recruiting process. Throughout the selection process, we focused on authentic communication and introduced the applicant to future colleagues at an early stage. The thread must not be broken here, and the workshop should consider how this can be achieved. (Lemke 2020)

Suggestions: Maintain and expand contact

- Four weeks before the first day of work, the supervisor should contact the new employee and ask whether everything is in order so far or whether support is needed for the job change.

- A week before the first day of work, a team member can check in with the new colleague and discuss the most important things for the first day. It is certainly interesting for the new colleague to learn something about the dress code, the parking situation or even the canteen. Not to forget the time when the first working day begins for him.

- Are there any important events or team events taking place in the time leading up to the first day of work? Even if the newcomer is not yet on board, important events should already be planned for him.

- To get off to a good start, it can be very helpful to invite your new colleague to product presentations, important trade fairs or internal workshops. Of course, this is done on a voluntary basis and must be implemented in compliance with trade secrets and legal requirements. However, there should be no reason for you not to invite your new colleague to a team event, the Christmas party or simply a casual get-together among colleagues.

A mentor for a good induction

From the first day of work, a mentor can be assigned to the new colleague. The mentor is responsible for the successful induction of the new employee. This can include many things. Starting with a small tour of the company premises, introducing the team members, showing important facilities such as the canteen, the parking lot or even the IT office. The focus is also on familiarization with the workplace, getting to know the new work equipment and explaining procedures and processes.

The mentor's task can extend over several months. The new colleague will definitely appreciate having a contact person for his or her professional questions. Whether it is just to find out who is the right colleague in the company for a current question or how a certain issue is to be handled in the new company.

For a successful induction, it is therefore advisable that the mentor comes from the new colleague's own team. In any case, he must be well acquainted with the procedures and customs that need to be known in the position of the newcomer. Especially in the first weeks, the task of the sponsor is quite time-consuming. This should be considered when appointing a team member as a mentor. It is not necessary for a sponsor to take over the entire induction. Of course, this task can be distributed among several team members. However, the mentor should have an eye on ensuring that all familiarization steps take place in a sensible sequence.

A buddy for the first months

In addition to a mentor, a buddy can also be placed at the new employee's side. While the mentor takes over the technical training and comes from the ranks of the own team, the buddy embodies more the role of a friend or trusted colleague. His or her task is to listen to the concerns and fears of the new colleague. Ideally, the buddy is not directly from the new colleague's team. This then also gives the new colleague the opportunity to talk about conflicts in his new team or how to deal with difficult colleagues. Together, it is often easier to reflect on difficult situations and find a solution.

The role of buddy can also be time-consuming. Above all, a quiet and time-appropriate setting should be chosen for the meetings. Perhaps a meal together in the canteen or even a short walk to listen with as clear a head as possible and discuss suitable solutions.

Regulars' table for new colleagues

A buddy program may not be right for every company or every new employee. Nevertheless, it is important to create a place for new employees where they can share their current concerns and fears. Especially for employees who have left their old home for the new job, it is important to quickly find a connection. This can be done within one's own team, but networking and friendships beyond team boundaries are also important.

A simple measure would be to set up a regulars' table for new colleagues. All that is really needed is a date that takes place at regular intervals, e.g. a joint lunch break on the first Wednesday of every month. Until this appointment has become established, it is helpful for HR to provide start-up support by informing all new colleagues and motivating them to attend this appointment. After a few months, the regulars' table of the new colleagues should become a self-runner.

In addition to onboarding measures, feedback loops must not be forgotten. The onboarding workshop should therefore also discuss who collects feedback from the new employee and his or her colleagues and when.

The recruiting team is likely to be interested in how well the new colleague performs his or her new role and how the working relationship is. Behind this is not only the question of whether the probationary period is survived, but also how good the selection process of the recruiting team was. Was the right candidate found for the right position or were the right competencies and requirements not already considered in the requirements profile created? These questions provide important information for improving the recruiting process and working within the recruiting team.

During onboarding, feedback meetings can be arranged with the new colleague. The aim is to find out how well the new colleague has been able to adjust in the meantime. Feedback sessions on the recruiting process should also be conducted to obtain feedback. How was the selection process experienced, what is remembered particularly positively and what could have gone better? Another key question is how closely the job described in the selection process corresponds to the candidate's actual experience and expectations. At this point, we are in the check phase of the PDCA cycle and hold a small retrospective with the new employee on the recruiting and perhaps onboarding process.

In addition to feedback discussions with the new colleague, discussions can also be held with colleagues from the team and other people who work closely with the new colleague. The aim of this survey by the recruiting team is to find out how accurate their selection process was, and whether the right colleague was actually brought on board. These surveys are somewhat similar to the feedback that the manager usually obtains in order to subsequently decide whether the employee has passed the probationary period.

There is a small, important difference between the recruiting team interviewing the team and the executive. While the manager gathers information for the decision to pass the probationary period, the recruiting team pursues the goal of further improving the selection process. Even if there are different goals in the survey, there will be overlap between the intent of the executive and the recruiting team. With experienced recruiting teams, it is therefore quite conceivable that they also influence the decision to pass the probationary period.

A first step in this direction can be for the new employee's teammates to learn to give direct feedback and engage directly with the new colleague instead of the manager or recruiting team. We have already shown ourselves to be authentic and transparent throughout the entire selection process. During onboarding and also in everyday interaction, the team should stick to this and continue to communicate with the new colleague at eye level and not rely on the manager or recruiting team as a middleman.

Giving direct feedback is uncomfortable for many employees, especially if critical or disruptive behaviors are also to be addressed. Giving and receiving feedback has to be learned, and it takes a little time for a true feedback culture to develop. In the context of agile transformation, self-organization and the self-responsibility of each individual in the team, it is helpful if, for example, HR offers assistance and encourages mutual feedback. It is also important to emphasize that feedback can also be positive.

The most important things from chapter 11

- Onboarding starts from the first contact between applicant and company.
- The first team-building dynamics are already apparent in the selection process, and these intensify as the selection process progresses.
- Contact with the new colleague must not be interrupted between the conclusion of the contract and the first day of work.
- The recruiting team shares responsibility for successful onboarding.
- At the latest at the end of the onboarding phase, the recruiting team has to ask the questions: “Was the right candidate selected for the job?” and “Could the candidate’s expectations be met?”.

OUTLOOK - WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

With an agile approach to recruiting, we address the increased complexity in recruiting. Not only do the desired skilled workers seem to be scarce on the labor market, but we live in a world that is changing ever faster. Recruiting can no more rely on traditional job descriptions than it can on well-intentioned forecasts for the future. It is not just individual industries - such as the photography or music industries years ago - that have undergone major change and rarely survived. Today, we see the automotive industry looking for new mobility solutions and having to develop completely new areas of expertise for itself. All this in times of a global pandemic, the extent and consequences of which for the economy and coexistence are difficult to predict.

For the recruiting of new employees, it can be deduced that other competencies and skills within the workforce are gaining in importance. A new employee can no longer be sought only for a precisely defined task. Rather, he must be in a position not only to accompany but also to help drive a company's upcoming adjustments to as yet unknown challenges. This is the only way to ensure that the employee can continue to work successfully for a company in the long term - or, in other words, that a company can adapt quickly even in uncertain markets. Consequently, the importance of competence-based personnel selection is increasing.

The battle for the best talent will continue to intensify. For applicants, different job offers from different companies initially appear to be of equal value. Often, they also differ only slightly in terms of task content and pay. For a good candidate experience, we rely in agile recruiting on the involvement of the team and on authentic and transparent insights into the task and the new team.

At the same time, we design our recruiting processes to be flexible enough to allow us to respond early to a wide range of changes in the labor market and the company as a whole. Individual recruiting processes that are geared to the needs and skills of applicants enable personal and appreciative communication with applicants along the entire recruiting process.

The opportunities and possibilities

The agile recruiting approach helps attract the right employees. When selecting personnel, particular attention is paid to skills and competencies so that long-term cooperation is possible. This also increases employee satisfaction and at the same time reduces fluctuation, especially within the probationary period. The radiance of satisfied employees and authentic communication in the selection process fill the talent pipeline with suitable applicants.

This approach and also the involvement of the searching team pays off in different ways for the recruiting success and also has other positive aspects. Some of them have already been mentioned on the previous pages. At this point, we would like to summarize the advantages once again and go into a little more detail.

Distribute recruiting across several shoulders

Recruiting is spread over several shoulders, and the manager's schedule is no longer the bottleneck for finding appointments for interviews. Speed is the be-all and end-all in recruiting. Short response times and the fastest possible personal contact with applicants accelerate the recruiting process and increase the commitment on both sides to deal with each other openly and fairly. After all, you now know each other personally and can no longer hide behind a job ad or application portfolio.

Faster, more personal and more engaging in the recruiting process - that seems obvious, but it also requires more time and the necessary resources. A recruiting team and, above all, the involvement of the searching team can help.

Let's think, for example, of a frequently observed situation in companies. A few promising applications have been received in response to a job posting. Ideally, we can now start directly with the selection process.

Unfortunately, the manager has just been assigned a particularly important and urgent project by management, so there is currently no capacity available to conduct interviews.

Detached from the question of what position personnel recruitment should have in a company, the only option in such cases is to put off the applicants and hope that they will still be interested in the position at a later date and continue to be available. After all, the competition never sleeps; our competitor is also on the lookout for suitable talent.

A recruiting team helps at this point, especially with time-consuming personnel selection. Faster initial contact with applicants and more timely interviews are possible. Step by step, the candidates are identified for the final selection, at which the manager should also be present at the latest.

The sharpening of the dull eye

It is not uncommon for executives to move away from day-to-day operations over time. After all, their job is to lead their team and also to strategically shape the work environment. This unknowingly causes a manager's view of the tasks on his or her team to become clouded. How is she also supposed to know in detail what daily challenges the team members are facing and, more importantly, exactly what skills they need to do so?

Let us recall the example of the accountant (in chapter 5.1). A manager will quickly be able to list the technical skills required for this position. However, it is the team above all that knows what challenges the day-to-day work actually holds in store. It will be clear to everyone that an accountant posts receipts. But what needs to be done to ensure that the necessary documents find their way from the various departments back to the accounting department can vary greatly. From a friendly reminder to an obligatory follow-up or even a detective-like tracking down of lost receipts, the requirements at this point can vary greatly.

Involving the team in the requirements analysis helps to clear the clouded view again. The team knows which competencies are really necessary for the position to be filled and which hidden challenges they encounter on a daily basis. As part of the recruiting team, the team thus makes a significant contribution to sharpening the requirements profile. It can focus attention on the skills it really needs to be successful on their team.

Authentic and credible at every step

Involving the team allows us to connect with potential applicants on a whole new level. The external image of a company, a department or a team is no longer guided solely by the need to present itself as positively as possible or, in the case of personnel marketing, to generate as many applications as possible. Rather, real insights into tasks and companies are provided.

Through these genuine and authentic insights, a company presents itself as it really is. Such an appearance is perceived and evaluated quite differently by potential applicants. Above all, they appreciate authenticity. Finally, there is also uncertainty on the part of applicants about what it really feels like to work at another company. It helps to get information that does not have to be filtered out for marketing purposes.

This starts with the approach to potential applicants, whether through a personnel marketing campaign or quite classically through the job advertisement, the selection process and finally the contract negotiations and onboarding. At every step of the recruiting process, there are numerous opportunities to appear authentic and thus credible to applicants.

For example, the recruiting team is well advised to provide insight on current problems and difficult relationships. It will also come as no surprise to an applicant looking for a job to hear that there are also people in this company with whom he or she can rub elbows, or that there are tasks for which solutions have not yet been found. Instead, these insights create trust and together, the recruiting team and the applicant can find out even better, just how well the vacant position and the applicant fit together.

Communication among "equals"

The benefits of being "authentic and credible every step of the way" are enhanced by communicating among "equals." By communication among "equals" we mean conversations on a true eye-to-eye level, and on the same (hierarchical) level. A conversation between future teammates and applicants can reach a completely different depth and again increases authenticity and credibility.

An executive's testimony: "We make a great team!" says a lot about the leader and the new team. Regardless of how true this statement may be, it should be clear to almost every applicant that a manager can hardly speak otherwise in an interview. Only when interacting with the team does the applicant get a credible impression, which is reinforced when the team reports that they have a great boss.

The same applies to insights into the actual task. If, for example, HR provides a job description during the interview, applicants will certainly believe what the HR employee says. Doubts will remain, however, as to whether the tasks have been communicated in the necessary depth and what exactly lies behind them. These doubts are eliminated by communication among "equals".

In addition, the interview with future colleagues also gives the applicant the opportunity to ask questions that are often considered inappropriate in a traditional job interview, but are of great importance to the applicant. Starting with the question, what is the boss like, vacation arrangements and questions about working hours and work location.

Individual recruiting processes

The greatest strength in agile recruiting lies in the individual design of the recruiting processes. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, the recruiting process is individually tailored to the situation to be filled and the needs of the applicant.

Different jobs, different procedures. Of course, an intern goes through a different selection process than the new division manager. But do all division managers go through the same selection process? The dynamics of our working world make it necessary for us to focus on an applicant's individual skills and competencies during the personnel selection process and to work with him or her to find out how the applicant can best contribute these skills to our company.

Uniform recruiting processes do not allow us to respond to the individuality of an applicant and also to recognize and develop new approaches that are unfamiliar to us. So the question in recruiting is not what is the next step in our process, but what information do I need next to make a decision. In agile recruiting, we have a selection of the most diverse methods available for this purpose, which can be pulled individually and situationally by the recruiting team to answer this question.

In the selection process for the position of sales manager, for example, the question arises as to whether the applicant is able to win over an established, senior team and inspire the team for the new sales strategy. There is no sample solution for this task. Depending on the skills and experience of the applicant, completely different competencies can be used. The recruiting team has to find out individually what these are and how they are to be tested in the interview.

Faster to the productive employee

In agile recruiting, we try to get into personal contact with applicants particularly quickly. Be it through authentic communication in the early stages of personnel marketing or through communication among “equals”. Throughout the recruiting process, we show ourselves to be approachable and make a point of getting to know the applicant.

This closeness ensures at a very early stage that a certain commitment is created between applicants and the company. On one hand, this promotes open communication and, on the other, leads applicants to identify with the company and the position at best.

A close and trusting exchange takes all parties involved to deal with each other openly and honestly. If a job offer is not suitable or there are concerns about a particular qualification or requirement, this can be addressed directly. Either it is possible to resolve these concerns or the decision is made that you are not a good match at this point. Holding off and waiting in the selection process is made more difficult for both sides.

During the selection process, team members are given the chance to become friends with the new colleague, and not just mentally. At the latest during the interviews, there is an opportunity to get to know the new colleague personally and to take the first step of onboarding.

The opportunities of agile recruiting at a glance:

- It sharpens the focus on the competencies that are really needed to be successful in the role you are looking for.

- The job fit of each setting is improved.

- It will reduce dissatisfaction and terminations during the probationary period.
- The talent pipeline is filled with authentic and transparent insights into the company and team.
- High acceptance for the new colleague, as the team was involved and supported the hiring decision.
- Get productive employees faster and shorten the onboarding phase.
- Promoting the team's ability to self-organize.

The risks and the effort

Even a first reading of the listed advantages makes it clear what potential an agile recruiting approach has and what opportunities open up to distance oneself from the competition on the labor market and to win the best talents for one's own company. To be fair, however, the risks and increased effort that an agile recruiting approach entails must also be mentioned at this point.

In addition to competency-based personnel selection, the involvement of the searching team is the greatest success factor and also the greatest risk. The transfer of responsibility to the recruiting team and thus also to individual members of the searching team represents a task into which all those involved must gradually grow.

The manager remains responsible

Regardless of how much a recruiting team is involved in, for example, the selection of personnel and ultimately the hiring decision, the responsibility for this decision still lies with the manager. In almost all companies, they are responsible for at least disciplinary management and have a legitimate interest in being able to influence every hiring decision.

In addition to purely disciplinary leadership, the manager also has a duty to work with his or her team to deliver the required performance. In their own interest and in the interest of the entire team, they are responsible for meeting the targets and goals set by the management. In view of the manager's own career and the reputation of the team, a manager will find it difficult to delegate responsibility - especially for hiring decisions - or to grant co-determination rights.

The team cannot think entrepreneurially

A point of criticism that is frequently mentioned and at the same time a risk that must be taken into account, is that employees do not have the necessary experience in personnel selection. Interviews would not be very structured and questions would tend to be situational and incoherent. As a result, employees would favor the candidate they like best and make their decision based primarily on their instincts.

It is often further argued in this context that teams tend to choose the candidate who is particularly similar to them and fits harmoniously into the team. This describes a situation in which homogeneous teams are formed. Such a team usually works very harmoniously with one another, but at the same time also stands for stagnancy and little innovation. Many studies have proven that heterogeneous teams, i.e. teams that are very diverse, perform better. Their diversity and different skills enable them to achieve better results and continuously develop.

These risks mentioned are to be taken seriously. However, they are not solely due to the involvement of employees in the recruiting process. Even managers, especially less experienced managers or managers who are seldom on the lookout for personnel, do not have the necessary skills in personnel selection per se. Unstructured conversations and decisions based on instinct are just as observable with them. Compared to the team, managers have the advantage of having gained experience in recruiting over time. How their recruiting skills have improved over time is another matter.

Whether a team makes the right hiring decision or not, is not significant, neither is the role of sympathy or similarity effects. The same applies to managers, who are also not free of errors in perception and judgment. We can assume that it will be easier for a manager to influence the uniformity of the team through a targeted selection of personnel. However, this says nothing about whether a manager is making the most objective hiring decision possible, or whether he or she is also subject to the various errors of judgment.

The agile approach brings weaknesses to light

For the entire selection process, it can be summarized that the same challenges apply to agile recruiting as in a classic setting. As in any agile process, it brings out the vulnerabilities and threats faster and makes them more transparent to all stakeholders. An agile approach demands a high level of professionalism in personnel selection, as is actually required in any selection process. The interaction of different actors quickly brings to light when methods and practices were not used properly or were not applied in the first place.

At this point, we are not necessarily dealing with a higher risk, but with an increased effort for HR. Recruiting skills training, such as brief training on assessment and perception errors, is no longer recommended for managers only, but must be provided to all members of the recruiting team. The same applies to the teaching of interviewing and questioning skills. Here, it is HR's task to share its knowledge and gradually enable the various recruiting teams.

The extent to which this is necessary depends on the desired level of team involvement in the recruiting process and the number of positions to be filled. The transfer of the necessary know-how should take place step by step along the recruiting process and improve a bit with each new candidate. Along the way, teams also learn over time to make hiring decisions that move their team forward and lead to the desired level of heterogeneity.

Finally, it should be noted on this point that even in agile recruiting, the goal does not have to be to take away a manager's decision-making authority. Rather, the focus is on having the entire team participate in a decision through the recruiting team. The goal is to jointly make a hiring decision that is supported by all parties involved. The quality of the decisions increases if all those involved have the necessary competencies in personnel selection. This, in turn, leads to a manager being able to place more trust in the selection decisions of their team.

High coordination effort

We have mentioned scheduling as a major advantage. It is certainly helpful in the selection process when the manager's schedule is no longer the eye of the needle. Appointments for interviews with candidates can thus be arranged promptly. On the other hand, the need for internal coordination can increase. Where initially only a suitable appointment had to be found for the manager, HR and applicant, it is now the appointment calendars of the members in recruiting that must find a suitable gap.

It becomes even more difficult when multi-stage interviews are to be conducted. For example, if a specialist interview is initially conducted with the applicant and a social-fit interview is to be conducted directly afterwards. In addition, the third element on the agenda could be getting to know the entire team. The scheduling of such a series of meetings is much more complex. In addition, there are coordination meetings before and after the interview between the different interview groups in order to report to each other on their experiences and impressions of the applicant.

Good preparation and the additional voting appointments improve the quality of the selection process and ultimately the hiring decision. They therefore contribute to better personnel selection. This is certainly a desirable result, but it also involves an increased coordination effort.

Consequently, it cannot be said across the board that the recruiting process is accelerated. On the professional level, however, the quality is increased and the candidate experience is enhanced through authentic communication among "equals".

Responsibility and co-determination must be clearly regulated.

Another stumbling block is a false expectation within the recruiting team and also within the team that has an open position. The role of each team member in the recruiting process and the associated tasks must be defined in advance. A common mistake, for example, is not talking beforehand about the possibilities of co-determination and decision-making. While managers and HR are often already accustomed to making hiring decisions together, it is new territory for the remaining members of the recruiting team.

So before a decision is made as to which candidates will or will not be invited to an interview, it should be clear to everyone involved what weight each vote carries. It is perfectly legitimate, and for the most part accepted by all, if the team is initially allowed to make recommendations, but has no voting rights. If this arrangement was made at the beginning of the selection process, everything is OK. If the team members only find out during the selection process that they do not have voting rights, for example when they propose a candidate who is later rejected by their manager, this is seen as a breach of trust and the team's willingness to contribute further is reduced.

The distribution of tasks must also be clearly regulated. Who guides the candidate through the entire process and, in addition to the coordination, also takes on the communication with the applicants and, for example, writes the invitations for the interviews? In the interviews themselves, the participants must be clear about their task. Let's take up the previous example again with a three-stage interview. In such a selection process, it must not happen that in each of these three interviews the candidate is asked to briefly elaborate on his or her resume. The gain in knowledge in two of the three interview phases is zero in this case. For the candidate this procedure would be tiring and at the same time the question would rightly arise in his mind whether the employees in this company actually know what the others are doing.

However, it is not only a matter of avoiding repetition, but also of ensuring that the previously defined qualifications and competencies are asked for at each step. This distribution of tasks includes asking about the notice period and the desired salary. Particularly in this last point, clarity is needed in the team as to who is allowed to provide what information on this topic and who actively asks this question in the interviews. A dutiful or overzealous team member will otherwise quickly overshoot the mark and start discussions that the team is not ready for at that time.

The team should work - recruiting is a matter for HR

Not really a risk, but a frequently cited argument against the introduction of agile recruiting is that recruiting is an HR topic and should be solved by HR. It is a little unclear exactly where this attitude comes from. Of course, it is very convenient, the required personnel is reported to HR and the colleagues then have to deliver. Delivered as ordered, with a bow on it - who wouldn't want that? If it were that simple, we wouldn't even need to talk about involving the departments or setting up recruiting teams. Recruiting would not be a team sport, as described at the beginning, but rather a large warehouse where the HR colleague in charge simply reaches into the right shelf and delivers the desired number of new colleagues.

The reality looks different. Every company has difficulty attracting the right talent. Many rely on recruiters who have been trained specifically in their area of expertise and can network appropriately. The IT recruiter was probably the first of his kind to specialize in one of the most competitive job markets.

So one option would be to increase headcount at HR and give each department its own recruiter. The latter can familiarize himself with the technical domain and, over time, build up a suitable network with potential applicants. This is not at all far-fetched for corporate divisions with high personnel requirements. However, the positive effects of the described authentic communication among "equals" will not materialize.

For areas in the company that have lower staffing needs, a separate recruiter specializing in that area is not worthwhile, and a recruiting team seems to be the sensible option.

Certainly there will be both in companies, specialized recruiters, who should work closely with the departments and also focus on the involvement of the searching team, and recruiting teams, which will also be supported by HR, but will not have the benefit of a dedicated recruiter.

However, both scenarios invalidate the argument that HR alone is responsible for attracting the right talent to the company. Recruiting has developed into a team sport in which it is only possible to attract the right employees for one's own company by working together and using the skills and capabilities of everyone involved.

Recommendations for implementation

One of the biggest advantages of agile recruiting is authentic communication with candidates along the entire recruiting process. This has a positive effect on the overall candidate experience and leads to an initial bond between applicants and the company as early as the selection process.

The charisma of a recruiting team can be increased even further by using individual employees in the form of job ambassadors in personnel marketing, or even better, by having them report on their own company voluntarily and with full conviction, regardless of personnel marketing campaigns within their target group.

These advantages result primarily from the involvement of the searching team. Even comparatively small and simple measures, such as a team-fit interview, can enable companies to stand out positively in the competition for the best talent. In this way, initial experience can be gained in the involvement of employees in the selection process, which can be further expanded step by step and iteratively - in other words, entirely in the spirit of agility.

The constant change and the increasing complexity of our entire world and especially in our markets require a rethink in the selection of personnel and the definition of requirements. Be it the half-life of knowledge or increasingly complex tasks that need to be solved. The focus in personnel selection is increasingly shifting from professional aptitude criteria to methodical competencies that allow applicants to react quickly and better to changes and to adapt to their changed tasks.

Involving a recruiting team in the requirements analysis helps identify the necessary and future-ready skills needed in the position being filled. Above all, the manager gains a deeper insight into the day-to-day challenges of their employees and regains more clarity on the question of what it really takes to be successful in their team.

As a result, the team contributes to a better requirements profile that leads to a common understanding of what is being sought while providing the basis for better selection decisions for the right candidates. We thus lay the foundation for the new colleague's later job satisfaction as early as the requirements profile stage, thus reducing dissatisfaction and terminations within the probationary period.

While the previously mentioned points can be implemented comparatively easily and parts develop their effect even if they are only applied sporadically or initially in small parts, the active involvement of the recruiting team or the searching team is associated with increased effort when it comes to the selection process itself and the associated interviews.

Involving employees in the selection process increases the need for coordination and requires the development of recruiting competencies within the team. In addition, it needs to be clarified, which co-determination rights in personnel selection are transferred to the team. If a company's goal is for its employees to act in an increasingly autonomous and self-organized manner, the agile recruiting approach is a good way to go.

How intensively the individual members of the recruiting team are involved in personnel selection and what effort should be made by HR to enable the individual members must be decided on a situational basis depending on the number and frequency of the positions to be filled. Another criterion is the desired degree of self-organization in the respective teams.

The candidate experience benefits once again when applicants realize during the selection process that employees are involved in such responsible tasks in a company. This kind of appreciation and trust in the skills of one's own workforce shows applicants a part of corporate culture.

The most important things from chapter 12

Recruiting is already a complex and time-consuming task. Due to the constant change in the markets and the increased uncertainty, the importance of competence-based personnel selection is growing. At the same time, the best talents on the market demand individualized recruiting that is tailored to their needs and authentic and genuine insights into the company as well as the new task.

The opportunities of agile recruiting once again at a glance:

- The focus is sharpened on the skills that are really needed to be successful in the role you are looking for.
- The job-fit of every recruitment is improved.
- Dissatisfaction and dismissals are reduced during the trial period.
- The talent pipeline is filled with authentic and transparent insights into the company and team.
- High acceptance for the new colleague, as the team was involved and supported the hiring decision.
- Faster to a productive employee and shortening of the onboarding phase.
- Promote the team's ability to self-organize.

On the other hand, there is an increased effort in organization and preparation in the selection phase and a risk of wrong decisions if too much responsibility is transferred to the recruiting team too quickly.

Agile recruiting requires a high level of expertise from all players and succeeds best when the known standards for personnel selection and recruitment are adhered to. For HR, this means that it is increasingly taking on an advisory and coaching role in order to build up the necessary expertise in the recruiting teams.

HR has a responsibility to continuously improve existing recruiting processes and to review and offer new, better opportunities. It thus provides recruiting teams with a constantly improving repertoire for designing an efficient and individual selection process and for identifying the right candidates.

The radiance of your own employees - a little story

These insights have such great appeal and desirability to candidates that I always like to think back to one of my first experiences working with recruiting teams.

For the position of an internal customer service representative, a recruiting team was set up at short notice, consisting primarily of employees from the searching team. The executive had decided to delegate the entire selection process to their team, insisting on an interview with the final candidate and also claiming veto power.

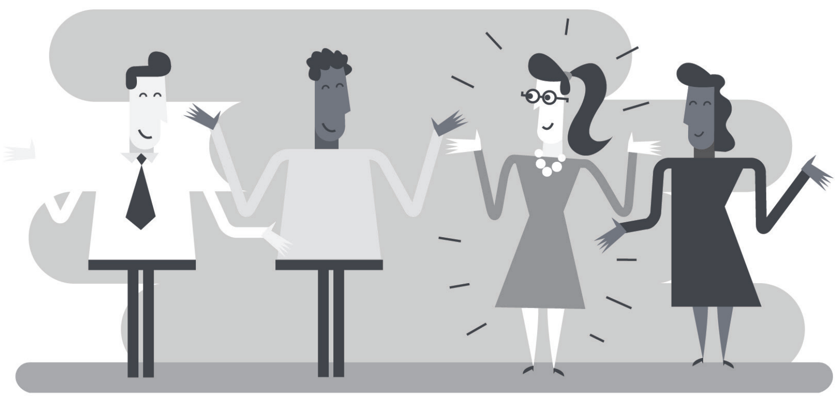
Frankly, this decision was also due to a certain lack of time on the part of the executive, who was heavily involved in strategic projects at the time. So the recruiting team was given a little more responsibility at the beginning than might have been advisable for a first step.

The executive's demonstrated confidence gave the recruiting team a real push. The team very quickly tapped into the necessary skills; after all, they didn't just want to find a new colleague, they also wanted to honor their manager's trust and find the right candidate.

During the selection process, the desired candidate was quickly found and invited to a final interview with the manager. In the second meeting, the positive impression from the first meeting continued and all the necessary steps for drawing up the contract and consulting the works council were started.

Only at this point did the candidate report that he had already had a contract offer from another company for several days. He said, however, that he was very taken with the team's involvement in the selection process and their insights into the new role and the corporate culture. So much so that he not only held off the other company for a few days, but also turned down their higher-paying contract offer in order to work in the future with the colleagues he had already had the opportunity to get to know during the selection process.

Today, he too is a member of a recruiting team, sharing lessons learned from his recruiting process and attracting new colleagues to his team.



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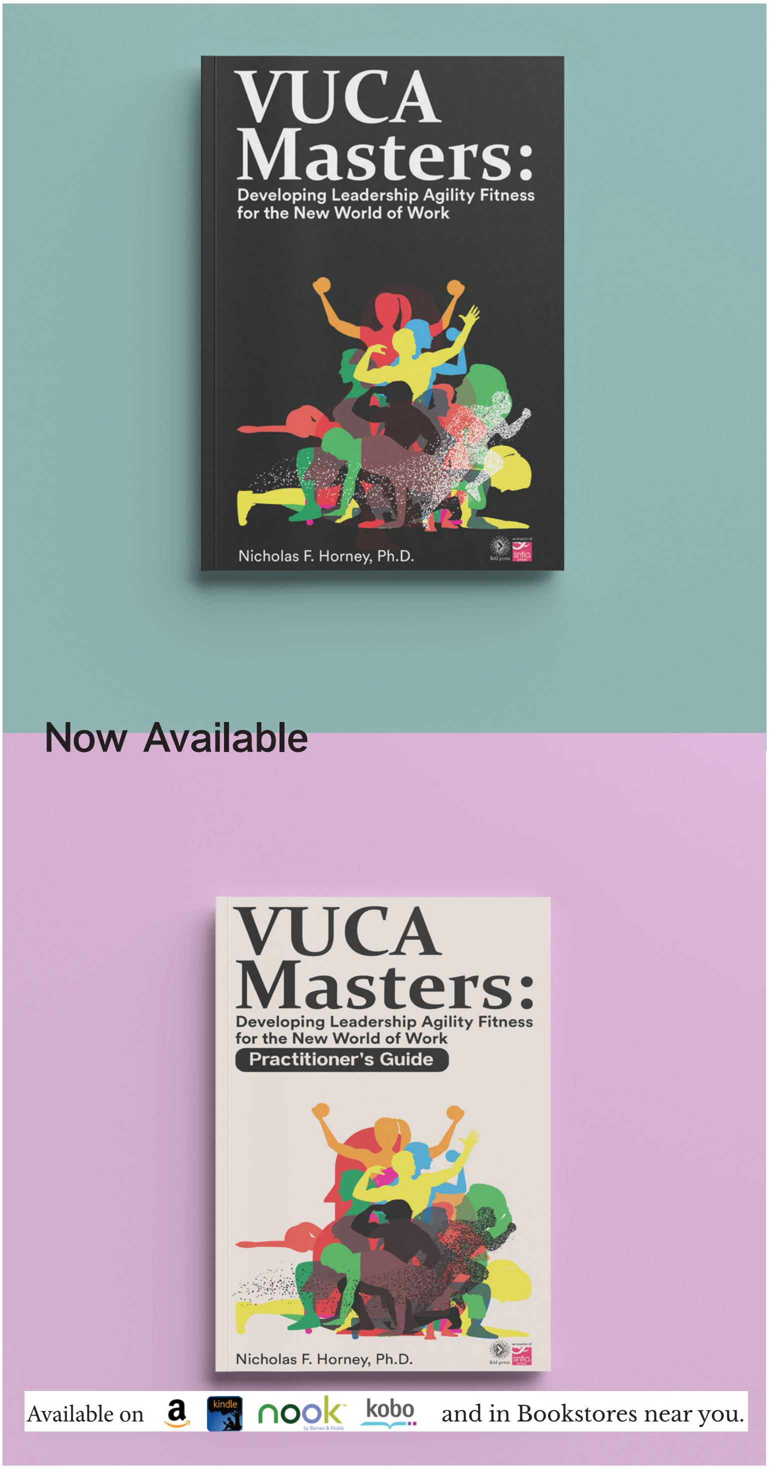
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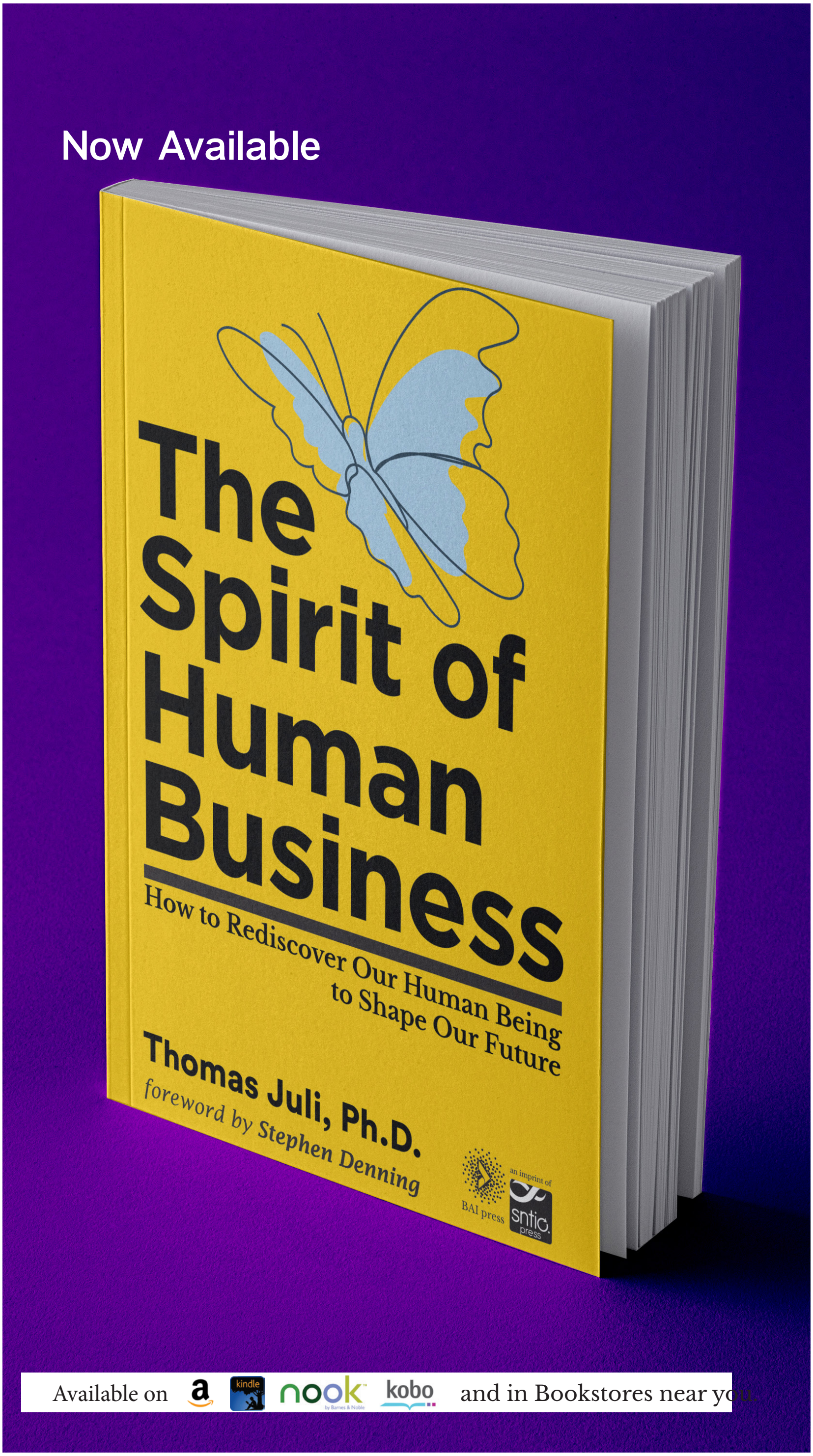
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