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**THE DRAWBACKS OF THE  
RECRUITMENT CYCLE IN AFRICA**

**-OML Africa**

## **THE DRAWBACKS OF THE RECRUITMENT CYCLE IN AFRICA**

When it comes to the recruitment process in Africa many HR leaders in Africa can compile a list of problems they face in the war -on talent. In this article, we will touch on some of these issues and suggest ways we can improve the recruitment process to ensure the right people are hired.

The marketplace in Africa works on a different principle to Europe and other parts of the world. Recruitment in Africa is kept very simple. Recruiters do not usually use a lot of standardized selection methods when hiring candidates. In many African companies (with the exception of a few companies) the issue of implementing a recruitment strategy when it comes to resourcing is almost non-existent. Recruitment is a reactive process in most cases rather than a planned process.

The issue is very often the people who are responsible for recruitment do not have the skills to do the job the right way. This is due to the fact that many people working in the role of HR and recruitment are not necessarily trained HR professionals or recruiters. In some cases, HR has been added to their job or department and usually, the individual manager or junior employee doesn't have knowledge of recruitment in terms of attracting, selecting or retaining the right candidates. This is a huge problem in Africa. Even in larger companies where there is usually an internal HR team, recruitment is not always managed strategically.

### **Attracting potential candidates**

Many employers do not use a variety of methods to attract talent. Some of the methods used in resourcing are through newspaper advertisements, recruitment agencies, job boards, and mainly by whom you know it is viewed as the shortest and the easiest way to find an employee and save money. The issue here is that employers do not always get the right people in the right jobs, this in time impacts on productivity and the performance of the company. In recent times with the growth of social media, some HR professionals in Africa have also started using these platforms to source for potential candidates.



### **Selecting the right candidates**

Selecting people by whom you know or in some cases by the owner of the business or members of the leadership appointing members of their family into job roles can hinder the business because usually the skills and experience to manage the duties of the job is lacking as most often than not the appointment is not based on merit or competence. In comparison, an assessment centre method is 90% more efficient when it comes to selection. In Africa, only a small number of companies use other selection methods such as aptitude tests, psychometric tests, and assessment centres. This is because some of these methods are seen as time-consuming and a rather expensive way to hire by employers. There is also the issue of having experienced personnel to run assessments. Thus, competency interviews remain the main method for selection. To select the right candidate, employers need to adopt a mix of methods of selection that assesses skills, competencies, personality, etc.

## Retaining the best talent

When it comes to retention the issue varies. In some industries retention is not an issue. Additionally, because of the difficulties in securing jobs in Africa, people do not leave their jobs as frequently as they do in Western countries. But the issue of retention still remains, particularly in the health and social care field in what has become known as the 'brain drain'. This is mainly due to poor working conditions, poor pay, lack of adequate incentives and so forth. Benefits and rewards also play a key issue when it comes to retention in Africa, particularly remuneration.

There is also an argument that in some cases employers are retaining the wrong people. There are people who have been in their roles for many years but contribute very little to the company. In other companies, there are also too many people being retained because of lack of planning when it comes to resourcing and retrenchment. The point is by not having a retention strategy an employer may be losing talent or retaining the wrong employees as well as losing money through overstaffing.

It is obvious that combinations of modern recruitment methods are more effective and efficient than using traditional methods alone. So how do we modernize and improve the way we manage the recruitment cycle in Africa. A good place to start is the development of a recruitment strategy for the company, with input from managers and the senior management team. This should form part of the main HR strategy.

Results of the Survey of Global HR challenges: yesterday, today and tomorrow, a survey conducted by

PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) looking at global HR challenges in Africa, revealed that African countries have a lot of work to do in the area of Human Resources strategy. The results showed that African's top challenges include: change management (63%), leadership development (31%), and the measurement of HR effectiveness (31%). A similar survey had similar results, the most important in that survey was change management (44%), and compensation (31%), staffing, recruiting and availability of skilled local labor (31%). Looking ahead the issues are expected to pose a challenge, three years from now we can expect the following: organizational effectiveness (44%), leadership development (38%), change management (31%), measurement of HR effectiveness (31%) and succession planning (31%). This means that HR leaders in Africa need to take these challenges into account and begin to address these issues. Research has shown that effective management is the biggest obstacle to achieving better results. It was a problem in the past and remains a current issue.

The topic of recruitment is considered to be important by top management, it seems that top management understands that to gain a competitive advantage they must value how talent is acquired, developed and retained. This should include expanding both the number of HR managers and changing the organizational view of the HR role, from administration to strategic business partner. These changes would enable HR managers to be more effective in leading and implementing positive solutions that in turn would improve the performance of staff.



## Key Points

A good HR recruitment strategy can ensure that the right people are attracted and selected for your company. In Africa the choice of talented employees is evident but you have to work to find them.

It always comes down to time and money, which is why proper attention should be given to recruitment. Recruitment is one of HR's main cost areas, so we really can't afford to get it wrong.

If you can't manage your recruitment internally, then outsource it to a good HR recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) company that can support you to manage your recruitment effectively. This is sometimes more cost effective in terms of time, cost and expertise.

When it comes to the recruitment strategy it is important to get as much support from staff, managers and senior management as possible. We suggest the following:

- Ensure you get the buy-in from managers and senior management by getting them to contribute to your recruitment strategy.
- Prepare people for change
- Phase in changes to allow people to adjust
- Highlight and speak of the benefits of the new changes to encourage more commitment to supporting it.



## Separate the wheat from the chaff!

By hiring the right people for the right job the right way with OML Africa



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