

CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE RECRUITING STRATEGY AT HBS



HARVARD | BUSINESS | SCHOOL
Career & Professional Development

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Just as every organization is unique, your recruiting strategy should be, too. When developing your recruiting strategy, be thoughtful about who your ideal candidates are and how you can create awareness among a larger audience before targeting a select group of students. Consider the following to create a comprehensive recruiting strategy that fits your hiring needs.

YOUR GOALS

Every organization is unique as it relates to its mission, size, culture, location and hiring process. Before crafting a job description or advertising your brand, spend time thinking through your hiring goals and what makes your company unique. Are you seeking innovators, employees who stay for multiple years at a time, diverse candidates? What are the skills your most successful employees tend to possess? Furthermore, where do MBAs thrive in your organization? Beyond skills, are there characteristics of employees that complement your culture? Being crystal clear about your goals and the types of candidates you're seeking will help you target and engage with candidates that are right for your organization.

YOUR BRAND RECOGNITION

If your organization is not well known among the HBS community, think about ways you can build brand awareness, whether by leveraging HBS alumni or current students who are or previously have worked for your organization, or by participating in events where you have the opportunity to meet, engage and educate candidates about your organization.

YOUR CULTURE

Hiring candidates who will thrive in your organization's culture can often be as important as a candidate's skills or expertise. Take the time to get to know your organization's culture and the culture of individual business units that are the focus of hiring efforts. The ability to articulate your culture to candidates will help you better promote your brand.

YOUR TIME

Consider the amount of time you can dedicate to recruiting at HBS. Often recruiting partners will request a class resume database without considering their time available to sort through the hundreds of students in the database and send personalized messages to candidates of interest. Similarly, we often receive requests from recruiting partners who want to host company events, but don't have the time to dedicate to marketing or preparing for the event. Ensure that you have enough time available to dedicate to your recruiting efforts so that they are successful.

YOUR LOCATION

Companies headquartered in locations outside of the cities where our students most frequently accept positions often face a unique challenge when trying to sell candidates on job opportunities at their organization. HBS recruiting partners who have seen the greatest success are those who are unapologetic about their location and have a clear message in place about its benefits. One recruiting partner who saw great success recruiting at HBS promoted organizational benefits such as country club memberships and relocation packages. Another success story includes an organization that targeted candidates based on pre-HBS residence or undergraduate institution location, who therefore may have had a connection to or an interest in returning to the region.

YOUR TALENT

HBS Alumni & Current Employees: HBS Alumni, or current employees, make strong company representatives as their opinions are highly valued by current students. Have them present at a company presentation or attend an event to greatly impact awareness on-campus. The HBS classroom is a dynamic place where students learn through the case method; sending a presenter who is familiar with this experience and can create an engaging discussion will positively impact your time spent at HBS.

Former Employees: Leverage your former employees who are now students at HBS to sit on a panel or be in attendance at your events. Students value one another's experiences and opinions. Not only are students interested in learning about career advancement inside the organization, but touting the career mobility your opportunities will provide beyond the organization can be a powerful message. Thus, it may be of value to invite former employees who are now pursuing unique opportunities to engage candidates of interest.

YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Website: Your company website is a robust tool to engage HBS students and alumni. Whether featuring the latest press about your company, showcasing what makes your company culture unique, or highlighting specific opportunities for MBAs within the career section of your site, your company website can be one of your greatest marketing tools.

Social Media: Our students and alumni hold accounts on social media platforms ranging from LinkedIn and Twitter to Pinterest and YouTube. Ensuring your company's profile is up-to-date is a great way to promote your brand, present your organization as a thought leader and provide candidates with another means of contacting you.

THE PLAYING FIELD

Students' Schedules: It's important to know what you're up against when it comes to recruiting at HBS. HBS students' academic schedules are often quite demanding leaving little time for social and recruiting activities. With discussion groups meeting as early as 8am and three case days going until 3pm, often students don't get a chance to think about recruiting until the late afternoon. Time and again we hear from students that they've been invited to anywhere from 1-6 company events in a day. Creating a highly personalized communication strategy will increase your chances of standing out from the crowd.

Alumni: While HBS alumni who are actively seeking new job opportunities are often in the alumni resume database in Career Hub, keep in mind that they are also leveraging other resources like the HBS alumni directory, their undergraduate job board, LinkedIn and other industry job boards. Attend relevant industry association conferences and affinity group conferences, in addition to leveraging resources in Career Hub, to connect your organization with experienced candidates that may be right for your organization.

YOUR APPROACH

Target the Right Candidates: One HBS recruiting partner experienced great success when they stopped pursuing only who they believed to be the strongest students and in addition started to target and prioritize students whose interests aligned with that of their organization and whose personality seemed a better fit with the culture. Review candidates' intended areas of interest in Career Hub to help target your search.

Communicate Effectively: Candidates engage further with organizations that approach them in a personalized and authentic manner. Ensure that you know the background of each candidate you reach out to and incorporate pertinent information into communications with them. Students often convey their distaste for spam emails, hence our recommendation to communicate using personalized and engaging content.

Candidates appreciate transparency throughout the hiring process. We often observe students getting frustrated that they haven't heard from a particular company and therefore strongly encourage companies to be upfront about their recruiting process.

CREATE A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION

Hosting a presentation at HBS is a great way to create awareness of your organization's mission, culture, recruiting process and job opportunities. We encourage companies to be selective about who presents at your company presentation. Bring someone who can be charismatic, who is knowledgeable about the multiple business units within your organization and who can speak to frequently asked questions such as current job opportunities, international hiring and recruiting processes.

While HBS Career & Professional Development takes attendance at Company Presentations, we do not take attendance at Industry Education presentations, given they are not recruiting by nature. We strongly encourage companies to take attendance on their own at Industry Education Events; candidates who attend are most interested in what you have to say and could be relevant candidates to pursue.

Ensure your presentation is tailored to the HBS audience and use the presentation to engage and inform your audience in a way that complements your publically available resources. Be transparent about your culture and recruiting process and create a dynamic forum for students to learn about your organization.

MAKING AN OFFER

After an offer is made, we encourage company representatives to follow-up with candidates to see if they have any questions. Arranging follow up from an employee who is in a role similar to the offer a candidate is holding can increase success yielding a candidate. This provides the candidate with a forum to ask relevant questions and learn about the day-to-day logistics of the job.

Visit the [HBS Recruiting Guide](#) to view a comprehensive guide to the myriad ways to connect with candidates.



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