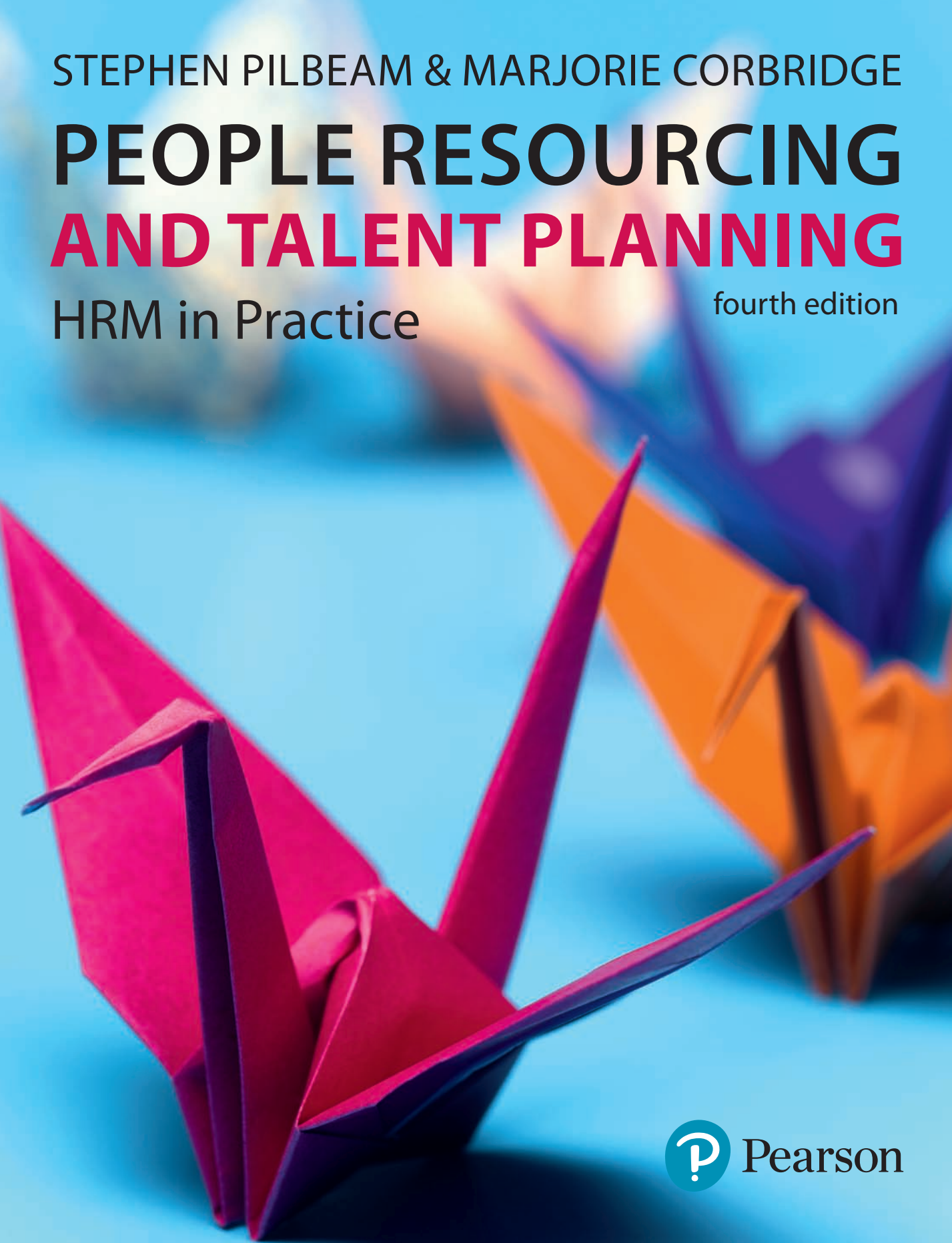


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# PEOPLE RESOURCING AND TALENT PLANNING

HRM in Practice

fourth edition



# **People Resourcing and Talent Planning**

- 1 A strategy for gaining attention – headings, messages and illustrations.
- 2 Information about the position – to develop applicant interest and to enable the application decision.
- 3 The action message – how and when to apply and what information to supply.

An important consideration is the balance between the volume of wording and the ‘white space’. There is a temptation to seek the greatest value from the advertisement by packing it with words and information, whereas in terms of impact the ‘white space’ provides a powerful window for the message. The astute recruiter will come to terms with paying for the correct amount of white space in order to enhance visual appeal.

*A realistic job preview opportunity* is presented by the advertisement. The greater the information which is communicated effectively and the more realistically the job is previewed, the greater the probability that an informed application decision can be made by the applicant. The advertisement is potentially a filter for the recruitment and selection system by allowing unsuitable applicants to self-select out, and all advertisements should be overviewed from the perspective of potential applicants.

*Achieving diversity objectives* can be pursued through recruitment advertising. This should go beyond the rhetorical statements of being an equal opportunities employer. The absence of criteria which constitute direct or indirect discrimination will send a more powerful message. Gender-neutral job titles, although giving succour to politically correct sceptics, provide one means of seeking to redress gender segregation in employment. The CIPD endorses the positive use of advertising in order to re-balance situations where particular groups may be under-represented, and the use of appropriate visual images can contribute to the reinforcement of non-discriminatory practices. The overt welcoming of applications from disadvantaged groups sends a firm equal opportunities message.

*The resource requirements* necessary to deal with applicant response also need consideration. The choice is between a ‘mail box’ approach, which just receives applications, and the personal contact approach, where applicants respond by calling in or telephoning. The personal contact approach is more resource intensive, but it is an opportunity to filter applications through objective and predetermined pre-selection criteria.

### **Internet recruitment**

The Internet provides increasing access to labour markets and relies on the positive efforts of the individual to visit the job vacancy and initiate the job search, but increasing use of Internet recruitment by employers, recruitment consultants and job-seekers is evident. Seventy-five per cent of employers use their own websites to advertise vacancies, with 25 per cent of all employers using commercial websites (CIPD, 2009a). The use of the Internet for advertising jobs needs to be based on the likelihood of Internet surfers being within the target labour market. Internet job search is broadening its base in terms of the job-seeking habits of applicants. As the incidence of broadband Internet access increases and as familiarity with online job search has grown, Internet recruitment is becoming mainstream recruitment practice. Advertising on the Internet for

six months costs approximately the same as one full display advertisement in a broad-sheet newspaper.

The basic differences between traditional advertising and using the Internet for recruitment are that job details are viewed electronically and the application form can be completed and sent online, or a CV can be sent as an attachment to an email. There are three principal ways an employer can use the Internet for recruitment (CIPD, 2009a). First, a recruitment zone may be added to an existing organisational website. This may be a good starting point because it is relatively quick and inexpensive, but it has limitations, because other than for well-known or high-profile organisations there is little reason for the job-seeker to visit the site. The extent to which visitors to the corporate website will migrate to the recruitment pages will be influenced by the clarity of the signposting and the user-friendliness of the hyperlinks. The second way is to design a separate recruitment website. This is more expensive than the first option, but it can be actively promoted and is likely to reach more job-seekers. It can provide a direct access point for all vacancies and project a strong corporate identity through incorporating information about the company and the training and career opportunities. The third method is by advertising jobs on a specialist media site. Used like traditional press advertising, this may feature just a job advertisement or it could incorporate an extended description of the vacancy and have a link to a company website. Key players, among 300+ providers, include Monster, Top Jobs, Total Jobs, Net Jobs and Guardian Jobs Unlimited. It continues to be difficult for the HR professional to verify the claims of these service providers in terms of the size of their databases, the volume of job-search hits and the relative costs and success rates. The potential advantages of using the Internet include a shortening of the recruitment cycle, accommodating the job-seeking habits of an increasing proportion of the labour market, reducing the volume of paperwork associated with recruitment, projecting a technologically progressive corporate image and providing job-search availability 24 hours a day. The potential disadvantages are associated with the possibility of generating high volume but not necessarily high quality or genuine job-seekers (termed 'electronic time-wasters') and limiting access to some labour markets.

The Internet can also be used as a pre-selection technique and a preliminary stage in the matching of applicants to the job. Banks of curricula vitae (CVs) and personal profile questionnaires are constructed on the system by specialist providers and can be accessed by employers. The level of sophistication is developing rapidly and job-seekers can enter CVs directly on to the system; the CVs are scanned and artificial intelligence software recognises skills, knowledge and qualifications regardless of how they are presented within the CV. The candidate profile is appraised against the employer's selection criteria and a candidate shortlist. Candidate confidentiality can be maintained through the use of identity numbers. These developments would appear to herald the age of the multimedia curriculum vitae. The 1998 Data Protection Act gives applicants a limited right to access the criteria and method of selection.

### Web 2.0 and recruitment

Web 2.0 is the label for second generation web activity where individuals interact and contribute rather than be passive receivers of information. This interaction manifests itself through blogs and through social networking sites such as LinkedIn, MySpace and Facebook. There are two principal opportunities for employers. First, through

**EXHIBIT 6.6 e-recruitment at Xerox and Nike**

Xerox Europe employs 6000 sales and support staff working in 600 individual businesses and receives 100 000 applications per year for 2000 positions as telesales specialists, product specialists and sales managers. An e-recruitment programme provides all businesses with access to self-service recruitment and this enables managers to manage the entire recruitment process. Each business has Internet access to an e-HR portal which is divided into a 'Xerox-manager gateway' and a 'job-applicant gateway'. This enables Xerox recruiters to post job offers online, receive applications and automate the follow-up. Database-search features, a scoring engine, screening criteria and a job-posting engine maximise candidate sources and generate shortlists. The benefits include:

- delivering a stronger and more consistent employer brand to the talent market
- more targeted and focused recruitment campaigns with greater control over internal and external processes, agencies and individuals
- reducing errors through continuous performance monitoring and reporting.

Nike's Europe, Middle East and Asia (EMEA) headquarters in the Netherlands receives 800 job applications a month for around 100 vacancies. Concerns about maintaining standards and keeping track of CVs, together with a need to reduce the cost per recruit and improve applicant quality, resulted in Nike implementing e-recruitment which handles the application process from the receipt to the job offer. External applicants apply for positions via the Nike website. Links with recruitment websites, such as Monsterboard, provide further opportunities to attract candidates. Applicants attach a CV, the system matches the competencies and experience of the candidate to the job requirements and Nike managers access the shortlisted candidates. The system retains a talent bank of CVs and searches the database when positions arise. There was decreased reliance on external recruitment agencies, savings of 50 per cent on recruitment costs and the average time to fill vacancies reduced from 62 to 42 days.

For further information see:

Pollitt, D. (2004) 'E-recruitment helps Xerox pick the cream of the crop', *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 12(5) 33–5.

Pollitt, D. (2005) 'E-recruitment gets Nike seal of approval', *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 13(2) 33–5.

exploiting social networking sites to engage with potential job-seekers and to promote the employer brand and, second, through seeking information about potential job-seekers through their social networking presence and activity. Clearly there are inherent dangers in seeking out information on individuals in relation to reliability and validity, and also ethical issues in relation to respect to privacy (the same may be said of 'googling' potential recruits). However, the growing pervasiveness of social

networking activity warrants consideration in relation to recruitment opportunities. Attraction of graduates appears to offer rich opportunities and this is illustrated by T-Mobile, which used a social networking dimension in the 2007 graduate recruitment process. T-Mobile created a Facebook site and invited potential graduate recruits to join. The site provided information on selection procedure and assessment centre programmes, and enabled potential recruits to interact with each other. This provided a vehicle to project T-Mobile values, to provide information to candidates and to garner information on the potential recruits. This information became part of the selection process, which also involved extensive interviews and psychometric assessment. A DWP survey (2009) highlighted the benefits of social networking sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, for those seeking employment. A third of employers utilised such sites to connect with potential employees and to reach out to a wider pool of talent and a half of the employers said that if candidates invested time in developing a strong online site with links to career networks, a 'personal brand', they were more likely to be hired. The use of these networks looks set to surge as organisations continue to improve corporate social networking tools and promote employee–employer links. These networks are potentially the 'new frontier' in talent spotting.

### Other advertising

*Vacancy boards* may be either internal, and only seen by current employees, or external – located in a public place. They are a low-cost way of advertising jobs, but will only access a limited pool of applicants. Internal vacancy boards enable existing employees to apply for a job change, personal development or promotion. Employees may also bring vacancies to the attention of family members and friends. External vacancy boards are often used by restaurants and retail shops and are effectively utilising the customer base as the labour market. These window boards need to be professionally designed and strategically positioned to maximise the impact on the flow of customers and other members of the public. Some retailers take the concept further by advertising jobs on shelf labels and at checkouts. Employers should be aware of the possibility of unlawful indirect discrimination if access to the noticeboard makes it more difficult for one sex or for members of ethnic groups to apply for the advertised job. Vacancy boards may need to be used as a supplementary rather than the only method of recruitment.

*Television and radio* offer innovative ways of attracting applicants. The use of television is confined to teletext services or used by government to promote particular professions, careers in the armed services or in teaching, for example. Local radio advertising is relatively low cost and functions by listener intrusion and message repetition. A limited amount of job and organisational information can be communicated by radio, but it can spark interest.

*Leaflet drops, posters and recruitment caravans*, as well as being recruitment methods, can function as promotional activities to raise the organisation's profile. Leaflets are relatively cheap to produce and deliver, but are poor at targeting a particular labour market. Leaflet drops may be a useful supplementary method within a recruitment campaign aimed at filling a substantial number of vacancies. They are often associated with the opening of new businesses, particularly retail or personal services



outlets, where the need is for a high volume of low-skilled or semi-skilled applicants. The public suffer from unsolicited mail fatigue and leaflets may not trigger interest or action. Posters are another adjunct to wider recruitment activity; the issues are, first, deciding on and accessing appropriate locations and, second, how to stimulate applicant attention. A recruitment caravan is a mobile recruiting centre. The mobile unit can be located in a public place for a specified period of time and is more suited to multi-site national recruitment. The investment and maintenance cost is considerable, but this method has been used effectively by the armed services and by retailers looking to staff new supermarkets.

### **Talent banks**

A talent bank consists of speculative enquiries and also applications retained from previous recruitment activity, and provides a pool of potential candidates that can be accessed when a vacancy occurs. The advantages are lower costs, resource efficiency and a shortened recruitment time scale, but talent banks are problematic to manage and demand efficient and effective recording, filing and retrieval systems. An HR information system can target the search of a talent bank in relation to a person specification. Three factors militate against talent banks. First, they have a tendency to decay quickly. Applications have a limited life as candidate interest may wane over time or personal and occupational circumstances may change. Second, the resurrection of an application and the contacting of a candidate by the employer has implications for the psychological contract. The approach to the applicant by the employer, a reversal of normal roles, raises expectations about the likelihood of job success, with subsequent employer rejection being less acceptable to the candidate. This role reversal may also increase candidate perceptions of strength in negotiating the contract of employment and heighten the expectations of the successful candidate in respect of more positive or favourable treatment during the employment itself. Third, the exclusive use of talent banks may not help the pursuit of diversity objectives, because they may restrict access to jobs and may potentially constitute unlawful indirect discrimination. Twelve of Hampshire's local authorities have developed a recruitment website advertising all of their jobs in one place. Candidates submit application details and they are stored in the Hampshire Talent Bank, which then allows authorities to match skills against job roles. Candidates choose which authority can access their details and are effectively applying for a number of jobs although only submitting their application once. This enables the authorities to save on advertising costs, matches applicants to job skills and offers an opportunity for positive employer branding. At Xerox the e-recruitment system retains a talent bank of CVs and each registered applicant is automatically asked to update the CV every six months in order to remain active. The system searches the database when positions arise.

### **Employment agencies and recruitment consultants**

Employment agencies and recruitment consultancies have a profit motive and provide a wide range of services in return for fees. Their services include:

- supplying temporary workers (agency staff) to accommodate peaks and troughs in work or to cover employee absence

- attracting, pre-selecting and referring candidates for ‘permanent’ positions
- seeking out candidates (head-hunting) and maintaining a register for specialist, professional, management, executive or technical positions
- providing training and development opportunities for individuals to make them more attractive to employers, for example updating on current business software packages.

The use of employment agencies constitutes the externalisation of elements of the recruitment and selection system. These elements include some administrative tasks, candidate attraction and applying pre-selection criteria. Success depends on a precise specification of requirements by the employer and the professionalism and ability of the agency. Since 1995, employment agencies have not required a licence, but the Secretary of State can prohibit individuals from running employment agencies. New regulations governing the private recruitment industry were drafted in 2001 and these regulate activities in areas such as constraints on work-seekers’ future employment, the payments demanded when a work-seeker supplied by an agency is offered permanent employment, the payment of wages direct to the worker by the hirer and not by the agency, the advertising of work only where a genuine job exists, and ensuring that adverts contain details of pay rates and also the qualifications required. The Employment Consultants Institute provides a code of professional conduct, membership services, and professional training and accreditation for employment consultants.

The costs of services to employers can be high in relation to other recruitment methods. Where the agency can meet recruitment needs more quickly, efficiently or effectively through the availability of resources, contacts or recruitment expertise, this is a desirable option. Head-hunting of senior executives is frequently undertaken by executive search agencies or consultants through a network of contacts. Using executive search is rather like recourse to a dating agency, ‘selling the job to the potential candidate and then trying to sell the candidate to the employer’ (Taylor, 2002). The advantage to the employer is the opportunity to instigate confidential dialogue with talented executives from competitor organisations. It also enables approaches to be made to candidates who may not be actively seeking employment and would therefore be unlikely to respond to press advertisements. In this executive labour market many individuals may not have realised they were in the labour market until they were contacted by an executive search agency. Although executive search is initially expensive, the benefit of securing an influential executive can make it worthwhile. There are clearly ethical, confidential and professional boundaries that should not be breached. Employment agencies and recruitment consultancies, by having greater access to persons in employment, have certain advantages over job centres.

### **Job centres**

Job centre applicants are more likely to be unemployed, although job centres offer services to employed people seeking a job change. Databases of candidates are maintained which facilitate a speedy search on the basis of employer requirements. A professional and executive recruitment service is also provided and, in addition to local services, job centres can access national and European Union labour markets. A proactive and