

Air Cargo World

AUGUST 2010



South America heads north : Cool chain expands links : People not planes deliver

Recruiting for hard times

We are in an unprecedented era in America. The recent economic crisis has produced double-digit unemployment and banks that provide working capital to businesses continue to disappear.

Many companies are suffering from lack of capital and resources. Strong corporations survive in any environment, often times due to their “run lean and mean” policy where self-motivated, highly skilled, team-oriented employees rule.

The logistics industry, like all others, desires exceptional candidates at any time, but it is particularly difficult to find experience and talent in this down market. So it is a common practice, and advisable, to promote from within if at all possible.

However, if current personnel resources don't provide a match, companies are tempted to shoulder the responsibility of sourcing appropriate candidates. Advertising, reviewing and circulating resumes, prequalifying and interviewing candidates is time consuming, expensive and potentially impractical.

To find transportation industry stars currently out of work is an unreasonable expectation. Solid candidates are employed and hesitant to risk changing companies. Jumping ship for a possible promotion is much less desirable today. The employer says, “Bring me talented people motivated to increase our profit line, and they will be paid well!” The candidate says, “Does this company provide such a superior opportunity for me that I can risk leaving a proven and safe position?” The payoff for both sides must be significant and the stakes are high.

Our industry is complex and sophisticated. It mandates specialized knowledge that only comes from working in this field. Knowledge of products, modes of transportation, carrier options available to shippers, and how to arrange for their services; government regulations that may apply to specific shipments and/or commodities; security and safety issues that apply to products being shipped and all the appropriate paperwork necessary for clearing Customs are just a few of the required skill sets.

Exactly what are employers' specific expectations of

a recruiter? Well it's not just distributing resumes! A recruiter's job is to manage the expectations of the employer and the candidate. Today there is no abundance of open positions — but there is a demand for well qualified and experienced individuals, especially those in sales and trade lane development. And the need for these talented, successful people escalates in tough business environments.

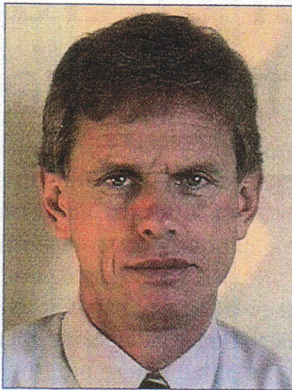
The imperative question for the hiring airline or forwarding company is “how quickly can the new employee add value to my operation? Will he or she provide my shippers with the most efficient and cost effective options for their freight? Will the employee meet our level of customer service? Do references from previous customers support this candidate?”

An “A-Team Recruiter” can be relied on to communicate heavily in order to find clues for the perfect employee match. Most of these clues hide in the perfect, or shall we say, not-so-perfect company culture. This type of information often even hides from employers. No business environment is perfect, or completely flawed, yet each organization fits specific personality types.

Examining detail from the inside provides the recruiter with more information to help attract the right candidate; one that might never show up on the company radar. If a previously unknown recruiter phones up to tell you about a perfect candidate for your company — send them away. They may know the candidate, but they don't know the team.

A perfect match brings the logistics employer a person who doesn't just hold the basic, technical skills required for the position. The chosen candidate holds all the basic requirements, plays as a team member, help others to meet their full potential, and will always give a full day's work for the pay! **ACW**

Helmut Berchtold is president and CEO of logistics industry recruiter adi Management Consult. His experience includes a stint with Schenker, where he helped restructure the organization and managed corporate services including foreign currency accounting, purchasing, leasing and IT.



Helmut Berchtold