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5 Contemporary Recruitment and Selection Challenges

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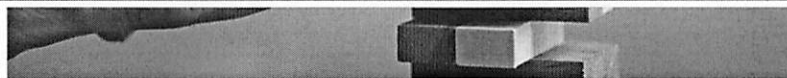
The recruiting process is constantly evolving, thanks to improvements in technology and scientific research. This has allowed HR teams to identify top talent in their applicant pools and to make better hiring decisions.

However, according to a recent commentary published in the *International Journal of Selection Assessment*, even with these great strides, there is still a substantial gap between research on the recruitment and selection process, and actual implementation of those findings.

In their article "Highlighting Tensions in Recruitment and Selection Research Practice (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijsa.12129/abstract)" researchers Ann Marie Ryan, and Eva Derous explored this research-practice gap. They interviewed 164 HR

practitioners and examined thousands of scientific studies involving the recruiting process, and concluded that understanding the gaps in the talent selection process is the first and most important step to attract and identify top talent.

From Credibility to Validity, Five Important Conversations

In their article, Ryan and Derous point out that researchers are not necessarily studying the issues that are most relevant to hiring managers in practice. On the other hand, HR professionals do not always implement techniques in the recruitment process or the hiring process that are supported by reliable research. Oftentimes, making meaningful advancements requires striking a balance between HR-related trends and research-related trends.

"These days, new developments or perspectives are much less ascribed to single great minds or designers but rather come 'from the street,'" write Ryan and Derous. "However, moving from 'street credibility' to 'scientific validity' is still a big step and what the research–practice divide is about."

The pair of researchers also explored the causes behind this research-practice gap. They identified five primary tensions between the practical recruiting process and the research behind it.

1. Innovation vs. Efficiency

HR managers continuously seek out new and improved tools to enhance the process of recruitment. While they often are ready to embrace new hiring techniques, striking a balance between expediency and effectiveness often holds them back. Inefficient hiring techniques can deter prime candidates. SHRM recently reported that 60% of prospective applicants (https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/technology/pages/study-most-job-seekers-abandon-online-job-applications.aspx) quit the application process when it is too long or complex.

Both researchers and HR professionals, Ryan and Derous say, must understand that innovation is a process, and new ideas can be difficult to implement until they are scalable.

2. Customization vs. Consistency

Today's recruiting technology is great at customization. Companies can customize everything from their application process to assessment tests to help detect applicants that are a good "fit" for their company. While most companies welcome this feature, when not implemented correctly it hinders research. Without consistent variables, researchers have a difficult time ascertaining hard data that hiring manager can trust.

3. Transparency vs. Effectiveness

Transparency has become a hot topic for HR professionals in recent years. The thought is that the more transparent a company is, the more trust it inspires among its applicants. However, research shows that too much information may skew research results.

If the company provides too much information about the purpose behind the assessment testing or about the company in general, it could affect the candidate's overall performance (http://www.furstperson.com/blog/unintended-consequences-of-gender-stereotypes-and-transparency-in-the-employee-selection-process) since they may be able to "game" the test. Companies must carefully balance transparency and effectiveness.

4. Wide Reach vs. Coherence

For years, employee referrals have been a vital part of the recruiting process. The surge of social media outlets (http://www.furstperson.com/blog/getting-started-with-your-social-recruiting-talent-acquisition) now gives your employees an even larger recruiting pool. However, one of the biggest problems with the wide-reach concept is that you company can lost control of its message. An inconsistent message can confuse applicants and affect the quality of your selection pool. Being clear with your company's goals and objectives can help alleviate these complications.

5. Diversity vs. Standardization

HR professionals ranked diversity (http://www.furstperson.com/blog/how-does-ethnicity-impact-perception-of-cognitive-assessments) as the third most important trend affecting the recruiting process today. The problem is that the level of standardization found in most recruiting processes can limit diversity. Tailored talent assessment solutions that take into account an individual company's culture and goals can help to avoid this issue and foster a diverse workplace while maintaining high performance standards.

There is no doubt that great advances in the recruiting process have created more efficient hiring practices. Hiring managers today have a wealth of tools and resources they can introduce into their recruiting strategies, including simulations, personality assessments, and critical thinking assessments. They also have a better understanding of how to utilize these hiring metrics to make sound hiring decisions and ultimately, find, hire, and keep candidates who drive their businesses forward. But most important is to use a talent assessment solution that is validated by scientific research, and can overcome those tensions which challenge the recruiting process.