

THE TATECH

Talent Technology
Implementation
Management
Learning &
Certification
Program

TATECH

THE ASSOCIATION FOR TALENT
ACQUISITION SOLUTIONS



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**THE TATECH
TALENT
TECHNOLOGY
IMPLEMENTATION
MANAGEMENT
LEARNING &
CERTIFICATION
PROGRAM**



The TAtech Talent Technology Implementation Management Learning & Certification Program meets an urgent need among employers recruiting for top talent.

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Gain the knowledge to guide your organization's successful introduction of a technology-based talent acquisition product.



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THE TATECH TALENT TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT LEARNING & CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Introduction

As its name indicates, the TAttech Talent Technology Implementation Management Learning & Certification Program is a two-part professional development resource composed of:



A self-paced instructional curriculum

The curriculum presents the most effective practices for successfully implementing technology-based talent acquisition products and services in enterprise employers, small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs), staffing firms and recruitment process outsourcing companies (RPOs).



An exam

The exam covers all aspects of the concepts and principles, skills and knowledge, and practices and procedures presented in the curriculum, leading to a Certified Technology Implementation Professional (CTIP) credential for HR and Talent Acquisition professionals.

The program has been developed and is supported by TAttech: The Association for Talent Acquisition Solutions.

Founded in 2007, TAttech is the trade association for the global talent technology industry. Membership is open to any organization that uses technology to design, develop and/or deliver a talent acquisition product or service for use by HR and Recruiting professionals.

Currently, TAttech's Members include AI and machine learning companies, applicant tracking system vendors, blockchain and data technology companies, job boards and employment marketplaces, job search engines and aggregators, programmatic ad buying platforms and networks, recruitment advertising and marketing agencies, social media sites and technology-related consultancies. Collectively, they power or operate over 70,000 sites worldwide.



Why Is Such a Program Needed?

The TAtech Talent Technology Implementation Management Learning & Certification Program meets an urgent need among employers recruiting for top talent. These organizations are acquiring technology-based talent acquisition products at an unprecedented pace, and no such guide to or process for implementing them effectively has been available.

Do a browser search for “best ways to implement talent technology,” and you’ll get two kinds of results:

01 Articles, podcasts and blog posts with guidelines and tips on how to bring new technology in general into an organization and/or its recruiting team.

For example:

- » “5 Ways Technology Can Improve Your Talent Attraction”
- » “Nine Ways to Help Employees Adapt to New Company Technology”
- » “A guide to talent management tools and trends”
- » “Technology for Better Talent Management – What’s the Best Way to Use It?”
- » “The best way to mesh technology and talent: Think agility and resilience in your people”

The content is helpful, but non-specific or directive. It provides an overview of what’s required, but no detailed, stepwise process for actually doing it.

02 Articles, podcasts and blog posts with guidelines and tips on how to bring HR technology into an organization and/or its recruiting team.

For example:

- » “3 Steps: How to Effectively Implement HR technologies in the Workplace”
- » “4 Steps to Implement HR Technology Effectively”
- » “Six ways to implement HR technology successfully”
- » “6 tried-and-true tips to successfully implement new workplace technology”
- » “Digital HR Transformation: 8 Tips for Success”

HR technology, of course, has a very different purpose and user base than that of talent technology. The former enables HR professionals to address employee administration, satisfaction and performance, while the latter enables Talent Acquisition professionals (and HR professionals with talent acquisition assignments) to find, engage and recruit both active job seekers and passive prospects so they become employees.

In both cases – technology in general and HR technology in particular – the implementation process is generically similar to that for talent technology, but specifically very different. In effect, a talent technology implementation project is a unique initiative whether it occurs in an enterprise employer, SMB, staffing firm or RPO. Therefore, the only way to accomplish all of the technical, operational

and structural tasks required to successfully roll out a technology-based talent acquisition product is with a talent acquisition-first strategy – one that is designed from the outset for the recruiting mission.



KEY POINT

The TAtech Talent Technology Implementation Management Learning & Certification Program fills a critically important gap in the resources available to today's talent acquisition professionals. It enables them to capture the power of advanced technology and thereby enhance their own performance on-the-job and the return their organization achieves from its investment in that technology.

The Program's Body of Knowledge

The TAtech Talent Technology Implementation Management Learning & Certification Program's body of knowledge has been built with insights of and lessons learned by HR and Talent Acquisition (TA) practitioners and leaders and those of industry experts and thought leaders as well as with the findings of research conducted by academic institutions, government agencies, HR/TA consultancies and publishers, and professional associations. It is a living corpus that is continuously refreshed in response to both new technology

developments and innovations in business strategies and recruiting practices.

The principal driver in this ever-expanding body of knowledge, however, is technology. The capabilities of talent technology, in particular, have expanded significantly in the past ten years, and the products that incorporate those capabilities are now critically important elements of most employers' talent acquisition strategy. That development has largely been driven by a single, irrefutable fact: the War for Talent has not diminished but increased, and prevailing in that competition – hiring the very best talent – has never been more essential to an organization's success.

Though often used to describe one kind of product, talent technology actually covers a wide range of hardware and software systems that are vastly different in their purpose and complexity. They are applicant tracking systems and chatbots, programmatic ad buying platforms and interviewing robots, job boards, candidate relationship management systems and an array of other dissimilar products. Despite these differences, however, the key to employers' effective application of those products is exactly the same: it is the caliber of the product's implementation within the organization. Indeed, the success of that implementation almost always determines the return an employer will achieve on the investment it's made in such products. Said another way, only an effective implementation can deliver the ROI an organization expects and deserves from talent technology.

That said, the process of implementation varies based on the kind of technology-based talent acquisition product an organization is installing. It is possible, however, to organize the technologies into two broad categories, so the program's body of knowledge provides

**[Note Bene:
The term
"organization"
is used herein
to encompass
all employers,
including
both for-profit
companies and
not-for-profit
entities.]**

the insights and skills required for successful implementation in both. In separate sections, it addresses:

INTERNAL IMPLEMENTATIONS

The implementation for those talent technologies that are installed within an organization's existing technology stack or that are cloud-based but must interoperate with the other products in the tech stack. The goal of implementation is to ensure that recruiters can effectively use the technology to help meet the organization's business goals.

EXTERNAL IMPLEMENTATIONS

The implementation for those talent technologies that are accessed and used outside the organization, although they must be able to accept input from the organization's data systems and provide output to those systems effectively and efficiently. The goal of implementation is to ensure that recruiters can effectively leverage the technology to help meet the organization's business goals.

The use of these two categories notwithstanding, the separation line between them is neither definitive nor absolute. Some of the talent technology-based products in one category could, in certain instances, also be logically assigned to the other category or even appear in both categories. Their assignment here is intended only to indicate the approach to implementation that is most likely to provide the maximum ROI for the organization.

The first category of technology-based talent acquisition products is covered in Sections I and II of the body of knowledge. They address the following products:

- » Applicant tracking systems
- » Candidate assessment systems
- » Candidate communications systems
- » Candidate data collection and analysis systems
- » Candidate intelligence systems
- » Candidate Interviewing systems
- » Candidate relationship management systems
- » Chatbots / Conversational AI products
- » Employee referral systems
- » Internal mobility systems
- » Offer management systems
- » Programmatic recruitment platforms
- » Recruitment marketing platforms
- » Sourcing automation platforms
- » Talent acquisition suites

The second category of technology-based talent acquisition products is covered in Section III of the body of knowledge. It addresses the following products:

- » Classified advertising platforms
- » Job ad distribution systems
- » Job boards
- » Job search engines & aggregators
- » Social media sites, when used for recruitment advertising
- » Talent or candidate marketplaces

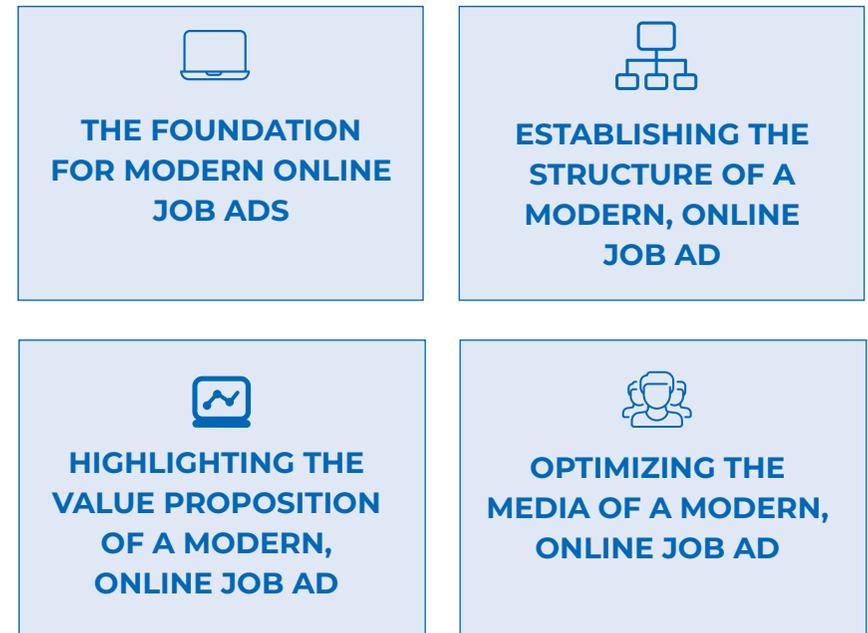
Organization of the Program

Sections I and II of the body of knowledge are organized as:



These sections present this curriculum in self-paced instructional modules which introduce the individual and group actions, communications, coordination and leadership required to effectively implement a technology-based talent acquisition product in the recruiting team of large employers and among designated users within smaller organizations (e.g., the individual serving as an HR Department of one). While each organization will tailor its adoption of the body of knowledge to its own unique circumstances, the program's constituent principles, practices and guidelines give HR and Talent Acquisition leaders and professionals a time-tested blueprint for both optimizing the benefits that recruiters receive from such products and, as a consequence, for achieving the business goals that were established for the acquisition of the products.

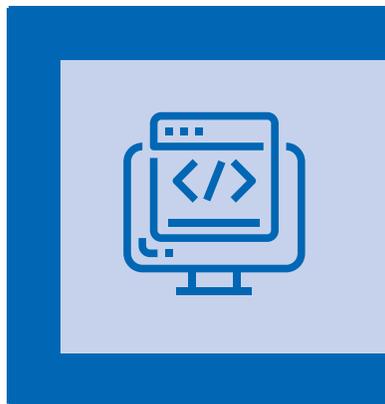
Section III of the body of knowledge addresses online recruitment advertising products and is organized as follows:



This section introduces a set of principles and practices for effectively leveraging the capabilities of the second category of technology-based talent acquisition products – external platforms for online recruitment advertising. It moves beyond traditional “best practices” designed and used for 20th century talent acquisition to practices that will enable organizations to connect with and convert high performers in the 21st century. They are the most productive strategy that organizations can use to optimize their return on investment (ROI) from what the researcher and consultant Josh Bersin estimates is the “several billions of dollars” they spend on job advertising each year.¹

Certification

TAtech offers a certification exam based on the body of knowledge presented in its Talent Technology Implementation Management curriculum. It is open to any HR or Talent Acquisition leader or professional who has been admitted to the Learning Program and is recruiting for an enterprise employer, SMB, staffing firm or RPO. Successfully passing the exam earns the individual the Certified Technology Implementation Professional (CTIP) certification, the only such credential in the talent acquisition field. For more information on the certification process, please contact [TAtech](#).



SECTION I:

ORGANIZING INTERNAL IMPLEMENTATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED TALENT ACQUISITION PRODUCTS

The purpose of an internal implementation of technology-based talent acquisition products is to ensure that recruiters can effectively use the products to help meet the organization’s business goals. These products include:

- » Applicant tracking systems
- » Candidate assessment systems
- » Candidate communications systems
- » Candidate data collection and analysis systems
- » Candidate intelligence systems
- » Candidate Interviewing systems
- » Candidate relationship management systems
- » Chatbots / Conversational AI products
- » Employee referral systems
- » Internal mobility systems
- » Offer management systems
- » Programmatic recruitment platforms
- » Recruitment marketing platforms
- » Sourcing automation platforms
- » Talent acquisition suites

The Decisive Elements of a Successful Implementation Project

The decision has been made. A solution provider has been selected. Your organization has acquired a new technology-based talent acquisition product. The process was likely complicated, time-consuming and, more often than not, interspersed with unexpected questions or concerns that had to be resolved. But, all of that is over now. The contract has been signed, and the product will shortly arrive. It's natural for those involved to let out a sigh of relief and think the hard part is over. Unfortunately, that would be a mistake.



KEY POINT

According to IDC, “25 percent of IT projects fail outright. Just as bad, 20 to 25 percent don't provide the expected return on investment and up to 50 percent require material rework in order for the organization to reach the goal for which a product was originally purchased.² And worst of all, over half of those financial and performance shortfalls have the exact same cause: inadequate implementation.

According to Forbes, 54 percent of new tech failures are due to poor management, while just 3 percent are caused by a problem with the technology itself.³ Certainly, some of that poor management occurs during the acquisition phase of a technology-based product, but in many instances, that's simply not the case. The organizational need has been clearly defined, the selection of a solution provider has been timely and well organized and the best product has been acquired. What causes the organization to experience a problem is poor implementation planning and execution.

And, that situation has consequences. It can cause:

- » a shortfall in the product's capability as measured by the key performance indicators recruiters are able to achieve;
- » an inadequate return on an organization's investment made in the product; and/or
- » a requirement that the organization spend even more money to rework the product so it performs as needed.

In the end, the organization has wasted its money and seen its competitive position degraded. It can't recruit the talent it needs, and the resulting shortages undermine the organization's business performance.

Imperfect implementation causes these problems because installing a new technology-based product is neither trivial nor simple. It is as complicated, time-consuming and potentially fraught with missteps and errors as the process of selecting a solution provider and product. That's a fact with which you are almost certainly already familiar.

It's Not As Simple As Throwing a Switch

Though clearly not an exact analogy, think of your own acquisition of a new smart TV. As a good consumer, you probably did a significant amount of research on the different brands before you made a selection. So, you feel good about your choice, but you also

know there's still another hurdle you have to clear. All of that time and effort as well as the money you invested will be lost if the TV's installation isn't equally as well done. And, in today's homes, getting over that obstacle can also be a non-trivial endeavor.

Often, the screen has to be wall mounted which can mean the involvement of a carpenter or technician. Then, if you're using cable, the connections have to be made correctly and synchronized with your provider's modem. Next, the set has to be meshed with the tech stack in your home – the WiFi for internet access and its integration with signals from other devices if you have them. And finally, you have to learn how to use the full range of buttons on your remote so that you take advantage of all of the set's capabilities and not use it simply to turn basic viewing on and off.

In short, getting your new smart TV out of the box and working for you is not easy. And, if that's the implementation challenge you face with a technology that relatively familiar and (normally) designed to be consumer-friendly, think how much more involved it will be to install a technology-based talent acquisition product. Even so-called "plug and play" technologies – those that can be integrated "without the need for physical device configuration or user intervention"⁴ – require careful installation in order to deliver all of their capabilities as well as their expected performance benefits. The same is true of those tech products that might be considered "small" or likely to have a minor or even no effect on the organization and recruiting team where they will reside and be used. In truth, every technology-based talent acquisition product will introduce both technical integration challenges as well as operational and other adjustments within the recruiting team. For all of those reasons, the anticipated return on investment for the product can only be achieved with the successful execution of a comprehensive and detailed implementation strategy.

That strategy must be specifically designed both for implementation by the buyer – by the recruiting team – and for technology-based talent acquisition products. It cannot be a jerry-

rigged plan derived from the solution provider's standard approach to onboarding its product for its customers. Similarly, the strategy can't be a reworked version of some generic approach to introducing new technology in general or even one intended for the implementation of an HR product. To introduce a technology-based talent acquisition product effectively, the buyer must employ a strategy that addresses the unique technical and user aspects of that technology within the culture, capabilities and operations of its recruiting team.

Further, to meet that high standard, an implementation strategy for technology-based talent acquisition products must include two organic elements:

LEADERSHIP

An Implementation Project Leader (IPL) with the internal stature, business acumen, recruiting experience, supervisory skills and corporate support to effectively direct all preparations for and the actual execution of the installation of a new technology-based talent acquisition product so that it achieves the goals the organization has set for it.

METHODOLOGY

An exhaustive and in-depth blueprint that lays out all of the necessary technical tasks, policy and procedural changes, individual preparations and communications within the organization and between it and the solution provider to install a technology-based talent acquisition product so that its use by recruiters meets or exceeds the organization's target performance indicators.

Lacking either or both of these elements virtually guarantees that a new technology-based talent acquisition product will not be implemented effectively and that, as a consequence, the organization will not achieve the return on investment (ROI) it anticipated or deserves from the product's acquisition. However, these two elements do not exist in a vacuum, but in the context of the acquiring organization. And, of all the factors that will affect the strategy, the caliber of its support – the priority, budget, resources and top-down commitment it provides – will have the most significant impact on implementation success. Indeed, an implementation project can have both great leadership and a robust methodology and still fail if it does not receive full and sustained organizational backing.

That support must, of course, be shaped by the scope and scale of the implementation. No two projects are exactly the same, so the organization's backing should be tailored to its own financial, organizational and competitive circumstances as well as the potential benefits and cost of the technology-based talent acquisition product being acquired. Assigning more support to a project than is necessary for a successful outcome is a waste of organizational resources, while assigning too little support will waste the organization's investment in the product by preventing recruiters from meeting the expected improvement in key performance indicators. Committing the right level of support, on the other hand, provides a foundation on which leadership and methodology can have their full beneficial effect.

The Superstructure of Success

While the organizational foundation of an implementation project is essential to achieving the goal for a product, however, high caliber leadership and a robust methodology are the decisive factors. They are the superstructure that gives shape to the outcome. They create both the reality and the internal perception of whether an implementation is a success or a failure.

High caliber leadership and a robust methodology enable recruiting teams to recognize and respond to the situational reality that confronts them. The complexity of modern recruiting teams, including their existing technology infrastructure and staffing protocols – often a mixture of full time, part time and contractual recruiters working both in a central location and remotely – as well as the installation and operational requirements of the products they purchase and any customization they have contractually required effectively transforms the simple acquisition of a product into an entirely different kind of organizational endeavor. **Implementing a technology-based talent acquisition product is, in essence, a highly complicated change management challenge.**

In order to integrate such products effectively, the organization must recognize and adapt to any of a range of new and sometimes uncomfortable realities. From unfamiliar user interfaces to altered procedures and performance expectations, from the need to learn one or more new skills to a recast role with new priorities, some of these changes can be extensive in their impact while others can be easily integrated into ongoing recruiting operations. Regardless of their scale, however, only high caliber leadership and a robust methodology can guide the organization to enhanced recruiting outcomes.





KEY POINT

Implementing a technology-based talent acquisition product is, in essence, a highly complicated change management challenge that requires both a solid organizational foundation and a superstructure of high caliber leadership and a robust implementation methodology.

Unfortunately, there are more than a few instances where that truism has not been recognized or simply ignored. In those cases, the implementation of technology-based talent acquisition products gets inadequate organization attention and resource allocation. They are viewed as lacking the operational impact or cost exposure of larger technology-based products (used in IT or HR, for example), so their implementation is viewed as a minor undertaking. Inevitably, that perception leads to the conclusion by an organization's chain of command that bringing such products on board does not warrant a fulsome commitment of its support, the assignment of high caliber leadership or the use of a robust implementation methodology.

Therefore, the first test of an implementation project for a technology-based talent acquisition product often involves making a business case similar to that which was used to justify the product's acquisition in the first place. It involves convincing the organization's decision-makers that doing the implementation the right way – assigning it the appropriate priority, budget, resources,

leadership and methodology – is the only strategy that will ensure the organization actually receives the benefits it needs and deserves from the product. As with the original business case, there are two points which reenforce this position, but for the implementation case, the focus is not on the potential benefits of a product but on actually realizing those benefits for the organization. They are:

TALENT ACQUISITION

The organization invested in a technology-based talent acquisition product to achieve a specific goal, whether that was a lower cost-per-hire, an improved candidate experience, higher quality new hires or something else. An inadequate implementation will degrade or prevent the achievement of those goals and potentially the organization's ability to recruit the talent necessary for it to meet its business plans.

FIDUCIARY

The organization made a financial investment in acquiring the product and did so with the expectation of receiving a specific return in terms of improved performance or operational cost savings on the money it spent. Inadequately implementing the product will reduce recruiters' capability achieved with the product and, as a consequence, force the organization to accept a lower ROI or an additional investment for rework that will degrade or even eliminate the anticipated return.



KEY POINT

In effect, the implementation of a technology-based talent acquisition product is a business initiative, and as with any other business initiative, it can be done well and advance the organization or done poorly and undermine it.

Implementing a technology-based talent acquisition product is basically an exercise in building success – for individual recruiters, for the recruiting team and for the organization where they work. It begins with a foundation of appropriate and sustained organizational support and then employs a superstructure of high caliber leadership and a robust methodology to create a new and valued capability measured in individual and team performance enhancements that were not achievable before. When carefully assembled and integrated, these three elements enable HR and Talent Acquisition leaders and professionals to capture the power of technology and apply it to their recruiting activities in a way that leverages their success to advance the success of the organization as well.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 What is the principal cause for the failure of new technology-based products?
- 02 What characteristics must an implementation project have if it's to install a technology-based talent acquisition product effectively?
- 03 What single factor provides the critical foundation for an implementation project?
- 04 What are the organic elements of a successful implementation project and why are they so important?
- 05 What is often the first test of an implementation project and what's the best way to meet it?

Section I Module 2

Implementation Project Leadership

No project can achieve its mission without an effective director, but selecting an Implementation Project Leader (IPL) for a technology-based talent acquisition product can present a number of challenges.

First, the solution provider whose product is being implemented almost always has more technical expertise and certainly more specific knowledge of the product than anyone on the staff of the organization acquiring the product. Given that advantage, there's often the temptation to defer to the solution provider and not appoint an internal leader for the project or to appoint one who lacks the background, authority and/or resources to do the job so will simply follow the lead of the solution provider.

Second, even when an organization wants to appoint its own internal leader, the requirement that they have the requisite authority and technical expertise to do the job can mean that it must accept someone on the HR/TA staff who will be at a technical disadvantage during the product's installation in the organization's tech stack or someone from another internal unit – usually the IT Department – who lacks an understanding of how recruiters will use the product on-the-job and the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will determine its value to the organization.

These concerns, while often raised during the selection of an IPL, are actually based on a faulty assumption. It is correct that the IPL must be comfortable with technology, but they need not be a technologist. They don't need to know how to write source code or develop algorithms, but they do need to have experience using talent technology on-the-job. They should understand how technology has been deployed to date by their employer — what specific functions have been assigned to technology — and both the benefits and the issues or shortcomings, if any, associated with doing so. For example, if an organization has previously implemented an applicant tracking system (ATS), the IPL should be familiar with recruiters' perceptions of how that product has helped and/or hindered their performance and the reasons behind their opinions.

That background is critical for one all important reason: it is the only preparation that is appropriate and sufficient for the implementation project's mission. Ironically, it was a politician – Bill Owens, the former governor of Colorado – who wrote most accurately about this requirement. He put it this way: "True leadership lies in guiding others to success--in ensuring that everyone is performing at their best, doing the work they are pledged to do and doing it well." In essence, it is the IPL's experience with and expertise in talent acquisition that enables them to lead their coworkers in accomplishing the mission of meeting the goal the organization set for acquiring a new technology-based talent acquisition product. Only that background can deliver the desired improvement in recruiting performance.



KEY POINT

The mission of a technology-based talent acquisition product implementation project is not the arrival and activation of the technology, but the achievement of the organization's goal for the product – the specific improvement being sought as measured by KPIs.

An IPL's role, therefore, is to manage the project to that end. They must know how to identify individuals within the organization that have the competencies required for project success – including those with expertise in specific areas that exceeds their own – and be able to recruit and work with them. In the area of technology, for example, the increased mobility of recruiters in recent years may mean that a person now on the organization's recruiting team has had experience with the implementation and/or use of the specific kind of technology and even the specific product being acquired. Such an individual would, of course, be more knowledgeable about the technical aspects of implementation than the IPL, and someone who should serve on the project for that very reason.

The IPL should also be able to assign tasks to a range of the organization's employees – including those on the recruiting team as well as those working in HR, IT and potentially even Finance. They should know how to identify the person with the right expertise, to communicate the actions they want that person to complete as well

as the outcomes that should be achieved, and to assess the quality of the person's work and direct any corrective actions that may be necessary. They should also have the interpersonal skills to resolve any issues or disputes that may arise within the implementation team and between the team and the solution provider. In other words, the IPL is an orchestra conductor and a diplomat, a strategist and a tactician, a nuts and bolts fanatic and a visionary, all rolled into one.

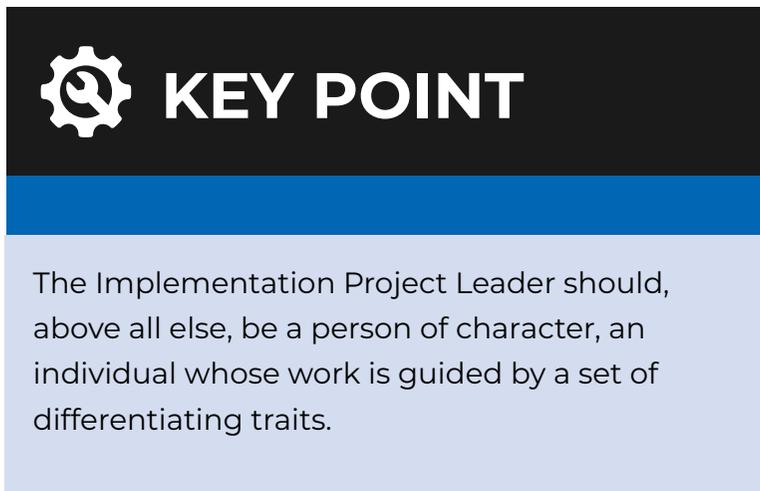
The Selection of an Implementation Project Leader

The selection of an IPL should focus first on the determinative word in the role's title: leader. To realize the expected outcome of an implementation project, an IPL should have the appropriate standing among their peers – they should be recognized as someone who is or has the potential to be a leader – as well as an interest in the product being acquired and its effective use by the recruiting team. Their assignment should not be a role for which they are ill equipped – personally or professionally – or in which they are uninterested. The surest way for an organization to derail a project is to select a leader:

WHO lacks the professional stature, personality or commitment for such a role and for that reason is not respected by their coworkers on the implementation team, or

WHO has been assigned the role against their wishes and therefore personally underperforms and/or tolerates underperformance among the other members of the team.

An effective IPL, in contrast, should be seen as someone who can draw on personal qualities that summon the best from themselves and from others. They should be highly regarded as both a person and a colleague, enthusiastic about serving as the project's leader and committed to providing the team with the guidance and encouragement its members need to implement the organization's new technology-based talent acquisition product successfully. In effect, they should be universally recognized as having a defining and differentiating attribute. They should be a person of character – an individual who comes to work with a set of distinctive qualities.



KEY POINT

The Implementation Project Leader should, above all else, be a person of character, an individual whose work is guided by a set of differentiating traits.

The dictionary defines character as “the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.”⁵ In the case of a leader, it is the basket of traits that sets a person apart as someone who can assemble and direct a diverse team of individuals in the successful accomplishment of a mission – the implementation of a technology-based talent acquisition product in such a way that it delivers the return on investment desired by the acquiring organization. While there is no commonly-accepted list of such traits, numerous public and private sector organizations have accepted those identified by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL).

The Center describes its approach to leadership as “the capacity to think and act beyond the boundaries that limit our effectiveness.” It is leadership that achieves the desired objective not only when the sun is shining and everything is proceeding as planned, but also when there are storm clouds of competing priorities and disruptive disputes overhead. To lead in that kind of environment – one that most closely resembles reality — CCL’s research has determined that a leader must have ten of those “mental and moral qualities.”⁶

They are:

- » Integrity
- » Ability to delegate
- » Communication
- » Self-awareness
- » Gratitude
- » Learning agility
- » Influence
- » Empathy
- » Courage
- » Respect.

While those traits define a leader of character in general, however, they do not necessarily identify the qualities that would enable an individual to succeed in the specific role of an IPL. One source that comes closer to providing that level of precision is Peter Weddle’s book, *Generalship: HR Leadership in a Time of War*. In it, he lists seven characteristics he believes are essential to effective leadership in the competitive labor market recruiters call the War for the Best Talent.⁷

By recounting tales of history’s most effective generals in combat, he describes the character traits HR and Talent Acquisition leaders

will need to prevail in the battle for top talent. They are provided here with an interpretation that relates them to an implementation project:

COURAGEOUS

Willing to be at the tip of the spear.

An IPL should have the self-confidence and fortitude to take on and succeed at the task of implementing a technology-based talent acquisition product.

FOCUSED

Clear-sighted despite the fog of battle.

The IPL should be able to see past day-to-day technical, operational and/or cultural challenges and concentrate on achieving the organization's goal for the product.

SELFLESS

Possessing the soul of a warrior.

The IPL should be convinced of the implementation project's importance and committed to delivering the benefits it holds for the recruiting team.

HUMBLE

Always a companion in the foxhole.

The IPL should be strong enough to involve and support those who have skills and knowledge the IPL lacks but are essential to the product's successful implementation.

BOLD

Imbued with the spirit of the bayonet.

The IPL should be willing to take decisive action to resolve any problems that arise within the organization and/or with the solution provider and keep senior leaders informed of their status.

RESILIENT

Unmoved by the shocks of combat.

The IPL should be confident enough to withstand setbacks and determined enough to restore the implementation team's forward progress with a minimum of delay or disruption.

INSPIRATIONAL

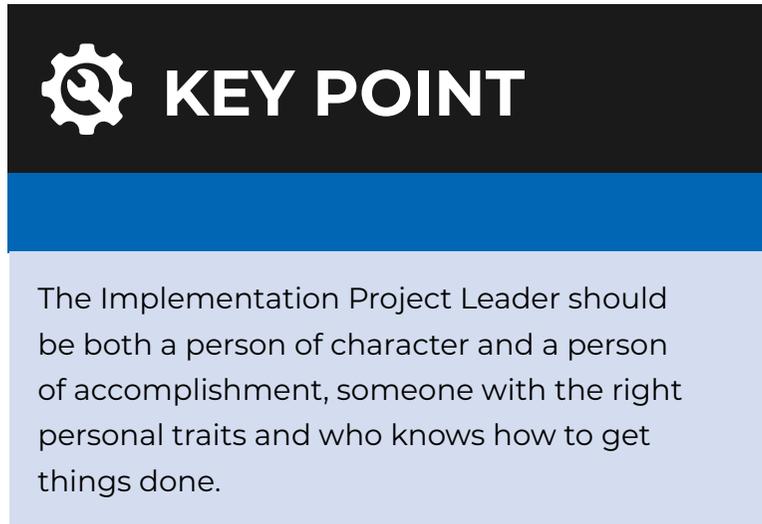
Seasoned with a feel for the troops.

The IPL should be comfortable using words and deeds to communicate a personal allegiance to project success and to encourage others to meet that same high bar of commitment.

It's a daunting list, to be sure, and as with any other facet of human endeavor, no one person will possess every trait on the list. In combat – and in the War for the Best Talent – there is a gradient of leadership. Some leaders are extremely successful and others are less so. The difference is obviously shaped by the nature of the challenges they face, but also by how many of those traits they display. Indeed, the best leaders – the ones remembered for achieving the most highly regarded outcomes – prevail in almost any situation and they do so because they are persons with an abundance of those character traits.

And yet, as important as such leadership traits are, they are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to ensure a successful implementation project. Even relatively small implementation efforts and certainly all of the larger ones are complex undertakings with numerous moving parts. They require the effective execution of an array of tasks by a range of diverse individuals at precisely the appropriate time to produce the exact right sequence of outcomes that lead to the desired project result. In effect, implementation projects are also a significant management challenge. For that reason, the IPL should be someone who can fill two roles. They must be both a leader and a manager, and to be an effective manager, they

must also be a person of accomplishment – an individual who comes to work with a sense of purpose.



KEY POINT

The Implementation Project Leader should be both a person of character and a person of accomplishment, someone with the right personal traits and who knows how to get things done.

The dictionary defines accomplishment as “the successful achievement of a task.”⁸ In other words, the IPL must be someone who can get things done. They should have a bias for action and organizing as well as a propensity for courage and inspiring others. They must not only have “the capacity to think and act beyond the boundaries that limit our effectiveness,” but as Marcus Buckingham described in *Harvard Business Review*, they “know and value the unique abilities and even the eccentricities of their [fellow] employees, and they learn how best to integrate them into a coordinated plan of attack.”⁹

The need for that double combination of character and accomplishment adds yet another level of complexity to the selection of an IPL. As noted in the title of a post on the applied social psychology blog at Penn State University, “All Leaders Are Managers, But Not All Managers Are Leaders.”¹⁰ Said another way, managers may or may not be able to lead a technology-based talent acquisition product implementation project successfully, but all leaders will

have that capability. To do so, however, they must also possess the skills of a competent project manager. Those skills, as identified by ProjectManager.com, are provided below and once again with an interpretation that relates them to an implementation project.

+ COMMUNICATION

The timely and continuous provision of information to and the gracious acceptance of feedback from everyone involved with or affected by the project, including stakeholders, team members and coworkers, the chain of command and the solution provider.

+ SCHEDULING

The development of a timeline for all of the tasks that must be accomplished by both the organization and the solution provider and the coordination and oversight required to ensure their completion according to plan and with the necessary outcome.

+ RISK MANAGEMENT

The early identification of those situations that could become problems or setbacks and their proactive resolution or mitigation as well as the timely and effective defusing of unexpected issues as soon as they arise.

+ COST MANAGEMENT

The development of a realistic budget for the project, the securing of its approval by the organization and the management of expenses to ensure the project is successfully completed within the budget’s parameters.

+ NEGOTIATING

The use of engagement, persuasion and compromise to eliminate or diminish issues and disagreements that may arise with the solution provider as well as among team members and coworkers, other stakeholders and those in the chain of command.

+ CRITICAL THINKING

The careful, unbiased analysis of every decision that must be made and every challenge that must be overcome, in order to ensure the best possible outcome for the project and ultimately for the organization.

+ TASK MANAGEMENT

The oversight of each and every step in the implementation process, providing support and guidance where necessary to ensure its completion on time and with the necessary outcome in order for implementation to succeed.

+ QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The articulation of a standard of performance that will be expected and enforced among all team members and the solution provider to ensure the organization achieves the appropriate return on its investment in a technology-based talent acquisition product.

Though it can seem that way given the long list of attributes they should have, the selection of an implementation project leader is not the quest for a superhero. An IPL need not be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, but they should possess a fulsome repertoire of the character traits of a leader and the purpose-driven skills of a project manager and be the kind of person the organization

can count on to bring those attributes to work with them every single day. Peter Drucker once said, "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. A successful IPL will be able and determined to do both.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 What issues or concerns can stand in the way of an organization's appointing a capable IPL and why are they based on a faulty assumption?
- 02 What is the mission of an implementation project and how does it shape the requirements and responsibilities of an IPL?
- 03 What is the defining and differentiating attribute of an IPL and how is it manifested in their work with the implementation team?
- 04 What are some of the leadership attributes an IPL should possess and why are they important to an implementation project's success?
- 05 What are some of the management attributes an IPL should possess and why are they important to an implementation project's success?

Section I Module 3

Implementation Project Methodology

The knowledge market StackExchange defines a methodology as "a set of principles, tools and practices which can be used to guide processes to achieve a particular goal."¹¹ When used for the implementation of a technology-based product, a methodology provides an orderly, stepwise process for identifying and then constructively organizing, executing and managing the tasks that must be performed by the product developer and the acquiring organization. In effect, it ensures that everything that must be done gets done effectively and efficiently and that anything that need not be done isn't.

For the implementation of a technology-based talent acquisition product, however, that can be a challenge. Most organizations do not have their own implementation-specific methodology, so they are forced to "make it up as they go" or turn to the solution provider that developed the product they've acquired. The former approach inevitably creates an implementation fraught with missteps and mistakes, so more often than not, organizations default to the methodology of their solution provider. It's a rational decision, but one that can lead to problems within the organization and even to a diminished return on the organization's investment in the product.



Every solution provider will have a plan in place for the installation of its product with a customer's recruiting team. It will almost always be a robust methodology developed and refreshed with the lessons learned from prior installations. The tasks and timeline, communications and

coordination points it lays out are all important to the successful introduction of the product. They do not, however ensure an effective implementation within the organization. They are necessary, but not sufficient for the organization's success.

That insufficiency is not a shortcoming of the solution provider's methodology, but rather an acknowledgement of what a methodology for an organization's implementation of a product must be designed to do: its purpose is to guide the implementation project team in the accomplishment of the team's mission. And as stated in Module 2, the mission of a technology-based talent acquisition product implementation project is not the arrival and activation of the technology, but the achievement of the organization's goal for the product – the specific recruiting improvement being sought, as measured by KPIs.

Moreover, every organization's internal considerations – its culture, recruiter capabilities, tech stack status, budget and other resources, to name just a few – are unique to it. The solution provider's methodology, in contrast, is normally designed as a universal plan that can be used to introduce its unique product into all organizations in the same way. Some adjustments are typically made, but the basic structure and content of the plan are fixed. In other words, while the solution provider's approach offers important insights and information for the successful implementation of its product, only the acquiring organization has the internal perspective and understanding to introduce the product in the organization, and only a methodology with that focus can provide the right set of principles, tools and practices to produce the organization's success.



KEY POINT

When introducing a technology-based talent acquisition product, the implementation project team must use a methodology that supports the accomplishment of its mission and that can be tailored to an organization's unique internal considerations.

Such an organization-centric methodology must:

01

Incorporate and be continuously refreshed with the principles, tools and practices developed and/or refined in other implementation projects for technology-based talent acquisition products, both internally as memorialized during prior projects and externally as published or presented by such credible sources as TAtch, SHRM and business publications, as well as by solution providers themselves.

02

Respond to and provide an effective strategy for accomplishing the operational (e.g., improved candidate experience), financial (e.g., lower cost-per-hire) and/or customer service (e.g., greater hiring manager satisfaction) goals established for the technology-based talent acquisition product in the business case which justified its acquisition.

For example, if a conversational artificial intelligence (AI) solution is acquired in order to provide candidates with more information about an employer earlier in the recruiting process (and thus improve their experience), the implementation should not be considered complete with the installation of the solution, but rather only after candidate surveys confirm that they are receiving more information that is helpful to them and thus view the employer's "customer service" more favorably than before.

03

Ensure explicit buy-in from the decision-maker(s) who authorized the product's acquisition.

For example, if it was the Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO) who authorized the acquisition of a programmatic ad buying solution – if he/she was the individual who reviewed and approved the business case for the product and the selection of the vendor – then the CHRO should also review and formally approve the use of the methodology for its installation. If, for some reason, the CHRO approved the plan and another executive approved the vendor's selection (e.g., IT, Finance), then both executives should sign off on the methodology.

04

Address the needs, responsibilities and potential concerns of all of the individuals in and units of the organization that will be involved with and/or affected by the installation of the new product. Typically, these include:

- a. Users (e.g. recruiters, recruitment managers)
- b. Coworkers (e.g., staff from IT, hiring managers)
- c. Resource providers (e.g., Finance, HR)

- d. Managers (e.g., the direct supervisor of the IPL, CHRO)
- e. Internal supporters (e.g., colleagues with prior implementation experience, champions)
- f. External supporters (e.g., the solution provider's implementation staff, consultants as necessary).

05

Create a blueprint for effective communication and interaction among all of those listed in paragraph 4 above and for their direction and/or coordination as appropriate by a designated Implementation Project Leader (IPL). This blueprint should ensure the project has the attention and priority of the organization's leadership as well as the resources and other support, budget and time commitment necessary to achieve a successful outcome.

The TAtech AttainTech® Methodology

The TAtech AttainTech® Methodology meets all of the above requirements and provides a logical, detailed, stepwise progression of activities which an employer should accomplish in order to implement a technology-based talent acquisition product effectively. These activities span a total of ten steps that begin immediately following an organization's acquisition of a product and conclude with its rollout and the organization's assessment of the product's impact on recruiters' performance.

The steps are summarized below:



APPOINT THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT LEADER

This step involves a review of prospective internal candidates and the selection of the Implementation Project Leader (IPL) by the Oversight Authority (OA), typically either the executive who authorized the product's acquisition or the manager of the recruiting team where the product will be used.



ASSEMBLE THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT TEAM

This step involves the creation of a Stakeholders Working Group (SWG), composed of individuals representing users, hiring managers, HR, IT and Finance. In addition, ex officio members of the group should include the Oversight Authority, the solution provider's point of contact and the internal champion for the project should there be one.



CONFIRM THE ORGANIZATION'S GOALS FOR THE PRODUCT

This step involves the IPL and SWG's review of the business case that justified the product's acquisition to identify the specific goal or goals the organization seeks to achieve, the metrics that will be used to measure goal achievement and the timeline for the final rollout of the product.



DETERMINE REQUIRED OR POSSIBLE INTERNAL CHANGES

This step involves identifying and evaluating the changes within the recruiting team and elsewhere in the organization that will potentially be necessary for implementation to succeed, including but not limited to cultural issues, tech stack adjustments, revisions to standard operating procedures and/or policies, and the altered roles and responsibilities of recruiters and hiring managers as well as the new skills and competencies required for their job performance.



CONFIRM THE SOLUTION PROVIDER'S READINESS TO IMPLEMENT

This step involves a review of the solution provider's plans for implementation, including the identification of its topic or action-specific points of contact (for example, who will the organization interact with for the execution of a customization task), confirmation of its contractual requirements and its assignment of resources to meet them as well as its expectations of the Implementation Project Leader and team.



**STEP
06**

DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION & MILESTONES (POA&M)

This step involves the description and assignment of specific tasks and deadlines to members of the SWG, other units in the organization and the solution provider to ensure the project is ready to implement Step 7, the Pilot Test of the new product, in accordance with the timeline established in Step 3.



**STEP
07**

CONDUCT A PILOT TEST OF THE PRODUCT

This step involves the design of and preparation for a pilot test of the product, the approval of that plan by the OA as necessary, the execution of the test by a select group of users as they conduct their normal work requirements, and the collection of contemporaneous data on the performance of both the product and users.



**STEP
08**

REVIEW THE PILOT TEST & MAKE ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

This step involves an assessment of the pilot test, in terms of both the experience of the participants and the results achieved (i.e. the recruiting outcomes as measured by KPIs) compared to the goal(s) established for the product as well as the development and installation of training, procedural, product or other changes, as required, to remediate any shortcomings that are identified.



**STEP
09**

IMPLEMENT THE PRODUCT ROLLOUT

This step involves obtaining OA approval for and executing the full and final implementation of the product within the recruiting team, including a review with users of the rationale for the product, an orientation on how it works by pilot test participants, and preparatory on-product training in conjunction with the explanation and introduction of any required procedural changes.

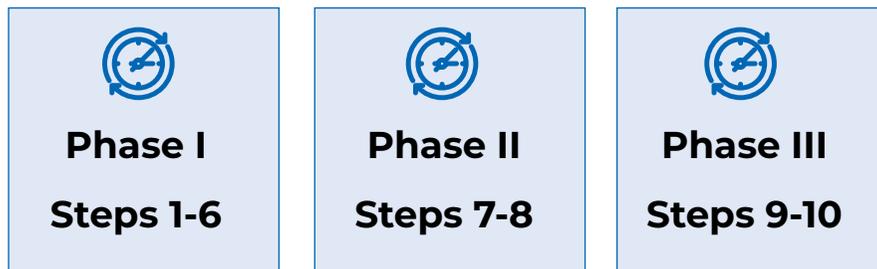


**STEP
10**

CONDUCT PERFORMANCE MONITORING & MAKE ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

This step involves an assessment of the achieved ROI for product six months after the Rollout is completed and the determination of any product upgrades or rework, procedural revisions or other changes required to optimize the value of the product to the organization.

Each step in the methodology builds on the previous steps and adds to the preparations for the next steps. It provides an orderly and continuous process that guides the IPL and project team to a successful outcome. However, there are two logical break points in the progression that provide the opportunity for the OA, IPL and SWG to review what's been accomplished and ensure the project is ready to move on to the next steps. Those break points effectively divide the methodology's ten steps into three phases.



Throughout each phase, the IPL should maintain a detailed, written record of the tasks assigned and completed as well as any issues encountered or concerns raised and how they were addressed. Then, at the conclusion of the phase, this record should be reviewed with the Oversight Authority and a Go – No Go decision made. A Go decision would allow the implementation project to move on to the next phase. A No Go decision would require the IPL and the SWG to develop and execute a supplementary POA&M to address the causes of the hold. These might include but are not limited to adjustments to the contract with the solution provider, additional work to improve tech stack integration and/or the recruiter UI, and a leadership review of unexpected developments or unintended repercussions that occurred within the organization or among recruitment candidates.

A Team Endeavor

The TAtech AttainTech® Methodology is, of course, only a tool, and that tool is only as effective as the individuals who use it. Said another way, just as a state-of-the-art product – no matter how sophisticated its technology – is only as good as its users, an implementation methodology will only be successful if it is employed by a committed and capable implementation team, led by a knowledgeable and savvy Implementation Project Leader. In fact, it's best to visualize the implementation of a technology-based talent acquisition product as a team endeavor. As Steve Jobs described it:

“Technology is nothing. What’s important is that you have faith in people, that they’re basically good and smart, and if you give them tools, they’ll do wonderful things with them.”¹²

The key to success, therefore, is a comprehensive methodology designed to achieve the employer’s goals as specified in the business case for the product by assembling a team of dedicated and competent professionals who are supported by their coworkers and leaders and by the solution provider whose product they are to install. That’s why TAtech calls its tool the AttainTech® Methodology – it enables and empowers HR and Talent Acquisition leaders and professionals to attain the return on investment their employer deserves from technology.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 Why is it important for an organization that is implementing a technology-based talent acquisition product to use a methodology for implementation that has an internal focus and the flexibility to accommodate modifications and refinements?
- 02 What must an organization's methodology for implementing a technology-based talent acquisition product enable its users to do?
- 03 What are the ten steps of the TAtech AttainTech® Methodology and how does each step prepare for the completion of the next during an implementation project?
- 04 What are the three phases of applying the TAtech AttainTech® Methodology and what are the primary activities accomplished in each phase?
- 05 Why is it appropriate to view the use of the TAtech AttainTech® Methodology as a team endeavor?

SECTION II:

EXECUTING INTERNAL IMPLEMENTATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED TALENT ACQUISITION PRODUCTS

The purpose of an internal implementation of technology-based talent acquisition products is to ensure that recruiters can effectively use the products to help meet the organization's business goals. These products include:

- » Applicant tracking systems
- » Candidate assessment systems
- » Candidate communications systems
- » Candidate data collection and analysis systems
- » Candidate intelligence systems
- » Candidate Interviewing systems
- » Candidate relationship management systems
- » Chatbots / Conversational AI products
- » Employee referral systems
- » Internal mobility systems
- » Offer management systems
- » Programmatic recruitment platforms
- » Recruitment marketing platforms
- » Sourcing automation platforms
- » Talent acquisition suites

01 BEGINNING OF PHASE I

Section II **Module 4**

Selecting For Internal Implementations



APPOINT THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT LEADER

In addition to possessing the right character traits (please see Module 2), the IPL should also be drawn from the right internal organization. Optimally, they should represent the unit or function that “owns” the product, as the individuals in that unit have the greatest incentive to see it implemented effectively. In most organizations, that will be the recruiting department or team as it will derive the benefit – the enhanced recruiting capabilities anticipated from the product. In addition, that group will be responsible for the product’s application to talent acquisition and, depending on the caliber of that application – the key performance indicators that are actually attained – determine the degree to which the goals established for the product are achieved.

There are, of course, other organizations that could conceivably be tapped to provide an individual to serve as the IPL. The most likely are the IT and Finance Departments, where employees will often have more technical and financial management expertise than those on the Talent Acquisition team. That advantage, however, will not replace or compensate for the IT and Finance Department’s lack of on-the-job involvement with or even responsibility for the product’s use. Only that kind and level of engagement with the product provides the necessary perspective and incentive to ensure an organization achieves the ROI it expects and deserves from the product.

Of course, some employers, especially small and mid-sized businesses, will not have a separate and distinct recruiting team or function, so it is conceivable that the IPL will have to be drawn from somewhere else in the organization. Even in that situation, however, the guiding principle should be that the IPL must be someone who either will personally use the product or who works in a unit of the organization that will. What remains true, regardless of the size of the organization, is that only those individuals have the requisite vested interest to ensure the optimal implementation of a product, and that outcome, of course, is the only way to deliver an appropriate return on the organization’s investment.



KEY POINT

The Implementation Project Leader should be someone who either will personally use the technology-based talent acquisition product or who works in a unit of the organization that will.

Identifying an appropriate person to serve as the IPL is not the same, however, as installing them in that position. As noted earlier, an IPL should not be coerced into the assignment, but rather should be convinced of its value to them and to the organization and therefore willingly take it on. To that end, the organization should discuss and achieve agreement on two key issues with a prospective IPL: what they will do in the role and how they will be recognized and rewarded for their work.

Scope of the Assignment

Since the Implementation Project Leader will, in almost every instance, be selected from within the recruiting team and therefore have work responsibilities with and for that group, it is important for the organization's Oversight Authority (OA) – the manager or executive to whom the IPL will report – determine how the assignment will be structured. A mistake that occurs all too frequently with implementation projects is layering the assignment as Project Leader on top of all of their other day-to-day recruiting requirements and responsibilities.

That doubling up of work inevitably presents a prospective IPL with a Hobbesian choice:

- » they can focus their energies on doing their recruiting job and skimp on the time and attention they devote to their leadership of the implementation project, thereby increasing the probability it will not meet the organization's goals for the product;

or

- » they can devote the necessary time and effort to lead the implementation project effectively and skimp on their "day job," thereby ensuring they will miss their recruiting goals and potentially undermine the organization's business plans.

The best course, therefore, is to accurately determine the scope of the implementation project and size the IPL job accordingly. While this can be done prior to the selection of an IPL, the most effective course is for the Oversight Authority to do it in collaboration with the individual who is being offered the job or considered for it. If that tact is taken, the individual should be informed up-front that they have the right to decline the job, without prejudice, if they and the Oversight Authority cannot agree on how big or small the job actually is.

The metrics for this analysis include the acquisition cost and technical complexity of the product, the potential for operational or

staffing changes driven by its implementation, and how important its anticipated KPIs are to the organization's accomplishment of its business plans. The ultimate purpose of the analysis is to determine whether the IPL role will be a full- or a part-time assignment. Will it be the only job they have until the project is successfully completed or will it be a job they do in addition to their normal work?

For example, if an organization must rapidly hire a large number of seasonal workers to keep up with demand during the Holidays and meeting that requirement is critical to protecting its competitive position in the market, the implementation of a newly acquired candidate relationship management system that is specifically designed to support high volume recruiting might well be sufficient to justify sizing the IPL assignment as a full-time role.

Whether the decision is to size the job as a full-or part-time assignment, however, it should trigger two additional actions:

- » First, the OA should determine how the IPL's assignment will be accommodated by the recruiting team. To that end, they should review individual workloads and designate one or more of the IPL's coworkers to take on whatever recruiting work the IPL will no longer be able to perform.

In the latter case, assigning the extra workload to others on the recruiting team must only be undertaken if doing so will not undercut their own performance and/or their morale. And, in the former case, the funds for contracting out the work should optimally be included in the budget approved for the implementation project and not taken out of the recruiting team's budget.

- » Second, the OA should coordinate with HR on the appropriate appraisal process and reward structure for the IPL role. Decisions should be reached on the criteria that will be used to evaluate the IPL's job performance and to determine the compensation adjustment or other recognition they are eligible to receive.

This information should be memorialized in writing and provided to the prospective IPL prior to their making a final decision on whether or not to accept the position. **In effect, the process of recruiting an IPL should be similar to the way a prospective employee is offered a job with the organization.**

Recognition and Reward

The selection of the IPL should be formally announced within the organization, using the medium with which it makes its most important announcements (e.g., written, verbal, a combination of the two). The purpose of this announcement is several-fold:

- » To signal to the recruiting team that the organization is committed to advancing its capabilities with the best resources available;
- » To establish the authority of the IPL and defuse any potential resistance to the project within the recruiting team and/or from other stakeholders, including most especially Hiring Managers, IT and Finance; and
- » To reenforce the stature of the IPL role with others in the organization so that they will accept the role if offered it in the future.

That recognition, however, should not be a one-off exercise. To be most effective, it should feature both the IPL and the implementation team they assemble and continue throughout the duration of the project. The organization should highlight their work in achieving key project milestones such as the graduation of the first recruiter from the product's training program, the conclusion of the pilot test and, most importantly, the successful rollout of the product in the recruiting team and the realization of the organization's target KPIs.

In addition, the IPL should be incented to perform at their peak during the project and rewarded for doing so. A study reported in *Harvard Business Review* found that while high performers are intrinsically motivated to do well, they measure their success through their compensation. As the study's authors noted, "The most important contributor to job satisfaction for all employees was base pay, followed by bonus pay. High performers cared significantly more about both of these factors than average or low performers."¹³ In effect, selecting the right individual to serve as IPL and publicly recognizing their assignment isn't enough to ensure project success. To achieve that end, they should also be rewarded with a performance appraisal and compensation adjustment commensurate with the scope of the project and size of the role and that is in keeping with the organization's established practices.



KEY POINT

To ensure an IPL performs at their peak, they should be rewarded with a performance appraisal and compensation adjustment commensurate with the scope of the project and size of the role and that is in keeping with the organization's established practices.

To conduct that review, the Oversight Authority should establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the IPL's role and review them with the individual selected for the position to ensure they are understood and accepted. These metrics could include the project's completion on time and within budget as well as the achievement of the target KPIs established for the product.

For example, if an IPL successfully oversees the implementation of a new recruitment marketing platform that the organization's leadership considers a critically important factor in the opening of a new distribution hub for its commercial products, the IPL might receive a raise in pay, a promotion or both. Providing such an award will not only incent the IPL to continue their superior performance in whatever role they are assigned, it will also motivate others on the recruiting team to seek out and excel at such roles in their work for the organization.

Section II **Module 4**



STEP 02

ASSEMBLE THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT TEAM

Although most HR and Talent Acquisition professionals are aware of the importance of stakeholders, it's not always clear what drives that importance. In fact, no two stakeholders have the same stake in an implementation project. The stake or interest of a product's future users, for example, is very different from the stake of their customers or the hiring managers for whom they recruit. From the IPL's perspective, however, all stakeholders have a common influence in the project's outcome. They can help or hinder its achievement of success. In effect, their stake can be a bet on or a bet against a new technology-based talent acquisition product.

As one business source put it, they make a judgment on whether they have "something to gain or lose" from the project.¹⁴ That determination often turns on the information they are provided about the new product and their ability to have their views and concerns considered in its implementation. Therefore, the first and most important act of an Implementation Project Leader is to establish a Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) composed of the right functions within the organization represented by the right individuals from those functions.

With regard to functions, the members of the group should include individuals representing:

- » The recruiting team (users),
- » The customer (hiring managers),
- » HR,

- » IT, and
- » Finance (or the unit that will be responsible for paying the solution provider's invoices).

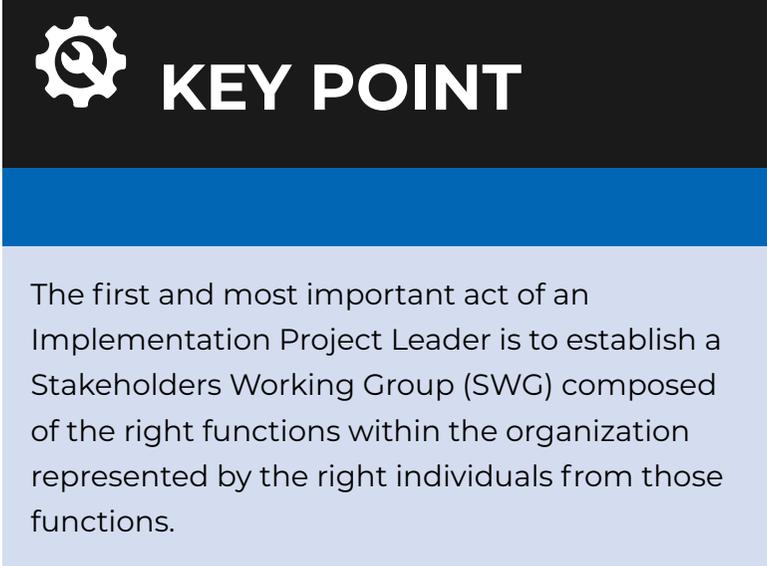
In addition, individuals representing two other functions should be considered for membership on the SWG. The areas these two functions oversee should have been addressed in the evaluation and selection of the solution provider, so the role of their representatives during implementation is to ensure that the solution provider meets any commitments it made during the selection process. If, on the other hand, these areas were not addressed during that process, it's critical that these individuals fully investigate the existence of or potential for any shortcomings in their respective areas and appropriately resolve them during implementation.

These individuals are:

- » The General Counsel or a representative of the outside law firm that supports the organization. Their role is to monitor the contract performance of the solution provider and to implement any contract adjustments that may be subsequently identified as important to product implementation.
- » The organization's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Officer, Manager or Director or, if there is no such position, a senior member of the HR team. Their role is to ensure that the installation and use of the product does not create bias in the sourcing, consideration and selection of new employees. In addition, if the organization is a Federal contractor, an Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action practitioner should be also included, unless that person and the DE&I representative are one and the same.

Finally, ex officio members of the group should include the project's Oversight Authority, the solution provider's point of contact (POC) and the internal champion for the project should there be one. The Oversight Authority and the internal champion should participate

in the group as they see fit, while the solution provider's POC should do so when invited.



KEY POINT

The first and most important act of an Implementation Project Leader is to establish a Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) composed of the right functions within the organization represented by the right individuals from those functions.

While it's essential to have the right individuals from the right functions involved with the Stakeholders Working Group, securing their participation can be a challenge. In most organizations, the IPL will not have the authority to select specific individuals for assignment to the group. Indeed, they may encounter resistance from some supervisors who do not want high performers in their unit distracted by an "outside" assignment or removed from their regular work responsibilities. That situation may also occur with individuals on the recruiting team and in HR as their supervisors often lack the staff assets to replace them, even on a temporary basis. In other cases, particularly for individuals working in IT and Finance, the IPL simply will not know who has the necessary skills and knowledge and the interest to make a meaningful contribution to the project's success. Ultimately, therefore, the establishment of a strong and engaged SWG – which is itself a critical factor in ensuring the implementation project's success – will require that the IPL effectively negotiate with

the requisite managers to secure the participation of those individuals who are most likely to be high performers and help achieve the project's goals.

The two most persuasive points that can be used in these negotiations are:

The fiduciary responsibility of optimizing the organization's return on investment from an effective implementation. No unit or manager wants to be seen as failing to contribute to or, worse, actually working against the organization's current or future financial wellbeing.

The enhanced recruiting support that will be available to the organization's operating units as a result of implementation success. No unit or manager can afford to ignore the importance (and difficulty) of acquiring top talent, whether it's for their current or future work requirements.

True organizational support for a new technology-based talent acquisition product does not end with the approval of the business case for its acquisition or the signing of a contract with a solution provider. Nor does it end with the designation of an Oversight Authority and their appointment of a qualified and committed Implementation Project Leader. What's an equally essential element of the support necessary for such a project's success is the assembling of a team with "the right stuff" – a group of subject matter experts who have the necessary competence and commitment to contribute and who are drawn from appropriate units throughout the

organization. To play their part effectively, however, they will need to know and buy-in to exactly what they will be expected to do and to the exact outcomes they will be responsible for delivering.



KEY POINT

To play their role effectively, all members of the SWG must know and buy-in to exactly what they will be expected to do and to the exact outcomes they will be responsible for delivering.

Roles & Responsibilities

While those selected to serve on the SWG will bring considerable subject matter expertise to the group, most will not have previously worked on the implementation of a technology-based talent acquisition product. For that reason, the first meeting of the SWG should be devoted to educating its members on their responsibilities and on the IPL's expectations of them during the project. While these will vary from project-to-project and organization-to-organization, there are three baseline duties which all group members should be expected to perform:



CONTRIBUTING

They should proactively share their subject matter expertise wherever it can help ensure the product's successful implementation.

For example, the representative from IT will have the technical knowledge to oversee integration of the product into the recruiting team's tech stack. They will be able to communicate with the solution provider's developers and engineers to appropriately integrate the product's application program interfaces (APIs) and thereby ensure it interoperates effectively and efficiently with the other products in the tech stack.



COORDINATING

They should use the group's meetings and other interactions to transmit information, share ideas and resolve any issues or concerns that may arise.

For example, the hiring manager's representative may see a potential problem with the effective use of the product's output by hiring managers unless they receive additional training which is not included in the solution provider's contract. They should raise the problem with the SWG and work with the group to explore options, select the best solution for the problem, and monitor the activation of that solution prior to the product's launch.



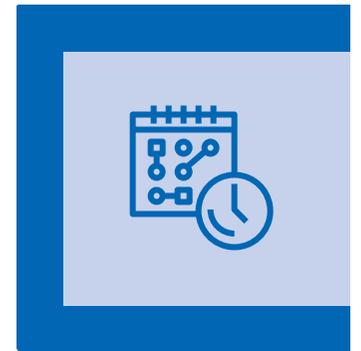
EVANGELIZING

They should build interest in and support for both the product and the implementation project across the organization, but especially among their coworkers in the units or departments they represent.

For example, the individual representing the recruiting team should use the information they receive from their interactions with the solution provider and the members of the SWG to update their colleagues on the product's capabilities and timeline for implementation and take any feedback they receive to the group so that their views and concerns are heard and considered.

To ensure the SWG members gain a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities, this introductory meeting should include both a presentation by the IPL that details what each will be expected to do and a full and frank discussion by the group of the tasks those duties entail, any problems or issues that could occur to derail them, and why their effective accomplishment is central to the project's success.

In some cases, it's effective to begin this dialogue at a first meeting and then call a break so the group's members have some time to consider what they've heard. However, the group should be reconvened for a second meeting no more than 2-3 days after the first and continue their discussion of what each must do in order to achieve the project's success. The ultimate goal of this interaction is both to educate the group's members – individually and collectively – so they are clear about what's expected of them and to build their buy-in for the project's success by involving each and all of them in establishing a common vision for the group's work.



Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 What criteria should an organization use in selecting an Implementation Project Leader and which one criterion is the most important?
- 02 What process should be used to size the IPL's role and what actions are triggered by that determination?
- 03 Why are stakeholders important to the success of an implementation project and which stakeholders should be included in the Stakeholders Working Group?
- 04 What are the baseline responsibilities of those individuals selected to serve on the Stakeholder's Working Group and why are they so important?
- 05 What's the ultimate purpose of the first one-to-two meetings of the Stakeholders Working Group?

Section II Module 5

Preparing For Internal Implementations



STEP 03

CONFIRM THE ORGANIZATION'S GOALS FOR THE PRODUCT

As soon as the Stakeholders Working Group is established and its roles and responsibilities are confirmed, the IPL and the group should review the business case that was used to justify the acquisition of the technology-based talent acquisition product and identify the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will determine the organization's expected return on its investment. While these are the criteria that will be used to evaluate the organization's achieved benefit from the product, they will also, rightly or wrongly, have a significant impact on the perceived success of the implementation project. Even though there are important variables beyond the project team's control (e.g., the level of senior leadership support, the commitment of the solution provider), the goals articulated in the business case for the technology's acquisition will, in almost every instance, be the same measures of merit for the implementation team. Therefore, it's critical that the team have a clear understanding of both the metrics and the data and methods that will be used to calculate them.

Optimally, these success factors will be metrics or quantified measures that remove any subjective judgment from the assessment of the product's value once implemented. Unfortunately, however, there are only a few such parameters currently in general use. Indeed, Jac Fitz-enz, in his trailblazing book *How to Measure Human Resources Management*, lists just thirty metrics that have widespread acceptance in the entire HR field and just four in the recruiting area:

Hires as a percentage of total employees, Cost of hire, Time to fill jobs and Time to start jobs, all calculated for both exempt and nonexempt employees.¹⁵ Of those, Time-to-Fill (TTF) and Cost-per-Hire (CPH) are currently the most frequently used as new product goals.

Thanks to the work of Fitz-enz and others, the formulas for calculating these two metrics are straight forward and well established. Their use in determining the product's achieved benefit and the project's level of success, on the other hand, is not. The reason for this inconsistency is found in the nature of the organization's goal for the product. It is not the metric's value at any point in time, but the change in the metric's value over time.

In almost every case, what the organization typically seeks is a decrease in one and sometimes even both of those metrics. That objective creates two concerns for the IPL and SWG.

First, they must have a clear definition of the baseline against which they will be evaluated – they must know the starting value of the metric – and second, they must ensure that the metric's calculation after implementation is done in exactly the same way as the calculation was done for the metric at the time the product's acquisition was approved. In other words, the IPL and SWG must be able to confirm the data, data source and formula used to calculate the original figure for the business case – the current or baseline Time-to-Fill and/or Cost-per-Hire – so they can ensure the same data, data source and formula are used for the calculation of the metric(s) once the product is being used by recruiters.

There are, of course, instances where the assessment of an organization's ROI from a new technology-based talent acquisition product is based on less determinative criteria. For example, the business case might specify that the goal of the product's acquisition is an improvement in "new hire quality" or in "the candidate experience." While both can be determined by a survey – the former of hiring managers, the latter of job seekers or applicants – doing so inevitably opens the calculus to both the impact of factors beyond

the control of the implementation project team (e.g., the caliber of first line supervisors in the organization, company policies regarding how many times a candidate must be interviewed) and the subjective judgments of the survey populations. That's not to say that such measures shouldn't be used, but rather that the IPL should point out the potential impact of such factors to the Oversight Authority before the metrics are applied to evaluate the product and/or the project's performance.



KEY POINT

Even though there are important variables beyond the implementation project team's control, the goals articulated in the business case for the technology's acquisition will, in almost every instance, be the same measures of merit for the implementation team.

Once the success metrics are determined, the IPL and SWG should review the contract the organization signed with the solution provider to assess its adequacy for meeting those goals. At the discretion of the IPL, the organization's legal counsel and/or the Oversight Authority can also be included in this analysis. The review should:

- » Look for a clear specification of what the solution provider must deliver (e.g., software, APIs, passwords, data) by when and according to what standards that are to be evaluated by whom.
- » Assess what implementation support the solution provider is obligated to deliver under the contract (e.g., installation and

debugging of software, recruiter training, tech stack integration, issues and problems resolution).

- » Ascertain if there are financial penalties for the solution provider's failure to meet any of its contractual obligations, and if so, what constitutes a failure and who decides if one has occurred.
- » Determine if there are any gaps between the business plan's objectives and the contract's specifications. If gaps exist, assess their importance and review alternative courses of action.

For example, the group might decide to ignore a gap because it's judged to be unlikely to affect the organization's achievement of its desired ROI. On the other hand, the group might decide that the gap is so important, the organization should renegotiate its contract with the solution provider. The results of this gap analysis should then be briefed to the Oversight Authority and the organization's legal counsel.

What Happens If There Is No Business Case or KPIs?

Not every organization prepares a written business case to justify the acquisition of a new technology-based talent acquisition product. In small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) and even occasionally in larger enterprises, there isn't the time or an interest in preparing such a document, so there will be no explicit enumeration of the goals for the acquisition. Without those KPIs, however, the IPL will have no way of knowing what's expected of them or how their work will be evaluated. To protect themselves, therefore, and no less important to deliver the ROI the organization deserves from the product, the IPL should embark on a "listening tour" of the organization to establish "proxy metrics."

A listening tour is simply a series of scheduled interviews with appropriate individuals – typically the leaders – from those functions in the organization that have an interest in the product's acquisition.

In most cases, they will be the same functions as those that serve on a Stakeholders Working Group for a larger organization:

- » The recruiting team (users),
- » The customer (hiring managers),
- » HR,
- » IT, and
- » Finance (or the unit that will be responsible for paying the solution provider's invoices).
- » Compliance
- » General Counsel / Legal (as necessary).

The purpose of the listening tour is two-fold:

To introduce the product implementation initiative to each function and solicit a representative from them to serve on the SWG. Of course, in the case of small and at least some mid-sized businesses, one individual may represent two or more functions (e.g., HR and the recruiting team) so the group will often have a smaller membership than that empaneled by larger enterprises.

To transform imprecise or implied expectations for the product and even unarticulated assumptions about its purpose into one or more proxy metrics that can be calculated. Once identified, these metrics should then be reviewed with functional leaders to achieve their buy-in and support for using them in the evaluation of the product once it's implemented.

Following the listening tour, the IPL should convene a meeting of the newly constituted SWG and review and discuss the proxy metrics that were determined during the tour. The discussion should be used to clear up any confusion about or disagreement with the metrics. Once a consensus is achieved, the IPL should memorialize the metrics in a document that is distributed to each representative on the SWG for review with the leader of their function.



KEY POINT

To protect themselves and no less important to deliver the ROI the organization deserves from the product, the IPL of an implementation project for any acquisition without a business case should embark on a “listening tour” of the organization to establish “proxy metrics” that will be used to determine the product’s value and the project’s success.

Once that internal coordination has been completed, the IPL and SWG should use the process outlined above to review the contract the organization signed with the solution provider to assess its adequacy for meeting the proxy goal(s). Discrepancies and potential problems should be noted and addressed in Step 5, when the project’s success metrics are discussed with the solution provider.

Section II Module 5



STEP 04

DETERMINE REQUIRED OR POSSIBLE INTERNAL CHANGES

As noted in Module 1, the introduction of a technology-based talent acquisition product is essentially an exercise in change management. Most humans are hardwired to be wary of and even uncomfortable with a disruption to their normal way of doing things. The author Arnold Bennett acknowledged as much when he wrote that, “Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.”¹⁶ That disquieting reality has the potential to derail an implementation project, so the IPL and SWG must develop a clear understanding of the potential scope of change a new product could introduce in their organization.

One of the best ways to gain this insight is through the use of a table top “war game.” In this exercise, the IPL and SWG simulate various recruiting scenarios once the technology-based product has been implemented. The analysis should take all of the stakeholders through all of the tasks involved in the recruiting team’s operations using the new product in its intended role. It should assess how policies, procedures, unit-to-unit interactions (e.g., recruiter’s work with hiring managers) and other factors could change during “normal” recruiting and during any revision to its pace or scope that could be caused by a new direction that might be undertaken by the organization.

For example, if the organization is considering a move into a new geographic market and that strategy will require it to open another production facility in that area in the coming year, the IPL and SWG should use the war game to simulate how that initiative is likely to

affect the pace and scope of recruiting operations and then, what impact the new product is likely to have in that new environment. They'll want to evaluate how using the new product might introduce operational or other changes as the recruiting team works to staff the facility prior to its opening and then later as its operations continue.



KEY POINT

A table top war game is one of the best ways to develop a clear understanding of the potential scope of change a new technology-based talent acquisition product could introduce in an organization.

No one's crystal ball is perfect, of course, but war game analyses can reveal the potential and/or the need for change, and offer an opportunity to think through how best to manage it. They can help both to avoid surprises and the disruption that surprises can cause and to transform, wherever possible, any changes introduced by a new product into positive factors in the work of the recruiting team.

An effective table top war game will enable the IPL and SWG to:

- » Identify and effectively prepare for the introduction of any organizational changes caused by the acquisition of a new product. Unexpected changes are the greatest driver of cost overruns and delays in implementation. They can also cause stress among recruiters and other stakeholders and even undercut their acceptance of the product and thus the ROI the organization achieves from acquiring it.

- » Communicate fully with recruiters and other stakeholders about what will be different when a new product comes online. Keeping them informed about those changes and how the changes will impact them will help to diminish their anxiety and potential resistance. No less important, explaining why changes are necessary and how they will help recruiters in their work – the WIIFT factor or “what’s in it for them” – can help to transform their negative perspective about change into support for its outcome.

To provide a complete assessment, each tabletop exercise should evaluate the following:

What technical changes must be instituted?

For example:

- » Data protocols: What data must the product receive from other systems in the organization in order for it to operate as intended?
- » Configurations: What APIs must be connected to ensure the product can interoperate with other products already in the organization's tech stack?

What individual changes must be instituted?

For example:

- » Competencies. What new skills and/or knowledge must recruiters acquire to use the product effectively?
- » Standard Operating Procedures: What changes in process or practices must recruiters make to integrate the product into their daily work?

What organizational changes must be instituted?

For example:

- » Culture. What changes will be required in the culture of the recruiting team (and potentially in other units of the organization) in order for the product to be effectively implemented and used?
- » Structural. What changes will be required in the composition or organization of the recruiting team in order for it to make best use of the new product?

While the implementation project team should identify and determine the scope of these changes, it will not normally direct their execution. In most organizations, that will be the role of the Oversight Authority in conjunction with other functional leaders in the organization. The IPL, therefore, should keep the Oversight Authority informed as changes are uncovered during the simulations so the OA can approve their introduction in the recruiting team and, if necessary, coordinate with and achieve buy-in from other units in the organization that will also be affected (e.g., hiring managers).

In addition, the Oversight Authority, together with the Implementation Project Leader and Stakeholders Working Group, should give careful consideration to the pace and timing of the actual introduction of the changes. In some instances, it will be best to introduce all of the changes at once and thereby get any disruption that occurs over as soon as possible. In other instances, it might be prudent to introduce the changes more slowly and over time, so the affected individuals and units can adjust to the new way of doing things.



KEY POINT

The Oversight Authority, together with the Implementation Project Leader and Stakeholders Working Group, should give careful consideration to the pace and timing of the introduction of any changes required to implement a new technology-based product successfully.

Whatever the pace at which changes are introduced, however, they should be well underway prior to the arrival of the product on-site. Holding back on the introduction of change until after the product arrives, has two downsides:

First, it delays the product's rollout and, as a consequence, the organization's ability to achieve its return on the investment it made in the product and the contribution of that return to its business plans

And second, it positions the product and the resulting changes as a *fait accompli* by the organization done without input from recruiters, potentially provoking their resentment and even resistance and ultimately undermining their adoption of the product

Getting the organization, including its recruiters and those in other affected units, ready and willing to accept a new technology-based talent acquisition product is the regulating factor in its effective implementation and, by extension, the organization's realization of its return on investment. For that reason, the IPL should carefully monitor the status of all change introduction efforts and keep the Oversight Authority informed of any delays or issues that arise.

Section II **Module 5**



STEP 05

CONFIRM THE SOLUTION PROVIDER'S READINESS TO IMPLEMENT

As soon as Steps 1-4 have been completed, the IPL should reach out to the solution provider and schedule an implementation project kickoff meeting. While that may seem late in the process for such a meeting, scheduling it prior to the completion of those preparatory steps ensures the IPL will be unable to provide the necessary information and guidance to the solution provider for them to launch their implementation efforts. It may also require potentially significant revisions to whatever information and guidance the IPL does provide, as a result of what they learn during the completion of those steps after the meeting. In both cases, the organization's relationship with the solution provider gets off to a problematic start and the implementation itself is likely to be delayed.



KEY POINT

Conducting the implementation project kickoff meeting with the solution provider before all necessary internal preparations have been completed almost guarantees that the organization's relationship with the solution provider will get off to a problematic start and delay the implementation itself.

With those preparations complete, in contrast, the IPL and SWG have the necessary understanding of the mission and support of the organization to work as an effective partner with the solution provider. Such a partnership is both essential to the success of the implementation project and a challenge to establish. Not surprisingly, there are more than a few opinions about what constitutes the characteristics of a productive business partnership. Ultimately, however, it is the qualities or attributes each of the participating organizations bring to their interaction that matter most.

For example, BlackEnterprise.com surveyed its Young Entrepreneur Council to get the answer to the following question, “What is one thing you should look for in a potential partnership to ensure it will be mutually beneficial and effective?” The respondents didn’t identify one or two attributes, but instead highlighted a total of thirteen that they considered the essential qualities of a good business partner.¹⁷

Their list is, at one and the same time, both the description of an impossibly perfect partner and a checklist with which an organization can select the best available partner for its purposes. It includes:

- » Honesty & Commitment
- » Transparency
- » Complimentary Skill Sets
- » Strong Mutual Benefit
- » Communication
- » Equal Terms
- » Clear Goals
- » Skill Set Diversification
- » Shared Vision
- » Company Culture Alignment

- » Understanding Responsibilities
- » Minimum Committed Weekly Hours

The IPL, however, doesn’t have the freedom to select a business partner for the implementation project. That’s already been done through the product acquisition process. The selected solution provider is the organization’s de facto partner. Therefore, the goal of the project kickoff meeting is to discover which of the above attributes characterize the solution provider and to reenforce those that are present as the governing features of its relationship with the organization.

For example, the discussion of task assignments and timelines is an opportunity for the IPL to ascertain if the organization and solution provider have a shared vision for the project and to underscore its importance to a successful implementation. Similarly, addressing how problems are to be resolved will enable the IPL to assess the solution provider’s commitment to transparency and to reenforce its value to the organization. As much as possible, therefore, the solution provider should leave the meeting not only with a clear understanding of what it is to do, but also the qualities it will be expected to demonstrate in doing so.

In addition, the kickoff meeting is the organization’s opportunity to lay out its plan for completing the implementation project on time, within budget and in a way that achieves the organization’s desired ROI. To that end, the IPL should develop a comprehensive agenda for the discussion and forward it to the solution provider prior to the meeting. They should also select a lead discussant from the SWG for each agenda topic, and that person should then coordinate, as appropriate, with the other members of the SWG to ensure they fully understand any questions or concerns about and all of the variables regarding the topic and the best outcome for the organization from its discussion with the solution provider.



KEY POINT

The kickoff meeting of a product implementation project is the IPL's opportunity both to inform the solution provider of the organization's plan for completing the project on time, within budget and in a way that achieves the organization's desired ROI and to assess the kind of business partner the solution provider will be.

While the specific agenda for each implementation project will be different, every kick-off meeting should, as a minimum, address the following topics:



Topic 1: Leadership

The designation of a single point of contact or Implementation Support Leader (ISL) for the solution provider. Having to deal with multiple points of contact often causes confusion and delay, so the organization should push for the assignment of one individual who has the stature and authority to handle routine communications between the solution provider and the organization. They will almost certainly be assisted by their coworkers in dealing with specific questions or concerns, but they should be the person responsible for organizing and coordinating those interactions. Similarly, the

IPL should be the organization's sole point of contact for the solution provider, and they should then involve other SWG members, as appropriate, to address specific questions or issues.



Topic 2: KPIs & Contractual Issues

The IPL should use the kickoff meeting to articulate the specific goals the organization has for the product as defined by its target Key Performance Indicators and relate them to the specific provisions of the contract, including any requirement for product customization. The goal of this review is to identify any terms and conditions that need clarification and/or any disconnect between the KPIs and those terms and conditions that might require a codicil to or revision in the contract in order for the organization to achieve its target ROI. If Step 2 identified the potential need for such an adjustment, the organization's General Counsel or outside attorney should be present at the meeting. The resolution of any identified contractual issues should occur before implementation proceeds.



Topic 3: Action Plan

The kickoff meeting agenda should also include a review of the solution provider's preliminary plan of action and milestones for its product's implementation. What will it do by when, what outcome will be achieved by each action and how will that advance product implementation? The purpose of this review is two-fold: first, to give the IPL and SWG a sense of the capabilities

and resources the solution provider intends to devote to the implementation effort and second, to give the solution provider feedback from the IPL and SWG regarding their assessment of its plan and level of commitment. As with contractual issues, any concerns with the solution provider's approach should be aired, discussed and resolved before the implementation proceeds any further. In addition, the IPL should obtain a copy of the solution provider's plan in writing so it can be included in the organization's master Plan of Action & Milestones, which will be developed in Module 6 and serve as the governing document for the implementation project.



**Topic 4:
Dispute
Resolution**

The hope is always, of course, that there will be no disputes between the organization and the solution provider during the project, but it is important to set up a process for their resolution, just in case. The first step in such a process should always be for the individuals involved to work out the situation on their own. Should that not be successful, they should follow a stepwise process that begins with their raising the issue with the IPL and ISL for their action. Should they not be able to resolve the issue, it should be referred to the ultimate decision-making authority within the organization and the solution provider. For example, the IPL might refer the matter to the organization's Chief Human Resource Officer or to its General Counsel, while the



**Topic 4:
Dispute
Resolution
cont.**

solution provider's ISL might involve their Chief Operating Officer or corporate attorney. Should those individuals also be unable to reach an agreement, it's likely that the dispute resolution clause in the contract will be triggered and provide the mechanism for reaching a final decision.

With this final preparatory step completed, the IPL and SWG are in a position to begin the detailed planning necessary for a successful product implementation. All of the internal assignments have been made, all of the internal and external coordination has been done, the groundwork for change management has been laid and the contract has been reviewed and revised if necessary. Those preparations will enable and support the implementation project team in their development of a comprehensive Plan of Action & Milestones that will guide the rest of the implementation effort.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 Why is it important for an implementation project team to know how the KPIs used in the business case for a new product were calculated?
- 02 What aspects of the organization's contract with a solution provider should the IPL and SWG review and what criteria should they use in their evaluation?
- 03 What's the purpose of a table top "war game" in an implementation project and why is it important?
- 04 Why should any changes caused by the introduction of a new product be underway or even completed prior to the arrival of the product on-site?
- 05 What are the two goals of an implementation project kickoff meeting and what are the four essential items that should be included on every meeting's agenda?

Section II Module 6

Planning For Internal Implementations



STEP 06

DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION & MILESTONES (POA&M)

As soon as possible after the kickoff meeting, the IPL and SWG should meet to develop a Plan of Action & Milestones (POA&M) for the implementation project. As noted above, this document is the master plan for introducing the technology-based talent acquisition product into the organization and to do so in a way that ensures the organization achieves its targeted Key Performance Indicators for the product. It lists every action that both the organization and the solution provider must take, the sequence in which they must occur, which specific individual or team will be responsible for performing them, the deadline for their completion and the criteria that will be used to determine if the tasks have delivered their intended outcome.

A POA&M is a standard work management tool used in academia, industry and government. For example:

- » The Center for Development of Security Excellence uses a POA&M "to assist organizations in identifying, assessing, prioritizing, and monitoring the progress of corrective efforts for security weaknesses / deficiencies / vulnerabilities found in programs and systems;"¹⁸
- » RSA, a risk management company, uses a POA&M to help "organizations manage risk in the digital era—uniting stakeholders, integrating technologies and transforming risk into reward;"¹⁹ and

- » The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is using a POA&M to organize and execute the recommendations of the DoD Board on Diversity and Inclusion “to improve the Department’s diversity and inclusion and broaden equal opportunity for all members of the Armed Forces.”²⁰

In short, the POA&M is a proven tool that can help the IPL and SWG complete the implementation project successfully. The following checklist provides a detailed but not necessarily complete guide to the tasks such a POA&M should include. Individual organizations and products will often generate their own unique tasks that should supplement those listed here.

KEY POINT

A Plan of Action & Milestones (POA&M) lists every action that both the organization and the solution provider must take, the sequence in which they must occur, which specific individual or team will be responsible for performing them, the deadline for their completion and the criteria that will be used to determine if the tasks have delivered their intended outcome.



TECHNOLOGY

1. Develop, install and test any required product customizations.
2. Evaluate the product’s APIs and determine how long it will take to connect them to other devices in the organization’s talent and/or HR tech stack.
3. Evaluate required data flows into the product and the destination points for its data outflows.
4. Execute and test API connections.
5. Activate and test data flows.
6. Review product security features and ensure they meet and can interoperate with the organization’s data and system security protocols.
7. Finish installation of the product.
8. Execute product test run and identify any issues.
9. Remediate / resolve all test run issues.



USERS

1. Evaluate the need for a user’s guide or job aid (e.g., a checklist of steps for recruiters to use with different kinds of requisitions) that would help recruiters make more effective use of the product, because (a) its operator requirements are particularly complex and/or (b) recruiters will only use the product sporadically.
2. If a user’s guide or job aid is determined to be needed, check with the solution provider to see if it offers such a resource or, if not,

the cost of acquiring one from or developing one with an outside source.

- a. Select a source and acquire or develop the user's guide / job aid.
 - b. Include the user's guide / job aid in the pilot test of the product and make revisions as necessary based on feedback from the recruiters participating in the test.
 - c. Include the use of the user's guide / job aide in the training provided to recruiters (see below).
3. Build a **Training Subplan** in the POA&M that includes all development for and the execution of the necessary training to ensure that current and future recruiters achieve full proficiency with the product. Sub-tasks include:
- a. Identify training requirements for full competency use of the product by recruiters (i.e., a level of usage sufficient to meet the target KPIs established as the organization's ROI in the product). As a minimum, they should include:
 - i. Initial training prior to product introduction
 - ii. Refresher training on an ongoing basis
 - iii. Follow-on training for new employees
 - b. Ascertain if the contract with the solution provider includes any provision for training on the product's use and assess if it will meet all or some of the initial training requirement. Identify any gaps that exist.
 - c. Determine the best way to close the gaps in initial training by comparing the cost and timeline for developing and conducting necessary supplemental instruction in-house (if that capability exists) versus having it performed by the solution provider or some other resource.
 - d. Develop any required gap training and then train all current recruiters on the use of the product.

- e. Develop the necessary refresher and follow-on training. Depending on the time required to complete the other tasks in the POA&M, it may be necessary to launch the refresher training prior to the product's actual rollout.
4. Build a **Change Management Subplan** in the POA&M that includes all of the required technical, individual and organizational changes identified in Module 4. Subtasks include:
- a. Communicate the changes and their rationale to recruiters and other stakeholders who will be affected.
 - b. Begin the installation of the changes and monitor adoption among recruiters and other stakeholders to spot work-arounds or other forms of resistance.
 - c. Use additional communications, mentoring and counseling to address those who are struggling with or resisting the changes. Give them the opportunity to revise their behavior by reenforcing the value of the product to the organization and its benefits for recruiters and other stakeholders.
 - d. Coordinate with the Oversight Authority on when and how the organization will deal with those individuals who continue to reject the changes. While taking such steps is not the responsibility of the IPL and SWG, they should monitor what's done as the effectiveness of those actions will have an impact on their success with the implementation project.
 - e. Complete the installation of all changes required for product implementation.
5. Meet regularly with those individuals on the recruiting team who will use the product:
- a. Keep them apprised of the status of the implementation project and any updates to the expected start date for those tasks in which they will be involved (i.e., initial training, pilot test, rollout).

- b. Solicit feedback on the product and its implementation, especially on those aspects that will affect them (e.g., additional steps they will have to perform to do their job, the adequacy of the training they're receiving).
 - c. Review the feedback and, if appropriate, make adjustments to accommodate it. Notify users of the decision and its rationale.
6. Coordinate with the Oversight Authority and/or the manager in charge of the recruiting team and with HR regarding a modification to the performance appraisal process so that each recruiter's adoption of and competence with the product is periodically assessed and the assessment is tied to their annual performance and salary review.
- a. Develop and communicate to recruiters one or more specific measures or standards of individual performance that will be used to evaluate their use of the product.
 - b. Provide a phased introduction of the measures / standards so that recruiters have some time to get comfortable with the measures / standards before they are actually activated and included in their performance appraisal.
7. Develop a **Post-Rollout Subplan** in the POA&M to ascertain if recruiters have been able to meet the organization's goals for the product. Subtasks include:
- a. Monitor ongoing acceptance and use of the product by the recruiting team for a period of six months.
 - b. Determine the KPIs achieved by recruiters' use of the product and any steps required to improve them. At a minimum, this analysis should include the following subtasks:
 - i. If the achieved KPIs continually fall below their targets, reconvene the SWG and brainstorm the causes of the shortfall(s) and the step(s) that could be taken to remediate them.

- ii. Implement the remedial step(s) and monitor their impact, continuing the upgrade cycle until the target KPIs are achieved.
- iii. Meet with the Oversight Authority and review any technical, procedural or other initiatives uncovered during the product review that could achieve even better results than the targeted KPIs and make a go-no go decision on their implementation.
- iv. If a go decision is made, implement the selected initiative(s).

Organization

1. Build a **Communications Subplan** in the POA&M that promotes knowledge of and support for the project. Subtasks include communications to three key constituencies:



- a. Employing a variety of formats (e.g., update memos, lunch & learns, group briefings), keep recruiters apprised of the project team's work on implementing the new technology-based talent acquisition product.
- b. These communications have two goals: (1) to give recruiters a sense of partnership and even participation with the members of the project team in their implementation efforts and (2) to use the WIIFT factor to reenforce their interest in and support for the new product.



HIRING MANAGERS

- a. Messaging hiring managers to introduce them to the product and its benefits for them. The pace of and content of the messages should recognize managers' limited time for updates and focus on how the implemented product will support the achievement of their business objectives.

The goal of this messaging is to encourage hiring manager support by drawing a direct line between the KPIs recruiters will deliver with the product and their own operational KPIs. At the same time, however, it should also manage their expectations by providing realistic or even conservative forecasts of the timing for the new product's introduction, the burn-in time required for recruiters to come up to full proficiency and any other factors that may affect their perception of what the product will do for them.



THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

- a. Keeping the Oversight Authority informed about the project's progress and any problems or issues that may have arisen.

This messaging has two goals: (1) to help the OA meet their responsibility for supervising and guiding the project on behalf of the organization and (2) to reinforce the OA's ownership of and commitment to the new product.
- b. Reporting to senior management on the progress the project team has made in achieving the KPIs used in the business case to justify the product's acquisition.

The goal of these reports also has two goals: (1) to provide an overview of the project's progress toward implementation, the

remaining steps to be accomplished, and any factors that would interfere with the organization's achievement of its target ROI and (2) to keep the value of the acquisition in front of the organization's senior leadership and to avoid any surprises that could undermine their confidence in the project's ability to realize it.

- c. Updating the internal champion, should there be one, on the project's accomplishment of its milestones and other successes.

The goal of the messaging to the internal champion is also two-fold: (1) to keep them engaged with and supportive of the project and (2) to provide them with information they can use to encourage awareness of and support for the project throughout the organization, but especially among its thought leaders.
2. Include an **Internal PR Subplan** in the POA&M that celebrates the accomplishment of the project's major milestones. Subtasks include:
 - a. At a minimum, use the appropriate internal messaging platform to promote the following:
 - i. The arrival of the product at the organization;
 - ii. The first graduate of the training program for the product;
 - iii. The rollout and initial use of the product; and
 - iv. The first applicant to be hired with the product in use.

- b. The goal of this campaign is to recognize the good work of the SWG and the solution provider, build enthusiasm for the product by marking the progress being made in its implementation, and reinforce the engagement of the recruiting team (and even the organization's workforce broadly) by underscoring the organization's commitment to its workforce by investing in technology that will advance its acquisition of top talent.



SOLUTION PROVIDER

1. As noted in Module 5, obtain and integrate the solution provider's plan for its work on implementation into the organization's POA&M and ensure that duplicative tasks are eliminated and that necessary coordination points between the solution provider's activities and those of the organization are established.
2. Develop a schedule of regular progress review meetings between the SWG and the ISL. These meetings should be frequent enough to enable the effective review of task performance and the resolution of problems and issues, but not so frequent as to interfere with the ongoing performance of those tasks.



KEY POINT

The organization's POA&M is the master plan for the implementation of a new technology-based talent acquisition product and should incorporate the solution provider's plan for its work on the project.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the modules.

- 01 What are the purposes of a Plan of Action & Milestones (POA&M) when used in a technology-based talent acquisition product implementation project?
- 02 What kinds of training and what other tasks should be included in the training sub-plan of the POA&M?
- 03 What tasks should be included in the POA&M regarding those on the recruiting team who will use the product once it's implemented?
- 04 What tasks should be included in the Post-Rollout Subplan of the POA&M?
- 05 What three constituencies should the POA&M's Communications Subplan address and what are the goals for the updates, reports and messages to each group?



PHASE I COMPLETION & PHASE II GO-NO GO DECISION

The completion of Step 6 represents the conclusion of Phase I in the TAtech AttainTech® Methodology. At this point, the IPL should review the tasks that were accomplished in Steps 1-6 with the Oversight Authority. If no issues, concerns or risks were identified during those preparatory activities, they should request a Go decision to move on to Phase II.

On the other hand, if one or more issues, concerns or risks were identified during Steps 1-6 (for example, the IT representative on the SWG pointed out a potential problem with tech stack integration), those matters should be reviewed with the OA and their likely impact on the product's successful implementation should be assessed. If it's determined that the impact is likely to be negligible, the IPL should request a Go decision to move on to Phase II. If, instead, it's determined that the impact is likely to be significant, the IPL should recommend a delay in proceeding with the project (a No-Go decision) until the matter can be resolved.

A No-Go decision should trigger a remediation process that adds the following tasks to the POA&M:

- » Confirm the problem & determine its source;
- » Identify potential solutions to the problem;
- » Select the best solution and incorporate it in the pilot test (Step 7);
- » Review the outcome of the remediation process with the OA and request a Go decision to move on to Phase II.

02 BEGINNING OF PHASE II

Section II **Module 7**

Testing For Internal Implementations



STEP 07

CONDUCT A PILOT TEST OF THE PRODUCT

A pilot test is a usability study. It is not a test of recruiters' competencies or of a product's capabilities. It is an examination of what happens when recruiters apply the product to their work. It seeks to:

- » determine if a specific product can be used by a specific organization's recruiters on-the-job to achieve the specific KPIs that were cited to justify its acquisition; and
- » fix any issues that would interfere with that outcome.

An instructor at Carnegie Mellon University identified the essential elements of an effective pilot test or what he called a "pilot study." That description – pilot study – is the most appropriate description of how such an exercise should be conducted. It is to determine how best to manage the change – a term that he actually uses – that will occur in an organization when it introduces something new or different. In his view, that analysis involves five elements:

- » Plan and design the pilot study
- » Train personnel to accomplish the change
- » Support and monitor the pilot study
- » Evaluate the pilot results

» Make recommendations and improve.²¹

This module will tailor the first three of these elements to a pilot test of a soon-to-be implemented technology-based talent acquisition product. The next module (#8) will do the same for the final two elements.

Moreover, the requirement to do such tailoring makes an important point about pilot tests. While the above definition is accurate in a general sense, there is no such thing as a generic pilot test. Each test design is idiosyncratic to the organization conducting the test and the product being implemented. Large organizations will normally conduct more formal pilot tests, while smaller ones will often use a less structured assessment of recruiters' use of a product on-the-job. Some technology-based products are so large and their implementation so complex, they require a lengthy pilot test, while others can be installed with a minimum of organizational preparation and therefore evaluated relatively quickly. In every instance, however, the goal of such a test is the same: to ensure a new technology-based talent acquisition product actually delivers the expected benefits to the organization that purchased it.



KEY POINT

Regardless of their length, formality or complexity, all pilot tests have the same goal: to ensure a new technology-based talent acquisition product actually delivers the expected benefits to the organization that purchased it.

Test Design

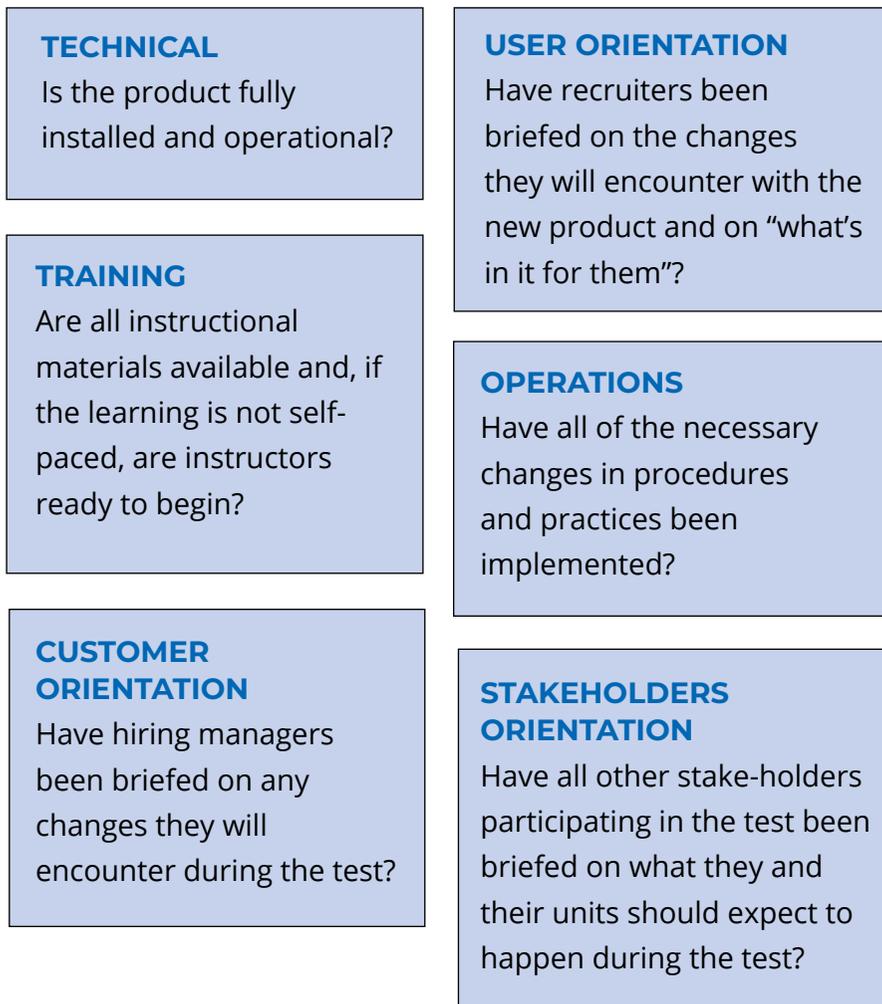
The first step in a pilot test is to establish the test design. The IPL, SWG and ISL should determine what constitutes an adequate test of recruiters' use of the product. Specifically, they must decide how long the test will run and under what conditions to give an adequate assessment of what the organization can expect once the product is fully implemented. What sort of test configuration is most likely to determine if a product will, in fact, deliver the target KPIs?

Establishing the length of the test can be and often is affected by the cost of conducting it. While there may be ancillary expenses (e.g., reconfiguring recruiters' work area, necessary software upgrades), the largest single cost element will be labor, specifically the time test participants will be removed – either completely or partially – from their normal recruiting responsibilities. That work will still need to be done, so unless the “normal” workload of test participants can be accomplished during or with the test, the organization will have no choice but to arrange for internal or external backfill, neither of which is free. External resources, of course, impose a direct cost on the organization, but even the use of internal resources – adding the work of test participants to the ongoing work of other recruiters on the team – imposes a productivity cost and potentially a cost in decreased morale.

Similarly, the decision on test conditions will revolve around how many recruiters will be involved and how much of their recruiting responsibilities will be included in the test (e.g. will the product be used on all of their assignments or only on a select subset). Similarly, a determination must also be made of the role of the recruiting team's customer (e.g., will hiring managers be involved in the test) and any other stakeholders participating on the project team. Finally, the IPL, SWG and ISL should ensure that the organization's ongoing strategic initiatives – especially its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) – are adequately addressed in the test design.

Given their importance, the decisions on the length of the pilot test and its conditions should be briefed to the Oversight Authority prior to any further test planning. Once the Oversight Authority has signed off on the decisions, the IPL, in conjunction with the SWG and ISL should begin a readiness assessment of both the organization and the solution provider. This evaluation should ensure that both are properly prepared for the test.

Since the test will involve the hands-on use of the product as if it were fully and completely implemented, this preliminary review should, as a minimum, confirm the completion of the following tasks in the POA&M:



As soon as there is confirmation that all preparations have been completed, the IPL and ISL should set a start and end date for the test. The IPL should convey those dates as well as an explanation of how the test will be conducted to the recruiting team so they are aware of what it will entail and any adjustments it might require in their operational procedures and recruiting practices. To assuage any concerns that might arise, the IPL should also remind recruiters of the benefits they can expect from the product’s successful implementation and position the test as a way of ensuring they actually receive those benefits once the product is finally rolled out.

Test Development

Following the announcement of the pilot test, the IPL should select the test cadre. In addition to any volunteers who step forward after the announcement, the IPL should solicit the interest of specific individuals whom they think would be particularly strong participants. If at all possible, participation should be voluntary, but if there are no volunteers or recruiters interested in the test, the IPL should identify a list of ideal candidates with a range of technological competencies and experience. The size of this cadre will be determined by the scale of the test itself, so could range from one or two participants to a dozen or more recruiters. Once that list is finalized, the IPL should brief the Oversight Authority on the individuals it includes and get their approval to assign those individuals to the test.

In those instances when test participants are not volunteers, the IPL will likely have to “sell” them on the value of the assignment. To that end, it should be positioned as both a vote of confidence in them by the organization’s leadership and a chance for them to make an important contribution to the organization’s success. In addition, they should be encouraged to see their participation as an opportunity to add to their skill set and to expand and enhance the value of the work on which they will be evaluated in their next performance appraisal.

Once the test cadre's selection and introduction are complete, they should be given a set of guidelines for their participation. These guidelines will help to ensure that the pilot test provides an accurate and realistic evaluation of how the product affects recruiter performance on-the-job and of any adjustments that may be needed to optimize that outcome. They include, but are not limited to:

The Test Experience

- » The goal of the test is not to determine if recruiters can or cannot use the product effectively, as measured by the organization's target KPIs, but rather to ensure that they can. It is not a pass-fail examination, but rather a mechanism with which to optimize outcomes.
- » Therefore, if one or more problems are uncovered during the test, the organization will develop a solution for each of them and test their effectiveness as a part of the test.

For example, should the test reach a point where recruiters are unable to use the product effectively with the training they've received – especially if ongoing recruiting operations are being negatively impacted – the test will be halted, so that additional training can be developed and delivered, and then the test restarted.

- » Participants may also find that their initial use of the product feels unnatural or even disconcerting, so an important part of the test will be to assess their ability to work through such feelings and move on to a more "normal" usage pattern.

Record Keeping

- » All participants should keep a daily journal of their work, recording their observations of the product's ease-of-use, quality of outputs and the potential need for (further) customization.
- » The journals will be included in a report on the test that will be prepared by the IPL and briefed to the SWG, the ISL and the Oversight Authority.

Training & Support

- » The training the test participants receive will be identical to the training planned for all users in conjunction with the product's final rollout.
- » Participants will receive no additional support other than that which users are likely to receive once the product is implemented (e.g., assistance from a peer coach – a coworker who has become especially adept in the use of the product).

Performance Evaluation

- » A data collection system will be established to capture the data necessary to measure the KPIs achieved by the participating recruiters. Such a system must, of course, be unobtrusive, accurate and able to provide timely output.
- » If possible, the data system should be the same system normally used to measure recruiter performance. This approach avoids the introduction of any data collection anomalies that could skew test results. However, if for some reason that system can't be used, an alternative system should be devised to mirror the normal system as much as possible.



KEY POINT

In order to ensure the pilot test provides an accurate and realistic evaluation of the product's use on-the-job, test participants should be provided with guidelines on their test experience, training, record keeping, and the data collection that will be used to measure their performance.

With those preparations in place, the IPL should update the Oversight Authority with one of four options:

- » If the timing of the completion of all test preparations is consistent with the announced start date for the test, the IPL should notify the Oversight Authority that the test is beginning and will conclude at its previously determined end date.
- » If the timing of the completion of all test preparations is prior to the announced start date for the test, the IPL should assess the potential for an early start to cause a problem, and if that's unlikely, request the Oversight Authority's permission to begin the test immediately with the appropriate adjustment to its end date.
- » If on the other hand a problem is likely to occur, the IPL should notify the Oversight Authority that the test is ready to be initiated early, but to avoid a problem, will not begin until the announced test start date and will conclude at its previously determined end date.

- » If the timing of the completion of all test preparations is after the announced start date for the test, the IPL should provide an explanation for the delay and request permission to begin the test at that time with the appropriate adjustment to its end date.

Test Execution

Test execution encompasses the following activities in the following largely chronological sequence:

- » Notification of the test's start to the recruiting team and other stakeholders.
- » Initiation of participant record keeping.
- » Training of all test participants.
- » Activation of the data collection system.
- » Initiation of recruiting with the technology-based product.
- » Periodic updates on the status of the test to the SWG and OA.
- » Execution of any delays required for remediation of problems.
- » Installation and testing of problem fixes and resumption of recruiting.
- » Conclusion of the test.
- » Submission of recruiter journals to the IPL.
- » Receipt of test data by the IPL.

Test Conclusion

The pilot test should conclude either when it reaches its previously determined end date or when it reaches an end date adjusted for any mid-test halts. Since test data will not yet have been analyzed, recruiters' achieved KPIs are unlikely to be known at that point. It's important, therefore, to avoid premature judgments by either the test participants or other stakeholders about the outcome of the test. To that end, they should be reminded that:

- » the purpose of the test is not to judge the capability of either the product or recruiters, but rather to optimize recruiters' performance through their use of the product; and
- » the analysis of the outcome as measured by achieved KPIs and the determination of any adjustments required to optimize them will take place in the review that follows the test.

Section II Module 7



STEP 08

REVIEW THE PILOT TEST & MAKE ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

The goal of the pilot test review is not to find fault or point fingers. Its purpose is not to judge the performance of either recruiters or the solution provider's product. Rather, a good pilot test review will determine (a) if the recruiter and the product working together are able to achieve the KPIs established for the product when its acquisition was approved, and (b) if not, what actions must be taken to achieve that objective.

For that to occur, the pilot test review should occur in two cycles:



Cycle A addresses problems that were identified and resolved during the pilot test.

This assessment should determine if the fixes were adequate and would be practical during the full rollout of the product. If the analysis uncovers the potential for a reoccurrence of the problems or that their cost or impact on other resources is unsustainable, more effective and durable solutions must be identified, tested and implemented.



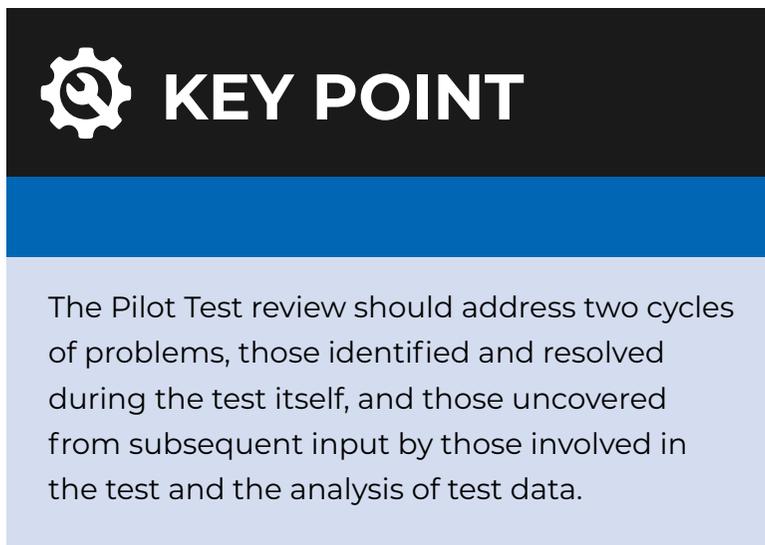
Cycle B addresses problems that are identified after the test has concluded.

They include two categories of problems:

1. Problems that had a negative impact on the outcome of the test (i.e., recruiters were unable to achieve the target KPIs with the product) and must be fully corrected in

order for the organization to achieve its anticipated ROI from the product; and

2. Problems that did not have a material impact on the outcome of the test (i.e., recruiters were able to achieve the target KPIs with the product), but should nevertheless be addressed to ensure the most effective and efficient usage of the product.



KEY POINT

The Pilot Test review should address two cycles of problems, those identified and resolved during the test itself, and those uncovered from subsequent input by those involved in the test and the analysis of test data.

Addressing the problems in Cycle B typically requires a more formal and structured review process. It should tap the views of both test participants and anyone else in the organization whose work was affected by the use of the product and include the reduction and analysis of the performance data generated by the test. The Cycle A review of problems during the test itself, on the other hand, can be accomplished with a less structured process. It should focus on the experience of the participating recruiters, their customers and coworkers. In both cases, however, the reviews should not be positioned as activities under the sole purview of the organization, but rather as collaborative initiatives involving both the organization and the solution provider.

To that end, the IPL, SWG and the ISL should meet to review the test results, focusing on two kinds of data:

EXPERIENTIAL DATA

Using interviews and, if time permits, flash surveys, assess the experience of recruiters, the recruiting team and hiring managers.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Using data from the test's data collection system, calculate the KPIs achieved by recruiters as they used the product.

If the analysis in Cycle A reveals the existence of persistent problems and/or the analysis in Cycle B identifies performance degradation or effectiveness/efficiency problems, the reviews should also include the development of appropriate remedial actions. The process for that development includes the following steps:

STEP 01 Identify the problem and its location in the organization. The test data should be used to answer the following questions:

- » Product: did the product fail to operate as intended or in conjunction with other products in the tech stack?
- » Users: did recruiters fail to achieve the goals for the product when they used it on-the-job?
- » Recruiting Team: was the work of other recruiters negatively affected in any way by the product's use?
- » Customers: did hiring managers see any degradation in the support they received from recruiters?
- » Coworkers: was the work of others in the organization negatively affected in any way by the product's use?
- » Job Seekers: was the candidate experience degraded in any way by the use of the product?

**STEP
02**

Determine the cause of each identified problems and the best way to remediate it. Review participants should brainstorm among themselves and call on the expertise of others (e.g., engineers on the solution provider's team, others on the recruiting team) to identify the root source of each issue, the alternatives for addressing it and the one solution that is most likely to fully and permanently correct it. As a minimum, they should consider:

The product's design?

For example, did the product freeze up when the volume of applicants increased significantly?

The product's interoperability with the tech stack?

For example, was it cumbersome for recruiters to move back-and-forth between the product's user interface and the dashboard used for the other products in the tech stack?

The training provided to recruiters?

For example, did the training not cover troubleshooting techniques that would help recruiters resolve problems on their own when they arose on-the-job?

Recruiters' performance?

For example, did it take too long for recruiters to perform their assigned tasks with the product?

The recruiting team's efficiency and/or effectiveness?

For example, did the use of the product slow the exchange of information between recruiters?

Hiring managers' expectations for the product?

For example, did hiring managers believe the product would cut the time-to-fill their openings, when the product was actually designed to improve candidate quality.

The ability of the organization to meet its DE& I commitment?

For example, did the recruiters' use of the product meet the target time-to-fill benchmark, but also restricted their access to a more diverse population of candidates?

Coworkers' experience?

For example, did recruiters' use of the product make it more difficult for internal candidates to apply and be considered for the organization's openings?

The candidate's experience?

For example, did the recruiters' use of the product make it difficult to respond to applicants in a timely way?

Product accessibility?

For example, did the product's design make it difficult for users and/or candidates to access and use the product effectively?



KEY POINT

The Pilot Test reviews should not be positioned as activities under the sole purview of the organization, but rather as collaborative initiatives involving both the organization and the solution provider.

**STEP
03**

A record of all required adjustments and a timeline for their resolution should then be incorporated into the POA&M.

The IPL should submit an Interim Report to the Oversight Authority, indicating the results of the review and the plan for addressing the issues it identified. In some cases, this process may require that the pilot test itself be restarted and extended so that fixes can be installed, assessed and confirmed to work. In other cases, the fixes may be clear and straightforward enough that there is a high degree of confidence they will work and thus do not require further testing.

Once all issues are resolved a Pilot Test Final Report should be submitted to the Oversight Authority. The Report should confirm that all implementation preparations have been successfully completed and request approval to move to full-scale rollout of the product in the organization.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the modules.

- 01 Why is the term "test" in the phrase "pilot test" a misnomer when used to describe an assessment of the usability of a new technology-based talent acquisition product?
- 02 What are the five elements of a pilot test and what requirement governs the way they should be implemented?
- 03 What is the goal of a pilot test, regardless of its duration or scale?
- 04 What are the two cycles of problem reviews that occur in conjunction with a pilot test and how should they each be conducted?
- 05 What process should be followed to address problems that are identified in Cycle B of the pilot review?



PHASE II COMPLETION & PHASE III GO-NO GO DECISION

The execution of Step 8 represents the completion of Phase II in the TAtech AttainTech® Methodology. At this point, the IPL should review the tasks that were accomplished in Steps 7-8 with the Oversight Authority. If no issues, concerns or risks were identified during those preparatory activities, they should request a Go decision to move on to Phase III.

On the other hand, if one or more issues, concerns or risks were identified during Steps 7-8 (for example, some hiring managers didn't like the process changes accompanying the product's introduction and were resisting it), those matters should be reviewed with the OA and their likely impact on the product's successful implementation should be assessed. If it's determined that the impact is likely to be negligible, the IPL should request a Go decision to move on to Phase III. If, instead, it's determined that the impact is likely to be significant, the IPL should recommend a delay in proceeding with the project (a No-Go decision) until the matter can be resolved.

A No-Go decision should trigger a remediation process that adds the following tasks to the POA&M:

- » Confirm the problem & determine its source;
- » Identify potential solutions to the problem;
- » Select the best solution and submit it to a Cycle A review;
- » Review the outcome of the remediation process with the OA and request a Go decision to move on to Phase III.

03 BEGINNING OF PHASE III

Section II **Module 8**

Launching Internal Implementations



STEP 09

IMPLEMENT THE PRODUCT ROLLOUT

Following the conclusion of the pilot test and the submission of the Pilot Test Final Report, the IPL should confer with the SWG and the ISL, and set a date for the product's rollout. As a minimum, the following factors should be considered in setting the date:

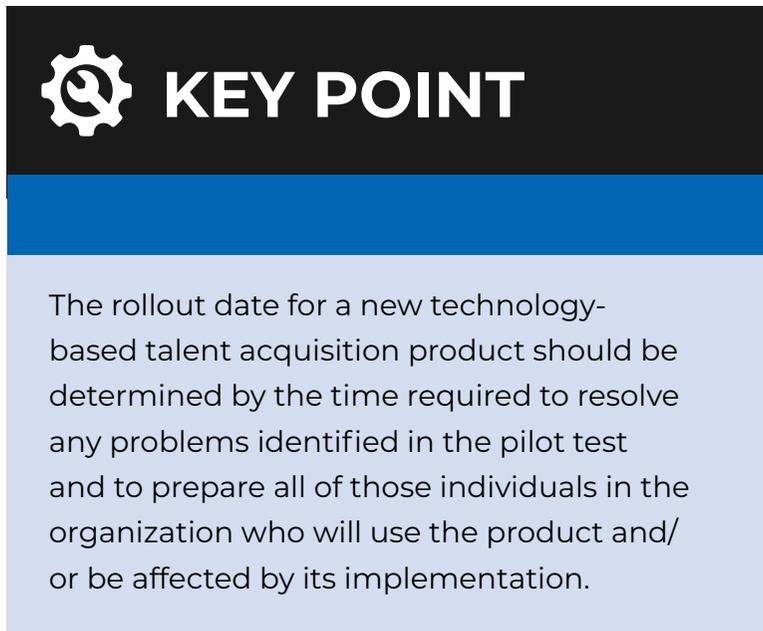
- » The successful completion of the fixes to any problems identified in Cycle A and/or Cycle B of the pilot test review.

Typically, these fixes would occur and their effectiveness confirmed before the Pilot Test Final Report is submitted, but if for any reason, the report is submitted and authorization to proceed is received before they have been completed, the product rollout date should not be set until they have all been resolved.

- » The time required to ensure the readiness of others in the organization whose role will be affected by the product's rollout.

This group includes any users of the product who were not included in the pilot test as well as the functions / units represented on the Stakeholders Working Group and, on an optional basis, those coworkers who came forward with issues or concerns during the Pilot Test Review.

In this instance, readiness indicates that the members of this group have been appropriately prepared for their roles and/or work experience once the product is rolled out. As with the confirmation of problem fixes from the pilot test, the product rollout date should not be set until all of these preparations have been satisfactorily completed.



KEY POINT

The rollout date for a new technology-based talent acquisition product should be determined by the time required to resolve any problems identified in the pilot test and to prepare all of those individuals in the organization who will use the product and/or be affected by its implementation.

Once the rollout date has been set, the IPL should notify the Oversight Authority of the date, and with the SWG, begin the preparations for the product's rollout. At a minimum, these preparations should include the following:

Preparing Users Not Included in the Pilot Test

The Product's Purpose & Goal

The IPL should distribute a summary of the business case rationale for the product's acquisition and the KPIs that will be used

to determine its value to the organization and its contribution to recruiters' work.

On-the-Job Experience

Recruiters who participated in the Pilot Test should provide a summary of their experience with the product as well as with any problems that were encountered and their resolution. The content should highlight how long it took to get familiar with the product, tips learned during the test for using the product most effectively and any product or application quirks they observed.

User Training

The solution provider, outside contractors or in-house trainers should deliver the training on the product as stipulated in the contract, supplemented by the learnings of pilot test participants as appropriate.

The IPL should monitor the instruction for the following issues that could affect the success of the rollout:

- » Shortfalls in individual competency and the need for additional training; and
- » Individual resistance to using the product and the need for counseling.

If such issues are uncovered, the IPL should coordinate with the trainers for the additional training or with the recruiting lead and/or HR for appropriate counseling.

Policy & Procedural Adjustments

The IPL should provide a review of the policy and procedural changes implemented for the product's introduction, focusing on their effectiveness and sufficiency to support recruiters' ability to achieve the target KPIs for the product.

Preparing Hiring Managers & Other Stakeholders

The Product's Purpose & Goal

The IPL should distribute a summary of the business case rationale for the product's acquisition and the KPIs that will be used to determine its value to the organization and its contribution to recruiters' work.

Product Familiarization

One or more members of the SWG should provide a brief overview – tailored for non-users – of the product's features and how recruiters will apply it in their work. The purpose of this interaction is to prepare them for any changes they will encounter as a result of recruiters' use of the product and to manage their expectations regarding the results of that use.

Test Support Experience

Hiring Managers involved in the Pilot Test should provide a summary of their experience being supported by recruiters using the product in their work. The content should focus on any adjustments they had to make to work with the recruiters, any significant changes they observed in the nature of their support experience and their thoughts on how best to benefit from the product's introduction.

Hiring Manager / Stakeholder Familiarization

One or more members of the SWG should provide a brief overview – tailored for non-users – of the product's features and how recruiters will apply it in their work. The purpose of this interaction is to prepare them for any changes they will encounter as a result of recruiters' use of the product and to manage their expectations regarding the results of that use.

Policy & Procedural Adjustments

The IPL should provide a review of the policy and procedural changes implemented for the product's introduction, focusing on their effectiveness and sufficiency to support recruiters' ability to achieve the target KPIs for the product.



KEY POINT

The preparations for the rollout of a technology-based talent acquisition product should be tailored to each individual's role and/or experience with the product.

Preparing the Product

The IPL, together with an appropriate representative from the organization's IT unit and the ISL, should meet and confirm that:

- » The product is fully installed and that any problems identified during the pilot test have been successfully resolved; and
- » All customization development has been completed, installed, tested and determined to be working according to specification.

Launching Implementation

Upon the satisfactory completion of all preparatory activities, the IPL should convene a pre-launch meeting of the Stakeholders Working Group. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- » Provide a forum for the expression of any final comments and the resolution of any final concerns among the group's members;
- » Recognize the role played by those members by asking for their concurrence as a group that the product is ready for rollout and to memorialize that group decision in an Implementation Project Final Report that is sent to the Oversight Authority;
- » Thank the members for their contribution to the successful completion of the implementation project; and
- » Remind them that their role continues on an ad hoc basis for another six months in order to assess recruiters' achievement of the organization's KPIs for the product (see Module 10).

With the submission of the SWG's Final Report, the use of the product should be initiated in the recruiting team.



STEP 10

CONDUCT PERFORMANCE MONITORING & MAKE ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

Many organizations make the mistake of assuming that a new technology-based product's implementation has been completed once it's been introduced into the day-to-day operations of the recruiting team. The Oversight Authority receives the Implementation Project Final Report from the IPL and SWG and reports up the chain of command that the product has been successfully integrated into the organization. What isn't clear at that point, however, is the extent to which the goals for the product have been achieved. While the pilot test provides a preview of the end result, not enough data have been collected on recruiters' regular and ongoing use of the product to calculate the actual KPIs achieved with the product.



KEY POINT

The implementation of a new technology-based talent acquisition product isn't complete until the achievement of the organization's target KPIs has been verified, a milestone that is normally approximately six months after the product's rollout.

For that reason, the implementation project and the assignments of the project team should continue on an ad hoc basis for at least the first six months of the product's usage. While the IPL and SWG

members can return to their normal responsibilities, they should be tasked with meeting periodically – normally at the three – and six-month marks – to identify any problems or issues with the new product.

For that reason, the implementation project and the assignments of the project team should continue in two phases:

PHASE 1: HYPERCARE

This phase covers the first 4-6 weeks of product installation and use by recruiters and, if applicable, hiring managers.

Phase 1 involves the transition of the product into the workflow of the recruiting team, and requires that the IPL and SWG ensure the stability of the technology-based product as well as the effectiveness of user and customer support and the integrity of data provided to and/or generated by the product. This early “go-live” activity builds the necessary foundation for fully competent product use and develops clearly defined protocols for identifying and resolving initial concerns among stakeholders that could later fester into larger problems.

PHASE 2: BURN-IN

This phase covers the first six months of the product’s usage after hypercare.

While the IPL and SWG members can return to their normal responsibilities, they should be tasked with meeting periodically – normally at the three- and six-month marks – to identify any problems or issues with the new product.

These problems could involve a range of factors, including:

Product Performance

Technological deficiencies, at least in a product with an application track record, are rare, but they do happen from time-to-time. Should such issues occur, they will likely require upgrades to the product or the reworking of any customization that was done to it. Some of these developments may be covered by the organization’s contract with the solution provider, while others may necessitate a revision to that document. Both should be addressed with the solution provider in a meeting between the IPL and ISL. Since contractual matters will be discussed, it’s prudent to have the organization’s General Counsel or legal representative attend as well.

Recruiter Performance

Recruiters’ proficiency with the product will vary, of course, so the organization should track and remediate, as necessary, both the performance of individual users and the recruiting team’s overall capability with the product. Depending on the level of need, these adjustments may be as simple as periodic “lunch and learn” instructional or refresher sessions or a recruiter’s FAQ notebook, or alternatively, as extensive as mandated retraining and the development of a virtual assistant within the product itself. Once again, some of these resources may require a revision to the solution provider’s contract or the execution of a new contract with a second provider.

Product Integration

Poor product interoperability with an organization’s existing tech stack is probably the most frequently cited problem with the implementation of a new technology-based talent acquisition product. If a new product does not interoperate well with the rest of the products being used by the recruiting team or its usage in some unexpected way interferes with other essential recruiter tasks, the recruiting lead or Oversight Authority should work with the organization’s IT unit and the solution provider to determine and

implement appropriate corrective measures.

Hiring Manager Satisfaction

Resistance to change can occur among hiring managers as well as among recruiters, so it too should be monitored. It can take the form of using the press of business requirements to insist on “doing things the old way” or even the outright refusal to adopt to the new practices that have been instituted in conjunction with the implementation of a product. If such resistance does occur, the recruiting lead or Oversight Authority should work with the appropriate business unit leads to develop and execute a strategy for building better understanding and support among hiring managers. Should that strategy fall short on either an individual or more general basis and the disruptive behavior continue, it will have a negative impact – just as it does with such behavior among recruiters - on the organization’s ability to achieve its target KPIs. Therefore, the HR department should be notified of the situation and a decision made regarding how it should be addressed in future performance and salary reviews and other management steps.



KEY POINT

The know-how and insights of the implementation project team should be archived in a Lessons Learned Report on which the organization can draw for future implementation projects.

Final Actions

Should the 3- and 6-month reviews determine that no problems or issues exist with the rollout or that any issues or problems that did exist have been effectively resolved, the product can be considered successfully implemented. At that point, the IPL should submit a Lessons Learned Report to the Oversight Authority detailing the know-how and insights the project team gained in their role.

This report is a critically important document, as both recruiters and recruiting managers are increasingly mobile and, when they depart, take their expertise with them. The Lessons Learned Report provides the organization with a hedge against that loss by archiving the experience of the implementation project team as institutional knowledge on which the organization can draw during future implementation projects for technology-based talent acquisition products.

In addition, the following actions should also be taken:

- » The IPL and SWG members should be officially released from any further responsibilities for the project.
- » The Oversight Authority should notify the supervisors of the SWG members that the project has been completed and provide

a detailed account of their contribution to the organization's achievement of its business goals in acquiring the product.

- » The Oversight Authority should notify the organization's senior leaders that the goals established in the business case for the product's acquisition have been achieved. This notification is an opportunity for the recruiting and/or HR leader to:
 - o demonstrate their unit's ability to contribute to achieving the organization's business goals and
 - o to reinforce their commitment to doing so in a professional and timely fashion.
- » The Oversight Authority should distribute a memo throughout the organization thanking the IPL and the members of the Stakeholders Working Group for their contribution to the successful outcome of the implementation project and the benefits that will accrue to the organization as a result.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the modules.

- 01 What steps should be taken to prepare recruiters and others in the organization, as appropriate, for the rollout of a technology-based talent acquisition product?
- 02 What potential issues among recruiters should instructors be on the lookout for, once user training has begun in preparation for the rollout of a technology-based product?
- 03 What is the purpose of the pre-launch meeting of the Stakeholders Working Group?
- 04 Why should the implementation project for a technology-based product continue for at least six months beyond its rollout date?
- 05 What is the purpose of the Lessons Learned report the IPL submits to the Oversight Authority?



The first and most important act of an Implementation Project Leader is to establish a Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) composed of the right functions within the organization represented by the right individuals from those functions.

SECTION III:

EXTERNAL IMPLEMENTATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED TALENT ACQUISITION PRODUCTS

The purpose of external implementations of technology-based talent acquisition products is to ensure that recruiters can effectively leverage the products to help meet the organization's business goals. Unlike with internal implementations, these products will not be integrated into an organization's tech stack, but will instead be applied to send data to and accept data from an external resource. While there are other applications of such products, the most prevalent is recruitment advertising which requires the outflow of job ads to an online publisher such as a job board in order to produce an inflow of candidate applications.

Therefore, the purpose of these external implementations is to help an organization's recruiters achieve the best return on investment in their advertising by producing an outflow of the kinds of data most likely to generate the best inflow of applicants from:

- » Classified advertising platforms
- » Job ad distribution systems
- » Job boards
- » Job search engines & aggregators
- » Programmatic recruitment platforms
- » Talent or candidate marketplaces

The Foundation For a 21st Century Job Posting

Unlike with internal implementations, the most effective way to implement an external technology-based talent acquisition product is not a methodology that integrates a wide range of players and activities, but what has traditionally been described as “best practices.” These tried-and-true rules are designed for recruiters only, and in this case, only for a single activity: recruitment advertising. Almost since the advent of online talent acquisition, best practices have provided the guidelines for how to source candidates successfully on external publisher sites such as job boards, job search engines and aggregators.

For more than a few years now, however, the practices have been showing their age. Indeed, many of them haven’t evolved much, if at all, since the arrival of the first job boards in the 1990s. They do not take into account two key features that reset today’s talent market:

The scarcity of high performers in every profession, craft and trade and the increasingly important role they play in the success of every organization; and

The emergence of new socio-cultural dynamics and the increasingly important role of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in building a high performing workforce.

As a consequence, the ads developed with these best practices no longer produce the sourcing power – the irresistible message – that recruiters must have to prevail in the War for the Best Talent:

What’s needed, therefore, is an alternative strategy, one that’s designed to **pique the curiosity of the full diversity of high performers in today’s workforce** and then to accomplish two additional objectives:

- » intrigue those high performers enough to get them to pay attention to an organization’s employment opportunity; and then
- » persuade them to do the one thing we humans most hate to do: change.

In effect, this strategy must be powerful enough to convince high performers to go from the devil they know – their current job, boss and commute – to the devil they don’t know – a new job, a different boss and an unfamiliar commute. That can’t be done with yesterday’s practices, but it can be achieved with a new approach to online recruitment advertising designed for the 21st century: TAtech’s Nexxt Practices®.

Nexxt Practices® are a set of rules designed to achieve recruiting success in the face of 21st century talent market dynamics – one in which the 20th century War for Talent has morphed into a modern-day War for the Best Talent. One that doesn’t simply rinse and repeat sourcing from the same old cohorts of the workforce, but instead reaches into its widest and most diverse dimensions to find high performers. One that doesn’t simply toss information at employment prospects, but instead works to engage and entice them.



KEY POINT

Nexxt Practices® are a set of rules designed to achieve recruiting success in the face of 21st century talent market dynamics – one in which the 20th century War for Talent has morphed into a modern-day War for the Best Talent.

In some respects, these new rules draw on what was done in the past, but in other much more fundamental ways, they are a fresh approach to using the written word to promote an organization's value proposition as an employer to reluctant consumers called high performers. In effect, Nexxt Practices® make it possible for an organization to maximize the return on its investment in recruitment advertising, whether its recruiters are writing the ads themselves or monitoring the work of an outside solution provider such as a recruitment advertising agency. Said another way, these 21st century guidelines enable and empower recruiters to meet their fiduciary responsibility – to spend their organization's money wisely, while accomplishing their mission.

Regardless of where it's created, however, recruitment advertising is always conveyed with the same medium: **the job posting**. It has been and remains the most widespread method of candidate sourcing used by enterprise employers, small and mid-sized businesses, staffing firms and recruitment process outsourcing companies. It works on job boards and employment marketplaces, on job search engines and aggregators and even on social media sites. The job posting literally fills millions of openings every year. And yet,

despite that widespread use and effectiveness, it is often disparaged by recruiters or simply ignored at recruitment conferences.

There are undoubtedly several reasons for this situation, but the most important is a misunderstanding about the primary role of a job posting. Unlike an old-fashioned classified ad and a standard corporate position description, it is not simply to convey information. That was good enough for recruiting success in the 20th century's War for Talent, but is totally insufficient in today's War for the Best Talent. In this new competition, a job posting must still convey information, of course, but far more crucial is its ability to build a relationship with high performers in the space of a couple of hundred written words. And all too often, that additional requirement is overlooked.

Too many of today's job postings are an information rich description of a job that makes little or no attempt to connect with people who have plenty of options, but seldom want to change devils. High performers are almost never at a loss for a job – they're always in high demand – but what they want is something else. They may hate change, but they are always on the lookout for **a career advancement opportunity** – a way for them to continue and even advance as a high performer in their profession, craft or trade. And, the key to transforming a job opening into such an opportunity is to write a job posting that surrounds information with respect.





KEY POINT

The key to transforming a job opening into a career advancement opportunity is to write a job posting that surrounds information with respect.

That's not as unusual a notion as it may at first seem. There's been much written and spoken over the past couple of years about the importance of optimizing the candidate experience. In a highly competitive talent market, high performers will always gravitate to where they are treated best. Indeed, the organization that gives candidates a distinctive and memorable experience will have a formidable advantage in the War for the Best Talent. Such an experience is typically defined as what happens to a candidate while they are passing through an organization's recruiting process. For the candidate, however, the experience starts well before that point. It begins when they first encounter an employer's job posting. That interaction sets the tone for everything else that happens between the organization and the candidate.

A job posting, therefore, must inform, to be sure, but to differentiate how an employer will be seen by high performers, it must also shower them with deference and dignity. Indeed, the posting must demonstrate that the employer is so aware of the contribution high performers can make to its success that it has taken the time and made the effort to write an ad that seeks to bond with and inspire them. Everything from its choice of words to the actual content of the posting must be carefully crafted to convey the organization's esteem for the capabilities they bring to work with them each day.

A Respectful Job Posting

A "respectful job posting," is shaped by five Nexxt Practices®. They are based on and collectively reinforce a single guiding principle:



THE GOLDEN RULE OF 21ST CENTURY RECRUITING

What you do to recruit high performers will also attract mediocre performers, but the converse is not true.

Aim low, recruit low; aim high, recruit high. To be effective in today's talent market, a job posting must consciously and carefully aim high – it must be written to acknowledge the unique attributes and convictions of high performers – and avoid a "come one-come all," middle-of-the-road approach to its message. It must be explicitly designed to inform and entice high performers with "what's in it for them." That's the differentiating power of Nexxt Practices®.

NEXXT PRACTICE #1

Address the reader with vocabulary that relates to them.

Even when they are in transition, high performers never, ever think of themselves as a "job seeker" – which they view as a demeaning term used to describe a supplicant for work. So, connect with them by employing terms and phrases that are more acceptable to them and thus more respectful. For example, it's always best to address them in the second rather than the third person – to speak directly to them with "you will be able to ..." instead of with a phrase that holds them at arm's length such as "the incumbent will be able to ...". Even the seemingly benign and oft-used phrase "the successful candidate will be able to ..." is problematic because high performers see it as condescending. In addition, they will seldom have an up-to-

date resume, so don't ask them to submit one, but instead set up your process to accept and ask them to submit "an application."

NEXXT PRACTICE #2

Tell the reader how long it takes to complete an application.

High performers are impatient and easily put off. They are almost always employed, so they consider their time to be very valuable and won't tolerate delays in the recruiting process or even uncertainty about what's going to happen next. They view such situations as employers being impolite and a sign of disrespect. The best approach, therefore, is to demonstrate your regard for them by acknowledging the importance of their time. Use the job posting to indicate how much time they will have to invest to complete the application for your opening and whether they must do so in a single sitting. For example, "We know you're busy, and our application respects that. It takes just fifteen minutes to complete and you can do it all at once or in multiple sessions." In addition, it's always courteous and frequently differentiating to thank candidates not for submitting an application, but for their time and interest in considering an employment opportunity with your organization.

NEXXT PRACTICE #3

Give the reader the information that's important to them.

High performers consider "Requirements" and "Responsibilities" to be words only an employer could love. Such terms do nothing for them except convey the impression that an organization sees them as just another job seeker who's hoping to fill just another block on the organization chart. A more respectful approach is to have a job posting tell them what they want to know about an opening. So, respect their wishes and describe what they will get to do, what they will get to learn and accomplish in the organization and its position, and with whom they will get to work and how they will be recognized

and rewarded for their contribution. Yes, that's essentially a job's requirements and responsibilities, but the word choice and focus is entirely on **what's in it for them**. For example, the posting might begin with a statement like this: "If you're looking to work in a role that's critical to a company's success and with peers who are at the top of their field, this is the opportunity for you."

NEXXT PRACTICE #4

Let the reader know what's going to happen to them.

No prospect, but especially not a high performer, likes to be left in the dark or ignored when they apply for an opening, so show them the courtesy and respect of telling them what happens next. A job posting should explicitly state how long it normally takes for an organization to review an application once it's submitted and (if it's the case) that it will acknowledge the receipt of all applications by email. Most employers do provide such acknowledgements, but in survey-after-survey, applicants describe their submission experience as a "black hole" – they believe they hear nothing back from employers. In most cases, this disconnect can be traced to applicants' spam filters. Therefore, a posting should also provide the email address from which that message will arrive so they can ensure it doesn't get caught there. For example, the posting might conclude with a statement like this: "We believe you deserve to be kept informed about the status of your application. Please add this address – corporate@newco.com – to your safe list, so our email updates won't get caught in your spam filter."

NEXXT PRACTICE #5

Provide the reader with appropriate accommodations.

High performers, of course, are present in every cohort of the workforce. All too often, however, organizations that do not ensure their job postings are accessible by individuals utilizing assisted technology run the risk of overlooking the disabled talent community. It's important, therefore, that the content of online ads be in full compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Doing so will both acknowledge the organization's respect for the potential contribution of such individuals and, as a result, generate a more inclusive yield of applicants. In addition, job postings should include information on how people with disabilities can request an accommodation during the application process and what will happen after they do so. Optimally, this information will provide clear and concise instructions on how to make such a request and indicate how long it will take for the employer to reply and in what format that reply will be transmitted.

A job posting works best when it operates as a talent relationship building platform rather than as simply a company information transmission. Building a relationship, however, can't be accomplished in today's talent market with out-of-date best practices. What's needed instead is a set of modern Nexxt Practices® that use both vocabulary and content to convey an organization's respect for high performers.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 Why is it now necessary to replace traditional best practices with a new approach when crafting online recruitment advertising?
- 02 What three things must a job posting now do to advance an employer's competitiveness in today's talent market?
- 03 What is the primary purpose of a job posting in the War for the Best Talent and how does it accomplish that objective?
- 04 What is the role of a job posting in shaping the candidate's experience with an employer and its recruiting process?
- 05 What is the Golden Rule of Recruiting and why is it so important to effective recruitment advertising in today's talent market?

The Format For a Nexxt Practices® Job Posting

A Nexxt Practices® job posting is formatted for both the realities of today's working population and the specific attributes of high performers. Research has found that today's adult population has a much shorter attention span than that of earlier workers. People are so busy and so bombarded by information that they are easily and often quickly distracted. That makes it especially hard to connect with them in a meaningful way online. And, it's even worse with people who are already employed as is the case with almost all high performers – they have an especially short attention span. The only way to reach them with a job posting, therefore, is to organize its content so that it is easily accessed and rapidly understood.

Some suggest that this situation requires a job posting to be extremely short. LinkedIn, for example, conducted a survey of its members and found that “job posts with 150 words or less got candidates to apply 17.8% more frequently than job posts with 450 to 600 words.”⁹ That's fine if you're using a “come one-come all” recruiting strategy and are simply looking to maximize the number of applicants generated by a posting. If, on the other hand, you care as much about who applies as you do about how many applications you receive, you need a different approach. You need to use a Nexxt Practices® or “NP job posting.”

The goal of an NP job posting is not to generate more applicants; it is to generate more quality applicants – more applications by high performers. To do that, it is created with the Goldilocks Guide to Content. It doesn't provide too much content, which can feel overwhelming or worse be perceived as abusing people's time, or too little which often attracts “impulse applicants” – those who don't really care much about what they're applying for. An NP job posting provides just the right amount of content for a high performer

to make an informed decision about whether or not they may be interested in an employment opportunity.



KEY POINT

An NP job posting provides just the right amount of content for a high performer to make an informed decision about whether or not they may be interested in an employment opportunity.

Of course, the challenge in applying the Goldilocks Guide to Content is knowing what is “just the right amount of content.” The answer isn't a specific number of words, but instead what kind of words are used and the format in which they are presented. In other words, an NP job posting is written to respect the candidate by:

- » providing exactly the information they want in order to determine if a job opening is a career advancement opportunity for them; and
- » organizing that information in a way that allows them to access it easily in order to understand rapidly whether it might be a change worth making.

In effect, the Goldilocks Guide to Content implements the Golden Rule of Recruiting. It explicitly tailors the presentation of a job posting for a single, specific cohort of the workforce: high performers.

To accomplish that objective, a NP job posting has three sections:

01 THE HOOK

The Hook is a short but hard-hitting summary of both the career advancement opportunity an organization is offering and the organization's value proposition – what makes it special – as an employer. It is just enough of the right information to intrigue a high performer to read on. In the posting, this section should be titled, **Our Opportunity.**

02 THE ENTICEMENT

The Enticement is a description of the opportunity the organization is offering, using the five kinds of information that capture the imagination of high performers and persuades them to act. It tells them:

- » What they will get to do,
- » What they will get to learn,
- » What they will get to accomplish,
- » With whom they will get to work, and
- » How they will be recognized and rewarded.

In the posting, this section should be titled, **What's In It For You.**

03 THE CALL TO ACTION

The Call to Action is a statement that urges the prospect to apply for the opening or, if it isn't a good fit for them or the timing isn't right – to take one or both of two additional steps:

- » bring the posting to the attention of a friend or colleague who might be a good fit (because high performers know other high performers); and/or
- » add their contact information to the organization's mailing list so they can be kept apprised of other opportunities (and nurtured as a potential applicant through the organization's recruitment marketing activities).

In the posting, this section should be titled, **The Options You Have.**



KEY POINT

A Nexxt Practices® job posting should be organized in three sections that enable high performers to easily access and rapidly understand an organization's career advancement opportunity.

Such a job posting will typically run from 700-1,000 words in length. Without proper formatting, that amount of information could be off-putting for some high performers. However, the use of three distinct sections, each with a title that relates it to the reader's interests enhances its accessibility and comprehension. It enables them to read as much as they want depending on their interest. It's not too much or too little, but what they can quickly decide is just right for them.

In addition, to make the content even more accessible, it should be laid out in a way that allows the reader to scan the message and identify its main points. Rather than using the thick, pithy paragraphs of a position description, therefore, an NP job posting uses headlines – a single sentence or two at most – followed by three-to-five bullets – short, declarative statements that are visually set apart – to convey its opportunity. There's no fluff that has to be waded through, but instead the reader's time is respected by offering them a focused presentation of exactly what they want to know.

Here's how such a job posting is composed:

OUR OPPORTUNITY

This section should include a sentence (or two at most) followed by three-to-five bullets that call out and emphasize the key advantages offered to high performers by both the opportunity and the organization.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

This section should be a series of paragraphs addressing the five aspects of what's in an opportunity for high performers. Each of the paragraphs should be formatted as a one-to-two sentence headline, followed by three-to-five bullets that add explanatory and/or corroborating details. Those details should be selected to both inform and fascinate high performers, to enhance their understanding and capture their imagination of what the job could be for them.

THE OPTIONS YOU HAVE

This section should include a one-to-two sentence headline followed by three bullets.

- » The first bullet should encourage the reader to apply for the opening and provide a link to the organization's application form.
- » The second bullet should encourage the reader to stay in touch with the organization and provide a link to its mail list sign-up form.
- » The third bullet should encourage those who decide not to apply to bring the opening to the attention of a colleague or friend who might be a better fit for it.

An NP job posting reimagines online classified advertising as an exercise in relationship-building that is tailored to the unique interests, status and behavior of high performers. Unlike traditional classified ads or even best practice job postings, it presents its message in a format that subliminally recasts the employer-candidate interaction as a communication between equals about an opportunity that will benefit both of them.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 What is the Goldilocks Guide to Content and how is it applied in an NP job posting?
- 02 What is "just the right amount of content" in an NP job posting and who determines it?
- 03 What are the three sections of an NP job posting and what are their specific roles?
- 04 How is the content in each section of an NP job posting formatted and why is it done that way?
- 05 What are the three options a high performer is given at the end of an NP job posting and why are they important?

Section III Module 11

The Title of an NP Job Posting

The reality is oddly oxymoronic: many of today's job postings are a modern medical miracle. They're a cure for insomnia in 500 words or less. They don't connect with or engage high performers, but instead read like an online version of a 20th century newspaper classified ad. They are soporific. They will recruit the desperate and the devil-may-care, the middle-of-the-road and the mediocre, but they have no ability whatsoever to turn high performers into applicants.

To achieve that end – to activate passive, high caliber talent – recruiters must recognize and respect what makes high performers different from all other employment prospects. It is a difference that stems from one distinctive attribute: they are so good at what they do, they are almost always employed. In order to recruit them, therefore, an organization must persuade them to redirect their careers, to move out of their comfort zone and into a new and potentially advantageous, but also potentially dangerous place.

A job posting has to convince them to set aside what they know and roll the dice with an organization they don't know, to abandon what is certain and accept what is uncertain, to replace what they have in hand with the promise of something better. In essence, a job posting must inspire them to reimagine their future, and that's impossible, at least with ads that focus exclusively on an employer's job specifications with a couple of sentences about its benefits thrown in for color. To be effective with high performers, a job posting has to present an open position from their perspective – with what's in it for them – and begin with a signal – an unignorable sign – that captivates their attention.

An NP job posting creates such a signal the same way it's done in a novel or a movie. The movie itself has to tell a good story, of course, but equally as important, it has to be introduced with a fascinating

hint of what's to come. It has to have a title that tantalizes the reader with the prospect of something they must not bypass or miss. Part of what gave the blockbuster *Gone With the Wind* its magic, for example, was the intriguing mystery of its title. If the film hadn't been the adaptation of a bestseller, if it had had to rely solely on its title and that title had been *The Story of a Plantation*, it would have had a very difficult time attracting an audience when it first appeared in theatres. Similarly, no matter how advantageous an employment opportunity may be – and no matter how well its story is told by a job posting – it will not get the attention it deserves unless that job posting has an unignorable title.



KEY POINT

In order for a job posting to reach and influence the behavior of a high performer, it must first attract them with a title they cannot ignore.

The development of such an unignorable title begins with research in the right places. Uncovering the key elements of a title that fascinates high performers requires an investigation that looks past the traditional sources for such content. It means no longer relying on:

THE HR DEPARTMENT

Although not true everywhere, too many HR Departments simply resort to the job title on the organization chart as the job posting title.

High performers ignore such titles and look for those that relate to how they see themselves. For example, there's not a high performer on the planet who thinks of themselves as a Research Scientist Step 3, but there are many who see themselves as an accomplished Senior Research Scientist.

HIRING MANAGERS

Too many hiring managers are unable to offer any useful title suggestions because they rarely understand or even know what motivates high performers, including those in their own team. All too often, their default position is to use the title of the job posting the last time the position was advertised, a strategy that virtually guarantees it will be out-of-date and ineffective.

Instead, the best sources of insights into what will entice high performers to read and consider a job posting are other high performers who are already employed by the organization, especially those who are filling roles similar to the opening being advertised. They are the best surrogates for actual employment prospects among top talent in the market. What fascinates them is almost certain to fascinate others just like them.

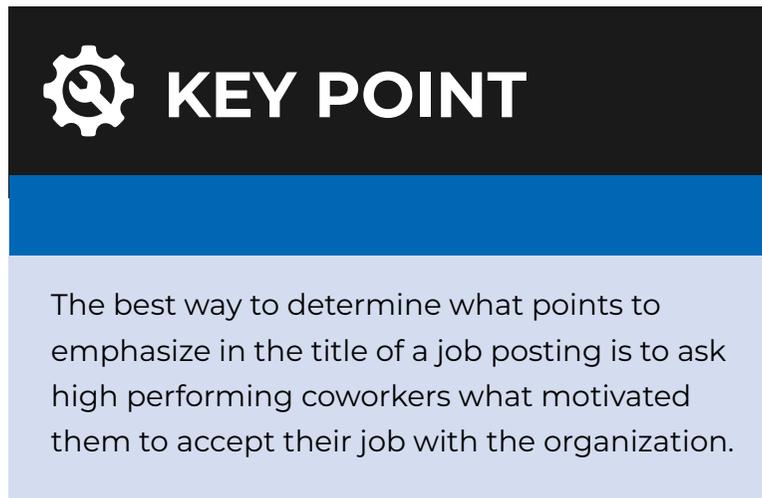
Pinpoint that information by asking them:

- » "What attracted you to your job and to this organization?"
- » "What made the job stand out from other openings you were considering?"
- » "What was it that convinced you to accept the offer you received?"

This type of investigation, of course, is exactly what marketing professionals do when determining what will appeal to the potential consumers of a new product. They hold focus groups with the demographic most likely to buy the product and search for the language and presentation concepts that will move them to notice the product and then decide to purchase it. They ask questions, test assumptions and get feedback on alternative approaches, all to

acquire an in-depth understanding of the psychology of the buyer, of what motivates them to act.

Recruiters, however, seldom have the time for such a formal research process. They must deal with the ongoing process of filling current openings. Nevertheless, they can develop the same understanding because they have an advantage that marketers lack. They have access to inside information. They can speak with previous buyers of a similar product – their coworkers – and ask them to explain what went into their accepting the job they now have. No focus group is required, just a simple conversation that explores what made them initially interested in the job and say “Yes” when it was finally offered to them.



KEY POINT

The best way to determine what points to emphasize in the title of a job posting is to ask high performing coworkers what motivated them to accept their job with the organization.

The insights acquired from those coworker discussions should then be used to craft a job posting title with the following characteristics:

It uses terms that make it easy for high performers to find the posting.

As previously noted, high performers never search for a job, they look for a career advancement opportunity that is appropriate for them. To find such an opening, they often use a browser and terms that describe who they are or who they aspire to be. Therefore, a job posting title should include the specific skill (e.g., business development, account management, algorithm design) or occupational role (e.g., pediatric nurse, senior engineer, bookkeeper) that is most likely to be used when high performers look for an opening that matches their self-image.

It features an alluring aspect that makes the title (and the opening it introduces) irresistible to high performers.

A job posting title should include the one factor that makes it too tantalizing for high performers to ignore. It can be an aspect of the job itself (e.g., the opportunity to work with world class colleagues or to develop a new product) or something about the employer (e.g., its mission, brand stature or even its location). It is the element in the title that will differentiate the opening from all of the others a high performer will likely uncover, and thus be the one they consider first.

It avoids unprofessional terms that turn off high performers.

A job posting title represents the organization with the opening and as such either advances or harms the stature of its brand. Therefore, the title should not include terms that are faddish and/or simplistic (e.g., “We’re looking for a ninja salesperson.”) or overused and/or dated (e.g., “If you’re an all star programmer, we want you.”). Similarly, it should avoid all caps – the online convention for shouting – which is often seen as unprofessional, as well as internal job titles (e.g. Program Manager Tier 2) that are both meaningless and irritating to an outsider.

It is the right length for high performers.

The title of a job posting should adhere to the Goldilocks Rule. It should not run so long it puts off high performers or be so short it fails to interest them in or, worse, leaves them in the dark about an opening. Instead, the title should provide the right content expressed in 40-to-60 characters and spaces to inform and entice the right demographic for the job. That constraint makes writing an effective job posting title one of the most challenging tasks in recruitment advertising. It requires creativity, English language skills and a flair for marketing.

Finally, it's helpful to think of a job posting title as a neon sign outside an organization's door. Its purpose is to catch the attention of the busy people who are passing by. It must be intriguing enough to get those people to stop and pay attention and interesting enough to cause them to open the door and peer inside the organization. If it does that, it's been successful. It's positioned the visitors in just the right place to see what's inside the organization, which is the purpose of the job posting message that follows it.

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 Why is the title of a job posting so important to an online ad's ultimate effectiveness with high performers?
- 02 Where should the research occur for pinpointing the elements to be included in a job posting's title and why should it be done there?
- 03 What specific elements should be included in a job posting title to make it irresistible to high performers?
- 04 Why should a job posting title always be crafted with professional and non-faddish terms?
- 05 Why is writing an effective job posting title one of the most challenging tasks in recruitment advertising?

The Content of an NP Job Posting

Job postings – at least those that attract the attention of high performers – are not classified ads or internal position descriptions repurposed online. They are written and visual documentaries designed to engage and enchant busy people. They are visual because they should, whenever possible, include relevant video or photos that captivate and inspire high performers, and they are written because high performers need details that are informative and persuasive. In effect, the two media work in tandem to convey a single message: this isn't just another job for anybody, this is a unique career advancement opportunity for the right high performer.

In order to fulfill those roles, the video and written content must be carefully assembled. In an NP job posting, they will create a candidate experience that is similar to a person's first few minutes after watching a great movie, play or concert. By the time they come to the end of the ad, they have been so fascinated by what they seen and read, endorphins have been released, leaving them in a state of expectant hopefulness. It is that state that motivates them to seek out a way to perpetuate the experience, which is of course when the ad invites them to submit an application. In effect, an NP job posting acts exactly as a creative work, developed not by an artist or author but by a skilled human resource or talent acquisition professional.

Creating such ads, however, is all too often precluded by the requisition workload assigned to individual recruiters in today's organizations. They are each responsible for filling so many open



positions, they simply do not have the time to craft a job posting that will be effective in the War for the Best Talent. Therefore, an important preliminary task for many recruiters is to educate HR and Talent Acquisition leaders about the need to support the development and use of this new kind of job posting. They must convince their leaders that only those ads will enable them to meet their fiduciary responsibility. Only those ads will position them to maximize the return they (and their team) achieve on an organization's investment in recruitment advertising.

In addition, it should also be pointed out that such ads, once created, become an organizational asset. Since employers often repetitively recruit for the same kind of talent or even the same job, the NP job posting need not be recreated in totality each time it's used. Rather, it can simply be updated and/or tailored, as necessary, for a specific opening. In effect, it acts as a template that not only saves time and effort for the veterans on the recruiting team, it provides new recruiters with a job aid that will jump start their acquisition of high performers.

Once a commitment to using NP job postings is made, TA leaders have two options for developing them:

They can do so by setting aside the time for and prioritizing the creation of NP job postings by the organization's own recruiters. In many cases, this option will also require that the recruiting team's members be trained in the basic principles and practices of assembling such ads.

Alternatively, they can contract out ad creation to an outside supplier, if one with the appropriate competencies can be identified. However, those ads reflect on the organization's employment brand, so the recruiting team is still responsible for ensuring the quality of the job postings produced by the supplier.

In both cases, it is also essential that the development and use of the job postings adhere to the following Nexxt Practices®.



KEY POINT

An NP job posting is a creative work that assembles the written word and video into a message with the power to sway the behavior of high performers.

The Content of the Job Posting

As discussed in Module 10, the content of an NP job posting doesn't deliver the information an organization wants job seekers to know about an opening, but instead provides the information a high performer seeks to uncover about the career advancement opportunity being offered by the organization. It tells them:

- » What they will get to do,
- » What they will get to learn,
- » What they will get to accomplish,
- » With whom they will get to work, and
- » How they will be recognized and rewarded.

The net effect is to transfer the essential elements of a job into a frame of reference that holds the attention and interest of high performers.

To enhance its accessibility even further, this content should be formatted in three titled sections in the job posting:

**OUR
OPPORTUNITY**

**WHAT'S IN IT
FOR YOU**

**THE OPTIONS
YOU HAVE**

OUR OPPORTUNITY

The Our Opportunity section is the first paragraph of an NP job posting. It introduces the special value proposition of both the job opening and the employer that is offering it. To optimize its accessibility, it uses an introductory sentence or two (the ad's

headline) and then three-to-five bullets to draw a high performer's attention to:

- » What they will get to do,
- » With whom they will get to work, and
- » How they will be recognized and rewarded.

Our Opportunity introduces the reader to the ad's content with a title that uses the plural pronoun "our" to position the opening as a partnership, a joint endeavor that will serve both the high performer and the employer. The word choice also establishes a subliminal connection with the reader and, in doing so, continues the relationship building process begun with the job posting's title. It then focuses on the three key triggers of change for high performers: their prospective role in the organization, the individuals who will be their peers on-the-job and their potential impact in and accomplishments with the organization.

This presentation should avoid both exaggeration and obfuscation and, instead, paint a clear and accurate, but also vivid portrait of the opportunity. It should not use cliches (e.g., hard charger, dream team) or flowery or bureaucratic wording, but should inform the reader by conveying the message in the second person and with every-day language that will reenforce the emerging relationship between them and the organization (e.g., "You will have a chance to work alongside some of the smartest people in the ...").

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

Following the Our Opportunity section is What's In It For You – the centerpiece of the ad's value proposition for high performers. It adheres to the same guidelines as those used to compose Our Opportunity, but provides more detail in a series of paragraphs and bullets that address the full range of what high performers want to

know about a career advancement opportunity:

- » What they will get to do,
- » What they will get to learn,
- » What they will get to accomplish,
- » With whom they will get to work, and
- » How they will be recognized and rewarded.

This section has several goals:

Differentiation

Done well, the content of this section will set an organization and its job opening apart from other organizations and their openings in several ways. The section's:

- » title, which indicates the ad has been designed to serve the reader as well as the organization;
- » focus, which features the information high performers care about most in a format that is easy to access; and
- » word choice, which underscores the organization's emphasis on building a relationship with the reader.

A Peak Experience

By avoiding the employer-centric focus of traditional classified advertising – by explicitly addressing the interests and aspirations of individual candidates – the content in this section enables the organization to make a credible claim of doing something truly extraordinary. Its presentation of the five categories of information that high performers want to know about a job opening actually enables them to make an informed judgment about whether that opportunity will be fulfilling for them. And while high performers almost never move to a new job for a shorter commute or even for more money, they do accept new roles that give them the opportunity to express and experience more of their talent.

Despite its wide use in recruiting, the word “talent” is neither well understood nor even clearly defined. It is typically associated with figures in sports and entertainment and with those who forge scientific and technological breakthroughs. According to this conventional view, talent is something only special people possess, and that is simply incorrect.

Talent is the capacity for excellence. It is also a defining attribute of the human species. It is as much a part of being human as our opposable thumb. Said another way, every person has talent. It’s hard to find in the workforce because very few people have had the chance to identify, develop and employ it.

Sadly, our educational system and employment processes prevent the vast majority of people from discovering and working with their talent. The one exception is the cohort of the workforce called high performers. They are the rare individuals who intuit their talent – which they often describe as a calling – or who have had the training that makes them self-aware. In either case, they are not only cognizant of their capacity for excellence, they are always searching for ways to demonstrate and expand it.

This section provides a way for them to conduct that search. For the first time ever, they will have the information they need to evaluate whether a career change will move them closer to the fulfillment derived from working with their inherent excellence or what the psychologist Abraham Maslow called self-actualization. As described in Wikipedia, “Self-actualization, in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, is the highest level of psychological development where the ‘actualization’ of full personal potential is achieved...”²⁴

That’s exactly the kind of peak experience for which high performers are searching. They want to be the best they can be, and an NP job posting details how the work they do for an organization is also a way for them to work on themselves, to move themselves closer to the perfection of their talent. It may or may not be the right way for one high performer or another, but they will all appreciate

the respect they’ve been shown in being able to make an informed decision.

Acknowledgement

This section also continues the ad’s relationship building by recognizing high performers as special prospects:

- » It uses words and phrases that promote the opportunity’s potential for continuing their record of sustained excellence – highlighting how it will enable them to demonstrate their commitment to high performance at work (e.g. “This role will enable you to build on your success in ...”)
- » It also provides an indication of the job’s importance to the organization by revealing to whom the incumbent will report and what success looks like (i.e., what they will be expected to be contributing to the organization – the key performance indicators (KPIs) with which they will be evaluated – after a specified period of time on-the-job).



KEY POINT

An NP job posting delivers its message with the frame of reference and the format that enables high performers to determine if a job opening will enable them to continue the perfection of their talent at work – to express and experience more of their capacity for excellence.

Additional Aspects of What's In It For Them

The What's In It For Them section of an NP job posting should also include the following information:

- » A quantified statement of the role's value to the organization. While the research shows that high performers do not typically work for money, they do use salary as a measure of their own career advancement and where they stand in their field of work, so the job posting should indicate the compensation or at least the compensation range for the opening.
- » A description of the organization's culture and work style, tailored to high performers. This content should position the organization's environment as a great place for them to achieve their career advancement goals. In particular, but only if appropriate, it should highlight the organization's mission, leadership vision, and values as they relate to and support the individual expression of excellence on-the-job.
- » Assuming it's true, a strong statement regarding the organization's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) as a core feature of its human capital management strategy. To be more than a platitude, however, the job posting should provide evidence of that commitment by linking to specific implementing steps or practices described on the organization's career site and/or in statements made by a diversity of peers in an embedded video (see next page).
- » A short video that features coworkers and hiring managers talking about how the organization advances individual growth and success on-the-job. While the video should have good production values (and include closed captioning to promote accessibility), it should avoid appearing too staged or glossy. Informal, candid and genuine statements by individuals whom high performers will see as their peers will have the greatest impact. If time permits, it's best to feature coworkers in the unit where the opening is

located or, at a minimum, in the same field as that required by the opening.

The goal of the video is two-fold:

First, it enables the organization to provide an engaging glimpse of what it's like to be employed there. A particularly effective approach is to position the video as the depiction of "a day at work" for a diversity of individuals describing how their employment with the organization has enabled them to excel at their job.

Second, Google has reported that video helps to improve search engine optimization (SEO) for a job posting. Since many high performing prospects start their search for a new job with that or another browser, the embedded video is likely to increase the probability a job posting will turn up in their search results.

- » An indication of where the job is located or if it can be performed remotely. In some cases, the location of a job can actually make it more appealing. If the research conducted among coworkers filling similar jobs (Module 11) reveals that to be the case, this section should underscore that point. On the other hand, if the job involves work from home (WFH), the section should provide information on the organization's policies and practices to promote teamwork and conduct individual assessments in such an environment.

THE OPTIONS YOU HAVE

An NP job posting always closes with a call to action. It requires time and effort to write or update such an ad, so it's important that it generate a fulsome return on that investment. There are three possible outcomes that will deliver such a return, and the call to action encourages high performers to select one or more of them.

First, readers are invited to apply.

Of course, this action produces the best outcome as it generates applications from high performers. As a reminder, the ad should not require the submission of a resume, but instead invite readers to complete an application form. To be effective, however, that form must not be overly long or complex.

Job seekers, and high performers in particular, won't tolerate lengthy or overly detailed application forms, at least at first. When they encounter them, they simply walk away. And sadly, that is happening more and more frequently. In fact, surveys indicate that the application abandonment rate is now as high as 60 percent and can be as high as 90 percent in some situations.²⁵ In other words, having written a great ad that was effective enough to engage high performers and convince them to apply, recruiters are losing more than half of those applicants because their application form is too tedious to complete.

The better course, therefore, is to use a two-step application process.

- » The first step involves an application form that is short and collects just enough information to pre-qualify an individual as potentially a good fit with an opening. Those that fail to meet that standard should be immediately informed and invited to apply for other positions.
- » In the second step, those who do meet the potentially qualified threshold should be contacted by a recruiter who both conducts

a more detailed assessment of their fit with the opening and continues the relationship building effort. Those determined to be a less than optimal fit after that assessment should be immediately informed and invited to apply for other positions. Those determined to deserve additional screening should then be invited to fill out a detailed application, which they are more likely to do, having been contacted by a recruiter and provided with additional information about both the opening and the organization.

Those determined to deserve additional screening should then be invited to fill out a detailed application. At that point, they will have been contacted by a recruiter and provided with additional information about both the opening and the organization, so there is a much higher likelihood they will tolerate the longer form.

Second, readers are asked to make a referral.

Some of the high performers who read the job posting will likely decide the opening is not a good fit for them or the timing isn't right for them to make such a move. Rather than simply discontinuing its interaction with them, however, the organization should use the job posting to encourage them to tell friends and colleagues about it. This "prospect referral" mechanism implicitly acknowledges a simple fact: high performers are the most likely group in the workforce to know other high performers.

Third, readers are encouraged to stay in touch.

If a reader has read a job posting all the way to its Call to Action, they are "a qualified lead" – an individual who may not apply for the current opening, but is more likely than the norm to apply for a subsequent opening in the organization. It's important, therefore, that the organization stay in touch with them. To that end, it should offer to keep them informed about future openings in which they

might be interested (i.e., a job alert) and to make them a “friend of the family” by sending them periodic information about activities at the organization so they get to know it better. Such recruitment marketing messages should continue the organization’s relationship building by highlighting the activities and accomplishments of its employees – the people who would be their coworkers and peers.

Some Final Additional Factors

Other factors that can enhance the success of an NP job posting include:



Posting the ad at the right time.

According to LinkedIn’s research, “Candidates view and apply most often on Monday. Posting your job early in the week may yield more applications over the first few days. Most applications occur on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday with just 15% coming in over the weekend.”²⁶ High application rates are important, of course, but even more central to an organization’s success are such rates among high performers, so that’s the metric an organization should track and adjust to, as appropriate.

In addition, for a job posting to appear on Monday, it will often have to be uploaded either over the weekend or even on the Friday before, so it’s important to know the publishing schedules of the job boards an organization is using and plan accordingly.



Adding a social element to the posting.

Socialize the ad by drawing on the Socratic method to establish a “silent dialogue” between the organization and the prospect. The ad can create an indirect conversation

with a high performer by using embedded questions to evoke a response from the reader. For example, after describing its team-oriented approach to accomplishing work, the job posting might include the following question:

“Do you find that you perform best when working in a team?”

The direct nature of the question will likely cause the reader to pause and consider their answer. It pulls them even deeper into their consideration of the opening and adds the subliminal message that the organization wants to build a relationship with them.



Using gender-neutral vocabulary.

The organization should make real its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) by avoiding pronouns and terms that signal an inattention to bias as well as requirements that could limit the applicant pool by gender. Available resources that can help eliminate such problems include:

- » [LinkedIn’s Ultimate Recruiting Toolbox](#)
- » [The Gender Decoder for Job Ads](#)

Learning Reinforcement

Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you've mastered the content in the module.

- 01 What is often the first task for a recruiter in their development of an NP job posting and why is it so central to their success?
- 02 What are the three key elements of the Our Opportunity section of an NP job posting and how should they be presented?
- 03 How does an NP job posting differentiate an organization and its opening from other organizations and their openings that are targeting high performers?
- 04 How does the content in the What's In It For You section of an NP job posting provide high performers with a peak experience?
- 05 What are the three options in the final section of an NP job posting and why are they important?

SECTION IV:

A FINAL WORD ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Congratulations!

You've now completed the TAtech Learning & Certification Program in Talent Technology Implementation Management. You now possess the necessary knowledge to guide an organization's successful introduction of a technology-based talent acquisition product. You know how to:



Oversee and/or participate in the internal implementation of products designed to perform a wide range of recruiting roles – from candidate administration and relationship building to assessment and selection; and



Develop and use job postings that leverage the power of external technology-based products designed for online recruitment advertising – from job boards and employment marketplaces to job search engines and aggregators

Regardless of whether the implementation occurs internally or externally, however, your contribution will help to ensure the organization achieves:

- » the key performance indicators (KPIs) it has targeted for acquiring or using these products; and
- » the fullest possible return on its investment (ROI) in them.

Having achieved this standard of performance, you are now eligible to take the qualifying exam for the **Certified Technology Implementation Professional (CTIP)** credential offered by TAtech: The Association for Talent Acquisition Solutions. This credential is the only such recognition available to HR and Talent Acquisition professionals. It attests to their singular ability to help organizations effectively tap the power and promise of advanced technology in talent acquisition.

For more information about sitting for the certification exam, please contact [TAtech](#).

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