

Abstract

The demand for high-potential employees is expected to rise in the coming decades, and the shifting balance of supply and demand of this human resource will lead to more competition. Research has shown the potential problems organizations face in the near future regarding the recruitment of these well-educated workers. Recruitment has been identified in the literature as the most important single human resource activity. The recruitment of high potentials is, therefore, an essential facet of future business strategy. However, there is a lack of research in the field of targeted recruitment. This study used the grounded theory method to explore the implementation of segmentation and targeting in the recruitment of high potentials in the pharmaceutical industry in Europe and the United States. The implementation of these instruments can best be understood as an interaction between four categories: the identified internal need for certain groups of high potentials; the scarcity of these groups of high potentials in the market; the attitudes, opinions, and strategies within human resources; and the technological capabilities. Depending on the situation, different recruitment instruments are used to recruit high potentials. However, the interviewees did not have a homogeneous definition of high potentials nor do they use an explicit recruitment profile, though they implicitly search for the high-potential characteristics of intelligence and agility, engagement, the ability to perform in various environments, and the ability to manage one's energy levels. In addition to research aimed at creating a better understanding of the context and consequences of a more tailored approach to high-potential recruitment, future research could, for example, compare the practices used in the pharmaceutical industry with those used in other industries, thus providing new insights.

Use of Market Data in the Recruitment of High Potentials

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