

To better compete in the digital age, organizations need to evolve their talent acquisition function. This IDC Analyst Connection discusses the role of the next-generation recruiter.

## *The Next-Generation Recruiter: Strategic Coach and Talent Advisor*

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**Questions posed by:** Jobvite

**Answers by:** Megan Buttita, Research Director, Emerging Trends in Talent Acquisition, Worldwide Services Group

### **Q. Where are most organizations today with transforming recruiting into a more strategic function?**

**A.** Talent acquisition (TA) has been discussing how to transform recruiting into a strategic function for quite some time. Most organizations are still lagging in their journey to evolve TA or don't know where to begin. Some don't have the right people or teams in place; others don't have the right technology. For many companies, it is a combination of all these things.

By shifting to a consultative, talent advisor approach internally, recruiters will have the ability to influence key talent and workforce planning initiatives with business partners and hiring managers, which is essential to being competitive in today's market. As a coach to candidates (both internal and external), recruiters set prospects up for success throughout the hiring process — leading to quality hires, more informed and engaged employees, a successful employer brand, and lower attrition rates.

When organizations are transforming recruiting into a strategic function, one of their biggest oversights is to turn to a technology solution before they look at people and processes. Instead, organizations should assess their overall TA maturity, which means looking at teams and people as well as examining data and technology to uncover broken — and successful — processes. Understanding where challenges and opportunities exist will give TA teams a realistic place to begin their transformation much more effectively than if they just put a technology in place and try to retrofit people and processes into it.

### **Q. How can recruiters make the transition to coaches or talent advisors?**

**A.** First, we must recognize that this transition will not happen overnight. A great deal of change management needs to occur. It has to start with leadership buy-in and be a part of the larger organizational strategy, with IT and finance as champions for the transformation. My recommendation to TA organizations as they make this strategic transition is to model how other departments and roles have digitally transformed. Marketing offers a blueprint for how to strategically evolve during the digital era. IT project managers can also provide the structure and guidance needed to help the TA organization transform.

TA departments and recruiters must understand how human/machine interaction will help in this transition. Communicating and having a solid project management process in place will be crucial. Recruiters also need to understand how technology will free up time for them to become coaching partners and talent advisors. They will no longer spend multiple hours a day performing the administrative work of the past. Instead, they will be able to have more strategic conversations around internal and external market realities — conversations that must be prioritized in the current labor climate. This transition will give recruiters the ability to speak with the business and become influencers rather than provide reports without context that don't answer key business goals or produce valuable insights.

As TA teams begin or continue their transformation, it's important that they look within the organization for the support and talent needed to change. This could mean reskilling, upskilling, or borrowing talent from other parts of the organization for project-based work. They should look for talent outside of the box and focus on diversity of thought and background among other qualities to model a reconfigurable and inclusive function for the rest of the organization.

## Q. How will technology enable the next-generation recruiter?

**A.** Technology is transforming recruiters into talent advisors and strategic coaches by supporting, automating, and scaling TA for the workforce of the future. Emerging technology is being leveraged to modify redundant, repetitive, and administrative tasks. Examples include scheduling interviews, matching candidates with open (and future) positions, automating recruitment marketing workflows, leveraging SMS to engage and attract candidates, using predictive task management, and utilizing cutting-edge assessment technologies to streamline the screening and selection process. The time savings enabled by these technologies will allow recruiters to be more creative in their roles, take courses to learn new skills, or become part of different project teams to better understand the functions for which they recruit.

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The importance of using personalized content for role-based strategies cannot be stressed enough. Companies face huge barriers when recruiting for roles the same way they always have. Having technology that can analyze large amounts of data coupled with a recruiter's understanding of business needs provides a holistic picture of where potential candidates, skills, and capabilities exist and can be targeted. Recruiters who can verbalize this data will be able to change the narrative from "this is how I feel" to "this is what the data is saying and what it means for our organization." This is where technology and visualization tools will have a huge impact on transforming recruiting into a strategic function.

## Q. What skills should the "recruiter as coach" have?

**A.** Recruiters are often a candidate's first point of contact with a company, which makes them the ultimate brand ambassadors. They should use this coaching position as a way to prepare candidates for conversations with hiring managers and to provide candidates with a glimpse of what working at the company will truly be like. Authenticity is key.

A recruiter's job is to be able to understand what the business needs are and translate that information for candidates, provide information about the potential trajectory of the role, and be transparent about the company culture. Strategic talent advisors listen to and have conversations with candidates — the days of reading off a script are over. The function is about engaging candidates and understanding their needs and how the organization can help candidates fulfill and support their dreams and goals.

Honing TA's storytelling skills with internal and external talent data promises to be a game changer. Because of changing requirements and capabilities as well as low talent supply, technology that provides information about the internal and external markets is necessary to compete for the best candidates. Not surprisingly, companies are often sitting on their own best talent; therefore, uncovering internal talent pools will be essential for the workforce of the future. Leveraging data in this way allows recruiters to have meaningful conversations about the constantly changing talent landscape within their organizations as well as in the broader labor market.

## Q. How can the recruiter as coach connect the dots between people, process, and technology?

**A.** Recruiters are at the center of the talent equation. As recruiting matures into a strategic advisory model, we should see the function as a seamless part of the organization. Recruiters are a company's eyes and ears. They can help uncover what is happening in the external market through candidate conversations, and they can do the same internally by leveraging data and analytics as well as listening to coworkers about what is happening in other parts of the organization.

Recruiters are the gatekeepers for a gold mine of competitive intelligence just waiting to be tapped. The key to this information lies in technology's ability to retrieve the intel quickly and accurately so that recruiters can connect the dots on what they are hearing about the processes that are working or not working and how this impacts an organization's talent priorities. Technology then becomes the infrastructure for the TA function to run effectively.

Just as recruiters need to focus on listening to and communicating with candidates in new ways, other business functions such as IT, human resources (HR), and the line of business (LOB) must work in tandem with their TA and recruiting teams to support this strategic transformation. It's important to think of this shift for recruiters and TA as an extension of what the entire organization is going through or has been through. As TA gains traction and attention on this journey, everyone who is part of the hiring process will benefit from harnessing the strength of a strategic recruiting function.

## About the Analyst



### ***Megan Buttita, Research Director, Emerging Trends in Talent Acquisition, Worldwide Services Group***

Megan Buttita is the Research Director for IDC's Emerging Trends in Talent Acquisition, responsible for the software and services practice. Mrs. Buttita's core research coverage includes evaluating the evolving landscape of the talent acquisition technology space including but not limited to sourcing, research, and candidate relationship management tools.

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