MAKING HIRING MORE STRATEGIC: PRACTICAL TIPS FOR HR AND USERS

AN OFFICIAL CLIENT UPDATE OF PT HEADHUNTER INDONESIA

On Monday, a Manager from a manufacturing company submits a recruitment request to the HR staff. He says:

"I need a Sales Manager with experience handling B2B in the HORECA market, who can also manage digital marketing tasks—something as simple as creating Instagram content. The maximum salary budget is 10 million rupiah. The position must be filled within a week. The candidate must be fluent in both English and Mandarin."

Hearing this, the HR Staff immediately has doubts about finding a candidate who meets all these requirements within a tight timeframe and limited budget. Despite his concerns, he chooses to stay optimistic and replies simply:

"Understood, Sir. I'll find someone."

He immediately begins searching through various channels, doing his best to meet the deadline, even though he knows deep down that the request is unrealistic. He doesn't raise any concerns or ask clarifying questions—he just focuses on trying to deliver.

A week later, during the next Monday meeting, the Manager asks for an update. The HR Staff admits that he hasn't found a suitable candidate yet. He doesn't offer any alternative solutions or suggestions either—only says that he will continue searching.

The Manager is visibly disappointed with the response.

The Blame Game

The story above is fictional, but similar situations like this happen all the time in the real world. Throughout my time working in the recruitment industry, I've witnessed many variations of this story, and friends in the same field have shared similar experiences of dealing with unrealistic or confusing hiring requests from users. What makes it worse is that these users are often supported by HR staff who act more like passive order-takers than strategic hiring partners.

This often leads to a familiar, unhelpful question: *Who's to blame—HR or the user? Who's being incompetent here?*

Personally, I'm not interested in playing the blame game. It doesn't bring us any closer to solutions. Instead, I'm more interested in how we can break free from this cycle and move toward a more productive, collaborative approach.

That's why, through this essay, I want to offer a practical guide to hiring—not just for recruiters, but also for users—so we can approach hiring not as a transactional task to be completed, but as a shared responsibility driven by mutual ownership and trust.

What HR Must Do:

1. Frame the Relationship with Users as a Partnership

Framing the relationship between HR and users as a partnership means shifting HR's mindset from being an order-taker to acting as a strategic hiring partner. This shift is crucial, especially when HR is faced with unrealistic and unclear expectations.

In this role, HR must have the confidence to speak up—not just to say "No, we can't do that," but to guide the user with, "Here's the best way to achieve your goal, based on what's possible in today's talent market." This involves offering alternative solutions, such as adjusting the scope of the role, reconsidering the required qualifications, or setting a more realistic hiring timeline.

Ultimately, it's about being solution-focused. HR shouldn't simply accept every request from the user upfront, but instead help educate the user and shape the hiring strategy into something achievable and effective. It's a collaborative process, not one where the user 100% dictates and HR follows, but one where both sides work together to make strategic decisions.

2. Guide Your User to Clearly Define The Recruitment Needs

When users come to HR with unclear or even unrealistic expectations about the role they want to fill, this is where HR must step in—not just to take notes, but to actively guide the user toward a more grounded and specific understanding of the talent they're looking for.

If the role or expectations are unclear, HR can start by doing these simple things:

- **Ask the Right Questions**

  A great way to open the conversation with the user is by asking, *"What specific outcomes would the new hire need to achieve during the probation period?"* Then, this can be followed by, *"What specific skills would they need to achieve those outcomes?"* These core questions help shift the focus from a generic job description to a results-oriented discussion.

  Once these are answered, HR can then explore further supporting details with the user, such as culture fit and personality. The key is to gather information that is as specific and concrete as possible, helping HR zero in on the kind of talent that will truly meet the organization's expectations.

- **Visualize the Role**

  Encourage the user to take a moment to visualize how the new hire will fit into the existing organization and how the new hire's presence might influence team dynamics and business outcomes. This simple yet often overlooked step can be incredibly helpful.

  For example, using a whiteboard or digital tool to map out the organizational chart and place the new role within it allows all stakeholders to clearly see where the new talent fits and how they'll interact with others. This not only helps clarify expectations but also promotes alignment across the team before the search begins.

- **Document Everything**

  After having a detailed discussion with the user about the role and expected responsibilities of the new hire, HR should document the key points discussed in the meeting in a clear and structured format file. This file should then be shared with the user or relevant stakeholders for confirmation to ensure alignment before proceeding with the

hiring process.

When done properly, this file demonstrates that HR has accurately understood and captured the user's needs. If the user later requests changes during the hiring process, HR can refer back to this agreed-upon file to clarify what was previously discussed and confirmed.

What Users Must Do:

1. Frame the Relationship with HR as a Partnership

Just as HR should approach the relationship with the user as a partnership, the reverse is equally important. The user must also see HR as an equal business partner in the shared goal of hiring the right person for the company.

In practice, this means being willing to listen to HR's feedback about challenges that arise during the recruitment process and being open to reconsidering or adjusting initial expectations when necessary. It's about creating a two-way dialogue where both sides contribute their expertise and collaborate toward a successful hire.

2. Be Clear on Outcomes, Not Just Qualifications

Instead of giving HR a long list of qualifications or "nice-to-have" traits, users should focus on what they actually need the new hire to achieve —especially during the probation period (typically the first 3–6 months). Users should ask themselves: *What does success look like in this role?*

By defining clear, outcome-based goals, users help HR align the search with the real priorities. This also increases the chances of finding candidates who may not meet every checkbox (because there's no such thing as a perfect candidate) but are fully capable of delivering the results the organization needs.

3. Give Clear Feedback to HR

One of the biggest obstacles in hiring is vague or delayed feedback from users. After HR shares candidate profiles or after users conduct interviews, users must give clear feedback to HR. Users should explain what they liked, what they didn't, and—most importantly—why a candidate wasn't a good fit.

Prompt and clear feedback will help HR refine the search more effectively, quickly, and increase the chances of finding a candidate who truly meets the organization's needs.

Conclusion

I've always believed that recruitment is a partnership—it's never just one person's job. While the HR department may carry the hiring KPIs, every stakeholder involved in the process, especially users, also plays a critical role in ensuring the success of a hire.

When HR and users can work in collaboration—sharing insights, being open to each other's input, and solving problems together—the chances of hiring the right talent improve significantly. Recruitment becomes less of a transactional task and more of a shared responsibility driven by mutual ownership and trust.

WRITTEN BY VIDI AZIZ
DESIGNED BY SHABRINA SEPTIANDINI

VIDI AZIZ
Senior Consultant
PT Headhunter Indonesia