

What's hot on the labor market?



Headhunters, like all recruiters, spend much time interviewing candidates. Naturally, we all come across things that may be not so obvious for those sitting on the other side. Here are the latest trends: LinkedIn. Yes or No?

Social media has changed the recruitment process and has become a very valuable sourcing pool. Some companies do fancy Facebook campaigns, while others approach candidates directly via LinkedIn or Twitter.

There was a very interesting discussion during a recent HR conference about social media and its place in the sourcing process. Surprisingly, many companies do not use this source. The comments ranged from "We don't need that—we have enough applicants anyway" to "We are from production, and don't have time for this" to a very surprising "If a candidate has his/her profile on Facebook or LinkedIn, that means he/she is not available for us." I suppose any external sourcing provider who is involved in talent management would question this.

My headhunting experience is different. We do not use Facebook in our active hunting, and any sensible person keeps his/her profile locked anyway. However, LinkedIn is frequently used. Especially in CEE it has become very popular and anybody who wants to know what is going on is there! Note that having a profile on LinkedIn doesn't mean an individual is on an active job hunt. Where else would a candidate learn quickly what the trends are, which positions are available, or what the current pay in a certain sector is?

We have done several regional CEE searches this year and LinkedIn has proven to be a very valuable source for both finding candidates and

checking references. I therefore recommend that everyone creates a professional profile, update it regularly, and use it to be "In."

References Matter

Some people may think a reference check isn't done anymore and the CV detailing one's experience, especially technical skills, is enough for a potential employer. On the contrary, the reference check has become a firm part of any recruitment process. Therefore, it is advisable to choose your reference contacts carefully. Do not presume the reference you get from your previous bosses and colleagues will all be positive. It may be worth it to check upfront before using someone as a reference. One way to do this is to have another person, such as a friend, call the reference and find out what they have to say. You may be surprised.

Another interesting thing is the references one gets via LinkedIn. A speaker at a recent HR conference said he got an invitation from one candidate whom he had met only once. Shortly after accepting, he got a request for a positive reference! Naturally, he didn't give any. Learning such a fact may decrease the credibility of any online reference. References are a very sensitive topic and I would say less is more in this case.

Video vs. In-Person interview

This is often important for people who have spent several years abroad, built a good career, and plan to return home. I have been asked several times whether it is

necessary to have an in-person interview with a potential client, or whether a video interview can work as well. It isn't necessary, though we recommend investing time and money to meet the client personally.

When using external recruiters, meeting them personally is also recommended. A recruiter should become your agent and therefore needs to get to know you and your needs. Furthermore, a recruiter is a valuable source of market information. Why not take advantage of this!

A video interview usually works well in the second phase of a recruitment process when a regional HQ wants to see what is going on, but the decision lies with local managers. Another frequent question is about travel cost reimbursement. The bad news is, this isn't usual in our region, particularly in the first or second round of interviews. Should you be chosen for the final round and invited to an office abroad, however, travel costs should be covered. When they are not, you should be questioning the client's seriousness.

Long Recruitment Processes, Positions Cancelled at the Last Minute

This has been a very hot topic recently. And yes, this is reality. Companies have begun to stop their hiring activities. We have seen two such cases recently. This naturally has to do with the global economic situation and the budgeting process for 2013. In other words, the positive growth

predictions from the 1st and 2nd quarters in 2012 didn't come to fruition, and now companies are reconsidering their 2013 plans. Many have decided to wait, postpone, or even freeze recruitment activities completely.

When is the Right Moment to Mention Compensation and Benefits?

This is a delicate topic and I am not going to say anything new. Interestingly enough, I recently had an international client interviewing Slovak candidates for a top position. The client called after one of the interviews and told me very openly, "You know, I suggest you don't work with that candidate anymore. Although he looked good on paper, his presentation in person just didn't match it. He was extremely self-confident, on the verge of being arrogant. Furthermore, he began by setting out his expectations for compensation and benefits." You can make your own judgment. I am not saying that any top foreign manager is always right, but in this case I have to agree.

Anyhow, let's conclude in a positive way. I would like to share one more piece of recent client feedback. The client decided some years ago to locate its CEE HQ in Slovakia. The main reason for this decision was not the country's location or low salaries. The main factor was the way Slovak people work, their positive attitudes and hands-on approach, along with their focus on results over self-praise. The client confirmed recently that setting up a Slovak HQ with top Slovak managers dealing with regional issues was the right decision.



Mariana Turanová
Managing Partner
Slovakia, TARGET
Executive Search CEE

