TALENT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION – ISSUE AND CHALLENGE FOR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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This article is dealing with the issue of talents recruitment and selection, as the essential element of ensuring organizational competitiveness. In this context, we intend to show the importance of the recruitment and selection of talents that makes the difference between organizations. In order to attract more talents, organizations should undertake concrete strategies of attracting talents and to develop the employer’s brand. The recruitment and selection of talents is also influenced by factors such as: demography, labor mobility, the changing business environment, etc. Moreover, the Moldovan demographic issues and awareness of the importance of human resources on the part of senior management have led to the need to approach this problem. The selection of talents in organizations can be achieved by applying a big variety of criteria. That’s why, in order to identify criteria for selecting talents in Moldovan organizations, has been realized a sociological survey by questionnaire. This survey covered 152 organizations from Republic of Moldova.

Key words: talent, recruitment, selection, employer's brand, selection criteria.

JEL Classification: M12; M19; M51; M54.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, when competitiveness between organizations is in a continuous growth and employees represent a resource whose value increases each year and which directly contributes to the economic performance, it requires a different approach of recruiting new employees. Moreover, to ensure a competitive advantage and achieve an organizational performance, many organizations were concerned with identifying and applying the most effective recruitment strategies and methods with the aim of attracting top professionals and talents. Thus, Lawler notes that more and more organizations realize that human resources can be considered the main source that provides competitive advantage [1].

In a knowledge-based economy, the role of talent increases significantly as a result of the impact it has on achieving organizational goals. However, today’s reduced number of working population reduces the number of talents, and increases competition between the organizations which are focused on this category of employees. According to the latest survey of the Manpower Group, more and more countries face the problem of employment vacancies. In 2015, Japan, Peru and Hong Kong were the top three countries that face the greatest difficulties in filling vacancies [19].

The problem of attracting talents is becoming more evident in Moldova. Although local employers recognize that talent shortages are a serious threat to the competitiveness of their businesses, many of them don’t take effective actions to resolve the matter.

For a long time, IQ, characterized by verbal, analytical and logical intelligence was and remains one of the elements or criteria applied in the selection process. The latest technological developments, have made more complex jobs and, very often, previous experiences aren't the most important aspect in the recruitment process.

Working in a century of uncertainty and constant change, organizations tend to attract capable people, who can adapt quickly to new requirements and that provide the highest possible results. This is one of the main goals that will count in the process of recruiting new candidates. This means that employee’s skills aren’t enough, they also should have a good potential to succeed to adapt to new requirements. Attracting good talents in the organization is already a problem for HR managers. That’s why, in order to highlight the importance of human resource, M. Armstrong argues that an organization is distinguished more by the type of activities and ideas implemented by staff than by acquiring modern technologies for production [1]. Although technologies, strategies and innovation represent the main elements that influence the competitive advantage, values created by them, will be better if they are managed efficiently by the human factor. Therefore, the competitive advantage will be achieved by those organizations that will be more effective in the process of attracting, developing and maintaining talents. Thus, Blass notes that the HR function has a key role in attracting and identifying talent, helped by the managers of organizational subdivisions [5]. However, in the process of recruiting talents, human resources’ mission is to identify talents, coordinate the recruitment of talents and to identify
managers responsible for evaluating talent powers. Therefore, an organization can be competitive when it’s better than others. In these circumstances, talents are those that can ensure organization’s competitiveness.

2. Theoretical and conceptual approach of talent

The concerns of researchers in the HR’s field, regarding the process of recruiting talents was noticed starting with 9th decade of the 20th century. Thus, there have been developed and proposed different definitions regarding talent. The earliest definitions have appeared in the Anglo-Saxon literature. That’s why, Miralles defines talent as an individual performance in a given activity [13]. In the literature, the talent is regarded as capital [15]. According to Sparrow, talent must be viewed against four types of capital:

- **Human capital** - the stock of skills, knowledge, personal and social responsibilities, embodied with the individual's ability to perform work tasks and produce economic values;
- **Social capital** - the totality of the present or potential resources that can be mobilized by the organization’s actors throughout social networks;
- **Political capital** - made up of the reputation of the person, reflecting previous activities in the respective field of activity, on the one hand, and capital representative - characterized by the ability to build effective and get support association for acquiring legitimacy through the use of traditional forms of power;
- **Cultural capital** - acquired habits in the process of socialization and transmitted to future generations within the organisation [7].

According to Peretti, talent is a 'gift' from birth, and education, training and experience is an opportunity that allows its development [16]. The author also mentions that talent is a quality of personality that can’t be transmitted, but different in behaviors in certain situations but manifests through different behaviors in certain circumstances. At the same time, D. Ulrich has a holistic vision over talent. In his opinion, talent represents means a combination between skills, contribution and commitment [20]. He notes that competence means that employees have the knowledge, skills and values necessary in the present and for future. Through commitment is understood that employees work hard, and do specific efforts for the organization’s success. Contribution means employee’s real effort to identify the purpose of his professional activity. Thus, the author concludes that competitiveness has to do with the head, commitment with the hands and feet, and the contribution with the heart.

Very often, talent is perceived as a result of graduation from a school or prestigious universities. For example, in French organizations talent is perceived as 'high potential' or 'very high potential'. Unlike the previous definitions, talent has become a synonym for the entire workforce in most organizations. Talent is viewed as a scarce resource. According to Barney, organizations ensure their sustainable competitive advantage when recruit and develop valuable and rare human resources. Therefore, talent can be considered a strategic resource for the organizations that provide competitive advantage. Starting from this, Boudreau and Ramstad promoted a new scientific concept - talentship. In their view, talentship is a combination of talent management and talent strategy [6].

3. Talent recruitment and selection

The process of providing with human resources is very important in the organization, because it implies both the responsibility of the offender and the selection of talents – the persons with the highest powers. Recruitment and selection of talents is an important part of talent management. In this context, Sloan and his colleagues have identified six key talent management processes, and grouped them into three groups:

- attracting and retaining – people become closer to the organization;,
- selection and integration - providing support for acquiring new roles;
- development and mobilization - encouraging people towards development and high performance [18].

In the recruitment process, the unknown can be a major problem. Therefore, in order to compensate the fear of the unknown, employers' challenge is to make the organization known and attractive. In this case, creating and communicating a compelling argument becomes imminent that cannot be ignored. For this, it’s necessary to take into account several elements. Firstly, there is the strategy of acquiring talents which is aimed at meeting the needs of talent. The second issue concerns the formulation of clear and convincing promises of employment by the organization to differentiate from competitors. Organization’s offer should be related to the professional future of the employee's duties and responsibilities to be performed, rewards. The third component aims to develop the employer brand as a process that facilitates attracting talents in the organization. The above factors contribute to increase the organization’s attractiveness against talents (Figure 1).
Fig. 1. Elements that ensure organization’s attractiveness

Source: [14].

According to the 1-st Figure, the left side is balanced and all elements have the same importance. In this case, we might consider that all elements are important, equally, for the employee. Conversely, the right side demonstrates that in the absence of an element, the other three elements must cover his absence. In this case, we might consider that all elements are equally important for the employee. Conversely, the right side demonstrates that in the absence of an element, the other three elements should cover its absence. It’s very important for organizations to make them more responsive to these expectations and, at the same time, formulate concrete promises. Therefore, organizations should implement four types of promises:

- the promise of reward – the fixed salary, variable salary, bonuses, incentives, financial rewards, non financial rewards etc.;
- promise of accountability - autonomy and freedom in the discharge of work, subordinate personnel management, budget management etc.;
- the promise of reputation - the organization’s credibility on the performance and image of the employees;
- organizational commitment - organization’s ability to develop employee’s skills both inside and outside.

Recruitment and selection is one of the most difficult decisions that organizations should take. Therefore, in order to convince that they have taken the best decision in the buying process, including human resources, talents, organizations must go through several stages (Figure 2).

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**Fig. 2. Talent acquisition process**

Source: [17].

Successful implementation of these three phases requires knowledge of the competences, skills and professional skills related job description and organization. In order to identify the most suitable person for the vacancy,
organizations apply different selection criteria, such as competence, professional communication skills, sense of responsibility, motivation, creativity, leadership qualities, etc.

At the same time, it should be noted that the applied selection criteria will depend on:

- the amount of vacancy;
- vacancy position in the organizational structure;
- complexity of the vacancy;
- recruitment and selection policy promoted by the organization, etc.

4. Factors that influence the process of recruitment and selection of talents in Moldova

Recruitment and selection process is influenced by several factors that may have direct or indirect implications, on attracting talents in the organization. For example, the most important factors that influence the process of attracting and selecting talents in the Moldovan organizations are listed below:

**Demographic trends.** Moldova is facing serious demographic problems. The reduced rate of birth, in the last 20 years, has led to an aging population, including the working population.

The aging trend of the Moldovan population is reflected in the statistics provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (Table 1).

Table no. 1. Indicators which reflect the aging of the Moldovan population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Developed by the author based on the information from the National Bureau of Statistics.

According to the 1st Table, during the years 2007-2016, the aging coefficient increased from 13.7% to 16.7%. In terms of gender, aging coefficient increased among women from 16.0% to 19.3%, while among men this indicator increased from 11.2% to 13.8%.

The same trends are observed in the indicator that reflects the average age of the population. In the analyzed period, this indicator has raised from 35.5 years in 2007 to 37.8 years in 2016. Similarly, we observe that the average age of women is higher than men. In 2016 this indicator was 3.4 percentage points higher among women compared to men.

**International migration of labour.** In the last 18 years, Moldova has been marked by a continuous process of emigration of the population. In the event of finding a job better paid abroad, the native work force emigrated to the rather large proportions. That’s why, the National Bureau of Statistics shows that there are over 300 000 people who work abroad.

Table 2 presents the top 9 countries the most Moldovan citizens lived in and had carried some professional activity during 2009-2015.

Table no. 2. The population of the Republic of Moldova aged 15 and over who were working or looking for a job abroad during 2009-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294,7</td>
<td>311,0</td>
<td>316,7</td>
<td>328,1</td>
<td>332,2</td>
<td>341,9</td>
<td>325,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>177.1</td>
<td>191.8</td>
<td>204.7</td>
<td>223.3</td>
<td>223.4</td>
<td>232.8</td>
<td>206.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data presented in Table 2 show that a large number of the local labour force is abroad in search of a job or working legally or illegally, having a certain job. Out of the total working population aged 15 and over, most of them are on the labour market in the Russian Federation. While in 2009, in the Russian Federation there were 60.9% of the total number working abroad aged 15 and over, then in 2014 this indicator reached 68.1%, decreasing to 63.3% in 2015.

The large share of the domestic labour force on the labour market in the Russian Federation was due to the unrestricted access to the country, but also to the good knowledge of the Russian language, which enables a faster integration of the Moldovan citizens into the labour market from this country. The restrictions forwarded by the Russian Federation to the domestic workforce reduced the number of Moldovan citizens working in this country by over 25,000 people compared to 2014. The economic crisis in 2008 largely led to increased unemployment in the EU countries, which resulted in the labour force reorientation from the community countries to the Russian Federation.

Changes in the economy and business structure. In the knowledge-based economy, increases the importance of general and vocational knowledge and skills, new trades and professions predominantly intellectual work. The existence of a gap between professional knowledge held and those required in the labor market. In many cases, the business is growing faster than vocational education. This causes the gap between knowledge and skills required in the labor market and those offered by vocational education institutions.

5. Applied methodology

In the process of selecting talents, organizations can apply different criteria, with the aim of selecting those people who correspond most closely to their vacancies. For this purpose, it was conducted a sociological survey by questionnaire. The questionnaire was used in 152 organizations and addressed HR managers or persons responsible for this area of activity. To ensure the representativeness, the survey comprised organizations located throughout the Republic of Moldova with different fields of activity (Figure 3).

Fig. 3. The structure of the surveyed organizations

In the research done below, there have been submitted several selection criteria for various categories of posts. That’s why, each surveyed organization, had to show what selection criteria they used. After processing the information, I noticed that, for the selection of talents, Moldovan organizations applies different criteria (Table 3).

Once the post is higher, grows the number of selection criteria which organizations apply in the process of recruiting talents. That’s why, in order to select talents for specialized posts, organizations apply frequently such criteria as: professional skills – 88.4%, work experience – 81.5%, leadership qualities – 80.1% and education – 75.3%.
Table no. 3. The criteria applied by respondent organizations in the selection of talent, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Execution posts (Workers)</th>
<th>Specialized posts</th>
<th>Managerial posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Level of general culture</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Professional skills</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Professional abilities</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Organisational abilities</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Leadership qualities</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Knowledge of foreign languages</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The motivation of the person</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The creativity of the person</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>IT skills</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Driving license</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The age</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by the author based on the done research.

These criteria are applicable to managerial posts too. In addition, for managerial posts we can highlight language skills. This criterion is applied by 76.9% of respondent organizations. It’s strange that, in the case of specialized posts, this criterion is used only by 28.8% of surveyed organizations. Although age is considered a discriminatory selection criterion, more than a quarter of the surveyed organizations, use it in the screening process of candidates for all categories of posts. That’s because organizations don’t realize that in this way, they violate the rights of a category of candidates.

6. Conclusions

Talent’s recruitment and selection represents an important issue for ensuring a competitive advantage. In order to be competitive, every organization should develop and implement concrete actions to attract talents. Otherwise, they may face various problems. Moreover, it’s essential to evaluate in advance the professional knowledge and skills of the required talents. Although, Moldovan organizations deal with lack of talents, most of them didn’t develop strategies to maintain the existing ones. Due to talent shortages, local organizations become increasingly worried about it. In these circumstances, in order to cover the need for talents, organizations will be required to identify other sources of recruitment and apply more complex methods of attracting candidates, such as starting to repatriate native labor.

Furthermore, the population’s aging and international migration of labour, have a direct impact on the process of the talents’ selection. Although, local organizations apply a multitude of talents selection criteria, lack of local labour leads them to hire people who don’t entirely correspond to their vacancies.

7. References