11 Ways the Role of the Recruiter Is Evolving in 2021
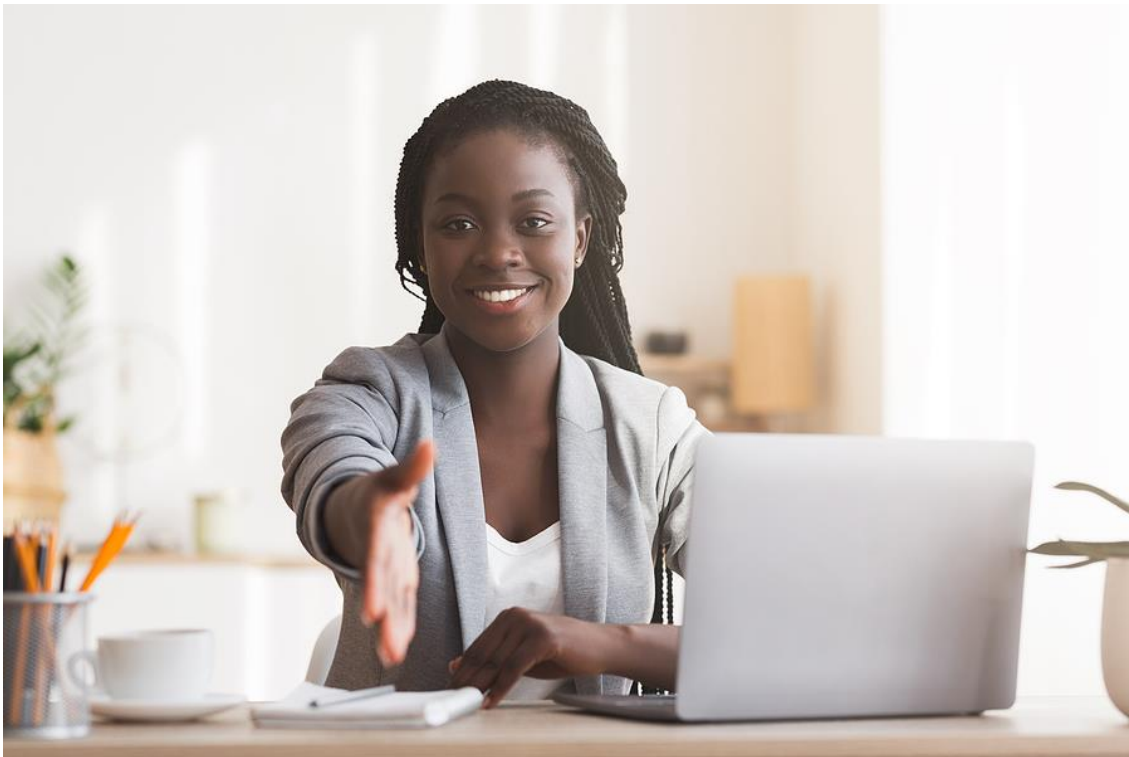
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By Ajay Kaul, managing partner of <u>AgreeYa Solutions</u>

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many job descriptions and roles have transformed, as recruiters and HR professionals found themselves at the forefront of crisis and risk management and a shift to remote work, among other challenges.

While tools and techniques for the virtual hiring process are easily accessible, both recruiters and job seekers are navigating an uncertain and unstable market. And, going forward, recruiters and HR professionals will have to pivot from tactical to strategic responsibilities, taking progressive steps to achieve their goals in the new normal.

According to a recent survey by Gallup, <u>almost 60% of U.S. employees</u> who've been working from home during the coronavirus pandemic would prefer to continue to work remotely — even after the pandemic ends. Some of the leading companies, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Microsoft, have already announced that they will allow their employees to continue working remotely post-pandemic.

All these developments raise a few questions. Will the current situation spark long-term changes and completely transform the recruitment industry? Will it permanently change the roles and responsibilities of talent seekers and HR and impact the way we find, attract, and select talent? Or will we soon go back to "business as usual?"

One thing is certain — COVID-19 has brought some significant changes to the workspace. Here are some of the ways the roles and responsibilities of HR and recruitment professionals have already changed, as well as what changes may be soon to come.

1. Incorporating empathy into candidate communications

While personalized and strategic candidate interactions have always been an important part of recruitment, they are perhaps more so now. Amid the COVID-19 crisis, as everyone is facing unexpected circumstances, empathy is essential.

Recruiters can use crisis communication content to improve their interactions with candidates. If necessary, they can seek assistance from their marketing and communications department, as they may already have a communication plan for employees and the company at large. This will keep all crisis-related communications consistent across the organization.

2. Increasing adoption of technology solutions

The current situation has forced many organizations to step up their use of new technologies. Recruiters are no exception — they are actively leveraging enhanced communications strategies and solutions, virtual interviews, virtual onboarding, and other methods to manage the overall candidate experience.

According to Jobvite, [84% of recruiters](#) are adapting their hiring processes to work remotely. In this way, organizations are moving toward a more rhythmic, fluid hiring process that will help them better meet their current and future goals.

3. Tackling culture challenges

Creating an engaging workplace culture has traditionally fallen under HR's umbrella. But managing organizational culture has become more critical during the pandemic, and doing so while working remotely is a new challenge for many companies.

Working from home can be an isolating and disorienting experience for those accustomed to seeing their peers every day at the office. So recruiters are shouldering more of the responsibility in maintaining a positive workplace culture.

4. Identifying new ways to reward employees

During the transition to remote work, many employees had to trade hours that were once dedicated to fun team activities for heavier workloads and increased responsibilities. Additionally, they had to learn how to work independently from home, making time and space for work in the same environment where they live.

A remote workforce calls for employers to find new and safe ways to show appreciation for employees, such as recognizing and celebrating the team on virtual platforms or sending employees online gift cards.

5. Finding different ways to welcome new hires

Under normal circumstances, employers might welcome new employees with a warm handshake, a gift bag, a guided tour of the office, and lunch with the team. But those things aren't possible for fully remote organizations.

In the new normal, recruiters can greet newcomers by sending a welcome note or gift to the employee's working location. Company-branded stationery, office supplies, and other items can help them feel connected to the organization.

6. Revising employment contracts

In light of the global health crisis, legal experts, HR representatives, and recruiters may need to work together to make necessary amendments to hiring contracts and offer letters that include clauses about COVID-19 risks, reporting, testing, etc.

They will also need to develop a plan for communicating these changes to current and future employees.

7. Scheduling training around WFH best practices and employee well-being

HR representatives may consider providing online training sessions on topics like safe online practices, remote work ethics, and tips for staying productive while working from home.

Though recruiters can't remove all the obstacles of remote work, taking the time to educate employees on how to navigate the new situation could relieve some of their stress and worries.

8. Training the recruitment team

The importance of training also extends to the recruitment team. In recent months, recruiters have been stretched thin and have had to overcome unexpected obstacles. From dealing with hiring slowdowns, furloughs, and, in the case of some industries, unprecedented spikes in hiring to aligning with ever-shifting business priorities, the one constant for recruiters is the need to adapt.

At the very least, it's critical to keep the recruitment team informed of changes in the hiring process, so they can effectively support and build relationships with candidates. This process may involve maintaining a summary of updates at a centralized repository or a collaboration channel.

While some recruiters will shift to hiring for different roles, locations, or teams as needs change, many others will do more than hiring. That's why the demand for personal development is rapidly growing — recruiters who are continually acquiring new skills will become agile and quick to adapt to future industry changes.

9. Adopting a holistic approach to geographically diverse teams (GDTs)

With remote working in place, recruiters may be hiring from all over the world, thereby increasing the candidate pool. But this also requires taking into consideration geography-specific leave policies and government guidelines.

HR and talent acquisition experts must also be aware of health and safety guidelines regarding sick leave, insurance support, etc., and they may need to implement time-off policies specifically for COVID-19-related concerns.

10. Leveraging data analysis

There is no denying recruitment is essential to generating value for a company— after all, employees are an organization's true assets. Nowadays, recruiters are increasingly leveraging data analysis and

key performance indicators (KPIs) to quantify this value addition. This effort helps garner buy-in from business leaders and encourage investment in recruitment technologies and strategies.

Roles for talent analytics experts have grown by a staggering 111% since 2014. This means that a recruiter's on-ground responsibilities could now involve a high degree of data science know-how or hands-on experience in the latest technology tools.

11. Strengthening diversity hiring

Fast-tracked by COVID-19 and racial justice movements, diversity hiring changes projected to take years are now taking months. Companies are finally treating diversity with the urgency and accountability it always deserved. People understand and believe that diversity is not a feel-good "initiative," but a business-critical undertaking — one that the recruiting industry can lead.

The recruiter's role will not only include delivering a diverse pipeline of candidates but advocating for them and holding stakeholders and hiring managers accountable for moving those candidates through the funnel. Recruiters can restructure hiring processes to reduce bias — from building diverse interview panels to mandating data-driven reporting against diversity goals.

Recruiters will increasingly serve as the bridge between a company's hiring needs and other key HR initiatives. So it should come as no surprise that they're rapidly adding skills like diversity and inclusion, decision-making, and HR strategy to their tool belts and resumes. They will bring clarity to talent data, reshape employer branding, and fine-tune the virtual hiring process — all from the standpoint of continuous improvement.

Ajay Kaul is a visionary leader and a trendsetter. As managing partner of AgreeYa Solutions, he has been instrumental in leading the company through solid growth and international expansion for the past 20 years. Kaul has three decades of experience in building powerful and innovative solutions for businesses across various industries and verticals. His expertise and knowledge span across enterprise sales management, marketing and strategy, global delivery, mergers, and acquisitions.