

DEVELOP A TALENT POOL

A primary focus of your *recruitment strategy* should be a rich referral network. Developing these relationships before you need them allows you to proactively identify promising candidates, respond to market opportunities quickly and speed the process to fill vacancies.

Key elements of this strategy should include:

- **Professional networking.** Encourage top managers, suppliers and customers to identify talented individuals who are a good fit for your company's culture. Take advantage of professional and business development activities, such as industry conferences, trade shows and education seminars, to collect business cards with an eye towards future recruitment. Develop a hit list of sleeper candidates who may not be on the job market now but are worth cultivating.
- **Local schools.** Placement departments of universities, community colleges and technical schools are an excellent recruiting source. Developing an ongoing relationship with program faculty can give you the inside track, increasing your company's visibility on campus and providing early access to promising students. Opportunities that pay off include developing a co-op or internship program, volunteering to speak to students about career choices, giving a guest lecture on a technical topic and participating in career/employer fairs.
- **Company web site.** Go beyond posting listings for available positions. Whether you're actively recruiting or not, your corporate web site should include a "Join Our Team" section that summarizes your mission, value and culture, and outlines why people should want to work for you. Allow visitors to submit resumes for consideration for future positions and stay in touch with promising candidates. Consider including generic job postings for positions that experience frequent turnover.
- **Former employees.** Employees who leave on good terms can be a rich resource for referrals and may be candidates for re-hiring. Such "boomerang" employees already know your firm's culture, processes and products, allowing them to get up to speed quickly. Stay in touch with top-performing former employees and be sure they know the door is open.

Nurture both your *network* and *high potential candidates*. Invite them to lunch occasionally or encourage them to visit your company when they are in the area. Consider including them on the distribution of your newsletter or other company publications to keep them in the loop about corporate direction and successes.