

More and more companies are investing in employer branding, “karieri.bg”

Sofia, Bulgaria – We live in a very dynamic world in which HR processes are complicated and interrelated, and it is very difficult for specific priorities and trends to stand out. I believe that in the current Bulgarian job market, the most crucial focus and attention should be brought to bear on hiring and in particular retaining people at all levels.



Challenges and talking points for Bulgarian HR professionals include the country's improving macroeconomic framework, potential new investments in certain sectors, and staffing issues such as improvements in productivity outsourcing and technologies on one hand, and the nascent demographic crisis and decrease in the working-age population on the other. The question is straightforward if not simple: where can we find people – and more importantly, how can we motivate and retain them? However, the issue is complicated by generational differences, and challenges in retaining and motivating young people. A consistent

approach is required, with in-depth analysis, short-term and long-term company strategies, and adequate and timely action by everyone in the company – not just the HR managers!

New approaches to selection: Targeting schools and establishing an employer brand

These days, employers and brokers are less likely to rely on traditional channels such as job announcement websites and LinkedIn. The number of submitted CVs is falling, as is the quality of job applicants; applications are frequently submitted by people who lack the required experience and skills. This irritates the job-seekers, who do not know why they are unsuccessful, and the employers, who waste time browsing inappropriate applications. This causes widespread complaints and a vicious circle – the average quality of the applicants decreases, while the few good candidates are lost in an avalanche of unsuitable CVs.

Employers seeking young people at the start of their professional career should be working with general schools, vocational schools and universities and setting up training centres, instead of posting job ads. Particularly promising young people may be preselected as early as 13-18, because it is best to make long-term strategies and plans in order to secure the company's business needs for the future.

Conversely, in order to recruit experienced people, it is necessary to cooperate with local authorities, advertise the company as an attractive employer and win the confidence of potential applicants by participating in forums, career days, open days and active employer PR campaigns. Companies need to understand that employees choose employers as well as the other way around, and should take the necessary steps to market themselves better. In 2017, it will be more and more important for companies to invest in their brand and create a positive image as a desirable employer.

We hope that companies will be more organised in their selection processes in 2017. Too many positions are filled within a couple of weeks, but if a new employee does not work out, a replacement must be found immediately.

The fire-fighting approach to problem solving is widespread in the South Slavic region, where short-termism and the absence of planning are common. We hope that as companies grow larger, older and wiser, they will take more care to plan HR processes.

Required knowledge and skills: Dynamic, flexible and serious people in demand

The market will need dynamic, flexible and serious people, since employers constantly complain that their current and prospective employees are unwilling to work, irresponsible and reluctant to change. Companies will need to invest time and money in order to produce employees with the desired qualities. Fresh graduates cannot necessarily be expected to understand what is required from them on the job, and will need training, assistance and senior employees to mentor and help them to integrate in the organisation. This also applies to experienced employees; even an executive director needs to be appropriately introduced to the company and understand the corporate culture, processes and rules. Even the most experienced professional will be doomed to failure if the introductory process and initial training are inappropriate.

Seeking people by sectors and positions: Labour-consuming production and services

The highest demand for staff is expected in growing sectors that need a high headcount, including various manufacturing sectors and the service sector. However, we should not forget that the modernisation of processes and technologies will increase productivity and thus reduce the demand for headcount. It is very unlikely that 2017 will see robots and state-of-the-art-equipment replacing employees in call centres and enterprises, but this trend will be important in the near future.

People management: Motivating, inspiring and developing people matters

People management is an art and a calling, which nevertheless changes and adapts to new environments. These days, managers tend to take an individual approach in order to understand each team member's specific needs and motivations, breaking the boundaries of the formal conversations for presentation and career development. We can all see the way in which hierarchies, formal employment relationships and working time are becoming less significant. How should a manager handle a free and creative person who does not fit the complex hierarchical structure, and needs time for individual pursuits (such as sport) during the day? This calls for dynamism, energy, flexibility and time management skills. We hope that in 2017, team leaders, managers and directors will devote more time to their employees, and display an in-depth approach while evaluating people. It seems that in some companies, directors dedicate more time to their budgeting process and financial statements than to motivating, inspiring and developing their people, when it is in fact people that make a company successful.

“People make a company successful” – let this be the business motto for the New Year.



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