THE USE OF COMPUTER-BASED MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AS A RECRUITMENT TOOL: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ATTITUDES OF RECRUITMENT AGENTS IN A SELECTED AREA OF THE WESTERN CAPE ON 10 FEBRUARY 2004.

by

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SUMMARY

Recruitment and selection has become a specialised industry and is competing in a global market. To remain competitive, recruitment agents have to stay ahead of their competitors, by providing an excellent service to customers and applicants, and by keeping up with technological developments in their field.

The current investigation focuses on an assessment of the attitudes of recruitment agents in a selected area of the Western Cape Province to the use of computer-based management information systems as a recruitment tool. A questionnaire was distributed amongst recruitment agents in the identified area. It focused on recruiter biographical information, the services they offer, the methods and processes they use in recruitment, the knowledge and skills they need in their field, and their knowledge and attitude towards electronic-recruitment.

The literature indicated a move towards using technology in the field of recruitment, and this was consistent with the findings of the study. Although the respondents were familiar with developments in technology used for recruitment, only a small number were familiar with the major business information systems, namely, SAP R/3, Oracle and PeopleSoft.

Information specifically related to recruitment agents in South Africa was limited, but the study provided some insight into this field. It was found that recruitment agents disagree on what a good advertisement, as well as a good résumé, should contain, and this is problematic as these are two of the most important things that recruitment agents work with every day.

The literature provided no indication of the qualifications needed by a recruitment agent, and resulting from this, a second finding of the study indicated that, according to the respondents, the qualifications needed by a recruitment agent are varied. It was found that qualifications of the sample group varied from only a school-leaving certificate to post-graduate degrees.

A significant trend identified that only 24.2 per cent of recruitment agents are involved in research related to recruitment, and write articles related to their field. This contributes to the fact that so little information is available about South African recruitment agents.

The study indicated that recruitment agents hold a positive attitude towards computer-based information systems, although they are accepted with caution because of various logistical problems in the South African market. The study also provided useful information to start a process of drawing up a profile of the South African recruitment agency business.

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INTRODUCTION

Although recruitment and selection were always an important business function, during the last two decades of the 20th century they have become a specialised process in companies, and many companies have either opted for contracting out these functions or purchasing rather expensive computer-based programmes that assist the company to make recruitment and selection decisions. Recruiting has become a complex business, and to have the competitive edge, it seems that the company or agency with the latest technology and use of its available functions will be able to provide the best service.

With the emergence of electronic recruitment and the application of other computer technology in recruitment, affluent developed countries are at the forefront of these developments. However, many of these technologies are now available in developing countries, including South Africa.

In the following section, a brief outline of the motivation and development of the research and the research problem is presented. There is also an overview of the research design and methodology.

1.1 DEVELOPING THE IDEA AND THE MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Recruitment and selection processes have been part of the business world for many years. They can be traced as far back as the selling of slaves, where the slaves were 'marketed' and the ones with the best features chosen. Today the people with the best features, for example qualifications, personality traits and experience, are still chosen, either by the recruiter or the hiring company.

Recruitment and selection have come a long way, and one of the reasons for choosing this topic was to examine the various developments that have occurred in this area of business over the last few years, and how they have influenced business and work, especially in South Africa. Recruitment agents have become an essential part of our lives. In an economy with greater demand than supply, the competition to appoint the best applicant is fierce.

This topic is relevant for the South African market in order to keep up to date with global trends and to compete in the global economy. The Internet, as a recruiting tool, has brought the whole process to an individual who has access to a personal computer.

The importance of this topic is undeniable. The recruitment agents who want their business to be ahead of that of their competitors will have to familiarise themselves with the constant new developments in their field of expertise. Recruitment agents will have to compete globally and buy themselves the best possible computerised programmes that will allow them to provide an excellent service to their clients – be it the corporate client or the individual seeking a job.

The motivation for this research was to attempt to assess the attitude of recruitment agents toward these computer-based management information systems, and to familiarise the researcher with the different technologies available and the whole process of recruitment and selection. The aim of the researcher was to know how the information obtained could be used to provide the best possible and most efficient service to corporate and individual clients, and how recruiters could put themselves ahead of

competing agents. The research was done in fulfilment of an MA degree in the Social Sciences.

1.2   DERIVING AT THE RESEARCH TOPIC FROM PRELIMINARY READINGS

A great deal of literature was available on the more traditional recruitment and selection processes and methods. Less literature was available when it came to the latest developments, especially in electronic recruitment (e-recruitment), and the greatest source of information with regard to e-recruitment was the Internet.

In order to narrow down the study, discussions were held to decide which areas to focus on, and the most essential areas to be covered were chosen. During the literature review, extensive note taking enabled the researcher to eliminate certain areas and focus on what was seen as essential.

1.3   THE GOALS AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The overall aims and goals of this research study were to define recruitment and selection, to make a distinction between recruitment and selection processes and methods, and to create flowcharts that would illustrate the recruitment and the selection process, as well as the various steps it comprises.

The research also aimed to make a distinction between traditional recruitment and electronic recruitment or e-recruitment. In the same way as with traditional recruitment, the aim was to provide a working definition of e-recruitment, and to look at some of the available computer-based

management information systems and their functions. The advantages and disadvantages of e-recruitment would be discussed in detail, and guidelines included on how to implement and operate such a system.

The specific research objective was to assess the attitude of recruitment agents to the use of computer-based management information systems. In this process the aim was to assess whether the recruitment agents had any knowledge of such systems, and the various type of systems that were available, and the functions they provided. The research also tried to determine whether the identified population were familiar with e-recruitment and whether they would consider using it. The research also aimed to gain more knowledge in the field of recruitment and selection, how it functioned in South Africa, and how the service of the recruiter could be improved by making use of computer-based information systems. The knowledge gained in the study would assist the researcher in future career ventures, and could form the basis of future research to identify trends in the field of recruitment and selection. Some further aims included determining services offered by recruitment agents, and how suitable applicants were attracted and identified, establishing the qualifications that a recruitment agent would need, whether recruitment agents had an academic interest in their field, and whether they kept up to date with changes and development in the field of recruitment.

1.4   THE STRUCTURE OF THE TREATISE

The treatise consists of five chapters, starting off with the Introduction. The second chapter consists of two literature sections, part one focusing on traditional recruitment and selection, and part two focusing on electronic

recruitment. Chapter three covers the methodology, Chapter four the presentation and analysis of the results, and chapter five contains the conclusion and recommendations. A complete bibliography is included, as well as an Appendix that contains a copy of the questionnaire.

1.5   GENERAL INDICATION OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study started off with extensive reading of printed literature and information available on the Internet. The purpose of the literature study was to obtain a broad overview of the field of recruitment and selection and the current trends and developments in these areas.

Literature was fairly easily obtained, and the current developments and shortcomings in recruitment and selection were identified. Definitions of recruitment, selection and e-recruitment were formulated from the literature. Once the literature had been studied, a population group was chosen, namely recruitment agents in a selected area of the Western Cape. A questionnaire with five sections was formulated, which examined the knowledge and attitudes of recruiters in various areas of recruitment and selection, especially e-recruitment.

1.6   OUTLINING THE REMAINDER OF THE TREATISE

In the remainder of the treatise, the literature studied will be discussed in detail, defining recruitment and selection, and looking at how it developed. The literature chapter will look at the various methods of recruitment and selection, as well as their advantages and disadvantages. As part of the

literature chapter, a large section is devoted to electronic recruitment, its definition, how it developed, and its advantages and disadvantages.

Chapter three focuses on the research design and methodology. This chapter will discuss the research problem and how it was chosen, and will provide certain key concepts. The sample design and sampling techniques and the reason for the decisions made will also be explained in detail. The data collection methods and the fieldwork done, as well as the data capturing methods and analysis and the shortcomings of the research will be discussed in this section.

Chapter four looks at the results and their presentation. The sample and its characteristics will be discussed in order to understand the nature of the findings. The main results of the study will be described and summarised, making use of graphs and tables. To conclude this chapter, the main results will be interpreted and the most important results will be highlighted.

Chapter five will draw together the findings of the previous chapters, and the relation between the findings and the literature will be indicated. In the conclusion, the relevance of the study will be explained and recommendations made.

Lastly, a complete and detailed list of references will be provided, as well as an Appendix containing a sample of the cover letter and accompanying questionnaire that was sent out to the participants.

PART ONE: THE PROCESSES AND METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The past twenty years have seen a dramatic shift in the management of recruitment, selection and the appointment processes. This change has been closely connected to the development of integrated Enterprise Resource Management (ERM) systems and the Internet, and the outsourcing of the recruitment function to external agencies. Increasingly it is being recognised by management that an organisation's workforce is an important investment, and as such must be optimally competent. Adherence to this philosophy has been accelerated by an increase in global competition for the most suitably qualified and productive workforce.

2.1.1 Competition

Carrell et al. (1998:138) write 'Recruiting good applicants has always been challenging; however, political, demographic and economic factors in South Africa require employers to utilise more flexible and innovative recruitment methods'.

'Organisations often claim that people are their most valuable asset. In fact, people are not only an organisation's most valuable asset, they are its most unique asset.' (Pamenter, 1999:60). The new economy is characterised by a knowledge-centred environment in which human capital is the most important asset in ensuring that an enterprise remains competitive. This requires long-range planning. SAP argues that, because of competition in the global market place, it is important to find, develop and train quality

employees, and therefore recruitment procedures have to be optimised and must enhance the quality of a company's human resources (HR) decisions (SAP HR:13). Lou Adler (2003:np) argues similarly that the key to success is 'to do something before everybody else does it – or do it faster, or to do it better. Don't follow the leader, be the leader'.

Since the 1980s, economic pressure has forced organisations to re-organise themselves to function with fewer but better-skilled employees. In addition, organisations need to attract employees who will stay.

Gerber (1998:89) predicts stiff competition between companies to appoint the best worker, while Greengard maintains that a company is given a competitive advantage by the people who work for it, and the knowledge which they possess. Finding workers who have the skill and expertise to drive innovation and product development is rapidly emerging as the next great HR challenge. This is very obvious in companies which compete for a limited pool of scientists, engineers and mathematicians (Greengard, 1996:52). Because of this recruitment challenge, companies find that traditional staffing sources are no longer good enough, and companies need to get creative in the matter of recruiting (Talbott, 1996b:12).

2.1.2 Migration

According to Greengard (1996:55), 'knowledge workers migrate to where the best opportunities exist, while companies migrate toward definable labor pools'. Migration implies that employees relocate to where the best jobs are available.

2.1.3 Innovation

Solomon (1995:94) believes that, by using innovative career pathing and training techniques, and by providing handsome compensation packages, companies can attract and keep the growing cadre of global leaders, while Gerber (1998:89) states that, as soon as a vacancy arises within an organisation, it provides the opportunity to 'redesign, realign and reconsider the job'.

2.1.4 Automation

Recruitment is going 'high-tech' as many corporations strive towards more efficient, cost-effective staffing, and technological advances such as computerised interviewing, videoconferencing, and offline databases.

Technology brings with it many changes, and using computerised interviews and databases to store information will lead in due course to a cut down in paper usage. There are a good number of vendors developing products to help with this transition. Human Resources Management Systems (HRMS) keeps tables on almost everything and automatically puts valuable HR material on any manager's desktop' (Frazee, 1996:75). It can include features like applicant tracking, time-clock interfaces, payroll links, payroll processing, and information like education, medical, and performance or personal skills. It reduces paperwork and tracks everything from the job application to post-retirement.

FIGURE 1: FLOW CHART OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

RECRUITMENT

| Open position **in company due to:** 1. person leaving 2. new skills needed | → | **Line Manager** fills out **requisition** to fill position, detailing **job specification**. | → | **Job specification rectified** or changed by **Personnel** or **HR** department |

Position is **advertised**

INTERNALLY

Advantages: Encourages advancement of current employees.

And/or **Externally** Sourced from: **Other companies and training institutes like colleges and universities.**

SELECTION

The Personnel **Manager** goes through the **applications**

The person **rejects** the job offer

The Personnel **Manager** prepares a **shortlist** of suitable candidates

High potential candidates are invited to an **interview**

The person **accepts** the job offer

Attends an orientation programme

Job offer is made to the most suitable candidate.

The Interviewing panel consists of:
1. One or two officers from the recruiting department.
2. Technical adviser if needed.
3. Head of Personnel or HR department.
4. A General Manager

Based on Kamoche (2000:89-81)

2.1.5 Difference between Recruitment and Selection

According to French, recruitment is the process of finding suitable applicants and convincing them to apply for a position. Selection, on the other hand, is the process of choosing among those who apply for a position (French, 1986: 238).

Boxall and Purcell (2003:140-141) say selection is about choosing among job applicants. It is about how to make fair and relevant assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of applicants. It is deeply concerned with the value of particular practices'.

They define a recruitment strategy as the 'way in which a firm tries to source or attract the people among whom it will ultimately make selections'. Recruitment strategies include attempts to 'sell the organisation as an attractive place to work and attempts to reach better pools of applicants.'

2.2   THE HISTORY OF RECRUITMENT AND RECRUITMENT TECHNOLOGY

2.2.1 The History of Recruitment in South Africa

South Africa's main inhabitants prior to the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 were the San and Khoi-Khoi people, and with the setting up of a refreshment post, more trading occurred between the immigrants and the locals. Further developments required more people to help build the colony, and many of the crewmen of passing ships stayed behind. Many of the first crewmen were skilled workers, such as millers, bakers and blacksmiths. The local people were unwilling to work as labourers, and Jan van Riebeeck, who was familiar with slave trading, brought slaves from various parts of Africa.

The slaves maintained gardens and buildings, and worked on farms, all without pay (Swanepoel et al., 2003:40).

South Africa was mainly an agrarian society prior to the discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1872) and families were involved in household- and agrarian activities (Swanepoel et al., 2003: 40). Once these discoveries were made, the world of work changed dramatically. Because of mining, a need arose for 'mining and engineering-related skills to mine the diamonds and gold. Other industries, such as building, engineering and the railways, developed around the mining industry. In order to obtain skilled workers, they were recruited from the United Kingdom' (Swanepoel et al., 2003:41). The skilled workers received high wages because of the demand for their services, while the local people were used for the less skilled tasks.

Secondary industries came about from the developments in the mining industry. Mass production increased, which increased the need for semi-skilled workers for the furniture-, clothing and shoe-manufacturing industry. A large number of white females and black males were willing to do these jobs for lower wages than the skilled labourers received (Swanepoel et al., 2003:42).

In 1942, Isobel White accompanied her husband to South Africa. She was the first person to address personnel issues in South Africa in a professional manner, and published an article in the South African Industry & Trade Journal, titled: 'Selecting employees for maximum efficiency' (Swanepoel et al., 2003:43). White was then appointed to do research in the area of personnel management in South Africa. In 1955, at the first ever conference of the SA Institute of Personnel Management in Port Elizabeth,

she said, 'The personnel manager has, therefore, become much more concerned not so much with the battle for staff comfort… but with the human relations side of this job. The function of the personnel manager thus becomes: recruitment, employment, incentives and morale' (Swanepoel et al., 2003:49).

By 1964, according to Swanepoel (2003: 50) many personnel departments had a section dealing with employment, which included recruitment and selection.

2.2.2 Recruiters become Eliminators

Before the 20th Century, more people were available and partially qualified for existing jobs than were needed. Recruiters became eliminators, screening and reducing the number of people to be considered for a particular job. According to Bedore (2002:np), the recruiting role has evolved from administrative taskmaster to coach or consultant. This development was due to the 'never-ending war for talent'. The recruiters' success relied on 'knowledge about the who and where talented people are, and the ability to screen and sell that talent to the right client' (Wheeler, 2003:np). The recruiter usually had to do a great deal of legwork, spend hours on the telephone and attend meetings, and needed a big network of friends and colleagues who would refer people to him or her (Wheeler, 2003a:np).

To do this effectively, the recruiter needed information about the person, usually in the form of a document or résumé. This information was used to determine the suitability of the person and whether he or she should be interviewed or not. The recruiter needed interviewing skills and an intimate

knowledge of the client's needs (Wheeler, 2003a:np). The successful candidate was rewarded with a job and the possibility of a pension after many years of loyal service.

Owing to the availability of people, jobs were not advertised well or marketed effectively and the recruiters developed relationships only with applicants who had rare skills or excellent experience. Educational qualifications were used as further screens, even though no strong correlation had been established between performance and traditional selection criteria.

Bedore (2002:np) suggests that first the 'problem was that the need for the right talent was going unmet, then it became the challenges caused by cutting too deep and then trying to rehire that lost talent'.

2.2.3 Going Electronic and Using Various Tools

The electronic résumé was introduced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and entire Websites were dedicated to explaining what electronic and scannable résumés were (Sturm, 2001:np).

At this time, the scanning of paper résumés was introduced and job fair vendors were the first to develop and adopt this application of imaging technology to recruitment and résumés. Scanning of paper résumés became even more popular when client/server applicant tracking systems were introduced. Scanning centres were set up in recruitment and administrative service areas to handle the volume of paper coming into a company.

Every résumé had to be prepared by 'opening envelopes, removing staples etc.' (Sturm, 2001:np). After this it was run through the scanner and

validated with the 'human eye' to correct any optical character recognition errors, and extract data like name, address, and phone number.

2.2.4 Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

With the development of computer technology from the 1980s onwards, according to Kevin Wheeler (2003:np), the most common tool for recruiting was applicant-tracking systems (ATS). ATS is a bundle of tools that gathers résumé data by either scanning paper documents or alternatively asking applicants to enter information about themselves. It stores data and extracts needed information using search methodologies like keywords. ATS also has reporting capabilities, and many offer administrative features such as scheduling interviews and tracking applicants as they progress through the recruitment process.

If ATS is properly installed and configured, and is used by trained recruiters, it automates the job of 'culling through piles of résumés to find applicants who possess certain specific skills, education or experience' (Bedore, 2002:np).

In the 20th century, the abundance of skills declined, and in many fields not enough people with the required skills were available. It was essential that qualified people were found quickly and that jobs were marketed efficiently and sold to the applicants, instead of worrying about storing résumés. According to Kevin Wheeler, the President and Founder of Global Learning Resources Inc (2003:np), many companies who bought these systems failed to use them properly and this increased the workload and costs, because they needed more time and people to use the ATS system.

In the mid-90s, a company called 'Websites' introduced career sections that were a friendly invitation to send paper résumés via mail. The applicants were instructed on how to make their applications scanner-friendly (Sturm, 2001:np).

Newspaper advertisements pointed readers to Web pages where more job listings were available. The applicants would prepare a scanner-friendly application and mail it to the company concerned; once the company received the application it was optically scanned 'into an electronic format to nullify all the trouble they just went to in sending in the paper version. Once in the system, the recruiters would invariably print out the electronic version to send to the hiring manager or stick it into a folder' (Sturm, 2001:np).

According to Sturm (2001:np), some companies, after doing various review studies and cost-benefit analyses, determined that outsourcing the scanning process would be more cost-effective.

During the 1990s, Web-based methods like the Internet and e-mail started to infiltrate the recruitment process and caused the number of paper submitted applications to decline. As e-mails were sent from individuals and job boards, the ratios of 80 per cent paper to 20 per cent electronic started shifting to 50 per cent paper and 50 per cent electronic. Today some companies have no paper policies, and boast a 100 per cent electronic system (Sturm, 2001:np).

The reasons, according to Sturm (2001:np), why companies try to cut down on paper are that paper costs money to buy and transmit, it is processed slowly, the delivery is slow, and the format is static and cannot be incorporated into any other system except a filing cabinet.

2.2.5 Assessment Software

Assessment software is fairly new, and assists recruiters to learn about a candidate's skills, abilities, competencies and personality, in order to offer the best position to the person.

In the past few years, screening technology was developed, which allows a series of questions to be posed to potential applicants. This allows the recruiter to steer the candidate who does not meet the required level of education, experience or geographical location, to the best position in an organisation or talent pool. 'It is essential that communication with the candidate, developing marketing strategies for targeted applicants and having the ability to screen applicants for skills, cultural fit and general abilities become key' (Wheeler, 2003:np).

It is important to keep track of both candidate and customer's details, as this directly influences success. The more that is known about applicants, the better-personalised service can be offered.

2.2.6 The development of Systems in the Information Age

> The genius of the future lies not in technology but in our ability to manage it.
>
> Anonymous (Martin et al., 1991:693)

2.2.6.1   The Information Age

The 1980s are seen as the start of the Information Age, which is seen as 'global business environment enveloped within a plethora of information, the vast majority of which is being generated by contemporary new technology' (Cleary, 1998:1). The developments in technology in the Information Age have contributed to the development of the 'post-industrial' state. O'Brien

(1999:11) says that we are living in an 'emerging global information society with global economy that is increasingly dependent on creation, management, and distribution of information resources of interconnected global networks like the Internet'. Cleary argues that many agrarian-based societies moved to heavy industry, which made a gradual move towards an information-driven trading environment (Cleary, 1998:1). He argues that people did not necessarily stop doing what they used to do; they simply computerised everything. Computerisation reduces the production costs of, for example, information that has to be distributed. Instead of printing thousands of copies, companies simply make the information available on their Website, and the person can access it via the Internet.

A system can be defined as an 'array of components that work together to achieve a common goal by accepting input, processing input and producing output in an organized manner' (Oz, 1998:6). A distinction can be made between open-ended systems, which are systems that have an interface with, and interact with other systems, and closed systems, which are systems that do not have connections to others. Oz sees an information system as a system that is an aggregate of components that work together to process data and produce information (1998:8), which usually consists of various subsystems. Oz believes that one of the greatest contributions of information systems is the automation of information exchange between departments.

Martin et al. (1991:694) say that companies focus their attention on integrating high-speed processors operating in parallel. They predict that there will be fierce competition amongst suppliers of operating systems. There

will always be opportunity for improvement, that is, increasing the speed, size, and number of transistors that can be placed on a chip (1991:695).

O'Brien (2001:154) refers to voice recognition, and says it includes voice messaging software that 'allows PCs and servers in voice mail and messaging systems to interact with you through voice responses' and '…multimedia output is common on Websites of the Internet and corporate intranets'.

Martin et al. (1991:695) state that the products of various vendors will in future be able to communicate better with each other since data transmission has become more uniform. The reason for the inter-software compatibility is that no hardware or software vendor can function totally independently in the global village.

2.2.6.2   Computer-based information systems

Data is entered into a computer, the data is then processed to produce information, and the produced information is stored in a formal structure, which is called a database (Wessels et al., 1999:9).

Computer-based systems are used because they can process a large amount of information in a very short time, and can store this information for retrieval at a later stage. The quality of the information is very high, and the processing costs are lower than when done by hand. Computers can also do complex calculations easily.

Oz states that HR has become very complex because of the fast growth of specialised occupations, training needs, and the promotion of highly skilled employees. He says that HR consists of the following activities.

- Employee Record Management: The law requires companies to keep detailed records of their employees, and computer systems allow companies to keep the information electronically.

- Promotion and Recruitment: The selection process can be automated and a database can be searched for the most suitable candidate.

- Training: Multi-media software replaces the teacher and allows the trainee to go back to the more difficult parts of the work;

- Evaluation: Evaluation software standardises the evaluation process and compensation and benefits management, as well as assisting in managing salaries, hourly pay, and commissions.

Although many people have argued that technology will lead us to a paperless society, Oz states the opposite (1998:7), saying that studies indicate the paper usage in America between 1980 and 1990 doubled. Nevertheless, managers who use information systems efficiently also use very little paper because they realise that a report does not have to be printed. He further says that technological developments have improved worker efficiency, and allow workers to produce much more, much faster. The introduction of electronic data interchange, which allows for electronically exchanging information, should contribute to the reduction of paper in offices.

2.2.6.3   Developments in Information Technology

According to Cleary (1998:2), the 1990s experience transformed the manner in which commercial functions were conducted and decisions were taken. He believed that the growth of Information Technology (IT) in business and domestic environments was due to 'collective crystallisation of the relatively

recent and significant technological advances which have been made in the computing and communication industries' (Cleary, 1998:2).

The advances that Cleary referred to, include miniaturisation and the ability to produce sophisticated electronic and computer components using mass production. There have been enormous gains from these developments, which can be seen in the wide range of goods and services that are available to both the individual and the industry. Furthermore, various software applications have been developed, mainly to take advantage of the various hardware developments. Cleary believes that these developments allow computers to address more complex tasks, while at the same time being cost-effective.

In the 1990s, computer users started using 'intelligent graphic-enhanced software systems such as the new sophisticated multimedia style communication applications, which are allowing users to present, store, analyse, transmit and receive data and information with unparalleled effect' (Cleary, 1998:3).

2.2.6.4   The Digital Business Environment

Modern businesses make extensive use of IT, and this would imply that their employees are highly educated, 'mobile and mentally prepared to adapt to a constantly changing setting' (Cleary, 1998:4).

According to O'Brien (2001:17), IT 'is reshaping the basics of business'. He believes that Information systems perform three vital roles in any organisation, namely:

•   support of business operations

- support of management decision-making

- support of strategic competitive advantages

Cleary (1998:4) states that commercial organisations are realising that these talents are still in short supply, while there is still an oversupply of 'redundant unskilled and semi-skilled employees' who used to be the 'backbone' of the company.

According to Cleary, owing to IT developments, companies often schedule work for employees only when they are needed, and thus mostly have part-time or short-term employees. IT development also allows people to have home offices where, when provided with the right equipment, they can do their work efficiently in the comfort of their own home. In creating home offices, employees do not have to travel in traffic, and companies do not have to maintain expensive office buildings. 'Top of the range wireless-linked laptop computers enable such workers to relay the results of their activities as and when needed as well as receive any necessary incoming information from their employer' (Cleary, 1998:4).

The latest developments in IT have enabled companies to raise 'productivity levels, decrease times for impact decisions, accelerate production cycles and generally compete in a far more cogent and effective manner in the new global economy' (Cleary, 1998:4). The late 1990s are known for the growth in the usage of 'high speed modems, ISDN telephone lines and various wireless technologies, which promise to deliver Video on Demand (VOD)' (Cleary, 1998: 5).

Martin et al. (1991:691) say that technological change 'now comes from too many different sources to be predictable with any precision. Martin et

al. (1991:692-693) further say that technology will continue to change at a rapid rate. The change will take many forms, using the company database for more than just its traditional uses, and change will focus attention on the asset value of information, since many organisations see information as an important resource. It is believed that the most important organisational consequence of change will be the effect on people. The change in the way information is used within an organisation must be proactively managed to overcome obstacles.

2.2.6.5   Key types of software in the 1990s

One can distinguish between two types of software, according to Martin et al. (1991:168):

2.2.6.5.1   Application software

Application software is a programme that is written to achieve or accomplish particular tasks, for example payroll, inventory record-keeping, word processing, spreadsheets, and programmes that can produce reports for management.

2.2.6.5.2   Support software

Support software can also be called systems software, and does not produce a direct output to the user. The purpose of support software is to provide a computing environment in which it is efficient and easy for the users to work. It also enables application programmes written in a variety of languages to carry out various functions, and ensures that computer hardware and software are used efficiently.

2.2.7 Looking at the Future

In the future, different tools will be available. Data bases will remain an important piece of emerging technology, and many of the features of the old systems will evolve into something different.

Wheeler (2003:np) believes the résumé will no longer be the centre of these tools and will be 'replaced by interactive tools that gather small bits of candidate data over time and continuously assess applicants and market them in real time' (Wheeler, 2003:np). The Internet has become a data base which allows recruiters to draw applicants on a 'just-in-time' basis. Tools will 'parse a wide variety of documents and attach that information to the authors for follow up' (Wheeler, 2003:np). Wireless technology will be used, and will enlarge the communication circle.

According to Attaway (2003:27), a wireless local-area network (WLAN) can be defined as 'a flexible data communications system implemented as an extension to, or as an alternative for, a wired local area network (LAN)'. WLAN uses 'radio-frequency technology to transmit and receive data over the airwaves. WLANs provide all the features and benefits of traditional LAN systems, without the limitation of a cable'. WLAN has two main components, namely a network interface card (NIC) and wireless access point (WAP). The NIC is inside the user's personal computer and 'provides the means of sending and receiving data remotely, creating a transparent connection to the network' (Attaway, 2003:27). The WAP, which is also called a base station, is the 'wireless equivalent of a traditional local-area-network hub'. These wireless stations are connected to the wired local-area-network by means of

'a standard Ethernet cable and it communicates with the wireless devices by means of an antenna'.

According to Attaway, wireless connectivity has several advantages for the workplace, namely (2003:27):

- 'Real time access to information from anywhere in the organization, including having to find a place to connect to the network with a cable'

- It reduces the number of wires and connections and increased the flexibility of the placement of user devices

- It also reduced installation and product-life costs

- 'Ease of configuration and arrangement to accommodate a variety of office settings and number of users'

'Wireless networks are becoming common in settings that demand increased worker mobility and flexible working environments, for example airports, universities, and warehouses'. Attaway believes that WLANs will become more prevalent and will spread to a wider variety of industries.

Wireless technology also has disadvantages, one of the most important being greater security risks. The reason is that WLANs can provide access to individuals located outside the security parameter of the network, since they can usually be used at any point within 300 feet of the system's antennas.

Maureen Link (2003:19) refers to another form of wireless technology, called the 3G. 3G is 'the wireless industry's version of broadband Internet Service, offering faster speeds and more mobile applications'. According to Link, 'faster speeds enable enhanced messaging, email with attachments, enriched video and audio clips, and high-speed Internet browsing – all common to applications in the wired desktop world' (Link, 2003:19). Link

believes that 3G allows greater mobility for personal technology and business tools. 3G will allow an individual access to everything at the main office. A 3G connection in a person's laptop allows him or her to download files two to three times faster than before, and it is less expensive for the travelling business person than to pay hotel dial-up charges.

Recruiting businesses will be able to improve their services by making use of wireless technology. It would be possible for the recruitment agent to sit in his or her, or in the client's, office discussing the job requirements of a particular position, and within minutes call up the files of potential applicants. Recruiters will be able to provide a quicker and more efficient service by implementing wireless technology.

2.3 RECRUITMENT: DEFINITIONS AND NATURE

Recruitment is an essential part of any company's existence. The recruitment process of a company will determine the quality of the employees and the company productivity, and therefore it is important that companies are familiar with recruitment and selection processes and strategies.

2.3.1 Definition of Recruitment

Recruitment is an organisational function, which involves the locating, identifying and attracting or acquiring of a pool of suitably qualified applicants, based on the job requirements, in order to fill a vacancy.

According to Gerber et al. (1998:90), recruitment can be seen as a two-way process: organisations are looking for potential applicants and potential applicants are looking for suitable organisations. For this meeting to take

place, the following are needed: a common communication medium, such as the advertisement in the paper read by the possible applicant; finding a match between his or her characteristics and the job requirements; and motivation by the applicant to apply.

2.3.2 Recruitment

According to Savill (1995:109), 'any employer who wants a competent, motivated and productive work force knows that the recruitment programme is at the heart of HR planning.' Bedore (2002:np) believes the key to recruiting success is the following four points:

(1)   increasing the understanding of the overall business

(2)   developing management skills

(3)   linking efforts to corporate objectives

(4)   leveraging technology

Carrell et al. (1998:140) believe the first step in recruiting should be to determine the relevant labour market and gain information about it. This will directly influence the recruitment strategy and method of a company.

Ernie Glickman, managing partner at a division of Coopers and Lybrand LLP, who specialised in change management, says (Greengard, 1996:53): 'Companies are in search of the best talent they can find, regardless of where that person is from'. When companies are global, they face the problem of finding people who know the language of an area and who understand the culture, and hiring foreign nationals is often the only way to solve this problem (Greengard, 1996:54). American corporations, for example, will often hire foreigners who completed their post-graduate studies

in the United States of America (USA), who sometimes worked in USA companies and would like to return to their homeland. The advantage of these recruits is that they know the American company that is pursuing its global markets, and they know the language and the culture of their homeland. 'This allows the company to compete successfully in overseas countries' (Greengard, 1996:54).

In order for companies to be able to find 'individuals who are knowledgeable about their business, proficient in languages and technology, multi-culturally adept, flexible and open-minded', it would require a different mindset than the one with which they traditionally view employees' (Solomon, 1995:95). This means that people already working for the company need to be educated with an international and less ethnocentric perspective, and it requires recruitment techniques, compensation policies, succession planning and innovative training, which deal with these problems.

Carrell et al. (1998:138) argued that, in South Africa, the largest potential workforce was non-working women who care for their families at home. To get these women into the labour force would require companies to implement sponsored day-care, flexible working hours, part-time work, job sharing, and extended maternity leave. Carrell et al (1998:138) were of the opinion that the disadvantaged groups, namely blacks, Asians, coloureds, women, and the disabled, would play an important role in filling vacancies in the coming years.

2.4   RECRUITMENT POLICY

A recruitment policy is a course of action selected from various alternatives for a company's recruitment process, and embraces the general principles and aims of the organisation. According to Swanepoel et al. (2003:260), a recruitment policy 'stipulates broad guidelines on how an organisation intends to deal with recruitment'.

The aim of a recruitment policy is to spell out the objectives of the recruitment process and to provide guidelines for carrying out the recruitment programme. The purpose of a recruitment policy, according to Gerber et al. (1998:91), is to enable management to attract the 'most competent individuals for every task, and to fill the job with the best qualified applicants'.

A recruitment policy has various elements. Some of the elements are to decide on the population from which workers will be recruited, and the aim should be to appoint the most competent person, to decide who will be responsible for recruitment, and to decide on specific characteristics the policy should have. It should be constantly reviewed and adapted. Further, the company's public image should be considered, and it should be aligned with the business strategy of the company. Swanepoel et al. (2003:260) say that when a recruitment policy is formulated, it is also necessary to decide on the legal prescriptions of fairness and discrimination that need to be included, to decide which clauses of collective agreements with the trade unions should be included, how to remain within the budget, and how urgently the position has to be filled.

When the recruitment policy is formulated, the following questions should be considered, according to Gerber et al. (1998:91) and Cunningham

et al. (2003) to determine the population from which workers should be recruited:

- Can someone from within the organisation be promoted?

- Will family members of existing employees be employed?

- Will handicapped people be employed?

- Will people over 65 be employed?

- Will there be cooperation with other employers?

- Will affirmative action be taken into account?

- Be clear on the minimum qualification for a position, but do not be too prescriptive

- Comply with labour legislation

It has to be decided who will be responsible for the recruitment functions. In smaller organisations, the line-manager is usually the responsible person, and in larger companies the HR manager will carry out the recruitment function. In a very large organisation, a recruitment specialist is likely to be appointed for the recruitment function. Swanepoel et al. (2003: 260) say that a proper recruitment policy will allow managers to use a variety of recruitment practices.

Work is becoming more specialised owing to technological advancement, and a sound recruitment policy should be developed. Furthermore, it should provide access to a global pool of applicants. A recruitment policy needs the following characteristics: it should be flexible, it should be innovative, increase the mobility of employees, and totally redefine the recruitment process.

Implementing an effective recruitment policy and strategy is a challenging task. Companies are required to constantly develop their recruitment policies to ensure that they recruit the best staff. The company must ensure that it has enough of the right staff, with the right competencies, who are in the right position at the right time (Cheminals et al., 1998:15 in Cunningham et al., 2003).

Previously, employees were likely to remain with the same employer for their entire life; currently, employees are likely to change employers every five years. However, before recruiting, an organisation must assess whether it needs additional staff, and it should therefore consider the following:

- Reorganising the work: Tasks within a section may be rationalised so that the remaining workers can cope with the work.

- The use of overtime: In case of temporary staff shortages, personnel could be encouraged to work overtime until things are back to normal.

- Mechanisation: Modern technology is increasingly enabling fewer people to do more work, hence decreasing the demand for employment expansion.

- Employment of temporary or part-time staff: Many organisations have seasonal peaks when the workload increases and then make use of temporary staff (Torrington et al., 1995:213).

2.5   RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process is the method of recruitment that a company uses. The recruitment process consists of various steps or stages (Gerber et al., 1998:98-99).

FIGURE 2:   THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

```
                      ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                      │ Temporarily fill open position │
                      │      from subsidiaries         │
                      └─────────────────────────────┘
                         ↑              │
                         │              │
┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Open     │ → │ Line         │ → │ Job      │ → │ Decide on    │
│          │   │ manager put  │   │ specifi- │   │ methods of   │
│ position │   │ in request;  │   │ cation   │   │ recruitment  │
│          │   │ write job    │   │ reviewed │   │ based        │
│          │   │ specification│   │ by HR    │   │ on recruitment│
└──────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────┘   │ policy       │
                                                   └──────────────┘
```

SET TIMELINE FOR RECRUITMENT
PROCESS

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    Types of Recruitment     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  • Solicited Recruitment                   │
│       o Poaching or pirating               │
│       o Headhunting                        │
│       o The underemployed                  │
│  • Unsolicited Recruitment                 │
│       o Hiring the unexpected              │
│       o Direct applications                │
│  • Internal sources of applicants          │
│       o Job postings                       │
│       o Part-time employees                │
│       o Employee referrals                 │
│       o Skills inventories                 │
│       o Job bidding                        │
│       o Promotions                         │
│       o Transfer and relocation            │
│  • External sources of applicants          │
│       o Employee referrals                 │
│       o Networking                         │
│       o Campus recruitment and             │
│         targeting                          │
│       o Private employment agencies        │
│         and sourcing                       │
│       o Advertisements                     │
│  • Internet/ e-Recruitment                 │
└───────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Source: Based on readings in Pamenter, F (1999:60-66) and Gerber et al. (1998:90-99).

Before a company starts recruiting, a study could be done on the factors that would contribute towards attracting the most suitable applicants. This would include an analysis of the strong and weak points of the organisation as an employer, and could include things like the national or local reputation of the organisation, remuneration, fringe benefits and working conditions, opportunities for training and development, and the location of the office or plant. The most positive aspects should be emphasised.

Alan Price (1997:223) sees recruitment as a marketing process. He says that potential applicants can come from the 'internal trawl of the organisation' or from the external job market, which is reached through recruitment advertising in the media, public and private employment agencies, professional associations, by headhunting, or by word-of-mouth. According to Price, external recruitment can also take place by means of staff notices, newsletters and advertising the vacancy in a journal.

Carrell et al. (1998:151) suggest that the rejected employees could receive a counselling session or an interview with the HR department or the hiring supervisor. During this session the employee should be informed why his or her application was unsuccessful. It is important to focus on the person's qualifications and strengths that made him or her a good candidate in the first place. Suggestions should be made about possible training and education to improve his or her performance. The counsellor can provide information on openings coming up in the near future, and provide assistance on how to bid for a job or how to conduct him or herself at an interview.

2.5.1 Realistic Job Previews

Schultz & Schultz define a realistic job preview as 'A recruitment technique that acquaints prospective applicants with the positive and negative aspects of a job' (1998:65). The information can be provided through written descriptions, videotape or an on-the-job sample of the work. Schultz & Schultz (1998) refer to research that found that a realistic job preview led to job-satisfaction, performance, and lower turnover rates.

2.6 FINDING AND ATTRACTING POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

All companies need to find and attract potential employees as a result of a new position being created in the company, or because a position has become vacant, which is the first phase of recruitment. It could happen, when an opening arises within a company, that the position is 'unmanned' for a period of time and can cause a reduction in productivity. To avoid this, a proper recruitment policy and a well-prepared recruitment process are essential. Pamenter (1999:62) says that setting timelines is necessary to determine the time period within which to identify internal and external applicants. This will provide guidance to the people involved, and also give the recruiting manager a comfort level. The creation and maintenance of a recruitment policy is usually the responsibility of the recruitment manager or hiring manager.

The company can use various methods of recruitment, for example the Internet, advertisements, or an external recruiter. In order to find the most suitable candidate, a number of different types of recruitment methods are

used. It is possible to distinguish between solicited and unsolicited recruitment, and internal and external sourcing as types of recruitment.

2.7   TYPES OF RECRUITMENT

Unique recruitment problems require innovative solutions

(Talbott; 1996:3)

To find and attract the best applicants and future employees, requires the use of various types of recruitment techniques, such as job posting on Internet Websites, searching Internet career sites, using third party recruiters, placing advertisements, and using referrals (Dahltorp, 2002:np).

In the next section, solicited, unsolicited, internal and external recruitment will be discussed. Electronic recruitment will be discussed in Section Two: Part 2 of the text.

According to Price (1997:192), 'external recruitment has the virtue of bringing in a wider range of experience but limits career opportunities for existing employees.' He also says that companies which focus 'on internal supply are likely to view people as assets carrying long-term value, rather than as costs' (1997:193).

According to Price (1997:193), the best option for resourcing personnel is to focus on both internal and external job markets. As Price (1997:103) remarks, 'Firms with an internal focus recruit at junior levels and "grow" their employees into valuable assets through training, development and experience in the organisation'. He further comments that 'companies can buy talent at a variety of levels from the external employment market. A mixed strategy offers

a balance of continuity and commitment from long-term staff together with fresh ideas from imported "new blood".'

2.7.1 Solicited Recruitment

Solicited recruitment is 'recruitment that is an active and aggressive process to find the best applicant for employment as the company goes and searches for the applicants' (French, 1986:246). The applicants for solicited recruitment can be found within the company, which means that the recruiter searches among current employees or the recruiter can search externally and obtain a diversified and qualified applicant pool. Recruiting passive job seekers, usually top performers, could be seen as solicited recruitment. These top performers are often not looking for work or have multiple job offers to choose from. Their current employers take care of them and they will probably not easily be convinced to leave their current jobs. Under solicited recruitment, the following will be covered: Poaching or Pirating, Headhunting, Creating talent pools, and the Underemployed.

2.7.1.1 Poaching or pirating

John Sullivan (2003:np) refers to hiring talent from direct competitors as 'poaching', while Carrell et al. (1998:140) refer to this type of recruitment as 'pirating'. Carrell et al. believes that talented employees are lured away from their current employers by offering the persons a more attractive salary, better working conditions and better benefits. This is an example of external solicited recruitment.

Corporate recruiters often avoid poaching and rather focus on applicants outside the industry or region. The reason for this is often a fear that their competitors would do the same and 'steal their people' and often company policy prohibits stealing or hiring applicants from their opposition (Sullivan, 2003:np). Carrell et al. argue the opposite (1998:141), saying that large firms often prefer 'poaching' or 'pirating' to hiring people with no work-based experience. The reason is that people who already have training and experience can become productive more quickly. Sullivan believes fighting for top talent makes recruiters better, and to have an impact, they have to hire 'away talent to help their firm and to intentionally hurt their competitors' (2003:np).

According to Sullivan, (2003:np), the benefits of hiring to hurt are that it provides competitive intelligence since it provides direct learning about the competitor's techniques and approaches. Secondly, it brings new customers, since the new employees might bring new customers with them. Thirdly, while the opposition is trying to protect their top performers, they are wasting management time while the pirating company is gaining management time, and fourthly, the new employees can provide new hires by referring other top performers.

When hiring top performers from the competitor, says Sullivan (2003:np), make sure that the person is hard to replace and has skills and knowledge that are hard to substitute, so that the person's leaving will create an immediate negative impact on the business.

Sullivan (2003a:np) indicates that some of the positions to target would be: top sales manager; CEO in waiting; top manager of the fastest growing division, and the recruiter that successfully poaches your top talent.

Cappelli (2000:104) believes that poaching has spread because 'companies have learned to use outside hiring strategically as well as tactically' (2000:104). The reason for poaching, he believes, is to quickly acquire expertise to be able to expand into new markets. Poaching also provides an easy way to enter into new regions, by poaching people doing similar work in that region. According to Cappelli, 'Hiring outside executives is now even seen as [an] effective and frequently less risky alternative to acquiring entire companies' (Cappelli, 2000: 104).

2.7.1.2   Headhunting

At the more senior levels, Price (1997:224) sees headhunting as another informal recruiting method and also calls it an 'executive search'. It is also a method of solicited recruitment. Flanagan and Finger (2000:136) believe that a headhunter can search for top management and other talent for top jobs in a company. They define a headhunter as a 'specialised corporate recruiter'. Swanepoel et al. (2003:268) say that a headhunter approaches a person personally with a job offer to fill a particular vacancy, or as alternative, an advertisement is written with the specific person's résumé in mind.

2.7.1. 3   The underemployed

Carrell et al. (1998:141) say that some employees feel 'under-employed' because their current job does not relate to their interests and training. These

employees are often not actively seeking other employment, but they can easily be recruited by headhunters of companies that can offer them jobs which are more in line with their training and skills. This is an example of external solicited recruitment.

2.7.2 Unsolicited Recruitment

Unsolicited recruitment takes place when 'excellent applicants turn up unexpectedly' (French, 1986:246). As with solicited recruitment, unsolicited recruitment can be either internal, from within the company, or external, from outside the enterprise.

The following types of unsolicited recruitment are considered: hiring the unexpected, and direct applications.

2.7.2.1   Hiring the unexpected

Recruiters find that traditional staffing sources are no longer efficient and to deal with this problem, recruiters have to become creative in their hiring strategies. To do this, they may hire the unexpected. To hire the unexpected is when recruiters accidentally come across certain unlikely candidates who are then recruited and hired.

'Netscape' (Talbott, 1996:1) is a California-based Internet software company which says it hires the unexpected. They have never experienced a shortage of job applicants, and in 1995 they expanded their workforce by 450 per cent without running a single advertisement. Applicants are plentiful, but the Netscape recruiters use their imagination to seek out the very best applicants. Kandis Malefyt, vice president of people at Netscape (Talbott,

1996:1), says that non-traditional recruitment methods help her identify the diversity and talent that the growing company demands. Malefyt provides an example of this type of recruitment by saying the following: 'It is not out of character at all for us to offer hackers a job'.

French (1986: 246-248) describes unsolicited recruitment as a situation when 'excellent applicants turn up unexpectedly'. He mentions that the unsolicited applicant might become a better employee than the one recruited through advertising or a college placement office. Unfortunately the unsolicited applicant is informed that no suitable position is available, and often when a position becomes vacant, the person has obtained another job.

2.7.2.2   Direct applications

Carrell et al. (1998:152) say that the largest source of applicants for most organisations is direct application via the mail or 'walk-ins'. This can be an inexpensive source of qualified applicants. The public image of the company and its reputation will determine whether applicants will use the direct application method to obtain employment at the particular company. Although the initial costs are low, screening the applications can become expensive.

2.8   SOURCES OF APPLICANTS

A company has to decide whether to do an internal or external search, or use both (hybrid) approaches to sourcing applicants. Some organisations have a rigid policy that allows for internal searches only (Pamenter, 1999:60). There are various sources of internal and external sourcing, namely word-of-mouth

referrals, job posting, part-time employees, employee referrals, skills inventories, job bidding, employee transfers, and the relocation of employees.

2.8.1 Word-of-Mouth Referrals or Applicants

This functions as a formalised introduction scheme, whose purpose is to introduce a pool of 'like-minded people' (Price, 1997:224). Appointees from this method tend to have a more realistic view of the company, and to have obtained their knowledge about the company from the informal networks, compared to people who were attracted by advertisements and gained their knowledge about the company from a Public Relations department. As a result 'word-of-mouth' applicants tend to stay longer, owing to a more realistic view and expectation of the company, and are often more suitable for the positions than the other recruits obtained through advertising.

However, it should be noted that word-of-mouth recruitment is discriminatory, as it may exclude minority groups who are not yet part of the informal networks. 'Inevitably people will recommend others from their own in-group even if they have no intention of discriminating (Price, 1997:224).'

2.8.2 Job Posting

Job posting takes place when job openings are announced to all employees (French, 1986:242). Bulletin board notices, printed bulletins or monthly newsletters published by the personnel or HR office, can be used to make announcements about job openings. Carrell et al. (1998:151), state that job posting is one of the most frequently used methods of internal recruitment, and that there are at least three effective ways of job posting, namely,

- traditional bulletin boards

- computer e-mail based systems

- telephone voice-mail-based systems

It is believed that the last two methods are more effective because they allow for easy access by all employees, twenty-four-hour availability, minimum paperwork, and immediate notification to all employees. Carrell et al. (1998:150), however, make the assumption that all employees have access to computers and frequently use the telephone. Swanepoel et al. (2003:266) believe that this method enhances the possibility that the best candidate can apply, but it can also cause the position not to be filled quickly, and employees may hop from job to job.

2.8.2.1   Requirements of job posting

Carrell et al. (1998:151) state that the job-posting procedure should be clearly explained to all employees, and the same method should be followed for each position. Five aspects of job posting should be mentioned. Firstly, it is argued that if the method varies from position to position, the employees might feel that 'employer subjectivity' enters into the process. Secondly, part of the posting should be the job specifications, including the nature of the job, the qualifications and skills needed, the number of years of experience, and the fact that any employee can apply for the position. The more specific the job specifications are, the fewer applications the HR manager will receive. Thirdly, it is important to state how long the position being posted will be open, and those employees who are sick or on leave need to be notified about the open position. Fourthly, it is important that the procedure for application be

specified, and lastly, the HR department should ensure that satisfactory feedback is provided once an employee has been selected.

The advantage of internal job posting is that minority and disadvantaged groups in the company become aware of career changing opportunities within the company. According to French (1986:242), the US courts and federal agencies have begun to require internal job posting as part of the settlement of discrimination cases. Another advantage, according to Carrell et al. (1998:152), is that job posting uncovers talents of employees that supervisors will not voluntarily reveal, and that it avoids the awkwardness of recommending for promotion an employee who does not wish to be promoted. With job posting, employees who do not wish to be promoted will not apply for the position.

2.8.3 Skills Inventories

Some firms, according to French (1986:243), have developed 'computerised skills inventories of their employees' by means of a database, that stores relevant information on skills, educational background, work history, and other important factors. The database can then be used to identify employees with the necessary requirement for a particular job. Swanepoel et al. (2003:265) see it as a record system listing employees with specific skills, that provides a fast way of identifying potential candidates, but is often limited to objective and factual data. It is an internal recruitment method.

2.8.4 Job Bidding

According to Carrell et al. (1998:150), job bidding is the most frequently used form of internal recruitment in an unionised environment. As soon as a position becomes available, the employees who qualify for this position are notified that they can 'bid' for this position if they would like to be considered for it. The most senior employee will receive the position. It follows a structured process, which is specified in the union contract. Promotions are based on seniority and ability. Job bidding is an internal method of recruitment.

2.8.5 Promotions

According to Carrell et al. (1998:148), internal promotions and advancements reduce turnover rate and employee dissatisfaction. As soon as a person is promoted, a vacancy arises, which can then be filled from within the organisation. This produces a chain effect, and two or more positions can be filled using internal recruitment. Internal promotions contribute to employee morale because each promotion positively affects several employees in the company.

The advantage of this method is that, because entry-level positions are filled externally and the higher-level positions are filled internally, the company does not risk experimenting with new appointees at high levels. The employee has already proved him or herself at lower level positions, and rewarding employees in this way is often faster and more cost-effective than appointing someone from outside (Carrell et al., 1998:148).

2.8.6 Employee Transfers and Relocation

Internal promotions will often lead to relocation of employees from one city to another, despite the fact that employees, according to Carrell et al. (1998:149), are less mobile today, meaning that they are less willing to relocate than 20 years ago. The prospect of relocation brings about various problems: higher house payments and real estate problems, for example, higher property prices in other areas, higher rates and taxes, and a transfer fee. Holloway (2003:np) adds that workers are less keen to move since they are worried about their partners finding work again, and perhaps leaving family behind, especially if they are older family members that might need care.

The advantage, as with any internal appointment, is that the employer knows the appointee's abilities and work record. This employee is also likely to become productive very quickly, with minimum training and orientation.

Transferring employees does have disadvantages. The main disadvantage is the costs involved, since the employer is usually responsible for the direct moving expenses including temporary housing, travel allowance, removal costs, and property registration. Some companies also have to assist the spouse in finding alternative employment. Another disadvantage is the disruption of the spouse's career, and employees are concerned with the quality of their lives and are often less willing to relocate, even if it means promotion.

2.8.7 Part-time Employees

Carrell et al. (1998:141) say that in past years, managers believed that part-time workers were not loyal to an organisation and that they usually did not produce at the levels of permanent employees. Recently, however, part-time employees have become an important source of recruitment. The truth, according to Carrell et al. (1998:141), is that part-time employees are just as productive, and that some highly qualified people prefer to work part-time. Part-time employees can save the company money because of a reduction in benefits and lower salaries. Thus, if a company's part-time employees produce at the same level as its permanent employees, 'they become an attractive alternative' (1998:141). Part-time workers often have more enthusiasm for traditionally boring and routine jobs, because they do not face constant repetition for lengthy times.

2.8.8 Advantages and Disadvantages of Internal Sourcing

'Internal sourcing' refers to the process of recruiting persons from within the company, and this type of sourcing has various advantages and disadvantages that will be discussed in the following section.

2.8.8.1 Advantages

One of the main advantages of internal recruiting, according to French (1986:243), is that the employee is already known to the organisation, and therefore his or her performance will be easier to predict than that of an outside person.

French (1986:243) suggests that managers can discover, through informal communications, that the best candidate for a particular job is already working for the company, but in a different section. Referrals are also successful, mostly owing to the already good relationship between the company and the referee or current employee (Wheeler, 2003:np).

An internal appointee will need less general training and orientation and less time to adapt to the work environment.

French (1986) argues that appointing an internal employee raises the employee's morale and improves the organisational climate. Carrell et al. corroborate this statement (1998:148).

2.8.8.2   Disadvantages

Large companies are not advised by French to rely to heavily on internal recruitment or sourcing, as it may be harmful to the company. If new blood is not occasionally appointed from outside the company, 'management may become stagnant and out of touch with their competition and the marketplace' (French, 1986:243).

Cultural factors of a particular company will influence the nature of recruitment (Price, 1997:224). A company might decide to recruit among the family or friends of the current employees or even the owners of the company. If no suitable applicants are found, advertisements and agencies are used. The problem with this is that the company risks being accused of nepotism. Referrals are usually seen as an informal recruiting method.

French does say that in smaller companies, internal recruitment is not always advisable, especially since moving a person to a position in the

company where there is a gap, will probably create as big a gap in the department from which he or she is moved (1986:243).

2.8.9 External Recruitment Methods

'External recruitment' takes place when the company recruits from external sources like employee referrals, networking, campus recruitment and targeting, private employment agencies, sourcing, and advertisements.

2.8.9.1   Employee referrals

Employees are often encouraged to assist their employers in locating qualified applicants. The employees are rewarded, often in the form of a bonus, for making a successful referral.

Adamsky (2003:np) says the Employee Referral Programme (ERP) of a company follows certain steps,

(1)   A candidate is referred to the person in the company who is responsible for ERP.

(2)   The referred candidate undergoes a series of interviews within the organisation.

(3)   The candidate is accepted and an offer letter is then generated. Or the candidate is rejected and a letter of rejection is generated.

(4)   If the candidate accepts the offer, the referring employee receives a referral bonus according to the company's policy.

Carrell et al. (1998:152) say that when employees make a referral, they are placing their own reputation on the line, and therefore are likely to recommend only qualified applicants. Fields (2001:68) says that the

advantage of employee referral is that the person who refers a friend or family member will know that applicant personally, and he or she also knows the needs of the company. Fields believe that this will allow for a better applicant than one who walks in off the street or applies for a position that has been advertised.

According to Howard Adamsky, founder and president of HR Innovations, Inc (Adamsky, 2003:np) referral is a relatively cheap way of obtaining suitable candidates. The new recruits may bring new insights and new customers to the organisation.

Some companies prefer not to use employee referrals for fear of inbreeding and nepotism. Employees who referred an applicant, who was not hired, might show their dissatisfaction by not co-operating with the appointed person.

- Selection devices

  According to Carrell et al. (1998:176), the policymakers will have to determine the combination of interviews, tests and selection devices that will be used during selection procedures.

- Candidate expectations

  Unskilled workers do not always see the necessity of filling out application forms or completing certain tests. It was found that, even at the lowest level, all candidates expected to be interviewed (Gerber et al., 1998:105).

- Time available

  It is advised to spend the minimum time 'meeting the candidate's expectations and at the same time thoroughly investigating their suitability to the job' (Gerber et al., 1998:105).

- Cost

  To save costs, pay attention to the following – design and printing of application forms, test instructions, reference request forms and other documentation. Make sure time is used effectively during the selection process (Gerber et al., 1998:105).

  Other devices are provisional selection interviews, the application form and selection methods. There are also personal references and the interview.

2.8.9.2   Networking

'Networking' is 'the informal interpersonal network of professional contacts and resources that each employee establishes' and it is an 'invaluable recruitment source' (Carrell et al.; 1998:153). Networking involves professional associations. Lou Adler (2003b:np) says that networking is the 'most important and cost-effective means of finding top semi-candidates'. He also says that it reduces the time for finding the most suitable candidates, since one contacts people whom one knows, and one knows top people for a particular job. Adler also believes that a company should find at least 50 per cent of their top candidates through networking.

Flanagan and Finger (2000:136) also say that a person should make him or herself 'visible', especially to attract the attention of headhunters and to cultivate professional contacts.

The importance of networking is that it allows companies, through professional contacts, to be able to identify a suitable candidate when a position opens up in his or her company.

2.8.9.3   Educational institutions

An alternative method is the use of educational institutions. As Swanepoel et al. (2003:268) write, 'Schools, colleges, technikons and universities provide grass-root level opportunities for recruiters to pick the '"best of the crop"'. They also believe that such institutions are a source of people with specialised skills.

Campus recruiting entails the pre-screening of programmes to identify the top students and to introduce them to employers. Tertiary institution training staff can play an important role in identifying candidates. Kevin Wheeler (2003c:np) says that companies should take a proactive stance on campus and let people know that they care about such people as engineering graduates, mathematics graduates and others. It is important to tell the students about patents and awards, to show them the equipment or software they will be able to work with, and show them how exciting it is to be, for example, an engineer or a scientist in a particular enterprise.

French says (1986:245) that companies send out recruiters to tell students what the company can offer and at the same time screen potential applicants. This trip is usually co-ordinated by the placement office of the institution – this office may assist in arranging facilities, marketing the event, and perhaps doing the initial screening of students.

Another method of targeting, sometimes used, is called 'ring-fencing'. This is a targeting method where only specific groups will be considered. These companies may discriminate against institutions where ethnic minorities and working-class people are represented (Price, 1997:228). Swanepoel et al. (2003:268) warn against recruiting, in the South African context, only at so-called 'white universities'. Rather, recruiting should form part of a company's affirmative action drive.

2.8.9.4 Sourcing through private employment agencies

An employment agency is a company specialising in the recruitment of suitable candidates for a particular position in a company at the request of a client. The employment agency is responsible for placing an advertisement and screening the applicants. The employment agency then draws up a short list of suitable candidates which is provided to the client, from which the company selects those whom they wish to interview.

Swanepoel et al. (2003:268) refer to employment agencies as 'consultants', and say that they have a 'broad network base and are exposed to management in action'. They therefore are a valuable source of information and expertise.

A company opting for private employment agencies often has to pay a percentage of the applicant's first-year salary as an agency fee (Carrell et al., 1998:153). An effective agency will save the company money on recruitment and selection, by screening out unqualified applicants and finding qualified candidates. It is advisable for a company to make use of no more than three agencies, as an agency is more likely to work hard at retaining repeated

business, and this also assists the agency to get a better understanding of the company and the company requirements (Carrell et al., 1998:153).

Some organisations do not necessarily have the staff to administer the recruitment function, or lack the expertise to conduct a thorough recruitment effort. It may be necessary to employ the services of outside resources, such as employment agencies.

To do this, the company can utilise external resources to do the search, but it is necessary to consider certain issues, like the fact that 'cheap is not always better'. Various electronic search services are available, and they promise to provide applicants at a low cost, but such search engines do not always understand the employer's culture or needs. The recruiter should also know the corporate culture of the employer, so that he or she can avoid making a misfit in selecting an applicant. Swanepoel et al. (2003:268) stress that the applicant's personal details must be kept confidential, and that the company has to accept professional recruitment procedures, and might be expected to sign a contract with the agency.

2.8.9.5   Advertisements

> It takes courage to identify and stay with a clearly defined target
>
> segment when advertising, but it pays off in the end.
>
> (Flanagan & Finger, 2000:409)

Companies should realise that, when they advertise a position, there are three groups of people who are likely to respond to the advertisement:

(1)   recruitment agencies who will be interested in referring their clients

(2)   competitors who will be interested in the company's activities

(3)   prospective employees who will be interested in what it is the company has to offer. Timing and positioning of the advertisement will influence its impact.

The response to an advertisement can be measured in terms of the number and quality of the applicants who apply. The recruitment process should strive to obtain the best applicants for the short list. The process should also be cost-effective.

Formula for the Cost of the Recruitment campaign:

Cost of Recruitment Campaign = recruitment costs/number of people employed (Gerber et al., 1998:99).

There are four ratios that can be used to determine how many leads should be obtained to yield the desired number of hirings (Gerber et al., 1998:99). They are the ratios of: leads to invitations, invitations to actual interviews; interviews to offers; and offers to hire.

It is useful for managing a recruitment budget to 'consider the time-lapse data indicating the average time intervals between an offer and its acceptance and the final addition of the person to the payroll' (Gerber et al., 1998:99).

French (1986:244) states that the most useful advertisement is 'the one that specifies the exact nature of the job, the qualifications required, and the salary range'. He also says that the advertising medium should be selected carefully, with the target audience in mind. Flanagan and Finger (2000:408) respond by saying that it is important to spend enough time on constructing the correct profile of the ideal applicant before proceeding with the

advertisement. Once the ideal applicant is identified, a 'catch-phrase' that will attract that person should be used in the advertisement. In order to attract suitable applicants, the advertisement should state key factors such as salary, job title career, and travel opportunities; this has a direct influence on the number of responses to the advertisement (French, 1986:244). Flanagan and Finger also say that the advertisement should be clear on what the position entails, as this will attract people who qualify for the position. Companies advertising vacancies do not want to be swamped with applications from unsuitable applicants, and to prevent this, the company will write an honest job description stating, for example, that work pace is dependent on the movement of the production line, or that the work is very repetitive.

Carrell et al. (1998:156) state that advertisements have become more creative, and usually include images that sell the company first, and the job second. Strong visuals are attention-getters, for example, the use of humour and graphics that will get even the casual observer to read the advertisement before turning the page. They also say a successful recruitment advertisement is based on four questions:

(1)   What does the company want to accomplish? Developing an accurate job description is essential, as it summarises the job functions.

(2)   Who does the company want to reach? The recruiter has to estimate the demographics and motivation of the applicants he or she wants to attract. This will assist in selecting the most appropriate advertising medium.

(3)   What should the advertising message convey? The identification of, for example, job duties and minimum qualifications is necessary.

(4)   How and where should a position be advertised? One or more possibilities can be used after considering the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Price states (1997:225) that advertisements in trade or professional journals attract the most suitable applicants, although this is more expensive than advertising in the local press. Price also says that this is a 'poorly researched aspect of resourcing, but it seems that employers are happier making a choice from an unexpectedly large pool of applicants than from a small pool generated by an unsuccessful recruitment campaign'.

According to Flanagan and Finger (2000:409), a company should include the organisation's vision in the advertisement. The organisation should also be very specific about what the applicants should do once they read the advertisement; for example, state that the applicants should send or e-mail complete or short résumés, and provide the full details of where they should be sent. It is necessary to provide copies of the advertisement to, for example, the receptionist, who might receive calls with reference to the position, and to current employees who might be interested in applying. The recruiter must ensure that the advertisement is placed 'in the most appropriate newspaper or trade journal, on the most appropriate day, in the most appropriate section at the most appropriate time of the year' (Flanagan and Finger, 2000:409).

2.9   HOW SOUTH AFRICA RESPONDS TO LABOUR SHORTAGES USING NON-

TRADITIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES.

Carrell et al. (1998:138-140) say South Africans respond to labour shortages with non-traditional recruitment strategies, as referred to below:

2.9.1 Disadvantaged Applicant Training Programmes

A large number of jobs require that a person have a high school certificate or a degree. Many disadvantaged groups cannot obtain these qualifications, and consequently many companies and government departments offer training programmes that cover basic writing and mathematical skills as well as job-specific instruction. An example of this is the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme.

2.9.2 Internships and Mentoring Programmes

Employers provide students with educational opportunities through the means of internships and mentoring. Swanepoel et al. (2003:414) define 'mentoring' as a communication relationship between a senior organisational member, called the mentor, and a junior organisational member, called the mentee or protégé. Field (2001:185) defines a mentor as a person who 'serves as a seasoned counsellor or advisor to employees'. The mentor has already gained experience and knowledge in their career path and can now serve as personal guide to the new or up-and-coming employee. The mentor relationship directly influences the mentee's career success by leading to benefits such as increased performance, higher income, greater satisfaction, and early career advancement. A company can design a formal mentoring

programme to ensure that the corporate structure supports mentoring, and then make use of the existing managers and top performers.

2.9.3 Career Exhibitions

The South African Department of Labour and other large companies host career exhibitions in places that are accessible to disadvantaged groups. At these exhibitions, special incentives for older applicants are emphasised. Some of these incentives include bursaries, housing, transport, and free education for their children.

2.9.4 Diversity Data Banks

South African employers often find it difficult to attract qualified, culturally diverse applicants to increase the diversity of their workforce. The reason for this is that the culturally diverse applicants do not respond to traditional recruitment methods (Carell et al., 1998:140). To solve this problem, many companies have created a 'diversity database', which contains information on different ethnic groups and their qualifications. The database allows easy access to these groups for vacancies varying from entry level to senior positions.

2.10 STEPS AND GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is an essential part of any company. It can also be costly, and to make sure that recruitment is cost-effective and actually obtains the best applicants, there are certain steps and guidelines to be considered (based on Gerber et al., 1998:90; Adamsky, 2003:np):

(1)   Planning and forecasting are needed before starting recruitment and this would then include the formulation of a recruitment policy.

An analysis of the job should be done to prevent discriminatory recruitment and to ensure that the recruitment happens in accordance with job-related factors. The factors that influence the recruitment are thus analysed.

(2)   Approval must be obtained for an appointment, in accordance with the HR budget and level of appointment.

(3)   The minimum qualities in the form of a job specification are needed, to ensure a proper match of a candidate. The job descriptions and job specifications should be updated and confirmed. Job analysis will lead to a job definition or description. A conventional job description will contain job titles, summaries of main functions, and detailed lists of job activities (Price, 1997:205).

(4)   The various recruitment sources should be investigated, and the recruitment techniques should be chosen. These sources and techniques should be adapted to the organisation.

(5)   A recruitment advertisement should be developed, and placed in the most suitable communication medium.

(6)   A closing date for responses must be set.

(7)   Applications must be evaluated.

(8)   A short list of applicants is compiled for a preliminary interview.

(9)   Applicants are chosen on the basis of the job description and job specification.

(10)   Applicants need to be informed of the positive and negative aspects of the job, for example, that it is a monotonous job or requires a lot of overtime (negative) or that the position involves excellent overtime or a company car (positive).

(11)   Successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified.

(12)   Recruitment should take place only when it is needed, and the recruitment programme needs to be audited.

2.11   WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECRUITMENT?

According to Jeff Dahltorp (2002:np), the level of the position that has to be filled will determine who is responsible for recruitment and whether third-party recruiters will be used. Many companies choose the option of third-party recruiters for positions higher than the administrative level, because it is quick and easy to rely on this form of recruitment. Most companies will have to use third-party recruiters for high-level or unique positions, since the recruiter's candidate databases and networking ability will be valuable for finding a suitable candidate. French (1986:240) believes that the overall responsibility for the recruitment process lies with the HR manager. The HR manager, according to French (1986:240), is responsible for 'designing and implementing a recruitment program that will meet the company's personnel needs while complying with all legal requirements. It includes finding sources of applicants, writing and placing advertisements; contacting schools, agencies and labour unions; establishing procedures to guarantee equal employment opportunity; and administering the funds the firm has budgeted for recruitment'.

French states that the HR manager needs to be assisted by other managers who can best predict the needs of their own department. These departmental managers must decide what tasks need to be completed, and what kinds of people are needed to fill each type of position.

Dahltorp (2002:np) feels that if companies invest in technologies that will streamline a company's recruiting hours, the company will be able to find applicants for top-level jobs using the Internet.

2.11.1 Requirements of a Hiring Manager

Deciding who should be responsible for the recruitment process should be dealt with during the writing of the recruitment policy. The level of the position usually plays a role in the appointment of a person. Entry-level positions are generally handled by the line-managers or supervisors, and the appointment of high-level positions are generally handled by the recruitment manager, who usually comes from the HR department.

The hiring manager therefore needs to meet certain requirements:

(1)   An in-depth knowledge of job analysis – the tasks, skills, knowledge and other mental and physical competencies required of an individual in a particular position. Job analysis enables an organisation to create a job description and a job specification, which usually entails writing an outline of what the job and position entail. It also sets the minimum qualifications needed to perform the tasks associated with a position.

(2)   The ability to liase with supervisors and management to determine HR requirements and thereby ensure sufficient buy-in of multiple-

stakeholders into the recruitment and selection process, and consequent appointment.

(3)   It is essential that the recruitment manager is knowledgeable in labour law. In South Africa the most significant labour acts that a person should be familiar with are the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1999 (EEA) and the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 amended (LRA). Compliance with both of these will ensure that the company does not unfairly discriminate against possible applicants during the recruitment or selection process. If a company does discriminate against an applicant, it may face legal action.

(4)   In order to remain competitive, the recruitment manager needs to know the local labour market, the current status of employees in the company, and the goals and culture of the company. This knowledge serves as a basis for deciding whom to appoint.

(5)   The hiring manager is often the only person who is able to describe to applicants what the vacant position entails. He or she is also the best person to accurately screen applicants for the best fit for a particular position and determine whether the applicant has the required skills (Anonymous, 1996:13).

2.11.2 Problems and Considerations regarding Hiring Managers

Hiring managers can sometimes oversell the prospects or positive features of a position, especially if they have taken an interest in a particular candidate. Hiring managers should be aware of being biased or letting their personal feelings or opinions influence their treatment and choice of candidates.

2.12 SELECTION

According to Alan Price (1997:223), selection is a decision-making process which follows on the process of internal and external recruitment processes, which lead to a number of applications. If a job analysis has been completed, the job criteria or competencies need to be identified. The decision-making is based on these criteria, and therefore relevant information has to be obtained from the applicants. The following section defines 'selection' and looks at selection methods – strategies and decisions.

2.12.1 Definition of Selection

'Selection' is a process of job matching, which starts with a job description and the identification of personal qualities that will be needed by the person who will fill the position. It is also a process of providing a pool of suitably qualified candidates who have the aptitude, abilities and experience to meet the job requirements and the requirements of the organisation, and who are most likely to succeed in the position, and are then chosen or selected by a selection panel.

The appointment of a person to a particular position rests upon the assumption that the person will function successfully in the job. The appointment will be made after the individual's potential and the job requirements are weighed up against each other (Gerber et al., 1998:103).

2.12.2 Available Technologies

Dahltorp (2002:np) is a supporter of using various technologies available for recruiting and selecting the best applicant. Importantly, he states that before

any company can decide on what technology they will need or use, they have to create their process of recruiting and selection, know how it works, and if it works effectively.

He strongly discourages companies from buying into technologies or products where the seller advises that the company should replace their recruiting processes, though the company knows that they work.

2.12.3 Factors influencing the Selection Decision

There can be both internal and external influences. Internal environmental factors (Gerber et al., 1998:104) are the size of the organisation, the nature of the organisation, the nature of social pressure, and the number of applicants for a certain job. External environmental factors are the natures of the labour market, trade unions and government regulations.

2.13   THE SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process is the series of events to select the best applicant, and the various steps will be considered in the following section. Selection consists of various steps:

FIGURE 3: The Selection Process

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Organisational Goals                                │
│    •     Why does the organisation exist?           │
│    •     What are its goals and objectives?         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Job design                                                  │
│    •  What are the duties and responsibilities of the       │
│       individual worker?                                    │
│    •  What work does the individual performs for the        │
│       organisation?                                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Job success criterion                                       │
│                                                             │
│    •  What distinguishes successful performance from        │
│       unsuccessful performance?                             │
│    •  How is it measured?                                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Job Specification                                           │
│                                                             │
│       What traits, skills and qualities in the individual   │
│       are related to successful performance?                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Selection Instruments                                       │
│                                                             │
│    •  What devices are available for determining if the     │
│       applicant possesses the desired traits,              │
│       characteristics and skills?                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Carrell et al., 1998:177)

2.13.1 Setting of Organisational Goals

Carrell et al. (1998:176) believe that organisational goals should be set, which should include a general hiring policy of the organisation. It is necessary for the policy makers to determine where the employees fit into the framework of the organisation, and to establish the relationships among the employees in the organisation.

2.13.2 Job Design

Job design determines the duties and responsibilities of each job. Repetitiveness of certain jobs can have an influence on employee motivation,

which influences job performance. A person's performance is directly influenced, according to Carrell et al. (1998:176), by his or her ability and motivation, which in turn are influenced by the job design. According to Flanagan and Finger (2000:146), a picture of the most suitable candidate should be created by looking at the job design, and the personal attributes and specific expectations of the person who has to fill the opening.

2.13.3 Job Specifications

A job specification follows from job analysis, and it specifies the traits, skills and background an applicant will need to be able to perform a particular job. Flanagan and Finger (2000:146) say that the job description or specification should be examined to determine whether it is still appropriate. The position's immediate supervisor should be consulted, and then the job requirements in terms of job title, key responsibilities and the duties, skills, limits of authority, job relationships, special demands, and conditions of employment have to be reviewed

2.14 SELECTION METHODS

As with different types of recruitment, a company can use different methods to select the best applicant(s). It is important that the person who is responsible for the selection is properly trained in the selection method. It is important that the selection methods are continuously reviewed to ensure that they keep up with market trends, and to give a company a competitive edge in selecting the most suitable applicants or future employees. There are a number of different selection methods, which will be discussed in the following section.

Alan Price (1997:228) looks at a number of selection methods, or what he refers to as 'researching candidates'.

2.14.1 Application Letters and Résumés

The word 'résumé' is a French word that means 'summary', and in English it has come to mean a summary of the applicant's achievements and abilities (Flanagan et al., 2000:146). Letters and résumés are typically used as initial applications. There are variations between cultures, according to Price (1997:228), and some cultures, like France, still request a handwritten application letter, short résumé and photograph. Many French firms make use of graphologists during selection (Price, 1997:229). These résumés contain little or no personal information, whereas the Japanese recruiters expect an official family registry, physical examination report, and letters of recommendation, in addition to the résumé and photograph. In countries where equal opportunities are recruiting issues, the use of photographs is criticised since it implies that selection will be influenced by appearance and colour. According to the South African Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1999, it is illegal to discriminate against applicants on the following grounds:

Prohibition of unfair discrimination.

> (1) No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth. (EEA, 1999:11)

Career advisors spend a good deal of time teaching job seekers to write excellent application letters and résumés. Coaching in this regard does, however, result in bland, standardised applications, which do not stand out amongst hundreds of others.

2.14.2 Application Forms

In a recruitment programme, application letters and résumés do not always provide all the relevant information. The comparison of applicants is easier if the data is supplied in a standard form (Price, 1997:229). French says (1986:255) that the advantage of an application form is that the standardised format allows the managers to 'glean the relevant information at a glance'. Applicants who have applied for a job will sometimes receive an application form to complete, requesting information that has already been provided. Carrell et al. (1998:180) call this an 'application blank'.

According to Price (1997), the problem with application forms is that they provide very little space for answers, which may cause very similar responses from all the applicants, and if candidates do not include information that will distinguish themselves from the other applications, they do not have a good chance of being short-listed.

The questions asked on the application form, according to French (1986:255), should be job-related and 'avoid inquiries into matters pertaining to age, sex, race or other such factors'. The reason for this is to avoid unlawful discrimination.

2.14.3 Qualifications

Educational qualifications are very important in some cultures, like France and Japan, while in other countries the importance of qualifications will depend on the level and nature of the vacancy. Some recruiters rely heavily on educational qualifications as initial selection criteria for short-listing applicants. Skills and competencies are sought at a later stage of selection.

2.14.4 Biographical Data

Application forms and résumés do include sections on experience, hobbies and other spare-time activities. Traditionally, little use was made of this information, according to Price (1997:230). It can, however, be used to discriminate between applicants who are similar in most other respects.

Biographical data forms have been developed to identify non-academic qualities. They consist of systematic information about hobbies, interests, and life history. These forms usually consist of multiple-choice questions covering (Price, 1997:231):

- Age, sex, place of birth, residence

- Family background, number of siblings, parental history

- Education, work experience

- Marital status, number of children

- Physical characteristics (weight, height) and medical history

- Hobbies and leisure interests

- Reading habits – newspapers, magazines, type and frequency of books read

Biographical data questionnaires are expensive to set up, but cheap to administer, especially if the information can be entered into a computer using optical scanning. However, the reason for their use is that they select people who are similar to those employed already (Price, 1997:231). They are designed to eliminate unfairness, and it 'consolidates and makes "'scientific'" an embedded practice which is prejudicial to the disadvantaged' (Price, 1997: 232).

2.14.5 References

The function of references is to provide a 'factual check to maximise the probability of a truthful application and to provide evidence of character or ability' (Price, 1997:232). French (1986:255) says that reference checking can 'verify or contradict what the applicant has told the organisation' and they can provide 'supplemental information that can be useful in the hiring process'. Schultz & Schultz (1998:88) argue that reference checking is merely to check other people's impressions of applicants and to verify information on the applicant's application. They also mention that the information often presents a false picture of the applicant, as the referees tend to provide an overly positive picture of the candidate. Applicants are unlikely to offer referees who will say anything unfavourable about them.

2.14.6 Psychometric Tests

According to Carrell et al. (1998:181), testing as a part of the selection process has experienced periods of both growth and decline. The primary problem was that various tests were used without determining their validity.

Applicants often have to undergo psychological, medical, and specially designed tests for managerial personnel. The South African Employment Act, 55 of 1999 (1999:11) states the following with regard to psychometric testing in the South African context:

Psychometric testing:

Psychometric testing and other similar assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used –

   a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable;

   b) can be applied fairly to employees; and

   c) is not biased against any employee or group.

Companies wishing to make use of psychometric testing will have to ensure that they meet the requirements of the EEA, 55 of 1999 to prevent the company being liable for discrimination.

Carrell et al. (1998:183) mention that in the South African context many of the tests used are culturally biased, although some of the tests have been adapted for the South African environment.

According to Williams (2003:np), any method that separates applicants into qualified and unqualified applicants can be seen as a test, and this includes interviews. For Williams (2003:np).'It is best then to use validated tests that accurately predict job performance'.

There are various types of tests that can be done (Gerber et al., 1998: 111-113)[1]: performance tests, intelligence tests, aptitude tests, interest tests, personality tests, psychological tests, skills tests, physical and motor skills,

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[1] These tests have to be administered by qualified people. Many of the test developers insist that the test buyers have certain minimum technical qualifications (William, 2003:np). Such tests can also be given under the supervision of a qualified Psychologist (Anonymous, 2000).

medical tests, and assessment centres. When using tests, the validity and reliability of these tests have to be considered.

The tests can take the form of pen-and-paper tests or multiple-choice questionnaires or can be presented on computer screens. These tests usually require the test taker to work through a large number of questions in a given amount of time. The questionnaire always proceeds from easy to more difficult, and due to the limited time, few people can complete all items correctly (Price, 1997:233).

Price states that 'there is a widespread belief that they are somehow objective, contrasting strongly with the subjectivity of interviewing' (1997:233). Applicants, on the other hand, feel that at an interview they can 'sell' themselves and create a favourable impression.

Psychometric tests 'assume that there is an optimal set of psychological characteristics for success at any human activity, for example, success at a particular job' (Price, 1997:233). Price feels that the 'traditional, tightly prescribed "job" is disappearing in favour of a more fluid, flexible role'. Older notions of psychological 'dimension' by which jobs and people are matched, are being replaced by the more complex multidimensional concept of competences' (1997:233).

2.14.6.1 The advantages and disadvantages of tests

Advantages and Disadvantages of Tests	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Tests results are numerical and allow for direct comparison of applicants on the same criteria.	Test responses can be faked to give a desirable score. Some tests include a 'lie detector' to overcome this.
Tests provide 'hard' data, which can be evaluated for their predictive usefulness in later years i.e., compare predicted performance with actual performance.	Tests can be unreliable – factors like anxiety, headaches and illness can lead to variable results.
Tests provide explicit and specific results.	Tests can be invalid – not measuring what they say they measure.
Tests measure substance and not image.	Some people may lack sufficient self-insight to give accurate responses.
Test batteries cover a comprehensive range of abilities and personal qualities.	Tests can be irrelevant – not measuring qualities relevant to a specific organisation e.g. honesty
Tests are empirically based with a grounding theory. They are reliable and valid, and discriminate between good, average, and mediocre.	Tests are often unfair to people who are not white, middle-class and male as this population is often used as the reference population.
Empirical data from tests provide objective evidence to justify decisions.	Since firms use the same tests, practice effects and knowledge of desirable answers can affect their value.
Tests provide insights and explanations for behaviour and can justify individual rejections.	

Source: Price, 1997:234

2.14.6.1.1 Criticism of psychological testing

The increasing use of psychological tests has caused 'some disquiet amongst psychologists, particularly the proliferation of personality assessments' (Price, 1997:236). Various tests are available on the market, and are often promoted by people without adequate training who make extravagant claims about their value and effectiveness. Many employers cannot identify good and bad products.

Price refers to Blinkhorn and Johnson (1997:236) 'who criticize personality tests as predictors of job performance compared to ability and aptitude tests'. They argue that personality tests 'validity coefficients are often

no better than chance'. It is also argued that applicants can lie on personality tests, for example, if the candidate knows that the job requires a person who is an extravert, they present themselves as being extraverts, even if they are not.

If applicants are exposed to the same test on more than one occasion, it is argued that they gain from previous experience, because they may remember some of the answers. (Price, 1997:236)

Language can have a great influence on test performance. Usually ethnic minorities have to take a test in English, which is not their first language. The applicants' performance is then influenced by their comprehension of the questions and their ability to express their answers in a way that is meaningful to the testers. The time limit on tests is also detrimental to non-mother-tongue speakers, as they have to 'translate at a conscious mental level' (Price, 1997:237). In the end the test does not measure problem-solving ability or motivation, but the person's proficiency in English.

The applicants who have to take them often do not favour psychological tests, and they often experience test anxiety. Labour unions also tend to be negative towards testing, according to Schultz and Schultz (1998:122), it is believed that the test serves the company and not the applicant.

2.14.6.1.2   Physical examinations

Gerber et al. refer to physical examinations as 'medical tests' (1998:112). Medical tests can indicate whether an individual has tendencies towards serious illnesses. During these examinations the applicant's blood and urine

are tested. Gerber et al. give the following guidelines when carrying out these tests, especially when an HIV/AIDS test is done:

- If these tests are done, all employees must be tested without exception.

- Provision has to be made for follow-up tests.

- The applicants have to be forewarned about tests.

- Applicants must be reassured of the confidentiality of the test results.

In some instances the organisation may appoint a physician or nurse to conduct a physical examination of the applicant. In some companies, individuals need to fill out a health questionnaire, and those with apparent health problems are sent for a physical examination (French, 1986:259).

The reason for these examinations is to assist the employer in appointing a person in a suitable position; for example, a person with a back problem will not be appointed in a position where he or she has to lift heavy objects or push a wheelbarrow. The examination creates a record of the person's ailments and prevents possible claims for workers' compensation for pre-existing conditions, and it can indicate if the person is likely to be absent often.

In South Africa, according to the EE Act (55 of 1999), doing a physical examination can be grounds for discrimination, and it is against the law to insist a person reveal his or her HIV/AIDS status or not to hire a person because of his or her HIV/ AIDS status. The EEA Act (55 of 1999) states the following on medical examinations (EEA, 1999:11):

Medical testing**.** (1) Medical testing of an employee is prohibited, unless – legislation permits or requires the testing; or it is justifiable in the light of medical facts, employment conditions, social policy, the fair distribution of employee benefits or the inherent requirements of a job. (2) Testing of an employee to determine that employee's HIV status is prohibited unless such testing is determined justifiable by the Labour Court in terms of section 50 (4) of this Act.

2.14.6.1.3   The right to use tests

Gerber et al. (1998:113) state that the right to use tests is only granted under the following conditions:

- Only an individual may register with Health Professionals Council and not an organisation.

- Registration as a personnel practitioner or personnel technician at the SA Board for Personnel Practice does not give the individual involved any right to use tests.

- The National Institute for Personnel Research and the Institute for Psychological and Edumetrical Research of the Human Sciences Research Council sell tests to registered users.

2.14.6.1.4   Assessment centres

Assessment centres that refer to a process and not a place, are often used for obtaining information on an applicant's supervisory and managerial ability for a job (Gerber et al., 1998:113). According to Carrell et al. (1998:183), this is also called 'Managerial Selection Devices' and it is an expensive but valid predictor of managerial ability.

Assessments centres are generally conducted off-site, can last from one day to a week, and can include up to 12 applicants at one time. Trained

assessors will record and evaluate the performance of each applicant in simulated situations. Carrell et al. (1998:183) say that most assessment centres have four areas of evaluation, namely organising, planning, decision-making, and leadership.

At these centres applicants will 'take part in in-basket exercises, leaderless work groups, computer simulations and role play, which require skills similar to those needed for successful execution of the actual tasks' (Gerber et al., 1998:113). Other techniques used are interviewing, role-plays, objective testing, and management games. Line managers, consultants or trained outsiders can do the evaluation.

The Assessment centre will allow the organisation to formulate decisions with regard to the following: qualifications for certain jobs, promotion-worthiness of applicants, how applicants function in a group, type of training and development programmes needed to develop the desired work behaviour in applicants, and how well the applicants can observe, evaluate and report on the other applicants' performance.

2.15 SELECTION STRATEGIES

Selection strategies can also be seen as the selection policy of a company, and involve planning and conducting the selection of applicants. Selection strategies refer to specific actions that contribute to the success of the selection process, for example, multiple predictors, placement, cost-benefit selection, and the selection of managers, which will be discussed next (Gerber et al., 1998:116).

2.15.1 Multiple Predictors

There are three approaches:

- Multiple obstacle approach

In the multiple obstacle approach 'each selection aid is seen as an obstacle that the applicant must overcome to progress to the following step. Therefore the applicant must go through each of the selection steps and if any of the steps are failed, the applicant is rejected' (Gerber et al., 1998:116).

- Compensating approach

The candidate is not necessarily rejected if he or she fails one of the selection steps. The person might achieve a low score in one area, but an exceptionally high score in another area. This person will be allowed to go through the whole process and at the end be compared with the other applicants (Gerber et al., 1998:117).

- Combined approach

This starts with the multiple obstacles approach and ends with the compensating approach. The first method can be used up to the level where applicants have to pass certain tests to be considered for the job. If the applicants do not pass these, they are eliminated from the process. After the tests are completed, the compensating approach can be used, where applicants will complete the whole process (Gerber et al., 1998:117).

2.15.2 Placement

This is when a candidate is considered for more than one job by considering the applicant's interests, skills and knowledge.

2.15.2.1   Cost benefit analysis

During selection one has to consider the cost of filling a job and the potential costs that may result from a wrong selection decision, for example the cost of terminating a service, the cost of hiring another employee, and low productivity. It can be assumed that the cost will increase as the employment standards rise.

2.15.3 Selection of Managers

The type of person who is employed will determine the selection process and the aids to be used; therefore it is necessary to do a detailed study of a job before appointing someone to do the recruitment or appointment.

'Successful managers usually have above average intelligence, drive, judgement and managerial skills, the criteria must be determined that the candidate for a certain job must meet' (Gerber et al., 1998:117). These criteria can be derived from performance standards of existing managerial personnel and future needs. It is necessary to determine these criteria beforehand, as managerial tasks differ according to managerial level and the function of the particular industry.

When managers are selected, it is necessary to focus on behaviour, test scores, and general impressions.

2.16 INTERVIEWING POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Alan Price states that 'the interview is a social ritual which is expected by all participants' and 'is such a normal feature of filling vacancies that applicants

for a job would be extremely surprised not be interviewed at least once' (Price, 1997:237).

Flanagan & Finger (2000:147) mention first-round interviews. These are also mentioned by Carrell et al. (1998). The purpose of first-round interviews is to determine the applicants' compatibility and suitability in relation to their future job performance. It enables the interviewer to obtain and interpret facts that can then be compared with the attributes determined for the ideal applicant. When it comes to interviewing the short-listed candidates, it is already a follow-up interview, usually with the three most suitable candidates. At this stage in-depth probing questions should be used to determine the applicants' accomplishments in order to reveal more information than was revealed in his or her résumé and initial interview.

Carrol Perry (Anonymous, 1996:15), an attorney with a San Francisco-based law firm, advises to stay away from questions relating to the following issues: age, race, sex, national origin, religion, marital status, pregnancy or disability. In South Africa, too, the above are important to remember, as the laws of the country protect all South Africa's people against potential discriminatory questions that in any way refer to the above-mentioned factors. This is substantiated by Flanagan & Finger (2000:79), who write that, according to South African law it is illegal to ask questions if they do not directly pertain to the person's capacity to do a job.

Prohibition of unfair discrimination (EEA October 1999:10).

(1) No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex,

pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.

(2) It is not unfair discrimination to –

a) take affirmative action measures consistent with the purpose of this Act; or

b) distinguish, exclude or prefer any person on the basis of an inherent requirement of a job.

Hiring managers should be careful to extend a partial offer to an applicant. A partial offer is when the hiring manager only divulges part of the information with regard to the job, for example the job specification, but does not provide information on the salary or the expectation to work over-time. By extending a partial offer, the successful applicant might decline the offer after going through the whole process, because of information that was not divulged at an earlier stage. This can become costly as the process would have to start over, and the company can be liable for lawsuits, if the hiring manger made promises that are then not kept in the contract.

Jack Kennedy, research specialist with Brecker & Merryman in New York (French, 1986:262), mentions that to prevent turnover people should be given realistic job previews. According to Kennedy, this should already happen during the interviewing process, and especially at the time of the offer. This could be done by detailing a week or month in the work-life of a person in that job. The good and bad points of that position can be listed. He also thinks that applicants should visit often, and talk to as many co-workers as possible.

French (1986:262) is of the opinion that the interview has the greatest influence on the potential employee's view of the company and his or her attitude towards the job. The interview provides an opportunity to fill the gaps in the information provided by application forms and tests. Schultz & Schultz

(1998:82) agree that the interview provides 'the opportunity for the applicants, if they ask the right questions, to determine whether the company and the job are right for them'.

2.16.1 Different Types of Interviews

2.16.1.1 Informal interviews

Some companies will invite applicants for informal interviews prior to the main selection procedure. This is usually for the purpose of information exchange and provides an opportunity to discuss the full nature of the job, working environment, and prospects for further development and promotion. French refers to this type of interview as a 'screening interview' (1986:262). Breakwell, in Price (1997:238), indicates that both the interviewer and applicant need to have checklists of essential points to cover in an interview.

2.16.1.2 Unstructured interview

The unstructured interview lacks advance planning, and is usually seen as a general conversation. The interviewer asks questions at his or her discretion (Schultz & Schultz; 1998:83).

The negative side of this interview technique is that, when five different interviewers interview the same candidate, one potentially gets five totally different impressions. Each interviewer might be interested in a different aspect of the candidate, and this could result in interviewer bias and prejudice (Schultz & Schultz; 1998:83).

2.16.1.3   The situational-problem interview

In the case of the situational-problem interview, the candidate has to solve a particular problem or complete a particular project (Schultz & Schultz; 1998: 83). The situational-problem interview tests the candidate's ability to solve problems that he or she might face in the particular position.

2.16.1.4   Formal interviews

Employers tend to believe that the formal interview is the most important source of evidence in making the final decision.

Schultz & Schultz refer to structured interviews (1998:85) and define them as 'Interviews that use a predetermined list of questions that are asked of every person who applies for a particular job'. The structured interview reduces interviewer bias. A form with the questions is provided, and the interviewer notes the candidate's responses on the form. The questions are asked in the same format and sequence to all applicants, and therefore provides for a better comparison of applicants, based on their responses.

French (1986:264) calls this the structured or patterned interview – the interviewer uses a standard list of questions and the aim is uniformity of data from one interview to the next. It assumes that no important questions will be forgotten, and it ensures that each candidate is treated in the same way.

The interview is often criticised for being subjective. As early as 1964, E.C. Webster came to the following conclusions (Price, 1997:239):

- First impressions – Interviewers often make up their minds in the first few minutes and then seek evidence to support their opinion. Price refers to a survey done in 1992 (1997:239) that found that 74 per cent

of interviewers made their decision on a candidate in the first five minutes.

- Candidate appearance – this is the most significant factor, followed by information on the application form.

- Unfavourable evidence is valued more strongly than favourable information on the application form.

- Interviewer's opinion 'comes over' to the candidate during the interview and influences the candidate's further performance in an unfavourable or favourable direction.

2.16.1.5   The singleton

The most common form is the singleton interview. French calls this type of interview the 'one-on-one interview' (1986:264). In this type of interview the candidate has only one session with one interviewer. The applicants who are not selected see this method as unfair.

2.16.1.6   Panel or board interview

Potential bias is overcome by making use of a panel or board interview, which consists of a number of interviewers. Two or three people take turns in asking questions. The panel consists of an operational interviewer, usually a line manager from the department with the vacancy, and a personnel interviewer who usually comes from the personnel department. Sometimes there can be an additional chairperson. Every person asks questions appropriate to his or her level of expertise. For example, the operational assessor will ask task-

related questions and the personnel assessor will ask questions on career aspiration and motivation.

The panel interview is seen as fairer than the previous methods because the questioning takes place in a public arena and all parties present hear the responses. It also provides a wider range of questions and thus also allows more varied responses.

Flanagan & Finger (2000:147) warn against 'trusting your gut' and suggest that the gut feeling be replaced by a screening test. They suggest that the following should be considered when appointing someone: 'personality fit of the applicant to the organisational culture and environment', and if the person's personality will complement other employees working in the company. Traditionally, 'gut feeling' was used to determine this fit, but today psychometric testing can be used to make a more scientific match.

French (1986:266) states that the interviewer should always listen closely to what the candidate is saying, and try to understand the candidate's own outlook. The interviewer can encourage the applicant to ask questions, as this will make the applicant feel that his or her needs are being considered. The interviewer should avoid gestures and 'nonverbal signals like glancing impatiently at the clock'.

2.16.1.7   Evaluating the interview

To judge any method of selection, including the interview, Price suggests that the following four basic requirements be considered (1997:239-241):

2.16.1.7.1   Practicality

The selection method must be practical in a given situation, for example, cost, convenience, and available time must be assessed. The attitudes of the employers and the applicants to the methods are also important.

2.16.1.7.2   Sensitivity

The ability of a method to distinguish one candidate from another is important. Interviews will rank applicants who are fairly close, whereas tests give a wide range of scores (Price, 1997:240).

2.16.1.8   Interviews revisited

Weisner and Cronshaw, according to a study done by them in 1988 (Price, 1997:242), found that interview validity would depend on the type of interview. Traditional or unstructured interviews had very poor reliability, and were seen as not much more than 'a cosy chat'. Structured interviews based on job analysis had a much higher validity. Structured interviews have a specific format and focus on questions about the job. Two standard methods can be used:

- Criterion-referenced interviews. These types of interviews are based on job analysis, with a set of questions that are geared towards the experience and skill of the interviewee, and the interviewee can usually choose from the questions.

- Situational interviews make use of a reasonable number of real-life work incidents and are obtained from jobholders or their supervisors. Schultz & Schultz (1998:85) define the situational interview as follows:

'Interviews that focus not on personal characteristics or work experience but on the behaviours needed for successful job performance'.

According to Schultz & Schultz (1998:86), to develop a situation interview, a list of critical incidents that differentiate between successful and unsuccessful employees currently on the job, should be prepared. The supervisor will assign a benchmark for scoring incidents. These incidents are then turned into questions, which are then used in the situational interview.

According to Price, a possible way of dealing with these situations is outlined and rated as suitable or unsuitable. This is frequently done on a point system (1997:242). Applicants are presented with these hypothetical situations and their responses are evaluated against predetermined ratings. Thus the applicant's future behaviour in similar situations can be predicted.

Alan Price (1997) says that an effective interview requires a great deal of planning beforehand. Flanagan & Finger (2000:78) emphasise that the interviewer should know the exact purpose of the session, and that he or she should read and familiarise him- or herself with the relevant documentation and prepare a set of questions in advance. Price believes that this will ensure a high degree of validity as a selection tool (1997:242). The aim of the interview is to obtain predictive evidence regarding a candidate's likely performance on the specific criteria. The questioning style can be linked to the kind of evidence required, and may take one of three principal routes, according to Price (1997:242-243):

- Hypothetical problem-solving questioning. The candidate is presented with a situation to evaluate or solve, and which can be expected to test

the candidate's abilities in a number of respects such as intellect, problem-solving ability, lateral thinking and creativity.

- Behavioural (past) event questioning. Behavioural event questioning works from the basis that 'previous handling of situations and problems predicts an individual's future performance in similar situations' (Price, 1997:243).

- Patterned behavioural event (life) questioning. Questions based on patterned behaviours aim to identify an individual's career or life strategy. This questioning establishes how rational and sensible changes in the person's life have been, and is used to 'draw conclusions about stability, seriousness of application and likely motivation' (Price, 1997:243).

- Stress interviewing. In this type of interview the candidate is pressurised, sometimes even aggressively. Interviewers, implying that the work environment is often stressful, justify this method.

- 'Sweet and sour interviews' are 'interviews where the interviewer takes completely different approaches, one pleasant and one unpleasant, in an attempt to gain a wider range of responses from the candidate' (Price, 1997:243).

French (1986:265) suggests that, despite the format an interview takes, there are other problems that should be considered. One of these is the personal bias of the interviewer. For example, the interviewer may not like people who wear striped ties. The interviewer should ignore his or her personal preferences and be aware of stereotyping people, for example, minority groups or women.

French also refers to the 'halo effect' which means that if an applicant is impressive in one area, the interviewer might concentrate on this feature, and it would overshadow the applicant's other weak points. The opposite of the halo effect is called the 'horn effect', which would imply that if the candidate is weak in one area, it is assumed that he or she is weak in all areas (French, 1986:265).

French refers to bias, whereas Schultz & Schultz (1998:82) call it 'first impressions'. Schultz & Schultz mention that interviewers, when assessing possible applicants, are influenced by their own subjective impressions of the applicants. These subjective impressions often carry more weight than the applicants' experience or qualifications.

2.16.1.9   Preparation for interviews

Price mentions (1997:243) that the interviewer should ensure that relevant information is read beforehand. Flanagan & Finger say that questions should be prepared in such a way that they will get complete and detailed answers. It would be necessary to know beforehand what facts and information the interviewer would like to obtain. Furthermore, the interview should focus on the interviewee, and sidetracking by irrelevancies should be avoided (2000:78). The interviewer should remain in control, and direct the flow of conversation to achieve the pre-determined goals. The interview should take place in an appropriate environment – a quiet room without interruptions, and comfortable but businesslike furniture. The interviewer should put the interviewee at ease. French (1986: 266) suggests that the candidate be put at

ease by starting off with general talk about neutral subjects, and in this way also establish rapport. Flanagan & Finger (2000:78) support this view.

With a trained interviewer, the most useful tactic for applicants is to become familiar with the company they are applying for. This requires research on the company history, products or services, and the company strategy.

Flanagan & Finger (2000:78) add that it is necessary to make notes during the interview, and to make use of checklists. The checklist should include qualities essential to the particular job, and specific topics that must be covered during the interview. It is also necessary, immediately after the interview, to elaborate on the notes taken during the interview, summarise answers and record factual information. The data should also be reviewed. This process is very important when several interviews are done.

2.17   THE SELECTION DECISION

Once all the applicants have been tested, interviewed and their references checked, the final decision on appointment usually lies with the supervisor or head of department where the job opening exists (French, 1986:268). It is the HR department's responsibility to approve the salary and benefit structure of the appointed person.

According to Carrell et al. (1998:193), the selection decision is made on the basis of one of two processes, namely compensatory selection or multiple hurdles selection. The multiple hurdles selection requires the applicant to pass each of the hurdles, for example, initial screening, application blank, testing, interview, background checks, and departmental

interview. This method is often used because of its cost-effectiveness, since applicants can be rejected at each of the stages.

Compensatory selection allows all the applicants who pass the initial screening to be allowed to complete the application blank, be tested, and be interviewed before the final choice is made. The final choice is based on a comparison of the selection information. This method allows for an applicant who scored low in one area, to have the low score evened out by scoring high in another area. The greatest advantage of this method is that an excellent candidate who performed poorly in the interview because of anxiety, but performed excellently in the aptitude tests will not be excluded from consideration. The biggest disadvantage, however, is the high costs because of the larger number of candidates that go through the entire process.

The HR department, according to French (1986:268), usually makes the actual job offer via a phone call or letter. The person can also be called in for a final interview and then an offer is presented to him or her. Flanagan & Finger (2000:147) point out that official documentation should be ready within 48 hours of making the applicant an offer, and arrangements made for having the contract signed. The person is informed of the salary, the structure of the benefits, and if any further conditions need to be met before the final appointment is made, for example, whether a physical examination has to be passed. The starting time is determined, and if the candidate would like to consider the offer first, a date is provided by which the company would need an acceptance or rejection of the offer.

French (1986:268) mentions the importance of informing unsuccessful applicants as soon as possible. The participants that came far in the selection

process should receive personal letters stating that their application was unsuccessful. Flanagan & Finger (2000:147) suggest that the unsuccessful candidates should receive a written letter of thanks. The reason for this is that the unsuccessful applicants might in future be considered for other positions in the company, and it is therefore important for the company to maintain a good relationship and image.

2.17.1 Making an Offer to the Successful Applicant

According to Kentley, it is possible that the salary offered is below what the person expected, and he or she may lose interest in the particular position. The applicant may make a decision on salary alone, not realising that there may be other positive benefits (Anonymous, 1996:15). Most companies prefer the hiring manager not to discuss salaries so early, as it often creates false expectations and disappointments.

According to Flanagan & Finger (2000:147), once the offer has been made to the successful applicant and he or she has accepted, an induction programme should be prepared for the new employee.

2.17.2 Record Keeping

Carrell et al. (1998:194) say that, in view of the Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995, amended), it has become essential for companies to keep complete records of the recruitment and selection processes of the company. It becomes important when the company has to prove that they did not discriminate when appointing or rejecting a particular applicant. Documents of every step in the process should be kept. For example, copies of the

advertisements and contracts with the employment agencies, the résumés and the final decisions to accept or reject a particular applicant need to be stored.

2.18 SELECTION AND THE LAW

Carrell et al. (1998:175) state that, with the acceptance of South Africa's Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995, amended) (LRA), the selection process has become important to all South African companies. Companies who make themselves guilty of direct or indirect discrimination during the selection will be guilty of committing an unfair labour practice. The same protection against discrimination that is offered to employees is also offered to people seeking employment. In this regard, Carrell et al. offer the following question: 'When does an applicant become an applicant? For example, when they answer an advertisement, write in, telephone or appear at the gate' (1998:175).

2.19 EVALUATION OF THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Since recruitment is such an important function in all companies, it is essential that the recruitment and selection process be evaluated on a regular basis. This is necessary to see where costs can be saved, whether the current recruitment policy is effective in obtaining suitable candidates, and how the whole process can be improved. Since the business and work environment constantly change, it is the company's responsibility to ensure that their policies keep up with these changes.

In order to ensure equity, equal access to a position is required, and this can only be achieved through public and open recruitment. For this reason, recruitment marketing is an expensive and time-consuming process.

Recruitment effectiveness is measured in terms of expediency, meaning, 'whether vacancies are filled with minimally qualified people at acceptable cost', or a sufficient number of applicants are attracted (Price, 1997:225). The long-term consequences of recruitment costs to the organisation are seldom taken into account. The quality of the people who are responsible for recruitment is often doubted. Advertisements placed by recruitment agencies for recruiters seldom state that they require knowledge of people management or selection techniques. Rather, they focus on communication and youth as central attributes for such appointments (Price, 1997:225).

It is essential that the cost of recruitment be evaluated (Gerber et al., 1998:99-100). This can be done using various metrics. Adler (2003:np) states: 'The objectives of metrics is to provide insight into what is going on today and anticipate what will happen tomorrow'. David Szary (2003:np) suggests that a good set of performance metrics would include the following:

(1)   Quantify performance and how satisfied the customers are

(2)   Justify recruitment resources, headcount, and workforce planning

(3)   Develop performance improvement strategies for ongoing improvement. It would also include the direct cost of the salary of the recruiter, various methods used, and time spent by the operational personnel in the process.

After the above, the cost of each recruitment method can be calculated separately, and compared to the advantages of that particular system. The advantages can be analysed in terms of a measure, such as acceptance offers. A person would be able to conclude that some methods provide a high percentage of qualified applicants, for example, referrals from existing employees, but that this method does not provide sufficient applicants to meet the needs of the organisation.

Carrell et al. (1998:159) refer to the cost-benefit model that illustrates the 'decision-making aspects of recruitment, and stress the economic implication of selection decisions'. In the recruitment process, there are four possible outcomes for each applicant.

Four possible outcomes in the recruitment process:

Applicant/ Employee Performance	Selection Decision	
	REJECT	**HIRE**
Successful Applicant/ Employee	II **Incorrect Decision** **(False negative)**	I **Correct Decision** **(Hit)**
Unsuccessful Applicant/ Employee	III **Correct Decision** **(Hit)**	IV **Incorrect Decision** **(False positive)**
Rate of success (hit rate) is computed as follows: **Hit Rate =** $\dfrac{\text{Hits (I + III)}}{\text{Hits (I + III) – [False Negatives (I) + False Positives(IV)]}}$		

Source: Carrell et al. 1998:160

Quadrants I and III indicate correct decisions: hiring applicants who become successes as employees. Management would like to increase the

rate of correct decisions or hit rates. 'Hit rate' is 'the percentage of correct predictions about future performances of employees' (1998:159) In quadrants II and IV, management makes incorrect decisions: hiring applicants who eventually become failures as employees. In quadrant IV, the hired applicant is unsuccessful on the job, and this is called a false positive. In quadrant II, management rejects an applicant who would have been successful, and this is called a false negative.

To accomplish the cost-benefit analysis of the recruitment programme, several estimates need to be made. The cost of the two types of errors, false positive and false negative, should be considered. This would include the cost of advertising positions, reviewing the applications, and testing a large group of applicants. Included in this cost is the cost of training and orientating the false-positive applicants.

Carrell et al. (1998:160) point out that it is necessary to consider potential costs, for example, a false positive could include an employee becoming disillusioned with the organisation and spreading low morale. They also state that the company will find it difficult to calculate the costs of false-negative decisions, since they cannot know how much potential they have lost when rejecting an applicant who would have been a successful employee.

A perfect recruitment process would be able to identify into which quadrant the applicant falls, and enable the recruiter to make the correct appointment. The most important cost-benefit analysis focuses on the sources of recruitment, for example, employee referrals, and advertisement responses. 'Each of the sources will produce a different percentage of

successful job candidates at differing costs' (1998:160). The costs of a particular source can be related to the number of applicants located.

Stoops (Gerber et al., 1998:100) 'points out that information from previous recruitment activities is the best source for obtaining cost advantages, but that these data are usually either not fully kept, or are not readily available at all.'

The evaluation has two components (Gerber et al., 1998:100):

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the recruiters themselves

- Evaluation of the recruitment sources

Quantifying a certain target could do this and measure how well the recruiters have succeeded in attaining this goal, for example how many appointments could be made for 30 expected vacancies for clerical personnel.

Wheeler (2003b:np) says that some people believe that a recruiter's skill can be measured by the turnover of the people hired by the recruiter, but in fact recruiters have little control over the manager's management skill, and turnover seems to be a better measure of the manager's quality than that of the recruiter.

The better measure, according to Wheeler, is 'to determine the match between the competencies and skills that were needed to do the job, and those of the individual hired' (2003b:np). However, this method is open to the same problem as previously mentioned, namely that the recruiter has little control over the hiring manager's management skills. Soren came up with two measures to help decide on the quality of the recruiter (Wheeler, 2003b:np):

(1)   Number of candidates presented to the hiring manager. According to Soren, 'Count how many candidates the manager looked at before

making a hiring decision. The lower this number, the more successful the recruiter (recruitment agent) is. This metric determines certain things that influence the success of the recruiter (recruitment agent):

- He or she should have a pool of applicants that they can quickly present to interested clients.

- He or she should be credible and have a good relationship with the hiring manager

- He or she should have an understanding of the business and the position.

- He or she should have the ability to assess the position and be able to choose the applicants with the skills, experience, background and capability to do the job, and importantly, choose someone that would 'fit' the manager's personality.

(2)   Speed of Presentation. Soren believes that there 'should be almost no time between the time a request arrives for a particular person, and the time that a candidate's qualifications are available to the hiring manager' (Wheeler, 2003b:np). The talent pools cannot be 'stagnant databases' and should almost be like a chat room with two-way communication and information flow about the organisation and the candidate.

The evaluation of recruitment sources is the second leg of evaluating the recruitment process, and involves various actions, as discussed below.

- Evaluation of the recruitment sources. This can be done in many ways, for example in the case of campus recruitment, the number of

acceptances of job offers can be divided by the number of campus interviews to calculate the cost per recruitment on campus.

- Evaluating the recruitment programme shows the suitability of the applicants who applied for the positions, given the money spent. It can be measured as follows:

  o Percentage of total applicants who qualify for the job;

  o The number of qualified applicants in relation to the number of jobs available;

  o The quality of the subsequent performance of the appointees;

  o The total turnover rate for new appointees

2.20 RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES

Today, retaining talent in a company is as essential as having a good recruitment and selection process, in order to maintain the vitality of a company (Anonymous, 2000b:9). Field (2001:41) says that companies often make the mistake of seeing retention and recruitment as two separate entities, but she believes that they are very closely related. Field also believes that when a company does not pay attention to retention, and the work environment is inhospitable, indispensable employees will seek other employment, and the hiring manager will once again have to start searching for a new applicant. To be able to avoid high turnover rates, the staffing needs of a company have to be understood, and the most suitable people for openings should be hired. It is important to have the 'right kind of compensation to reward important activities and motivate employees to change or maintain their actions' (Anonymous, 2000b:9). HR has to be

creative in developing rewards for a company's valuable employees, which involves listening to the needs and desires of the employees, and communicating to the employees how they can work effectively in the organisation.

Tom Peters (Anonymous, 2000b:58) says in this regard that, to attract and retain employees, it does not hurt to pay good money or to have great benefits, and it does not hurt in the least to have great gyms and daycare centres. Peters also argues that a company will not have difficulty in attracting top talent if they are a great place at which to work.

Cappelli (2000:104) points out that, in order to retain employees, companies are re-engaging in designing and promoting long-term career-paths, and heavily investing in employee development. Companies are attempting to buy back the loyalty of their employees. Cappelli feels that these attempts are not necessarily enough to retain employees and argues that market-driven retention strategies should start with the fact that long-term employee loyalty is not possible or desirable. The retention programme should become 'targeted efforts aimed at specific employees or groups of employees' (2000:104).

2.20.1 Rethinking Retention

Cappelli says that, to adopt a new strategy, a new reality has to be accepted and that is 'the market, not your company, will determine the movement of your employees' (2000:104). A company can make itself as attractive as possible to work for, but cannot protect its employees against aggressive recruiters or attractive opportunities.

It is necessary for a company to determine which employees they need to retain, and for how long they should be retained. For example, will they only be needed until a particular project is finished? Once this has been determined, specific retention programmes, aimed at retaining these specific employees, should be implemented.

Cappelli (2000:105-109) refers to certain mechanisms that can be used for retention. They include the following: compensation, job design, job customisation, social ties, location, and hiring. Each of these retention strategies has strengths and shortcomings. These are discussed in the following section.

2.20.1.1 Compensation

Compensation remains the most popular retention mechanism, and companies try to retain employees through 'golden handcuffs' (Cappelli, 2000:105), which are 'pay packages weighted heavily toward unvested options or other forms of deferred compensation'. An important weakness of this mechanism is that a competitor can easily match it. Competitors often buy out the 'golden handcuffs' by using signing bonuses, which are called 'golden hello's'. However, Cappelli argues that compensation can influence who will leave and when they will leave. Companies pay 'hot skills' premiums to employees who have scarce skills. These premiums are stopped once the skills become more readily available, or when the employer decides that these skills are no longer essential to their business.

Paying signing bonuses in stages will assist in keeping new employees at the company (Cappelli, 2000:105; Mitchell et al., 2001:np). Mitchell et al.

(2001:np) explain that a housing allowance, profit sharing and spousal financial and job assistance can influence an employee to accept an offer.

2.20.1.2   Job design

Job design seems to be a better mechanism for retaining employees than compensation, according to Cappelli (2000:106). If a company thinks carefully about which tasks to include for which jobs, they can directly influence retention rates, as seen in the example of the United Parcel Service in the USA. The company realised that their drivers had some of the most essential skills in keeping them ahead of their competitors, namely that they had a thorough knowledge of the delivery routes. The company did, however, have a high turnover rate of drivers and when they started questioning drivers who had left the company, they found that most of the drivers left because they disliked the tedious job of loading the packages before they could start their daily deliveries. The company opted to remove the loading of packages as part of the deliverer's job design, and experienced a dramatic decrease in turnover rate.

2.20.1.3   Job customisation

Cappelli says that companies can tailor jobs to particular individuals' needs. The process provides workers with various tools to assist them to assess their interests, values, and skills. The aim is to 'encourage managers to tailor rewards, benefits, and assignments to individual requirements' (2000:107). It seems to become a general trend to base rewards on skills, rather than just

on performance. Salaries used to be based on the labour market, that is, those in specialised fields got higher salaries.

2.20.1.4 Social ties

Although loyalty towards companies is disappearing, the loyalty to fellow employees is not (Cappelli 2000:108). For a company to encourage the development of social ties among their key employees can significantly reduce turnover rate. The aim of this is that, if an individual leaves a company, he or she will also be leaving their social network and a network of company-sponsored activities.

2.20.1.5 Location

In this respect, Cappelli (2000) argues that carefully choosing the sites for various groups of employees can have a direct influence on the company turnover rate. If a company has their top skilled workers in a remote area, they are not likely to be poached, but the problem might be to convince employees to relocate to remote areas in the first place. It might be that employees with young families would prefer to move to more rural areas and once they have settled, it might be difficult to uproot again.

2.20.1.6 Hiring

Regarding hiring, Cappelli (2000) says that companies often recruit employees who will be difficult to retain. Companies can prevent this by hiring employees who can do the job, but are not in high demand. Microboard Processing in Connecticut hires one third of their employees from high-risk

applicants, for example, former drug addicts and people with criminal records. These employees start off with simple landscaping jobs, and if they cope, they are moved to the assembly operation. The company says in return they are getting a 'hardworking pool of employees who are grateful and loyal to the company for giving them a chance' (Cappelli, 2000:109).

2.20.1.7   Tips for retaining employees

According to Margaret Field (2001:200), there are various tips for keeping employees. She advises the following:

- Make managers aware of the importance of retention efforts in current labour markets. It is necessary to train these managers to improve their management style.

- Offer management and employees skills-development programs.

- Improve HR service delivery to internal and external customers.

- It is essential to provide career management programs that include career paths and promotional opportunities.

- Keep the employee's benefits and perks in line with what they need.

- Survey your employees on a regular basis and ask them what they want.

- Create a strategic HR recruitment and retention plan.

2.21   CONCLUSION

Recruitment and selection have undergone many changes in recent years, as can be seen from the literature. Recruitment and selection can no longer be run in a haphazard and hasty manner, and organisations and recruiters have

come to realise that having the competitive edge and hiring the most suitable candidates have become an essential part of their day-to-day activities. In order to maintain a competitive advantage, companies and recruiters will have to familiarise themselves and keep abreast with the developments in their field.

In South Africa, too, recruiting has become a specialised industry with a large number of recruitment agents available in all big cities and larger towns. Because of the large numbers of recruitment agents that are available, each of them will have to out-do their competitors to keep the business, and this should be based on providing an excellent service to the client and the future applicant. The recruiter has to identify the most suitable applicants in the shortest possible time, and the recruiter's methods should constantly be reviewed to remain ahead in business.

The next section will focus on computer-based information systems. Electronic or e-recruitment will be defined, and some of the different available systems discussed. The advantages and disadvantages of using electronic systems will be explained, as well as how to use the different types of electronic systems available. The section will end by looking at the training of employees.

PART TWO: ELECTRONIC RECRUITMENT

2.22 INTRODUCTION

> The Internet will allow a person to promote him or herself to a very large audience. It can be helpful to have a personal Website designed that would present the person to national and international business communities. If a person does this, he or she would have to have a 'self -promotional' package ready to e-mail at all times and to also have a hard copy available.

> (Cappelli, 2000:137)

Part one of the literature study focused on the traditional part of recruitment and selection. Part two focuses on Electronic Recruitment (e-recruitment) and provides a definition of e-recruitment and what it entails, and describes some of the e-recruitment systems or tools that are available.

Recruitment agents have come to realise that, to be able to compete with a global market and to be able to provide the best applicant in the shortest possible time, they have to make use of technologies such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. Not only have recruitment agents come to realise the endless possibilities of these technologies and the various systems available, but also job seekers and those who want to be visible to top recruiters are making use of the technologies.

2.23 ELECTRONIC RECRUITMENT

Electronic recruitment has undoubtedly become the 'buzz word' of modern recruitment, and can be seen as one of the most important and innovative developments in the competitive field of recruitment and selection. Electronic recruitment can be defined as the using of various computerised systems to

assist in recruiting the best candidate and it includes the use of Internet sites and sophisticated database programmes like SAP, Oracle and PeopleSoft.

Fast, successful staffing is a goal of all corporations and with hundreds of résumés arriving for often only a few openings, the hiring process can be lengthy and tiring (Talbott, 1996b:18). Sometimes good candidates are overlooked or positions are filled with less-than-ideal candidates; to sidestep these problems, many companies are moving towards using automated systems.

Recruiting and hiring are very costly and time-consuming, and to save time, companies often outsource this function to recruiters, though to save money, the company itself often has to do it. According to Lermusiaux, (2000:np), 'corporate recruiters often rely on complex networks of external providers for various services that tune into the recruiting cycle: recruitment advertising agencies, executive search firms, temp agencies and providers for background checking, skill-validation, drug testing and more'. Many of these providers market themselves on the World Wide Web, and some provide the services online. The use of technology can save a company time and money. The technology can often interface with the organisation's intranet and is the most advanced form of recruitment.

In South Africa, e-recruitment is finding its feet in many industries. However, South Africa is a third-world country with a large number of illiterate and unskilled workers and a high degree of computer illiteracy or non-access to a computer. The charts below indicate the percentage of South Africans that own personal computers and the percentage of South Africans that have Internet access.

GRAPH 1: PERCENTAGE OF SA POPULATION THAT HAS ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

AT HOME

Percentage of SA population that has computers at home
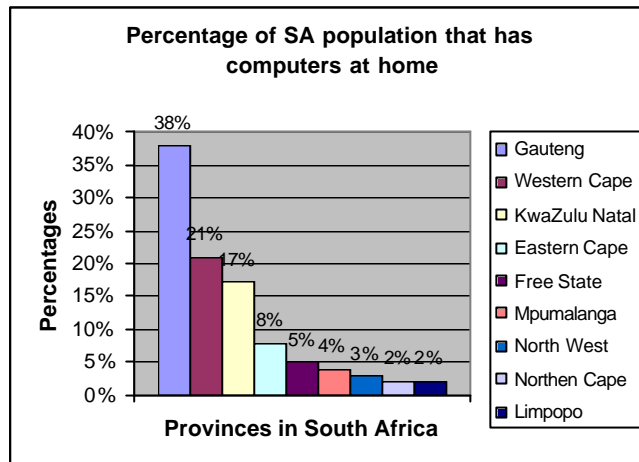
Source: www.futurekids.co.za/statistics.htm

GRAPH 2: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION THAT HAS ACCESS TO INTERNET AT

HOME

Percentage of SA population that has access to the Internet
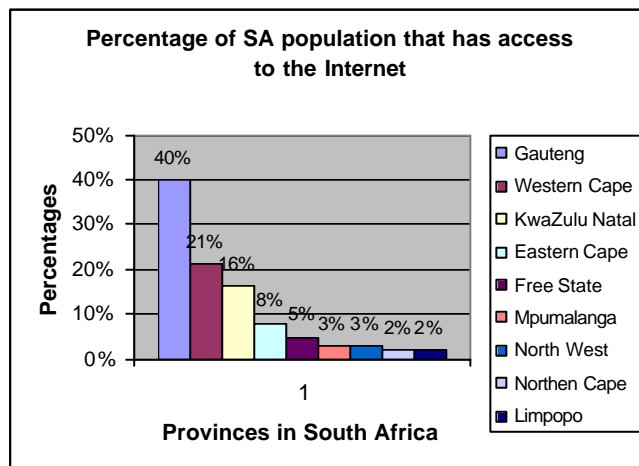
Source: www.futurekids.co.za/statistics.htm

The graphs indicate that a very small number of South Africans have

access to personal computers and even fewer have access to the Internet.

The low numbers might make one reconsider the use of e-recruitment, since it indicates that few people would have access to work advertised on Internet sites. They would also suggest that one would attract only a certain type of applicant, the ones that are affluent and highly qualified, which could therefore discriminate against certain parts of the population.

> IDC believes the global e-recruitment market will reach $13.4 billion by 2005, with a compound growth rate (CAGR) of 52.4 per cent. The Aberdeen Group expects the e-recruitment market to double each year through 2003. This encouraged the development of mySAP HR e-recruitment and they believe that this comprehensive recruitment solution will go beyond what other market players offer them (mySAP, 2001:1).

Options of where to post an advertisement are endless: 'Monsters Board, E-Span, Career Magazine, Job-centre and many others' (Talbott, 1996a:14). According to Talbott (1996a:14), to surf the Internet with online services is the newest recruitment technique, and it can yield many good résumés and candidates, provided that the right strategy is used. There is no one right place to do online recruitment, and every company must design their own online recruitment strategy to meet their own needs, then find a service that matches these needs.

According to Solomon (1995:94), companies who want to compete in the international arena have to 'acquire the capability to connect with other parts of the globe to find and develop talent anywhere in the world'.

Information can be obtained instantaneously through technology and the developments in global communications, which also allow, 'managing products, people and services like never before' (Solomon, 1995:94).

2.24 THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

Electronic recruitment is not independent of other operational aspects of an enterprise. To add value and achieve optimal results, it needs to be integrated into the wider business process of the organisation. By automating routine tasks, such as correspondence and applicant tracking, it is able to add to the bottom line (Cunningham et al., 2003).

Samuel Greengard (2000a:38) states that strategic capabilities of systems and software have developed so much that, where automated forms previously lessened paper-based work only, a system can now route forms to the appropriate person or system. For example, when an employee adds a new dependant to his or her record, the system will automatically 'populate fields asking for insurance information and tax withholding' (Greengard, 2000a:39). According to Greengard, it is 'possible to deploy most types of applications over the web, and one of the hottest has been online recruiting, which has revolutionized HR over the last few years' (2000a:39).

2.24.1 Electronic Data Interchange

Before the development of Supllier Networks, Internet corporations made use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) to connect to trading partners and suppliers. EDI exchanged information between companies on a one-on-one basis. To set up EDI required high degrees of customisation, and it was

capital-intensive, both physically and intellectually. This already gave a promise of a 'paperless' supply chain. 'EDI was costly to maintain, slow to adapt and resulted in linear business relationships' (Lermusiaux, 2000:np).

Lermusiaux (2000:np) says that many industries organised vertical portals that brought together various suppliers in the industry and integrated them into supplier networks. Supplier networks on the Web reach many industries and companies, while the Web also provides the base for a Virtual Private Network (VPI) through which data can be electronically moved amongst suppliers. This implies that 'candidate information gathered through the front-end of a corporate career web site can not only flow through to the back-end of the recruiter's hiring management system, but also be fluently shared from that back-end system with key external providers' (Lermusiaux, 2000:np).

Acquiring a computer programme, which allows the company to review a comprehensive set of information, is a good investment and it allows the hiring managers to find, select and pre-screen candidates within hours – a process that can otherwise take months.

According to Sturm (2001a:np), early attempts in automation use caused the recruiters to miss some candidates; they often used subjective keyword searching skills, which could take longer than the original viewing and sorting of résumés. Currently, the automating of the pre-screening process, features built-in pre-screening technology that operates from a general level to a more sophisticated pre-screening level. It significantly cuts down on reviewing time.

Current focus is on competency-based recruitment and selection, which would imply that the competencies should be clearly defined to ensure the best results from the person hired, and implies a more candidate-centred approach (Cunningham et al., 2003).

According to Frazee (1996:72), recruitment software upgrades employee-selection processes with summary reports and probes questions for live interviews. Skills and résumé tracking, job posting, performance management and employee information define the broad range of additional features.

2.24.2 Application Service Providers (ASP)

The emergence of application services providers (ASPs), according to Thomas B. Hickey (Greengard, 2000:46), opened up doors to new tools and capabilities, especially for smaller firms that do not have an IT department or the money to buy expensive software. ASP allows these companies to 'rent software like enterprise resources planning (ERP) packages, time and attendance applications and benefits systems' to run an entire company. ASPs allow a company to rent space on 'a remote system and let an outside company manage system maintenance, security and upgrades' (Greengard, 2000a:40). Smaller companies save money and free IT staff to handle the more urgent matters. Greengard believes that if it is 'done right and the software resides outside the organisation's boundaries, it is transparent and secure' (2000a:40).

2.25 DEFINING SOME COMMONLY USED WEB-BASED TERMINOLOGY

- Applicant Tracking System (ATS) – 'An applicant tracking system is a software application designed to help an enterprise manage its staffing process more efficiently' (Handler, 2003:np). ATS functions on an enterprise level, and candidate management systems can function on a smaller scale. ATS can be used to 'post jobs on a corporate website or job boards, it can screen résumés and generate interview requests to potential candidates by e-mail' (Handler, 2003:np). Some ATSs have 'individual applicant tracking, requisition tracking, automated résumé ranking, customized input form, pre-screening questions and response tracking, and multilingual capabilities' (Handler, 2003:np).

- Competency-based assessment – Competency-based assessments are assessments designed 'around behaviors found in a competency model instead of around more "psychological" attributes, such as personality traits or abilities' (Handler, 2003:np). These assessments often include multiple assessment methodologies to be able to predict the various behaviours defined by a 'competency'.

- Electronic recruiting agents – Various Web-based applications allow 'users to automatically search the web to find résumés of candidates who are qualified for a specific position' (Handler, 2003:np). Recruiters use these Web pages to identify and retrieve information that can be used to contact possible applicants.

- Human Resource Information System (HRIS) – Handler (2003:np) defines these as 'enterprise level software systems, designed to support management of human resource data, for example payroll, job

title, and contact information'.   Examples of HRIS systems are SAP, Oracle and PeopleSoft.

- Job board – A job board is 'a website or part of a website that allows job seekers to view available jobs posted by a variety of organizations' (Handler, 2003:np). The applicant will identify a possible position and the job board will provide a way of sending 'critical job-related information' to the employer (Handler, 2003:np). Job boards often have additional services to offer job seekers assistance in managing their careers and job searches.

- Niche job board – 'A job board that serves a specific industry or occupation' (Handler, 2003:np).

- Realistic job preview (RJP): RJP is a step in the selection process that provides the applicant with realistic and accurate job information – especially about the more difficult aspects of the job. The aim of RJP is to allow applicants who feel uncomfortable with the job preview to withdraw themselves from the selection process. Handler says that research indicates that RJPs assist in reducing turnover rates.

- Sourcing – Handler says that sourcing can be either passive or active. Active sourcing is when recruiters actively search databases and job boards to try and locate qualified candidates. Passive sourcing is when the company makes use of printed advertisements, careers pages or job boards to assist applicants in finding out about available positions at their company.

2.26 HOW DOES E-RECRUITMENT WORK?

Companies and recruiters will have to realise that e-recruitment has become an essential part of the recruiting practice and that with it come a great number of changes in the recruitment and selection process, as will be discussed in the following section.

Automation changes everything. Most of the sophisticated systems operate in more or less the same way. The company receives the résumés which are then inputted directly from the source, for example fax or e-mail, or they are scanned into the system using a high-quality optical scanner. From each résumé two files are created, one that is an 'image file that reproduces and stores the document, allowing the HR department to retain each résumé's layout and design in a computerised form, and the other a text file, which the computer can use during searches' (Talbott, 1996b:18). Artificial intelligence will then capture key information from the résumé, and the recruiters can then search the database for applicants with certain skills or qualifications. This will provide a prioritised list of candidates, ranked according to the specified qualifications in the search.

When the hiring manager is looking for someone to hire he or she will create a profile of the person he or she is looking for and search on the database for such a person. Once certain candidates are identified their résumé's and profiles are printed and reviewed.

Linda Jack from Stanford University has found a way to make her searches more effective by selecting a 'fairly large number of keywords or fields and limiting the pool further for a second search' (Talbott, 1996b:19).

She believes that by widening a search and then narrowing it down, a better group of candidates is provided.

2.27 THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF E-RECRUITMENT

E-recruitment has its advantages and disadvantages, as do most of the technological developments or any other recruitment techniques that are being used. What is important is that each company should consider its unique working environment and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the different recruitment methods, including e-recruitment, before deciding on how to approach this important part of the business. A company should also carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of the different software packages that are available for recruitment and selection functions.

2.27.1 The Advantages of Electronic Recruitment

The advantages will be divided into two parts – the advantages for the employer or company, and the advantages for the applicant.

2.27.1.1   The advantages of e-recruitment for the employer or company

Some of the advantages are reduction in costs from shorter duration of the hiring process.

The Internet allows the employer to (e-recruitment overview:np; Cunningham et al., 2003 and Greengard, 2000:46) reach a broad number of potential candidates, and online recruiting can eliminate paperwork and speed up the hiring process. It enables a company to target particular pools of applicants and reach passive job seekers who are not necessarily looking for a job but could be tempted by an offer. And the recruitment cycle is much

shorter. If a search does not identify enough qualified applicants, the recruiter can repeat the process by narrowing down the requirements (Talbott, 1996b: 20).

E-recruitment allows for great timesavings. Linda Jack says: 'When reviewing résumés, people can't remember when they read what about which candidate. They just can't keep all the information in their memories. As soon as a résumé is received it is scanned within 24 hours and is immediately accessible to the hiring manager. Résumé information can be faxed directly from the database' (Talbott, 1996b:20).

E-recruitment allows tracking the recruitment process by recording 'which candidates were interviewed, when the interviews took place, who was hired and why others were passed up' (Talbott, 1996b:20). Tracking the recruitment process improves the organisation's internal and external image.

Some of the systems allow for follow-up letters to be generated and to ask high-potential candidates to update their files. By having up-to-date files, firms with automated tracking have constant access to a database source of top applicants who expressed their interest in working for the company' (Talbott, 1996b:20).

'Instead of hiring search firms or placing additional advertisements, recruiters can search their database to find qualified people' (Talbott, 1996:20). Linda Jack also says: 'An applicant may apply for Job Y, but get Job X. We don't lose track of our potential resources'.

Electronic recruitment packages enable better co-ordination of the hiring and selection process and maximise recruiter efficiency. It also enables

an electronic profile match-up of applicant qualifications and job requirements and is better able to identify suitable applicants.

E-recruitment also enables the HR manager to make a more meaningful contribution to ensuring a quality workforce and to employ employees consistent with the current need for diversity, a tolerance of change and of high quality.

2.27.1.2   The advantages of e-recruitment for applicants or employees. Electronic-recruitment allows applicants or employees to locate and compare jobs more easily and stay in control over their career.

E-recruitment offers the applicant or employee a comprehensive picture of him- or herself to potential employers, through profiles containing assessments, test results, education details and work experience.

Electronic recruitment allows job hunting from a home computer without an appointment or a suit and without answering any questions. (Anonymous, 1995:14). It allows the applicant to obtain information 'when you want, where you want and in the quantity you want' and people find it easier and more convenient to apply online. Many newspapers, trade journals and magazines are accessible online, and offer advertising options, for example job postings, banner advertising and electronic sponsorships (Van Nostran, 2002:np)

The submission of electronic résumés is a less expensive way for an individual to apply for a number of positions, or to apply for positions in another country.

2.27.1.3   Tangible advantages of e-recruitment

E-recruitment has various tangible advantages for example it reduces administration by utilising employee and manager self-service, and it allows the organisation to reduce the administrative functions associated with recruitment and talent management (Internet 2). It also reduces advertising and applicant processing costs and overheads.

E-recruitment also allows reducing capital and maintenance costs of an infrastructure by outsourcing infrastructure requirements, and reduces IT hardware requirements and thus capital expenditure in the maintenance and upgrade of hardware.

Employee retention is a key component of talent management, and by utilising e-recruitment, a company can reduce the need to hire, by identifying and retaining top talent.

2.27.1.4   Intangible advantages of e-recruitment

E-recruitment has a number of intangible advantages like growth of employer brand, which allows a company to fully develop the market and manage external and internal company brands and images.

Career management tools allow employees to have 'access to internal job information and they will have access to an application that ensures procedural fairness in job application processes. Perceived fairness is a major factor in an employees job satisfaction' (Internet 2).

When e-recruitment is used, best-practice processes are introduced because of the organisational data that is standardised, and job descriptions, interview guides and skill and competence matrixes that are available through

single applications. It streamlines business processes like job advertisement creation, screening, short-listing and matching, and all this can be configured for each organisation. This leads to consistency in organisational processes.

Owing to the provision of a 'standard employee profile e-recruitment ensures that all applicants can be ranked fairly, based upon the information they provide' (Internet 2).

Sturm (2001:np) says that an automated system allows taking on more requisitions and spending more time on face-to-face evaluation of applicants. It also allows for more creative job descriptions, more time to maintain communications and relations with potential applicants, and more time to research and understand the recruiting business and to attend conferences and network.

E-recruitment provides the organisation fast access to a potential workforce – a concept that has been shown to reduce hiring time once vacancies occur.

2.27.2 Disadvantages of Electronic Recruitment

2.27.2.1   The disadvantages of e-recruitment for companies or employers

Electronic recruitment also has a number of disadvantages for a company or employer, for example it can be very costly, as it usually requires hardware and technical support, and it is important to do a cost-analysis before putting forward a proposal (Talbott, 1996b:19 and Cunningham et al., 2003).

Companies often do not have the people resources to handle the résumé flow of electronic recruitment and therefore often abandon or lower their budgets for Internet recruiting (Dahltorp, 2002:np).

Electronic-recruitment increases the number of applications and thereby increases the workload of having to respond to inadequate or inappropriate applications and it is also difficult to confirm the quality of the résumé (Cunningham et al., 2003). Low quality résumés also waste HR management time and data storage space, and this leads to difficulties with out-of date résumés (Cunningham et al., 2003).

The World Wide Web provides selected accessibility and because of this is more likely to attract applications from newly graduated or unemployed college and university graduates (Cunningham et al., 2003).

The recruiters also have to make multiple postings and search multiple databases to access viable candidates (Handler, 2002:np).

2.27.2.2   The disadvantages of e-recruitment for the applicant or employee

The disadvantages of e-recruitment for the applicant or employee includes the fact that job seekers have to make important decisions based on limited information, since job boards do little to help the person understand the requirements of a job (Handler, 2002:np).

'Search Spam', a term used by Handler (2002:np), implies that most searching tools do a poor job of helping users find jobs for which they are suitably qualified. Candidates often have to visit multiple job sites and manage different résumé's or profiles for each job site (Handler, 2002:np).

2.28 THE FEATURES OF E-RECRUITMENT TOOLS

Vacancy creation and identification is part of the process of e-recruitment and this may occur because, when an employee leaves and must be replaced, there is the need for a specialised skill which is not available internally to the organisation, or when the organisation expands (Cunningham et al., 2003).

According to Van Nostran (2002:np), e-recruiting and marketing require a lot of planning, much more than the earlier formats like job postings and employer profiles. The recruiter has to consider all the options available via the Internet and decide which options will be most useful for his or her recruitment needs.

2.28.1 Advertising

Advertising includes an Internet component that requires the purchase of online space, for example job postings, career site memberships and e-newsletter sponsorships.

The application of software packages enables recruiters to determine, in a quantified manner, the suitability of a particular medium to advertise specific positions. This means better focusing of advertisements in a medium that reaches the required target audience. A concomitant benefit is the optimal use of the advertising budget (Cunningham et al., 2003).

There are certain guidelines to keep in mind before deciding on which option to choose if it is the first time this method is used. Job postings quickly generate a large pool of candidates, and the best results will be obtained from industry-specific or niche sites. Career membership sites are the best option if a company has a number of vacancies to fill, and banner advertising is useful

for employer branding and driving traffic to an employment Website. E-newsletters tend to reach a narrow demographic of people with specialised skills and knowledge (Van Nostran, 2002:np).

2.28.2 Special Projects

This includes recruitment brochures, direct mail campaigns and events on the Internet. If the company has a good employee referral system, it would be good to think how the Internet could complement this feature by sending out regular e-mails to employees that market a company's 'Hot Jobs of the Month' and encouraging them to forward them to friends and colleagues.

2.28.3 Features Needed in e-Recruitment

Jeff Dahltorp and Kevin Wheeler suggest that companies wishing to make use of e-recruitment would need the following basic features (Dahltorp, 2002:np and Wheeler, 2003:np):

- Automated job posting tool, a database-sourcing tool and a searchable database.

- Résumé scanning, parsing, and search tools as well as screening and skills assessment tools. A predictive matching tool to narrow down and rank applicants.

- Applicant tracking systems (ATSs), as well as e-marketing and communication tools.

- Workforce and succession planning tools, competency analysis systems and requisition management systems.

- Tools for gathering, analysing and reporting data.

- The databases and IT infrastructure that make all this work.

2.28.4 The Pre-Screening of Applicants

According to Charles Handler (2003b:np), the use of online pre-screening tools has grown over the last few years. The aim of a pre-screening tool is to ask applicants, questions related to their skills, experiences and interests, which are supposed to screen out unqualified applicants from the applicant pool. The applicant has to pass the pre-screening before being considered for an interview or more in-depth assessments.

Pre-screening can reduce an applicant pool by 50 per cent, simply by pre-screening applicants lacking the relevant experience, skills or qualifications. Pre-screening also allows the recruiter to find someone who has a very specific skill or experience. The effectiveness of pre-screening, according to Handler (2003a:np and Handler, 2003b:np), is directly related to the questions asked.

According to Handler, writing good pre-screening questions can be difficult, especially writing questions that assess skills like ambition, work ethic and innovation (2003b:np). The implication of this problem is that pre-screening is not very effective for jobs that require traits like work ethic.

A disadvantage of pre-screening tools is that they cannot distinguish between '"great" and acceptable candidates' and cannot prevent candidates from 'faking' it, that is to say, answering questions in a favourable manner in order to get a better score (Handler, 2003b:np).

2.28.4.1   How to select a pre-screening vendor

It is Handler's opinion that there are certain things to consider when selecting a pre-screening vendor. A variety of pre-screening vendors are available and they all seem to be providing the same service and asking more or less the same pre-screening questions, but the important distinction comes with the technology used to support the questions and the 'emphasis placed on ensuring that pre-screening questions are valid and effective' (Handler, 2003a:np). The following points can be used to evaluate the available vendors (Handler, 2003a:np):

- Does the vendor focus on quantity or quality? It is important to determine how the vendor measures the value of his or her system, and note whether it emphasises measures of staffing volume, for example, number of candidates processed, or measures of new hire performance, for example, performance ratings and retention. Handler warns that vendors whose primary focus is staffing volume, usually offer little help to make sure that the applicants are, in fact, best performers.

- Does the vendor effectively integrate assessment and information technology? Handler advises that a company's IT department should be involved in the process of selecting a vendor, since 'robust technology platforms' are essential for effective use of pre-screening tools (2003a:np). He also suggests that the system should, in fact, assist the company to hire better employees, and not only be easy to maintain by the IT department.

- Does the vendor support alternative forms of assessment? Pre-screening has to be one of several tools to support the staffing process, and other assessment tools like knowledge tests or cultural fit measures can complement it. It is therefore important to make sure that the vendor that is chosen can support additional tools and pre-screening questions.

  Handler (2003a:np) says that pre-screening is only good to evaluate whether an applicant meets the minimum requirements for the position, and it is necessary to make use of other forms of assessment like the interview, before making an appointment.

2.29 LOOKING AT DIFFERENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

The advancement of e-recruitment and technology allowed for the development of various service providers and programmes, each one promising to be the best for a company and providing an extensive range of services from HR functions through to a variety of financial services. In the next section SAP R/3, Oracle and PeopleSoft will be discussed briefly.

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2.29.1 SAP R/3

Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) is the leader in the ERP industry. 'Five former IBM employees founded the German-based company in 1972' (Jung, 2001:28). SAP is the 'largest inter-enterprise software company and the fourth-largest independent software supplier in the world' (Jung, 2001:26). The 'R' stands for 'real-time' and the original programme was called R/1. The current 'R/3 version was developed in 1987

as thin-client-server-based programme' and released in 1992 'offering total integration and real-time access to information, which was a unique feature at the time' (Jung, 2001:29).

SAP R/3 offered to link cross-border business and re-engineered business procedures into one product. A comprehensive set of business applications, using R/3, had the ability to 'store, retrieve, analyse and process corporate data in many ways for financial analysis, production operation, human resource management and many other business processes' (Jung, 2001:29). SAP R/3 became Internet-compatible with the release of the SAP R/3 3.1 version. This version of SAPs compatibility with the Internet increased their market share and SAP has released 'new modules and applications which adjusted the front-end and offered this programme in more than 20 languages, provided a data-warehousing component with an Excel front-end, and released Internet ready components' (Jung, 2001:30). In 1999, SAP included the World Wide Web as part of their strategy, and with this was able move itself into unclaimed business fields and markets.

In 1998, SAP released its human resource module and became a serious competitor for the similar product of PeopleSoft. It also catered for parts of the world other than the United States (US).

Currently, the recruitment solutions are fragmented and quickly changing. Owing to large job boards and niche vendors, it is difficult for a company to piece together recruitment solutions that fit their needs (mySAP, 2002:4).

MySAP HR goes beyond recruitment offerings of other software vendors. With mySAP HR e-recruiting, applicants and candidates register in a

talent warehouse, where they reside for as long as they are 'deemed potentially interesting' for a position in an organisation. This will enable a person to quickly locate the ideal candidate, and it is possible to maintain long-term relationships with all the people in the warehouse. It is possible to post job requisitions on the job boards via HR-XML interfaces (mySAP, 2001:1).

A collaboration platform allows one to link this solution to external systems, for example job boards, recruitment service providers and own internal systems. This programme is ready for use in an independent service centre and enables the organisation to completely outsource all its recruitment activities. 'Together with its partner Futurestep, SAP can offer the company the recruitment factory, a balance combination of recruitment services and software solutions that meet all your recruitment needs' (mySAP, 2001:1).

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2.29.1.1 E-recruiting with mySAP HR

This programme allows for advanced support planning, attracting, sourcing, and qualifying, closing and retaining talent. It also allows one to independently run a service centre or a hosted solution. The e-recruiting functions are provided in the talent warehouse, recruiter, service centre, analytics, and portal and collaboration platform (mySAP, 2002:8).

The talent warehouse allows the formation of long-term relationships with applicants, and has a self-registration process where applicants provide information about their qualifications, interests, and future job requirements.

The recruiter provides tools for sourcing, qualifying and closing processes, and has different tools for the recruiter, the recruiting experts and

the hiring manager (mySAP, 2001:1; mySAP, 2002:8). Some of the features provided by the Recruiter are workflow templates for job offer procedures, posting requisitions on job boards, administering advertised positions, and matching job profiles with job openings to create shortlists of suitable applicants. It also allows managing e-mail, workflow, scanning and archiving and initiating the steps for rejecting, inviting and arranging interview dates and locations. It provides means to communicate with online applicants and track the status of applications.

The Service Centre provides optimised recruitment services to the company's business units and the Service Centre can outsource some or all of the company's recruiting services. This places more demands on the available recruitment software and SAP HR Recruiting will allow a company to create their own Service Centre.

The Analytics are reporting tools which play a key role improving recruitment, and are a key factor in improving recruitment. Analytical tools of mySAP HR fulfil all reporting needs (mySAP, 2002:9; mySAP, 2001:2) for example providing a definition of recruitment benchmark, key performance indicators, and scorecards such as time-to-hire and standard reporting and list generation. The Analytics programme can also 'create statistics based on legal requirements and 'planning functions to analyze and simulate alternative recruitment strategies' (mySAP, 2002:9).

The Portal provide 'access to the mySAP HR e-recruiting solutions and help to create a corporate career site with secure and user-friendly access to the system via a web browser' (mySAP, 2002:9 and mySAP, 2001:2). The Portal allows creating different appearances for different target groups in

order to centralise administration and provide a well-defined security system that allows access and logon permissions with different restrictions for different groups of users.

The collaboration platform is a central theme in SAP solutions. Recruiting involves a range of contributors and processes like posting jobs on job boards. When doing this, the services of professional recruiters and staging company-wide recruitment are used. This system allows for collaboration with a variety of internal and external players. Collaboration is a general business trend today.

Future recruitment 'would see more processes involving collaboration among multiple recruitment professionals and other participants' (mySAP, 2002:3).

2.29.1.2   Exploring new ways of hosting

The speed and ease of the implementation are important factors in choosing whether to invest in e-recruiting technology. Once mySAP HR e-recruiting is up and running in a hosted environment, the company has the option to continue with the hosted system or run mySAP HR e-recruiting on their integral systems.

2.29.1.3   What makes it different from its competitors?

Electronic-recruitment is a new field, and no company has produced a comprehensive global solution. None of the SAP competitors has delivered an e-recruitment solution that matches the functionality of mySAP HR e-recruitment, and this includes competitors like ORACLE and PeopleSoft. This

SAP product can be implemented in-house or as an application service provider, and can also be operated as an independent service centre (mySAP, 2001:3).

2.29.1.4   Recruitment via internet and intranet

SAP HR Recruitment makes use of Internet technology and the most 'advanced global recruitment tools and media' (SAP HR – Efficient Personnel Managment:12). 'The employers posting job vacancies can reach out to entirely new groups of applicants, and at the same time strengthen the company's presence on the global network' (SAP HR – Efficient Personnel Managment:12). If the company has global requirements, it can use SAP HR Recruitment to 'search for and hire employees from around the world' (SAP HR – Efficient Personnel Managment:12). Applicants can be given authorisation to check the status of their application. Employees of the company can also apply by using the Employee Self-Service features on the company intranet.

SAP HR Personnel Administration can automatically identify internal applicants and track multiple applications. 'Existing master data is automatically proposed and this eliminates duplicate data entry and maintenance' (SAP HR-Efficient Personnel Management:13). It also features automatic correspondence functions to facilitate communication between applicant and employer, and allows the company to simplify global recruitment by allowing the company to create documents in the appropriate language and with the correct address format.

'SAP HR offers an extensive information base for making well-informed personnel decisions' (SAP HR-Efficient Personnel Management:13). A candidate's suitability can be determined by doing profile match-ups between the qualifications of the person and the job requirements. It also allows keeping tabs on the status of applications. When the employee is hired, the data stored in SAP HR Recruitment is automatically transferred to the SAP HR Personnel administration. Once the data is transferred, the personnel officer would only have to add the information that is not already provided, like tax information or payroll accounting.

The company would have to decide which features of the SAP HR Recruitment it wants to use (mySAP.com, 2000:1-6). It allows for the optimal process to be defined and then to distribute tasks and responsibilities within the company's recruitment strategy. This product also makes it easier to distinguish between administrative and decision-making tasks within the recruitment process. The administrators are able to process applicant data individually or in bulk, and the HODs can make use of a range of functions to make quick, informed decisions on the qualified applicants.

SAP HR Recruitment is able to dynamically advertise and recruit staff. The HR department will have information on current and future vacancies at their fingertips. This avoids staffing shortages caused by unfilled vacancies. SAP HR Recruitment enables the company to employ new staff when needed.

The advertisement can also be tailored to the job it is advertising. These vacancies can be advertised via the Internet or company intranet. 'External applicants and employees can submit a job application which

includes application documents in electronic form to the HR department and they can track their application at any time on the Internet' (mySAP.com, 2000:3).

The modern communication methods make recruitment more effective and save on resources, as the job application is immediately sent to the person responsible for processing it, and the applicant does not have to call to find out what stage his or her application has reached. Every step of every applicant can be coordinated and monitored. Job applications can quickly and easily be entered and structured.

SAP HR Recruitment handles a wide range of applicant correspondence automatically. Standard letters are stored in the system and they can be adapted to an individual scenario. Standard contracts can also be stored, and they can be changed and enhanced and then saved to the system. E-mail can also be used to communicate/correspond with applicants in an efficient manner.

The aim of recruitment is to find the most suitable person for a particular position. Decision making plays an important role in this process. SAP HR Recruitment assists in the decision-making process and always finds the most suitable candidates quickly and directly.

If the company SAP system is integrated with SAP HR Personnel Development, profile match-ups between the job requirements and the various applicants' qualifications can be used to establish how suitably qualified various applicants are for the position in question.

2.29.1.5   Finding qualified staff

All vacancies in the company are transferred to SAP HR Recruitment and this triggers the recruitment procedure. The following people are responsible for filling the vacancy: an administrator, a personnel officer from HR, and the manager of the department where the vacancy arose. The personnel officer will record the advertisement data in SAP HR Recruitment, and it will include where the advertisement was placed, publication date, and closing date for applications, publication costs, job description, and the advertisement itself. The personnel officer will forward the advertisement to an external agency. The advertisement is then formatted for publication in, for example a newspaper, and it is entered on the company Internet site (mySAP.com, 2000:8-9).

An administrator will enter basic data like name, address etc. on SAP HR Recruitment and then assign the applications to the relevant advertisement. Some of the applicants might have applied for other positions in the company, and when the data is entered, SAP HR Recruitment recognises these applicants and provides the data that has already been entered for these applicants. The data is then accepted.

While the applicant data is entered, the system checks whether any of the applicants are former employees or whether the company currently employs them. Existing master records will automatically be proposed for these applicants. The personnel administrator then decides to edit this information or transfer it to SAP HR Recruitment.

Applications could also be made on the Internet, and the external applicants receive an automatic confirmation that their application has been

received. These applicants will receive an applicant number and password to be able to track the status of their application, using the Internet. Data entered here like personal data, information on previous employers and education, is automatically transferred to SAP HR Recruitment. Documents sent as electronic attachments are automatically archived in SAP ArchiveLink for further reference.

SAP HR Recruitment automatically generates a confirmation of receipts for applicants when the data is entered. An administrator then personalises the standard text for several applicants. All confirmation receipts are printed out at HR and then mailed to the applicants.

2.29.1.6   Applicant screening

The personnel administrator, when entering basic data, rejects applicants whose applications do not meet the minimum requirements. The applicants will receive a letter of rejection, which is automatically generated by the system (mySAP.com, 2000:910).

Submitted applications are passed on to a personnel officer who screens the applicants and prints out a list of applications for which the personnel officer is responsible. The list of applicants that fulfil the minimum requirements of the advertised position is examined. The personnel officer then enters additional data, for example qualifications, education, and previous employment. The documents that are not archived are scanned into the system and then archived in SAP Archive.Link. Now all application documents can be directly called up in SAP HR Recruitment. The applicants

who have a qualification profile that is attractive to the company are then transferred to an applicant pool.

Profile match-ups with SAP HR Recruitment are used to compare applicant qualification profiles with the requirements of the advertised position. The system displays detailed information on the suitability of various applicants.

The personnel officer considers all responses to the advertisement, any unsolicited applicants and applicants who have been put on hold. (mySAP.com, 2000:10). The personnel officer then runs another profile match-up to select suitable applicants and assigns the candidates to the vacant positions.

2.29.1.7   Selecting employees

The manager of the department with the vacancy will call up the applicants' archived documents and then decide who will come for an interview. A deadline is set for when the manager should provide this information, and if it is not sent on time, an automatic reminder is mailed to the manager. The manager checks the suitability of all applicants remaining in the process. The applicants are then rejected, put on hold for the vacant position, or invited to come for an interview.

2.30 ORACLE

Oracle has been called Oracle since 1983 (Jung, 2001: 26). Oracle is a United States (US) based company which is a major supplier of database and web-server programmes. Oracle is also the owner of ERP (Enterprise

Resource Planning) suites, for example Oracle 10i. Oracle is the second largest ERP vendor, and according to Levinsohn and Gomes in Jung, (2001: 27) its market-share is almost half of SAP's, at 14 per cent.

2.31 PEOPLESOFT

PeopleSoft is yet another US ERP vendor and was founded in 1987, which makes it the youngest ERP vendor (Jung, 2001:27). PeopleSoft produces software for Human Resources Management Systems, for example HRMS, Financial, Material Management, Higher Education, Customer Relationship Management, Project Management and Supply Chain Management (Internet reference 7). This system is specifically aimed at the US market, considering that its payroll application is not usable outside the US. It is a leader in HRIS, but seem to lack 'cross-cultural, cross-national, and growth-scalability' (Jung, 2001:27). In terms of revenue, PeopleSoft is rated third, and is constantly in competition with Oracle for the second place among ERP vendors. It is said by Jung (2001:27), that PeopleSoft has a 'limited market penetration and international client base, and frequent minor updates', which causes a decline in its customer satisfaction ratings and its profit margin. In order to improve, PeopleSoft moved its focus to performance management application, supply-chain management application and e-Procurement application (Jung, 2001:28).

The PeopleSoft database consists of two components, namely the PeopleSoft system catalogue (or People Tools) and application data. The People Tools are similar to the Oracle system catalogue (Internet 7).

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2.32   A CRITIQUE OF HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

According to Lefkow (2003a:np), Human Resource Information System (HRIS) vendors, for example SAP, PeopleSoft and Oracle, are infiltrating the applicant-tracking space.

Lefkow argues that the HRIS vendors are far behind the applicant-tracking system vendors in various areas. He says that many of the major shortcomings are seen on the candidate interface. Attempting to figure out how to use a particular vendor's online application seems to be a big problem. Lefkow tried out such a site and it took him about forty-five minutes to complete the online application form, which in all likelihood would be unusable to the recruiter. Many of these vendors' application interfaces make use of abbreviations and limit the number of characters to be used in, for example, the job search. The ranking system used by the recruiter is based on a similar formula.

Lefkow also mentions that the IT department does not support most of the applicant-tracking solutions, and companies seldom have a 'business analyst who steps in to translate requirements to features in the initial planning stages' (Lefkow, 2003a:np). It is therefore essential to make sure that the applicant-tracking system that is chosen is suitable to the company's needs.

2.33   CAREER NETWORKS

2.33.1 How Would a Career Network Function?

Research by Forrester (Handler, 2002:np) blames the 'disjointed and scattered nature of web-based job searching as the culprit for dissatisfaction

among both job seekers and recruiters'. He believes that this dissatisfaction will create a rise of meta-sites that will integrate training, assessment, and placement services. Forrester calls these sites 'Career Networks' and foresees that these career networks will capture 55 per cent of the recruitment market by 2005. These career networks will arise from alliances by partnerships and acquisitions between job boards and high-traffic portals on the Web.

These networks include three critical components (Handler, 2002:np) that need to work together as a system to help provide tools needed to tap into the economy provided by a one-stop career shop:

(1)　A profile database

(2)　A jobs database

(3)　A matching engine

To ensure the evolution of the online job searching models, their various problems or disadvantages should be addressed and resolved. According to Forrester's research (Handler, 2002:np), career searchers will move to a holistic concept of 'career management'. This would provide the career searcher with personalised experiences, which would allow them to manage their career-related affairs from one centralised location. The job seeker would be able to 'obtain a deep level of self understanding and to subsequently utilise this understanding to focus on fulfilling career goals and objectives' (Handler, 2002:np).

Users will be able to benefit from the following activities:

- Build a profile. On entering a career network for the first time, the person will be able to access a variety of self-profiling assessment

tools. These tools include assistance to understand their work values, motivators, personality and knowledge or skill levels. By accessing these tools ongoingly, the users can update their profiles. When this is combined with additional personal information like experience and basic qualifications, the results of the assessments will assist users in searching centralised databases to locate jobs that fit their personal profiles.

- Access a virtual 'career coach'. Users will receive an electronic relationship agent or 'coach', who knows who they are and assists them in managing their careers. This could include providing tools that will help the person determine what available jobs are suited to his or her profile, it will recommend developmental resources, and it will assist in creating important job-search materials like résumés and cover letters (Handler, 2002:np).

- Utilise niche-based career channels. Career networks aggregate job postings from different sources into a centralised database, which will then be streamlined into 'career channels', which will grow through the integration of niche job boards into the larger career networks (Handler, 2002:np).

- Conduct highly efficient searches. Job postings will be based on profile elements, which are used by job seekers. A sophisticated matching engine will match job seekers to jobs, based on how well the seeker's profile meets the requirements of the particular job (Handler, 2002:np).

- Track their search process. Career networks will facilitate a two-way communication process between the organisation which posted the job

or which is looking for an applicant that allows them to 'enter a career track within the organisation' (Handler, 2002:np number). Applicants will have a desktop similar to the one used by recruiters via ATS systems, which will 'allow them to see who reviewed their profile, understand why they may not be a good match for a particular job, and manage multiple job searches.

- Conduct Research. Users will be able to research salary and relocation information, and information about jobs and careers.

An advantage of these career networks is that recruiters will only have to use one or two locations to find and communicate with qualified applicants.

2.33.2 How to Achieve Career Networks

In order to achieve career networks, Handler (2002:np) says that an understanding of the central role of screening and assessment is needed. To achieve the promise of personalised matching, a complete understanding of the job seeker and the job is required, and assessment will provide this capability.

Handler says that few companies see the link between assessment for selection and the creation of training and development programmes. A career network will have to integrate training-and-development-related functionality into the services offered to jobseekers. He further says that niche job boards will have to integrate into career networks to create channels lined to a centralised database. This will allow aggregation beyond alliances to real integration. Importantly, Handler also says that the job seeker deserves a service of substance, that he or she should be seen as a consumer who

wants a valued service, and should be the primary focus. To personalise the process more, communication needs to be improved between the job seekers and the recruiters, and in order to accomplish career networks, innovative technology will be needed. Most of this technology already exists, and just needs to be put together into a complete system.

2.33.2.1   The process

According to Linda Jack of Stanford University (Talbott, 1996b:19), many people resist the movement to technology. According to Jack, it is important to get 'company buy-in'. To prove a system's usefulness, it is necessary to involve the entire recruitment team and give end-users a say in decision-making. Kleinert in Talbott (1996b:19) says that: 'technology is only as good as the training provided to the end-user.'

It is also necessary to train or educate applicants. Most HR professionals agree that the best results are obtained from technology if they [HR professional] educate applicants. Résumés also need to contain keywords that describe the applicant's skills and often a particular typeface and paper should be used. 'Ideally a résumé should be on unfolded, white bond paper in 12-point type, without italics, boldface or underlined words' (Talbott, 1996b:20).

It is important, says Keandra Van Nostran (2002:np) that a company realises that they have to allocate a certain section of their budget to Internet recruitment. Often a company's recruitment plan lacks a dedicated portion of the budget for Internet recruitment. The type of position that the company is recruiting for will determine the budget for Internet recruiting, for example

recruiting for technical and professional positions will require a larger Internet recruiting budget than recruiting for blue-collar positions. Van Nostran believes that a company is more likely to implement online strategies if it includes them in their budget. This budget should include 'anticipated media fees and special project fees' (Van Nostran, 2002:np). The media fees cover job postings, career site memberships, banner placement fees, and e-newsletter sponsorship fees. The special project fees will cover artwork production like banners, Web pages, and virtual postcards.

2.34 FEATURES OF HIGH TECH METHODS FOR ENHANCING RECRUITMENT

As part of electronic recruitment, an article in the Personnel Journal of August 1994 looks at the following high tech methods of enhancing their recruitment.

(1)   Offline databases. According to Mark Jordan, databases provide an alternative to using executive search firms (Anonymous, 1994:6). Companies usually subscribe to these services on a yearly basis and can then search the database for a certain number of times. Although the annual fee often seems very high, it is cheaper to recruit this way than in the more traditional ways.

On some databases the person who enrols also pays a once-off fee and is then provided with the software on which career information is entered. These profiles usually provide a 'detailed employment history, educational background, job titles, scope of responsibility, community interests and memberships, skills inventory, and current and desired salary' (Anonymous, 1994:6).

Not all persons registered on these databases are actively looking for a job, which can make it difficult to find a suitable candidate. According to

Green (Anonymous, 1994:6) 'it's harder to get what we want, because it's harder to sell someone who's not jobless or being fired or miserable'.

(2)   Computerised Interviewing. A Web-based interview allows for the answers to be stored in the computer. The computer then rates these answers and scores them to assist in decision-making.

(3)   Video conferencing. ConferView, developed by Management Recruiters International, is a system using video conferencing. This allows the interviewers and interviewees to view each other over video screens and to conduct a virtual face-to-face interview with candidates in other locations.

One of the disadvantages of this method is that there is often a time-delay of about 5 seconds, but this is solved by pausing a few seconds after someone speaks, so that the other person can get all the audio. This method is much cheaper than paying for plane tickets and accommodation in order to meet a person face-to-face.

This method also puts extra pressure on the person being interviewed, since it is difficult to sit in front of a camera because it is an unnatural environment, and this allows the interviewer to see how a person handles a situation they are not used to (Anonymous, 1994:8)

According to Wellman (Anonymous, 1996b:20), 'Video conferencing lets us get to people sooner and move ahead with the process quicker. We're finishing our searches two to four weeks earlier with the use of this technology.' There is also the advantage of being able to tape the session.

2.35 DESIGNING AN ONLINE RECRUITMENT SITE

Talbott (1996a:14) says that every company must design an online recruitment strategy that will meet its company needs, and then find a service to match it. According to her, there are certain steps to follow in order to have a clearer understanding of the selection process. When they are followed, the company is likely to find an option best suited to a particular company.

2.35.1 Steps to Design an Online Recruitment Site

(1) Familiarise yourself with the Internet. Dave Madsen, Systems West consultant, says the key to Internet recruitment is understanding and experimenting with the Internet. HR professionals first need to learn the basics to successfully use Internet Recruitment (1996a:14). Internet recruitment should not be delegated, and the recruiter has to 'go to a class and get comfortable with the technology – even if it means sitting down with a college student for several hours and just learning what the Internet has to offer' (1996a:14).

(2) Research the market. After the basics are mastered, the recruiter must discover what the Web can offer you in terms of recruitment. It is advised to use an online index or directory to find out which recruitment services are available, for example http://www.yahoo.com or http://webcrawler.com. Using key words like 'jobs', 'employment' or 'careers', the HR professional can discover what options are available.

(3) Define your target audience. Before a company can determine whether a specific service will meet its expectations, it must define its needs. Bencini notes that it is important to consider who your target audience is. 'Each

company has its own unique recruitment needs and requires exposure to different types and numbers of recruitment' (Talbott, 1996a:15).

Some companies feel that the more exposure they get on a site, the better the site is. Scott Stevenson, technical recruiter for Federated Systems Group in Atlanta, says, 'There are many bulletin boards and online services that our ads get dumped onto after we post them. Because our service provides this option, it gives us the exposure we want and helps us find the right people' (Talbott, 1996a:15).

Companies should, however, not look only at the number of visitors to a particular site, but should also try to determine who those visitors are. John Sumser, president of Internet Business Network, says that some services measure their effectiveness in size and volume, but although traffic does matter, and 'high volume is sometimes a good sign, what HR people need to worry about is finding the right traffic every time' (Talbott, 1996a:16).

It is also important to remember that certain Web sites attract a certain segment of the population. Some will be oriented toward specific industries, and others towards college graduates. Some services are aimed only at certain geographical areas.

(4)   Determine your search needs. A company's search can be narrowed further by determining the offered features of a particular service and selecting one that appeals to it.

•   Some services store résumés in a database. Registered employers then perform searches for appropriate candidates.

- Sites can also allow employers to create company profiles and then post their jobs – allowing the applicants to send résumés directly to the company when positions are of interest to them.

- Some services can provide job matching – résumés and job postings are stored online. Both parties are then contacted when an applicant looks right for a job. These active systems allow the company to track positions and help to see that there is activity, because of the matches sent to the company.

Bencini says that these matching systems often work on the basis of key words, which are used to identify openings. Success would therefore depend on the recruiter's ability to identify keywords appropriately. To assist with this problem, general job titles should be avoided. 'If you list something general like "computer programmer", you will get all the résumés with that description, regardless of their experience or the other qualifications you need' (Talbott, 1996a:17). It is best to think in terms of nouns to describe the skills and qualifications needed for the position.

(5)   Compare costs. Costs for the different services vary greatly. It is necessary to determine the pricing philosophy for each site and remain within the company's budget. Some services will provide free access to posted résumés, but they are not always very useful. Some of the résumés posted are from people who are not necessarily job-hunting. Bencini suggests that paying for a service to perform the matches saves time (Talbott, 1996a:17).

(6)   Continue experimenting. The Internet is constantly changing and rapidly growing, and therefore it is essential for HR professionals to frequently re-evaluate their online recruiting choices. Bencini says (in Talbott, 1996a:17),

'The Internet is growing by leaps and bounds, and a web site that wasn't successful for you two months ago could be your best option today. Be sure to return to the search engines often to reassess your approach'.

It is good to try a few services and track your results, especially before committing to a long-term contract, according to Sumser (Talbott, 1996a:17).

2.35.2 How to use a Job Board for Recruiting

Lou Adler (2003c:np) suggests the following steps when developing your recruiting advertising and applicant-processing systems for the Internet: The advertisement should be highly visible, preferably on the first page and among the top ten positions. Adler suggests that the company should pay for this feature if necessary, or even post its positions daily. He also suggests using job titles that are not the same as the advertisement title or any other advertisement listed. It is essential to that the advertisement inform the applicant what he or she will do, learn, and become, in the position. The application process should be easy, to prevent opt-outs, and the application should take less than five minutes to complete. It is important to first try out the application and make sure that it works.

2.36 EVALUATING E-RECRUITMENT AND PROVIDING A GOOD E-SERVICE

Roger E. Herman says that many applicants are turned off from e-recruitment sites because of the various automatic, impersonal responses created by the site and then mailed to the applicant (2003:np). He further comments that very few recruitment systems respond to applicants, since the assumption is that applicants send their résumés to every job site or electronically advertised

position they can find. As soon as an applicant gets no response or an impersonal response, they are 'turned off and their interest in working for that company or employer wanes rapidly' (Herman, 2003:np). Herman makes an important statement: 'When you treat people well, they remember. When you treat people badly, they remember even better – and they tell others' (Herman, 2003:np). As soon as the employment market picks up, applicants become more selective and discriminating in choosing an employer. Applying to a company and receiving an insincere, uncaring response, they will simply move on to the next job opportunity. Companies can never assume that a person who sent a résumé is still interested in working for them (Herman, 2003:np).

According to John Sullivan (2003b:np), it is important to assess customer satisfaction, by seeing every applicant as a possible customer and then 'maximise the value you provide them, versus the value such processes provide to you'. Surveying a sample of every applicant that completes the application process can assess customer satisfaction with the company's application process. Conduct a follow-up survey among those who completed the application process at some pre-determined period of time following the initial application, and then survey all the individuals who were selected for interviews and ask them about their online experience. It is also advisable to survey applicants who walk away from the application process prior to completing the process, to find out why they walked away (Sullivan, 2003b:np).

There are certain typical challenges that most companies face, to improve their e-recruitment capabilities, according to Dr Sullivan (2003b:np):

- He says that the company should discourage marginally qualified and unqualified people from applying. This can be done by using automated self-assessment tools on the Website so that applicants can pre-screen themselves and provide a list of disqualifying factors on the Website and warn candidates that those who meet any of the factors on the list will be disqualified. It is also useful to place the average job acceptance or failure rate for applicants on the Web page, to indicate beforehand that the odds are very low for succeeding, and post the actual salary range to further discourage people who are unlikely to accept because of the salary. Include a realistic job preview, with the good and the bad aspects of the job, and be selective where jobs are advertised.

- Improve information flow, and provide feedback to candidates to prevent them from becoming frustrated. Dr Sullivan sees it as essential that applicants should be kept informed about the status of the application. He suggests that the following can be done. During the hiring process, identify applicants that you would like to hire in future and inform them what they would need to do to increase the likelihood of their success, and periodically communicate with these applicants. It is good to spend more time after interviews to inform applicants where they have failed to meet the company or position's standards. Provide a password-protected Website that will allow applicants who qualify to track the progress of their application.

- Vary the application process for top candidates, so that they will re-apply for a similar position.

2.37   IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS

Schultz and Schultz (1998:169) say that people should think of having a variety of different careers in their lifetime, and for each career they will have to master certain skills, which will need constant updating. 'Careers of the future will require life-long learning' (Schultz et al., 1998:168).

FIGURE 4:   DEVELOPING A SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM
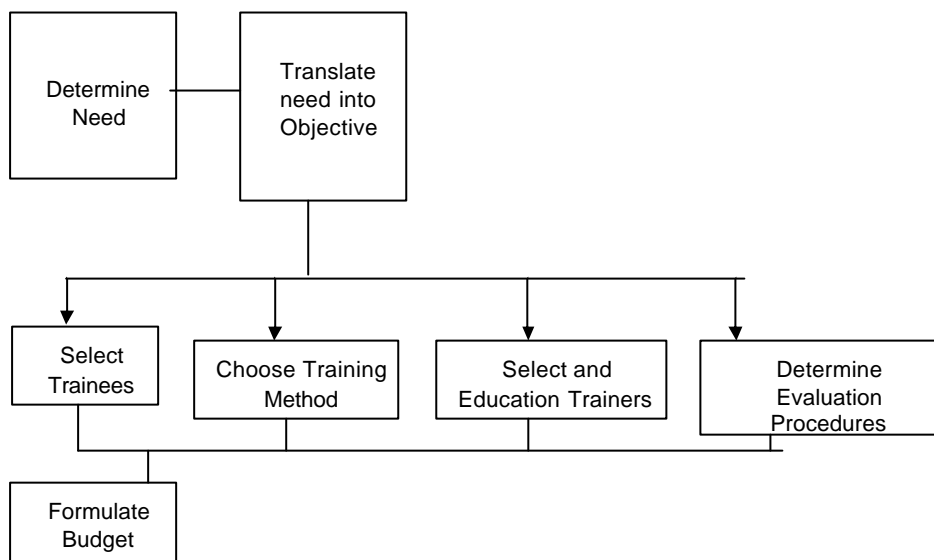
Source: French, 1986:314

Boxall and Purcell (2003:143) believe that all companies can gain from encouraging 'informal and incidental learning on the job'. This could involve exposing new workers to the skills of the more experienced workers, and can be complemented with formal 'on- and/or off-the-job training in, for example, technical skills'.

French (1986:314-315), like Boxall and Purcell, believes that good training justifies the expense of the training. Before starting a training programme, it is necessary to determine whether there is a need for such a

programme. French feels that training of poor quality will damage the organisation. He argues that workers who go through skills training and are still not qualified well enough for their jobs will become 'discouraged, discontented and sometimes ex-employees'.

Another negative side of training occurs when workers are over-trained and their jobs become unchallenging, with the result that the workers become bored. An over-trained worker is likely to leave the company.

French defines training in an organisational context as follows (French, 1986:313): 'The organisationally directed experiences that are designed to further the learning behaviours, that will contribute to organisational goals'. Training can advance the goals of the individual and the company.

French says that there are three things to be analysed to determine training needs or training objectives, as it is called by Schultz and Schultz (1998:170): The first is analysing organisational needs. It would involve determining the number of employees with specific skills and where they are needed within the company at any given time. They say that 'a general organisational analysis can suggest broad training needs that can then be translated into specific needs of employees or groups of employees'. This is followed by identifying the task of a particular job, and then the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform that particular job should be identified. To determine which employees require training for the identified job, an employee analysis is performed through a job analysis, critical incidents, performance appraisal and self-assessments.

Secondly, analysing job specifications. Companies tend to have a written job specification, defining the skills for every position in the company

(French, 1986:315-316). By examining these job specifications, it is possible to determine the skills needed for each and every job. It is the HR department's responsibility to keep the job specifications up to date, accurate and complete. Schultz and Schultz (1998:170) advises that a needs assessment has to be conducted, which will determine the goals of the organisation and the individual and how the training programme will contribute to achieving these goals.

Thirdly, analysing worker skills and qualifications. Employee personnel files should be kept up to date to allow simple analysis of worker skills and qualifications. When this analysis is done, there are two steps according to French (1986:316) one, 'determining the extent to which the organisation currently employs individuals with skills needed now and in the future and secondly, this analysis should be used to design the skills training programme needed to close the gap between the organisations needs and the present qualification of its employees.'

After the training needs are identified, the skills needed are translated into training objectives. The training programme then has to be designed to meet the objectives. The objectives have to include the number of people to be trained, the skills training will focus on and the period within which the training should be completed.

2.37.1 Selecting Trainees

Selecting individuals for training, according to French (1986:317), is an important decision for the organisation and the individuals who is chosen. Providing the right training to suitable employees will contribute to a stable

and well-trained work force. On the other hand, providing training for individuals with 'limited performance potential is simply a waste of time, effort and money'. This is all from a company perspective. The most important thing when selecting trainees is that the individual should be trainable and should be likely to stay with the firm and actually use the skills gained to benefit the organisation.

The employees perceive those who are selected for training to possibly receive 'higher pay, additional prestige and promotion opportunities'.

Boxall and Purcell (2003:143) say: 'The opportunity to use training more powerfully really arises where firms have invested more comprehensively in recruitment, and thus built a labour pool with greater long-run potential. They believe that in such a context, 'training and development offer the kind of complementary potential recognised in models of high performance work systems'.

Boxall and Purcell (2003:144) believe that long-run development plan involve a more balanced mix of formal training and education, usually off-the-job and informal coaching and teambuilding, typically on-the-job. Formal learning is important to increase the person's understanding of relevant theory and the person's ability to tackle abstract problem solving. This development, according to Boxall and Purcell, become even more powerful when the individual face a more challenging work environment in which their informal learning is extended.

2.37.2 Choosing a Training Method

2.37.2.1   On the job training

On the job training (OJT) is a company's primary skills training technique. It should include specific procedures for providing training to the employee. An example is job instruction training and is the most effective OJT method for several reasons for example, it provides effective training results at low cost and different training techniques can be used in conjunction with it, like classroom training. Another advantage is that if a supervisor or co-worker does the training, it will ensure that the training is directly related to the specific work situation (French, 1986:319-324).

On the job training, according to Schultz and Schultz (1998:179), provide employees training while they are working, and this is done under the guidance of an experienced operator, supervisor or trained instructor.

Shultz and Shultz refers to the advantages and disadvantages of OJT. The advantages (1998:179) are that it is cost effective since the organisation does not need to establish, equip or maintain a training facility. Making use of supervisors or co-workers would mean the company do not have to pay for professional trainers. 'There is no concern about whether job performance in a training situation will carry over to the actual work situation because training and job situations are the same.' (Schultz et al., 1998:179-180). It is also important that feedback is immediate and visible, while good performance can be praised and poor performance will be noted in a faulty product.

The disadvantages (Schultz et al., 1998:180) are that workers and supervisors have to take time of their own work to do the training and this could contribute to expenses in the long run due to reduced productivity. It

can happen that trainees can damage equipment due to inexperience and high accident rates are quite common for trainees. They say that using co-workers as trainers does not necessarily mean that the training is sufficient because not all workers are good teachers.

2.37.2.2   Apprenticeship Training

Apprenticeship training allows employees to learn from the already skilled workers. It usually starts with theoretical, classroom training and then the individual will start by performing limited tasks of the actual job. Eventually the individual should be able to perform all the job‑related tasks of a skilled craft worker' (French, 1986:321).

Schultz and Shultz define apprenticeship as follows: 'A training method for skilled crafts involving classroom instruction and on-the-job experience' (1998:180). Examples of apprenticeship training are plumbers, carpenters, electronic technicians and painters. The trainee usually signs a contract with a company to work for the company for a fixed period of time in return for attending the specified training programme and salary.

2.37.3 Off-the-Job Training

Off the job training involves various different methods, the first being lectures and conferences. Lecturing and conferencing is a general method for providing training and it can be held on-site or at facilities off‑site. On-site training is usually opted for when the company has the skilled people to do the training or when no specialised facilities are needed. Some companies

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prefer to do training off-site, as it tends to be more relaxed with fewer interruptions.

Secondly, programmed, computer-assisted instruction can be used. Computerised training systems are freely available for various jobs (French, 1986:323). Schultz and Schultz (1998:183) explain that computer-assisted instruction is sometimes also called computer-based training. Computer-assisted instruction (CAI) works as follows: the training material is provided on computer disks and this serves as the trainer. The trainees will interact with the material on personal computer terminals and their responses will automatically be recorded and scored. According to Schultz and Schultz the most frequent use for CAI is to teach computer literacy and to create flight simulations for pilots.

According to Schultz and Schultz (1998:184), the advantages of CAI are that the trainee is actively involved in the learning process, and that he or she can work at their own pace. Immediate feedback is provided on mastery of a particular skill and therefore it is reinforced. Another advantage is that it allows for more individualised instruction and the computer responds immediately without becoming annoyed or prejudice. It is also advantageous because of the fact that CAI can be performed with a small number of people and therefore it is not necessary to wait for a certain number of trainees to fill a classroom.

Thirdly, audio-visual aids (French, 1986:323) like films and television can be used in skills training. Although this is an easy method of training, using pre-recorded training sessions, which are distributed amongst trainees

have a disadvantage which is that there is no interaction between trainer and trainee.

Fourthly, Job Rotation (Schultz et al., 1998:185) refers to a management training technique that assigns trainees to various jobs and departments over a period of a few years. It is often used with graduates starting out in a career. The goal of this method is to give trainees the opportunity to gain insight into the different aspects and areas of the organisation. Job rotation can take several years and the trainee or employee will be moved from one department to another, from one plant to another, or to offices in other countries. These changes usually contribute to skills like flexibility, adaptability, and self-efficacy, as employees learn to deal successfully with new challenges.

Schultz and Schultz do mention that job rotation has certain disadvantages. Frequent moves can disrupt family life and the career of the employee's spouse. Also, a brief rotation period will prevent the employee from gaining the full knowledge of that particular position.

2.37.4 Selecting and Educating Trainers

The key to successful training is selecting the right individuals for training and providing them with the tools to do the training (French, 1986:325). Schultz and Schultz (1998:171) also emphasise that the quality, competence and expertise of an instructor will have a direct impact on student performance. A person presenting training must be able to teach and impart knowledge in a clear and compelling manner.

Various different trainers are used, the first being in-house trainers. In-house training can be more cost-effective and it is essential that the person chosen for the training should be trained in the overall process of training; for example, he or she must understand the objectives of the training in order to develop the presentations (French, 1986:325-326).

Secondly, outside trainers can be used. The outside trainers and the training organisation should be evaluated for the quality of their training before being hired. Furthermore, if an off-site location is to be used, it should also be examined beforehand (French, 1986:325-326). The advantages of outside trainers are that productive employees are not taken away from their work; firms who specialise in certain areas can be hired, who already have the experience and expertise in training in that field; the organisation receiving the training tends to have a wide choice of training programmes that can be followed, and the firm tends to have more control because it is 'easier to dismiss an external trainer than to redirect and improve an internal training programme' (French, 1986:326).

2.37.5 Determining Evaluation Procedures

French says (1986:326) that all training programmes have to be evaluated, and gives five reasons for this evaluation:

(1)   To determine whether the programme met its objectives

(2)   To identify the strengths and weaknesses in the training process

(3)   To calculate the cost or benefit ratio of the programme

(4)   To determine who benefited the most from the programme and why

(5)   To establish a database for future decisions about the programme

Training programmes can be evaluated with questionnaires filled out by trainees who attended the training, although the improvement in the trainee's performance is the best indicator of the success of the training.

Another method to determine the effectiveness of training is to compare the workers in the same job who went on the training to those who did not go on the training. The workers who underwent training should have improved in certain areas, for example, communications and leadership.

2.38 PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Companies face various demands as their national and international markets grow. Employees will need to stay qualified and at the same time the qualifications that are required become more differentiated. Because of this, knowledge and skills have to be updated much more quickly (SAP HR - Efficient Personnel Management:14-19).

To attract and retain talented employees has become the most competitive factor for companies, the reason being that for many jobs an over-supply of people is available. It is believed that, in future, recruitment will be influenced by demographic changes. The costs of recruiting, hiring and training of new employees are enormous. There is an increase in temporary employment and project-based employment. People are not as loyal to companies as they used to be, and all these factors have led to the rethinking of recruitment.

SAP HR Personnel Development would allow a company to recognise, promote and 'properly exploit the existing potential of employees' (SAP HR - Efficient Personnel Management:14). 'It also gives the company support tools

to make well-informed personnel decisions and effectively implement personnel development measures.'

SAP HR Personnel Development has the ability to indicate the existing and required qualifications in a company. It has a qualifications catalogue, which allows for specialist, analytical, and social skills and qualifications required by a company. These qualifications can be assigned to jobs and people within a company. It also allows for the evaluation and comparison of qualification requirements, by assigning qualifications to a proficiency scale. The 'validity, duration and depreciation value features' can accurately monitor the status of employees' qualifications.

2.38.1 Motivate Employees' Drive to Achieve

The above encourages the consideration of the employees' personal preferences and interests, which contribute to increased motivation and a desire to perform and achieve. An overview of the qualifications and potential of employees is immediately available, and at the same time, the training needs of employees can be identified and be set in motion.

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2.38.2 Career Succession Planning

Career Succession Planning is a powerful planning tool which allows for a quick response to organisational change, and to fill specialist and managerial vacancies from within the available pool of workers in the company (SAP HR - Efficient Personnel Management:15). Career Succession Planning means that the employer can plan and provide for quality and qualified personnel well in advance. It motivates employees because they can see career perspectives,

and at the same time it 'develops their work-related and interpersonal skills' (SAP HR-Efficient Personnel Management:16).

It enables the company to identify employees that are suitably qualified to competently fill vacancies which arise or will arise in the near future. It will indicate the suitability of the potential candidates and propose training where needed. It also has a simulation feature which allows the company to simulate the 'knock-on-effects of an employee transfer and evaluate its consequences' (SAP HR-Efficient Personnel Management:16). A company can now identify development perspectives and prepare for future requirements, define the careers, and use them as planning tools to indicate to the employees and applicants the various career options open to them if they have the right performance and aptitude.

2.38.3 Employee Development Plans

SAP HR Personnel Development has the tools to easily manage individual development plans by designing long- and short-term, individually tailored, development programmes for employees. The R/3 system also enables the company to create training programmes and to monitor all aspects of the training measures.

2.38.4 Appraisal Systems Monitor Personnel Development

'Evaluation is an important aspect of any investment' (SAP HR-Efficient Personnel Management:17). SAP HR supports planned and formalised appraisal of employees on the criteria defined by the company, or on qualifications. 'The appraisals are standardised and uniform to achieve

objectivity when the results are calculated' (SAP HR-Efficient Personnel Management:17). This appraisal system can also be used in yearly 'performance appraisals, remuneration differentiation processes, or in applicant selection and training for attendee and training appraisal' (SAP HR - Efficient Personnel Management:17). It therefore allows for more transparency, because information is available immediately.

Greengard (2000a:39) says that the technologies that companies use will allow a manager to know, at any given time, where an employee stands in terms of skills and training.

2.39 CONCLUSION

Recruiters need to become broader thinkers, and need to possess or acquire additional skills. To communicate ideas clearly, to coach and negotiate, will become more important. Not only should the communication with candidates improve, but also the communications with hiring managers and senior management.

Recruiters will need management skills as well as financial management skills, project management skills, and relationship management skills. Recruiters will need to undergo technology training, as 'recruiting is moving away from a phone book and telephone to beyond electronic résumés and online versions of printed want ads' (Bedore, 2002:np).

Technology is here to stay, and recruiters should either keep up or drop out. The technologies currently available are upgraded on a regular basis, and are there to assist recruitment agents in achieving maximum results with minimum effort.

In part two of this study, electronic recruitment was defined, and the different methods as well as the advantages and disadvantages of e-recruitment were discussed. A brief overview was given on a selected number of the information systems available, after which career networks, how to design an online recruitment site, and the evaluation of training needs were discussed. The section ended off with discussing the identification of training needs and selecting trainees, based on the use of a computerised system.

The following chapter will be discussing the methodology of the study in detail.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section the research problem, together with key concepts will be defined, and the grounds on which they were chosen will be described. The method of measurement, sample design and sampling methods, as well as the data collection methods and fieldwork practices will be discussed in detail. The last section deals with the data capturing and analysis, and the limitations of the research project.

It has become imperative for South African recruitment agents to realise that their competitors are no longer the recruitment agent next door, but that they are competing in a global market for a scarce resource, namely, suitably qualified applicants. In this research project, the current practices, methods and attitudes of the recruitment agents in a selected area of the Western Cape were measured.

3.2 POPULATION, EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY IN THE WESTERN CAPE

In the following section an overview of critical variables related to the Western Cape province are presented so as to conceptualise the research findings.
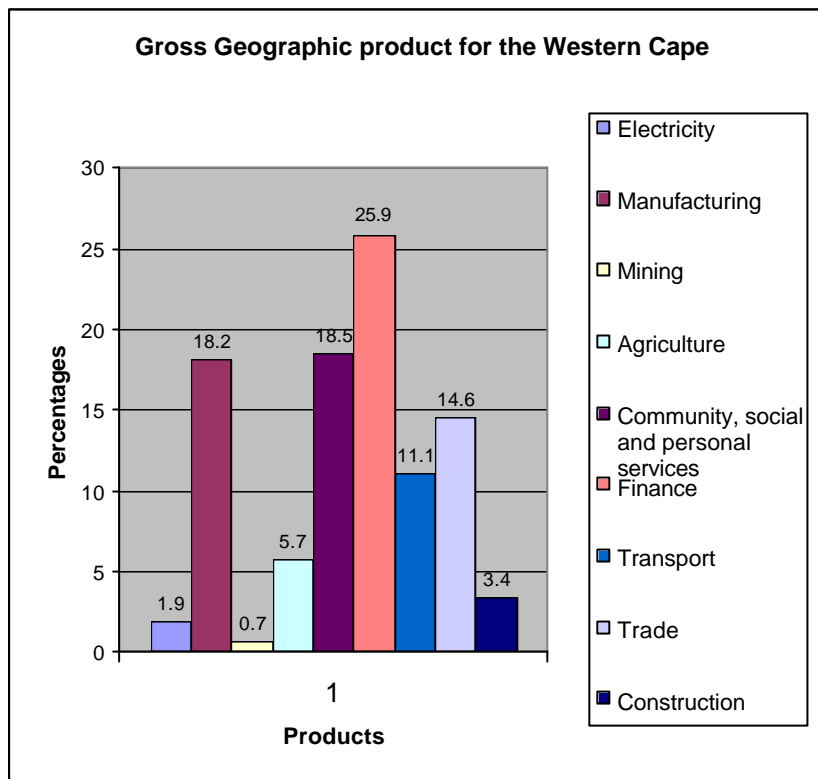
3.2.1 Geographical Location

The Western Cape, situated at the South-Western tip of Africa, covers an area of 129 370 km², which is about 10.6 per cent of the entire South African land surface (Internet 3, 1999:1). It has a population of approximately 4.3 million people (Dkeni, 2003:np), the majority being Afrikaans, followed by English- and isi-Xhosa-speaking.

The area has the highest life expectancy of all South Africa's provinces, with an average of 67.7 years in 1995 (Internet 4, 1996:np). Furthermore, in 1991 it had the highest rate of adult literacy, namely, 94.6 per cent, whereas the rest of South Africa was 82.2 per cent (Internet 4, 1996:np). It therefore compares well with countries such as Venezuela and Singapore.

This province also has a variety of tertiary institutions, namely three main universities: University of the Western Cape, University of Cape Town, and the University of Stellenbosch. There are also two technikons and various other training institutions. 'Only 6.7 per cent of the people aged 20 years or older have undergone no schooling' at all (Internet 3, 2001:2; Dkeni, 2003:np).

Economically the area is the third biggest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), contributing 14.21 per cent (Dkeni, 2003:np). In 1993 the per capita income was the second highest in the country, with an amount of R13 490. The inflation rate in 1995 was 8,7 per cent (Internet 4, 1996:np).

The main contributor to Gross Geographic Product (GGP) is the manufacturing industry, totalling 32.1 per cent or approximately R81 800 million, based on 1994 figures. Tourism constituted 20.5 per cent and agriculture, forestry and fishing industry contributed 6.5 per cent (Internet 4, 1996:np).

GRAPH 3:   GROSS GEOGRAPHIC PRODUCT FOR THE WESTERN CAPE

Gross Geographic product for the Western Cape

☐	Electricity
☐	Manufacturing
☐	Mining
☐	Agriculture
☐	Community, social and personal services
☐	Finance
☐	Transport
☐	Trade
☐	Construction

Electricity 1.9, Manufacturing 18.2, Mining 0.7, Agriculture 5.7, Community, social and personal services 18.5, Finance 25.9, Transport 11.1, Trade 14.6, Construction 3.4

Percentages

Products

Source: Anonymous, 2001:53

With regard to industry, the 'head offices of all but one of South Africa's petroleum companies are located in Cape Town' (Internet 3, 2001:3). Cape Town also houses the head offices of various insurance giants and national retail chains, and more than 170 000 people are employed in the clothing and textile industry. The clothing and textile industry is the 'single most significant industrial source of employment in the Western Cape' (Internet 3, 2001:3; Dkeni, 2003:np). A large number of the South African printing and publishing industries are also situated in Cape Town.

The unemployment rate is 17.9 per cent, which is much lower than that of the rest of the RSA (Internet 3, 2001:3).

Export statistics for the region for the period 1996-2000 indicate a sharp increase in categories like iron and steel, with a total increase of 245.6 per cent in the five years, glues and enzymes, with a total increase of 1584.3 per cent in five years, and explosives and matches, with a total increase of 768.2 per cent in five years (Internet 5, 2000:np).

In a study produced by the Provincial Treasury of the Western Cape (Internet 6, nd:np), it was found that 'between 1995 and 2001, the area's economy grew at an average annual rate of 3.3 per cent'.

According to this brief, the Western Cape growth has been driven by 'growth in Financial, Real Estate and Business Services and Transport and Communications sector and together they accounted for almost 75 per cent of the GDP growth between 1995-2001' (Internet 6, nd:np). In 2001, the tertiary components of the province contributed about 60 per cent to the provincial GDP, and therefore largely drive economic growth in the province (Internet 6, nd:np).

'The Information Technology industry continued to grow and diversify its role in the financial sector since 1995', which is very important in this province, since it houses the large offices of various major financial institutions (Internet 6, nd:np). According to Dkeni (2003:np), this area is currently experiencing the development of the first information communication technology cluster. The retail sector is also increasingly making use of the Information, Communication and Technology (ITC) services, since retailers use the Internet and cellular phones to advertise, 'using SMS as the mechanism' more frequently (Internet 6, nd:np number).

Cape Town is the capital of the area. The deepest South African harbour is found in Saldanha-Vredenburg (about 125 kilometres from Cape Town), and this area is known for its iron exports and its fishing industry. This area is known as the West Coast, and is plankton-rich. It is considered one of the world's richest fishing grounds, and is protected against over-fishing by a 200km commercial fishing zone and strict quotas. It is also kept for exclusive utilisation by local people, and creates jobs for some 28 000 people who are directly dependent on the industry (Internet 3, 2001:2; Dkeni, 2003:np). Various new developments are arising in the Saldanha-Vredenburg area, triggered by the vast Saldanha Steel Project (Internet 3, 2001:3).

Stellenbosch/Franschhoek and Somerset West form part of the wine-lands, and the Malmesbury area forms part of the Swartland, which is well known for its corn and wheat production as well as wine-farming.

The Western Cape can be seen as one of South Africa's affluent provinces, and since it has a high rate of literacy and a low rate of unemployment, there is a high work potential in the various recruitment agencies. This could possibly influence the sample, since the participants in the research might have an advantage over recruitment agents in other provinces, because of the possibility of access to better and later technologies. The financial wealth of the province can contribute to a larger 'work market' for the recruitment agents, which will directly influence their ability to spend money on training and technology, and contributes to a competitive advantage.

3.3   THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, KEY CONCEPTS, AND DEFINITIONS

In this section the research problem, the reason for the research, and its aims are discussed. The methodological approach is also outlined.

A qualitative approach was regarded as appropriate to the study for the following reasons.

According to Allan (1991:179), qualitative research is concerned with social processes, and at times is criticised for being 'impressionistic and non-verifiable, as the research methods are flexible'. Qualitative studies allow one to describe reality in 'accurate verbal terms', and researchers making use of this method are attempting to understand the social interaction and the social world from the point of view of the people who are being studied (Popenoe, 1993:39). Boeree (nd:np) says that qualitative research focuses on understanding, rather than predicting or controlling phenomena, and is often seen as a more appropriate way to study human life. Myers (1997:141) believes that qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data, such as data obtained from interviews, documents and participant observation, to understand and explain social phenomena.

Myers (1997:141) states that qualitative research methods were developed within social sciences to 'enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena'. He explains that qualitative data sources include fieldwork, interviews and questionnaires. The purpose of qualitative research methods is to assist researchers in understanding people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live (Myers, 1997:141). Myers refers to Kaplan and Maxwell (1997:141), who argue that, the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social

and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified. In this particular study, questionnaires were used to obtain information from the participants.

According to Popenoe (1993:39), sociologists tend to use a wider range of research methods than the natural sciences do, and sociological research often contains quantitative and qualitative aspects. Popenoe (1993:30) also believes that social scientists rely heavily on the empirical method, which involves using the human senses to observe the world. Other people using the same processes and methods can check these observations for accuracy. Popenoe believes that the empirical method or research assists in avoiding problems with human bias, emotion, and distorted reasoning. Mouton (2001:148) sees empirical research as studies that 'are usually qualitative in nature which aim to provide an in-depth description of a group of people or community. Such descriptions are embedded in the life-worlds of the actors being studied and produce insider perspectives of the actors and their practices'.

The researcher's study can be seen as a descriptive, empirical study. Dane (1990:6) defines descriptive research as the 'examining of a phenomenon to more fully define it or to differentiate if from other phenomena'. The researcher aimed to obtain exploratory and descriptive data. The literature provided limited information on the qualifications needed, methods used, and recruitment agents' attitudes towards e-recruitment. The statistics obtained from a descriptive study capture the features of the object of study at that particular time; these can change over time, and old results

can be compared with new results. Mouton believes that this type of research is guided by ideas or expectations, rather than by a hypothesis (2001:148).

The research can be seen as empirical, descriptive research, since the aim of the research is to assess the attitude of recruitment agents towards computer-based information systems. The researcher makes observations about the sample, based on the information obtained from the survey. The research will be repeatable. It is mainly qualitative, as it measures the attitude of recruitment agents.

The limitations of this type of study are, according to Mouton (2001: 148), a lack of generalisablitiy of results, and data collection and data analysis can be very time-consuming. According to Popenoe (1993:30), the empirical research method is a 'public and open path to knowledge'. It relies on repeatable observations, and reduces human bias, but Mouton (2001:149) opposes this, saying that one of the main sources of error is the 'potential bias of the researcher'.

Bias was not a problem in this study, since all the participants were contacted in the same way, and the respondents anonymously filled out the same questionnaire, therefore utilising a standardised method.

This study is a form of basic research 'which is firmly grounded in the scientific method, but has as its goal the creation of new knowledge about how fundamental processes work' (Cozby, 1993:8). According to Bickman and Rog (1997:x), problem solving is not an aim of basic research, investigates a specific topic, and is very focused on the question at hand. In their opinion, basic research is usually self-initiated, and the researcher determines the study. The current study has as one of its aims, the

development of new knowledge in the field of recruitment and selection; therefore a specific topic was investigated in a focused manner. Furthermore it was self-initiated, and can therefore be classified as basic research.

The reason for this particular research is to gain more knowledge in the field of recruitment and selection, how it functions in South Africa, and how the service of the recruiter can be improved by making use of computer-based information systems. The knowledge gained in the study will assist the researcher in future career ventures, and could form the basis of future research to identify trends in the field of recruitment and selection.

The aims of the study are to provide new knowledge on the attitudes of recruitment agents in the use of computer-based management information systems in the recruitment process, to provide comprehensive definitions of recruitment and selection, and to look at some of the current information systems that are available in the field of recruitment and selection. The researcher also tried to achieve the following specific aims:

- to determine the specific services offered by recruitment agents to their clients and applicants

- to determine how suitable applicants are attracted and identified, and the processes that follow

- to determine the qualifications that a typical recruitment agent would need

- to determine whether recruitment agents have an academic interest in their field, and whether they keep up to date with various Government Acts

- to determine whether any electronic technologies are used, what type of technologies are used, how frequently they are used, what the technologies are used for, and more importantly, how technology influences the recruitment and selection process

- to provide empirically based information to recruitment agencies in the area.

The literature study gives a brief overview of the history of recruitment, explains the difference between recruitment and selection, and considers the different types of recruitment and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Selection methods and processes are also discussed in detail. The researcher created flow charts for both the recruitment and selection processes. A second literature chapter focuses on electronic recruitment and some of the computer-based management information systems that are available.

The results of the research will be useful to South African recruitment agents, as they will indicate the latest trends in recruiting and the advantages of using computer-based management information systems. They will also indicate the current methods used by recruitment agents in the sampled area, and will provide a basis for further research in the province and the rest of South Africa.

3.4   THE SAMPLE DESIGN AND SAMPLING METHODS

In this section the design of the sample, the sampling techniques, and the criteria for the sample size will be discussed.

FIGURE 5:   MAP OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Source: www.uyapi.com\wcmap.htm, 2000-2003:np

The data obtained in this research project were qualitative data of an empirical nature. According to Myers (1997:142), qualitative researchers prefer to use the term 'empirical materials' rather than 'data', since qualitative data are usually non-numeric. Written data sources were used to obtain information prior to administering the questionnaire. In sociological research it is the practice to make a distinction between primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources are mainly unpublished data and are often gathered directly from the organisation. They may include things like reports, letters, and in this particular study, theses from the University of Port Elizabeth. Secondary data sources are published articles and books (Myers, 1997:142). In this research project, extensive use was made of secondary sources to obtain data for the literature study. The Internet was also used to a large extent for updated information.

The population group for the research comprised recruitment agents in the Western Cape. A 'population' can be defined as the 'total group of people to be studied' (Popenoe, 1993:39) or as a composition of 'all individuals of interest to the researcher' (Cozby, 1993:58). Dane (1990:289) says that a population is an abstract concept even though it consists of concrete units, for example the population of a country can only be estimated, because it is not possible to know the exact number of people within that population.

In this research non-probability sampling, sometimes also referred to as non-random sampling, was used, since the recruitment agents had an unequal chance of being included (Dane, 1990:302). The specific type of non-probability sampling used was accidental sampling, which, according to Dane (1990:302), is a selection based on 'availability or ease of inclusion'. This type of sampling allows the researcher to use whoever is willing to participate in the research, and is sometimes called 'availability sampling'.

In this study, the willing participants were the recruitment agents who filled out the questionnaires and returned them. Non-probability sampling was chosen, since it is an easy and relatively cheap way of obtaining a sample (Cozby, 1993:59). It furthermore allowed for selecting the sample from advertisements in newspapers and making use of the telephone directory.

Dane defines a sample 'as a portion of the elements in a population' (1990:289) or 'subjects from a population of interests' (Cozby, 1993:58). The sample of the research comprised a number of recruitment agents in the selected area indicated on the map of interests' (Cozby, 1993:58). The area includes Vredenburg/Saldanha (West Coast); Malmesbury/Paarl/Franschhoek

(Swartland area) and Cape Town, Strand, Gordon's Bay, Stellenbosch and Somerset West.

The selected geographical area, with an approximate radius of 150-200 kilometres, enabled contact to take place with a number of recruitment agents in a short time span.

The next step was to identify recruitment agencies in these areas. Cape Town is the largest and only city. The other selected areas are mostly large towns, all within a few kilometres from each other.

The sample was located by identifying recruitment agents who advertised in the local newspapers and telephone directories. A number of recruitment agents could also refer the researcher to other recruitment agents known to them. In the West Coast area a referral to the West Coast Business Development Centre provided a list of recruitment agents in the area, who were registered with them.

The Cape Town yellow page directory proved a valuable source to increase the sample size of recruitment agents. However, the information provided in the directory was often outdated; some numbers were no longer in use, and a small number of the listed agencies no longer functioned as recruiting agencies.

The population selected totalled 78 agencies. Each of these agencies was contacted by telephone and asked whether they would be willing to participate in the research. Although all indicated a willingness to participate, only 33 agents responded to the questionnaire. The researcher used this method, as the total population of the Western Cape was not known. The

selected agents were therefore used as the population, and the respondents as the sample.

The research is a qualitative study. Popenoe (1993:52) defines qualitative research as 'accurate verbal descriptions of reality and often look at the world as seen by the participants rather than by the outside observer'. A qualitative study describes, explains, and develops an understanding of the data (Louw and Edwards, 1993:889). The reason for choosing a qualitative method of research is because of its flexibility (Allen, 1991:179), and the research aims to look at, describe, and understand experiences, ideas and values, in this case applicable to recruitment agents.

Qualitative research measures intangibles, for example, attitude (Rosner, 2000:138). In this study the attitudes of recruitment agents were researched, which will qualify the research as qualitative research.

May (1993:70) points out that, to be able to make generalisations to the larger population, there should be sampling validity, which would imply that the research measures what it attempts to measure, and it is necessary to use a random selection method to be able to do this. If random selection is used, sampling error cannot be excluded, and results cannot be generalised.

3.5   DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND FIELDWORK PRACTICE

In this section the methods of data collection will be discussed as well as the fieldwork practices followed.

The method for data collection that was chosen was a survey method, which according to May (1993:65), is a 'method of gathering information from a number of individuals, a "sample"', in order to learn something about the

larger population from which the sample is drawn'. The purpose of a questionnaire is to determine or measure characteristics or opinions of the respondents. Glastonbury and MacKean (1991:225) says that a survey can have two purposes, namely to provide descriptive results and to provide an evaluative study.

The method of a survey study was chosen for various reasons:

- It was a relatively cheap way of gaining information from a large sample of people, since it could be delivered, posted, faxed, or e-mailed.

- Pre-coded questions could be prepared, which assisted the coding process and contributed to standardisation for all participants.

- Since the questionnaire could be emailed or faxed, this saved cost and time, as there was no real travelling involved.

- The participants could fill out the questionnaire in their own time, at a time that was convenient to them.

- The questionnaire provided a basis for the repeatability of the study – which would allow the study to be repeated and to check whether the findings were applicable to other recruiters elsewhere.

The questions were formulated during the literature study by identifying themes or topics and writing them down. The list of questions was then divided into thematic groups, from which the questions were formulated and placed in the questionnaire. The survey consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions and was a self-administered questionnaire. The reasons for making use of a self-administered questionnaire were as follows:

- The respondents could complete the questionnaire at a time that was suitable to them.

- It is easier to understand long questions when they are read by the person who has to complete them.

- It is also easier to complete questions where different choices are provided.

- No time was wasted interviewing respondents.

- The respondents were contacted beforehand to ask about participation, which generally has a better response rate than mailed surveys.

The majority of questions were closed-ended and pre-coded, meaning that a list of answers was provided to the respondents, who had to choose one of the provided answers. Pre-coding was used to assist with the coding process. Open-ended questions were used where more specific information was required. The fact that it was a self-administered questionnaire cautioned the researcher to keep the questions very clear and to provide comprehensive instructions. The researcher's contact details were provided in case any queries arose, but no queries were made.

A pilot study was done before the questionnaire was distributed. In this case the questionnaire was e-mailed to two experts on questionnaires and the layout of questionnaires used in survey methods. The participants in the pilot study received the same complete e-mailed version as the respondents would receive. They made sure that the instructions were clear, that the questions followed logically on each other, and that all the questions were easy to understand. The pilot study participants also made sure that all the electronic

functions added to the electronic questionnaire worked properly. On the basis of the pilot study, a few structural changes were made, and a few questions rephrased.

The questionnaire was administered in three ways, namely by hand, fax and e-mail. The e-mailed version had the best response rate, and the advantage of e-mailing the questionnaires was that one could see whether the e-mail had been delivered and read, and it was easy to send follow-up notes reminding respondents that the deadline was approaching, and later to send an immediate, personalised thank you note once the questionnaire had been completed. Another advantage was that there was more than enough space for open-ended questions, as the whole questionnaire spaced down when more space was needed. The e-mailed version was set up in such a way that the respondents could complete the choice questions by simply moving their cursor across the block and then clicking the mouse button, which created an automatic 'x' in the box of their choice. This feature allowed for quick completion of the questionnaire.

Each questionnaire had a detailed cover letter, providing the title of the study, the name of the supervisor, and the institution of study. The cover letter described the purpose of the study, gave a detailed explanation of how the questionnaire should be completed; it also provided a clear date for the deadline and contact details of the researcher.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections:

- Section A: Biographical information

- Section B: Services offered

- Section C: Methods/ Processes

- Section D: Knowledge/ skills

- Section E: Electronic Recruitment and Technology

Each section began with a brief description of what was expected of the respondent in that particular section. Section A asked generalised questions about gender, position in the company, and period of employment. There were two open-ended questions to determine the geographical area in which the agency functioned, and whether they provided a specialised service to a particular industry.

Section B consisted of eleven questions, covering areas of Curriculum Vitae, advertising, and applicant and client services. A Lickert Scale, which places the attitude of people on an attitude continuum and is also referred to as an attitude scale (May, 1993:79; Allan, 1991:234), was used. The Lickert scale in this questionnaire made use of a continuum ranging from a five for 'strongly agree', to a one for 'strongly disagree' and a zero for 'I do not know'.

Section C asked how the ideal candidates were identified, and asked about the processes that followed this identification. It also looked at how many placements had been made during a certain period of time, what type of record-keeping was used, and how frequently the recruitment agents kept contact with their clients, as well as how they dealt with clients whose native language was not spoken by the recruiter.

Section D used an open-ended question to determine what qualifications a recruiter needed. The recruiters were asked whether they were familiar with the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, and the Promotion of Access to Information Act, Act 2, 2000, and how these acts influenced recruitment practices. This section also tried to determine whether the

recruiters participated in research, kept up to date with developments in recruitment, and whether they belonged to any societies in the field of recruitment.

The last section, tried to determine whether technologies like email and the Internet were used to assist in their day-to-day activities. Section E asked specific questions related to different information systems that were available to determine the recruitment agents' familiarity with these well-known systems, and to determine which system, if any, they currently made use of. In this section, the attitude and use of technology by recruitment agents were investigated.

A request for feedback of the results was included at the end of the questionnaire, and the respondents were asked to provide a preferred address to which the results would have to be sent. The majority of the participants indicated that they would like to receive feedback on the results of the study.

3.6 DATA CAPTURING AND DATA EDITING

The data capturing and data editing section looks at the methods used to capture the data, and examines the editing of the data to be used for the data analysis.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections, and the majority of the questions consisted of pre-coded questions, for easy coding and capturing. On the right-hand side of the questionnaire, blocks were created where the code for each response could be written down.

A code was assigned to each response and these codes were recorded on a coding sheet in MS Word. In cases where more than one pre-coded option was chosen, new codes were assigned and recorded on a separate coding list.

Responses to the closed-ended questions were recorded verbatim and assigned a code, which was recorded on a separate coding sheet.

Once the codes had been assigned to the different responses, and were coded in the provided blocks, the data were captured onto an Excel sheet. A new Excel sheet was created for each section of the questionnaire and each sheet was clearly marked to eliminate any confusion.

Every questionnaire that was returned was also numbered for cross-referencing the number of responses captured in the Excel Sheet to the number of questionnaires that were returned. The cross-referencing also assisted in checking a response when it was unclear on the captured Excel sheet.

The captured data were used in the Data Analysis process. The data analysis will be discussed in section 3.7.

Making use of separate sheets for each section's responses and numbering the questions on each sheet, eliminated errors. The numbering of the questionnaires further assisted this process, as the numbers of questionnaires were also indicated on each sheet. The numbers were therefore cross-referenced and it could immediately be seen if a response had been left out.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis section describes the different data analysis techniques that were used in order to obtain a result from which inferences could be drawn.

Tim Holt (1991:259-260) refers to a Small-Scale Primary Survey as a type of research where the researcher works alone and is responsible for all the planning and carrying out of the research. These tasks would include the data collection as well as the data analysis, and the sample size is usually equal to or less than a hundred. Based on this description, the type of research done in this project can be classified as a small-scale survey, since the sample comprised 33 correspondents. The consequence of such a small sample is often that a large number of variables are obtained, and this was, in fact, the case.

The type of survey and sample size will directly influence the type of statistics that can be administered, and in this particular study, descriptive analysis and simple contrasts were the most effective. According to Holt (1991:260), the 'analysis is often restricted to taking one explanatory variable at a time'.

Myers says that, in qualitative data analysis, one should rather speak of 'modes of analysis', and he sees these modes of analysis as different approaches to gathering, analysing, and interpreting qualitative data. Qualitative data analysis is mainly concerned with verbal or written textual analysis. Myers refers to a specific type of content analysis as 'semiotics' (1997:142). Kiplin (Myers, 1997:142) defines content analysis as a 'research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their contexts'. The researcher will be looking for structures and patterned

regularities in the text, and will use these as a basis for inferences. The researcher captured and coded the open-ended responses on a coding sheet. The responses were then examined and themes were identified, which were then discussed in relation to the literature study.

The researcher made use of descriptive statistics for the quantitative data. According to Cozby (1993:139), descriptive statistics provide a description of the sample. Inferential statistics were used for the quantitative data. Inferential statistics, according to Dane (1990:238), include calculations like mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. Cozby (1993:139) sees inferential statistics as enabling a person to determine whether one can make statements reflected by the results if one were to test the entire population. These calculations are then used to make inferences.

The analysis process was started with frequency distributions, which indicate the 'number of subjects who receive each possible score on a variable' (Cozby, 1993:140). Histograms or bar graphs were used to present the frequency distributions. A bar graph indicates the score for each measure by a bar; its length will indicate the number of persons who received the score.

The descriptive statistics that were used were central tendency statistics, which is defined as ' statistics telling us what the sample as a whole, or on the average, is like' (Cozby, 1993:142). The most common central tendency statistic is the mean. The mean equals the sum of all the scores divided by the number of scores. The median divides the group in half, and the mode is the most frequent score. The measure of variability that was used

was the range, which is the 'difference between the highest score and lowest score' (Cozby, 1993:142).

Inferential statistics that were used for the qualitative responses, allow for inferences about the true difference in the population on the basis of the sample data. Inferential statistics will give the 'probability that the difference between means reflects random error rather than a real difference ' (Cozby, 1993:144). Inferential statistics will allow the researcher to determine whether the data obtained are reliable, meaning that the same results will be obtained if the study is repeated. These statistics will only allow for the probability that the results will be the same if the process is repeated.

3.8   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the quality of the data that was collected is discussed, as well as identifying the limitations of the study.

Overall, the quality of the data collected was good, but the biggest problem was the poor feedback received from the participants. Approximately 78 people were contacted by telephone, e-mail or fax, and only 33 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 42 percent. A possible reason for the poor feedback received is the time of year; (middle to late November) when many participants were very busy. A number of recruitment agents were contacted in January, to increase the sample size, but the feedback was just as slow and poor as in November. The number of questionnaires received will therefore influence the quality of the analysis and the generalisability of the results.

Since only a selected area of the Western Cape was used as the population, not all the findings will necessarily apply to all provinces in South Africa.

However, with reference to the selected area, two participants indicated a keen interest in the results of the study, as they are involved in the topics raised in the research. One participant responded as follows:

'Confidentially, I responded as I was looking at a new e-recruitment system. I was so impressed, I asked them if I could market it for them. I feel the employee recruitment industry is going to get a wake up call. The traditional methods of recruitment, across industries, will be displaced in a short period by more cost-effective and efficient channels. Already large employers are taking the gap. SME's will follow suit, if they are structured correctly.'

The response made by this participant is an indication of the relevance of the study, and the need for the information provided by the study.

Although survey studies are often criticised for being influenced by the human actions and presuppositions, in this study this was not a problem, since no prior knowledge of the typical recruitment agent was available to the researcher, who therefore could not be influenced.

Because the questionnaires were self-administered and most were distributed via e-mail, no personal prejudice could influence the responses on the questionnaires or the interpretations of the questions.

All participants indicated that they would like to receive the results of the research, which in itself is an indication of the interest in the topic, and the need for the research to be done within the industry.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research process was discussed and a description given of the research geographical area. The chapter covered the selection of the sample, the data collection methods, and the fieldwork that was done to obtain the data. Data capturing, editing and analysis were discussed. Finally, potential limitations of the research were identified.

The following chapter will be looking at the data analysis in greater detail.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the data obtained from the questionnaire is analysed according to descriptive statistics[2]. Principal themes identified in the responses to open-ended questions (qualitative data) are identified and stated in the text. Where appropriate, the results are discussed in terms of the literature pertaining to the topic.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.2.1 An Explanation of the Statistics used

In the study, descriptive statistics are used for the interpretation of the quantitative data. According to Cozby (1993:139), descriptive statistics provide a description of the sample. Where appropriate, inferential statistics are used to explain the results obtained. According to Dane (1990:238), the latter includes calculations like mean, median, mode and standard deviation. Cozby (1993:139) sees inferential statistics as statistics that enable a person to determine if one can make a statement that the results reflect what would happen if one were to test the entire population. These calculations are then used to make inferences.

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Frequency distributions, which indicate the 'number of subjects who receive each possible score on a variable' (Cozby, 1993:140), were used to start the process of analysis. Where suitable, the results are presented graphically, using either histograms or bar graphs.

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[2] Remarks made by respondents where included in the text are indented and in smaller print.

The descriptive statistics used are central tendency statistics. They refer to 'statistics telling us what the sample as a whole, or on the average, is like' (Cozby, 1993:142). The most common central tendency statistic is the mean – the mean equals the sum of all the scores divided by the number of scores. The median divides the group in half, and the mode is the most frequent score. The 'measure of variability' refers to the range, which is the 'difference between the highest score and lowest score' (Cozby, 1993:142).

Inferential statistics were used for the qualitative responses. This allows for inferences about the true difference in the population on the basis of the sample data. Inferential statistics give the 'probability that the difference between means reflects random error rather than a real difference' (Cozby, 1993:44). Inferential statistics allow a researcher to determine whether the data obtained is reliable, meaning that the same results will be obtained if the study is repeated.

4.2.2 Section A: Biographical Information

Section A of the questionnaire consisted of nine questions, focussing on the biographical details of the participants (refer to Appendix A: Questionnaire). In this section the open-ended questions allowed for extra information to be provided. The biographical questions focused on gender, qualifications and work-related issues.

4.2.2.1 Gender

The gender distribution indicated that females represented 66.7 per cent of the sample and that males represented 33.3 per cent (N=11). This is

consistent with the literature which indicated that female employees dominated recruitment agencies.

TABLE 1:   AGE

Age	Frequency	%
20 – 29	7	21.2
30 – 39	12	36.4
40 – 49	8	24.2
50 – 59	5	15.2
60+	1	3.0
Total	33	100

N=33

4.2.2.2   Age

The sample was divided into different age groups. The mean age group is 30 to 39 years (36.4 per cent). This is followed by the 40-to-49-year age group (24.2 per cent) and the 20-to-29-year age group (21.2 per cent). There was only one person in the over-60 age group.

4.2.2.3   Comparing the age ranges to highest level of education and position in company

Interesting information can be gained by comparing the age, level of education and the position held within the company.

In the age interval for 20-to-29 (21.2 per cent), all the participants except one had a post-matriculation qualification. In the same group, two people owned the company, and one person saw him- or herself as an owner

and recruiter, which mean that three of the participants in this age range owned the company.

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF AGE RANGE TO HIGHEST EDUCATION AND POSITION IN COMPANY

Highest level of Education						
Age	**20 – 29**	**30 – 39**	**40 – 49**	**50 – 59**	**60+**	**Total**
Matric	2	0	2	2	0	6
Diploma/ certificate	3	7	4	1	1	16
Undergraduate degree	0	4	1	0	0	5
Postgraduate degree	2	1	1	1	0	5
No Response	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	7	12	8	5	1	33
Position in Company						
Age	**20- 29**	**30- 39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60+**	**Total**
Owner	2	3	5	1	1	12
Recruiter	2	5	1	0	0	8
Supervisor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	4	2	4	0	13
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7	12	8	5	1	33

N=33

In the age range 30-to-39 (36.4 per cent), which is also the most representative group in the sample, all the participants had a post-matriculation qualification. In this group three people owned the company, and one person fell in the 'other' category, as he or she indicated that they were both recruiter and owner, and another person saw him- or herself as owner, recruiter and supervisor, which would imply that a total of five people in this

age range were company owners, and this was equal to the number of owners in the age range 40-to-49.

The 40-to-49 age group did not have the highest level of education in the sample. Only one person had a post-graduate degree, one person had an undergraduate degree and four people had diplomas. It was interesting to note that five people were owners of the company in this group. One more person also indicated amongst 'other' that he was an owner, supervisor and recruiter, which indicated that a total of six people were owners of the companies surveyed.

The 50-to-59 age range (15.2 per cent), had only one postgraduate person and one person who owned the agency, and one more person who said he or she was the owner and recruiter, which brought the total owners for the age group to two.

Only one person fell in the 60+ range and this person's highest qualification was a diploma or certificate, and he or she was also the owner of the recruitment agency.

The research indicated that twelve people were owners, eight were recruiters and no one was a supervisor. However, when the responses made for 'Other' (39.4 per cent) were examined, it was found that the other positions occupied were: sales manager; branch manager; supervisor and personnel officer; owner, recruiter and supervisor; owner and recruiter; support consultant; branch manager and supervisor; site manager and recruiter and account executive and secretary. The majority of the sample were owners (42.4 per cent) and recruiters (33.3 per cent).

TABLE 3:   TIME OF EMPLOYMENT IN CURRENT POSITION

Period	Percentage
1 – 5 months	3
6 – 11 months	15.2
1 – 3 years	30.3
4 years +	48.5
No response	3
Total	100

N=33

4.2.2.4   Employment in current position

The mean for period of employment in current position was 4 years+ (48.5 per cent). This was followed by the 1-to-3-years range (30.3 per cent), 6-11 months range (15.2 per cent) and 1-5 months range (3 per cent). The results indicate that the majority of the respondents had sufficient experience in the field to be able to provide valuable answers to the questions posed.

4.2.2.5   Number of employees at the agency

The mean equals 5.3, while the mode equals 2, which implies that most respondents employed only two people at the agency. One respondent did not complete this question.

4.2.2.6   Main operating area

The table below indicates that the majority of the respondents (48.5 per cent) operated in the whole of the Western Province. This was followed by "Other" (30.3 per cent) and then Vredenburg, Saldanha and Langebaan area (12.2 per cent).

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TABLE 4:   THE MAIN OPERATING AREAS

Operating Area	Percentage
Vredenburg, Saldanha, Langebaan	12.1
West Coast Area	6.1
Swartland Area	0
Entire Western Province	48.5
Other	30.3
No Response	3
Total	100

N=33

"Other" included the following areas: Boland/Somerset West; Johannesburg; countrywide and overseas and Cape Town, Gauteng, Kwazulu Natal and Europe.

4.2.2.7   Providing a specialised service

The mean (75.6 per cent) indicated that a majority of the respondents offered a specialised service to applicants, while 24.2 per cent (N=8) of respondents indicated that they did not provide a specialised service. It can be concluded that the majority of the recruitment agents within the sample offered a specialised service. The industries for which the specialised services were provided included the hospitality industry; wine and fruit; information technology; marketing; qualified artisans, semi-skilled and unskilled labour; maritime industry; administration; call centre agents, and steel, together with import and export; non-management and support staff and providing training.

4.2.3   Section B: Services Offered

This section contained eight questions in the form of a Lickert Scale. The responses are discussed in detail.

GRAPH 4:   SERVICES OFFERED
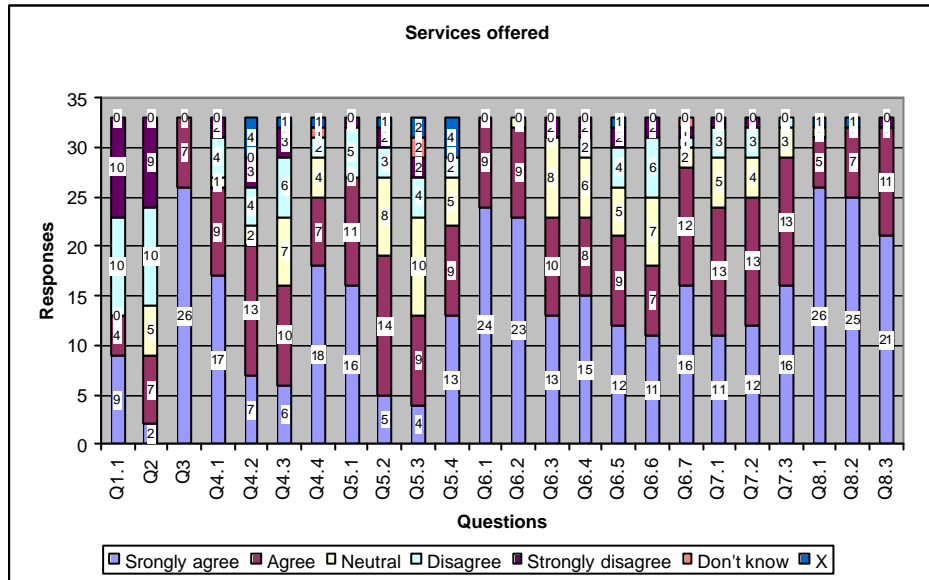
4.2.3.1   The Curriculum Vitae

Questions 1 to 3 focused on the Curriculum Vitaes (CVs) or résumés.

Q1.1: The majority of respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed and 30.3 per cent disagreed, followed by 27.3 per cent who strongly agreed and 12.1 per cent who agreed. The fact that the responses on the opposite ends of the continuum were almost equal indicates that recruitment agents were not in agreement of what a good CV should consist. This is consistent with the literature that indicated that there was disagreement on the contents of a good CV.

Q2: The majority of the respondents (27.7 per cent) strongly disagreed, followed by respondents who disagreed (30.3 per cent) that applicants were able to write proper CVs or résumés. A smaller number (21.1 per cent) agreed, while an even smaller number (6.1 per cent) strongly agreed with the statement. A number of the respondents (15.2 per cent) indicated that they were neutral about the statement.

The literature indicates that few applicants were in fact able to write a proper CV, which is confirmed by the results.

Q3: The results indicated that all the respondents were able to write a proper CV, a majority strongly agreed (78.8 per cent), followed by 21.2 per cent (N=7) who agreed with the statement. Comparing the responses of question 1.1 and question 3, there was an inconsistency in responses, since there was no agreement what a proper CV should contain, yet all the respondents indicated that they were able to write a proper CV. This finding can form the basis for further research.

4.2.3.2   How applicants are obtained

Question 4 determined which methods were used to attract applicants.

Q4.1: A majority of the respondents strongly agreed (51.1 per cent), followed by respondents who agreed (27.3 per cent) that advertising in the local newspaper was a good way of attracting applicants. A smaller number of respondents strongly disagreed (6.1 per cent), while 12.1 per cent (N=4) disagreed with the statement and one respondent (3 per cent) was neutral.

This is consistent with the literature that indicated advertising in the local newspaper was an effective way of obtaining applicants.

Q4.2: A majority of the respondents (39.4 per cent) agreed, followed by 21.2 per cent (N=7) who strongly agreed with the statement. Only two respondents were neutral, while four respondents (12 per cent) disagreed and four respondents (12 per cent) strongly disagreed. Four respondents (12 per cent) did not answer the question.

The majority of the respondents in the sample therefore made use of advertisements in national newspapers to attract applicants.

Q4.3: The mean indicated that a majority of the respondents (30.3 per cent) agreed, followed by 18.1 per cent (N=6) who strongly agreed with the statement. The respondents who disagreed were 18.1 per cent, which is equal to the number of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, while 9 per cent strongly disagreed. Twenty-one per cent of the respondents were neutral and 3 per cent did not respond.

The responses indicate the different approaches to advertising amongst recruiters and this can be an area to be addressed in future research. Price stated (1997:225) that advertisements in trade or professional journals attracted the most suitable applicants, although it was more expensive than advertising in the local press and that this area had been poorly researched.

Q4.4: The mean score indicated that most respondents strongly agreed (54.5 per cent), followed by respondents who agreed (21.1 per cent), and respondents who were neutral (12.1 per cent) towards advertising on the Internet. Only 6.1 per cent (N=2) disagreed with the statement, while 3 per cent indicated that they did not know and 3 per cent did not complete the question.

The result is consistent with the literature that there is general tendency to advertise job openings on the Internet to attract applicants.

4.2.3.3   The most effective means of advertising

Question 5 determined the most effective means of advertising.

Q5.1: The mean indicated that the majority of the respondents (48.5 per cent) strongly agreed, followed by respondents who agreed (33.3 per cent) and 15.1 respondents (N=5) who disagreed that advertising in the local newspaper was one of the most effective ways to attract suitable applicants. Respondents who strongly disagreed were 3 per cent.

It can therefore be concluded that the majority of recruitment agents in the population made use of their local newspaper to advertise vacancies since they saw it as the most effective medium for attracting applicants.

Q5.2: The mean indicated that 42.2 per cent of the respondents agreed, while 24.2 per cent were neutral and 15.1 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. Only a small number of respondents (9.1 per cent) strongly disagreed, while a slightly bigger number of respondents (6.1 per cent) disagreed with the statement and three percent (N=1) did not respond to the statement.

The results are not significant enough to conclude that the majority of the population agreed with the statement.

Q5.3: The mean indicated that the majority of the respondents (30.3 per cent) were neutral about the statement, followed by 27.2 per cent (N=9) who agreed, a smaller number of respondents (15.2 per cent) who strongly agreed with the statement and the same number of respondents (15.2 per cent) who

disagreed. The number of respondents who strongly disagreed were 6.1 per cent (N=2), while the same number of respondents did not know and did not respond to the question.

Advertising in specialised journals did attract a smaller group of applicants, but the people who read these journals are often highly qualified and the type of applicant that one would like to attract (Price, 1997:225). The results are consistent with the literature, although not significantly so.

Q5.4: The mean indicated that the majority of the respondents (39.9 per cent) strongly agreed, followed by those who agreed (27.3 per cent) and 15.1 per cent (N=5) who were neutral about advertising on the Internet. A number of respondents (12.1 per cent) did not respond to the statement, while a small number (6.1 per cent) indicated that they disagreed with the statement and no one indicated that they strongly disagreed.

The results indicated that 63.6 per cent (N=22) agreed with the statement made and this is consistent with the literature that there was a tendency to view the Internet as a suitable medium for attracting applicants.

4.2.3.4   Important information in an advertisement

Question 6 focused on the contents of the advertisements.

Q6.1: The mean indicated that most respondents (72.7 per cent) strongly agreed and that 27.3 per cent (N=9) agreed that a position's required qualifications must be included in an advertisement.

The results are consistent with the literature, namely that an advertisement needs to include the required qualifications for the position being advertised.

Q6.2: The mean indicated that the majority of the respondents (69.7 per cent) strongly agreed that an advertisement should include work requirements, while 27.3 per cent (N=9) agreed and 3 per cent (N=1) indicated that they were neutral about the statement.

This is consistent with the literature that indicated that work requirements should be included in an advertisement.

Q6.3: The mean indicated that a majority of the respondents (39.9 per cent) strongly agreed, followed by respondents (30.3 per cent) who agreed and 24.2 per cent (N=8) of respondents who were neutral towards the statement that salary should be included in an advertisement. A small number (6.1 per cent) indicated that they strongly disagreed.

The results indicate that 69.7 per cent (N=23) agreed that salary should be included and although it is not significant, this is consistent with the literature that was inconclusive about this matter.

Q6.4: The mean indicated a majority of the respondents (45.5 per cent) strongly agreed, followed by respondents who agreed (24.2 per cent) and 18.1 per cent (N=6) who were neutral about indicating the benefits of a position.

The same number of respondents strongly disagreed (6.1 per cent) and disagreed (6.1 per cent). The 69.7 per cent (N=23) of respondents who agreed with the statement were not significant. This is consistent with the literature.

The literature is inconclusive on whether benefits should be included or not.

Q6.5: The mean indicated that 36.4 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed, followed by those who agreed (27.2 per cent) and 15.2 per cent (N=5) who were neutral towards the statement. The respondents who disagreed (12.1 per cent) and the ones who strongly disagreed (6.1 per cent) were lower than the response rates of those who agreed that a closing date should be included.

This is consistent with literature that indicated that a closing date should be included.

Q6.6: The mean indicates that a higher number of the respondents (33.3 per cent) strongly agreed, while those who agreed (21.1 per cent) and those who were neutral (21.1 per cent) were equal, and 18.2 per cent disagreed with the statement. A small number (6.1 per cent) strongly disagreed with the statement that a 'response received' cut-off date should be included.

Although the majority of respondents indicated that such a date should be included, it is inconsistent with American literature, which indicated it as an unprofessional way of dealing with applicants.

Q6.7: The mean indicates that most respondents (48.5 per cent) strongly agreed that alternative ways for responding should be provided, followed by 36.4 per cent who agreed and 6.1 per cent (N=2) who were neutral towards the statement. The rest of the responses, strongly disagreed (3 per cent), disagreed (3 per cent) and 'don't know' (3 per cent) were equal.

The results indicate that a majority of the respondents (87.8 per cent) were in favour of providing alternative means of responding to advertisements.

The results are significant and consistent with the literature.

4.2.3.5   Important factors related to applicants

Question 7 focused on the information transfer to applicants and attempted to determine what type of information should be distributed to an applicant.

Q7.1: The mean indicated that a majority of respondents (39.4 per cent) agreed, followed by respondents who strongly agreed (33.3 per cent) and 15.2 per cent were neutral about informing an applicant that their application has been received. Only 9.1 per cent (N=3) disagreed and 3 per cent (N=1) strongly disagreed with the statement.

The results are consistent with the literature indicating that keeping contact with an applicant is good customer service and essential to the company image.

Q7.2: The mean indicates that most respondents (39.4 per cent) agreed, followed by those who strongly agreed (36.4 per cent) and 12.1 per cent (N=4) were neutral about informing an applicant whether they qualified for the position. Only 3 per cent indicated that they strongly disagree and 9.1 per cent disagreed with the statement.

The results are consistent with the literature, stating that informing an applicant of the status of their application, directly influences company image.

Q7.3: The majority of the respondents (48.4 per cent), as indicated by the mean, strongly agreed with the statement, followed by those who agreed (39.4 per cent). However, 9.1 per cent (N=3) were neutral about informing an applicant that their application was unsuccessful. Only one respondent (3 per cent) disagreed with the statement.

The results are consistent with the literature that indicated that applicants should be informed whether their applications were successful or not.

4.2.3.6   Responses to specific statements

Q8.1: The respondents indicated, according to the mean, that the majority strongly agreed (78.8 per cent) and were followed by those who agreed (15.2 per cent). One person did not respond (3 per cent) and one person (3 per cent) was neutral about providing timeous services to clients and applicants.

The results are significant, indicating that it is important to provide a timeous service to applicants and clients. This is consistent with the literature.

Q8.2: The mean indicates that most of the respondents (75.8 per cent) strongly agreed, followed by those who agreed (21.2 per cent) and 3 per cent who did not respond to the statement.

The results are consistent with the literature that indicated that friendly service is important.

Q8.3: In response to responding to queries by the applicant, all respondents agreed with the statement. The mean indicates that 63.6 per cent (N=21) strongly agreed and that 33.3 per cent agreed with the statement. The results are significant and confirm the findings of previous research.

4.2.3.7   The best day of the week to advertise

Question 9 relates to determining the most important days of the week to advertise positions in the printed media. Although only seven pre-coded

options were provided, some respondents chose more than one option, which was assigned a new code and recorded on the coding list.

GRAPH 5: THE BEST DAYS OF THE WEEK TO ADVERTISE
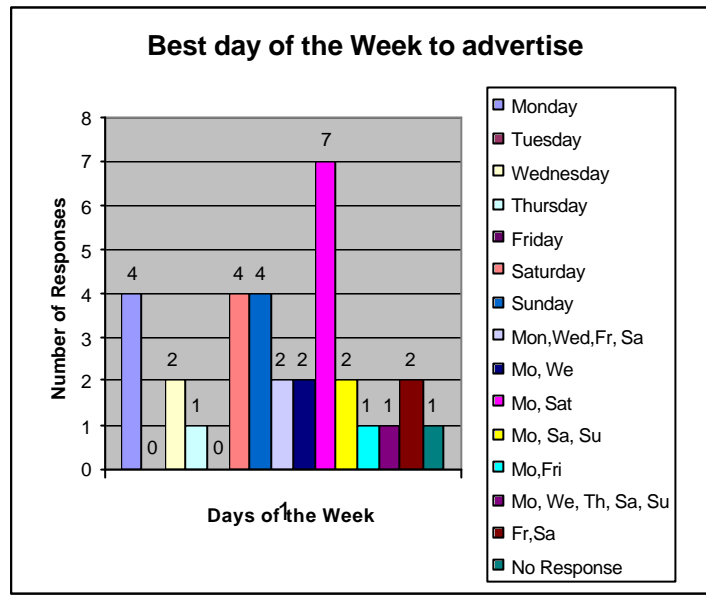
According to the participants, the best days to advertise were both Mondays and Saturdays (21.2 per cent). This was followed by advertising either on a Monday (12.2 per cent), Saturdays only (12.2 per cent) or on a Sunday (12.2 per cent). The graph indicates the other respondents' choice of combinations, and that one person did not respond to the question. Respondents did not indicate Tuesday, Thursday and Friday as best days to advertise on, although all combinations were found, except for a Tuesday.

There is very little literature available on the best day to advertise and it should be researched further.

4.2.3.8   Record keeping of personal details and CVs

Question 10 and 11 focused on the time that personal details and CVs were kept on record. Two respondents did not respond and only 3 per cent (N=1) indicated that they kept records for clients and applicants for less than three months. The mean indicates that the majority of the respondents (54.5 per cent) kept information on record for 24 months and longer, followed by the 19-to-24-month range (18.2 per cent) and the 7-to-12-month range (9.1 per cent). Only 6.1 per cent (N=2) indicated that they kept the information on record for 7 to 12 months. The results are consistent with the literature that indicates that records were kept for long periods of time, especially if they were kept in an electronic format.

4.2.4 Section C: Methods and Processes

The methods and process sections started off with three open-ended questions, which will be discussed in detail. The rest of the questions were pre-coded options, aiming at determining the methods to identify a suitable applicant and the processes to follow.

4.2.4.1   How a suitable applicant is identified

The first open-ended question asked how the most suitable applicants are identified. The responses were captured verbatim on a coding sheet and were then assigned codes. These responses were then grouped into themes, which will now be discussed.

Education/Qualification. The majority of the respondents indicated the importance of the applicant's qualifications and education, which was usually one of the first criteria to be checked. Some of the responses were as follows:

Must have relevant qualification and criteria pertaining to ad…

We have very specialised recruitment, requiring the candidate to have certain qualifications and specific experience. These are crucial.

Based on qualifications of the job…

Work experience. The second theme identified was work experience, seeming to be another important factor that recruiters used to identify the most suitable applicant. In the literature study it was found that there was a great need for skilled workers and that there was fierce competition to recruit the best skilled worker. The more senior and specialised the position, the more highly qualified the person should be, and it was often difficult to obtain such a person. Some of the responses made with regard to work experience were as follows:

We have specialised recruitment, requiring …specific experience.

Previous experience

Matching the skills and experience of the candidate…

Based on…years of experience.

Work experience needs to be appropriate to the job specification

Criteria. The term 'criteria' included both criteria that the recruitment agent wanted from the applicant, and the criteria identified by the client. It was indicated in these responses that most agencies had some criteria that they used to identify suitable applicants. It was necessary for the recruitment agent to establish whether the applicant matched the criteria of the client, the criteria used in the advertisement for the position, and the criteria of the applicant profile. In the literature it was found that ascertaining the requirements and criteria for a specific position before the recruitment process started, was of utmost importance. The reason for creating job requirements or criteria

beforehand is to avoid selecting the wrong applicant. The hiring manager is usually responsible for drawing up such a list and this allows the recruiter to start the elimination process during the recruitment process. Some of the responses made in this regard were:

Criteria given by client…

Use own criteria

Must have…criteria pertaining to the ad

…conform to outputs required.

Job requirement vs candidate's profile.

Assess whether the applicant meets the job requirements stipulated.

Matching the skills and experience of the candidate with the client's specifications.

Obviously we have to match the client's specifications to the best of our ability.

Qualifications, personality, work experience need to be appropriate to the job specification.

4.2.4.2 What is done after a suitable applicant is identified?

In this question, the open-ended responses were recorded on a coding list and assigned codes. The list was then examined to identify themes, which will be discussed in detail.

Interviewing. Interviewing the applicant was identified as one of the most important steps taken after the suitable applicant was identified. Respondents took different steps together with the interview; some would first speak to the applicant telephonically, and some would first shortlist the best applicants. Some of the responses that were made are as follows:

Speak telephonically and ask if they are still interested and arrange for a one-on-one interview.

Set up an interview with the client to meet or interview the candidate.

Interview, … and put forward to the client for an interview.

Bring them for an intense interview using the target selection process and should they meet the client's full requirement put the application to the client.

The candidate would have responded by telephone or e-mail – an interview would be arranged to determine suitability.

Forwarding applicant information to client. Once the recruitment agent had done a preliminary interview, the shortlisted or suitably identified applicant information was forwarded to the client. The responses made were as follows:

Always try to identify more than one suitable candidate. Redo CVs on standard format…send to interview.

I discuss the position and client environment with the applicant and if the applicant and I are in agreement on all points I submit the CV in my format to the client.

Set up an interview with the client to meet and interview the candidate.

Ask him or her if we can submit his or her CV in confidence to our client.

…put forward to client for interview

Bring them for an intense interview…should they meet the client's full requirements put the application to the client.

…forwarded to client if suitable.

Sell to the client

Reference check. The third theme arising from the open-ended responses with regard to what was done after the suitable applicant was identified, was that some kind of reference- or background check was done. The reference check was usually done after the applicant had been interviewed and done before the information was forwarded to the client. It did, however, seem that not all recruitment agents did a reference or background check of applicants. According to the literature, t is important to do extensive reference checks, previous work samples and work commendations (Price, 1997:246). The responses made included the following:

Reference check with ex-employers and if necessary with credit bureau.

> …with references and send to interview.
>
> Reference check, …credit checks.
>
> The candidate will then be referenced checked and forwarded to the client.
>
> Confirm previous records and experience

Keeping contact with applicants. The respondents indicated that they did keep contact with clients about various issues, for example whether the recruitment agent could submit their CV or that their CV would be submitted. The contact was purely to inform the applicant that their application was suitable, and it did not seem that contact was made with applicants who were not currently considered for an available position. In the literature, it was noted that poor communication and remaining in contact with applicants is a shortcoming in the recruitment process. The responses made in Section B of the questionnaire also indicated the importance of these actions in the recruitment business. The responses made included the following:

> Speak telephonically and ask if theyare still interested …
>
> …inform the candidate if we intend submitting their CV to client(s).
>
> I discuss the position and client environment with the applicant…
>
> Phone candidate
>
> Ask him or her if we can submit his or her CV in confidence to our client.
>
> The candidate would have responded by telephone or e-mail – an interview would be arranged to determine suitability.

Curriculum Vitaes (CVs). It seems to be common practice for recruitment agents to adapt the applicant's CV to a standard format, although not all agents mentioned this step. In the literature it was found that there is a strong encouragement of standardised CVs, since it speeds up the recruitment and selection process, and there is great emphasis on including only the most

essential information on such a CV. The problem with this action is that the key words that are used often exclude features, qualifications or experiences not covered by a particular key word. The responses with regard to CVs in Section B indicated that respondents had varied ideas on CVs and what should be included. The respondents were all of the opinion that they could write a good CV. Some of the responses made with reference to CV's were as follows:

> Redo CVs on standard format with refs…
>
> Prepare CV in our format, …
>
> I submit the CV in my format to the client.

Assessment of applicants. A small number of the respondents indicated as a second step after the most suitable applicant was identified, that certain assessments were done. A small number of respondents did assessments as a step to identifying the most suitable applicant. In the literature there is a lot of controversy surrounding assessment and psychometric testing. A number of people believe that it is necessary to do a number of assessments of an applicant's abilities before he or she is selected. There are, however, strict rules and regulations to adhere to when the different methods of assessment are used, specifically psychometric tests. Only three responses specifically focused on assessment of applicants.

> Ask for a personal assessment from applicant to requirements
>
> … psychometric testing, …
>
> Bring them for an intense interview using the target selection process…

4.2.4.3   How the most suitable applicant is placed

The aim of the question was to determine what the recruitment agent did to place the applicant after identifying the most suitable applicant. The literature indicated that the suitable applicants were forwarded to the clients at this stage and that the company where the vacancy existed took the recruitment and selection process further. As this was also an open-ended question, themes were identified and comments were made on the responses. The responses for this question led to three main themes being identified, namely: placing applicants, interviews by agents and clients, and the relationship with the client.

Placing applicants. The applicant was placed on the basis of the requirements made by the client, the recruitment agent would provide the client with a list of suitable applicants, and in some cases the client would draw up a short list from the names provided to him or her. At this stage the matching of competencies is important. In the literature the placing of applicants was discussed in great detail. The selecting of the wrong applicant can result in great costs to the company and therefore this is an essential time- and cost-saving step. The respondents had the following to say:

> Matching the client's request with candidate's request.
>
> If the client finds the most suitable candidate for the job, …
>
> The [applicant is placed] as a contractor.
>
> The client decides on a short list.
>
> We try to present the client with 3-4 suitable candidates, according to our competency-based questions.
>
> Match competencies.
>
> Introduce applicant to client. Forward CV, discuss CV with client. If happy, arrange for interview.

> … if it's the right match there is no doubt the client is going to take the candidate, that is why they use agencies that are experienced in the field.

Interviewing by agents and clients. The respondents indicated that various interviews took place before an applicant was placed. The recruitment agent would often do an interview to make sure that the applicant was suitable, and then the applicant's information would be forwarded to the client for an interview. Once again this is consistent with the literature, which indicated that the selection process is lengthy, consisting of interviews and often competency tests. The responses made with regard to interviewing, included the following:

> Client conducts final interview and decides on most suitable candidate.
>
> Arrange interview with client.
>
> This part is up to the client and/or HR department once relevant CVs have been submitted. They decide whom they want to pursue and arrange interviews with me for my applicants. Rarely one can persuade the client to interview based on one's own convictions and this is generally only with smaller companies where one can deal directly with the client and the client respects your opinion from past experience.
>
> … the client finds the most suitable candidate for the job, …
>
> Introduce the applicant to client, …if happy, arrange interviews.
>
> Provided all qualifications are verified, competency-based interviews are conducted, references are conducted, if all is well forward to client who will start up their interview process.

The relationship with the client. The recruitment agents indicated that a good relationship with the client was important, and they remained in contact with clients on a regular basis. It was also stated that a respected reputation was important when forwarding clients, and that past experiences with recruitment agents would influence the client's decision.

Literature advises the person who is making use of a recruitment agent to use only a few recruitment agents, as this allows the building up of a relationship with a recruitment agent. The recruitment agent will come to know the company, the company culture and what type of applicant will best fit the company's needs. The respondents commented as follows:

Skill and relationship with client – if it's the right match there is no doubt the client is going to take the candidate, that is why they use agencies that are experienced in their field.

All requirements from the client should met.

Constant communication with client and candidate.

Well-known, trustworthy company.

TABLE 5:   THE NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS IN THE PAST THRE E MONTHS

Placements	Percentage
0 –10	39.4
11 –30	39.4
31 – 50	15.2
51 – 100	0
100+	3
No Response	3
Total	100

N=33

4.2.4.4   How many people have been placed in the last three months? The aim of this question was to determine how many applicants each respondent had placed in the last three months. The rate of placement would be an indication of how successful their methods of identification and placement were. Only one respondent (3 per cent) did not complete the question, while one person indicated that he or she placed a 100+ people in

the past three months, and no-one placed between 51-100. The average

number of people placed by the respondents in the last three months was 5.5

people. The majority of the respondents (39.4 per cent each) placed between

1 and 10 people, and 11 and 30 people in the last three months, followed by

15.2 per cent (N=5) who placed 31 to 50 people and thirdly, five respondents

(n=5) placing between 31-50 people.

The placement rate was not very high, and could be an indication of

the respondents' recruitment and selection abilities. One respondent did

indicate that November through to January was a slow time in the recruitment

business.

4.2.4.5   Discovering to what recruitment agents attribute their success

This question aimed to determine to what recruitment agents attributed their

success in the placement of a suitable candidate. The question was an open-

ended one, and the responses were again coded on a coding sheet and then

grouped into themes. The literature did not indicate what would make a

recruitment agent successful, and therefore the information obtained from the

question would be useful in identifying successful recruitment agents. The

responses can once again be divided into three broad themes. The responses

were very varied, although a general trend could be identified. The themes in

which the responses were grouped were: Traits, knowledge and skills, and

experience. Traits. The traits identified were very diverse, and included

personality traits as well as business traits like professionalism. The traits

were directly related to the type of service the recruitment agent provided.

The literature did not provide any information on traits of a typical recruitment

agent, and although the sample was small and the responses very diverse, it was a definite indication of what recruitment agents thought were needed to be successful. These responses can be used as a basis for further research to see whether the same traits can be identified; this would allow a person to create an image of the typical traits required by a recruitment agent. The responses included the following:

Professionalism, persistence, good people skills

Excellent and accurate client service and excellent service to candidates.

Not sure if success is the right word, but I work for myself and as such only send what I feel are appropriate applicants for positions unlike some agencies or consultants who operate a 'spray and pray' CV policy.

Timeous service.

Kindness and compassion

Client commitment and poverty elevation

Close working relationship with our clients.

Apply a professional attitude, treating both candidate and client with respect.

People's person, interact well with clients.

My passion for recruitment.

Persistence and hard work.

Quick turn-around time, honesty to both my candidates and my clients, good and efficient service. I love what I do and have a passion for the industry.

Being honest with candidates to ensure best outcome for client and candidate.

It can be seen from the responses that the type of service that is provided must be professional and honest, and also that it takes a lot of commitment and persistence to succeed. It is also important to know what the client wants and to provide an excellent and timeous service. The respondents indicated very specific traits, that are, according to them,

essential to their success, and even though the sample was small, it can still serve as a guideline for future recruitment agents or future studies.

Knowledge and Skills. The knowledge and skills, according to the respondents, were also varied. The literature once again did not provide specific skills or knowledge that a recruitment agent would need. The comments made by the respondents can be helpful to form a basis for future literature to identify the knowledge and skills needed by recruitment agents. The comments made were:

> Knowledge of the specific industry we recruit for…
>
> Good candidate screening procedures, knowing the client's requirements.
> My understanding of the business…
>
> We do not waste time with sending unsuitable candidates to client. Ensuring candidates know what to expect.
>
> Only submitting CVs to client which match their specification as well as speed of interaction with the client.
>
> Good training, learning by trial and error, and market research. Updating knowledge – current legislation.
>
> Sourcing the right candidate for the job.

Responses made by the respondents on skills and knowledge indicated that a recruitment agent need to know the recruitment business and know the field for which they are recruiting.

It was found that good screening methods are needed, and that it is important to know what the client wants. It is also mentioned that it is important to update knowledge and stay ahead by taking note of new legislation.

Once again the information obtained from the sample can form a basis for future reference and research.

Experience. Only one applicant specifically mentioned experience, although many of the statements made and that were included under knowledge and skills can count as experience in the field. No literature was found on the experience needed by recruitment agents.

> …over 14 y ears of experience in recruiting.
>
> …learning by trial and error…

The comments included under this heading indicated that experience is not gained without making mistakes, and that it sometimes takes time to learn the 'tricks of the trade'. The more experience a person has in a certain field, the better will he or she be qualified to provide a good service, and it would probably be advisable to make use of an agent who has extensive and diverse experience when it comes to recruiting.

TABLE 6:   RECORD-KEEPING OF CLIENTS AND APPLICANTS

Method	Client percentage	Applicant Percentage
Manual filing system	12.1	3
Electronic database	21.2	15.2
Both manual and electronic	66.7	78.8
Other	0	0
No response	0	3
Total	100	100

N=33

4.2.4.6   Record-keeping of clients and applicants

The purpose of these two questions was to determine how recruitment agents kept records of their clients and applicants.

The mean indicates that the majority of respondents kept both manual and electronic records for clients (66.7 per cent) and applicants (78.8). A number of respondents had a higher response rate for electronic record-keeping for clients (21.2 per cent) than for applicants (15.2 per cent).

A small number of respondents indicated that they only kept manual records of clients (12 per cent) and applicants (3 per cent). It is consistent with the literature that records are kept both manually and electronically.

TABLE 7:   TIME-SPAN BETWEEN REQUEST FOR APPLICANT AND FINDING ONE

Time-span	Percentage
Less than 2 weeks	48.5
2 – 4 weeks	36.4
4 – 6 weeks	9.1
More than 6 weeks	0
No Response	6
Total	100

N=33

4.2.4.7   Time-span between request for applicant and finding applicant

This question established the time-span between a request for a suitable applicant and finding a suitable applicant. The time-span can be an indication of the suitability of the recruitment and selection techniques of the recruitment agents.

Literature indicates that the client is usually in a hurry to find a suitable applicant and the sooner the recruitment agent can provide the applicant, the better.

The mean for the time range was less than 2 weeks (48.5 per cent), followed by the 2-to-4-weeks range (36.4 per cent) and the 4-to-6-weeks range (9.1 per cent). A small number of the respondents (6 per cent) did not respond to the question. It seems that a majority of the respondents were able to find the ideal applicant in less then four weeks. No literature was found indicating the ideal time it should take to find the best applicant; it only indicated that it should be as soon as possible.

4.2.4.8   Reference checking

The question aimed to determine whether recruitment agents did reference checks on applicants as part of the recruiting and selection process.

The mean indicates that a majority of the respondents (84.4 per cent) did reference checks. This was followed by respondents who indicated that they only sometimes did reference checks (6.1 per cent), while two respondents did not answer the question. The results are confirmed by the open-ended responses made by the respondents, and it is consistent with the literature, which indicates the importance of doing reference checks. In the literature, French (1986:255) said that reference checking could 'verify or contradict what the applicant has told the organisation', and they could provide 'supplemental information that can be useful in the hiring process'.

4.2.4.9   Characteristics requested by client

The question aimed to determine whether the respondents, together with their clients, drew up a list of requirements other than educational requirements that were needed by the applicant. The literature emphasises that the hiring

manager should beforehand determine the qualities and requirements that an applicant for a particular position would need, as this would contribute to saving time and money in the recruitment process.

The mean indicates that the majority of the respondents (84.8 per cent) indicated that they did draw up a list of requirements together with the client. This percentage was followed by respondents who indicated that they did not draw up such a list (6.1 per cent) and respondents who did so only sometimes (9.1 per cent). One person did not respond to the question. This is consistent with the literature that indicates that a list of the requirements should be drawn up with the client.

TABLE 8: KEEPING CONTACT WITH CLIENTS AND APPLICANTS

Method of contact	Percentage for applicants	Percentage for clients
Telephone	30.3	21.2
Letters	0	0
E-mail	0	6.1
Website	0	0
Tel + E-mail	42.4	45.5
Tel, E-mail, Website	9.1	3
Tel + Website	3	12.1
Tel, Letters, E-mail	9.1	9.1
Tel, letters, e-mail, Website	6.1	3
No response	0	0
Total	100	100

4.2.4.10   Keeping contact with clients and applicants

The aim of this question was to determine the means of keeping contact with both clients and applicants. The respondents had to choose between telephone (1), letters (2), e-mail (3) and Website (4). Where respondents chose more than one option, new codes were assigned to the response and recorded on the coding sheet.

The mean indicates that the majority of the respondents kept in contact with the applicants (42.4 per cent) by means of telephone and e-mail, and the majority kept in contact with their clients (45.5 per cent) in the same way. This was followed by respondents using the telephone to keep in contact with applicants (30.3 per cent) and clients (21.2 per cent). A number of respondents (9.1 per cent) indicated that they made use of the telephone, e-mail and letters to keep in contact with clients and applicants.

Respondents also indicated that they kept contact with applicants (9.1 per cent) and with clients (3 per cent) via telephone, e-mail and their Website. One respondent indicated that contact with client was kept using the telephone and Website, while one respondent indicated that contact with clients was kept using the telephone and letters.

It can be seen from these responses that the respondents, to a large extent, made use of electronic technology to keep in contact with their clients and applicants. The use of these features will put recruitment agents at a competitive advantage since it allows them to distribute and obtain information very fast, and it is consistent with the literature.

4.2.4.11   Dealing with non-native speaking people

South Africa is a multi-cultural country and we are often confronted with people who do not speak our first language. The aim of this question was to determine how respondents dealt with non-native speakers in their working environment.

The mean indicates that the majority of respondents (57.6 per cent) made use of a second language, followed by respondents who made use of a translator (18.2 per cent), and 9.1 per cent (N=3) indicated that they used both translators and a second language. The number of respondents who had not had this problem totalled 6.1 per cent, and 6.1 per cent (N=2) indicated that they used only English to deal with people. One person did not respond to the question. Since South Africa has eleven official languages and therefore unique language issues, the results cannot be confirmed by the literature, and offers a source for future research.

4.2.4.12   Providing a job preview

The question determined whether the respondents gave a job preview or informed applicants of what the job entailed. The mean for this question indicates that the majority of the respondents (90.9 per cent) did provide a job preview for applicants, and a small number of respondents (9.1 per cent) indicated that they did not. The literature indicates that a realistic job preview is '[a] recruitment technique that acquaints positive and negative aspects of a job' (Schultz and Schultz, 1998:65). The advantage of providing a realistic job preview is that applicants who do not see themselves performing the tasks

required can withdraw from the process early on, and thus save the recruitment agent time and money. The results are confirmed by the literature.

4.2.5 Section D: Knowledge and Skills

The information gained from this section would give insight into the knowledge and skills that a typical recruitment agent would need in order to be successful. It contained only one open-ended question, and the other questions required simply a 'yes' or 'no' response. The responses were provided and pre-coded, and the respondents simply had to indicate their choice with an 'X'.

4.2.5.1   Qualifications needed by a recruitment agent

The respondents indicated which qualifications they thought a recruitment agent needed. As it was an open-ended question, the responses were recorded on a coding sheet and coded. Once this was done, themes were identified and will be discussed. Where appropriate, some of the individual responses are quoted. The themes identified in this question were specific knowledge and qualifications, industry-specific experience, and knowledge and skills.

Specific Knowledge and Qualifications. The respondents indicated that certain academic qualifications were needed to be a recruitment agent. Only one respondent indicated that no official qualifications were needed to be a recruitment agent.

> In the context of a recruitment agency no official qualifications …

Some of the respondents indicated that a Human Resources qualification would be advantageous, while some indicated that qualifications in sales and marketing were important. It seems that the majority indicated that some sort of qualification was needed, whether it be a diploma or degree, and some suggested that the qualification should be related to the field for which they were recruiting. Some of the comments made in this regard were:

LRA/ HR knowledge and on-the-job training

Labour law and recruitment techniques

HR courses and marketing
Diploma, degree – specifically HR – recruitment

Minimum matric, preferably a diploma or degree in field of expertise where placements will be taking place.

A tertiary qualification is preferred.

Sales and marketing, some sort of HR would be good but not necessary.

Must be a graduate.

Industry-specific Experience and Knowledge. Most of the respondents indicated that experience in the field of recruitment or in the specific area of recruitment was necessary. The number of years the person had been in the recruiting profession would contribute to his or her knowledge of recruitment. Some respondents gave the following replies:

Must have worked in the industry we recruit for

Experience in the field, like myself – 15 years

…it is best if the person has a good knowledge of the field they are recruiting for and a good number of years experience working in the business combined with a good general knowledge…

Experience from previous jobs

Skills. The respondents noted certain skills that a recruitment agent would need. Although many of these skills are not an official qualification that can be

obtained, it will directly influence the recruitment agent's ability to perform well in his or her job. The information provided by the respondents will be a definite basis for qualities needed by a recruitment agent and which is not always easily definable. The respondents indicated that the following skills were needed:

Knowledge of people.

Most important is the ability to sell. Good interpersonal skills. Ability to close a deal.

Sales ability and excellent communication skills.

The responses indicated that these skills are acquired through experience, and although one can be taught the basics of closing a deal or how to sell things, to become skilful at these tasks will take time. By adding these skills to their repertoire, recruitment agents will give themselves a competitive advantage.

4.2.5.2   General knowledge and skills needed by recruiters

This section required a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Its aim was to determine the knowledge and skills needed by recruiters. Table 10 provides a summary of the results. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents do go for further job related training (78.8 per cent) and that they are familiar with the Employment Equity Act (EEA), 55 of 1999 and its contents (90.9 per cent). A smaller majority (72.7 per cent) indicated that they inform their clients about the rules and regulations of the EEA when recruiting for them.

Just over fifty-four per cent (54.5 per cent) of respondents indicated that they are familiar with the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act no

2 of 2000). However, only 30.3 per cent of respondents indicated that this Act influences their recruitment strategies and applicants' right to information.

The last part of this section focussed on the respondents' academic interest in their field. A majority of the respondents indicated that they do keep up with developments in their field (78.8 per cent), subscribe to a related society (60.6 per cent), subscribe to related literature (63.6 per cent), attend conferences and seminars on recruitment (75.8 per cent) and that the latest recruitment information is distributed amongst all staff (72.7 per cent). Nevertheless, only 24.2 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do research and write articles about the field of recruitment.

TABLE 9:   RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Question	Yes (percentage)	No (percentage)	No Response (percentage)	Total
2	78.8	21.1	0	99.9
3	90.9	6.1	3	100
4	93.9	6.1	0	100
5	72.7	21.1	6.1	99.9
6	54.5	39.4	6.1	100
7	30.3	51.5	18.2	100
8.1	24.2	69.7	6.1	99.9
8.2	78.8	15.2	6.1	100
8.3	60.6	33.3	6.1	100
8.4	63.6	30.3	6.1	100
8.5	75.8	18.2	6.1	100
8.6	72.7	18.2	9.1	100

N=33

4.2.6 Section E: Electronic Recruitment and Technology

The aim of this section was to determine whether the respondents were familiar with certain technologies like email and Internet, and whether they made use of it. It also aimed at establishing whether they were familiar with electronic recruitment systems, and whether they would use them.

GRAPH 6:   RESPONSE TO THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY 1
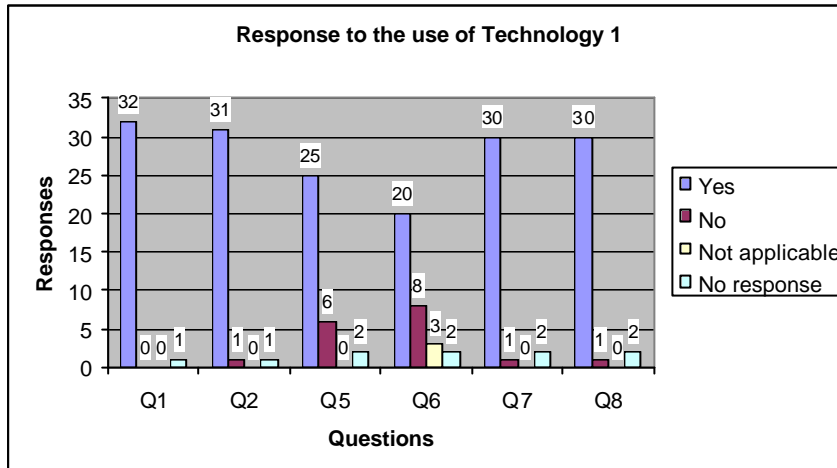
GRAPH 7:   RESPONSE TO THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY 2
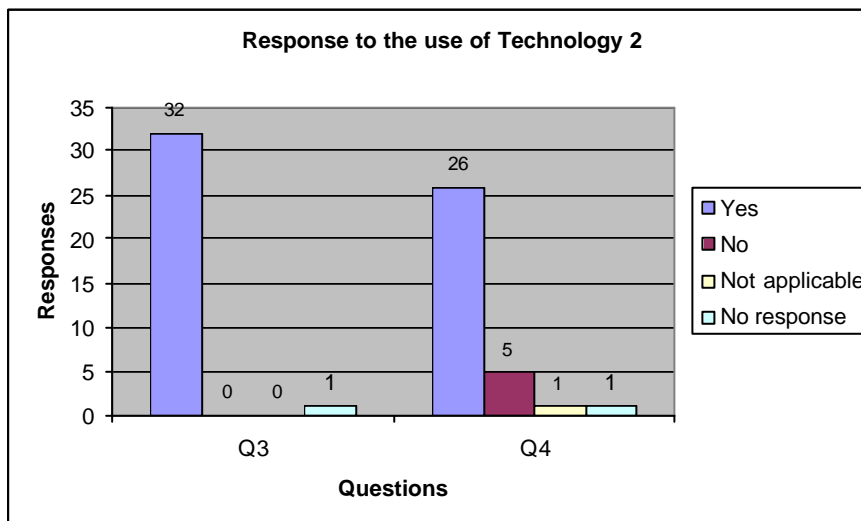
4.2.6.1   Response to the use of Technology

The above graphs cover the responses to questions one to eight of section E. Questions three to six gave the option of 'Not appl icable', but for the purpose of drawing a graph this option was included for all the questions. The results for each will now be discussed.

Q1: The mean indicates that a majority of the respondents (97 per cent) had access to email, while one respondent (3 per cent) did not complete the question. This is consistent with the literature, which indicated that most companies do have access to e-mail.

Q2: The mean indicates that most of the respondents (94 per cent) did have access to the Internet, followed by one respondent (3 per cent) who did not have access and one respondent who did not answer the question. The results are consistent with those found in the literature, that most companies do have Internet Access.

Q3 and Q4: The mean indicated that 97 per cent (N=32) of the respondents used their e-mail daily, while 78.8 per cent (N=26) used the Internet daily. This was followed by respondents who used the Internet weekly (15.2 per cent) and one respondent who indicated that the question was not applicable. One person did not respond to the question on the use of e-mail and Internet. This is consistent with the literature, which indicated that recruitment agents used the e-mail and the Internet frequently in work-related matters.

Q5: The mean indicates that most of the respondents (75.6 per cent) did have a company Web page. This was followed by respondents who did not have a company Web page (18.1 per cent), and 6 per cent (N=2) did not respond to

the question. The results are consistent with the literature, which indicated that most businesses have a company Web page.

Q6: The mean indicates that a majority of the respondents (60.6 per cent) advertised vacancies on their Website, followed by respondents who did not advertise on the Website (24.2 per cent), 9.1 per cent (N=3) who said it was not applicable and 6.1 per cent who did not respond to the question. It is interesting to note that some of the respondents did have a company Website but that they did not use it to advertise vacancies. This is a shortcoming and should be changed. The results are, however, consistent with the literature on company Websites.

Q7: The mean indicates that the majority of the respondents (90.1 per cent) were aware of electronic recruitment systems. Only 3 per cent indicated that they were not aware of these systems, and 6 per cent (N=2) did not respond to the question. The literature is consistent, indicating that people familiarised themselves with technology.

Q8: The mean indicates that most respondents (90.1 per cent) would use technology to advance their recruitment abilities. Only one person (3 per cent) indicated that he or she would not use it, and two people (6 per cent) did not respond to the question. The literature indicated that people were willing to make use of technology if it would assist them to provide a better recruitment service.

4.2.6.2   The feasibility of e-recruitment for South Africa

A majority of respondents (66.7 per cent) indicated that e-recruitment was a feasible option for South Africa, while a smaller number of respondents (30.3

per cent) indicated that they did not agree with the statement. The reasons

they gave are indicated below :

It speeds up the process, but also attracts chancers

Is has its uses. It's not the only solution. There is a place for human intervention, especially to see the personality and cultural fit for certain clients. This cannot be done electronically.

In a large country like SA it allows one to maintain a database of candidates and clients from all over the country, as well as for returning citizens, that one can draw on – whether you are a company looking to recruit or a recruitment organisation.. It also means that one can keep up-to-date with an applicant's career path down the years – developing relationships and networking. It also allows for a quicker and cleaner response, and importantly cuts down on paper – unless all CVs are also kept in paper format.

The cost of current recruitment is very high and the market is crowded. A company can reduce costs and be more effective if they set up their own e-recruitment systems.

Given the vast pool of unemployed people that will in future have access to electronic libraries, e-recruitment is a given.

We are solely a Web-based recruitment company. We do not use print media at all.

South Africa is becoming much more technologically advanced, more and more people using computers.

The more qualified employed can help with our country's economic growth.

It provides a broader base of candidates, however, non-technical candidates shy away from e-recruitment and PDI's [previously disadvantaged individuals] may not have access to the e-recruitment tools.

It's the way the world is going, all computerised. Paper media will never be replaced however the time you spend in front of your computer, it's much easier to apply online and easier if your are doing it from work. You cannot sit with the career times at your desk but you can online. Blue-collar posts will lead the e-recruitment as not all lower income people have access to the net at this stage.

We have the technology and candidates have become sophisticated as well, saves time and money.

Based on the above comments, one can come to the conclusion that

the respondents think that e-recruitment is a reality that brings with it many

advantages like time and money savings, that it attracts a computer literate

applicant, and that both technology and applicants have become

technologically advanced. The literature supports these statements. If a

search does not identify enough qualified applicants, the recruiter can repeat the process by narrowing down the requirements (Talbott, 1996b:20) and some of the systems allow for follow-up letters and to ask high-potential applicants to update their files. The functions mentioned reduce the workload of the recruitment agent.

The responses given to indicate that e-recruitment was not feasible for South Africa are as follows:

Not if you specialise in sectors like us

Depends on the level of position, not everyone have access [e-recruitment]

Response time too long. Candidates are not adequately screened and bombard you with CVs that is not suitable for advertised positions.

Most of our candidates don't have a computer and most is not computer literate.

A lot of professional candidates with access to e-mail and Internet are unemployed in South Africa.

The cost that goes with it.

Not all our applicants have access to computers. Very restrictive.

A smaller number of respondents indicated that e-recruitment was not a feasible option for South Africa and their reasons focused on the accessibility of e-recruitment, that they were bombarded with irrelevant applications and the high cost of being able to provide e-recruitment functions. The reasons cited here are consistent with some of the negative aspects found in the literature. Electronic recruitment can be very costly, as it usually requires hardware and technical support. It is important to do a cost-analysis before putting forward a proposal (Talbott, 1996b:19).

4.2.6.3   The influence of e-recruitment on the type of candidate attracted

The mean indicates that a total of 69.7 per cent (N=23) of respondents believed that e-recruitment would influence the type of applicant that was attracted, while a smaller number (24.2 per cent) indicated that it would have no influence, and two respondents (6.1 per cent) did not answer the question. The respondents who answered 'yes', indicated that e-recruitment would influence the type of applicant that was attracted in the following ways:

Will need to be computer knowledgeable, in general of higher education standard.

Only applicants who have access to the Internet and e-mail will see and apply for positions advertised in this way.

Those who currently have access is privileged and have a wider chance of success. This will become narrow once disadvantaged people gain access. Volume will increase.

More literate candidate.

We recruit IT staff – if they do not respond to us via the web, they are not the kind of candidate we are trying to attract.

Candidates who have access to e-mail or Internet are generally 'quite upper-class' (good calibre).

We find that mainly people who are employed (either temp or permanent) have access. Some highly skilled unemployed people do not have these facilities readily available.

It provides a broader base of candidates, however, non-technical candidates shy away from e-recruitment and PDIs may not have easy access to e-recruitment tools.

High profile applicants/ specialists would more often have access and market themselves appropriately. Easier marketable candidates – CAs/ Electromechinicians etc.

It will attract the higher-level candidates, to middle, basically all those that have access to the net. Serious career searches also tend to do it via the net as opposed to 'testers' that phone in for posts.

Technology is part of every job nowadays and having access to it and being able to use it, is essential.

The respondents indicated that, since computer knowledge and access to a computer are essential for e-recruitment, it would attract people with a

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higher educational level. Although some literature and some of the respondents believed that it excluded a large pool of applicants, there were those who believed that it provided an extremely large pool of applicants. It is important to realise that the field for which one is recruiting will have an influence on the usability of e-recruitment, as indicated by one of the respondents stating that they recruit IT staff and that if the person did not apply via the Web, the applicant was unsuitable. The results are consistent with the literature.

4.2.6.4   Is e-recruitment currently used by the respondent?

A majority of respondents (51.5 per cent) indicated that they did currently make use of an e-recruitment system; while a smaller number of respondents (24.2 per cent) indicated that they did not make use of an e-recruitment system and 15.1 per cent (N=5) of the respondents did not complete the question. The results are confirmed by the literature.

GRAPH 8:   FAMILIARITY WITH SPECIFIC E-RECRUITMENT SYSTEMS
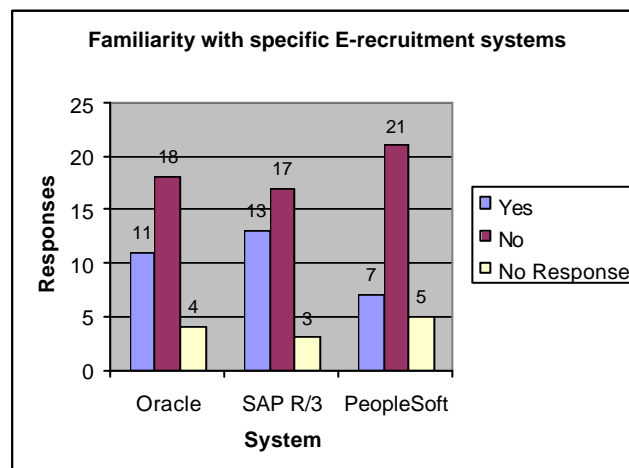
4.2.6.5   Familiarity with specific e-recruitment systems

The results, as displayed in the table, indicate that a majority of the respondents were not familiar with the e-recruitment systems' names. These systems are SAP R/3 (51.5 per cent), Oracle (30,3 per cent) and PeopleSoft (63.6 per cent). A number of respondents indicated their familiarity with systems, namely SAP R/3 (39.4 per cent), Oracle (33.3 per cent) and PeopleSoft (21.2 per cent). Some of the respondents did not respond to the question SAP R/3 (9.1 per cent), Oracle (12.1 per cent) and PeopleSoft (15.1 per cent). The literature indicated that these systems were the biggest in the world, yet a majority of the respondents were not familiar with them. The results did indicate a familiarity with other e-recruitment systems, as follows:

> We have written our own software package called Agency Enable and we sell it to other agencies. We have about 20 clients in CT and JHB.
>
> Too many to specify in relation to the technologies used, since there are a number of 'inhouse' and private ones that have been commercially developed and sold, often in Access/VB, but I can list some of the commercial online recruitment/job sites specific to SA: Job Navigator, Career Classifieds, Job Mail, The Job Index, Blue Dot Recruitment, Career Junction, Pnet, CareerWeb, Jobs.com, CVOnline, EmploySA, iDonovan.comza, JobFood.com, JobMatrix and Jobs-at.
>
> Staff Select, Mr Ted
>
> Graylink
>
> We use Front Range
>
> Pnet and Career Junction
>
> Career Junction, job shop, HR success and gold mine.

The respondents indicated their familiarity with a large range of e-recruitment systems, as can be seen from the quoted responses above.

4.2.6.6   Feedback request

A majority of the respondents (87.9 per cent) indicated that they would like to receive feedback, while only 12.1 per cent indicated that they did not wish to receive feedback. Twenty-three of the respondents indicated that they would like to receive feedback on the results of the study. The request for the results indicated a genuine interest and need for the issues raised in the questionnaire.

4.2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the results and analyses of the research were presented in great detail. The data analysis methods used were discussed and then the various sections of the questionnaire, with each of their sub-questions, were discussed in detail. The respondents' responses to open-ended questions were quoted.

In this section a good deal of useful information was obtained, especially with reference to identifying and placing the most suitable applicants, the qualifications a recruitment agent would need, and whether e-recruitment is a feasible option for South African recruitment agents. Very little or no information was available on these issues in the literature, and the information obtained here can serve as an indication of the requirements in the field of recruitment. The study can be used as a basis for further studies to obtain more information in the field of recruitment agents, especially with reference to e-recruitment. It would be useful to repeat the study in a year's time, to see whether any improvements or changes had taken place.

The next chapter will contain the concluding remarks and recommendations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Recruitment has become a complex business, with its aim of finding the most suitable applicant in the shortest possible time. The business of recruiting has become very competitive and specialised. The literature and the results have indicated that there is a move towards making use of technology to advance recruitment processes.

In this chapter, concluding remarks about the research, as well as some recommendations, are presented.

5.2   WHAT THE LITERATURE AND STUDY INDICATED

The reason for the study was to obtain knowledge in the field of recruitment and selection, how it functions in South Africa, and how the recruitment agent's service can be improved by using computer-based information systems. The literature provided some insights, and up-to-date trends were available on the Internet. The literature directly related to South Africa was limited, and basically covered the recruitment and selection processes. Information specifically related to recruitment agents was scarce, but the study provided great insight into this field.

New definitions, based on the literature, were formulated for recruitment, selection, and e-recruitment. The features, different types and specific advantages and disadvantages were discussed in great detail.

5.2.1 Relating the Literature to Specific Aims of the Study

The first aim was to determine specific services offered by recruitment agents to their clients and applicants. The literature focused on what was needed to identify a suitable applicant and what recruitment agents did to assist them in this process. It was found that applicants registered on databases or applied to advertisements via mail or e-mail. The information retrieved from a person's résumé was entered into a database for easy identification of requirements, using certain key words. The problem was that résumés needed to be standardised for this process. The literature indicated that clients either passed on the whole recruitment process to recruitment agents and only did the selection from a short list provided by the agency, or they obtained a list of possible applicants and did the whole process themselves.

The findings of the study indicated that South African recruitment agents offered a variety of services to their clients and applicants. The services included proper résumé- or CV-writing, keeping in regular contact with clients and applicants, and advertising to find suitable applicants.

A second aim of the study was to determine how suitable applicants were attracted and identified, and what processes followed. The literature provided guidelines on how to attract suitable applicants, and a good deal of information was available on where to advertise and what an advertisement should contain. Flowcharts were created to indicate the recruitment and selection processes and the functions that followed each. Extensive literature was available on how to identify the most suitable applicant, which involved various selection techniques like psychometric tests, medical tests, and reference checks.

The study found that South African recruitment agents used local and national newspapers and the Internet to obtain suitable applicants. There was disagreement about the information that an advertisement should contain. The responses indicated that recruitment agents did, to a large extent, agree with the literature on advertisements. The best days to advertise, according to the respondents, were Mondays and Saturdays; no literature was available on this particular point. The first step to identify the most suitable applicant, according to the respondents, was to focus on education, work experience and certain varied criteria. After this, an interview took place, reference checks were done, and sometimes specific assessments were done before the applicant's information was forwarded to the client. This is consistent with the literature consulted.

The literature did, however, warn that reference checks are not always reliable. French (1986:255) pointed out that reference checking could 'verify or contradict what the applicant has told the organisation'. The literature also indicated, according to Schultz and Schultz (1998:88), that the information often presented a false picture of the applicant, as the referees tend to provide an overly positive picture of the applicant. It can therefore be said that although reference checking is important, it should be used with caution. Testing of any kind should be done according to strict rules and under the supervision of qualified persons, and the South African Employment Equity Act of 1998 should be used as a guideline.

Thirdly, the research aimed at determining the qualifications that a recruitment agent would require. The literature provided no indication of the qualifications needed, and in South Africa no institution provides specific

training to become a recruitment agent. The results of the study indicated that recruitment agents in the field had varied qualifications, with some having only matric, and others having post-graduate degrees. The majority indicated that some sort of academic qualification was required that focused on either Human Resources that included knowledge of labour law, Sales and Marketing knowledge, and then general work experience or work experience in the field for which the person was recruiting. The respondents also noted that good people skills, knowledge of recruitment techniques and the ability to close a deal were needed.

A fourth aim was to determine whether recruitment agents had an academic interest in their field, and if they kept up to date with things like Government Acts. Extensive literature is available on recruitment and selection, as well as Websites that send daily newsletters and articles of interest. One such Website is www.erexchange.com, and valuable information was obtained from this site for the treatise. The respondents indicated that they did go for further training. The majority also indicated that they were familiar with the EEA of 1998 and the Promotion of Accessibility Act 2000, although not all the respondents informed their clients or applicants about these Acts, and not all said that they had an influence on their work. Only 24.2 per cent of the respondents indicated that they did research and wrote articles in the field of recruitment. A majority indicated that they kept up with developments in their field, that they belonged to an official society, subscribed to literature related to their field, attended conferences and seminars, and distributed the information amongst their staff.

A fifth aim was to determine the familiarity with, and use of, electronic technologies. Overseas literature provides extensive information on different e-recruitment systems, it uses, advantages and disadvantages. The three best-known systems are SAP R/3, Oracle and PeopleSoft. The research found, however, that very few of the respondents were familiar with these world-famous systems, and that instead they used a variety of other systems, many of which were Websites which applicants and recruiters could access to apply, and from which they could recruit, all free of charge. The research provided useful information about the systems that are used by South African recruitment agents. Literature indicates a move towards e-recruitment, and although South Africa faces certain logistical problems, for example that the majority of South Africans do not have access to personal computers or the Internet, this trend is also visible in the Western Cape.

The last aim was to provide empirical-based information to recruitment agents in the Western Cape. The results of the study provided useful and interesting information, which will be distributed to the respondents who requested it. It provided biographical information on the recruitment agents in the Western Cape, which included the average age of the respondents, their qualifications, number of people employed, and areas of operation. The study also provided useful information on the skills and knowledge that recruiters in the Western Cape deemed important, as well as the services they offered and the methods and processes they used. Useful information was also obtained with regard to e-recruitment and computer-based systems. The information will be useful to draw up a profile of a typical South African recruitment agent.

5.2.2 Limitations of the study

The quality of the data collected was good, since the questionnaires were filled out properly, and there were no problems interpreting the open-ended responses. The biggest problem was the poor feedback received from the respondents. Seventy-eight people were contacted by telephone to determine whether they would participate, and then the questionnaire was e-mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered. However, only 33 questionnaires (42 per cent) were received back. A possible reason for this limited feedback was the time of year in which the research was conducted, namely, middle to late November. This is a particularly busy time for recruitment agents. The limited response rate, although not undermining the quality of the research, restricts broad-based generalisation of the results. It also restricts the type and extent of statistical analysis that can be made.

Another limiting factor is that the literature was mainly based on the experience of overseas countries. In addition, most of the South African literature was based on overseas studies. In this respect, the study makes an important contribution.

5.2.3 General Remarks on the Findings

One of the findings of the study was an inconsistency in the opinions on what a good curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé should consist of, even though all the respondents indicated that they were able to write a proper CV. It seems that general guidelines for the contents of a good CV need to be developed, which would be acceptable to all recruitment agents. Such a 'standardised' version

would also be easier to capture on databases and track on the Internet, which is one of the most favourable ways to attract applicants.

The study also indicated disagreement on what a good advertisement should consist of. The majority of the respondents indicated that the inclusion of a statement like 'If you do not hear from us within in two weeks of the closing date…' is acceptable practice. American literature indicates this type of response as poor business practice, which creates an image of non-interest in applicants. Not providing feedback to applicants can influence the company's image, and word-of-mouth comments can have damaging effects on business. Recruitment agents should be advised to respond to queries and applications – whether they are successful or not – and to keep in contact with clients and applicants in order to remain competitive and create a good company image.

It would also be advisable that recruitment agents should consider the option of advertising in professional journals. Advertising in specialised journals does attract a smaller group of applicants, but the people who read these journals are often highly qualified, and the type of applicant that one would like to attract (Price, 1997:225).

No literature was available on the qualifications needed by a recruitment agent. The current study can be a starting point for future research in this area. The results of such research can be used as a basis to start training programmes specifically aimed at becoming a recruitment agent.

The time-span for finding the most suitable applicant was between two and four weeks for a majority of the respondents. This could be an indication of their recruitment and selection techniques. By improving their techniques

and improving their use of technology, they could speed up the recruitment process thereby giving better customer service and sourcing a better quality applicant.

Although a majority of the respondents indicated their familiarity with various recruitment-related legislation that had a direct bearing on recruitment, it is worrisome that the statement did not have a 100 per cent response rate. It is essential that recruitment agents, in order to provide a good service and to remain within the law, should be knowledgeable on these Acts and regulations, and apply them in their working environment.

There is also a need for research in the field of recruitment and the distribution of South African information related to recruitment. There is a definite gap in the market for this type of research. Together with research in this field, attending conferences and workshops on trends and developments in the field of recruitment is needed, and is essential to maintain the competitive edge. Recruitment agents should share their experiences and expertise with each other.

The fact that almost all the respondents made use of the Internet and e-mail indicates that they keep up with their overseas counterparts, but South African recruitment agents should be aware of the limitations of this type of recruitment in a third-world country like South Africa, and should probably use it as supplement to their traditional recruitment and selection techniques.

It would be advisable that recruitment agents should familiarise themselves with the various systems available, and consider the pro's and cons of each system before making a choice. Some agencies have developed

their own systems, which may be a viable option for the South African market, and demonstrates a need that has to be addressed.

5.2.4 Future Research

The current study was restricted to a particular focus, but the area of recruitment and selection, especially with reference to South Africa, has a great deal to be researched and analysed.

Some of the specifics that still need to be focused on are the qualifications needed by recruitment agents, the type of training they would need, and how they can fully utilise and familiarise themselves with computer-based information systems. It seems that their attitude towards this technology is positive, but they lack the skills and often the knowledge to use these systems.

Another area for future research would be how to adapt e-recruitment to the South African employment market.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The current research indicates that, if South Africa is to integrate and become a competitive player in the global market, more attention needs to be paid to the process and nature of recruitment. As an increasing number of employers outsource their recruitment function, there is a need for more research and information about recruitment agents.

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Research Title: **The use of Computer-based Management Information Systems as a Recruitment Tool: An Assessment of the Attitudes of Recruitment Agents in a Selected Area of the Western Cape on 10 February 2004.**

Researcher: Louana Victor, MA student in Sociology, University of Port Elizabeth (UPE)

Supervisor: Prof. PW Cunningham, HR Management, Programme Leader at UPE

To Whom It May Concern:

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently completing a Masters Degree through the University of Port Elizabeth and my research is aimed at recruitment agents in the Western Cape. The aim of the study is to determine the recruitment techniques and processes utilised by recruitment agents in a selected area of the Western Cape and to specifically look at whether they use computer-based information systems to assist them in their daily activities.

In order to achieve the aims of the research it would be greatly appreciated if you could assist me in completing the attached questionnaire. It should not take more than 10 minutes to complete and would provide me with valuable information to complete my research.

Hard copies will be hand delivered and collected. E-mailed versions can be returned to: louana@mweb.co.za. Completed questionnaires can also be faxed to 022-715 4703, marked for the attention of Louana Victor.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE ON OR BEFORE MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2003.

The questionnaire consists of five sections; each section covers a different topic. The instructions on how to complete each section are provided at the start of

each section. For the emailed version, simply move your cursor across the block, click with your mouse and it will automatically make a "X". In the sections where a written response is required, you can simply type in your response. If you have any questions during the completion of the questionnaire, I can be contacted on 022-713 2808 or 084 601 0505.

The information provided in the questionnaire will be treated with complete confidentiality and no names of agencies will be used. The information will not be distributed and only global results will be used in my report. The results will be made available to participants on request. If you would like to receive feedback, please complete the provided section in the questionnaire.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Louana Victor

The questionnaire consists of five sections; each section covers a different topic. The instructions on how to complete each section are provided at the start of each section. For the e-mailed version, simply move your cursor across the block and click with your mouse and it will automatically make a "X". In the sections where a written response is required, you can simply type in your response. If you have any questions during the completion of the questionnaire, I can be contacted on 022-713 2808 or 084 601 0505.

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PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE ON OR BEFORE MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2003.

SECTION A
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please place a "X" in the appropriate box or, where indicated, provide a written response:

1.	Gender	Male 1 ☐		Female 2 ☐			
2.	Age	20-29 1 ☐	30-39 2 ☐	40-49 3 ☐	50-59 4 ☐	60+ 5 ☐	
3.	Educational Level (Indicate highest qualification only)	Matric 1 ☐	Diploma/ certificate 2 ☐	Undergraduate degree 3 ☐	Postgraduate degree 4 ☐		
4.	Which position do you currently have in the company?	Owner 1 ☐ Other, please specify: 4		Recruiter 2 ☐		Supervisor 3 ☐	
5.	How long have you been employed in your current position?	1-5 months 1 ☐	6-11 months 2 ☐	1-3 years 3 ☐	4 years+ 4 ☐		
6.	How many employees are employed at this agency?						

7.	In which region does this agency mainly operate?	Vredenburg/ Saldanha/ Langebaan 1 ☐		West Coast area 2 ☐	
		Swartland area 3 ☐		Entire Western Province 4 ☐	
		Other, please specify:7			
8.1	Do you offer a specialised service to a particular industry?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐		
8.2	If yes, for which type of industry?	Please specify: 1			

SECTION B
SERVICES OFFERED

Please place a "X" in the appropriate box or, where indicated, provide a written response:

	Please rate the following aspects by placing a "X" in the appropriate box using the rating scale below: 5= Strongly agree 2= Disagree 4= Agree 1= Strongly disagree 3= Neutral 0= Do not know	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I do not know
1.	In your opinion, what does a good Curriculum Vitae (CV) consist of?						
1.1	It is very basic, listing only the most important things like the person's name and highest qualifications and latest work experience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	The majority of applicants are able to write a proper CV.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	Are you able to write a proper CV?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	Which of the following methods do you make use of to obtain applicants?						
4.1	Advertising in the loc al newspaper.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2	Advertising in national newspapers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I do not know	
4.3	Advertising in professional/specialised publications.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
4.4	Advertising on the Internet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
5.	Which, in your opinion is the most effective medium of advertising?							
5.1	Advertising in the local newspaper.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
5.2	Advertising in national newspapers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
5.3	Advertising in professional/ specialised publications.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
5.4	Advertising on the Internet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.	How important is the following information in advertising?							
6.1	Qualifications needed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.2	Work requirements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.3	Salary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.4.	Benefits attached to the position.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.5	Closing date.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.6	Cut off date for receiving a response from the advertiser i.e. "If you do not hear from us within two week of the closing date…"	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
6.7	Providing **as** an alternative a fax number or e- mail for responding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
7.	How important is the following, with reference to applicants?							
7.1	Informing an applicant that their application has been received.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
7.2	Informing an applicant whether they qualify for the position.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
7.3	Informing an applicant that their application has been unsuccessful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
8.	How do you feel about the following statements:							
8.1	It is important to provide a **timeous** service to all clients and applicants.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
8.2	It is important to provide a **friendly** service to all clients and applicants.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I do not know	
8.3	It is important to respond to queries concerning an applicant.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

9.	In your experience, which day of the week is the best to advertise in the printed media?	Monday 1 ☐	Tuesday 2 ☐	Wednesday 3 ☐	Thursday 4 ☐	
		Friday 5 ☐	Saturday 6 ☐	Sunday 7 ☐	▓	

10.	How long do you keep a person's **personal details** on record?	Less than 3 months 1 ☐	4-6 months 2 ☐	7-12 months 3 ☐	
		13-18 months 4 ☐	19-24 months 5 ☐	24 months+ 6 ☐	

11.	How long do you keep a person's **CV** on record?	Less than 3 months 1 ☐	4-6 months 2 ☐	7-12 months 3 ☐	
		13-18 months 4 ☐	19-24 months 5 ☐	24 months+ 6 ☐	

SECTION C
METHODS/ PROCESSES

Please place a "X" in the appropriate box or, where indicated, provide a written response:

1.	How do you identify the most suitable candidate for a particular position?	Please specify: 1				
2.	What do you do after the suitable candidate is identified?	Please specify: 1				
3.	How do you place the most suitable candidate?	Please specify: 1				
4.	How many people have you placed in the last three months?	0-10 1 ☐	11-30 2 ☐	31-50 3 ☐	51-100 4 ☐	100+ 5 ☐

5.	To what do you attribute your success?	Please specify: 1					
6.	How do you keep a record of all your **clients**?	Manual filing system 1 ☐		Electronic database 2 ☐		Both manual and electronic 3 ☐	
		Other, please specify: 4					
7.	How do you keep a record of all your **applicants**?	Manual filing system 1 ☐		Electronic database 2 ☐		Both manual and electronic 3 ☐	
		Other, please specify: 4					
8.	What is the **time span** between the request for a suitable candidate to actually finding a suitable candidate?	Less than 2 weeks 1 ☐	Between **2-4 weeks** 2 ☐	Between 4-6 weeks 3 ☐	More than 6 weeks 4 ☐		
9.	Do you do reference checks on applicants?	Yes 1 ☐		No 2 ☐		Sometimes 3 ☐	
10.	Do you draw up a list, together with the client of the characteristics, other than educational requirements, that is needed by the applicant?	Yes 1 ☐		No 2 ☐		Sometimes 3 ☐	
11.	How do you keep in contact with **applicants**?	Telephone 1 ☐	Letters 2 ☐	E-mail 3 ☐	Website 4 ☐		
12.	How do you keep in contact with **clients**?	Telephone 1 ☐	Letters 2 ☐	E-mail 3 ☐	Website 4 ☐		

13.	How do you deal with people who do not speak your native language?	Use a translator 1 ☐	Use second languages 2 ☐	
		Other, please specify: 3		
14.	Do you give applicants a job preview or inform them what the job entails?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	Sometimes 3 ☐

SECTION D KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS Please place a "X" in the appropriate box or, where indicated, provide a written response:				
1.	What qualifications does a recruitment officer need?	Please specify: 1		
2.	Do the employees at this company go for further training?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
3.	Are you familiar with Employment Equity Act?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
4.	Are you familiar with the South African law and regulations with reference to discrimination and affirmative action?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
5.	Do you inform your clients about the above rules and regulations when recruiting applicants for them?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
6.	Are you familiar with the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act no 2 of 2000)?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
7.	Does the above Act influence your recruitment and access to information by applicants?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
8.	Do you have an academic interest in recruitment, for example:			
8.1	Do you do research and write articles about the field of recruitment?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	

8.2	Do you keep up to date with the latest developments in your field?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐
8.3	Are you subscribed to a society related to the field of recruitment?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐
8.4	Are you subscribed to a literature related to the field of recruitment?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐
8.5	Do you attend conferences/ seminars on recruitment developments?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐
8.6	Is the latest recruitment information distributed among all recruitment staff?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐

SECTION E
ELECTRONIC-RECRUITMENT[3] AND TECHNOLOGY

Please place a "X" in the appropriate box or, where indicated, provide a written response:

1.	Does your company have access to e-mail?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
2.	Does your company have access to the Internet?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
3.	How frequently do you use e-mail for work related matters?	Daily 1 ☐	Weekly 2 ☐	Not Applicable 3 ☐
4.	How frequently do you use the Internet for work related matters?	Daily 1 ☐	Weekly 2 ☐	Not Applicable 3 ☐

[3] Electronic Recruitment can be defined as using various computerised systems to assist in recruiting the best candidate and it includes the use of Internet sites and sophisticated database programmes like SAP R/3 and Oracle.

5.	Does your company have a Web page?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	Not Applicable 3 ☐	
6.	Do you advertise vacancies on this Web page?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	Not Applicable 3 ☐	
7.	Are you aware of the availability of Electronic Recruitment systems?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐		
8.	Would you consider using such technologies if it would advance your recruiting capabilities?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐		
9.1	Do you think E-recruitment is feasible for the South African market?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐		
9.2	If **yes**, why?				
9.3	If **no**, why?				
10.1	Do you think E-recruitment will have an influence on the type of candidate you attract?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐		

10.2	If, yes, how?			
11.	Do you currently make use of an electronic recruitment system?	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
12.	Are you familiar with any of the following Electronic Recruitment systems?			
12.1	Oracle	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
12.2	SAP R/3	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
12.3	People Soft	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐	
12.4	Other, please specify:			

FEEDBACK REQUEST

	Yes 1 ☐	No 2 ☐
Would you like to receive the results of this study?	If yes, please provide postal address, fax or E-mail number:	