

h e g

Haute école de gestion
Genève

How to optimize the Talent Acquisition Strategy and Recruitment Process in Swiss startups and young ventures to build a winning team?

**Bachelor Project submitted for the degree of
Bachelor of Science HES in International Business Management**

by

Laurent KRENZI

Bachelor Project Mentor:

Ansar HAFIL

Geneva, June 25th 2020

**Haute école de gestion de Genève (HEG-GE)
International Business Management**

Disclaimer

This report is submitted as part of the final examination requirements of the Haute école de gestion de Genève, for the Bachelor of Science HES-SO in International Business Management. The use of any conclusions or recommendations made in or based upon this report, with no prejudice to their value, engages the responsibility neither of the author, nor the author's mentor, nor the jury members nor the HEG or any of its employees.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my warmest thanks to all the people who have directly or indirectly contribute to this Bachelor Thesis.

A special thanks goes to the research mentor, Mr. Ansar Hafil, who provided precious insight and guidance all along the project through his mentorship.

Sincere gratifications also goes to all the experts involved in the interviewing process and who provided essential insights by sharing their experience with the most professionalism; Mrs. Lamia Al Afani, Mrs. Suzanne Paris, Mr. Roman Bruegger, Mr. Alexandre Etienne, Mr. Matthew Lashmar.

Thanks also to all the people who participated in the surveys.

Sincerely,

Laurent Krenzi

Executive Summary

Recruiting has been shown to be a very important factor of a company's development and success, it also been highlighted to be a key source of competitive power and key component to build a winning team. Researches state that many young ventures have difficulty to recruit properly. Following a combination of weak recruitment capabilities with limited access to the right talents, the specialists state that there is a need to improve the hiring process. Whereas many studies try to find the cause of those problems and many recruitment frameworks already exist, there is very few information about how those two components could merge in order to propose a viable solution for Startups.

Whereas startups have really particular needs and challenges compared to already established and stable companies, the recruitment phase do not differ from that. Startups and young ventures have experienced difficulties to recruit new employees (especially when it comes to recruit fast and effectively) as well as evaluating the recruitment outcome afterwards). Actually, recruiting talents has been highlighted as the principal barrier for Startup's development. Studies show that a general lack of HR competence, poor analytics, weak notoriety, lack of network and underdeveloped connection to find suitable recruits, between other factors, are all negatively impacting the success of a startup's development phase.

In fact, existing guidelines and general best practices may not be adapted or versatile enough to meet startup's particular requirements. Also, many of those researches are conducted abroad and may not reflect with precision the Swiss market's challenges nor startup's environment specificities. Then the research question addressed as follow :

How to optimize the Talent Acquisition Strategy and Recruitment Process in Swiss startups and young ventures to build a winning team

Firstly, the goal is to understand the recruitment challenges that Swiss startups are facing and analyse candidates' behaviour in order to identify gaps, correlations and most importantly improvement opportunities so that Swiss startups have been provided with a flexible and easily-implementable detailed Recruitment Process, tailor-made for their needs in order to optimize their recruiting capabilities. Improvement in resources' efficiency (time and budget) is to be expected.

A recommended **7-step Recruitment Process** has been designed focused on correcting observed startup's gaps as well as with the objective to ensure both budget and time efficiency.

The identification of the most important recruitment barriers resulted in the design of **5 Talent Acquisition Strategy pillars**, tailor-mades for startups, to support their Recruitment Process.

An overall lack of process and monitoring has been identified in the majority of the startups surveyed. The proposed 7-step Recruitment Process is meant to stay flexible and the 5 Talent Acquisition strategies adaptable following each startup's particular needs.

Finally, supporting Swiss startups with presented recommendations is expected to maximize their chances of success and, ultimately, supporting the Swiss economic development, innovation, quality of life as well as employment creation.

The tone and level of information of the discussions as well as the recommendations presented in this research have been adapted to fit the variety of audience that startup's recruitment responsible in Switzerland might represent. (from no HR experience to HR professionals)

Contents

How to optimize the Talent Acquisition Strategy and Recruitment Process in Swiss startups and young ventures to build a winning team?	1
Disclaimer	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Contents	v
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature review	3
2.1 Entrepreneurship, startups and other definitions	3
2.1.1 <i>Entrepreneurship</i>	3
2.1.2 <i>Startups</i>	4
2.1.3 <i>Business incubators</i>	5
2.1.4 <i>Business accelerators</i>	6
2.2 Education in incubators vs. accelerators	7
2.3 Recruitment Process	8
2.4 Talent Acquisition	10
3. Methodology	12
3.1 Project outline and milestones	12
3.2 Data collection method	13
3.2.1 <i>Literature Review</i>	14
3.2.2 <i>Assessment of Swiss academic and training programs</i>	14
3.2.3 <i>First round of interviews (Startup's ecosystem)</i>	14
3.2.4 <i>Survey 1 "How to build a winning team for Swiss Startups"</i> ..	14
3.2.5 <i>Survey 2 "Meeting candidates' expectations"</i>	14
3.2.6 <i>Second round on interview (HR professionals)</i>	14
4. Results	15
4.1 Assessment of Swiss academic and training programs	15
4.1.1 <i>Swiss academic programs on Entrepreneurship</i>	16
4.1.2 <i>Swiss incubators and accelerators' training programs</i>	19
4.2 First round of interviews (Startups' ecosystem)	21
4.3 Survey 1 "How to build a winning team for Swiss Startups"	22
4.3.1 <i>Result of Survey 1</i>	23
4.4 Survey 2 "Meeting candidates' expectations"	32
4.4.1 <i>Result of Survey 2</i>	32
4.5 Second round of interviews (HR professionals)	38

5. Discussion	39
5.1 Recruitment process.....	39
5.1.1 <i>Identifying hiring needs.....</i>	39
5.1.2 <i>Drafting the job description/advert</i>	42
5.1.3 <i>Publishing the advert.....</i>	44
5.1.4 <i>Screening.....</i>	45
5.1.5 <i>Interviewing.....</i>	46
5.1.6 <i>Selecting and Offering.....</i>	48
5.1.7 <i>Onboarding and Retaining.....</i>	50
5.2 Talent Acquisition strategy	51
5.2.1 <i>Monitoring (Analytics and KPIs)</i>	52
5.2.2 <i>Employer Branding</i>	53
5.2.3 <i>Candidate Experience.....</i>	54
5.2.4 <i>Talent Identification.....</i>	55
5.2.5 <i>Cost Reduction.....</i>	58
6. Conclusion	61
6.1 Recruitment process.....	61
6.1.1 <i>Identifying hiring needs.....</i>	61
6.1.2 <i>Drafting the job description/advert</i>	61
6.1.3 <i>Publishing the advert.....</i>	62
6.1.4 <i>Screening.....</i>	62
6.1.5 <i>Interviewing.....</i>	62
6.1.6 <i>Selecting and Offering.....</i>	63
6.1.7 <i>Onboarding</i>	63
6.2 Talent Acquisition strategy	64
6.2.1 <i>Monitoring (Analytics & KPIs)</i>	64
6.2.2 <i>Employer Branding</i>	64
6.2.3 <i>Candidate Experience.....</i>	64
6.2.4 <i>Talent Identification.....</i>	64
6.2.5 <i>Cost Reduction.....</i>	65
6.3 Poster	65
6.4 Final words	65
Bibliography	66
Appendix 1: Swiss Entrepreneurship Academic Programs Map	69
Appendix 2: List of incubators and accelerators	70
Appendix 3: Analysis of incubators and accelerators programs	71
Appendix 4: Survey 1 How to build a winning team for Swiss startups	72
Appendix 5: Survey 2 Candidates' feedback.....	81
Appendix 6: Poster	84
Appendix 7: Interviews' transcripts	85

List of Tables

Table 1 Recruiting talents as the first barrier to a startup's development.....	23
Table 2 For how many years the startup has been active?	23
Table 3 In which region are you based?	23
Table 4 What is the size of your startup?	24
Table 5 How many employees did you recruit in the last three years?	24
Table 6 Raise of funds	24
Table 7 Who is in charge of the recruitment process?.....	25
Table 8 What is the company's level of HR knowledge	25
Table 9 "When starting to recruit for a position, my company already..."	26
Table 10 Which recruitment KPIs does your company measure?	27
Table 11 Startup's auto-evaluation on Recruitment Process.....	27
Table 12 Startups job ads' publishing channels.....	28
Table 13 Startup's advantages offered and showcased.....	28
Table 14 How many application per new job opening.....	29
Table 15 Source of hiring.....	29
Table 16 Type of contract offered.....	29
Table 17 Offer acceptance rate	30
Table 18 Reasons for offer refusals.....	30
Table 19 Startups' auto-evaluation on Talent Acquisition	30
Table 20 Startups' TOP 3 barriers to recruitment	31
Table 21 How old are you?.....	32
Table 22 Where are you based?	33
Table 23 TOP 3 features candidates look for in jobs	33
Table 24 Preferred 3 elements in recruitment process	34
Table 25 Candidates' preferred publishing channels	34
Table 26 Recruitment's expected duration	35
Table 27 Interest in working for a startup.....	35
Table 28 Why would candidates be interested in startups?	37
Table 29 Why would candidate not be interested in startups?	37

List of Figures

Figure 1 Overlapping feature between incubators and accelerators	7
Figure 2 the 7 steps of Recruitment Process	8
Figure 3 Entrepreneurship programs offered in Switzerland	16
Figure 4 Map of Swiss academic programs on Entrepreneurship	17
Figure 5 Number of appearances by topic	20
Figure 6 Comparative analysis of incubator/accelerators programs	20
Figure 7 Raise of funds	24
Figure 8 Who is charge of the recruitment process?	25
Figure 9 What is the company's level HR knowledge	25
Figure 10 Startups job ads' publishing channels	28
Figure 11 Source of hiring	29
Figure 12 Type of contract offered	29
Figure 13 Reasons for offer refusals	30
Figure 14 Startups' TOP 3 barriers to recruitment	31
Figure 15 How old are you?	32
Figure 16 Where are you based?	33
Figure 17 TOP 3 features candidates look for in jobs	33
Figure 18 Preferred 3 elements in recruitment process	34
Figure 19 Candidates' preferred publishing channels	34
Figure 20 Recruitment's expected duration	35
Figure 21 Interest in working for a startup	35
Figure 22 Type of contract offered	39
Figure 23 Job Ads' gap analysis	42
Figure 24 Startup's preferred publishing channels	44
Figure 25 Candidate's preferred publishing channels	44
Figure 26 Startup's TOP 3 barriers to recruit	51
Figure 27 Positive persona	57
Figure 28 Negative persona	57

1. Introduction

Problem statement

Recruiting has been shown to be a very important factor of a company's development and success, it also been highlighted to be a key source of competitive power¹ and key component to build a winning team.² Researches state that many young ventures have difficulty to recruit properly. Following a combination of weak recruitment capabilities with limited access to the right talents, the specialists state that there is a need to improve the hiring process.³ Whereas many studies try to find the cause of those problems and many recruitment frameworks already exist, there is very few information about how those two components could merge in order to propose a viable solution for Startups.

Whereas startups have really particular needs and challenges compared to already established and stable companies, the recruitment phase do not differ from that.⁴ Startups and young ventures have experienced difficulties to recruit new employees (especially when it comes to recruit fast and effectively) as well as evaluating the recruitment outcome afterwards).⁵ Actually, recruiting talents has been highlighted as the principal barrier for Startup's development.⁶ Studies show that a general lack of HR competence, poor analytics⁷, weak notoriety⁸, lack of network⁹ ¹⁰ and underdeveloped connection to find suitable recruits¹¹, between other factors, are all negatively impacting the success of a startup's development phase.

1 (Borgefors, 2017)

2 (Cardon, Stevens, 2004)

3 (Borgefors, 2017)

4 (Blank, 2013)

5 (Stoilkovska, Ilieva, Gjakovski, 2015)

6 (EYGM Limited, 2019)

7 (Eenmaa, 2018)

8 (*Ferraryi., 2019*)

9 (Kaiser, Müller, 2015)

10 (Leung, Zhang, Wong, Foo, 2006)

11 (Maschke, zu Knyphausen-Aufsess, 2012)

Research question and objectives

In fact, existing guidelines and general best practices may not be adapted or versatile enough to meet startup's particular requirements. Also, many of those researches are conducted abroad and may not reflect with precision the Swiss market's challenges nor startup's environment specificities. Then the research question addressed as follow :

How to optimize the Talent Acquisition Strategy and Recruitment Process in Swiss startups and young ventures to build a winning team

Firstly, the goal is to understand the recruitment challenges that Swiss startups are facing and analyse candidates' behaviour in order to identify gaps, correlations and most importantly improvement opportunities.

Then the objective is to provide Swiss startups with a flexible and easily-implementable detailed Recruitment Process, tailor-made for their needs in order to optimize their recruiting capabilities. Improvement in resources' efficiency (time and budget) is to be expected.

In addition, this project also aims at tackling the most important recruitment challenges that Swiss startups face by proposing adapted Talent Acquisition strategies.

Finally, supporting Swiss startups with efficient and realistic recommendations is expected to maximize their chances of success and, ultimately, supporting the Swiss economic development, innovation, quality of life as well as employment creation.

2. Literature review

In this section, essential terms related to this study will be addressed and defined. Further background and context will be presented as well as recruitment and HR related concepts to facilitate lecturers' comprehension.

2.1 Entrepreneurship, startups and other definitions

2.1.1 Entrepreneurship

Those who are called “entrepreneurs” are individuals that decide to create a new business, facing most of the risks and being granted by most of the rewards. Entrepreneurs are an essential piece of any capitalist economy, indeed they bring innovation and respond to market's needs with new or improved products or services. Notions of business ownership, innovation and leadership are the most common terms associated with entrepreneurship.¹² Professor Howard Stevenson, respected lecturer and researcher at Harvard Business School, defined entrepreneurship as “*the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled*”. This definition raises three different factors:

“Pursuit” - which emphasizes the idea that entrepreneurs have to rush in creating or at least showing progress and success in order to move their idea forward. This also accentuates the sense of relentless effort, determination and courage that features entrepreneurs.

“Opportunity” - which tries to characterize the added value from an entrepreneurial project's offering in one or more of the following non-exhaustive attributes: “1) pioneering a truly innovative product; 2) devising a new business model; 3) creating a better or cheaper version of an existing product; or 4) targeting an existing product to new sets of customers.”¹³

“Beyond resources controlled” – which underlines the fact that the majority of entrepreneurial projects will face financial constraints during the early stage of their development, at least. Regardless if they are internally or externally financed, entrepreneurs will have to minimize costs and maximize profits while budgeting for further development activities such as R&D, expansion, etc. The scarcity of resources coupled with the necessity to cut costs at the lowest often result in spending focused core operations only to the detriment of other essential activities such as recruitment.

¹² (Gedeon, 2010)

¹³ (Gedeon, 2010)

2.1.2 Startups

If the label “startups” is commonly used to define innovative and young companies, specialists and institutions struggle to agree on a consensus for its official definition. Investopedia suggest to refer to startups as :

“A young company founded by one or more entrepreneurs to develop a unique product or service and bring it to market. By its nature, the typical startup tends to be a shoestring operation, with initial funding from the founders or their friends and families.”¹⁴

This definition highlights the goal of the startups but also raise one of the main characteristic and concern that feature such companies: financial stretching. Indeed, regardless of their development stage (pre-seed, seed, growth, etc.), startups are almost by definition looking for external funding to support the evolution of the project and cope with financial distress. Startup are typically not financially independent and rely on external investment, money lenders such as banking institutions and other partners (venture capitals, business angels, incubator and accelerators, etc.).

This financial instability naturally pressures the other activities of the startup and tend to put all of its activities at risks. Indeed, this might generate negative impact on innovation, research & development, recruitment, partnering and marketing budget and operation’s expansion just to name a few.

In this project, startups’ characteristics that will be focused on are the following:

- 1) financial stretching
- 2) high-risk venture
- 3) fast-growing human capital

Preliminary findings gathered from literature review and interviews suggest that the recruitment challenges faced by startups, which constitute the core research question of the thesis, principally come from the combination of the three mentioned factors. Thus, other startups’ characteristics such as innovation factor or marketing budget will not be included in the scope of this research.

In fact, companies to which this research and proposed guidelines are addressed could perfectly not be labelled as “startup” but feature one or more mentioned critical factors and thus be concerned by this study.

¹⁴ (Fontinelle, 2020)

2.1.3 Business incubators

Incubators are institutions that propose a set of incubation services in order to create companies and support their development with the end goal of becoming successful and self-sustained businesses. Early stage startup can then have their project incubated for a period from 1 year to five years paying a rent or a membership fee. Depending on their structure, incubators may provide different facilities such as working areas (private or shared), equipment, material and administrative tools as well as other professional services.¹⁵ They also provide assistance to their incubated venture to raising funds, developing their activities and building a strong network.

Finally, they do provide mentoring and trainings programs to the entrepreneurs to raise their chances of success. Training programs are going to be the focus of the first market data collection in section 4.1.2.

Despite their presence in the market for several years, a consensus for incubator's definition is still to be decided. Two of the most popular and recent definitions are the following:

Firstly, a definition shared by the United Kingdom Business Incubation (UKBI) and German Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Technologiezentren (ADT):

“Business Incubation is a dynamic business development process. It is a term which covers a wide variety of processes which help to reduce the failure rate of early stage companies and speed the growth of companies which have the potential to become substantial generators of employment and wealth. A business incubator is usually a property with small work units which provide an instructive and supportive environment to entrepreneurs at start-up and during the early stages of businesses. Incubators provide three main ingredients for growing successful businesses - an entrepreneurial and learning environment, ready access to mentors and investors, visibility in the marketplace.”¹⁶

¹⁵ (Grimaldi, Grandi, 2005)

¹⁶ (Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse, Groen, 2012)

Then, a more classical and Anglo-Saxon definition published by the US National Business Incubation Association (NBIA):

“Business incubation is a dynamic process of business enterprise development. Incubators nurture young firms, helping them to survive and grow during the start-up period when they are most vulnerable. Incubators provide hands-on management assistance, access to financing and orchestrated exposure to critical business or technical support services. They also offer entrepreneurial firms shared office services, access to equipment, flexible leases and expandable space — all under one roof.” ¹⁷

In summary, incubators offer different services to early stage startups in order to maximize their chance of success and minimize their cost.

2.1.4 Business accelerators

Accelerators arrived on the market slightly recently and even though they serve similar objective than incubators (i.e. supporting startup company to develop their business and become independent), they do offer services in a more fast-paced and aggressive manner.

Accelerators have a more growth-oriented business model as they focus on high potential and scalable business that will deliver result in very short period of time, usually three to six months. They also require an equity participation in exchange of their service which are pretty similar to the incubators’ ¹⁸(offices, mentoring and coaching, access to network, etc.).

The combination of their business model and equity participation allow accelerators to generate quick returns on company that will succeed and limit expenses on companies that fail over a very short period of time. The selection process is also very picky to limit investment to companies that have high chances of success.

¹⁷ (Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse, Groen 2012)

¹⁸ (Bone, Allen, Haley 2017)

2.2 Education in incubators vs. accelerators

Although they share the same end goal but differs on features such as duration of program, cohorts, business model and selection process, training is one of the few service that incubators and accelerators have in common.

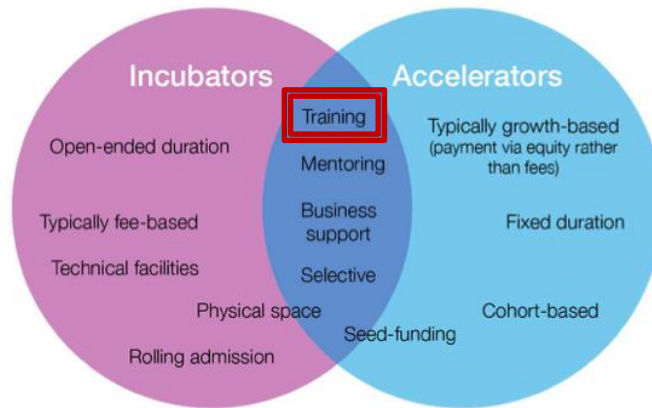


Figure 1 Overlapping feature between incubators and accelerators¹⁹

While incubators tend to propose ad-hoc courses offered by third-parties service provider such as consultant an expert, accelerators are characterized by intense and compact training programs. Incubator's classes are focus on early development subjects such as idea generation, product development, innovation, business planning, etc. Accelerators includes more global programs and aim at educating the founder in a very short period of time with a broad perspective in order to offer him/her with a toolkit of knowledge that he/she can then use to move the project forward rapidly.

Researches on incubation and acceleration training programs shows that accelerators are preferred by the founder due to its intense-mentorship approach. On the other hand, educational courses or talks offered by incubators tends to generate less optimized results.^{20 21}

Mentoring, also part of education programs, significantly vary between the different institutions and thus are voluntarily excluded from the scope of this project's analysis. Incubators and accelerators training programs offered in Switzerland are going to be mapped and analyzed in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 to determine to what extent courses on recruitment and talent acquisition are offered.

¹⁹ (Bone, Allen, Haley 2017)

²⁰ (Cohen 2013)

²¹ (Hackett, Dilts 2004)

2.3 Recruitment Process

Recruitment refers to all the activities aiming at attracting, screening, evaluating, selecting and hiring new employees to fill job vacancies within an organization. Even though this a well-known process and a study field that have been analyzed for decades, recruitment processes are defined and organized in several forms. To facilitate overall comprehension and implementation of suggested strategies, this project will focus on a 7-stages recruitment process which is the most commonly seen in literature review^{22 23} as well as in companies²⁴. Thus, researches pursued in this study have been oriented towards the mentioned framework and recommendations have been shaped to fit within it. The seven stages, ordered chronologically, are defined as follow:



Figure 2 the 7 steps of Recruitment Process

All the presented steps can be enhanced by an optimized Talent Acquisition strategy, as explained in the following section 2.3.2

22 (Breugh 2016)

23 (Creative Commons license 2016)

24 (Athuralya 2019)

1. Identifying needs – defining the needs of the company in terms of hard and soft skills to define which profile would most likely succeed in the given role. Educational background, professional experience as well as personality traits should all be included in a job creation's assessment.
2. Drafting the job description/advert – Writing the job advert that will feature the position to fill as well as the type of candidate needed. Level of education, desired experience, job-level, key activities and responsibility should all, among other details, be displayed.
3. Publishing the advert – Choice of the publishing strategy (internal vs. external posting) and through which channel (company's website, social media, job board, universities, etc.)
4. Screening – Review of collected applications. CV's should be compared to job description's criteria's to define which profile is matching or not. Selection of a short-list of candidates that will be invited for interviewing will be produced along with back-up or "wildcard" candidates. Indeed, candidates with interesting profile but representing a mismatch for the given job opening should be highlighted for future opportunities.
5. Interviewing – Meeting with the best candidates. This is the best occasion to check up their experience and assess their hard and soft skills to match the job description. This is also the best opportunity for the candidate to get in touch with company's values and benefits with regards to competition.
6. Selecting and offering – Final selection of the preferred candidate who offered the best combination of hard and soft skill along with personality fit during the recruitment process. This is the last chance to "sell the company and convince the candidate to accept the job offer. Negotiations are very common to discuss the exact term of the contract prior definitive offer. If negotiation are successful for both sides and inquiries are met, a formal offer is presented to the selected candidate. It is recommended to select back-ups in case of offer reseals.
7. Onboarding – Official welcoming of the new employees. It is important to accompany him/her during the initial period. An onboarding plan is recommended to make sure that every aspect of the new member's integration is covered (introduction to the team, visit of the facilities, job training, presentation of company's values, etc.)

2.4 Talent Acquisition

Recruiting people is not just about filling positions, at least not when the objective is to build a winning team. In fact, too many companies still rely on traditional recruitment processes and techniques to fill up their vacant positions. In an era where globalization is at its peak and competition is fierce, settle for past industries' standards can lead to a huge increase in time and money spend in recruiting. Especially in Switzerland where the market is flooded with very competitive companies and unemployment rate is extremely low (2.6% in June 2020²⁵), companies need to plan and elaborate new strategies to optimize their recruitment capabilities.

Talent Acquisition is a set of concepts and strategies in order to gain competitive advantage in the recruitment process. Deloitte refers to it as “a strategic approach to identifying, attracting and onboarding top talent to efficiently and effectively meet dynamic business needs.²⁶ Indeed, the objective is to support companies' HR professional in attracting, hiring and retaining the best workforce (=talents). Talent Acquisition is often confused with Recruiting, although they refer to two different concepts. Indeed, the Talent Acquisition encompass Recruiting and its activities, as presented in the previous section, while trying to support its implementation by improving candidates attraction and hire.

Talent Acquisition in a startup context makes even more sense when looking at the two main outputs that it can generate:

Cutting costs – Following startups' founders primary strategy, especially in early stages, to minimize cost and maximize profit, Talent Acquisition strategies can drastically contribute in achieving this goal. Indeed, it has be showcases that implementation of such strategy represent an important source of cost reduction and improvement of operations (recruitment) performance which result in a high Talent Acquisition's ROI.²⁷Cost reduction will typically come from cuts in agency's spending, increase in recruitment efficiency, decrease in attrition and implementation of various cost-saving measures.²⁸

25 (Barrow, Mosley 2005)

26 (Parthasarathy, Pingle 2014)

27 (Lermusiaux, Hartley 2005)

28 (Parthasarathy, Pingle 2014)

Increase applications – Job opportunities in startups are usually complex and require high, sometime even niche, sets of skill in order to perform well. Moreover, combined with startup's lack of attractiveness, especially in early stages, in confront of more established or well-known companies can lead to an huge shortage in applications. By relying on an optimized Talent Acquisition strategy, startups can access to those specific talent via modern tools and attract them using social medias, employer branding initiatives and others "job-selling" strategies.

To conclude, an optimized Talent Acquisition strategy should aim at improving marketability and efficiency that will lead to a faster as well as cost-efficient overall recruitment process. It should work in symbiosis with the different recruitment processes' steps presented in the previous section and enhance them. The focus on a given Talent Acquisition strategy should be aligned with company's objectives and tackle their main recruitment challenges.

3. Methodology

3.1 *Project outline and milestones*

The project has been spitted into the four following milestones:

Research proposal: After preliminary researches and exploring different subjects, the final subject of this Bachelor Project has been decided and confirmed on December 6th 2019. Completion of the final version of the Research Proposal has been done and handed out to the mentor on December 16th 2019 for official grading.

Project Report: To follow up with the literature review, qualitative interviews will be organized in order to assess Swiss Startups and compare theoretical and/or foreign knowledge to our domestic market. Then quantitative surveys will be send to broaden the assessment's scope. Afterwards, other interviews will be organized with HR professionals to collect their reactions as well as opinions on potential hypothesis and solutions. Naturally, the core body of thesis has been written and improved along the research process. Official submission of the report is set for Wednesdays, 3rd of June 2020.

Oral Defense: The oral defense will be held at Haute Ecole de Gestion de Genève on Wednesday, 17th of June 2020 in front of a jury composed of the thesis' mentor, Mr. Ansar Hafil, as well as an external juror.

Final archival copy: Following minors corrections based on the comments of the jury both on the report and the oral defense, the final archival copy is provided no later than 10 days after the oral defense, i.e. on Saturday 27th of June 2020.

3.2 Data collection method

Data collection method has been divided into 6 steps with the objective to begin with a broaden and contextual perspective and move forward towards more specialized gap analyses and research' scope.

Context – A complete literature review will be gathered and analyzed in order to define context as well as identify potential issues and orientate first discussions. To follow up with the literature review, qualitative interviews will be organized in order to assess Swiss Startups and compare theoretical and/or foreign knowledge to our domestic market.

Gap analysis - To follow up with the literature review, qualitative interviews will be organized in order to assess Swiss Startups and compare theoretical and/or foreign knowledge to our domestic market. In parallel, two quantitative surveys will be send to broaden the assessment's scope and assess startups as well as potential candidates.

In depth discussion – A second and final round of interviews will be organized with HR professionals to collect their reactions as well as opinions on potential hypothesis and solutions. More in-depth issues are going to be tackled.

Actual testing of the assumptions and proposed solutions have been excluded from the scope of this project due to timing and sanitary constraints due to COVID-19 outbreak. A few more months would have been needed in order to have comparable data and start evaluating the quality of the presented recommendations. In addition, startups that do not have recommended recruitment's KPIs implemented and well monitored (which represent the majority of the surveyed panel), would have need to go through the implementation of a data monitoring system before being able to produce sufficient and tangible data.

Results of Literature Review as well as the 5 different fields data collection are presented respectively in Sections 2 and 4.

Discussions, which will be structured as of the 7-step Recruitment Process as well as Talent Acquisition strategies, are presented in Section 5.

Summary of recommendations as well as the final conclusion of the project are presented in Section 6.

3.2.1 Literature Review

To get a first idea of the current situation in Switzerland, market data has been gathered from publicly available sources (articles, research papers, etc.) as well as from private sources such as incubators, startups, etc.. Results will be discussed in section 2.

3.2.2 Assessment of Swiss academic and training programs

Academic and professional programs from universities as well as from incubators and accelerators will be assessed. The goal is to map and then evaluate the solutions offered in Switzerland to the startups facing challenges with their recruitment activities.

3.2.3 First round of interviews (Startup's ecosystem)

In order to compare the preliminary findings, a first round of interviews is organized to collect insights from different members of the startup's ecosystem (founders, incubators, consultants, experts, etc.). This will help getting their opinions as well as experience in order to consolidate preliminary findings and orient the future researches. Interviewing professionals coming from different industry, with different profiles and objectives as well as from different organizations (startups, recruitment agencies, incubators/accelerators and consultants) will participate in creating a 360° view of the research topic and gather a more exhaustive pallet of insight as possible. This first set of interviews will provide extended guidance towards the design process of the two questionnaire.

3.2.4 Survey 1 “How to build a winning team for Swiss Startups”

Thanks to the data collected from the interviews and the literature review, a first survey is conducted in order to identify what are the critical factors towards recruiting in Switzerland. Startups' talent acquisition strategies will be evaluated and processes will be assessed to see if they meet the industry's standards and companies' expectations.

3.2.5 Survey 2 “Meeting candidates' expectations”

Potential candidates' feedback are gathered in order to understand their need and design Talent Acquisition strategies to fulfil them. Understanding its personas' (i.e. candidates) behaviour is a key element to any acquisition strategy.

3.2.6 Second round on interview (HR professionals)

A final round of interview is organized in order to collect feedback on preliminary hypothesis and to discuss in-depth strategies.

4. Results

As mentioned in section 3.2 Data collection method, field researches have been divided into 6 different steps. Those different inputs are all going to be used to build first assumptions and feed analysis to finally become proper strategic recommendations. Below are the results of each part of the data collection in a chronological order.

4.1 Assessment of Swiss academic and training programs

Following the problems identified during the primary researches and in the literature review, the objective was to audit what the different Swiss institutions are offering to the startups in terms of training programs in order to help them overcome their challenges.

The goal of this assessment is to evaluate if the recruitment needs and challenges faced by the Swiss startups have been well-identified and, more importantly, if they are being tackled by the different academic, state and/or private institutions' training programs. This will also contribute to build a general feeling about how serious the mentioned challenges have been judged by those specialized institutions by comparing their different programs and observe if the mentioned topic is covered or not, plus how redundant it is comparing to other topics like, business planning, lean management, etc.

The first step has been to identify and manually map all the different institutions (academic degrees and then incubator/accelerators training programs) before running further analysis.

The mapping process has shown that at Swiss level, the country offers:

- About 12 academic programs which are focus on Entrepreneurship either as a whole or as the major option. (Other non-specific programs with minor option in entrepreneurship or equivalent fields have been voluntarily excluded from the mapping process as there are not designed to tackle every subject around entrepreneurship in an exhaustive manner.)
- About 40 dedicated incubators and accelerators present in the majority of cantons but with a non-negligible concentration in the cities of Basel, Geneva, Lausanne, and Zurich.

(Please note this list is meant to be as exhaustive as possible but there is a possibility that some incubators and/or accelerators may not have been identified.) Further results and findings will be discussed respectively in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 below.

4.1.1 Swiss academic programs on Entrepreneurship

The mapping of the different programs focuses on entrepreneurship have been made by looking at the swiss official source for professional orientation (orientation.ch - by the SDBB-CSFO, which are mandated by the cantons) as well as on the web more generally.

The scope of this mapping does include all the official academic programs present in Switzerland graded and awarded by ECTS credits with compliance to the Bologna Agreement. It of course includes all level of higher education (i.e. Bachelor, Master, CAS, DAS). Other types of courses with different grading systems or certifications have been voluntarily excluded in order to keep a fair and comparable approach between the programs.

The repartition of the 12 programs is the following :

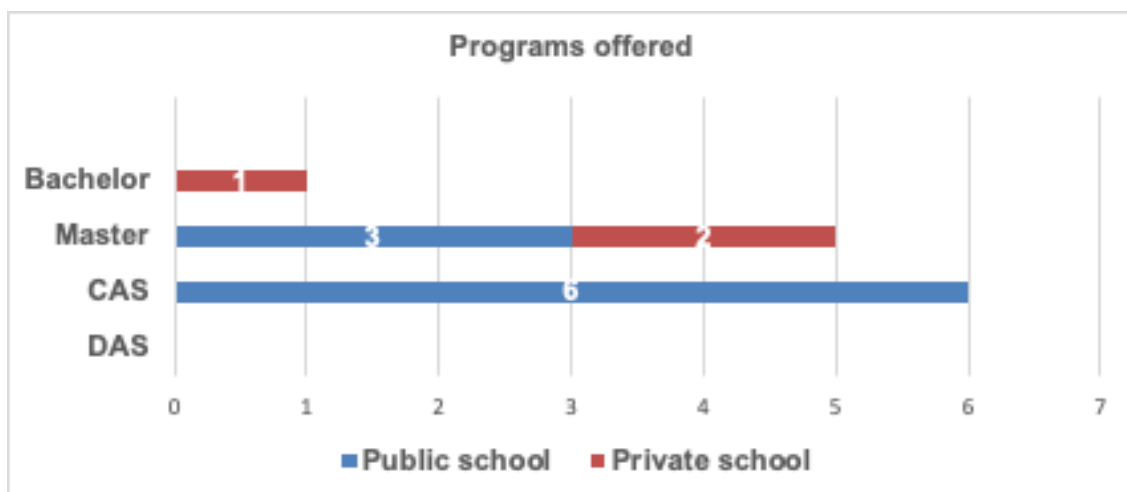


Figure 3 Entrepreneurship programs offered in Switzerland

The two most represented program levels are Master and CAS with respectively five and six programs. No DAS has been censused and only one Bachelor is offered at Swiss level by a private school (i.e. Geneva Business School).

An undergraduate that would like to begin its higher education (Bachelor) with an entrepreneurship program has only one option to choose from and can only undertake it in a private school as no programs are offered by the Swiss public education system. This might discourage potential students as they cannot choose the institution (Geneva Business School) nor the price (CHF 77'850.-) nor the location (Geneva).

A graduate with a Bachelor degree might have a fair number of options if he/she choose to continue his/her education in the Entrepreneurship field. Programs are offered in both public and private schools and can be followed in three languages (English, German and French) located eight different locations across the countries as well as online.

As previously mentioned, 12 entrepreneurship academic programs have in identified and manually mapped as presented in figure:

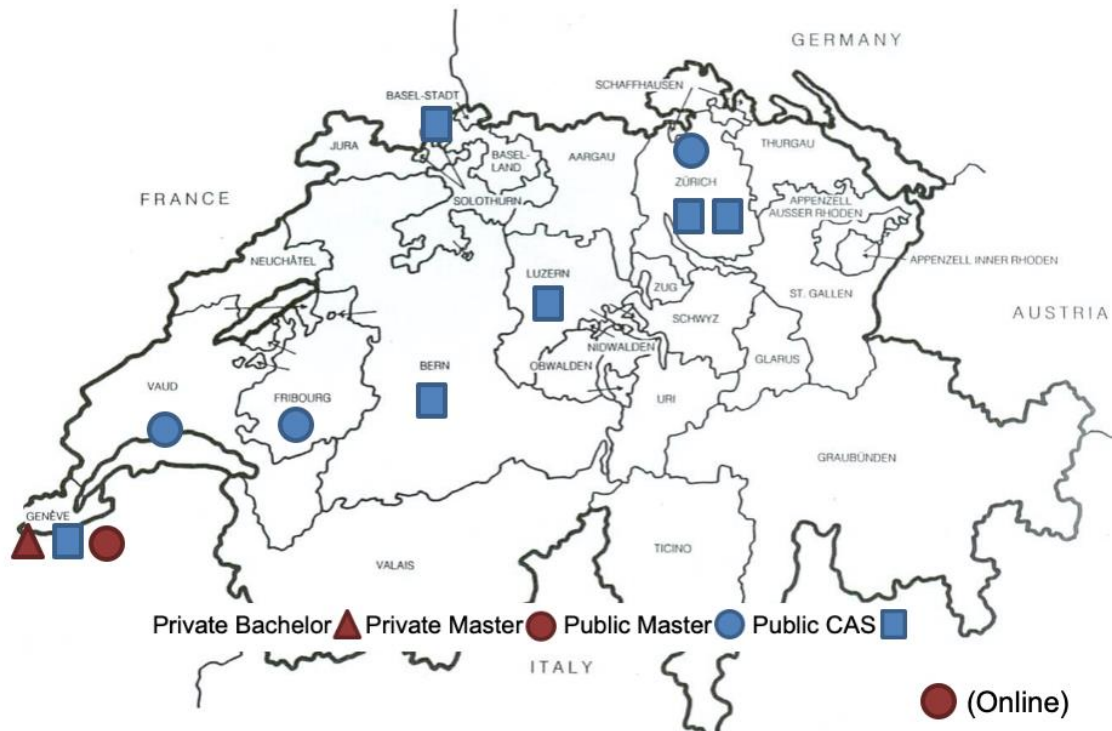


Figure 4 Map of Swiss academic programs on Entrepreneurship 29

29 Source: adapted from <https://images.app.goo.gl/1JvPjpee67ZjRNYJA>

Each programs' content has been analyzed in order to identify which one include recruitment or any related topic as part of their syllabus. The results have been very poor as only one program, the MBA in Entrepreneurship & Innovation offered by CREA INSEEC University, covers the topic with its "Team Creation" module. Only one out of the twelves programs teaching how to create a winning team come out as a disappointment as it has been identified by many experts, as mentioned in the literature, as being particularly key in startup's chance of success.

Title deserved	Course on recruitment?
Master of Science (MSc) in Business Administration with a Specialization in Innovation and Entrepreneurship	No
Master of Science HES-SO in Business Administration, Major in Entrepreneurship	No
Master of Science MSc in Management, Technology and Entrepreneurship	No
Certificate of Advances Studies in Kulturmanagement-Startup	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Cultural Entrepreneurship	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies FH in Entrepreneurship	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies HES-SO Kick off - Entrepreneurship and Self marketing for designers and creatives	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Global Social Entrepreneurship	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Biomedical Entrepreneurship	No
Bachelor of International Management with a Specialization in Entrepreneurship	No
MBA Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Yes
Bachelor of Science (B Sc) in Economics and Management	No

4.1.2 Swiss incubators and accelerators' training programs.

As stated in section 4.1.1, 40 active incubators and accelerators have been identified in Switzerland. The complete list of incubators and accelerators identified during this project is available in Appendix 2.

From the 40 identified incubators and accelerators, only 12 (30%) do offer a clear training programs and communicate clearly about its content. Other institutions might offer different type of support such as mentoring, coaching or consulting but for the scope of this research, they will not be clear enough for evaluation. Indeed, such type of assistance might be done in a responsive approach rather than with a teaching and/or preventive. Moreover, their precise content is difficult to identified because mentoring or coaching in general, as stated in the companies' website, might include more or less anything and in any form.

Following the reason mentioned above, an in-depth analysis have been proceeded on the 12 official training programs only. The goal of this analysis is, similarly to the academic programs, to find out if the recruitment / talent acquisition is addressed and to what extent.

The panels include training programs of the following institutions: F10; Fintech Fusions; Genilem; Innosuisse; Innovaud (through Platinn); Kickstart Accelerator; La Business Factory; Neonomia; Rising Star Accelerator; Startup Academy; The Ark; Virtual Institute for Open Systems.

The result has been very surprising as not a single training program does feature courses on recruitment nor on how to efficiently build a team. To have a comparative outlook and ascertain that the lack of training content on recruitment topics is not an anomaly, an analysis of 9 others topics has been pursued as well. The selection of topics have been done following literature review of startups' critical success factors analysis and by comparing the different training program with each other and highlighting the most recurrent topics. Bringing the total of assessed subject to ten different topics with their respective registered appearances (out of 12) presented as follow:



Figure 5 Number of appearances by topic

A more detailed and comparative view is also presented as following:

		Training programs' topics										Topic(s) covered by training program
		Recruitment	Intellectual Property	Goal setting	Product Innovation	Technological knowledge	Distribution channels	Communication/ Negotiation skills	Partnering	Marketing Experience	Business planning	
Incubators / Accelerators	F10	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
	Fintech Fusion	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	1
	Genilem	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	3
	Innosuisse	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
	Innovaud (through Platinn)	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
	Kickstart Accelerator	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	4
	La Business Factory	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
	Neonomia	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	4
	Rising star accelerator	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	3
	Startup academy	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3
	The Ark	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
	Virtual Institute for Open Systems	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
	Nb. of trainings	0	2	3	3	4	6	8	9	9	10	
% of topic coverage	0%	17%	25%	25%	33%	50%	67%	75%	75%	83%		
Color coding	0-24% = red / 25-49% = orange / 50-74% = yellow / 75-100% = green											

Figure 6 Comparative analysis of incubator/accelerators programs

From this analysis, the recruitment course comes out as the only one left behind as the other topics are all covered minimum two times.

The average appearance for a given topic is 5,4 times, with an even proportion (5 vs.5) of topics below and above average.

4.2 First round of interviews (Startups' ecosystem)

A first round of interviews has been organized and ran in order to get a first level of knowledge and general feeling about the research topic. The objective was to collect feedbacks and experiences from the different stakeholders that startups can rely on in order to help them grow. Interviewing professionals coming from different industry, with different profiles and objectives as well as from different organizations (startups, recruitment agencies, incubators/accelerators and consultants) will participate in creating a 360° view of the research topic and gather a more exhaustive pallet of insight as possible. This first set of interviews represent an important step before moving forward with field data collections and have been very helpful and determinant during the design process of the two questionnaire.

In order to be more agile and adapt to the interviewees' answers, only a limited set of questions has been defined beforehand. The below mentioned focus areas have been covered in the different interviews with slight adaptations in terms of tone and content.

- What are the biggest challenges that the interviewees have witnessed in startups when it comes to recruitment and talent acquisition?
- Do the interviewees feel or judge that the startups they have been exposed to were well prepared and/or aware of their recruitment challenges?
- How do the startups handle or try to tackle their different challenges in recruitment? What has been proven to be working and what has not ?

In total, four interviews have been completed to meet the first round' collection goals. The interviewees are the following:

- Suzanne Paris - International Recruitment & Talent Acquisition Professional, Founder and Business Manager of Gracia 101
- Ansar Hafil, Business Consultant and Mentor of this bachelor thesis.
- Roman Bruegger, Managing Director of Swiss EdTech Collider
- Matthew Lashmar, Managing Director of MassChallenge

Findings of the different interviews will be used in the analysis to develop the appropriate recruitment process and talent acquisition strategy in section 5.1 and 5.2 respectively. Complete transcripts of the interviews are available in appendix 7.

4.3 Survey 1 "How to build a winning team for Swiss Startups"

Following the discussions with the startups and the professional presents in their ecosystem, a questionnaire has been designed and sent to startups' funder in order to collect quantitative data. The questions of this questionnaire have been designed following the questions marks raised during the literature review phase and following the inputs of the interviewees.

- The goal of this survey is to assess the following topics:
- Are startups' founders aware of the challenges they might face when it comes to recruiting and do they know the consequences of them?
- How and by whom are recruitment activities handled?
- Are there any talent acquisition and/or recruitment process in place?
- What are the different KPIs, if any, measured by the startups regarding recruiting activities
- Audit the current recruitment strategies of the startups and identify potential gaps, opportunities and trends.

This survey also aims at collecting information directly from startups and in a larger scale than the one covered during the first round-interview phase. It has also made possible for founders to raise any additional concern and raise the challenges they are actually facing.

Actual results and findings will be presented in the following section 4.3.1 and full survey resume is available at Appendix 4.

4.3.1 Result of Survey 1

4.3.1.1 Did you know that recruiting talents is often listed as the first barrier to a startup's development?

Yes	26
No	6

Table 1 Recruiting talents as the first barrier to a startup's development

4.3.1.2 For how many years the startup has been active?

Less than 1 year	6
1-3 years	17
4-7 years	9
More than 8 years	0

Table 2 For how many years the startup has been active?

4.3.1.3 In which region are you based?

Swiss-french part	22
Swiss-german part	8
Europe	1
Outside of Europe	1
Swiss-italian	0

Table 3 In which region are you based?

4.3.1.4 What is the size of your startup? (approx. number of employees)

less than 5 employees	19
5-20 employees	13
20-50 employees	0
50-150 employees	0
150-500 employees	0
More than 500 employees	0

Table 4 What is the size of your startup?

4.3.1.5 How many employees did you recruit in the last three years?

	Last 3 years	Next 3 years
0 employee	3	5
1-5 employees	18	8
6-10 employees	6	9
11-20 employees	3	8
21-50 employees	0	2
51-100 employees	0	0
+101 employees	0	0

Table 5 How many employees did you recruit in the last three years?

4.3.1.6 Has your company already raised money through VCs, Business Angels, Incubators, etc.?

Yes	5
No	27

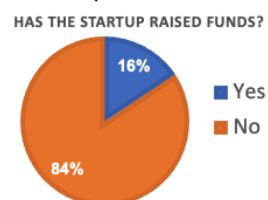


Table 6 Raise of funds

Figure 7 Raise of funds

4.3.1.7 Who is in charge of the recruitment process?

CEO/Founder	23
HR Manager or Specialist	4
A non-HR manager or employee	3
External agency/consultant	2

Table 7 Who is in charge of the recruitment process?

WHO IS CHARGE OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

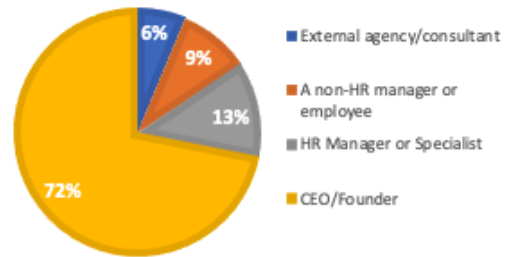


Figure 8 Who is charge of the recruitment process?

4.3.1.8 What is the company's level of HR knowledge

No HR professional	21
HR certificate / HR bachelor level	6
Some previous HR background	5
HR federal diploma / HR master level	0

Table 8 What is the company's level of HR knowledge

LEVEL OF HR KNOWLEDGE IN STARTUPS



Figure 9 What is the company's level HR knowledge

4.3.1.9 “When starting to recruit for a position, my company already...”

Has established company's set of values to identify the best fitting candidate	26	81,3%
Has established a clear job success profile to identify the required hard and soft skills	18	56,3%
Have already designed an onboarding/training plan for new employees and assigned it to someone	14	43,8%
Have a standard contract template for new employees	13	40,6%
Has put in writing standard interview questions (job requirements, candidate expectations, etc.)	7	21,9%
Performed a salary benchmark	6	18,8%
Estimated the time to hire for that particular position (recruitment process, work permit, resign period, etc.)	6	18,8%
Has a descent amount of interested candidates in their pipeline/network	5	15,6%
Assessed the job market for that particular position/job category	3	9,4%
Evaluated the potential costs of hiring internally vs. costs of an agency/consultant	3	9,4%

Table 9 “When starting to recruit for a position, my company already...”

4.3.1.10 Which recruitment KPI(s) does your company measure?

No KPIs on recruitment activities	22	68,8%
Time to fill	5	15,6%
Quality of hire	5	15,6%
Cost per hire	5	15,6%
Candidate job satisfaction	4	12,5%
Number of interviews to offer	2	6,3%
Source of hire	1	3,1%
First-year attrition	1	3,1%
Hiring manager satisfaction	1	3,1%
Applicants per opening	0	0%
Offer acceptance rate	0	0%

Table 10 Which recruitment KPIs does your company measure?

4.3.1.11 Based on your personal opinion, do you feel that your company has a clear and efficient Recruitment Process in place?

1* rating	2* rating	3* rating	4* rating	5* rating	6* rating	7* rating	8* rating	9* rating	10* rating
3	6	8	5	2	2	3	0	1	2

Average: 4,1

Table 11 Startup's auto-evaluation on Recruitment Process

4.3.1.12 Where does your company advertise their new job openings?

Job boards	24
Company's website	23
LinkedIn	22
Word of mouth	14
Universities or schools	10
Social medias	9
Newspapers	5
Alumni networks	4
Directly in other countries	0

Table 12 Startups job ads' publishing channels

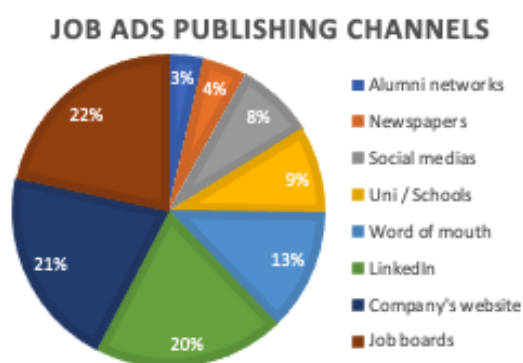


Figure 10 Startups job ads' publishing channels

4.3.1.13 What can your company offer/showcase to their potential candidates?

	Offer	Showcase	Variation (O minus S)
An exciting project/company	30	29	1
Flexible working	24	14	10
Fast career growth within the company	14	11	3
Work for a Sustainable project/company	7	7	0
Higher benefits than the average	3	2	1
Higher salary than competitions' average	2	1	1
Long term job security	0	0	0

Table 13 Startup's advantages offered and showcased

4.3.1.14 On average, how many applications does your company receive per new job opening?

- 20 applications	16
20-50 applications	14
50-100 applications	0
100-200 applications	1
+200 applications	1

Table 14 How many application per new job opening

4.3.1.15 Does your company usually hire:

Candidates based in Switzerland	28
Candidates based in Europe	7
Candidate based outside of Europe	2

Table 15 Source of hiring

WHERE DO STARTUPS SOURCE CANDIDATES

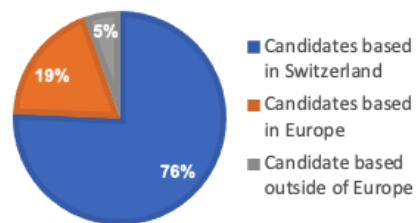


Figure 11 Source of hiring

4.3.1.16 What type(s) of contract does your company usually offers?

Temporary contracts	26
Freelance contracts	17
Permanent contracts	14
Internships	10
Commission-type contracts	9

Table 16 Type of contract offered

TYPE OF CONTRACT OFFERED

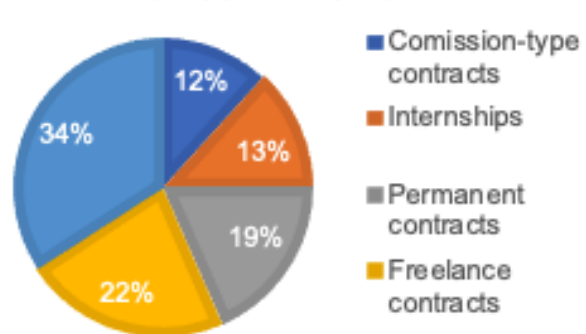


Figure 12 Type of contract offered

4.3.1.17 When given their job offer, does your candidates...

All decline your offer (0-10% acceptance rate)	1
Majorly decline your offer (10-40% of acceptance rate)	5
Fair mix of decline and acceptance (40-60% of acceptance rate)	16
Majorly accept your offer (60-90% acceptance rate)	7
All accept your offer (90-100% acceptance rate)	3

Table 17 Offer acceptance rate

4.3.1.18 For which reason(s) did your candidates declined offers?

They accepted an offer from a more "famous" company	19
Salary expectations were not met	18
The recruitment process took so long and they already accepted another offer	16
They did not mentioned it	15
They accepted another job that matched their "job's activities/responsibilities" better	7

Table 18 Reasons for offer refusals



Figure 13 Reasons for offer refusals

4.3.1.19 Based on your personal opinion, do you feel that your company has a well-defined and effective Talent Acquisition strategy?

1* rating	2* rating	3* rating	4* rating	5* rating	6* rating	7* rating	8* rating	9* rating	10* rating
0	6	12	4	2	2	2	1	0	3

Average: 4,7

Table 19 Startups' auto-evaluation on Talent Acquisition

4.3.1.20 Please select the TOP 3 barriers that you feel prevents your company from recruiting effectively.

Lack of applications	24
High salary wages	17
Lack of Recruitment and/or HR knowledge within your company	14
Identifying the right candidate (hard and soft skills)	13
Lack of "attractiveness" from your company versus big companies	12
Complexity of Swiss Labour laws / administrative process	4
Lack of time to invest in recruiting properly	4
Lack of budget to invest in recruiting properly	4

Table 20 Startups' TOP 3 barriers to recruitment



Figure 14 Startups' TOP 3 barriers to recruitment

4.4 Survey 2 “Meeting candidates’ expectations”

In parallel of the first survey « How to build a winning team for Swiss Startups », a second survey has been designed to assess candidates’ expectations. The data collected will help understand candidates’ behavior’s in Switzerland. Then once the results are analyzed and compared with the first survey, they might strongly contribute to fulfill strategic gaps of startups in terms of recruitment approach by designing an optimal recruitment process and a candidate focus-talent acquisition strategy.

This survey has been addressed to everyone in Switzerland within legal age bracket to work in order to know more about :

- Are they interested in working for startups? Why ? Why not?
- What are their perception (good and bad) of startups?
- What do they value when looking for a new job?
- Where and how do they look for new job opportunities?
- What do they expect from a recruitment process?

Actual results and findings will be presented in the following section 4.4.1 and full survey resume is available at Appendix 5.

4.4.1 Result of Survey 2

4.4.1.1 How old are you ?

-25 years old	26
25-40 years old	36
40-60 years old	5
60+ years old	0

Table 21 How old are you?

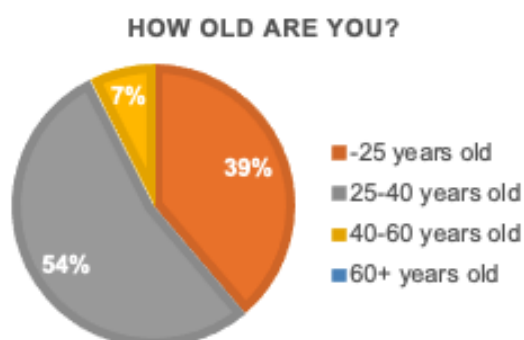


Figure 15 How old are you?

4.4.1.2 Where are you based?

Swiss romande	57
Swiss-german part	5
Europe	4
Outside of Europe	1
Swiss-italian part	0



Table 22 Where are you based?

Figure 16 Where are you based?

4.4.1.3 What are the TOP 3 features YOU look for when applying for a new job?

Fast career growth within the company	42
Flexible working (home office, hours, etc.)	37
Being part of an uncommon and exciting project/company	32
Higher salary than competitions' average	29
Higher benefits than the average (company car, relocation, allowances, etc)	19
Long term job security	19
Work for a sustainable project/company	14
Previous employees' comments on the company	12



Table 23 TOP 3 features candidates look for in jobs

Figure 17 TOP 3 features candidates look for in jobs

4.4.1.4 What are the 3 most important elements for you during a recruitment process?

Fast reply (either rejection or invitation to an interview)	45
Receive clear insight about what your potential job will be	43
Know the salary range / benefits the beginning of the process	32
Quality feedback from the interviewer	31
Fast recruitment process overall	24
Learn a lot from the company's activities and values	22
Being invited to the company's office	6
Having the interview in a neutral environment (café, park, etc.)	0

Table 24 Preferred 3 elements in recruitment process



Figure 18 Preferred 3 elements in recruitment process

4.4.1.5 Where do you look for job opportunities on a regular basis?

LinkedIn	53
Job platforms (Jobup, Monster, etc.)	50
Directly on companies' websites	46
Word of mouth	13
Events, forum, etc.	10

Table 25 Candidates' preferred publishing channels

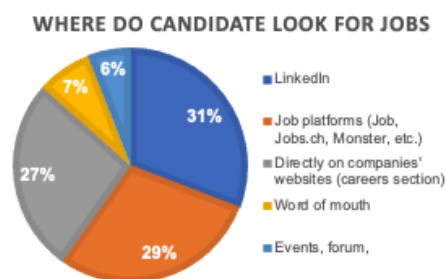


Figure 19 Candidates' preferred publishing channels

4.4.1.6 How long do you expect the whole recruitment process to last in order to meet your expectations?

less than 2 weeks	14
between 2 and 4 weeks	32
between 4 and 6 weeks	14
between 6 and 8 weeks	5
timing is not important	2

Table 26 Recruitment's expected duration

EXPECTED DURATION OF RECRUITMENT PROCESS

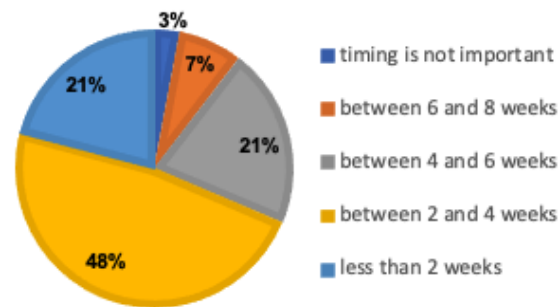


Figure 20 Recruitment's expected duration

4.4.1.7 Would you be interested in working for a startup?

Yes	21
No	17
Maybe	10

Table 27 Interest in working for a startup

INTERESTED IN JOINING A STARTUP?

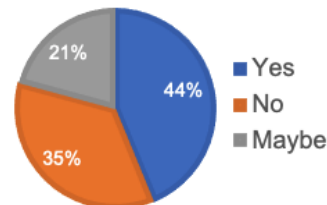


Figure 21 Interest in working for a startup

4.4.1.8 Why would you be interested in working for a startup?

Because it can be interesting as we will be in touch with everyone within the company with whom we will develop and improve our soft as well as hard skills. We will learn quicker and more things.
If it's a new idea a new concept I would love and be proud to be part of something exceptional
Learning opportunities
Diverse activities, taking part in its growth
Because you are able to give your ideas and thoughts
Fast environment and lot of opportunities within the company
New challenge

Give opportunities
High innovation
because of the exciting daily basis they should live
I can have the opportunity to be involved in a lot of thing and learn a lot
I already co-founded a startup and would like to found one completely by myself.
Its an unique opportunity
I would like to be part of challenging projects
Not applicable
fast environment, challenging
To get a first experience
Had already worked for one. Being able to work on a lot of differents topics and seing the results. The feeling of working with lot of motivated people (more than in a usual company) that want to go in the same direction is just perfect
Dynamism and collaboration
For an exciting project
Feeling more valued and having more impact than in a big corporation
Fast growth opportunities
bring in my knowledge and have real impact
It has growth potential, you can take responsibilities fast, develop a lot of skills and projects tend to be more dynamic and interesting
a different experience

Out of your comfort zone
Big potential
More impact in company's decisions
I think it's cool
It can be a good experience
more challenging and we can grow faster in the company
It gives you more responsibility and the opportunity to work for an exciting project
If I receive stocks
Because it involves starting from the beginning and leads to creativity, brand new ideas

Table 28 Why would candidates be interested in startups?

4.4.1.9 Why would you not be interested in working for a startup?

I don't have a long term security
Not in line with my career path
No
Instability
Lower salary
Because job opportunities are most of the times less attractive and wages considerably lower than in larger established companies.

Table 29 Why would candidate not be interested in startups?

4.5 Second round of interviews (HR professionals)

After collecting and running a first analysis of the first round-interviews as well as the two survey, a second round of interviews has been organized.

For this second round, the interviews were addressed to HR professionals (Recruiters, HR Managers, Talent Acquisition Manager) working or having experience in dealing with Swiss startups or growing ventures.

The goal of this second interview session is to discuss, collect feedbacks as well as opinions of the different HR professionals on the results of the two questionnaires. Their comments will then orient or consolidate the discussion and the recommendation sections of this paper. Having expert's point of view in this case is essential to confirm that recommendations addressed to the startups are making sense and that they comply with Swiss HR regulations (employment laws, data privacy laws, etc.) as well as best practices.

In total, two interviews have been completed to meet the second round's collection goals. The interviewees are the following:

- Alexandre Etienne, Talent Acquisition Partner at Nextthink
- Lamia El Afani, Talent Acquisition Partner at UiPath

5. Discussion

5.1 Recruitment process

5.1.1 Identifying hiring needs

As presented in section 2.4.1 of the literature review, every recruitment process should begin with a clear and precise identification and evaluation of the hiring need, mainly in terms of education level, core competences and experiences as well as soft skills.

From the data collected in Survey 1, different metrics suggest that startups do not run the necessary preliminary analysis to evaluate and confirm an hiring need in the first place. Indeed, only 3 out of 32 startups (9.4 %) assessed the job market for the given role and only 6 out of 32 (18,8%) performed a salary benchmark. Those are essential prerequisites in order to evaluate in what form the startups can acquire the identified need as well how it should define it. Defining clearly the job role will prevent organizational problem among the team's member as well as mitigate the uncertainty of hiring an external resource. Unfortunately, this issues have been confirmed by the interviewees such as Mr. Hafil who declared:

“And soon they realize, unfortunately, that when they were deciding to hire somebody; that they hadn't properly defined the role...that job role if you like, that's the first issue, No clear definition of jobs role, responsibilities and goals.” Hafil, 2020

A wrongfully evaluated hiring might also cause financial linked to the hiring and firing budget spent on the given resource. *Then it is strongly recommended for startups to start their recruitment process by defining a clear job success profile.*

5.1.1.1 Type of contracts

The type of contract might vary following the type of need, its availability on the market, the budget allocated to its acquiring, etc. The following chart demonstrate that Swiss startups offer a pretty equilibrated contract's type repartition.

The recommendation is for startups is to select the type of contract that fit their current and potential future needs. Short or flexible contract are preferred due to the uncertain nature of Startup's activities development.



Figure 22 Type of contract offered

5.1.1.2 Type of profiles

Generally, for startup it is recommended to focus on generalist type of profile during the early stage of the startup's development. Then, hiring specialist to support the company's growth might be appropriate. This strategy, as presented by both startup's expert Mr. Bruegger and Mr. Lashmar, focuses on mitigating uncertainty risk caused by startups' nature whereas needs, objectives and resource might evaluate quite rapidly and unexpectedly.

The earlier on you have people who are very generalist, and later on you have people who are much more specialist...If you're getting into scale up, it can be a very different game. Lashmar, 2020

5.1.1.3 Managing hiring flows

The unstable nature of startups might lead into high flows fluctuations, especially high increases, in term of recruitment needs. Indeed, startups might get funded or hit high market responses for their products and this will lead to an urgent increase in human capital. Then, two critical issues might submerge;

The first one is linked to market availability of required talent. Indeed, as highlighted by Mr. Bruegger, right talents rarely find themselves available at required time.

When you need the person at the right time, usually they're not available. You see candidates, but you can't get them because they still stuck in their current position.

This is also accentuate in the Swiss market due to its efficient economy as well as its very low unemployment rate. Notice periods being also longer in Switzerland than in the EU or the Anglo-Saxon countries contribute to maintain a lower flexibility toward personnel.

The recommendation for startups to cope with surgent and unexpected need is to both :

- *Trying to plan and anticipate hiring increases by networking and priory identifying interesting profiles (= that have value and personality fit with the startup)*
- *Relying on flexible and ad-hoc resources such as consultants to ensure a smoother transition with future proper hires.*

The second critical issue that might come from over-recruiting or increasing the number of employees too rapidly. As highlighted by Recruitment and Talent Acquisition experts Mrs. Paris and Mrs. El Afani in their respective case's presentation of an online bank and an IT Solutions company, significant funds or activity increases might cause the following risks:

- Tendency to over-react and recruit more personnel than what is actually needed
- Rush leading to poor comparison and planning of recruitment's costs
- Increase in uncertainty and dilution of responsibilities in job's scope

To mitigate those risks, it is recommended to have the startup's Recruitment/Talent Acquisition workforce involved in the strategic decisions of the startup. A close collaboration with the funder(s) as well as the management is recommended in order to advise on such risks towards expansion's planning. Realistic and controlled objectives should be set up according to the recruiting and hiring capabilities

5.1.2 Drafting the job description/advert

The second step of the recruitment process consist of transferring the identified hiring needs into a job description or advert. In fact, this represents a summary for both the employer and the potential candidates of what the given job opportunity looks like. Key elements such as the title of the job, rate of the employment, length of the contract location, key responsibilities, key requirements need to be showcased among other details.

Survey 1 reveals that only 18 out of the 32 surveyed startups (56.3 %) declared having established a clear job success profile. A gap of 43.7 % is then identified as this metrics should stretch towards 100%. Indeed, a clear job success profile is the most essential element to produce the job advert which represent entry door of the recruitment process towards potential candidates.

This feeling is also shared by interviewers. They agreed on job description being critical and unfortunately overlooked by the startups as highlighted Mr. Hafil

“For me the main challenge for startups in finding and hiring the right people and help the startup be successful... So obviously, for me it's the job description, they don't do a proper job in the beginning, in really defining the roles, responsibilities and goals.”(Hafil, 2020)

Startups have been surveyed on what features they usually offer to attract new employees. In parallel, the same census has been proceeded for what they actually showcase on their job adverts. The goal was to spot potential mismatch between features. The below gap analysis highlight some disparities between what startups usually offer and what they showcase on their job advert.

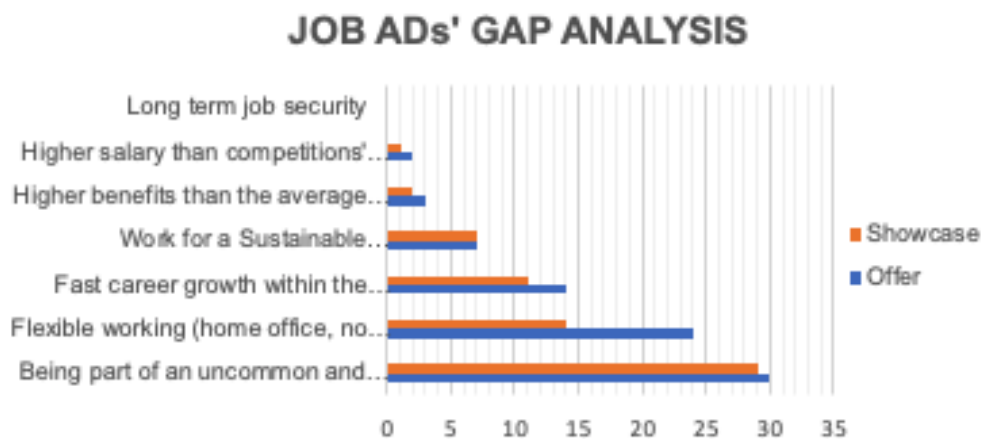


Figure 23 Job Ads' gap analysis

A negative gap (more feature showcased than offered) might have raised concerns about the ethics of part of the panel. Indeed, this would have been that some startups actually attract applicants with features they do not actually offer. Fortunately, no such gap has been identified in this analysis.

However, a positive gap (more features offered than showcased) has been identified on the majority of the features assessed, especially for flexible working. This means that startups do not showcase all the advantageous features they might offer. In fact, they are missing an opportunity to convince more applicants to apply and moreover to the ones who are particularly sensible to flexible working (i.e. 55.2% according to Survey 2).

Therefore, the recommendation is for startups to showcase all the positive features that they might offer without exception in order to maximize their attractiveness.

Additionally, Mrs. El Afani during her interview pointed out another challenge that startups might face during their expansion. Indeed, an increasing number of hires, especially for the same type of positions (e.g. salesmen), might cause a dilution in responsibilities' definition and thus increase uncertainty within the organization.

Her recommendation is to not duplicate job descriptions when recruiting similar jobs but to define and communicate very precisely what are the roles of each new position. (i.e. scope, geographical area, products, etc.). A new sole job description should be created for each new position.

5.1.3 Publishing the advert

After having properly produced the job advert, the startups should now publish it in the appropriate channel. Startup's publishing channels have been assessed as well as candidates' preferred ones.

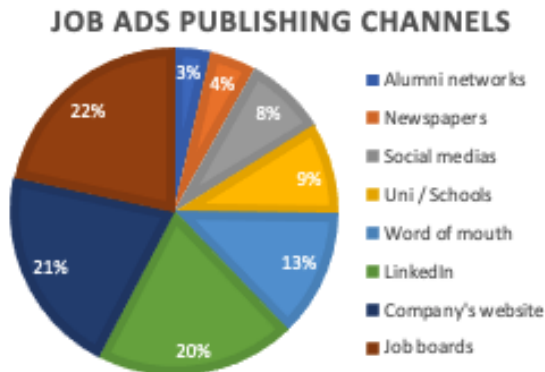


Figure 24 Startup's preferred publishing channels

As a comparison, candidate also rely on the same channels than the startups. Thus both supply and demand are pretty equally aligned in terms of strategy.

Results shows that startup's strongly rely on LinkedIn, Job boards as well as their corporate website..

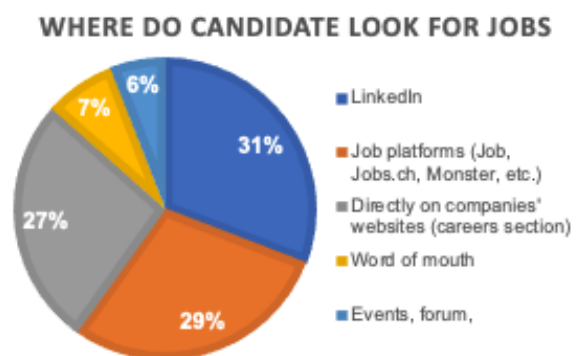


Figure 25 Candidate's preferred publishing channels

As publishing in multiple channels does not create a competition within the same startup, the recommendation is to increase the number of channels to improve its visibility.

5.1.3.1 Monitoring : How to identify the appropriate channel(s)

The different publication's channels such as LinkedIn, the different Swiss job boards (Jobub, Jobs.ch, Monster, etc.), the company's website, social medias and so forth should be evaluated to determine which of them should be used to generate quality candidates. *To do so, startups need to rely on a very important metric which is called "Source of hire" which showcase the channel that each of the company's new hires applied through and thus entered the recruitment process.* This is a key information to determine which is/are the most relevant channel(s) for each startup in order to maximize the amount of quality candidates. Excluding ineffective channels will reduce both costs of publishing and reception of irrelevant applications which will benefit the startup by savings in respectively budget and time invested into recruitment activities.

Unfortunately, Survey 1 highlights a clear gap with regards to the publication channel analysis as only 1 out of the 32 survey startups (3,2) keeps track of the Source of Hire KPIs. This mean that such analysis becomes impossible for the vast majority of the surveyed startups.

5.1.4 Screening

Now that applications have been gathered, the recruitment's responsible have to review and select (=to screen) the CVs. Unfortunately, likewise for the job advert creation process, the low number of startups (18 out of 32, 56,3%) that actually created a clear Job Success Profile (JSP) beforehand might cause some troubles. Indeed this might increase the time spent in each CV to screen it as well as reducing the overall quality of the screening process.

To facilitate this processes, the startups should priory produce a clear Job Description to refer to during the screening activity.

In addition, as highlighted in Survey 1, only 15,6% of startups declares benefiting from a decent amount of interested candidate before opening a new position.

The recommendation to help coping with this issue is that while evaluating CVs during the screening process, startups also sort out profiles which do not fit for the given opening but do fit with corporate values and keep them in talent pools for future potential needs.

The startups can benefit from a good source of applicants who already shown interest in joining the company.

5.1.4.1 Monitoring: Screening

Speaking about evaluating the quality of the screening process, a good indicator is to look at the "Nb. Of interviews per hire" metric. A relatively low number means that the CVs selected highlighted by the screening process match with the hiring need and the JSP. Indeed, the more the screening process is effective, the less candidates will need to be interviewed as the shortage of unmatching profile has already been done. Unfortunately, as shown Survey 1, the majority of startups surveyed do not record this KPIs. (i.e. 2 out of 32; 6,3 %)

5.1.4.2 Candidate experience: Screening

From a candidates' perspective, receiving a fast reply (positive or negative) is listed as one of the main features they do expect from a recruitment process. Actually, as recorded in Survey 2, it seat at the first place.

Thus, the recommendation is for startups to screen and reply to an application no more than two weeks after its reception.

In this case, the sooner the better in order to maintain an high candidate satisfaction in order to profit the employer branding. (cf. section 5.2.2)

5.1.5 Interviewing

Candidates that successfully went to the screening process will now need to be interviewed. Preparation is key for the interviewers to both proceed with efficiency and offer an optimal candidate experience to the interviewees. Unfortunately, most of the startups have been exposed as not featuring a clear interview process by Survey 1 as well as by Mr. Hafil who highlighted “*a complete lack, in general*” of interview process over the startups he has collaborated with during his career.

5.1.5.1 Interview material

All the member of the interviewing cast will need to refer to preliminary documents in order to have efficient interviews. Referring to a clear JSP and to the company’s set of values are both essentials to assess a candidate properly. Indeed, the interviewer can use a reverse-questioning method to evaluate if the candidate match with the job and company’s prerequisites by assessing the main important features of both documents. A third essential element that should be prepared beforehand by the interviewing panel is a set of standard interviewing questions. Indeed, benefiting from a written list of question have multiple advantages. Firstly, *the interviewers should divide the different questions between themselves* and then create a more efficient discussion that will both improve the process efficiency as well as the candidate satisfaction. Then it will also *ensure that essentials questions such as key prerequisites or administrative queries (candidate’s resign period, salary expectations, work permits, etc.) are effectively tackled* and not forgotten.

As highlighted in previous sections, only 18 out of the 32 surveyed startups (56,3%) establish *clear job descriptions* before opening a new position within their company. Regarding the *company’s set of values*, 26 out of the 32 surveyed startups (81,3 %) already established one and thus should use it during their recruitment process. Finally, only 7 out of the 32 surveyed startups (21,9%) declared having written a *set of standard interview question*.

The three mentioned document should tend to have a usage rate of 100% each during the recruitment process and especially for the interviewing step. Those are important elements to ensure an effective and efficient process while offering a good experience to the candidate. Recruitment responsible should rely on those documents especially because, as highlighted in the Survey 1, does not necessarily benefit from a HR background. (Cf. section 4.3.1.8)

5.1.5.2 Interview panel

Given their rather small and convivial structure, startups might include more people in the interviewing process to maximize the chance of finding the perfect fit, especially in terms of personality and values. Indeed, an hiring mistake might have an increased risk of tension or clashes due to the member's proximity and close collaboration.

It should be a team decision of hiring someone, because that person has to fit in a in a very small puzzle. Bruegger, 2020

5.1.5.3 Monitoring: Interviewing

A good indicator of the efficiency of the interviewing process is the “Nb. Of interview per hire”. Indeed, if the interviewing panel manage to share efficiently interview question and cover all the necessary topics, less interviews will be needed. As already highlighted previously, only 2 out of the 32 survey startups (6.3%) record this metric in their KPIs.

5.1.5.4 Candidate experience: Interviewing

On the other hand it is also essential to ensure that the interviewed candidates enjoy from a good interviewing experience. Feeling comfortable, having the opportunity to ask their desired questions, getting to know more about the company and its people are all important factor that the candidates will keep in mind while accepting or not the future potential offer. As startups seems to struggle in convincing selected candidates to accept their offer (cf. section 4.3.1.17), it is even more critical to ensure every chances on their side. Survey 2 highlight that the majority of the most desired features that candidate expect from a recruitment process concerns receiving key information from the interviewing panel about the job and the company. (cf. section 4.4.1.4) *It is then strongly recommended to provide candidates with an overall pleasing experience and to communicate on the three following aspects as well as to be prepared to providing complementary information about:*

- *Information about salary and benefits*
- *Clear insight about job role and responsibilities*
- *Company's activities and values*

The collected data also showed that candidates do not require any specific location for the interview as part of their top 3 features, but slightly prefer being invited to the company's office. (cf. section 4.4.1.4)

5.1.6 Selecting and Offering

Following the selection of the preferred candidate, the recruitment responsible will formulate an official offer. Essential elements such as the salary and benefits, location, length of the contract, start date (and end date if applicable) among other have to be features. In order to ensure that none of the key elements are missing and that the offering process flows as smoothly as possible, *the best practice is to elaborate a standard contract template* beforehand, especially in the case of startups where HR knowledge tend to be missing. Unfortunately, as revealed by Survey 1, only 13 out of the 32 surveyed startups (40,6%) have such contract template.

5.1.6.1 Reasons of offer refusals

Survey 2 allowed the identification of the reasons why selected candidates refuse their offer from Swiss startups. Data collected shows that refusal's motives tend to focus on 5 reasons. Within those 5 reasons, the 3 most cited answers seems to impact startups more or less equally as of approximately 50%.

Acceptance of an offer from a more "famous" company – Startups might typically suffer from a lower notoriety and prestige than well-establish brands or structures. *Creating and establishing a strong Employer Branding is then recommended.* (cf. section 5.2.2)

Another approach would be to *adopt a more "selling" strategy*, whereas the interview panel, especially if it comes from the founder, highlights and strongly emphasis the sense of mission and passion to touch the candidates' feelings.

"Selling the excitement and the opportunity!" Paris, 2020

Salary expectation where not met – The high appearance of this reason might principally come from the combination of the two following features. Firstly, as stated in section 5.1.5 Interviewing, the majority of interviewing panels do not use a set of standard interview question which might cause the omission of salary's discussion. Secondly, as only 18,8% of the surveyed startups declared performing salary benchmarks before opening a new position, the offered compensation might not be in line with industry's standards nor competitors in the market. *The recommendation is to run the proper evaluation and to try adapting Compensation and Benefits packages accordingly. Otherwise, the startups should emphasis the non-monetary benefits that it is able to offer such as highlighted by Mr. Etienne:*

“Really to concentrate on the advantages, the benefits that the company offers, and we're going to talk about work life balance and flexibility.” Etienne, 2020

Recruitment process took too much time – It emphasizes the critical need for startups to have designed an optimized recruitment process. Indeed, this input shows that a bit more than half of the startups already suffered from an offer refusal based on the slowness of their process. This might represent a frustration for startups that witnessed their preferred candidate walk away because of a lack of efficiency. A fast overall recruitment process is also cited by 35,8% of the surveyed candidates as being one of their top 3 expectations when enrolled in such process. (cf. section 4.4.1.4). 86,8% also defined “fast” as being less than 6 weeks. (cf. section 4.4.1.6). *The recommendation is to ensure that the overall recruitment process is pursued in less than 6 weeks.*

More generally, it is recommended for companies, especially startups in this case, that have a high number of offer refusals to select one or more back-up candidates in case the preferred one drops out.

5.1.6.2 Candidate experience: Selecting and Offering

31 out of the 67 candidates interviewed (46,3%) cited that getting a quality feedback is one of their top 3 expectations when enrolled in a recruitment process. (cf. section 4.4.1.4) As previously mentioned, offering the best candidate experience is key to create a positive employer branding and then maximize the chances of hiring. *Therefore the recruitment responsible should take the time to give constructive feedbacks to all declined interviewed candidates.*

5.1.6.3 Monitoring: Selecting and Offering

For this step, the implementation of two KPIs is recommended to monitor respectively the quality of the selection process and the offer strategy. The “quality of hire” measure the satisfaction from the founder and its team toward the new hire. It will enable the assessment of the selection process and spot potential breaches if the metric goes down. Then “offer acceptance rate” will be tracked to see if the startups position succeed at making offers.

Unfortunately, respectively only 5 (15,6%) and 0 (0%) out of 32 surveyed startups do track such KPIs.

5.1.7 Onboarding and Retaining

When the preferred candidate is hired, the startup need to provide him/her with quality training in order to maximize its capabilities and potential. This will also improve the first experiences within the company and thus lead to a better retention.

5.1.7.1 Onboarding

Unfortunately, a gap has been identified with thanks to Survey 1 with this regards whereas only 14 out the 32 surveyed startups (43,8%) declared having designed a proper onboarding/training plan for their new employees. (cf. section 4.3.1.9). *The recommendation is then for the remaining startups to design and implement such onboarding program.*

5.1.7.2 Retaining

Regarding the retention rate, no sufficient data was made available by startups as only one member of the panel does track the relative KPI, “first year attrition”. *The recommendation is then for the majority of startups to implement this KPI and start tracking motives of attrition to act accordingly.*

More generally, two types of recommendation (monetary and non-monetary) have been highlighted during the interview session.

- *long-term monetary incentives* in form of stock options offered, especially to key positions
- *Increase in job responsibilities and scope as the startups grow. Rewarding by promoting the best employees is an important factor of their level of satisfaction. It is also very much valued by the candidates as highlighted by Survey 2 whereas a fast career growth within the company is list as the preferred answer. (42 out of 67, 62,7%) (cf. section 4.4.1.3)*

5.1.7.3 Monitoring: Onboarding and Retaining

The recommendation is to implement the following two metrics in order improve the retention rate.

- *First year attrition* – with this quantitative metrics, the startups should be then able to track the number of attritions and measure its development
- *Employee satisfaction* – qualitative feedbacks will be collected whereas employees will evaluate their level of satisfaction

5.2 Talent Acquisition strategy

In general, surveyed startups do not seem to feel satisfied with their Talent Acquisition strategy. Indeed, the average grade of their auto-evaluation is 4,7 out of 10. (cf. section 4.3.1.19). Therefore, a strong effort has been focus on capturing startup's challenges and designing realistic, flexible and applicable strategies to overcome them.

The identification of the most important barriers resulted in the design of *5 Talent Acquisition Strategy pillars*, tailor-mades for startups, to support their Recruitment Process.

Indeed, the following 7 most redundant challenges have all been specially targeted:

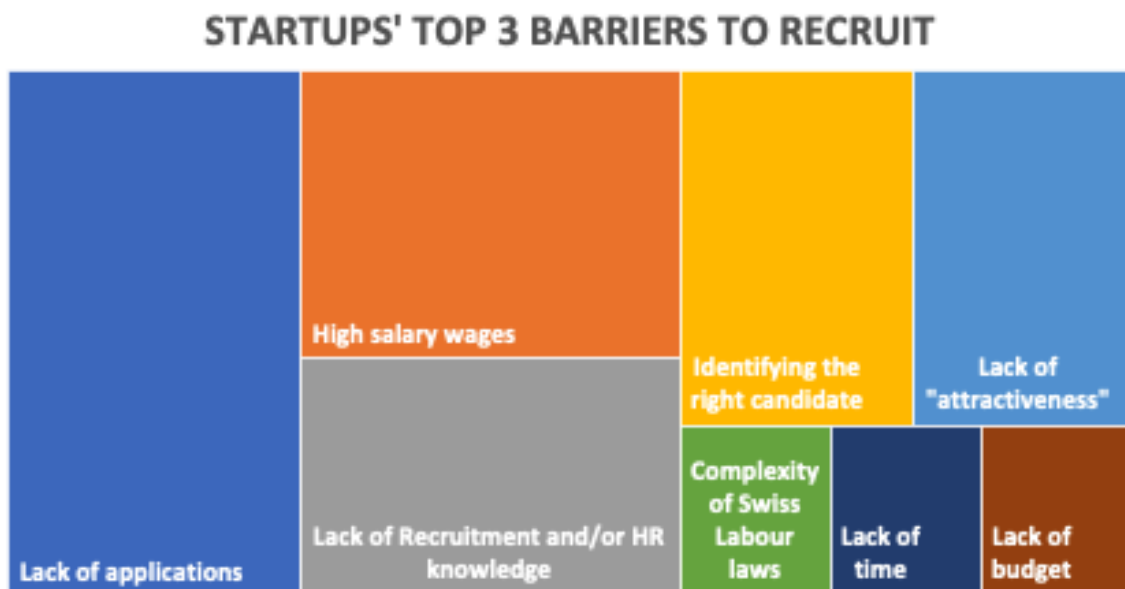


Figure 26 Startup's TOP 3 barriers to recruit

While *Monitoring* and *Candidate Experience* are tackling one or more of the mentioned issues, they also play an essential role toward the Recruitment Process' efficiency. Therefore, respective recommendations have been directly and fully integrated to the Recruitment Process to be solely part of it.

Employer Branding, *Talent Identification* and *Cost Reduction* might all be implemented and adapted by startup, following their needs, on a voluntarily basis

All 5 Talent Acquisition Pillars should be considered as sole recommendations.

5.2.1 Monitoring (Analytics and KPIs)

Studies and expert's feedback usually praise analytics. Especially in the era of Big Data, an increasing number of companies are now relying on data analytics as a solid business decision supporting tool. This is also true for Recruitment activities whereas most of the established HR workforce fully integrated programs such as Taleo (Oracle) or SuccessFactors (SAP) to run analysis and improve their performance. Recent studies also focused on startups and confirmed that this trend is also a confirmed competitive edge for startup. Indeed, companies which have committed to implement and relied on data driven decision tools for Recruitment, experience important improvement in their Recruitment Process.³⁰ Unfortunately, as exposed in the table below, more than two thirds (68,8%) of the surveyed startups do not track any KPIs related to their recruitment activities. Moreover, none of the preferred KPIs appears more than 15,6%.

This motivated the choice of fully integrating the monitoring features directly as a sole part of the Recruitment Process as well as its strong recommendation.

No KPIs on recruitment activities	22	68,8%
Time to fill	5	15,6%
Quality of hire	5	15,6%
Cost per hire	5	15,6%
Candidate job satisfaction	4	12,5%
Number of interviews to offer	2	6,3%
Source of hire	1	3,1%
First-year attrition	1	3,1%
Hiring manager satisfaction	1	3,1%
Applicants per opening	0	0%
Offer acceptance rate	0	0%

30 (Eenmaa 2018)

5.2.2 Employer Branding

Modern business' era is characterized by fierce competition led by globalization, constant innovation, overflow of data and information as well as increase of general and economical knowledge, just to name a few. Such inputs have notably led to a competition increase within the labor market. Active and passive job seekers have now not only access to numerous source of job adverts (job boards, social medias, corporate websites, etc.) to look for employment but also to numerous source of data concerning their potential future employers. Such source of data, typically composed by companies' statements, people's comments, various ratings as well as other inputs, are then analyzed and compared by job seekers to influence their decision in terms of applications.

The creation and leverage of such data by companies as well as its perceived image towards potential and actual employees is called Employer Branding. In fact, it is also defined as :

"The package of functional, economic and psychological benefit provided by employment, and identified with the employing company." (Ambler and Barrow , 1996: p.187)

Indeed, as startups are by definition pretty new on the market, external people generally might have apprehensions and will then look for information . It is at this moment that startup will particularly need to be proactive in *generating attractive content and maintain a good reputation*. Developing an effective Employer Brand has been identifies as being particularly effective in attracting³¹, signing and retaining employees.³²

Using Employer Branding as a tool to improve employer attraction has also been confirmed respectively by Mrs. El Afani and Mr. Etienne during their interview. Mrs. El Afani also briefly presented the case of herself managing her startup's expansion in Ukraine and define her experience with employer branding techniques such as *advertising, networking and referrals* as making a *"real solid difference."*

The recommendation will be for Recruitment and Talent Acquisition responsible to implement the highlighted Employer Brand techniques or directly collaborate with the concerned department if existing.

³¹ (Bouchikhi, Kimberly 2008)

³² (Barrow, Mosley 2005)

5.2.3 Candidate Experience

Startups should rely on Candidate Experience approach to both maximise their change of attracting talent and contribute to establishing a great Employer Branding. Like for Monitoring, Candidate Experiences features have been fully integrated to the Recruitment Process and should be considered as a sole part of it.

5.2.4 Talent Identification

Identifying the perfect candidate, the perfect fit for a company has been the main challenge of recruiter since the beginning of their activities. Although many literature exist on how to assess candidate, what skills or profile to look for, evaluate the personality so on so forth, it is very complex to address a single formula to find the most suitable candidate for a given position. Some experts addresses general guideline to help recruiters for given profile or industries but precise nor solid literature has been found in the market to define what is a good candidate fit for startups. However, what has been highlighted multiple during the interviews is that given the typical small structure of startups, mistake in candidates' selection might cause increased damage in terms of productivity and cohesion due to the increased reliability of each member.

“If it's not working out, you need to get rid of them very, very quickly, because in a small team. It's just too destructive.” Lashmar, 2020

Thanks to the precious insight from part of the interview panel composed by Startups specialists such as Mr. Lashmar and Mr. Bruegger as well as Talent Acquisition and Recruitment professionals such as Mrs. El Afani, Mrs. Paris and Mr. Etienne, preferred skills, personality traits and experience's type for candidate have been defined to help building the optimal fit for startups. An homogenous consensus has been observed when gathering the inputs of the different interviewees who exposed the recommendations based their experiences.

5.2.4.1 What to assess?

All agreed a candidate assessment within a startup context should begin with the review of his/her soft skills. Indeed, a clear emphasis statement has been witnessed by every member of the panel that declare recommending focusing on candidate's values, motivations, personality traits.

*“So finding that sense of mission, that sense of excitement is the most critical thing ...you really need to have that strong fit”
(Lashmar, 2020)*

They should all be assessed and revealed as a match with the startup's values, objectives, vision and members.

*“I still have to this day series of questions really focused on values ...
focused on understanding the personality of the candidate
,understanding what kind of values they believe in, what kind of
values they're looking for in their next employment.” (Etienne, 2020)*

A particularly high resilience to risk and change has also been discussed and highlighted during the interviews. Indeed, new hires will need to rely on those traits in order to cope with fast-paced and dynamic environment that characterize the startup' environment. Job-jumping profile might show a poor resilience to risk as well as low loyalty

*“If they haven't demonstrated some kind of flexibility or previous
experience in managing change, they probably not going to fit in.”
(Paris, 2020)*

The three recruiters also firmly stated that any *previous entrepreneurial related experience from candidates are a must to look for*. Indeed, a proven track record of working without clear guidelines nor processes constitute key assets. Actual design and implementation of such process in the past by the candidates is also a strong added value given the potential similar situations that might happen in the startup. Such records will help highlight the proactivity and the drive that candidate showed in the past, which are two qualities that startup's recruiter look for.

*So we're not looking for executives. we're looking for people act
proactively and strive to find more and to work more (Etienne, 2020)*

According to the expert, *applicants that comes from big groups or multinationals are not to be privileged*. Actually, it should create the opposite effect. Indeed it might translate to a profile that has been too much driven by strict policies and process orientated environments. It also might conduct to an excessive reliance on organizational personal or specialist to tackle challenges that differ from the employee's responsibilities.

*I think that somebody who's really process oriented will probably not
survive very long. (Paris, 2020)*

5.2.4.2 Startup's candidate personas

Unanimously consensed and unequivocal recommendations about candidate's background, personality traits and soft skills have been gathered and sorted out into the following positive and negative personas to illustrate respectively the preferred and undesired profiles.

Positive persona



Figure 27 Positive persona33

Negative persona



Figure 28 Negative persona34

Limitations : These personas are only general examples in order to help startup's identify and categorize their applicants. They were not designed to be considered as general guideline and have, of course, to be adapted following each startup's specific needs.

33 <https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona?persona=-M8m3T6WWgfcPLodbqPc>

34 <https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona?persona=-M8m7pdjqrqxCcHBBdLu>

5.2.5 Cost Reduction

High salary wages do not surprisingly seats within startup's biggest recruitment challenges. Indeed, the typical lack of budget from startups coupled with Swiss labor cost being one of the highest of the world almost suffice to justify this result. It has also been confirmed by industry's expert that highlighted this double threats as being particularly critical for startup.

*You have to be able to offer them (talents) a competitive package...
Which is very challenging for startups, obviously, because they're
very short of money...that's why often startups fail: because they don't
have the initial financing to be able to hire the right people.
(Bruegger, 2020)*

Different cost-effective sources of hiring talents are then presented in next sections and can be used by startups depending on their needs as follow:

- Internships
- Advisory board
- Recruitment beyond Swiss borders
- Alternative sources of hire in Switzerland

5.2.5.1 Internships

Recruiting interns might represent a good compromise between experience and salary wages. Indeed, for a significantly lower salary, startups can benefit from dynamic workforce fresh out of academic programs and eager to learn.

Mr. Bruegger particularly emphasis interns are being particularly valuable for the startups as well as presenting a win-win solution.

“You can have a professional working inside of your startup helping you with something, and working on his master's thesis...but taking it extremely serious because he wants to have a good grade at the end, but also because he wants to help the startup” Bruegger, 2020

Recommended pools of interns are prestigious business or engineering schools such as IMD, HEC, EPFL and ETHZ as well as all the student or graduate of programs presented in section 4.1.1

5.2.5.2 Advisory board

An advisory board is a committee of highly experienced professionals who join forces to support an organization by assessing and providing non-binding recommendations. This unformal practice offers more flexibility in its organization and implementation than its executive homonym. They also usually work pro-bono or for a significant greater value for money than executives or external consultant. Their motivations, as explained in their respective interviews by startup's specialists Mr. Bruegger and Mr. Lashmar, tends towards passion, recognition and benevolence. The benefits of setting up an advisory board are facilitated accesses to its member's network, experience and knowledge. It is also a token of credibility and improved legitimacy.

“Why do startups do that? If you have an advisory board that shows how actually serious you are also about your business.” (Bruegger, 2020)

Especially startups, which are generally looking for external investment, might benefit from those expert's increased credibility towards venture capitals, business angels, incubators, etc. It might facilitate their access to funding as mentioned by Mr. Bruegger:

“And one of the goals of the startup also is to have an advisory board is not only to tap into network, but it's easier to raise funds. It's easier to go to VCs and investors in general” Bruegger, 2020

As well as towards incubator/accelerators juries as mentioned by MassChallenge Managing Director, Mr. Matthew Lashmar

“Actually what we would look for when we assess a startup is who are their advisors and what's their credibility... So it could be that their VC, or their angel is on their (advisory) board, that's also super, super common. And then it really does help to have somebody credible from the industry that you're trying to attack.” Lashmar, 2020

Startups should focus on setting up their advisory board with recognized (experience and network) professionals within their industry they are operating in. Recommended pools of advisors are mentors, industry's experts, VCs, incubators and accelerators stakeholders, as well as leaders of targeted companies for partners, suppliers or buyers.

5.2.5.3 Recruitment beyond Swiss borders

Startups might be tempted, due to their struggle with Swiss high salary wages, to expand their recruitment activities beyond their national borders. Such strategy might result in the following two main options:

- Targeting candidates located in bordering countries or within the EU
- Relocating part of its activities abroad

Both might represent two interesting occasions for startups to use Swiss greater purchasing power towards its neighbors as a strategic leverage. They might also benefit from bordering countries' higher unemployment rate to source employees in markets where candidate's shortage is reduced.

However, data collected during this research suggest that the majority of surveyed startups do not seem to have the necessary HR knowledge nor foreign market presence (ie. None of the startups publishes in foreign countries. cf. 4.3.1.12) to undertake such strategic implementations efficiently.

If startups would like to venture themselves in such practices, a general recommendation will be to keep strategic and management workforce within its core location and rather decentralize the operational activities.

5.2.5.4 Alternative sources of hire in Switzerland

Further potential sources of cost-effective employees are available in Switzerland. They might represent a very marginal part of the population but can be considered for short missions or in case of heavy cost saving policies.

- Regional Employment Centers (RAV) – Each canton gives access to their pool of unemployed people to promote their reinsertion. RAV even propose incentives such as social benefits and refunds for companies that decide to employ such workers, especially for those who lost their unemployment rights.
- Retirees – Might be considered for short and ad-hoc mission such as deliveries. They might represent a good pool of responsible and experienced people

The recommendation will be to rely on those only in last resort due to the limitations in terms of profiles available.

6. Conclusion

6.1 *Recruitment process*

A recommended 7-step Recruitment Process has been designed focused on correcting observed startup's gaps as well as with the objective to ensure both budget and time efficiency.

6.1.1 Identifying hiring needs

Startups should always start their recruitment process by defining a clear job description. Then they should evaluate and select the type of contract that fit both their current and potential future needs (short or flexible contracts are preferred due to the uncertain nature of Startup's activities development). Generally it is also recommended to focus on generalist profiles during the early stage of the startup's development and then hiring specialist to support the company's growth.

The recommendation for startups to cope with surgent and unexpected need is to both :

- Trying to plan and anticipate hiring increases by networking and priory identifying interesting profiles.
- Relying on flexible and ad-hoc resources such as consultants to ensure a smoother transition with future proper hires.

To mitigate high recruitment flow's risks, it is recommended to have the startup's Recruitment/Talent Acquisition workforce involved in the strategic decisions of the startup.

6.1.2 Drafting the job description/advert

The recommendation is for startups to showcase all the positive features that they might offer without exception in order to maximize their attractiveness. They should not duplicate job descriptions when recruiting similar profile but should define and communicate very precisely what is the role of each new position. Thus, a new sole job description is created for each new position.

6.1.3 Publishing the advert

As publishing in multiple channels does not create a competition within the same startup, the recommendation is to increase the number of channels to improve its visibility. Startups should rely on “Source of hire” metrics to identify their most efficient publishing channel.

6.1.4 Screening

The startups should priority produce a clear Job Description to refer to during the screening activity. Then should remember of sorting out profiles which do not fit for the given opening but do fit with corporate values and keeping them in talent pools for future potential needs. Screening and replying to an application should not take more than two weeks after its reception to maintain a good candidate experience.

6.1.5 Interviewing

Given their rather small and convivial structure, startups might include more people in the interviewing process to maximize the chance of finding the perfect fit, especially in terms of personality and values. The interviewers should divide the different questions between themselves and then create a more efficient discussion that will both improve the process efficiency as well as the candidate satisfaction. Then it will also ensure that essentials questions such as key prerequisites or administrative queries (candidate’s resign period, salary expectations, work permits, etc.) are effectively tackled. To do, they should rely on :

- 1) A clear job descriptions
- 2) the company’s set of values
- 3) written set of standard interview questions

To maximise their chance of convincing candidates, the founder should provide them with an overall pleasing experience as well as providing clear and complementary information about: salary and benefits, job role and responsibilities, company’s activities and values

6.1.6 Selecting and Offering

The best practice is to elaborate a standard contract template

To decrease the risk of offer refusals, startups run the proper market evaluation and to try adapting Compensation and Benefits packages according to the market. In parallel, startups should create and establishing a strong Employer Branding as well as emphasis its non-monetary benefits. Given the high rate of refusal observed, select one or more back-up candidates is strongly recommended in case the preferred one drop out.

The recommendation is to ensure that the overall recruitment process is pursued in less than 6 weeks and that the interviewers should take the time to give constructive feedbacks to all declined interviewed candidates.

6.1.7 Onboarding

The recommendation is to design and implement a clear and structured onboarding program if not already done. The startups should implement the “first year attrition” and “employee satisfaction” KPIs to respectively collect quantitative and qualitative data. They should be able start tracking motives of attrition to react accordingly

To increase employees' retention, startups should use long-term monetary incentives as well as increases in job responsibilities and scope as the startup grows.

6.2 Talent Acquisition strategy

The identification of the most important barriers resulted in the design of 5 Talent Acquisition Strategy pillars, tailor-mades for startups, to support their Recruitment Process.

6.2.1 Monitoring (Analytics & KPIs)

Startup should fully integrate the presented monitoring features directly as a sole part of the Recruitment Process. Tracking of the 10 presented KPIs is essential for tracking recruitment activities as well as strategies' performances.

6.2.2 Employer Branding

Startup should rely on Employer Branding by generating attractive content and maintain a good reputation. by promote advertising, networking and referrals toward its employees.

The recommendation will be for Recruitment and Talent Acquisition responsible to implement the highlighted Employer Brand techniques or directly collaborate with the concerned department if existing.

6.2.3 Candidate Experience

Startups should rely on Candidate Experience approach to both maximise their change of attracting talent and contribute to establishing a great Employer Branding. Like for Monitoring, Candidate Experiences features have been fully integrated to the Recruitment Process and should be considered as a sole part of it.

6.2.4 Talent Identification

Talents should all be assessed and revealed as a match with the startup's values, objectives, vision and members.

Positive traits feature:

- A particularly high resilience to risk and change
- Previous entrepreneurial-related experience
- Ability to navigate without strict policies nor processes

6.2.5 Cost Reduction

4 sources of cost-efficient hires have been presented:

Interns – Startups should rely on the recommended pools that are prestigious business or engineering schools such as IMD, HEC, EPFL and ETHZ as well as all the student or graduate of programs presented in section 4.1.1

Advisory board - Startups should focus on setting it up with recognized (experience and network) professionals within their industry they are operating in. Recommended pools of advisors are mentors, industry's experts, VCs, incubators and accelerators stakeholders, as well as leaders of targeted companies for partners, suppliers or buyers.

International recruitment - If startups would like to venture themselves in such practices, a general recommendation will be to keep strategic and management workforce within its core location and rather decentralize the operational activities. However identified lack HR knowledge as well as foreign market presence suggest that startup should not pursue such strategy.

Retiree and unemployed people – Startups might rely on them as last resort in times of financial distress and for ad-hoc missions.

6.3 *Poster*

A 1-page poster has been designed to facilitate understanding as well as quick-access to general guidelines and strategies. It is available at appendix 6.

6.4 *Final words*

An overall lack of process and monitoring has been identified in the majority of the startups surveyed. The proposed 7-step Recruitment Process is meant to stay flexible and the 5 Talent Acquisition Strategies adaptable following each startup's needs.

Finally, supporting Swiss startups with presented recommendations is expected to maximize their chances of success and, ultimately, supporting the Swiss economic development, innovation, quality of life as well as employment creation. The tone and level of information of the discussions as well as the recommendations presented in this research have been adapted to fit the various audience that different profiles of recruitment ' responsible within startups represent. (from no HR experience to HR professionals)

Bibliography

ATHURALYA, Amanda, 2019. The 7 Recruitment Process Steps to Attract and Hire Top Candidates. *Creately Blog* [online]. 30 August 2019. [Viewed 4 June 2020]. Available from: <https://creately.com/blog/diagrams/recruitment-process-steps/>

BLANK, Steve, 2013. Why the Lean Start-Up Changes Everything. *Harvard Business Review* [online]. 1 May 2013. No. May 2013. [Viewed 29 May 2020]. Available from: <https://hbr.org/2013/05/why-the-lean-start-up-changes-everything>

BARROW, Simon and MOSLEY, Richard, 2005. The Employer Brand: Bringing the Best of Brand Management to People at Work | Wiley. *Wiley.com* [online]. 2005. [Viewed 1 June 2020]. Available from: <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Employer+Brand%3A+Bringing+the+Best+of+Brand+Management+to+People+at+Work-p-9780470012734>

BOUCHIKHI, Hamid and KIMBERLY, John R, 2008. The Soul of the Corporation: Managing Your Company's Identity. *Knowledge @Wharton* [online]. 2008. [Viewed 1 June 2020]. Available from: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/the-soul-of-the-corporation-managing-your-companys-identity/>

BONE, Jonathan, ALLEN, Olivia and HALEY, Christopher, 2017. Business Incubators and Accelerators: The National Picture. 2017. P. 76.

BORGEFORS, Simon, 2017. *How Founding Teams and External Investors Drive Success : Entrepreneurial Guidance for Swedish Technology Startups and Their Investors* [online]. KTH. [Viewed 29 May 2020]. Available from: <http://oatd.org/oatd/record?record=oai%5C%3ADiVA.org%5C%3Aakth-209225>

BREAUGH, James, 2016. Recruitment Process - The Ultimate Guide to Hiring Top Talent. *Jobsoid* [online]. 2016. [Viewed 28 May 2020]. Available from: <https://www.jobsoid.com/recruitment-process/>

BRUNEEL, Johan, RATINHO, Tiago, CLARYSSE, Bart and GROEN, Aard, 2012. The Evolution of Business Incubators: Comparing demand and supply of business incubation services across different incubator generations. *Technovation*. 1 February 2012. Vol. 32, no. 2, p. 110–121. DOI 10.1016/j.technovation.2011.11.003.

CARDON, Melissa S and STEVENS, Christopher E, 2004. Managing human resources in small organizations: What do we know? *Human Resource Management Review*. 1 September 2004. Vol. 14, no. 3, p. 295–323. DOI 10.1016/j.hrmr.2004.06.001.

COHEN, Susan, 2013. What Do Accelerators Do? Insights from Incubators and Angels. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization*. July 2013. Vol. 8, no. 3–4, p. 19–25. DOI 10.1162/INOV_a_00184.

CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE, Author removed at request of original, 2016. 4.1 The Recruitment Process. In: *Human Resource Management* [online]. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing edition, 2016. This edition adapted from a work originally produced in 2011 by a publisher who has requested that it not receive attribution. [Viewed 28 May 2020]. Available from: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/humanresourcemanagement/chapter/4-1-the-recruitment-process/>

EENMAA, Liisi, 2018. Data driven decision making in recruitment. In: . 2018.

ERNST & YOUNG, 2019. Social and Economic Performance of French Digital Business Startups [online]. [Viewed on 20 January 2020]. Available from: [https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-social-and-economic-performance-of-french-digital-business-startups/\\$File/ey-social-and-economic-performance-of-french-digital-business-startups.pdf](https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-social-and-economic-performance-of-french-digital-business-startups/$File/ey-social-and-economic-performance-of-french-digital-business-startups.pdf) .

FERRARY, Michel, 2019 *Les enjeux RH dans les start-ups: entre attractivité et motivation [PowerPoint]*

FONTINELLE, Amy, [no date]. What Exactly Is a Startup? *Investopedia* [online]. [Viewed 26 May 2020]. Available from: <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/12/what-is-a-startup.asp>

GEDEON, Steve, 2010. What is Entrepreneurship? *Risk Theory*. 2010. P. 20.

GRIMALDI, Rosa and GRANDI, Alessandro, 2005. Business incubators and new venture creation: an assessment of incubating models. *Technovation*. 1 February 2005. Vol. 25, no. 2, p. 111–121. DOI 10.1016/S0166-4972(03)00076-2.

HACKETT, Sean M. and DILTS, David M., 2004. A Systematic Review of Business Incubation Research. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*. 1 January 2004. Vol. 29, no. 1, p. 55–82. DOI 10.1023/B:JOTT.0000011181.11952.0f.

KAISER, Ulrich and MÜLLER, Bettina, 2015. Skill heterogeneity in startups and its development over time. *Small Business Economics*. 2015. Vol. 45, no. 4, p. 787–804. JSTOR

LERMUSIAUX, Yves and HARTLEY, Lisa, 2005. Contact for Taleo Research: . 2005. P. 9.

LEUNG, Aegean, ZHANG, Jing, WONG, Poh Kam and FOO, Maw, 2006. The Use of Networks in Human Resource Acquisition for Entrepreneurial Firms: Multiple “Fit” Considerations. *Journal of Business Venturing*. 1 February 2006. Vol. 21, p. 664–686. DOI 10.1016/j.jbusvent.2005.04.010.

MASCHKE, Konstantin and ZU KNYPHAUSEN-AUFSESS, Dodo, 2012. ID 2064658: *How the Entrepreneurial Top Management Team Setup Influences Firm Performance and the Ability to Raise Capital: A Literature Review* [online]. SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. [Viewed 29 May 2020]. Available from: <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2064658>

PARTHASARATHY, Mohan and PINGLE, Sameer S., 2014. Study of Talent Acquisition Practices – A Review on Global Perspective. [online]. 2014. [Viewed 4 June 2020]. Available from: </paper/Study-of-Talent-Acquisition-Practices-%E2%80%93-A-Review-on-Parthasarathy-Pingle/a3304472daf77e599127baf86cf4ddce38238291>

PUBLISHER, Author removed at request of original, 2016. 4.1 The Recruitment Process. In: *Human Resource Management* [online]. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing edition, 2016. This edition adapted from a work originally produced in 2011 by a publisher who has requested that it not receive attribution. [Viewed 28 May 2020]. Available from: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/humanresourcemanagement/chapter/4-1-the-recruitment-process/>

SECO, Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie, [no date]. Chiffres du chômage. [online]. [Viewed 4 June 2020]. Available from: <https://www.seco.admin.ch/seco/fr/home/Arbeit/Arbeitslosenversicherung/arbeitslosenzahlen.html>

STOILKOVSKA, Aleksandra, ILIEVA, Jana and GJAKOVSKI, Stefan, 2015. Equal employment opportunities in the recruitment and selection process of human resources. *UTMS Journal of Economics*. 2015. Vol. 6, no. 2, p. 281–292.

Appendix 1: Swiss Entrepreneurship Academic Programs Map

Title deserved	Name of the institution	Type of institution	Level of studies	Total credits (ECTS)	Entrepreneurship credits (ECTS)	Entrepreneurship focus	Location	Language	Course on recruitment?
Master of Science (MSc) in Business Administration with a Specialization in Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Zürcher Fachhochschule	Public	Master	90	42	47%	Winterthur (ZH)	German	No
Master of Science HES-SO in Business Administration, Major in Entrepreneurship	HEG Fribourg	Public	Master	90	63	70%	Fribourg (FR)	English	No
Master of Science MSc in Management, Technology and Entrepreneurship	EPFL	Public	Master	120	20	17%	Lausanne (VD)	English-French	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Kulturmanagement-Startup	Hochschule Luzern	Public	CAS	15	15	100%	Luzern (LU)	German	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Cultural Entrepreneurship	ZHAW	Public	CAS	12	12	100%	Winterthur (ZH)	German	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies FH in Entrepreneurship	Kalaidos Fachhochschule Schweiz	Public	CAS	15	15	100%	Zürich (ZH)	German	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies HES-SO Kick off - Entrepreneurship and Self marketing for designers and creatives	HEAD Genève	Public	CAS	10	10	100%	Geneva (GE)	French	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Global Social Entrepreneurship	Universität Basel UNIBAS	Public	CAS	15	15	100%	Basel (BS)	English	No
Certificate of Advanced Studies in Biomedical Entrepreneurship	Universität Bern UNIBE	Public	CAS	15	15	100%	Bern (BE)	English	No
Bachelor of International Management with a Specialization in Entrepreneurship	Geneva Business School	Private	Bachelor	180	30	17%	Geneva (GE)	English	No
MBA Entrepreneurship & Innovation	CREA INSEEC U.	Private	Master	120	120	100%	Geneva (GE)	English	Yes
Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) in Economics and Management	UniDistance.ch	Private	Master	180	10	6%	Online	French	No

Appendix 2: List of incubators and accelerators

Name	Training program	Site
Business Angels Switzelrnod	Yes	https://www.businessangels.ch/academy
business factory	Yes	https://la-business-factory.com/incubateur_nomade_geneve_annecy/index.html
F10 Incubato and Accelerato	Yes	https://www.f10.ch/startup-program/
Fintech Fusion	Yes	https://www.fusionpartners.ch/#approach
Foundation the Ark	Yes	https://www.theark.ch/fr/page/incubateur-the-ark-un-processus-sur-mesure-5561
Genilem	Yes	https://formation.genilem.ch/formation/
innosuisse	Yes	https://www.innosuisse.ch/inno/fr/home/commencez-votre-affaire/start-up-training/start-up-training_modul1.html
innovaud	Yes	https://www.innovaud.ch/fr/prestations/accompagnement
neonomia	Yes	https://neonomia.ch/presta/
Startup academy	Yes	https://startup-academy.ch/startups/?lang=fr
Virtual Institute for Open Systems	Yes	http://www.vios.ch/content/wie
Kickstart Accelerator	Yes	https://kickstart-innovation.com/program/
Swiss startup factory	No	https://www.swissstartupfactory.com
BlueLion	No	https://bluelion.ch
Circular economy incubator	No	https://www.cetransition.ch/en/incubator
EHL Business Incubator	No	https://www.ehl.edu/en/about-ehl/innovation/the-innovation-village
Exit accelerator	No	https://www.exitaccelerator.ch/expert-community/
Fondation d'aide aux entreprises	No	https://www.fae-ge.ch
Fondetec	No	https://www.fondetec.ch/accompagnement/
Fongit	No	https://fongit.ch/fr/
Geneus	No	http://geneus.ch/
Ginnove	No	https://www.geneve.ch/fr/themes/developpement-durable/municipalite/engagements-economie/programme-innove
Helvetia insurtech accelerator	No	https://www.helvetia.com/ch/web/en/about-us/blog-and-news/stories/company-and-innovation/think-tank-life-insurance.html
Impacthub	No	https://www.impacthub.ch
Masschallenge	No	https://masschallenge.org/programs-switzerland
Nexussquared	No	http://www.nexusquared.co/services/nexusacademy/
Pulse incubator HES	No	https://www.pulse-hesge.ch
Rising star accelerator	No	https://www.risingstaraccelerator.ch/
SBB startup	No	https://company.sbb.ch/en/sbb-as-business-partner/services/sbb-startup/about-sbb-startup.html
Shuttle Booster / Future Lab CH	No	https://www.futurelab.ch/en/about
Six fintech incubator	No	https://www.six-group.com/en/company/innovation/start-ups.html
Swiss EdTech Colider	No	https://www.edtech-collider.ch
Swisslife lab	No	http://www.sllab.ch
Swissnex	No	swissnex.org
Swisspark	No	swissparks.ch
The international create challenge	No	https://www.createchallenge.org
Thomson Reuters Labs	No	https://innovation.thomsonreuters.com/en/labs/incubator.html
venture	No	https://www.venture.ch
WeStart	No	http://we-start.ch
Y Parc swiss technopole	No	https://y-parc.ch/y-parc-sa/

Appendix 3: Analysis of incubators and accelerators programs

Incubators / Accelerators	Training programs' topics											Topic(s) covered by training program
	Recruitment	Intellectual Property	Goal setting	Product Innovation	Technological knowledge	Distribution channels	Communication/ Negotiation skills	Partnering	Marketing Experience	Business planning		
F10	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Fintech Fusion	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
Genilem	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	3
Innosuisse	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
Innovaud (through Platinn)	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
Kickstart Accelerator	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4
La Business Factory	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
Neonomia	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
Rising star accelerator	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	3
Startup academy	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	3
The Ark	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Virtual Institute for Open Systems	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Nb. of trainings	0	2	3	3	4	6	8	9	9	10		
% of topic coverage	0%	17%	25%	25%	33%	50%	67%	75%	75%	83%		
Color coding	0-24% = red / 25-49% = orange / 50-74% = yellow / 75-100% = green											

Appendix 4: Survey 1 How to build a winning team for Swiss startups

Rubrique 1 sur 4

How to build a winning team for Swiss Startups and Young Ventures



My Bachelor thesis is looking to explore the following question: How to optimize the Talent Acquisition Strategy and Recruitment Process in Swiss startups and young ventures? The final result is aimed at improving startups and young ventures's chance of success by building a winning team!

This questionnaire is addressed to the person in charge of recruitment/HR activities within the company (or to the CEO if recruitments are done externally).

Please respond to the following questions (aprox. 5 mins) with maximum integrity.
The results and data collected are strictly anonymous.

Did you know that recruiting talents is often listed as the first barrier to a startup's development *




Yes

No

⋮

In which sector is your startup active ? Liste déroulante ▼

1. Agriculture; plantations; other rural sectors	X
2. Basic Metal Production	X
3. Chemical industries	X
4. Commerce	X
5. Construction	X
6. Education	X
7. Financial services; professional services	X
8. Food; drink; tobacco	X
9. Forestry; wood; pulp and paper	X
10. Health services	X
11. Hotels; tourism; catering	X
12. Mining (coal; other mining)	X
13. Mechanical and electrical engineering	X
14. Media; culture; graphical	X
15. Oil and gas production; oil refining	X
16. Postal and telecommunications services	X
17. Public services	X
18. Shipping; ports; fisheries; inland waterways	X
19. Textiles; clothing; leather; footwear	X
20. Transport (including civil aviation; railways; road transport)	X
21. Transport equipment manufacturing	X
22. Utilities (water; gas; electricity)	X
23. Ajouter une option	



Obligatoire


For how many years the startup has been active? *

1. Less than 1 years
2. 1-3 year
3. 4-7 years
4. More than 8 years

In which region are you based? *

1. Swiss-german part
2. Swiss-french part
3. Swiss-italian part
4. Europe
5. Outside of Europe

What is the size of your startup? (aprox. number of employees) *

1. - 5 employees
2. 5-20 employees
3. 20-50 employees
4. 50-150 employees
5. 150-500 employees
6. +500 employees

How many employees did you recruit in the last three years? *

- 0 employee
- 1-5 employees
- 6-10 employees
- 11-20 employees
- 21-50 employees
- 51-100 employees
- +101 employees

How many employees did you plan to recruit (taking COVID-19 outbreak out) in the next three years

Choix multiples

- 0 new employee
- 1-5 new employees
- 6-10 new employees
- 11-20 new employees
- 21-50 new employees
- 51-100 employees
- +101 employees
- Ajouter une option ou [ajouter "Autre"](#)

Obligatoire

Has your company already raised money through VCs, Business Angels, Incubators etc? *

- Yes
- No

Après la section 1 Passer à la section suivante

Rubrique 2 sur 4

Recruitment Process

Assessing your recruitment process to make it as efficient as possible (more accurate, time saving, cheaper, etc.)

Who is in charge of the recruitment process? *

- CEO/Founder
- A non-HR manager or employee
- HR Manager or Specialist
- External agency/consultant
- Autre...

What is the company's level of knowledge in Recruitment and Swiss Labor Laws ? *

- No HR professional
- One or more employee(s) with previous HR background
- One or more employee(s) with HR certificate / HR bachelor level
- one or more employee(s)with HR federal diploma / HR master level

*When starting to recruit for a position, my company already...: (select all correct answers)

- Assessed the job market for that particular position/job category
- Performed a salary benchmark
- Has a descent amount of interested candidates in their pipeline/network
- Estimated the time to hire for that particular position (recruitment process, work permit, resign period, etc.)
- Has established a clear job success profile to identify the required hard and soft skills
- Has established company's set of values to identify the best fitting candidate
- Has putted in writing standard interview questions (job requirements, candidate expectations, key HR and ...
- Evaluated the potential costs of hiring internally vs. costs of an agency/consultant
- Have a standard contract template for new employees
- Have already designed an onboarding/training plan for new employees and assigned it to someone

Which recruitment's KPI(s) does your company measure? *

- No KPIs on recruitment activities
- Time to fill
- Quality of hire
- Source of hire
- Cost per hire
- Candidate job satisfaction
- First-year attrition
- Applicants per opening
- Hiring manager satisfaction
- Offer acceptance rate
- Number of interviews to offer
- Autre...

Based on your personal opinion, do you feel that your company has a clear and efficient Recruitment Process in place? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Totally disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Totally agree

Après la section 2 Passer à la section suivante

Rubrique 3 sur 4

Talent Acquisition Strategy

Defining the best Talent Acquisition in order to attract the best candidate in an efficient way.

Where does your company advertise their new job openings? *

- Word of mouth
- LinkedIn
- Job boards (Jobup / Jobs.ch / Monster / etc)
- Company's website
- Newspapers
- Alumni networks
- Social medias
- Universities and/or specialized schools
- Directly in other countries (local job boards, networks, universities, etc.)
- Autre...

What can your company offer to their potential candidates? *

- Higher salary than competitions' average
- Higher benefits than the average (company car, relocation, allowances, etc)
- Being part of an uncommon and exciting project/company
- Work for a Sustainable project/company
- Flexible working (home office, no strict hours, etc.)
- Fast career growth within the company
- Long term job security

What does your company ACTUALLY SHOWCASE in their job advertising? *

- Higher salary than competitions' average
- Higher benefits than the average (company car, relocation, allowances, etc)
- Being part of an uncommon and exciting project/copmany
- Work for a Sustainable project/company
- Flexible working (home office, no strict hours, etc.)
- Fast career growth within the company
- Long term job security

In average, how many applications does your company receive per new job opening? *

- Less than 20 applications
- 20-50 applications
- 50-100 applications
- 100-200 applications
- +200 applications

Does your company usually hire : *

- Candidates based in Switzerland
- Candidates based in Europe
- Candidate based outside of Europe

What type(s) of contract does your company usually offer? (select all correct answers) *

- Permanent contracts
- Temporary contracts
- Internships (without school enrollment)
- Apprenticeship / Internships (within a school program/degree)
- Freelance contracts
- Comission-type contracts

When given their job's offer, does your candidates *

- All decline your offer (0-10% acceptance rate)
- Majorly decline your offer (10-40% of acceptance rate)
- Fair mix of decline and acceptance (40-60% of acceptance rate)
- Majorly accept your offer (60-90% acceptance rate)
- All accept your offer (90-100% acceptance rate)

For which reason(s) did your candidates declined your offer? *

- They did not mentioned it
- They accepted an offer from a more "famous" company
- Salary expectations were not met
- They accepted another job that matched their "job's activities/responsibilities" better
- The recruitment process took so long and they already accepted an other offer
- Autre...

Based on your personal opinion, do you feel that your company has a well-defined and effective Talent Acquisition strategy? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Totally disagree Totally agree

Après la section 3 Passer à la section suivante

Rubrique 4 sur 4

Conclusion

Please select only 3 answers

Please select the TOP 3 barriers that you feel prevents your company from recruiting effectively. *

- Complexity of Swiss Labour laws / administrative process
- Lack of applications
- High salary wages
- Lack of "attractiveness" from your company versus big companies
- Identifying the right candidate (hard and soft skills)
- Lack of time to invest in recruiting properly
- Lack of budget to invest in recruiting properly
- Lack of Recruitment and/or HR knowledge within your company
- Autre...

Would you like to raise any particular concerns / challenges / comments about Recruiting in Switzerland?

Réponse longue

Appendix 5: Survey 2 Candidates' feedback

h e g

Haute école de gestion

Rubrique 1 sur 4

Candidates' feedback

Survey aiming at identifying what candidates look for when looking/applying for a new job. (1min aprox. to fill in)

How old are you? *

- 25 years old
- 25-40 years old
- 40-60 years old
- 60+ years old

Where are you based? *

- Swiss romande
- Swiss-german part
- Swiss-italian part
- Europe
- Outside of Europe

What are the TOP 3 features YOU look for when applying for a new job? (pick only 3) *

- Higher salary than competitions' average
- Higher benefits than the average (company car, relocation, allowances, etc)
- Being part of an uncommon and exciting project/company
- Work for a sustainable project/company
- Flexible working (home office, no strict hours, etc.)
- Fast career growth within the company
- Long term job security
- Previous employees' comments on the company

What are the 3 most important things for you during a recruitment process? (pick only 3) *

- Fast reply (either rejection or invitation to an interview)
- Receive clear insight about what your potential job will be
- Being invited to the company's office
- Having the interview in a neutral environment (café, park, etc.)
- Fast recruitment process overall
- Learn a lot from the company's activities and values
- Know the salary range / benefits the beginning of the process
- Quality feedback from the interviewer

Where do you look for job opportunities on a regular basis? (pick all right answers for you) *

- LinkedIn
- Job platforms (Job, Jobs.ch, Monster, etc.)
- Directly on companies' websites (careers section)
- Word of mouth
- Events, forum,
- Autre...

How long do you expect the whole recruitment process to take in order to meet your expectations? (from application to job offer)

- less than 2 weeks
- between 2 and 4 weeks
- between 4 and 6 weeks
- between 6 and 8 weeks
- time is not an important criteria for me

Would you be interested in working for a startup? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Après la section 1 Passer à la section suivante -

Rubrique 2 sur 4

Interested in working for a startup



Description (facultative)

Why would you be interested in working for a startup?



Réponse longue

Après la section 2 Accéder à la page 4 (Comments)



Rubrique 3 sur 4

Not interested in working for a startup



Description (facultative)

Why are you not interested in working for a startup?

Réponse longue

Après la section 3 Accéder à la page 4 (Comments)



Rubrique 4 sur 4

Comments

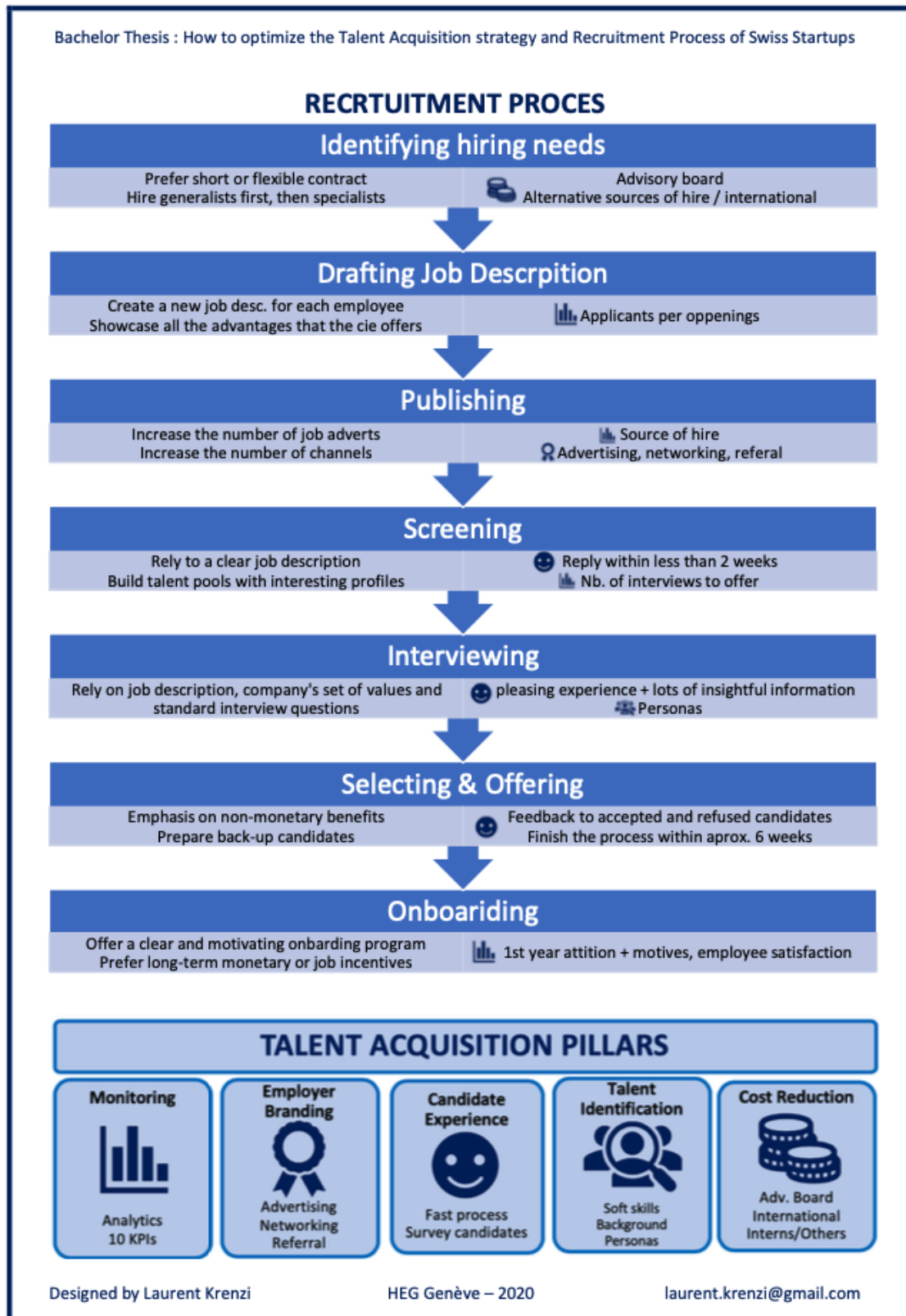


Description (facultative)

Any comments?

Réponse longue

Appendix 6: Poster



Appendix 7: Interviews' transcripts

Interview with Mrs. Suzanne Paris – February 19th 2020

Suzanne Paris 0:00

Yeah, we are five, five recruitment consultants working together. And we are hiring for three areas. So we hire IT professionals. We hire people to work in the pharma. So you know, medical doctors, medical directors, things like this. And we do finance. And we focus in Switzerland. So our clients are Swiss companies. And in Barcelona, I would say in Barcelona. It's a mixture. It's Swiss companies in Barcelona. So we work with (...). She's one of my big clients. And I work with (...) down here. But we also work with startup companies. So when startups can't find, you know, their own staff, help them kind of like as an agency. So I also employ people. So I do too. I do permanent recruitment like what, you know, like for Nestle, like, you know, if Nestle which use an agency I do that I provide them with people who want to work permanently for the end client, but I also do Consultancy Services. So for example with feminists here within the IT team, I have hired eight people so far so, hopefully it gets bigger, but eight people that are employed by (...) one on one so, they are my staff and their senior it guys that then I place my client to work on projects to work, you know, so most of them have got 12 months or two year project, and they go every day to the clients, but they are my staff. Okay, so the, the difficulty is, you know that I mean the projects are very exciting so that big global projects to work for, you know, on you know, nice Exciting technologies, so I can sell the project. But you know, one of the guys, he just left a big pharma company to come and join us. Another one, left a big staffing company, so I need to hire highly experienced senior people. And yet, you know, they go on my website and they go, Yeah, but you know, you're really small company and you're really new. So that's the challenge for me. I need I mean, fortunately, I've got great projects, so the projects kind of sell things.

But I need to pursue these guys that they should join me and they should invest in that I'll take care of their career and training and things like that. So it can be an extra sell, you know, and my competition or you know, in the sense of big IT, or engineering consultancies. So like Accenture, everybody knows Accenture Accenture calls you you know, it can be Interesting, but if I call they're like, well, you know who the hell are you why Schley I work for you. So that so yeah, so I do many different ways of recruitments in different locations. And for permanent and clients and for myself.

Laurent Krenzi 3:16

Okay. So you feel that the difficulty for you when calling these senior people is for you being a startup to kind of trust you and like, the legitimacy to call them or it is for them to be placed in those startups you're working for, or companies. I mean,

Suzanne Paris 3:40

no, I think it's for those guys to kind of take us serious from in the first call. Because they're like, you know, who are you why would we work for you kind of thing. And you know, when they've got so for example, I've had people who working Nestle in Spain here, who've left that job to come and work for me on one of my clients projects. So you can imagine a guy who's working a company like Nestle, who might be a bit bored, but then has to go home to his wife and say, you know what I'm giving not up to go work for this company that's, you know, not even 12 months old. So it's more the credibility on the market. I think once. Once I've established the connection, and they learn about the client projects, it's easier to sell. But it's easier to sell maybe for the guy, but you know what, I think when he goes home to his family, because stuff, it's a lot less secure than a big, you know, a big nowadays, it's less risky, because everybody knows, you know, even Nestle can let people go. So I think things are changing, but I still think you know, it's, it's a big company, it's secure. So it's almost like they need to give up the security and they need to balance the exciting challenge. Freedom against the security and some people are ready to do it and happy to do it and others say it's far too risky. Okay?

Laurent Krenzi 5:10

When it comes to that, what did you put in place? I mean, couldn't be like something very specific or just like a general mindset or approach to make them feel that this is going to be the right choice to for them to join a startup read that just keeping the jobs and wait for the next big name to come up to them and propose something.

Suzanne Paris 5:36

Yeah, I don't think we really have anything in place. I mean, I have good clients. That is a fact that I you know, I can promote and show them but I think it's more of a mindset. I think it's, you know, selling the excitement and the opportunity versus because When I approach people, some people are just not interested at all. And others are curious. And I think if they, if they have that curiosity, it's already kind of half the battle. I think then you just need to play on the curiosity and find out, you know, what made them pick the call, you know, what made them want to talk to me, there's something lacking where they

are, then maybe that I could already bring so I think it's there already, maybe half there. And I think it's maybe the personality type of the person that makes them more curious to explore that kind of thing. Okay, I think I think it's, it's risky. So somebody who's really risk averse will not even engage in the conversation because they immediately would go No, you know, it's not it's not for me. So I think it's, it's tapping into kind of that curiosity. And yeah, showing them you know, the differences between what they've got and what what a startup can offer, which is normally you know, Flexibility, I think, you know, freedom, a lot of it is freedom. And the chance to build something is always exciting. And, you know, it doesn't happen quite as much in a big, big organization. It's not often you get to start something Greenfield from scratch. And I think, you know, yeah, it's stuck now and i think but I think if they see the potential, they you know, and they have the right kind of personality, they will take the risk.

Laurent Krenzi 7:31

okay. And have you been able to identify some kind of threat that those people have in common, when it comes to you know, being more keen to accept this kind of offer or just being more curious about it. I mean, if you see that someone, that have been in the same area for all its life, and it's like 50 years old, maybe less flexible and keen to do that and you know, someone which is 25 have been to different countries traveling or working, you know?

Suzanne Paris 8:03

Yeah, but I think that's it, I think that's the big risk. So even those people who've been available, you know, 20 years, even if they want to take that risk, you know, they may be not used to change and adapting, and, you know, being, you know, more risky in their decisions, and that kind of the skills that I think you will often need in a startup, you need, you know, somebody who's risk adverse in a startup, you know, they probably going to be stressed out from day one. So, I think the risk is that even if they are willing to take the opportunity, if they haven't demonstrated some kind of flexibility or previous experience in managing change, they probably not going to fit in. And like I said, I think you know, in boss because in Barcelona, what I see, there's so many startups within it. That All young guys, guys and girls, you know, but I think you know, they, they're the kind of people and they do. And to be honest to this, they don't stay that long because there's so many startups, they'll move maybe from one startup to the next to the next to

the next. And I don't know why that is maybe the startups if they become successful, then they get too big. And then they start putting processes and procedures in place. And then they're like, you know, what I want to do, you know, I didn't like that's not why I joined and then they they move on. So I think that somebody who's really process oriented will probably not survive very long.

Laurent Krenzi 9:44

Okay. Okay. Get it. And when you were talking to the startups you were rooting for. Did it highlight some problems that they have that maybe big companies don't? When it comes to recruitment, I mean, For a founder or maybe for yourself when you started your company, like what were the principal difficulties when it comes to routing your first four being from a small team from a to a complete team? I mean when it starts really to grow without difficulty that's really relevant for startups to to be like the ones to take the first you know,

Suzanne Paris 10:29

I think one startup that I was working with 1 startup, one of the grew so fast, so it was a in 2016. It's like an online banking. And they grew really fast. So they went from very small to very big. They got a lot of investments, so external funding, so they had lots of money to kind of play with and I think the business was demanding You know that they hired really, really fast. And you know, at the time, they had one guy trying to manage all of the recruitment, and he was overloaded. So then he was using, there are many different agencies, I think at one time he had 40 agencies. Yeah, and it was, and I think he got to the stage where it was just, you know, a bit of a mess. He had, you know, use different terms and conditions with different agencies, there was no real structure in place, there was no real interviewing process. And at the time, they then hired a more senior, you know, high head of talent acquisition and who, whose job it wants to come in and put those processes in place, because I think they will overloaded the business needed new people because they had the money they needed to grow. And so you know, they were like, right, we need 30 Java developers, and we need them to start next, you know, next month. So at the time, the only way they could do it was reached out to every recruitment agency and, you know, but I don't think you know, the quality checks were there. You know, they were probably spending a lot, a lot more money than they needed to on recruitment. And, yeah, I think that was one of the challenges, they grew too quickly

that they didn't have time to adapt their processes and put them in place. And they had to kind of sit back and say, right, okay, now we need a tongue acquisition structure to control this because they didn't only grow in Barcelona, they grew in Barcelona, they grew in Berlin, and they they opened in New York. So all of a sudden, you know, they, you know, they were they were kind of, you know, what you call it a their own success was kind of causing, you know, problems. So I think because it because it they were growing so fast, they didn't have a trouble attracting people. But they didn't, they weren't necessarily qualifying the people as well as they needed to and it just Standing up a bit of a bit of a mess, and they were just, you know, hiring anybody, I think anybody who could do a little bit of development and applied was getting getting the job.

Laurent Krenzi 13:10

Okay. Okay, so it was maybe a lack of organization beforehand. And to see like to maybe evaluate, depending on the numbers of recruitment tool you need to do the right thing would be like to hire 24 agents, or just have one guy to do it internally.

Suzanne Paris 13:30

Yeah, I think that's it. But I think with startups, sometimes success can come so quickly, that, you know, some of these companies don't even imagine that in 12 months, you know, they've got because this company, they got, I don't know how many like 53 million, you know, dollar funding or something like that. And of course, the senior guys knew they were, you know, trying to get this kind of stuff, but I don't know. I think it just comes so fast that they don't They don't put that strategy in place until you know they. It's a little bit too late.

Laurent Krenzi 14:05

Yeah, good. Yeah, this is a thing I had also because I've been burned speaking not for my accounting purpose just for I personally kind of interest to some startup pitching and to some incubators look familiar because they have some project myself. And I've seen from the interviewers from the panels, they ask you a lot of time, like what you will do with the money if you get the grant or anything, but they don't ask you how, for example, they Okay, if I got this amount of money, I'm gonna buy this kind of material and hire 25

people, but they don't really take into consideration if we're gonna use an agency is going to recruit one recruitment guy or an employee some HR structure in there because for us in HR, we make a bit biased from things that Okay, we know that HR exists and is really important, but from maybe for engineers or it guys, that may be something which is a bit of a picture, right?

Suzanne Paris 15:10

Yeah. Yeah. The last thing that they they think of, I mean, they're focusing on the technology and selling the technology and Yeah, exactly. The nitty gritty and the How comes a bit later. Yeah.

Laurent Krenzi 15:26

Yeah, because this this is like, the subject of my of my case, is maybe to find a moment for them to do like, I don't know how on which form is gonna, it's gonna be at the at the very end was gonna be for them when I went on in one moment when they don't have a lot of money. But they do have some times to evaluate something and do some projections to include this recruitment talent acquisition part in their in their mind, I mean, because when, as you said, when you get the money already too late, because you need to act. Otherwise you waste a lot of money.

Suzanne Paris 16:04

Yeah. And it's the same, you know, with my company. So, you know, I think I'm quite lucky because I already had a lot of clients when I set up so it wasn't starting from scratch. And the people who joined my, my company were people that I already knew. So it was a lot of my network, we kind of got together and said, Okay, we've got these clients, let's, let's do it. But tomorrow, for example, if Nestle come to me, like they did in my previous company, and say, okay, we we need your help to build, you know, a hope here or in Milan or something like that. Of course, I would go out bad pitching for all of the work, but in reality become evil shit, I need to hire, you know, another 10 people to do that. So again, even for me as a recruiter, when I'm pitching, it's the last thing because I just think, well, if I've got the money in a fair, you know, science deal, I'll find the people and deal with it later. But you As HR I think, you know, with when I'm pitching, it's the last thing

because I just think I can solve those problems. And maybe, because I know recruitment, I know I can solve those problems, but for an IT guy, yeah, he's going to have no idea. You know, I think somebody and then he's like, Okay, what? How do we do this? You know, it's interesting.

Laurent Krenzi 17:30

Yeah, yeah, that's so the fruit that comes out and you don't really prepared for and that's like, I mean the problem that that they face. Yeah. And when you spoke to the service Did you notice that they have already some kind of reporting about HR recruitment? I mean, do they have like we had initially like time to feel time to hire in this kind of matrix. So they're just like, I need some Someone's going to recruit in buster.

Suzanne Paris 18:02

Yeah, that was that. That was it. They had figures. And I think they had figures like, Okay last year or last quarter because they don't even think they were moving so fast. It wasn't a case of looking back on the whole year. It was like in the last quarter. We hired 30 engineers, so they knew what they done. And they were like, and, in fact, yeah, they did have some because they were, they were like, okay, we hired this many, this many were from Barcelona. Because the guy that I work at this bank, the guy that I met, he was when I met him, he was like, we need non Spanish people. He said, because it's an international style, like an international startup. They were Barcelona, Berlin. They were opening in New York and he was like, we need non Spanish people. And I think because they'd wanted to hire so quickly. They were just, you know, grabbing from the local market. So they didn't know what they'd hired and what so he said move Going forward, we need women, and we need non Spanish people. So I think the but I think, you know, maybe in the first year, they didn't have any of that. But then, you know, they was so they were starting to time to hire. I don't know, it was kind of I think it was like now. We just need them now. Okay. Yeah. And there was a couple of positions, they knew that were very, very difficult. And they knew it was going to be a challenge. So, but I don't know if they knew exactly how many days you know, it would take or had taken to hire the last one. I don't think they had. Because I think at the time, they didn't, they were just starting to use LinkedIn to to advertise their positions. So I'm not even sure they really even had a database where, you know, they could collect that info. I think before they just had an

email address. You would apply, you know, the candidates would go into somebody's inbox.

Laurent Krenzi 20:10

Yeah, the work for me will be to identify like, you know, which part of the process are the most critical, depending on the, you know, their importance, or maybe they just need the time for me to do the thesis. And, you know, you have to focus on the most important parts.

And I was thinking out of other problems, like, maybe they're not, as you said, they're not aware of maybe some positions that they are more difficult to recruit for than others. For example, I'm going to take I can, for example, I recruiter going to take one month to be found, but for our Regional Medical Director in a particular firm, maybe like six months or one year.

Suzanne Paris 20:58

Yeah, exactly.

Laurent Krenzi 20:59

Yeah. So do you think? And did you feel that those company have an idea and an accurate idea of the differences between recruiting an admin assistant and Regional Medical Director, for example?

Suzanne Paris 21:21

I think the they were aware that some positions would be more difficult and more Nish. I don't know if they'd really categorized it and which ones but they were, you know, it was an IT company. So the senior guys were it guys. And I think they had an idea like, okay, a developer with two years experience shouldn't be a problem. I think they knew that, you know, an Enterprise Architect with whatever skills would take a bit longer. I think they had a vague idea, but I think it was Yeah, it was wasn't like it was a real category.

And I think it was just because you know, they were it guys, they kind of had a general a general idea, but I think only within it so and most of their positions were within it, but if then they were looking for, you know, like a sales guy or, you know, a recruiter, I don't think they would have any idea on how long it might take and find that. Okay. And I don't think because locations, I mean, they had location in Berlin here and in New York and I don't think they had any ideas of the differences so in, in Spain, most people have 15 days notice so people can move pretty quickly. Whereas in Switzerland, it's, you know, two three months it's it's quite common. So if you find the people then they have to factor that in. So I think you know, managers who are here in Spain, if they find somebody with niche skills and they're from Germany or Switzerland, they cannot believe that they have to wait you know, two or three months. For the person to start, because everything moves so quickly, which is, you know, Barcelona's a real hook for startups. And maybe this is one of the you know, the reasons because things are moving fast people can change and move. I mean, even senior super senior people have 15 days notice. 15, so you could be like, country manager for a company, whatever. And in 15 days, all the knowledge is gone because he's resigned and he's legally he's, I mean, that's all they have.

Laurent Krenzi 23:37

Okay, yeah. And I believe some from the other way around in Switzerland because my son is going to focus on Switzerland. Yeah, as here we have like, reason resigned period, which is a bit longer and as well as from the permit processes. I don't feel that startups have the knowledge of the Firstly, the procedures, and then the times that this just procedures anchors to be done. I mean, they're going to be okay, we're incidental. So we have the age of, of salary, so we can recruit someone from, I don't know, Italy or Spain, and then I'd be really happy about it. But it's going to be okay. I beat fast, faster for them. But when it comes to recruiting someone from Asia or Latin America is going to be a more tough problem.

Suzanne Paris 24:30

Yeah, and I don't think they would, I mean, I don't even know how they would do that. If they didn't have an HR with, you know, local experience, which normally it's the last thing that a startup employees is a is an HR person. So I don't know if the if they outsource

that kind of thing. If there's companies in Switzerland who help get permits for startups or consultants, I've no idea.

Laurent Krenzi 24:56

Nobody knew. I guess there was there should be One of them or at least she wants

Suzanne Paris 25:03

a new business idea for you. Yeah, maybe. Yeah. Because I don't know. Because, you know, I've worked in big companies. In Geneva, I worked for a company, it was about 80 people, but still we had an HR, you just did the work permits. So first startup, I mean, I have no idea how they would begin to, to know how to go about that.

(...)

Laurent Krenzi 25:58

When it comes to proactive sourcing? Did you notice that startups have some kind of a pipeline for the manager, the founder to have some people's just in case when I grew up a bit more quick than expected to have someone's maybe not as ready as he wants, but sometime, some people already identified as maybe potential employees or candidates.

Suzanne Paris 26:42

Yeah, I think they have. Yeah, honestly, I'm not I'm not 100% sure. I would guess they've got you know, small talent pools of either you know, people who were in processes in the past or ensure that they have a small town. pool of people that you know, they have in the project, you know, because in LinkedIn, I don't know if you did much private, but you can make a project. You can do Java developer, you can just throw everybody in that. So I'm pretty, pretty sure that's what they do. And you know whether or not they approach them now or they do it in the future. But yeah, I mean, if they've got an in house recruiter, I'd be surprised if they didn't have those. Those projects ready.

Laurent Krenzi 27:30

Yeah. And then the broken when they don't, actually because if you're just like, an IT guy on an engineer starting a startup, you may not have you know, as simple as that, like a like LinkedIn licenses, or maybe you don't know how to do Boolean search and you're like, Okay, I'm going to write a post on LinkedIn. But if nobody replies you're a bit. Yeah, blocked. Yeah.

Suzanne Paris 27:56

(...) But I mean, it's just value for money, like, what? four grand or something like that per year. But it's all you need. You can reach anybody in the world with a personal message or Oh, you know, like you put them all in the project, you send them all one message. So yeah, first startup yet four grand is a lot, but I mean, it's all you need to do to reach out to anybody.

(...)

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

Interview with Mr. Ansar Hafil – March 11th 2020

Ansar Hafil 0:00

Interview with me as an interviewer, a business consultant working with startups, and I will make notes. Okay, it's all yours, my friend. Let's start.

Laurent Krenzi 0:42

Firstly, I would like to know a bit more about your experience with startups and young SME is here in Switzerland, more or less how many company just more or less a number and in which fields

Ansar Hafil 1:01

Okay, so I would say I've been working for the last four years in startups, I believe by cheque, but I've been working with, let's say, 30 startups over the last four years, helping

them grow their business identifying areas that need to improve. Now regarding different industries, I would say I have been exposed to a number of different industries from medical pharmaceutical, to using the internet as her platforms to sell things...drones, you know, I've been involved in drones, the construction industry.

What else.. Yeah, but, you know, generally a vast different types of industries I have, because my consultancy is based on the basics, you know, you start specific or anything specialized, it's really helping startups get their foundations in place their basics in place.

Laurent Krenzi 2:32

Okay and does that include any of HR related activities for them? related to HR policies? The HR manager?

Ansar Hafil 2:43

Yeah. So one of my areas of focus is, well, I can take two two, I cover 10 areas of business. One is leadership. That's another one is that when I do my analysis, my checkup as it is checkup of the startup when I focus on the leadership. And also on the team, this does cover you know, the people and their HR policies.

Laurent Krenzi 3:24

Okay, great. So, now, I will just deep dive a bit into the the HR manager management you might find in those company you consult for. So, firstly, when you do you first checkup or analysis of the company of the current state of the company, do you notice any recruitment processes in terms of : who writes the job ad? who needs to interview the candidates? how many people do need to do the job Have you? Should we do that face to face for first by email by phone? Was it standardized and processed? Or it was more like, on the go?

Ansar Hafil 4:14

Definitely on the go. Yeah. A serious lack of any process. In general.

Laurent Krenzi 4:22

Yeah. And did you find any knowledge from the owner or the managers of those companies that this could be a problem coming to? Let's say moderate or large amount of recruitment coming, coming up?

Ansar Hafil 4:44

Yes. Basically, what happens from my experience? What happens is they hire people, which is ad hoc, often through networking, you know, no problem. processes and they get people to join the startup. And soon they realize, unfortunately, that

when they were deciding to hire somebody that they hadn't properly defined the role, that job role if you like, that's the first issue, No clear definition of jobs role, responsibilities and goals. And the second thing is they people they hire. Unfortunately, they realize afterwards, maybe they don't have the skills, the knowledge, the experience, to really do a professional job. Okay.

Laurent Krenzi 5:57

So you might say that there is First a lack of definition of the job role and then of lack of assessment of the candidate itself in terms of capabilities and knowledge and experience.

Ansar Hafil 6:12

Correct. All right. Yeah. Okay.

Laurent Krenzi 6:16

And, and did they quantify this? This list mismanagement of recruitment, like if the person the wrong person was hired or a lot of times was wasted in recruitment processes. Did they have any idea of the financial impact or maybe timing but

Ansar Hafil 6:40

I would say not not financial impact, they are not that advanced. They cannot really measure that. But certainly realize things are not getting done. Things are taking too long. Things are not as company grows the Can we say that the the jobs that need to be done to help the company and Vance they realize that person hasn't got the skills, the experience the know how to achieve them and this creates problems you know, it really creates an issue because eventually they have to try and find another position for that person in a startup which is not easy or they have to have a discussion and say look, sorry, we realized that, in fact, the person we really need for this position is we would we need some little more experience more qualification more. More skills, and you know, then they have to separate you know, they have to And the contract with that person for some of these can be very difficult because often they are their friends as well, you know, in the startup seats. They first look within their network, which are often friends and yeah gets very, it's very, very personal and very difficult situation creating about that on beyond sometimes because it's not a nice situation. Yeah, I can imagine.

Laurent Krenzi 8:32

Yeah. Okay. Does this company had any kinds of KPIs in terms of recruitment? For example, how many candidates do they have for such position? How many did they interview? How many candidates did they proposed a contract how many refused? tomini accepted? And why? Any kind of trucking?

Ansar Hafil 8:57

Certainly no KPI. You know it? It all seems to be, Oh, I know that person who I know that person again, you know, 80% of startups I've worked with who have hired people. It all seems to be a buyer. Who knows who, you know, I'm not just thinking not even using agencies really it's using their own personal network and the network of their friends and

people who already working there. So it's all be like a word of mouth. Again, not 100%. But you know, I would say 70 80% from what I've seen is it's all word of mouth, kind of how you how they get to know these people. Does that make you understand?

Laurent Krenzi 9:52

Yeah. Okay. And then we When it came to interviewing, did you feel or notice that while doing interviews the interviewers at some kind of checklist or something that they may have standardized to, you know, assess the candidates match up the values of the company for example, or key HR or administrative information such as resign periods or expectation in order to not miss that and you know, lose time.

Ansar Hafil 10:35

So, my my comment here is the interview process is very, very cool, really simple. And it seems as though there's just happy to find somebody that more or less a believe will fit into the team and be able to do I work on the website, work on that Communication or engineering? Yeah, it's again, no real interview process whatsoever.

Okay, now, if I may add, if I may add from my corporate life, you know, 30 years in Corp working for companies before I started doing business consulting. Also the interview processes I saw were very poor as well. In general, you know, even at in livestock may factor in large companies like (...) and (...) where I worked. The interview process, were very weak. So this issue of a good interview process, in my humble opinion is not only a problem for startups, I think it's a problem in General in any in any company, and I actually worked in (...) with HR myself on developing a new interview process to make it more scientific if I can say, which I will be more than willing to share with you if this is related, if this can help your project, you know? Yep. Okay, so I will explain what we've came up with. So, as you probably know, a general interview process the person interviewing has a copy of the CV and the letter of motivation. And then the interview person is just basically asking questions related to the CV and then the job they believe the person has to do. So very, very, not structured at all, very, as you say, as, you know, no structure whatsoever. Sometimes, only one person is involved in the interview process. Obviously larger companies, there may be others. But when those other people get together, it's a general discussion. And basically the one who speaks loudest to

things that that candidates the best they hire him and especially if he's the big boss. So the program though the process we developed in (...) was that I've written a course called target selection. So for each job we came up with a list of questions like 10 questions. And the questions were let's say we were looking for a salesperson. And these questions were related to Okay, please explain to me a situation where you had to handle An unhappy customer, for example. Okay, so then the candidate could have to say yes, during my experience and the situation with an unhappy customer, then we'd say the next part of the question would be okay, what actions did you do to try and calm the situation down to handle the situation? So that will be then would ask him, what actions he took in that situation? And then the last question, if you lie was what was the result of your actions? Were you able to calm the customer down getting to understand develop a plan to try and resolve the problem, blah, blah, blah. So we came up and and you know, do we about 10 different questions for sales? positions, 10 questions for engineering type question, etc. And there will be many and actually then we the people There'll be a minimum of three people interviewing the person not all at the same time, you know, one after the other. So, and the, the people interviewing would actually great, you know, say, okay, regarding that situation, in terms of the actions you took, it was at five out of 10, seven out of 10, 10 out of 10, etc. And that will go, you know, on a table. So, and that when then all three people got together the interviewers, often with the HR person, we could all add up the totals and we could actually talk numbers, you know, I mean, we need that to become more scientific. Hmm. And I am a we're not perfect, but at least it brought some data into the interview process, a bit of facts and data. And again, you know, really relating to the job and these questions. We asked, we're like, if you in communication, you tell me a situation where you had to communicate clearly precisely about the product. And so yeah, that was that was that what we called the target selection interview process based on situation action results. And now I posted was very proud to be part of that team that developed that whole process. And I really believe thanks to that new process. You know, we hired were able to hire better quality people because we had something structured in place okay.

Laurent Krenzi 16:45

It makes total sense, because I can relate to my personal experience with (...), where we had such kinds of units. We chose this competency based questions when, like the set of question for you know, how will you handle that? hadn't had the guts, etc. Additionally, two sets of value that we're meeting, you know, the company's missions,

values, etc. And we had, it was mandatory to us, for us to assess the candidates within this framework of, you know, competency based questions and values.

So, did you notice any kind of, of such framework in startups or SME your work?

Ansar Hafil 17:31

No, no, no, lack, complete lack. I mean, as we as we talked before, before you can really properly interview somebody, you need to have a proper excuse me a proper job description, a proper clear roles and responsibilities. And as we talked last time, about, you know, What experience do we want? What knowledge do we want? What skills do we want? What's the personality? You know, that all too that all needs to be defined for? So you can get the right people to be interviewed. So, I mean, that first stage is not in place. So how can he, how can the interview be in place? You know? Yep.

Laurent Krenzi 18:14

Okay. And now in terms of knowledge management, you said just before that the interview process was a bit freestyle. So what happened when those people get interviews and needs to, you know, keep track of whatt have been said during the interview, what was the candidate's response, you know, for the next interviews to come in and do not ask some questions or, you know, have to do the same feedback to the colleagues, you know, how do they transfer the knowledge from the interviews or keep track on it?

Ansar Hafil 18:54

Yeah, I mean, without before we had that in (...), we hadn't process the interviews with just get in a room with the HR people. And you'll be a general chitchat, you know, again, very not structured and you know, one person Yeah, like that alive is another one. I like that. And it was all it was, in my humble opinion it was not very structured and so, eventually, a decision was made who to hire obviously that job or the job too, but it wasn't a very structured process and often, you know, I the wrong people got hired because of the poor lack of poor structure in the process of the interview process. Yeah.

Laurent Krenzi 19:53

And there was no follow up after that? You know, no tracking data i mean i mean for the response that they get from the candidates do they keep somewhere or did they archive it or

Ansar Hafil 20:11

I believe the HR department keeps it and they have to have a file complete file on that person you know in the in these big companies I'll be not in the startups Yeah, I haven't seen any started by word with where you can go to a covered and see you know, files for all the people and there's no process or documentation at all file for star in my universe. I've never seen it. Okay. I've never dived in I've never asked to go in May. The boss may have something but in the big companies is probably Nestle. You know, the HR department keeps records I think of all the employees Yeah, yep.

Laurent Krenzi 21:00

Okay. Now if we go on the talent acquisition side, in terms of strategies, did you notice any awareness of any strategies for talent acquisitions in terms of how do we best attract candidates? How do we make our company appealing for candidates? Where do we post job ads, you know, in terms of strategies, concrete strategies and actions.

Ansar Hafil 21:32

Okay, so just to make sure when you say talent acquisition, this is the process of looking you know, trying to make sure you looking for potential candidates, is that correct? The talent acquisition ?

Laurent Krenzi 21:48

Yeah, yeah. How do we make the company appealing and how do we do we get new candidates, right.

Ansar Hafil 21:59

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. From again from my experience working with the startups, this is the mid he seems to be done very much word of mouth through, you know, your post on networking. Yeah, some startups are the more advanced they are put things up in Jobuo and Monster, you know, using those internet. Indeed those internet agencies as we call them. But that seems to be when the startup is already. I'd say two years old and now they're really they have a team of 10 people or more, that's when it's seen in from my experience as when they seem to get a bit more serious and maybe one of those 10 people now is dedicated to HR role. But whilst the startup is in like 3-4-5 people six it's often the founder that is still doing all the HR thing. And you know, that's it's all, as I said before, then it's just all networking and trying to find a person to sue networking.

Okay, so yeah, talent acquisition. When it's very small, my opinion when it's zero to, let's say six people is all very much networking. From when it gets to 10 and 15 people working for the startup, then they seem and there's somebody dedicated to really the role of the HR person, then they seem to get a little bit more professional Why working with agencies, online agencies or things like that?

Laurent Krenzi 24:07

Okay. And now in terms of budgeting, budgeting and financial projection, recruitment, does the company have any awareness of knowledge on how much money do they have? And should they allocate to the recruitment For example, to rather use an agency over, you know, going for hiring our in house recruiter, for example, their capabilities?

Ansar Hafil 24:38

Yeah. I mean, before so yeah, so the startups I work with they, you know, they know how much money they have to spend on a year because they've either got that through financing. And they what they called a calculator, a burn rate, you know, they know Okay, we've got two millions swiss francs and we want to achieve these things. So they calculate a burn rate, you know, how much are they going to spend per month and how long can they survive if they've got financing with 2 million Swiss francs for example. So this yeah this this calculation of knowing how much money it got financing and what they

want to achieve helps them calculate the salaries in fact, you know, because they, they know, they cannot spend more than so much money per month if they need to survive for the next year or so. Okay. Am I making sense does it make sense for you?

Laurent Krenzi 25:57

Yep

Ansar Hafil 26:01

The owners, you know, the founders of the startups they do, they are very aware of this burn rate, you know how and of course, if they do start selling some products, that's even better because then that helps them you know, they're self financing themselves a little bit, but often, you know, for the first couple of years when they developing their product and blah, blah, blah, you know, they don't have much income so everything's based on how much money they've been able to raise, you know, through financing or winning competitions. These different competitions startups can go in and if they win, they get like 100,000 Swiss francs so that's that's the calculation that's, you know, that that amount of money they've got that final And seeing how some designers or how many people can we hire, you know, to do the job we need to do to grow the business. And obviously startups are not very attractive in the beginning for experienced people so they often get young people and that sometimes can be a disadvantage because they lack experience, you know, which is why sometimes they decide to hire a consultant like me, you know, to say, okay, things are not going well. Let's get somebody with some experience to help us and that's often how it works. And he's, you know, when I when I, when I get called by somebody, can you come and help us? You know, sometimes things are pretty bad. Yeah.

Laurent Krenzi 28:00

Okay. Do you notice any knowledge of the markets from the managers of the company regarding to the specific position they need to recruit for, for example? Are they aware of, you know, the difficulty of worry of hiring a specialist in a different field, rather than hiring salesmen, for example?

Ansar Hafil 28:34

Yeah, that's a good question. In my experience, personal experience, when they really you know, if they need somebody to work on a website and communication, they can find people for that quite easily. I'm not saying it's the right people, but they do seem to find. Even sales people they seem to, you know, find again, I'm not saying what they find are the best. But where they do struggle is engineering, you know, engineering type roles like. Yeah, that's, that seems to be very difficult to find. Often the founders, you know, these engineering companies, they are engineers themselves.

But either case I can remember is this artificial intelligence. You know, we work with one startup where the idea was to really improve the hiring process, helping create more parameters in a system, using artificial intelligence to help improve the hiring, you know, getting the right people and then. The startup had enough money to last a year we have hired two artificial intelligence engineers. And we realized you know, they were not that experienced so that what we thought Yeah, well, we thought we get done didn't get done. And then so the founder woman actually realized that we need to hire people with experience and suddenly. So then she looked for people experience and they wanted you know, 10,000 Swiss francs plus more a month you know, and that that just see could you see didn't have the financing die, somebody like that. So in fact, then the startup just failed, you know, stopped moving on. Okay. So let's agree so, so yeah, so, so when we really need specific information experience and knowledge then it gets hard. Because those people think if you want to find good people, you got to pay them good salaries and startups in the beginning that are the money to pay good salaries.

Laurent Krenzi 31:17

Yeah. Okay. So, yeah, let's do that you felt that the people were not really aware of, you know, planning accordingly. You know, they were direct.

Ansar Hafil 31:29

Yeah. If they get the founder, the woman, she thought she could just find artificial intelligence engineers very easily, you know, okay. No problem. Yeah. Then. Then when she released Well, she found a couple. And we realized they were actually just learning,

learning on the job, basically. And so the project so then when she really started looking for people with experience, then suddenly with the finances, we're not there to hire the people.

Laurent Krenzi 32:01

Okay, that that was my feeling as well.

Ansar Hafil 32:05

I do agree it's logical that is like, you know, the more specialized people you need, there's less of them. And it's, it's harder to find them. And if you do find them, you have to pay them because of the people also want to hire them, you know, so it's

Laurent Krenzi 32:26

exactly, yeah, that's what my feeling that startups may wait until they got the financing and then they say, Okay, now I got the check, or we go and recruit five salesman and two engineers, but maybe the engineer may take six months recruiting the salesman two weeks, you know,

Ansar Hafil 32:43

Exactly why not? Absolutely. Yeah, and if you just want that interview or hire, you know, cheap, young I'm not saying anything against young people, you know, young, inexperienced engineers. Then unfortunately, company can make mistakes because they don't have any experience in the team, you know, and that will create problems itself by not having any experienced people in the team.

Laurent Krenzi 33:11

Yeah, exactly. No to make the transition with that, in order to maybe anticipate this problem, did you see any types of talent pooling from the startup SME in terms of time putting, I mean, you know, company doing first assessment of people and keeping them

under their and say, Okay, if in six months' time, I will need an engineer or a salesman, I got the right guy. You know, before-hand planning

Ansar Hafil 33:57

The only thing I can think of is that these founders, you know, they know people, they have a network and sometimes you can say to them, Look, if my company grows, I would be interested in you and I'll let you know. You know, it's very casual, casual chat like that. Yeah, all very casual guys. They like that long. It's all Yeah. It's, again, nothing structured, nothing filed. It's all in people's heads and yeah, but in general, no. I mean, it's obviously these founders, they meet lots of different people and, they can say, look, Oprah, my startup will grow and I'm going to need more people and I'll keep you in mind. You know, if a job comes up, if I can, I can afford to hire more people. And that's how I see you know, Just by word of mouth.

Laurent Krenzi 35:07

Okay, I think that was my last point. Okay, you have anything to add related to that.

Ansar Hafil 35:19

So just yeah, just summarize for me the main challenges to startups in finding and hiring the right people to help the startup be successful. So obviously, for me this job description, you know, they don't do a proper job in in the beginning of really defining the roles and responsibilities and the goals, you know, the goals of the position. So that's already one problem area. Then, as you say, the looking for the candidates. It's all of it some, some can use agencies, some use their network. So that's all about It flew if you like, you know these are they really are they really doing things that will really help them find the find the best candidates and actually looking process if you like. Then the third area is the interview process. As I say often in startups, they're so happy that found somebody that's willing to work with them this low salary, you know, there's hardly any interview process as I said, even big companies struggle with this interview process as well as the companies as well struggle with job descriptions. You know, when I get my first experience when I was part of the interview team in (...), you know, the, the boss who was hiring the person had to write down like, what the what the role was, and for

me often it was so flew so, you know, not clear at all. I mean that even I don't often talk to the people I said no, how do you expect to hire somebody? Where in my humble opinion, you don't even really know what you want know what? What do you want the person to achieve? So, you know, that's that job descriptions, not only a problem, in my opinion for startups, green pro companies, and then their story, then, you know, the interview processes is not structured at all. And then the actual hiring as well you know, that fourth step, making the contract and all those things. Yeah, that's the fourth step. Obviously, doing all the admin, the HR admin part of it, making sure that's all correct, because the contract is correct. Blah, blah, blah. Let me see if I can, just looking at my checklist as well here. When I when I Do my audit on companies about their team I mean training you know training it's okay hiring somebody but you you often have to invest as well in training they probably don't have all the skills so that's an area I was so focused on as well what training does the team need?

These are just general subjects Okay, though I'm just trying to you regarding Could I call it creating a winning team, you know, that's also the, you know, regular feedback regular is regular one to one between the boss and the employee having a regular meeting once a month, talking about how their how their motivation is, how their job satisfaction is, how are things going with their projects, to the needs support, and also that important question from the boss, any feedback from me, where I can improve as a boss to help improve your performance and your satisfaction and improve the performance of the company. So that's also a very big but you know, when I'm coaching companies and leaders, you know that you have to have these regular one to ones with your team, people individually and ask them how they are, ask them what helping even their projects to achieve the goals, and also that feedback. And, you know, these are just general things. Something you may know, I mean, we talk about issues, team problems, you know, clashes between individuals. In teams, you know, we say, Oh, they don't get on Fred and John don't get on. But in fact, if you really go into it, the reason they don't get on is because they haven't got clear roles and responsibilities. is between themselves. And that's why conflict appears in the team because it's not clear who should do what to talk about health as well. You know, it's important these days people take care of themselves because of burnout,. performance reviews is improved and it's important people have time to relax and take a break and recharge the batteries. Getting these work life balance correct.

Salaries, we didn't talk about salaries. Yeah, challenge of being able to if you want good people, You know, you have to be able to offer them a competitive package. Yep. Which is very challenging for startups, obviously, because they're very short of money. But is that? Yeah, that's why often startups fail because they don't have initial financing to be able to hire the right people. Yeah, to help the company grow. So that that is an important point in I think in the hiring process, as well as being confident what is a competitive package. In order to be able to get the right person instantly in startups, that's not really taken into consideration, you know, and if it's like a football team, you know, we want to create a football team. We want 11 players to try and do a job and we will if we don't have much money in the club, so we will, you know, get a few players who are probably not so good because we pay them low salaries, and unfortunately we don't win matches and eventually we get thrown out of the league, you know? Because So is that a very challenging thing to, to be able to find the financing to get the right people on board so we can be successful so we can start to sell and become a stable company.

Yeah, exam salaries as recommendation is to attracting if you want to get good people let's face it you know there's the joke you know if you if you pay people peanuts you get monkeys you know that's a funny joke. It's true if you give them again that's why these startups they often hire people just out of university young people looking for some experience and it's all sounds very nice and it can work obviously but often if you don't have the right team I mean my one of my famous saying is, as a boss as a you know, you the leader, you're only as good as your team. You know, you cannot do everything especially if your company is growing. You know, when you're a small startup two, three people are fine, you know, everybody's doing everything he can work. But once you start growing, you, you need to you create a good team because otherwise the founders be still doing everything and they'll have a burnout basically. Yeah. So it is key as you know, it's it is so important to have a winning team to get the right people on board. And I mean, that's when I, when I do my first assessment, my first questions are on leadership. You know, when I do my first assessment to the company, my first subject is leadership. And one of my questions is, how important are is it to you the quality of your tea? I asked that question just to get a feeling of, you know, do they believe you know, I'm the boss, my idea I can do everything. I just need people to help me do this. Or do they really understand the importance of having quality people around them to help grow the business and I tried to install me in getting inside the pay, you know? I know I know you're a great guy and got a great idea and everything, but you need good people around you, you know, you cannot do this on your own otherwise you'll have a burnout and it

won't work, you know. And, you know, the just the importance of having a quality team is an understanding the importance of a team. A lot of people don't understand that, you know, and Scotti people, I mean, you know, we can even Ronaldo Cristiano Ronaldo, you need good people around him. You agreed, you know? Yeah, you cannot win the match on his own on that TV is the best player in the world or messi or whatever?

(...)

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

(...)

Roman Bruegger 2:10

So I'm responsible for a co working space for startups in EPFL, in Lausanne. And those startups, they only work in education technologies. So they develop new tools for the classrooms for the basically for the future of learning, but not only in schools, but also in corporations, like Nestle or you know, Swisscom they also need to train their employees. So there are startups actually, embellishing the way and how we learn and bring new technologies into the world of education and training and learning. So that's basically where I'm, you know, in touch with startups. So we have currently 77 startups only working in education technologies. But I'm basically responsible for, you know, bringing them together with schools, with partners with investors with potential customers. So when in order to do that, To this end, we do a lot of events. And as we call them collisions, that's why the names we set the collider from colliding actually ideas, synergies, creating synergies, and so on. So just to give you a brief overview about what we are doing and where basically, my background is, and so that you also see maybe where it fits into your bachelor thesis and the questions that you will, you will probably address to me and to summing up I'm interested in the results that you are working on and your bachelor thesis because that might also help some of the startups Actually, to see, you know, the issues the hurdles that startups have in Switzerland to find good, good employees.

Laurent Krenzi 4:10

So from the Swiss EdTech website, I believe your organization is only deserving startups within the Swiss market is that correct?

Roman Bruegger 4:26

Yes, exactly.

Laurent Krenzi 4:34

Okay. And apart from that, you were a judge at Kickstarter, right?

Roman Bruegger 4:43

Yes. Kickstarter acceleration program in Zurich. Yes. Because we hosted actually, the first Kickstarter acceleration program at the Swiss EdTech Collider in Lausanne in 2017. Okay, only about there was only a tech startup. So they had verticals. So one was FinTech, Biotech, Foodtech and one was at EdTech so education technologies and this three months incubation program of kickstart accelerator was actually held at this Swiss EdTech Collider co working space at this point, this is also where I where I got to know Ansar because he was one of the consultants actually for one or two startups at this time.

Laurent Krenzi 5:30

Okay, okay, great. And within these two programs, I mean, you're from Kickstarter or EdTech. Do you provide some kind of courses or it is more like about mentorships of startups or owners?

Roman Bruegger 5:47

Yeah, that is a very good question. So the Swiss EdTech collider is a little bit unique and special. When you talk about the kickstart acceleration program. As the name implies, it's an acceleration/incubation program basically. So it's a three months to four months limited program. You come in, then you do mentoring, you help them, you know, to learn about the business, the finances, you know about everything around a business of a startup. After three months, it's like, "thank you. Good bye, good luck". And this is where the Swiss EdTech Collider is a little bit different. So we do ongoing support because what we have realized in education first, it's a very difficult, I want to say different market. It's, way longer. If you open a FinTech startup, you basically if your innovation works and runs, you can try to sell it as of tomorrow. In education, to talk to schools, it takes a lot of time because it's political, it's governmentally regulated. So what our idea is not to have a short program, but have a long program. So Swiss EdTech Collider is a long term partner for our startups.

Now coming back to your question, mentoring. So when you go into a kickstart acceleration program, which is three to four months, they will put the site to you, if you're allowed to enter that program as a startup, different mentors, maybe it's one, maybe two, sometimes it's three mentors in different business fields. So they provide that information to the to the startups and also this opportunity to Swiss EdTech Collidercollider here compared. We work with mentors like Ansar is a mentor, for example, we have a legal mentor or consultant that we put in touch with startups if they need it. But we don't have a program where we have 25 or 50 mentors at hand at Swiss EdTech collider and that they can put them at the disposal, you know, of all the startups that that we don't have. We have so specialists, subject matter experts I will call them that we can provide to startups if they if they need it because you have to understand when you have a kickstart program, when the startups come, usually the startups are, approximately all of them are at the same stage, they have a program, they have a tool, and they are starting trying to scale. They are all at the same situation. So that's why you can do a program around it because all of them have the same mindset. Here at the Swiss EdTech we have very early stage startups, but then you as also startups that have been in business for four or five years, which have already millions of revenues. So you see, it's difficult to have a group of mentors, because the needs are so far away from one startup to the other whereas in a Kickastar acceleration program everyone basically needs financial advice for scaling, everybody needs advice, scaling for teams and so on, because they are the same in the same position of development. Does that make sense?

Laurent Krenzi 9:17

Yeah, totally. And actually, this is the most critical point for me as well when it comes to recruiting. Because when scaling comes, I mean, there is an increase in revenue, in cost and everything, but I believe most of the time there is an increase of needs in terms of people. So this is a time when I mean, the needs of recruiting 5-10-50 people maybe comes to a point. And this might be the most critical part of my thesis. I mean, helping in defining what are the best guidelines for startups to tackle that.

Roman Bruegger 10:02

And I can tell you a lot while you're on the right, you're on the right approach. Because I have worked in San Francisco for seven years. And I've seen many, many startups. And the most crucial part is what you choose to touch. It's the team. It's not the product. It's

not even the vision and the idea... it's the team. So it's extremely important that you know, but to understand that successful startups and scale ups have a have a core team, as well as actually a board at this point, board of directors that have the same vision, the same passion and the same direction. Because otherwise, as you said, your thesis says that it's very crucial. And I would say it's the most crucial part because if you don't have a core team, that that has the same vision and passion Then it can fall very easily and quickly apart the whole idea. Yeah.

Laurent Krenzi 11:08

Yeah. And also, I mean, this is very important because when would come when it comes to scaling and the startups may have granted so some loans or some no business entities may come in or, or prices from incubators, so they're going to have a lot of maybe cash on hands. And they're going to have to use it properly. I mean, for product development or r&d whatsoever. And from my perspective and from what I spoke with different startup owners and incubators: recruitment is something that's been left apart from the majority of the cases. And it's a bit contradictory because when we look at literature review, we see that, as you said, creating a winning team, or recruiting specifically is the number one problem or top three problems when start are trying to scale. So there's maybe a bit of this much mismatch for them.

Roman Bruegger 12:18

Exactly. And, you know, a lot of teams also because startup, I mean, you know, if you have been talking to startups, startups who basically, you know, I don't want to say like a marriage if you find new partners, but it's at the beginning of a common endeavor. And in a startup, you also need a little bit different people I want to say than in traditional jobs because meaning the role of an employee in a start up is usually : everyone has to do everything role. It's not like at the beginning of a startup, when you are above 30 people may be you know, you You can start creating silos, right? You have a financial department, you have a, you know, you have a HR department, you have a production department and so on. And so if it is your structure, but at the beginning to assume that everyone can work completely independently, in a startup where you never know what the next day looks like, it's very, very tricky to put together a team. So in just to give you an idea, one of the things I realized is that is more hiring for potential of the employee than the track record they had, because a good track records of an employee doesn't

necessarily mean that he feels at ease in a startup because it is a little bit difficult or a different world. To work in a startup.

Laurent Krenzi 14:03

Yeah, this is some some great insight actually thank you for that. And because this is also my thing, because I actually an HR background, in recruitment, and I've been recruiting for Nestle for about three or four years. And I mean, after discussing with startups, I also felt that the profile of the candidates may change between, you know, someone who's applying and working for international and someone doing it for startup.

Roman Bruegger 14:33

Yeah. And also, it may change during the course of time and rapidly, you know, because you can say, hey, you will do this in our startup with four people forever. a startup is rapidly changing. That's what the entrepreneurship is all about, you know, it's pivoting. It's adjusting to the market. It's adjusting to the, to the forces that come from outside to the impact and you always have to do To change a little bit direction, and then coming back to what you thesis heads towards to is, it is crucial to have a winning team from the very beginning. So and, you know, some of the things that you can do to create a winning team is if you have already, you know, two or three employees always have the whole team, interview the candidates, because it's a small family. So it shouldn't be a one sided decisions, for example from the CEO. But it should be a team, a team decision of hiring someone, because that person has to fit in a in a very small puzzle. If you are in a huge company, as you said in Nestle, well, probably if one little cog wheel doesn't work well with that one over there. You don't feel it that much, right? But in a small startup, where all the cog wheelles are rather large, so it's imperative that they Work all together. So they basically they have to invite them truly to be part of the team. Because the startup is a team. You can you can put around wonderful visions, which is very important. The vision has to be clear, the mission has to be clear for all the employees, especially at this time, so that all go into the same direction. Communication is key. But at the end, it's really, it's really a matter of also personal stuff so that the person has to be accepted by other team members, specifically in startups in smaller startups more so than in big companies.

Laurent Krenzi 16:45

Yeah. So you're confident to say that, within startups, I mean, focusing on people on soft skills, it is more important than for international company for example, or Let's see regular industries.

Roman Bruegger 17:02

That's a good question whether you could generalize it, I would say like, it's more imperative yes to also check the soft skills. Whereas when you have traditional, big large companies, you know, usually the the hard skills, the results count more, but the soft skills certainly have to have a big, you know, kind of like place in the hiring process. Yes. Okay.

Laurent Krenzi 17:35

And we've progressed to that as a specific recommendation. For example, I don't know when we have candidates, what should we looking for, I mean, for previous entrepreneurs background, or maybe some kind of educational programs in particular, that you may see that's more adapted to a startup environment or

Roman Bruegger 17:57

if you asking about the edtech startups or in general?

Laurent Krenzi 18:03

in general

Roman Bruegger 18:04

in general? Well, it depends a little bit of the position. I mean, of course, you know, when you're looking for someone who is strong with financials, then it helps if that person had already a financial background. Because you want to rely on these people and you want to trust these people, because you can do everything on your own. That's why you hire

basically people. And so in startups, it's, it's crucial that you have someone who asked specifically needed skills. So yes, the background when you look for someone in let's say, when you grow in HR or in product management, of course, it's good if you don't tie your chest on newbie despite the fact that they might be cheaper, which is also one of the you know, one of the influential factors when startups hiring they always look for, of course, for the most, or the cheapest person, not cheeping meaning not good, but the lowest salaries, which tends to be then also the younger people. But I think at the beginning, you know, to have a good mix between senior experienced people and young ones who might be a little bit more flexible and then you know, have the have the drive and have also the, you know, the vision of changing stuff that is for me is a is I would say, a dream team. So firstly, the soft skills as you said, I mean, they all have to get along with each other, but then also have a good mix of experience people but also young ones who really have the, the drive of of a startup because experienced people that's what we sometimes see they still in this old pattern, you know, the eight to five day job right? You come on date and you leave at five. That's also another start, by the way, and also weekends, sometimes they don't exist. But it's a mix between experienced, and new people if you can afford that, or at least have for example, if you can't have this, if you have a young team, then what can be suggested is from the very early point on, you ask professionals more sophisticated professional with more experience to be as an advisor, like advisory board, for example. So then you have your core team, but at least you have the expertise to also see a little bit how the business world outside works, because that's also what sometimes lacks of very, very young, no offense, but very young startups and entrepreneurs, you know how the world actually and how the markets dynamics work. For example, yeah.

Laurent Krenzi 21:01

Okay. Okay. I was not very familiar with the advisory board kind of structures. How do you do Do you feel that is going in that way? I mean, do they put in place concrete boards where people are allocated, I mean, I don't know, one day per month when they per weeks I don't know to advise a company which is more like kind of freelancing contract that you contract the people for a specific needs or period of time and then they leave.

Roman Bruegger 21:32

It can be it can be both sides. But in most cases, the startups would build an advisory boards of people that have experience and have an have a network in the industry. For example, in education technology. If you're a start up towards the corporate training and learning world, like with Nestle, swisscom Nespresso, whatever is out there. So you want to have someone in the advisory board who can give you access To a network of HR professionals, for example, because then you can tap into the networks and saying like, okay, we have this solution that helps your employees to train better. These boards, usually in general, work pro bono. So that means that's not the official board like the that does the strategic and, you know, operational decisions together with the CEO and the team. But it's more really an outside board, a group of experts that help. Why do startups do that? If you have an advisory board that shows how actually serious you are also about your business. That also gives you kind of like a validation because people that joined advisory boards, they check the startup, they don't join just for fun, because they want to put their expertise to someone they believe in, as well. So meaning that emphasis size is actually the seriousness of the startup itself. So these guys are well connected. And one of the goals of the startup also is to have an advisory board is not only to tap into network, but it's easier to raise funds. It's easier to go to VCs and investors in general and say like, Look, hey, we have an advisory board, consisting of three or four people. They're all experts in their fields, well known people, blah, blah, blah. So that makes it also easy for the startup.

Laurent Krenzi 23:35

Okay, okay. Well, that's very interesting. I mean, well, I think it completely didn't looked at it during my research, so thank you.

Roman Bruegger 23:47

That's why we're here for we learn everything. Yeah, we learn we learn something every day.

Laurent Krenzi 23:52

Yeah. And just ask question about the advisory board. What is the The motivation for these people to join an advisory board? Is is more about, do they have some stakes in the company? Or are they remunerated in some way? Although it's pro bono.

Roman Bruegger 24:12

Yeah, you know, sometimes they will get shareholder at one point. But most of them, they just want to help startups, because they'd probably have had their own startup or they always wanted to do something, you know, for the for the society and for the greater good, or they wanted to do their own startup but didn't have the opportunity, but still, they want to help a startup to grow. So they feel part of the whole story. So that will be my first, you know, answer to your question, why, they do it. And also, of course, I mean, if the startup is very successful, that gives them, you know, on the other end, of course, also a successful image of being a supporter of startups. So most of them just want to put their expertise and an experience, you know, to the use for startups, but startups they believe in. So, I mean, that's what I said earlier, you know, they don't just join any startup they really join a startup where they believe in the cause where they believe in the goal and and vision. And so that is the reason they want to support and help,

Laurent Krenzi 25:25

Okay.

Roman Bruegger 25:28

But some get remunerated. So meaning they get something you know, but it can be, I don't know, it can be more like, you know, a nice dinner together or something like this. Instead of really... if you can also pay an advisory board. It's up to the startup, but most of the time they really get them in for the expertise and also because they have maybe personal connections to the to the CEO of the startup and want to help.

Laurent Krenzi 25:54

Okay. I will look a bit more into that because I am not familiar with this kind of structure, I think, yeah, with

Roman Bruegger 26:02

Yeah, as, again, as I said, just to summarize, you have a core team, which is your thesis, you know, the team of the startup, but when you have not that financial needs, you know, in order to pay these experts and specialists you need, you can try to have an, you know, advisory board, and they will give you the experience and expertise and knowledge probably that you and the best practices that you might need as a startup

Laurent Krenzi 26:29

Ok. Yeah, for example, you know, having the budget to recruit someone or knowledge in general, that may be the problem and the solution could be, you know, put in place some kind of advisory boards as you said.

Roman Bruegger 26:51

one of the one of the all part time work, of course, you know, if you can't afford someone paying 100%, maybe at the beginning of the year. To start a venture, you maybe you don't need a Chief Financial Officer at the hundred percent, you can try to get, you know, either on an hourly basis contract basis or temporary. But this is more tricky, because you know, people that look for jobs, they usually want to have 100% job in general.

Laurent Krenzi 27:20

Yeah, I agree. And now going back to a more broad perspective, if we can say. What do you think it might be other problems that startups have when it comes to recruitment? I mean, we just talked about budgeting, for paying the actually the candidates, that could be one of the problem, which tend to be a bit obvious, but do you see some other of your profit startups or startups in Switzerland particularly have when it comes to recruitment I mean, for example, dryness of markets in terms of candidates or administrative constraints or what would you point of view on that?

Roman Bruegger 28:04

So, all the points that you basically mentioned are, you know, constraints, you know, firstly, the budget of course, second, usually one of the bigger problems is a start up, as I said, you know, is very agile. So a lot of things change very rapidly. So that also means, sometimes they need to hire a person tomorrow, and not in six months when they can actually quit their current job, right. So the timeframe is also an issue because startups need someone to help immediately, but the market cannot allow because of regulations of Swiss laws, for example of contract laws to let that person under normal circumstances immediately let go. So that means they have to wait for three months or even six months, depending on the position until this person can join. And that is a long time for the startup. I mean, six months is, that's a long time. So this is one of the constraints I see. You know, when you need the person at the right time, usually they're not available. You see candidates, but you can't get them because they still stuck in their current position. Unless you really find someone who is open on the market like a consultant, they are usually always available, then it's easier. I would say that is that is probably one of the issues besides the ones that you have mentioned. And there's one thing that you can do to address this. So firstly, in your network, constantly, be on the lookout for, you know, people with the same a similar passion of your startup venture. Right. And also, it's important that I think always be open to hiring. So especially when the startup is new, so saying, like, don't just wait until you know, a position that you you need on Monday is there or until you receive applications, but also consider, you know, referrals or requests from people be always constantly a little bit on the lookout for people. Because that keeps your register open. You know, not in having to start from zero because if you look in your network, maybe you have one point you think about in two, three months I want to hire, I need someone in, in finances so you start looking now. Not in three months. Because even though you can hire them Yet, but if you have 5-6-7 potential people that you already know, and that might be interesting for your company, then once you really needed you can tap into your network immediately. Because if you go through the standard job markets, that's very cumbersome and coming back to what you said, it's a nose to nose business. So the soft skills they need, they are very crucial at the very beginning. So if you can build kind of a network of potential future employees, if you think about yourself Laurent, you have friends that come to mind when you think like when I have a startup and they do something, I will contact these guys and see whether they want to work with me. Always. Always have your ears and eyes open, you know whether where they are and so you can probably more rapidly react when you really need those people

Laurent Krenzi 31:59

Yeah, I totally agree with you actually, I can really relate this idea because within Nestle, I was also responsible to build these networks that we call talent pools. So we assess candidates beforehand that we may say, okay, in six months time, we're gonna need some salesman or this kind of in, particularly engineers. So when it comes, you know, the confirmation of the budgets, or maybe for startups it's gonna be, you know, some some funds, you already have the guys in the pipeline that you may just contract and then have them onboard rapidly.

Roman Bruegger 32:34

So I don't know, actually, whether that I haven't done research, maybe that's something you could do, but I don't know whether there is really a talent pool for startups. You know, whether there is a organization I mean, besides Jobs.ch and all these sites, right, but I'm not sure whether there is kind of like, because Nestle, they're huge. I mean, they have time they have a whole recruiting team, you know, to build talents and you know, to have them there. But the startup doesn't have time. So maybe that, if that doesn't exist, that might be a good idea. Yeah, for startups in general, I don't know whether that exists, frankly. So I haven't seen it.

Laurent Krenzi 33:14

But for example, it is more kind of internal knowledge, let's say. For example, Nestle have their own talent pools but it's kept confidential internally. So startups may want to see, I mean, something we can explore within my daisies may want to build up some mini talent pools, for example, for a company, you know. I am going to sell a product of some salesman with some particular I don't know, languages, for example, that are maybe complicated to access in order to prevent some hiring increase. So that maybe a solution would be you know, having some constant assessment or you know, building you know a database of interested candidates and as you said, compatible in terms of values and personal feelings, if we might say and have them somewhere ready.

Roman Bruegger 34:17

Yeah, I agree

Laurent Krenzi 34:20

And now, we spoke about a lot of potential problems that startups may have.. Within your experience with Swiss headache or kickstart or if you had other experiences, have you seen some courses or mentorships that are focused on recruitment? I mean, not only HR management or organization but focused on recruitment, on how to recruit, how to build a strategy for attract candidates and so on.

Roman Bruegger 34:55

That's a good question. I have seen you know that, for example, in kickstart acceleration program, that they have a section, you know, one of their modules is about HR and recruiting practices. But I, because I didn't participate in in those modules myself, only some of our startups, I don't know exactly what was, you know, the details of it, but I could envisage and imagine that they that they probably talk to us a little bit about the, you know, the most crucial factors like we said, you know, expertise is good, but also soft skills good. And it has to be a winning team at the end, you know, that that you have to compile and not only experts at not only alpha males and stuff, but I'm not sure whether I have seen specific, you know, classes and courses. How do you recruit? personnel, there is one I can share the link with you, though I have to look it up itself. EPFL Innovation Park acceleration. I'll share the link in a second just have to see whether that is the correct one because they do really support startups. I put it in the chat so I think this is one of the program and they have a trust, for tech trust tech program, where they actually, you know, have a formal startup acceleration program for companies developing innovative solutions. And as far as I know, that there is a part of this program is dedicated to personnel issues or related questions.

Laurent Krenzi 37:30

Okay, I will look into that because one of the goal of my thesis is, along with the course cases, I mean, the theoretical and academic side, I'm going to try to put in place some guidelines, some best practices, if we can say maybe, you know, 10 points, more or less

short, that we can fit into one or two pages that owners or CEOs from startups can have right on hands to have some some ideas or to help them.

And maybe from your experience or from your advising. What do you advise to startups that are recruiting, I mean, what are the sources that may be the best for them to check universities or, you know, we have some some kind of intrapreneurship program. Lacking assurance of people, they are at the mercy of degree with this kind of orientation. We have some some, some insight on that.

Roman Bruegger 39:10

Yeah, I would say, you know, most of the startups that from us that hire for their teams because they're young teams, right. I would say the majority of the startups that started developing an innovation day came out from either EPFL, or eth in Zurich. So engineering schools and they have an innovation a robot for you know, for kids to play and learn. And they usually go also when they recruit into their alumni networks, you know, when fellow fellow students, but I would certainly give the advice. Look, first and foremost, also in your network, coming back to what I earlier said because it's not only About the, the skills at the beginning, it's really like a marriage with the person that you don't know.

Coming back to what I earlier said, because it's not only about the, the skills at the beginning, it's really like a marriage with the person that you don't know. And if you know that person that might help already, if they have the same passion, the same, you know, compassion, the same vision as you: that helps. And usually you'll find people in your network or your network can help to find these specific people because they also have a network because you can rely on people that you already trust. So that's the first. That's really the first you know, address I will go to: check in your own network before you go to to official public sites like jobs.com or whatever job scout, etc. And then for sure, I would tap into the clusters of universities that would provide talents to your innovation. So, if you have a MedTech product or biology product, you will go probably into the universities where, where they have programs, like you said, you know, in Lausanne or in Geneva, they have business schools, the HEC in Lausanne, for example, is a very good pool for startups in finding general business people, you know, marketing

professionals or managing positions, finance position, so you will go to these to the schools. And then there are besides universities, the prestigious private schools like IMD, in Lausanne, for example, they have very highly talented people and pools of people that are looking for, you know, kind of challenges in startups. I give you an example: We are very closely working with IMD, we are doing also days and events together. But one of the things that IMD, for example, offers is they have Executive MBA programs, right? And what they have to do during that program, the people that attend they have to do, kind of like you, a master thesis, your thesis program. And they love to do that in a startup. So you basically can have, for example, for six months or even longer, depending on the program, you can have a professional working inside of your startup helping you with something, working on his master's thesis, but taking it extremely serious because he wants to have a good grade at the end, but he also because he wants to help the startup. So these are also pools that you can look into. So these business schools that are around for, you know, for startups. And then, as I said, the cluster, the cluster networks, the industry events, for example, industry events, you know, when you when you looks for someone in machine learning artificial intelligence, there is a four-day event here in Lausanne every year hosted by EPFL, where you can find lots and lots of talents in this specific field. So, you will go to these specific events to also meet with potential new employees.

So, yeah, what you said University, business schools don't forget your own network, and then all these events and lastly, I would probably, also for sure, you know, check the official public websites, in terms of jobs and these kind of things, because you wouldn't want to miss. And if you really need a very specific person, then you work with a headhunter. But then you have to have the money to pay for these guys. So that is that is a little bit, you know, the tricky part. Yeah, but the network for me is, I mean, network for me is probably the most important to check first there for talent and friends who know.. who might.. you know, someone.

Laurent Krenzi

And I believe this is also a solution for you know, pre-assessing people, I mean, if they fit with the company, because with Jobup or LinkedIn, we can have thousands of application but we don't really know if they're gonna fit, as you said.

Roman Bruegger

Exactly, exactly. And this..with startups, as you mentioned earlier, and we don't discuss that they usually don't have time. I mean, they're so focused on bringing, you know, forward their, their startup that they don't have time to screen 250 I mean, you know, applications. That is that is the HR department of Nestle can do that, because they have, I don't know, 25 people who can do that. But as a startup, you're mostly alone at the beginning. So you don't have these. So you need to find kind of like, solutions or help from outside. And if you have, you know, a huge network and you say you, I'm looking for a web developer JavaScript specifically. Then you post this to your network. I'm sure someone knows someone who has exactly those skills. And usually, as you said, You and including myself, I will not refer someone who I will not hire myself.

Laurent Krenzi

Yep, yeah, that's true. At least I don't do it.

Maybe just my last point to finish that and I think we were gonna be done. I mean, thank you very much for your insight. It's their interest. We just spoke about you know, I mean those guys in EPFL teaming up together or adding someone from ETHZ or you know some kind of local refereeing or network do you think that startups in Switzerland or more locally filled? I mean, do the guys from EPFL team up only with EPFL/ETHZ or have you seen some kind of international partnerships with some guys in Europe or outside Europe? Because I'm thinking of that in terms of budgeting. I mean, it's gonna be maybe cheaper to have someone working for you from Colombia or from an emerging market than from some In Switzerland.

Roman Bruegger 7:01

You have a we have an extremely good point there, Laurent. So, what I would like to add to my former points, what I said is, it depends what kind of employee or role you try to fill. Because a lot of our startups, for example, and this is just your statement brought me this.. this idea to my mind... a lot of startups, for example, have their product, the technical components, you know, the website and the the product itself. They have it developed, for example, in the Ukraine, or in Taiwan, or really, as you said, in somewhere in South

America or wherever, where it's cheaper. So, if I think and this this actually gives a little bit a new shed light of the whole discussion that we have this morning together is the core management team. That the core management team probably you look for local people, but the production depending on what kind of tool, of course and innovation you have, but the production team, you might be, as a startup very, very quickly and eagerly to be, you know, like, sourced out to all the countries. Actually, a lot of our startups, as I said, they have developed their technical stuff in China, of course, they have developed their websites in the eastern part of of Europe. Because you have extremely highly talented people here, but they're way cheaper than a web developer of Switzerland, for example. So you pay a third of the price for the same quality. And there are, now you can add maybe to the sources of where you can find people. So we talked about universities network, and so on. There are also specific companies that hire people in your name in foreign countries. You basically pay this company they pay the people, they make sure that everything that you want has been developed and they take responsibility for selecting the talents. Because I feel if you're a startup you Laurent and myself Roman we can't just fly around the world and look for good people. We don't have time and nor the money, but there are organizations who help you with that. tThen probably you choose pay them. I don't know how the business model works, but the commission fee so that they actually hire the people for you, but they're responsible that the whole production actually works like you want and which takes off a lot of pain and pressure from your shoulders.

Laurent Krenzi 9:58

Okay

Roman Bruegger 10:00

Yeah, so this is really a you have a, you have a point there: It depends what kind of people you look, I would say, to come back just to summarize, the core management team around you know, that is maybe the, the most crucial parts of your operational business. You want to have around you, you want to have here, you know, around you if you sit in Lausanne or in Geneva, you want them close by, whether it's Zurich, Geneva, it's not a big deal. But you don't want to have your chief financial officer in Guatemala, and then you want to have the chief marketing officer somewhere in South Africa. I work

for a company in Silicon Valley. And if you have time differences of 14 hours to do team meetings, then you see already there it gets tricky.

(...)

Laurent Krenzi 11:38

Okay, I think we'll come we're coming to an end. I'm basically done with my question. Thank you very much for your insight...

Laurent Krenzi 0:00

So I've seen from your LinkedIn profile that you have been dealing with startups since a little while. So I just wanted to have your input on how startups are dealing with recruitment. I mean, it's a real challenge for them, but how do they tackle it? And maybe if some accelerators do offer some support, or it is not in their capacity to offer some support from a recruitment perspective.

Matthew Lashnar 1:07

Now, generally, sometimes in accelerators, startups will meet other startups. And actually, that can lead to hiring. And that's more accidental, unplanned, but it's pretty common where you get a bunch of people together. And all of a sudden, they like working with other people, they just get they find that there's a sense of fit between somebody else that's on a different project. And then they say, hey, you've got a skill that I need. And so that happens. That's an accident, but it really does happen. So that community that you work in startups, is an important network effect. And you shouldn't underestimate as a way of hiring actually is not a bad deliberate strategy if you're a startup to go looking into incubators for interesting people that might, you might have a fit with. But it's not. It tends to be more ad hoc rather than strategic thinking of "Hey, I needed someone to do some development or marketing" or whatever it would be. In the accelerator, we mainly... we're very early stage. So most of the startups that we're dealing with are less than \$2 million worth of sales and less than half a million dollars of capital raised. So they tend to be very founder centric, and typical profile of a startup would be, let's say, 1-2-3-4 people. I mean, it's not usually for us, it's not much bigger than that. And so consequently, if you're thinking, if you're getting into the type of questions that you for larger people who are scaling up, then it becomes much more critical about how they, how they go about recruitment. And the stage my startups are at...they're actually looking they tend to be founders and co founders. That's mainly what it is. And they're looking for the first employee and when you get to the first employee, the fit is everything. Generally the first employees not motivated by money. in the sense of, "Hey, I can earn as much working for an management consultant or a corporation" because they're driven more by that sense of mission. So finding that sense of mission, that sense of excitement is the most critical thing because if there's only four or five of you on a team, you really need to have

that strong fit. There is too much work to do and not enough time. There's a huge amount of stress because you're probably burning cash. So you really do need to make that sense of mission. And that sense of fit with the person you're hiring is important. From a wealth perspective, and you're attempting to offer them wealth in the future. So if you're, you're giving them a share of the company on the basis that something's going to happen. But the starting salary tends to be pretty nominal and the wealth is the wealth creation is coming from future stock options if such a thing ever happens, although many people realize that's pretty tough. That's a pretty tough thing because there's not very few companies who actually go stratospheric in terms of valuations. Yeah, the first employees are doing it for experience, the fit for the fun because they see there's something interesting.. usually the founder that's quite charismatic and all the project is quite interesting.

Laurent Krenzi 4:39

Okay. Okay. Yes, I can see that I mean, the profile...if I can just resume what you just said, the profile for the ideal candidate at the beginning of the startups' lives, or at the beginning of its growth, should be more focused on you know, passion or fit . And then ag the end when it's maybe with 50 people or more is gonna be more more competitive offer some some competitive benefits, which is competitive with the markets, is that correct?

Matthew Lashnar 5:15

They get into the size of 50+ it's still.. you can be more competitive on salary and you need to understand what your salary structure is, but it's... you're still promising future wealth. And the team that you started with might not be the team you finished with because at the beginning, if you hire one employee to do your marketing, your communication strategy or PR, maybe your sales, your business development, that sort of possible. But by the time you've got to 50 to 100 employees, you've probably got all those jobs across 10-15-30 people. So you, that person who you hired as your second-third-fourth employee might not even be in your.. might not be the same sales skill set you need when you've got 50 to 100 employees. So it might be might be that, you know, the earlier on you have people who are very generalist, and later on you have people who are much more specialist. It depends if you're getting into scale up, it can be a very different game. It depends where you want to put your skilled people. So do you create

a business model and then just hire people who can then execute it? Or do you need people who are going to create new business models for you, or move into different categories, different countries, whatever it might be.

Laurent Krenzi 6:38

Okay, I understand. Thank you very much. And now just to add something on what you just said. Looking at, you know, a good candidate, what you just said that, firstly, we're going to look for a generic list and then a specialist. When it comes to soft skills and maybe with the mindset of the candidates. There is a little paradox, you know, between strategy and literature review that I found: that from one side, we should look for someone who is, you know, interested and passionate about, this entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem, which may be passion driven or something like this. And from the other side, this could be a risk because if someone who is, you know, familiar with startups, who is entrepreneurial himself and he is joining your startups, you will have the risk that in two or three years-time he is going to, you know, have his own startups, launch his own project. So, how do you feel and, with your experience. when startups recruit other entrepreneurs.. What is the output of this, I mean, those people leave after a few years? or is it a good fit to have entrepreneurs in your team?

Matthew Lashnar 7:59

I think again, it's a watch out. And it comes back to what I was saying about the mission and do people buy into it? I mean, I think you're always going to.. if people like to become entrepreneurs, there's always the risk that the person who you hire wants to do their own thing. And that's, if they like taking risks, they like being their own boss. I mean, that's always a risk. So, look at the, you're probably getting a year, maybe two years out of these people. And that may be okay. It might not be that, I mean, jobs for life doesn't really exist anymore. It might be that it's a short term thing. But I think you hire against... Okay, so you have some hard skills and you say, okay, can I do this level of coding? What's their sales experience? What are they good at in terms of, I don't know, do they understand HR law. Those are but you can measure those things in hard skills. When you get to the soft skills. Is that feeling of, you know, is this person? Is this someone that I want to have an argument with? And then actually the next moment, we're going to be able to, we're going to be fine, and we're going to move forward? Are they going to bring a different attitude to the table, is it going to be helpful? Are they going to stick with me

when it gets really ugly? And that's when you get into this mythical fit question, you know, do they fit with me as an individual? And at the end of the day, it's about that judgment, you make that judgment of do they fit and with the soft skills, and it's a risk that you take, I mean, if you hire lots of entrepreneurial people who are likely to want to do their own thing, the chances are that they may well move on, after they feel they've got you know, the, you know, the experience that they wanted to get with you. And that I think that's just natural. Now, you could do some things to help them stay so you can get into what's your personal development plan? How are you going to grow that individual? How you're going to give them more responsibility? You're gonna tie them in with more stock options so that they have to give up if they leave? So there's lots of ways you can manage it. But it's, I think you're right to think about it as a risk. But it's I think it's a consequence of, you know, if you're in startup land, then the chances are that you attract other people, and therefore, who are interested in entrepreneurship, and therefore, they have a higher probability of wanting to do their own thing.

Laurent Krenzi 10:24

Okay. Okay. Thank you very much. And you just said, the entrepreneurs, they should be, you know, comfortable with short terms with high risks. That's the life entrepreneur. But in this case, by experience, how do you see founders or founding teams, manage new employees?

Matthew Lashnar 10:54

Again, there's a there's a very old adage, I'm sure you've heard it, which is "you have to hire slow and fire fast" I mean, you've heard that. You spent a fair amount of time trying to figure out that you have the right person, and then you move quickly. But if it's not working out, you get rid of them very, very quickly, because it's in a small team. It's just too destructive. And I think that, you know, no one tries to make mistakes. But if it's not working out, you have to move pretty quickly, particularly if it's senior people. I mean, if you if there's two or three of you making the decisions, and one of those people is creating a lot of friction, as a founder, you need to move very quickly. I think there is also this link to your question a little bit... is, sometime, you when you really want to hire someone who says more experienced. Maybe you actually need to hire a professional CEO. Many founders are not actually CEOs, they're tech people. Or maybe they're just people with a mission but if your organization starts to grow, and you need to hire let's

say, a proper CEO who is used to.. a COO or a CIO, who's used to managing, like 50 to 100 plus people, that's where this could be very dangerous, where you could end up with a complete, let's say, clash between the founder or CEO or whatever you want to call it. And then that the experienced person you brought in to actually run the organization. Is then better off running a something that's scaling. And that is a big risk point. But it really only comes back to that chemistry and that trust that you have with the person you've hired. And I think you need to be very decisive. If you're getting to the point where you need to let them go.

Laurent Krenzi 12:49

Okay. And now as my work is focused on Swiss startups, I would like to know if you have experience or knowledge about Swiss stores versus European startups or also US startups... Because in terms of legal framework or from the market itself, I've seen an American, I can believe that those are very different ecosystems. For example, you just said, you know, fire quick. In Switzerland, you cannot really fire as quickly as in the US, for example. So have you seen some very different mindset or cases of Swiss startups and then compare it with other countries' startups?

Matthew Lashnar 13:36

No, I, I think actually in Switzerland, you can fire quick. It's places like France, Germany, where you really struggle to fire fast. But now I've been in the attitudes of more so risk from... it's actually not so much from a hiring perspective, it's more from a VC perspective or in the capital business. So Americans are much... Americans tend to be much more risk, friendly, Europeans tend to be much more risk adverse. And I see that in in Switzerland. But from a hiring point of view, I don't I probably don't i don't see enough of it. If I'm honest, I probably don't have enough broad experience to answer your question. If I think about what I've seen, I don't. Yeah, I don't really see it.

I mean, you need to think about the contracts that you create. But now I think usually if you want to get rid of somebody, they also want to go. It's normally not a good fit for them either so o it tends to be more consensual. Okay, there's a pain at the beginning of the conversation, but it tends to be more consensual. But I know I don't think I see a big enough difference or a big difference. But it's I think it's mainly because I'm not.. I don't

see enough of data set from maybe North America to get to compare it with. Okay. I can't give you a great answer, I'm afraid.

Laurent Krenzi 15:15

Okay. No, it's okay. Thank you very much. And now coming to your experience. How do you think people and founders reacts about, you know, lacking of recruitment potential? I mean, when founders want to recruit, you know, when they are in the growing phase, when they want to go from, as you said, 3-4-5 people's to 10-20 peoples, maybe when they get founded, they have these needs of "hands" to work or people to have in their teams. How have you seen them, tackling that problem? I mean did they all panic and go to agencies? Do they hire HR professional to do work internally? What are their strategies?

Matthew Lashnar 16:09

The first rule of thumb is network. So they go into people, let's say, their first tier of contacts and who do you know. So the network seems to be a very powerful way of recruiting people. They tend to not have too many specialists HR resource at this particular stage. So the recruiting, say for the younger ones tends to be much at least from what I can see much more informal. I mean, usually we ...if you and I know each other well, I would say.. WOkay, do you know anybody?" and you might go "Well, like, I've met these guys and talk to them." So it tends to be very network driven. And you know, things like LinkedIn. I mean, you can you can drop stuff on LinkedIn, but it's, you get such a random response. So network tends to be quite efficient. Because, you know, if I know you well, and I trust you, and you say "Well, hey, John's a really good guy", you already start off with "Yeah, it's worth interviewing that person." So I think the go-to places network. When you start scaling the organization..yeah.. you need professionals and they might use agency, for example. But it's still a network effect, it is very, very powerful. When you might actually reward other employees for bringing people in. It's not uncommon for, you know "Well, hey, we need a developer, who do you know?" or "We need a consultant". So you might then go back into your network and say "Hey, network, I need someone who does this, who could you recommend?" You might hire someone on an agency basis because I mean, keeping people off the books can be actually quite important. So you might want to just hire an expert for three months and see what happens. So rushing into a long term contract with someone is...yeah.. could

be very challenging. So leveraging your network, I think is where I would always advise people to go first. And it could be that it's people on the team or it could be your advisors. I mean, if you've got a VC out there, and they're investing in you or it's an angel, you want to go to your chairman and say "Hey, look, I think a really good x, who do you recommend?" That's how a lot of this stuff happens, particularly in Switzerland. Switzerland is much more network than many other countries. Very, very opaque in terms of recruitment.

Laurent Krenzi 18:38

Okay. Thank you for your input. And then just coming back to what you just said about the contrast structure. Do you feel that founders and entrepreneurs are comfortable, you know, with hiring someone, you know, freelance or very short term I think someone just joining the program for a few months or weeks, rather than have, you know, a Sunday I have two years or even a study.

Matthew Lashnar 19:03

I think people are very comfortable hiring people short term and see what happens because the risk is low, particularly if you don't know what the job is. So I mean... take sales, for example, if you want to create a scale operation for something, you might employ a knowledgeable salesperson to create the template of how you're going to operate. And you might do that over six months. And once you've got that template, maybe you hire a head of sales, and maybe that's the consultant. But then when you get into scaling it, you know, you go out and you hire much more junior level. So using consultants and experts, maybe you're not giving them the cash but you are giving them the shares in the company. This is actually a really good way of trying to protect your cash and get advice quite quickly because you're putting these people under time, pressure and deadlines. If you go hire an experienced hired who's maybe not used to the startup world, they could burn through a lot of cash and actually don't get necessary always a lot of productivity. So hiring people short term contract, keeping them incentivized with that, that carrot of, "Hey, maybe there's a job in it for you" or maybe you give them a slice of the company, maybe they can get a directorship. These are all really good techniques to get high caliber people working on your business, but not a lot of money. And it's best if you really try to condense the time frame so that you get them actually generating output for you and productivity, as opposed to "Hey, I've got a fat

salary. I'm used to, you know, taking it easy." which, frankly, in many corporates is...yeah...it could be the case for someone who's been in for 10-15 years or so.

Laurent Krenzi 20:53

Okay, and have you seen a lot of startups implementing this kind of incentive, performance based incentive? Because, you know, from my experience in Switzerland, I think we don't see a lot of that. It is not more American.

Matthew Lashnar 21:07

Yeah it's much more American, it's much more creative. And it's usually what I see is that they stay within themselves. So, what I like to advise people, that's how you want to get some of these higher caliber people working for free. You're right, we tend to see more people stay within their own actually, also age groups. You see, you do see some people reaching out to experience hires and putting people on their board. So if you find some really experienced advisors, and then you make a non exec directors, but I don't see so much of what I've just described to you in terms of getting experienced people involved in your business, although I think it's extremely effective doing that and, as opposed to, you know, taking them on to the payroll.

Laurent Krenzi 22:00

Okay, and I think I will have my last question for you: When it comes to a very specific need.. so if you maybe have, as you said, a sales or marketing director, and you need to scale up something very specific, you know, into digital marketing or something specific and technical. Have you seen owners or founders having, you know, required some consultant or having someone freelance joining and to help their proper IT manager or marketing manager to develop something and then drop out? How is the response from the, in this case, the marketing or it directors? Do they feel comfortable?

Matthew Lashnar 22:45

I mean, if I look at it from within my program, actually it's not uncommon for many of my corporate partners to actually mentor some of the startups. And so if you, let's take food

safety... I have a lot of food startups on my program. If you want an expert on food safety, you're going to go and talk to someone in Nestle or someone in Muller. And they can give you advice. Now, they're not going to work for you. But they can certainly give you advice about who to talk to. And again, there's a whole industry of consultants out there that if you do need very specialist information around GDPR, or Digital Public, or whatever it might be, you can go and employ them on in the short term. I don't I probably don't see as much of it. I'm probably not close enough to it. But I know they're certainly out there. And there's enough consultants out there that these people seem to be generating business out of advising startups, or advising small businesses. But I I don't have enough data to sort of say "I see it super often." I mean, usually the first port of call for one of my startups is that they would go to one of our partners and say "Hey, you know, do you know about x" and the partner would start advising them and then they would probably go down to, I would imagine a consultancy group but I'm not close enough to it to give you a good enough answer.

Laurent Krenzi 24:13

Okay. And have you seen a lot of startups creating an advisory board or something like this. Pro bono professional who can, you know, work and consult them for free or very cheap-

Matthew Lashnar 24:29

Yeah, it's very common. So, one of the things that actually we would look for when we assess a startup is who are their advisors and what's their credibility. Many of these advisors are getting some sort of stake in the company, very small, half a percent, a percent or something like that, to have them interested, but it's really common. So it could be that they're their VC, or their angel is on their board, that's also super, super common. And then it really does help to have somebody credible from the industry that you're trying to attack. The gig can give you some sort of advice, contacts or network. And whilst many people will say they'll do it pro bono, you bet best off giving them a slice of the company, because then you get a high caliber person. So it's not uncommon having a percent or half percent or something like that. But advisory boards, I think, are really important. Because if you're a startup, it gives you immense credibility, if you go in front of it and say "Hey, here are our four or five advisors from the field, experts". And then particularly, you look at universities.. so if you look at EPFL, you know, which of the

professors who are maybe advising them.. maybe it's people who make could even be serial entrepreneurs who are helping them raise money. So I think it's a really important thing to make sure: who advising you.

Laurent Krenzi 26:01

Okay? And where do you find these people? Because it is not like a title, you cannot just type in LinkedIn "advisor" or something. You know what I mean?

Matthew Lashnar 26:10

Okay, it comes again from network. So if somebody says to me "Man, I need some advice on something, can you help me?" then the chances are that we probably know somebody. Typically you'll see... if you go out and look at people who mentor startups, because a whole industry of ,let's say consultants and pro bono and people who will do it, and some of them will end up doing consultancy, or sitting on the boards of startups, and we do it because it's fun. And we also do it because it's giving back but if someone pays us a little bit and that's great. So if you want to be a mentor or coach with InnoSwiss or MasscChallenge, I take you through a recruitment process, and I'll will try get you through my network. And that's how you end up in one of these positions: you ask the VC and the VC says "Well, I know 20 people who might be interesting for you." So it's coming from network. If you imagine the iceberg analogy, it's the same as recruitment. The iceberg what you see at the top in Switzerland is very small, everything below the iceberg is what's really going on through the network. And it's an important network to be using and that's why you need advisors, VCs, people like us who could help you get connected.

Laurent Krenzi 27:38

Okay, so do you suggest, if I would like to put up an advisory board to have some, you know, pro bono or more experience level consultancy, that I should go directly to incubators or mentorship program? Or do you know some kind of, you know, talent pools or network effects. where these kind of people are easier to find?

Matthew Lashnar 28:03

Such there's not there's quite a few different. One of the best ways of doing it is exactly what you said that I mean, if you go into like who is who in Switzerland in terms of accelerators, whether it's Kickstarter, us, venture kick... there's all sorts of different ways you can do it. And most startups will apply to multiple programs. And what they're doing it for is the contacts, it's ...okay... contacts, mentors, experts, companies who can be customers and who will make purchases, or VCs. And there is that whole industry of people helping startups, which is where I would go to first if I was a startup, because it exists. You start talking to other founders, people like me, you can get into people's accelerators, and some of them will charge you, some don't. We won't, for example, because we're a non profit. But it's a really good way of doing it. Another way is going through angels. So if you try to find angels who are interested in your particular industry, they can be very valuable. But I think accelerators and incubators going that way is actually a very smart way because you can tap into the ecosystem and you don't have to find it yourself. You just literally tap into, you know, my ecosystem or the ecosystem that exists in Lausanne and all of a sudden, boom, you're connected. So that's a good way of doing it.

Laurent Krenzi 29:32

Okay. Okay, thank you very much. I think my questions came to an end. In terms of privacy, are you okay with me to integrate this interview into my project, or do you want me to blur some stuff, etc?

Matthew Lashnar 29:54

Everything I've told you is totally on the record and if you want to quote me, please go ahead and quote me. And, I mean, I'm a nonprofit, my job is to help startups. So if you're publishing, then I hope that that helps somebody. And if that helps somebody, that's great. ... It's also difficult topic. I've not seen anything that's... I mean, there are some good books that you can, you know, you can read on the topic, but I've never seen a academic research into it. It's always been one man or one woman's take on it and their practical experiences. So yeah, good luck. I've been really interested in reading it when it comes out....

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

Interview with Mrs. Lamia El Afani

Laurent Krenzi 2:01

So yeah, let's, let's begin. So I would just like to get your opinion on what have been the hardest challenges or the differences between rooting for a startup versus other structures.

Lamia El Afani 2:18

All right. And so I guess depending on the startup size, it can depend as well. What we've been doing in my company is that every time we would, we would set on a new a new country, the policy would be to hire salespeople first. And then all the ecosystem around salespeople, and then they would focus on other function. That's what we've done traditionally. At the beginning, we hired a lot of people at the same time we went to very, very fast. And now we kind of realize he was not the best way. So we slowing down on our recruitment. So I guess that would be something interesting for you to know as well. What else? Yeah, like for instance, when I joined the company two years ago, in October, November, they had as an objective to hire to 20 to 30 salespeople in the space of two months. So it was really fast, and then finish the project. They complain that we hire too many people, even though they decided on the number. And obviously, the fact of having too many people at the same time means that you don't really realize soon enough, what are the good people that you had and who are the best people. So you kind of realize all of that at the same time, a few months after It's a bit too late. So I guess my advice would be to hire people a bit more slowly, especially if it's the same function, like start with maybe one salesperson. And then I know one developer or some somebody else like that, and be a bit more consistent and do a lot of weapons checks. Because there's a lot of this isn't necessarily less time to do so. Which was a mistake. Especially for important people in the company, like people that are going to be senior or leaders, you really need to do some proper reference check. So that's something I can I can think about. What else? I don't know. Is there something specific that you noticed when you spoke to other people?

Laurent Krenzi 4:59

Yeah, like that. I've noticed different kinds of specificities that startups are, were recruiting you just one, touch one, which is pretty big, which is, you know, the planning or the reason. I mean, I've seen and I suppose that startups go through different recruitment cycle. So for example, when you start the company, you don't have a lot of money or you don't have a lot of needs. And then suddenly you have, you know, a big VCs coming in, or you just want to price on incubator or something, and you need to recruit, you know, like 10 guys in two weeks, right. So, I just wanted to, as you said, as it's a bit tricky to manage this kind of workflow, and, for example, to not recruit too fast or too much. Have you are you or maybe your insight or your recommendation about how not to Sit down with company and evaluate. Okay, guys, maybe 10 sales people's for the first week is too much. Let's begin with 1235 and then see what what's coming. You see what I mean?

Lamia El Afani 6:26

Yeah. So I remember when we started recruiting, and I think maybe six months after we went through that phase of recruiting a lot of people at the same time. So typically, when I say recruited law, I'm saying we multiply the number of employees by 10 in the space of one year, so that's just huge. Like, we went from to 200 to 2000 in one year, and it's just too much. And at that point, the guy that was in sort of like, recruitment, made a call and he was just like, yeah, next time, you have a leader that says I want 10 developers ask him, do you really need 10 developers? like can we not start with 2-3, and then you can see what's going on. So that's typically something that you should kind of reason startups to do. Also, the issue is when you hire people too quickly, in dilutes the responsibility. So people probably think when you hiring them that you know, whatever they're going to do is going to be defined is going to be clear, they're going to have veteran or like a territory, they're going to have like a true responsibility. But then if you hire a lot of people at the same time, the responsibilities diluted and people are just like, well, now this 10 new of us, so nobody's really like see what I'm going to do. So it doesn't really make any difference if I work hard or not. because nobody's gonna see it. There's just too many of us are just gonna fight on on territories and complain that detail. She's not big enough. And then they never really, they never really progress on the way that they work. So that's something we've noticed as well.

Laurent Krenzi 8:09

Okay, so you mean that is bring even more uncertainty when you bring more people?

Lamia El Afani 8:15

Especially if you have an issue sat down and you've clearly put like a job description for each position, even if it's five sales? Like is there going to be one sales for that country on sales with this country? Have we already, you know, done sales in in this country? Do we know what challenges that person is going to, to look for? Or that kind of stuff. And so so that's what I mean, like you need to really plan what each person is going to do so that they each have a clear responsibility and they feel responsible for what they're going to do. They do not feel like oh, there's 1000 people and just say level of me. So it doesn't really make sense. Wherever I'm going to do. Does it make sense?

Laurent Krenzi 9:06

Yes, yes, totally.

Lamia El Afani 9:09

And so that and there's something else I was thinking about what was it again? Um, oh yeah. Um, when your startup, it's very, especially when you have VCs coming. And you're going in you growing as a big startup is very tempting to hire people from big companies that are repeatable, that you know about, that are doing kind of the same thing. Like for instance, we're software startup. And when we decided to hire people like salespeople, they really wanted people from, like big competitors, like, I don't know VMware or Google, Facebook. You know, Microsoft's IBM and those kind of people. It doesn't work because if you have people that used to work in those big companies, they are so used to having everything organized for them, to having an OB secretaries doing some work for them that they're going to have to do by themselves. To have, you know, minions doing a lot of admin work that they will never have to do. So in terms of mentality in terms of mindsets, it really doesn't work. If there's a lot of them, maybe a few of them is fine. Because, especially if they're going to decide on a strategy, if they're going to help the company to scale if, for instance, they were at Microsoft, when Microsoft was so little, and they kind of stayed in theory, it was big. But if it's people that are actually going to

be on the field and do the work, it's not gonna work, because those people are too spoiled. They don't know how to do everything by themselves and they're just going to complain.

Laurent KKrenzi 10:51

Okay. Okay. I think you did, just touching another major point of my thesis about, you know, defining what kind of profile You would like to recruit as a startup? And yeah, definitely admit to them sense and also like to know about it in terms of other characteristics or you know, personality traits or whatsoever, do you do you have other recommendation? For example, during my research, people mutually mentioned that, for example, at the very beginning of the startup stage, you may look for generalist type of profile, and then you move to specialist because you didn't even you never know how the startups are gonna look like in six month's time. You have such kind of recommendations or alterations that you made.

Lamia El Afani 11:50

Yeah, I mean, I think it's a good thing to start with generalists. And I think the mistake that we did in my company is that at some point in was like the local, like, we let people decide how many people they needed to hire in each of the teams. Like for instance, the marketing manager decided he wanted one person to manage demand marketing and one other person to manage, I don't know, a marketing for public sector or generation I demand generation or pipeline, whatever. And so we hired like, we started with one big boss of marketing, and then that person willing to take one specialist for each little side of marketing. And it was just too much like we could have just hired one person good at doing two things at the same time. And it would have been enough. And then like next year, we'll do a year after we realize we had too many people and we had like 1000 marketing people in America where it's absolutely useless to have that many people. So we actually had to fire people, which was absolutely not good. In terms of organization, in terms of marketing for the company, so I think it's something that people need to be super aware of, because as a as a startup, if you kind of hire people are a lot of people at the same time and then you you fire them, and your reputation is not done yet, then it can read imagined. So it's really important to make sure you don't go into specialists very too soon. Because if you don't learn if you lose trust, people tell you what to do, and you don't take any advice up outside of that one marketing leader that you hired, for instance,

maybe you had a bad one you don't know. So you should take other advice before you trust that person to do everything they want to do. So that's something I've noticed as well.

Laurent Krenzi 13:57

Okay, okay. Thank you very much. You just made a good transition now because you just talked about reputations, especially in the early stage. During my work, I've noticed that not so much startups use, let's say, employer branding, to in order to attract or convince more people to join them. Do you think that employer branding is something which can be a major part of the talent acquisition proposition? Or is it indicative of your startup?

Lamia El Afani 14:37

Yeah, yeah, we have. We have a department dedicated to improve branding and our company and I can see definitely help. Like, for instance, I recently took responsibility for talent acquisition in Ukraine, which is a small country. And the reason why we want to hire in Ukraine is because we acquired a small set of they're like we've sold them. So now we need to hire more developers. And it was a bit difficult for me at the beginning because obviously I'm not from there. And on top of that nobody knows about the company in Ukraine. So at some point, like because I was struggling, I needed to take onboard Employer Branding team to help me. And I was a bit skeptical because I never really use their services. But they actually made a bit of difference, because they force everyone in the company that is already there, to mobilize the network to speak to people to advertise about the company they work for. And it does make a real difference like a solid, you know, receiving application when I never used to receive any direct application from the websites because nobody knew about what we do. I started having profiles that I was recruiting for from that territory, contacted me directly on LinkedIn because they heard we were looking for a job. So it really did make me like, like at the beginning, it was a lot of effort. And now like, like the effort paid off, and I have to struggle much less to find good people. So yeah, it's definitely worth having. And it's something we've been doing from the beginning, but I was always a bit skeptical, but it definitely works.

Laurent Krenzi 16:16

Okay. Okay, perfect. I'm happy that it worked out again.

Lamia El Afani 16:24

I had two dotnet developer roles that were struggling to, to hire for and it took me like maybe freelance. I don't remember exactly. But yeah, I think it was like three months, and then all of a sudden, because everybody just kind of panicked and like the whole company, decided to have me making the company bit more visible. I could hire two guys in two weeks. So we just got very, very quickly.

Laurent Krenzi 16:53

Okay. Okay, nice. Now, I think I have my last question. We just talked about employer branding being, you know, a very good input for candidates, you know, not to convince them or to attract them. And in the first place, would you see another input or variable that the recruitment process should feature to know, to attract more people or to convince them to join the group?

Lamia El Afani 17:24

And I think, honestly, I think it depends on where you are recruiting references in France or in other countries like that, where it's more difficult to set up a business. I would be very careful if I was to work for your startup like a small one. But like, for instance, in the UK, there's just like lot of people that are working for themselves, they have their own small companies. It takes like five minutes to create your own companies on the internet. It's free. I work for like someone in it. When you have too few people, and that person has been working for himself between years, which doesn't really happen in France, or in those kind of countries, I don't know how it is in Switzerland. I think it's kind of, I mean, still different from the UK. So I think you would depend like, in the UK, you take less of risk is this, it's more socially acceptable to land on business and finance, it probably makes like a difference. I think you should worry about where you're putting first because the culture and the approaches is different. And then, usually, like the worry of people is like, how stable is the company like, Did you get some funding already? Did you? Is there any people that are vouching for you? You know, is the article like talking about you?

And they promised that what you're doing is the future? How does your go to Market your use such looks like, especially for the first people that you're hiring because those people are going to be key. And they are the people most likely to become the leaders of your company tomorrow because they were the first one in there. And if they're not, then it's really bad thing because usually people that join a start up their early times are expecting to grow as leaders in the second time. And then if you have leaders after them to manage them, after they've been around to doing the work, you can create some frictions. So yeah, I mean, I'm digressing a bit, but that's kind of what I would recommend.

Laurent Krenzi 19:42

Okay, no, that's the drain site will actually have some of some I found similar results. As you know, people coming from Anglo Saxon countries are more, you know, Reliant with Rick's risk, and people here in Europe are more you know, less risk, risk taker. Let's see. Yeah, something which has been brought up during the study. Yeah, yeah,

Lamia El Afani 20:07

that definitely makes a difference. I know even for our company today, I mean, now we have 3000 employees. So we're not really a small startup anymore. But it's still hard, especially because of the market. Like for instance, if you think about it, it's hard to fire people in funds. So people are more cautious about changing jobs, about taking in new jobs about hiring people because they know it's going to be hard for them to get rid of them if they don't have a good reason. So it takes more time in the UK dog we can hire faster we can fire fast as well. So I think it's emergency in Switzerland. So you know, it's different, even though in like, instantaneous will be more regulated than in the UK. But yeah, that makes a difference. And in in Germany for instance, a very normal for people. If they're not happy with the job, they quit the job they stay at home for a few months because they have really good welfare state that is going to take care of them or they already have savings and they have absolutely no problem staying at home for six months until they find a great job that it will never be in a hurry to accept the job offer if they want to, to keep the geographer aside and keep on you know, interviewing for three months they would they are going to do so nobody can convince them to do otherwise. So it's a very different approach as well.

Laurent Krenzi 21:41

Okay. Okay, thank you very much. I think I'm bringing out of questions that I wanted to go through today. Will you have any further comments or you know, big Watch out that you have seen and you think are are a must?

Lamia El Afani 22:00

Yeah, I think he's just like preparing, like preparing a lot because I realized in even today my startup like, if you want to go big too fast, then you're going to realize then there's some things that you should have planned. So yeah, plan a lot, speak a lot to people at work, instead of hiring people that come from big companies try to hire people that actually build startup and make them successful in the past, instead of like, something different. I know it's impressive to see Google on the CV but it's not going to be any use if you're not gonna go yet. So and just planning things ahead. Like if you, I don't know, if there's someone that you've hired and end up doing a good job and you want to try them, then you should think about stuff like, Who's going to take on their appointment when they gone, who's gonna check on their calendar, who's going to check on the email To silly things like this, that's one button to some that people just don't think about. So that's what I've noticed in this kind of startup. There's nobody thinking about those kind of stuff. And it just makes a difference in this kind of way people think like, this is very silly. How can you have, you know, thought about this?

(...)

Interview with Mr. Alexandre Etienne

Laurent Krenzi 0:05

I would like to know more about your experience within the startup industry versus the other structure that you've been able to work with. So for example, in terms of experience and challenges, what kind of differences you've noticed in terms of profile, required and profile assets between the startups namely next thing and the other suit that you work with?

Alexandre Etienne 0:29

Okay, so basically, I would say there's a clear differences in the types of profiles in terms of how they were assessed, and also in how they were selected from the startup environment to the other environments. Namely, I do want to insist that the others, bigger environments, such as multinational companies, which was, you know, way higher and hire of people, first of all, so I would say the main differences between the two types of environments consists really of focusing less on the exact qualifications and academic diplomas. I would say that in the startup environment, we didn't focus as much on what type of degree you have or what type of specific you know, qualifications you have, because we tend to believe that the qualifications can be basic, basically equivalent, I mean, we can find an equivalence based on the discussion that we have. So I would say that, how I selected profiles at (...) was really based on a discussion that we had later on in the Call. So I will add next week I will tend to look at CVs but also motivation letters, I will tend to look at the how or then the exact so how the candidate presents himself and how the, the share their profile. One important thing is that in the selection process in the assessment process of the candidate, we would focus a lot on the values that the candidates have. Okay, so, we really do not want people who act like stars and who act like divas. So there are technically very competent, but actually in personality and soft skills and an attitude to do not fit to our culture and environment. So first, we would hope focus on the soft skills and the cultural fit almost more than the technical skills. Okay, so again, I would say that I have Had a CV, I have a series of questions, I still have, to this day series of questions really focused on values, so focused on understanding the personality of the candidate understanding, you know, what kind of values they believe in, what kind of values they're looking for and their next, you know, employment. And and therefore, I would I would base the selection mainly off of this, of the, of the values

of cultural fit, how they would fit with the team, and how in personality they work in our specific environment.

Laurent Krenzi 3:41

It's actually create a consensus with the other people that I interviewed, they agrees on the soft key rather than our skill. Because I mean, in the in small structures, I mean, this is a more important because if you're a classroom Exactly a personal problem with the team. I mean, you're just a team of 5-10-50 people and you're not just one bug in a big company.

Alexandre Etienne 4:20

I do have to insist again, not to not to criticize too much, but I would say that in in structures such as (multinationals), I would tend to think from a general point of view, the recruitment was perceived more as a administrative procedure and was less perceived as unnatural. You know, we give a lot of importance to the recruitment process. And we give a lot of importance to the assessment that us as recruiters, we provide to the hiring managers, the hiring managers, we build the trust relationship with the hiring managers. And I think that (in other multinationals), I didn't feel that as much. For example, I would say that that we tend to support the hiring managers in the choices that they want to make. So we help them administrate and manage the whole recruitment process. Whereas I think a recruitment process is really separate. It's a function that the recruiter, the talent acquisition partner really manages on his own and checks, you know, on the side with the hiring team, how to to select the candidate, so it's so the choice, the decision is more consensua. Sure.

Laurent Krenzi 5:42

Okay, thank you very much. And now in terms of rhythm or workflow, we can imagine a style how goes through different life cycle in terms of recruitment, and is more like high peaks or hiring freeze, let's say Then our regular flow of multinational or something more stable. What's your opinion on that? How do you tackle it within your experience?

Alexandre Etienne 6:35

Okay, okay. Well, my opinion on this, this is a very interesting question as well. I would say that at mix, so in the startup type of environment, we tend to really adapt the recruitment process in regards to the situation in which we are in so we are have the ability. So compared to the other experiences that I had, I would say that, we really had the ability to be flexible. In regards to the process, we will to adapt it to the circumstances in which we are in. And I would have to say as well, that we obviously have less processes in place. We have less clear policies, clear recruitment policies are clear, and recruitment processes are in place. Therefore, this gives us more for acting on our own behalf. So, let's say, we're going to need to be part of the company while we were fast growing actually Today we're in hyper growth actually. So I would have to say that we've increased our way of working, not necessarily by simply putting, giving more rules to alter your crew recruiters, the way that we acted, for example, in a time of fast growth was to increase the number of recruiters. So just to give you an example, this is still a large number of recruiters. And so I think what was interesting is that in the startup environment, we listened to the business we listen to the evolution of the company, and we adapt according to how development is going. So basically, since we were able to grow fast, then therefore we recruit more recruiters to to to hire in in a faster and a more dynamic way.

Laurent Krenzi 8:56

Okay, so you look at you, you're more we're working within the flow of the business itself, and not just as an agency within the company?

Alexandre Etienne 9:05

Exactly, exactly. Absolutely. Part of the business . I never felt like I was I was the agency or was part a side part of the business. I felt like the recruitment was really core, it was really core to the business and we were really able to, you know, to act accordingly to how the business evolved.

Laurent Krenzi 9:37

Okay. Okay, perfect. Yeah. And now in terms of budgeting, I mean, yes, for example, we can see during the research that startups tend to pay less their employees than, than other company a very early stage. So when you're in this situation, when you cannot offer a competitive compensation or benefits package to a candidate? What are the techniques or the things that you rely on to convince the candidate to join the group? And value?

Alexandre Etienne 10:16

Okay, okay. Very interesting. And I would say that it when that happens, so when we're not able to offer a high financial compensation so I can show you we had to obviously, negotiate this with the candidates, the selected candidates at the end. I think the one you know, best seller or best, best technique that I use is really to concentrate on the advantages, the benefits that the company offer, and we're going to work life balance and flexibility. I mean, we have different types of tools that we can use, we can talk to the candidate about a potential sign on bonus, and helps them in agree to sign the contract will also otherwise have the possibility of offering stock options. So this is also huge in regards to salary negotiation, or to I mean to offer negotiation. And so we have different types of stock options. And we have different ways of selling that and, and sharing it with the candidates. And again, last but not least, I would say the number one strongest tool that we use is the advantages that we offer in terms of work life balance and flexibility. So startups in general, I think have an incentive to act as a people oriented company. We tend to, we tend to sell our benefits to the clients. So for example, today at next week, we have what we call unlimited paid time off. We have unlimited holidays, actually, we have 25 days of holidays that are mandatory throughout the year. So an employee's Pacific is 25 his or her 25 days and after the 25 days is they're able to meet their objectives and with the agreement of the hiring of the line manager sorry, we are allowed to ask for more days okay. So this is called basically ask for more days policy, okay, or unlimited pay time off. Otherwise, I can just insist as well on the flexibility so we have the advantage of all For a lot of flexibility within the work space, we are able to arrive early and leave earlier arrived late and leave later. So we're really flexible in terms of, of working times. And we are lucky as well to have an employer that wants to send out a message of trust to his or her employees. So, so we really feel like, you know, we were able to have the flexibility in regards to when we arrive at work and when we leave work and, and also have, you know, time off for ourselves. And last but not least other benefits such as, you know, a work a workspace that is casual workspace. So casual

dressing, a workspace that provides you know, game activities, games activities, social interaction, social activities outside of work, but also free gym, pass and yeah, I mean Now, simply put him in food beverages free food, free beverages free coffee and tea and snacks at all times.

Laurent Krenzi 14:09

Okay. Okay, thank you very much. And now in terms of talent pooling, I don't know if you're using it within your company. But do you feel that talent pools are a good tool for startups to, you know, attract more candidates and have them on the loop for a high flow of recruitment, for example?

Alexandre Etienne 14:31

Okay, it's a very good question. And honestly, personally, I haven't used talent pools very commonly at mixing. If anything, I would say that at (...), and then monthly, so in bigger companies, this was more common. At next thing, we tend to really customize our recruitments and really focus on the specific you know, for list of candidates or specific candidate so either post a job online or either sourcing, really that those are the main tools that we use. But at basic, I would say talent pulling, I might have used it here in there. You know, if I were to recruit similar positions in different locations or similar positions, but different ad accounts, let's say, I had to recruit for three product managers. It's possible that that I might have used a talent pool to, to attract a lot of candidates. But otherwise, if anything, I would tend to say that this is a tool that I have used more in bigger environments.

Laurent Krenzi 15:46

Okay. Okay. And do you feel that within the startup industry, you've got more of those similar profile or is much more, much more of the variety of the profiles, I mean, you may not need the 100 sales rep, or any different kind of sales rep or different regions? So do you feel that there is more diversity? We didn't start that. True?

Alexandre Etienne 16:12

Yeah. So from my experience, I would say in the startup environment, type of candidates, first of all, receive, but also what type of candidates we select. So we don't necessarily always go for the same type. And also, you know, because the selection process is because the motivation aspect of the client as a candidate is very important into selection process. I would say that we received a lot of variety in regards to what kind of candidates to receive, why they are potentially motivated to join us there. There's a one I mean, there's so many reasons as to why someone would want to join, whereas personally and in bigger struggle I felt like the teeth, the type of candidates were more most of the time the same. And, and in most of the time, you know, take the same type of boxes, or as a next thing and in the startup world, there, there's a lot more variety and sometimes we take very typical type of product, select very typical types of candidates, candidates that have, you know, worked freelance candidates that have, you know, for example, worked in different types of environment and they want to try a startup environment, it can vary a lot, so we have to answer your question.

Laurent Krenzi 17:39

Okay. Okay. Thank you very much in terms of box ticking as you just mentioned, yeah, have you seen some best practices when you look at an applicant profile, for example, that if the candidates come from this or this industry, you will be more willing to succeed in the startup or For example, a country if he's going only within large multinational is going to have is going to struggle within this structure such as started.

Alexandre Etienne 18:11

No, absolutely I would say fully agreed with the first example you suggested and in terms of box ticking at we see so if I had to make a general rule, yeah, we actually do. We are more attracted in atypical profiles or so candidates that for example, you know, have had, have suffered certain positions, we're very interested with candidates that actually founded their own company that tried, you know, to to create their own startup to create their own company. So, candidates, they have an entrepreneurial mindset, and also candidates that you know, that skip that jump from jobs to job or Or candidates that maybe are not I would say comfortable in the corporate in the large multinational corporate environment. So we tend to go for candidates that tick our boxes tend to have

that profile. So to have people that have set up processes, people that have been able to work without any, you know, any processes or policies in place, people that were able to proactively and create their own job if I may say people that are hungry to you know, to grow in their experience are hungry to look for more work This is typically what we're what we tend to look for so we're not looking for executives. People that execute we're looking for people that that proactively and strive to find more and to to work more if that makes sense.

Laurent Krenzi 19:56

Okay, yeah, that's that's some very good such a providing. Thank you very much. And now in terms of rethinking, yes, those successful candidates may be more resilient with risk or more risk taker.

Alexandre Etienne 20:13

Absolutely, absolutely. 100% actually, and thank you for specifying that, that's the word I was looking for. So we tend to go for risk takers, people that that dare to, you know, stop at some point in their career that that made choices that didn't make. I mean, that might not seem like they make a lot of sense, but that helps the people grow. So I would say that we, we absolutely in the startup environment, we tend to go for candidates from a general point of view, we tend to go for candidates that, that we're not afraid to go out of their comfort zone, and we're not afraid to take a risk. And we're not afraid to let everything go because they had a dream. I don't want to sound too you know Yeah, but I mean it is it is a quality it is a personality traits, but also an experience trait that we value a lot. So So Absolutely.

Laurent Krenzi 21:13

Okay. Okay, thank you very much. I think my questions came to an end. Thank you very much for your great insight and for your time today.

Alexandre Etienne 21:23

My pleasure. My pleasure. I think the questions were great and I'd be more than happy to, to answer anything else if you needed me to. Okay, thank you very much.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>