

CHAPTER 3



Culture and Attitude

Organisational culture and attitude is a constant theme across the employee lifecycle from recruiting to retiring. It is not something that you can fix or change overnight; equally, it is something that will happen with or without your intervention. It is experiential—you cannot write down the culture you want and then have it. You need to communicate intent (aspirations) and then take action that is congruent with that intent.

Some of your culture is underground. You need to foster a climate of trust to be able to hear about it, let alone affect it. Taking culture seriously and improving it over time is a long-term commitment that will bring significant rewards in terms of recruitment and in other pursuits as well.

Recruiting Culture

The most effective approach for gaining new talent is to build a corporate-wide culture of recruiting in which every manager and employee is a recruiter.

Because of their continuous contact and interaction with outside talent, team members play an important supplemental role in identifying talent and spreading the employment brand. The most effective recruiting strategies convince employees to be talent scouts, making every employee a recruiter. (See also Chapter 5, the “Finding: Efficient, Effective, and Creative Sourcing” section.)

Part of building a strong recruiting culture is to invest in training your managers in recruitment. Best practices include ensuring that your recruitment training is a pass/fail programme. Include evaluation in the programme; managers must be formally accredited as competent before they start to recruit. Unaccredited managers can co-interview with accredited managers or HR staff but should not be left to do this alone.

It is unusual to have pass/fail in any sort of management training or development programme, but when it comes to recruitment this will set a high standard and send a strong message. Recruitment is both an art and a science. People need to be able to demonstrate competence before they are allowed to impact candidates and the long-term success of the business.

Candidate-Centric

As mentioned previously, recruitment has many similarities to selling. Indeed, at any one point during a recruitment campaign, there is always a seller and a buyer. The role, however, is not fixed, and many recruiters fall at the first hurdle. Namely, they consider

themselves the buyer and that they have something of greater value in the transaction, namely a job. However, when seeking top talent, you will find that the candidate has something of at least equal if not greater value, namely their talent.

Recruiters will fare better if they spend more of their time thinking of themselves in the seller role—the non-traditional seller, naturally. Don't fall into the trap of pitching the “features and benefits” of your company and the role you are looking to fill. Rather, properly investigate the candidates' interests and suitability for the role. Asking questions is the way to do this.

There are four key elements to being candidate-centric:

- Focus on the candidates' needs, their job selection criteria, and their hiring experience.
- Sell the candidates on applying for and accepting the job.
- Build relationships (candidate pools, alumni, etc.).
- Make fast recruiting decisions for high-demand candidates.

Focus on the Candidate

Focus on the candidate needs to start at the very beginning of the recruitment process and is integral to each aspect, from finding to attracting to interviewing to offering.

The impact of getting this wrong and creating a negative candidate experience is much more than simply losing a top-quality candidate. You run the risk of losing people within that candidate's immediate and extended network. With social networks as extensive as they are, each candidate's extended network is considerably wide. The adage that a shopper who has a bad shopping experience tells at least ten people about it applies equally to a candidate who has a bad interviewing experience. These days, of course, telling ten people includes posting the message on social media. If the

candidate is sufficiently motivated, there are a number of forums and sites where the news can be spread and will be checked by other potential applicants.

There is a lot of evidence that candidates like to be stretched during an interview. They correlate this with interest and challenge. You must always protect their dignity, and the process needs to feel fair. Candidates who are rigorously interviewed by recruiters who have done their homework and thought about the questions will most likely consider it a good experience whether or not they are given a job offer. A 25-minute chat as the interviewer glances at the CV for the first time while asking softball questions is not going to rank very well.

Some suggestions:

- Think about your ideal candidates and what is going to appeal to them when you craft job advertisements. Your advert wants to attract ideal candidates and put off those who do not qualify, as indeed any marketing campaign is designed to do.
- Remember, however, that adverts will be read by all your potential candidates, not only those who are interested in that particular vacancy. You cannot change your tone of voice radically from advert to advert since this will confuse and most likely put people off. The need to have a clear value proposition is critical if consistent messages are to be communicated to all potential employees.
- The process from the point of application to communicating the decision needs to be thought through, planned, and templated. Time passes quickly for recruiters who are handling lots of applications and doing lots of other things, including, for line managers, their day job. For

candidates, especially those who are taking the application seriously (rather than pressing the apply-all button on a job site), each day that passes feels like a long time. Therefore, when planning the process, you need to consider the touch points and the gaps and manage these effectively.

- Templating—acknowledgment emails, invitations to interview, turn downs, etc.—enables not just greater efficiency but also the ability to think about the message and impact in advance when you have time. It also improves consistency and reduces the risk of missing something or wording something badly in haste. Candidates are more likely to scrutinise messages than the sender and thus pick up on typos and errors (and not be impressed).
- Streamline and continually review your recruitment processes. A lengthy, time-consuming, or unsatisfactory process often puts top talent off from either applying (if the process is too onerous), attending the interview (if it requires too much time off their current work), or accepting the job (if they did not feel stretched and stimulated).

Selling the Candidate

Selling does not have to equate to being “salesy.” Indeed there is nothing a candidate likes less than an overzealous, over-salesy approach during a recruitment process or interview. If you are salesy, you run the risk of sounding inauthentic or desperate. Neither commends itself to the candidate. Inauthenticity puts people’s backs up and makes them suspicious—nothing can be as good as it sounds. Desperation is even worse. Not only do people not like to surround themselves with desperate people, but it also raises suspicions.

So why am I talking about selling to the candidate? Two reasons.

First, this is about mindset. If you go into recruitment thinking that “they [the candidates] are lucky to be given a chance,” you will have the wrong tonality. You will consciously or unconsciously give out the message that you are the superior and the candidate is the inferior. People don’t like to feel this way. Only the desperate would be willing to take a job when that’s the positioning from the outset. Second, the truth is that top talent has choices. Your job therefore is to make it easy for top candidates to choose you.

When I talk about selling, I talk about the process in which you use the questions you ask to demonstrate that you are the company to join. Use your knowledge of candidates to ask questions that both enable you to find out if they are suitable for you but also make them want to be part of the team. The recruitment process and specifically the recruitment interview includes encouraging candidates’ desire to be part of your team. You do this by being prepared, professional, and authentic.

Essentially, for a candidate to accept your job offer, they have to make a change. The best explanation of what is required for change is the Change Equation popularised by David Gleicher. This equation states that change is a function of three variables. The sum of these variables needs to be greater than or at least equal to the resistance to that change. One key aspect is that variables are multiplied, which means that if any variable is missing the momentum for change becomes zero (because anything multiplied by zero is zero).

Some candidates may arrive fully mobilised and ready to make a move. This does not, however, mean that they are not making a change. Therefore, the equation still applies. Their dissatisfaction with the present may be fully established (they want to move away from their old position, whether as an employee, a student, or unemployed). For those who currently have a job, they may

$$\text{Change} = f \begin{matrix} \text{Dissatisfaction} \\ \text{with the present} \end{matrix} \times \begin{matrix} \text{Vision of} \\ \text{the future} \end{matrix} \times \begin{matrix} \text{First} \\ \text{practical} \\ \text{steps} \end{matrix}$$
$$\geq \begin{matrix} \text{Cost} \\ \text{Pain} \\ \text{Effort} \end{matrix} \text{ [Resistance]}$$

want new challenges. It could be a move dictated by the need to relocate. The impetus for change, regardless of how it manifests itself, is still dissatisfaction with the present situation. Other candidates may not be quite so sure. They may simply be curious at the start.

Your job, therefore, is to establish if there is current dissatisfaction and to understand its nature. Making assumptions at this stage can be dangerous and lead to a failed hiring process. Remember that candidates will not necessarily feel able to be open to sharing their dissatisfactions (although, bizarrely, some can be somewhat too willing) so you need to be patient and gentle to get to the truth. Using negative reverses can be quite powerful. “It sounds like you have a great job and would really struggle to leave it. Tell me more about that.”

Facilitating an understanding of the candidates’ vision of their future is an important part of effective interviewing. Not only does it help candidates conclude that you are the right next move for them, but it also enables you to match their vision to yours and to see if there is sufficient correlation to make this a good hire. Additionally, the gap between their vision of their future and

their current position can create or amplify dissatisfaction with the present.

Compensation will come into this future vision, but although it is important information to gather, it is rarely the most important consideration.

One of the best ways to describe a job is to talk about the key expectations for the first 12 months. This will make the job tangible, shift the focus to outputs and achievements and away from a potentially boring list of tasks, and clearly set your expectations.

Whenever possible, give new hires responsibility. For example, during their first month, they could be asked to develop a sales plan and forecast for the first year. This will be supported by their manager. They will have access to existing plans, but you want them to take responsibility for their performance from the get-go.

The first practical steps are fairly straightforward in recruitment and need little more than talking through the process with the candidates. However, don't end the process you are describing at the point of the offer. Your ability to demonstrate a strong onboarding plan will go a long way to selling your opportunity. Too often companies omit a discussion of onboarding, which is not only damaging to them but also removes a valuable element from the job offer. Talking about training, career development, and future challenges can also make you an attractive future employer.

Be honest. There is no point in tricking someone into joining

your company. Candidates will not take long to find out what the real truth is, and, apart from the damage to trust, you could find yourself with problem employees who do not want the job in which you placed them.

Resistance to change in a recruitment situation is fairly straightforward to identify—the discomfort of leaving something you know, people you like, bosses you have loyalty to, coupled with the risk of starting somewhere new, and in some companies and countries losing the security or rewards that come through service. These factors need to be explored during the recruitment process. If they are not, the risk of making an offer and then not understanding why it has not been accepted increases.

Build Relationships

Building relationships, which we will look at more in the next chapter, is about maximising the recruitment process. Being candidate-centric includes thinking about the longer term. Just because valued employees may leave you, it does not mean that they should be no longer valued (or indeed valuable). Top employees can leave for good reasons, and if treated well they can become a recruit in the future. They can also become a talent scout or ambassador, sending people your way. Individuals who have a good recruitment experience regardless of getting an offer will tell their friends and contacts to consider you for their next move. Chances are they will have some talented people in their circle.

Move from transactional to relational recruitment. Transactional recruitment is highly efficient but low touch. It focuses on the recruitment activity itself and short-term recruitment to find the best candidate for the role being filled. Relational recruitment takes the long-term view and sees recruitment interactions in the broader context, including brand building, talent

spotting, and quality decision making based on an intimate knowledge and understanding of the candidates.

Looking at the recruitment flow—from search/attraction to pre-screening, selection, offer, and deployment—the intensity of interaction between the hiring party and the candidate builds, achieving its highest peak probably at Day 1 and during the onboarding phase. Here the candidate is not unlike a sales prospect. Rapport building continues throughout the process, building to the point of full commitment. Here the product/service “sold” is the job offer and starting employment with your company.

Speed

I am personally not a fan of the approach of dragging applicants through 20 interviews, 14 peer reviews, and a bunch of other hurdles all to make sure they are a good “fit.” I believe that if you are skilled at interviewing and spotting potential, you can make a good recruitment decision a lot quicker than that. You may have a brand where people are queuing up to join, in which case you can choose to have a bit of fun making yourself exclusive. But I cannot stop myself thinking that this is evidence of poor talent spotting or inadequate performance predicting capability. Also, for some people with strong alternatives, too long a chase will put them off, no matter the brand.

As an aside, I also have strong reservations about peer interviewing. Certainly, meeting some colleagues can be central to a good recruitment experience, but allowing peers to select makes me a little nervous. It is not so much that peers won’t hire competition (i.e., someone who might be better than them or go further than them) since if you have a high-performing culture this might not get in the way (or at least not consciously); it is more that peers might not be able to spot superior talent and that

they might recruit “people like us.” This will ultimately create a non-diverse team with all the resultant performance limitations that comes with this.

Recruitment needs to be a two-way process—candidate and employer must mutually benefit from the hiring decision. Therefore, building into your process a real opportunity to meet colleagues and get to know the job can be a very effective way to attract top talent. This can happen pre- or post-selection. Pre-selection is to arrange for them to meet colleagues as part of the formal interviewing process. This can work and will not do you any harm, but it can feel a bit artificial. Candidates and team members will be very aware of what is happening, which makes it feel a bit staged. Sometimes team members, in an effort to be collaborative and collegiate, may go a bit over the top, either positively (too enthusiastic about the company/job) or negatively (hyper-challenging and testing).

An alternative is to allow the candidate who has been offered the job a chance to meet the team prior to making a decision to accept. This will strongly reinforce the message that you see this as a two-way street and that you want the candidate to make an informed decision. It also signals clearly that you have nothing to hide and that the candidate will be allowed to look around. This needs to be done intelligently, of course. One of my recruitment consultant clients once shared with me an example of a sales director interviewing with a competitor’s manager and persuading him to give a demo of the company’s latest product about to be launched. The sales director later turned down the job but now had the information.

The benefits of speed are clear to me. Looking again to sales, selling is the facilitation of three transformations: moving someone from “possibly, one day, with someone” to “definitely,

now, and with you.” If you warm someone up to the idea of changing jobs—so they go to “definitely” and “now”—but you are too slow to offer, you will miss out on the “with you” part.

This is particularly important if you are head hunting either via external recruitment agencies or your own processes. If someone who has not been thinking about changing jobs is warmed up and ready for a change, they will now be open if another offer comes in while you are deciding.

A speedy decision is often linked in the mind of the candidate with decisiveness, clarity, and also desire and belief (for them and in them), all of which adds to your attractiveness as a recruiter.

Trust

One of my best hires as an HR director for a large multinational was also one of my fastest hires. We were hiring a top researcher from a competitor. The process started with a dinner with the potential manager and also the SVP/Research and SVP/Development.

The candidate over dinner stopped himself a number of times from talking further with the words “for confidentiality reasons I cannot talk more about this.” This was reasonable and no less than what we would have wanted one of our top scientists to do were they interviewing.

At the end of the meal, we had a brief discussion once the candidate had been chauffeured off to his hotel. We agreed that there was little information to be gathered through interviews; he was either as good as his reputation or not, and it was not going to be possible to get the data to prove this either way. Therefore, the next morning at 8 A.M. when he came in for his interview, we simply made him an offer.

Clearly these were special circumstances, but our ability to

turn around an offer overnight meant that the next morning I sat down and talked terms with him and he signed up. Our speed and approach did a lot to close the deal.

The good news: He turned out to be an exceptional hire, opening up some new avenues of research that did not overlap with the work he had done previously (which was tied up in non-competes).

Trust is an important component in successful hiring. Maister, Green, and Galford developed the Trust Equation in their book *The Trusted Advisor*. The equation was developed to help select advisors but can be equally applied to a number of situations, including sales, leadership, and hiring.

$$\frac{\text{Credibility} + \text{Reliability} + \text{Intimacy}}{\text{Self-Interest}} = \text{Trust}$$

In hiring, the elements can be defined as follows:

- **Credibility.** Your credibility when hiring derives from a number of factors: the firm itself, its brand and reputation, its website, and its social presence. The interviewers contribute also in terms of how prepared they are, how knowledgeable, and how competent; the quality of questions they ask and insights they offer; and their overall interviewing competence. Their perceived credibility, in line with communication in general, is affected not just by what they say but also how they sound and look—words, yes, but also body language and tonality.

- **Reliability.** The quality of your recruitment process impacts most heavily on the reliability score. Are your communications timely? Do you keep your promises? If you commit to responding or giving a decision within two days, you need to keep to this to avoid doing damage to your reliability score. Reliability is all about action—what you do. Do you start the interview when you say you will? Do you respond within the committed to or reasonable timeframe?
- **Intimacy.** The contributing elements to intimacy when hiring include: how well you get to know the candidate, how well you seem to know your clients, and how well you seem to know your staff. The first is about the quality and depth of questions you ask; the latter two about the information you give to a candidate. It is also about how well you seem to understand the needs and interests of the candidate. Skilled interviewers can create intimacy fast and maintain this throughout the process. Intimacy requires honesty and is rewarded with honesty.
- **Self-Interest.** This is about being perceived to be acting in your own self-interest. It's reasonable to have some self-interest; it just can't be exclusive. At the outset of a hiring process, a candidate will typically perceive the recruiter as having high self-interest. You can reinforce or increase this starting perception or you can reduce it. Increasing it is easy; simply talk a lot about yourself, the wonderfulness of the company, its many accolades, happy staff, brilliant jobs, and fantastic bonuses. Reducing it is a bit trickier but requires clear communication, an authentic style, congruence across the process, and a demonstrated understanding that this is a two-way process and that the candidate has

rights and needs and must have the information required to make the right decision about acceptance.

Thus, when recruiting, you need to take into account the elements of the Trust Equation and ensure that you are not inadvertently eroding credibility, reliability, or intimacy, or communicating too much self-interest.

Always Be Recruiting

Companies that limit themselves to recruiting only when they have a specific vacancy limit their access to top talent.

Even small companies, which cannot sensibly carry additional staff without this visibly impacting the bottom line, can still be actively talent scouting and planning to recruit top talent for the future. The key to success here is keeping in touch so that when the time is right for both parties the offer can be closed. (See Chapter 5, “Pipeline Management.”)

For larger companies, my advice is that if you come across unmissable candidates, you should think about how you can restructure to accommodate them. Get them in, interview them, discover their ambitions, and then get to work finding them a challenging opportunity.

Remember also that some top-talent candidates you meet might not be looking for a role just at that moment. You want to build a relationship so that when they are looking, they give you a call.

People who run sales teams know that they will always have people leaving. Therefore, there is no time when they should not be looking for the next salesperson to bring in. Work on this continuously and have some candidates in the wings so that losing a salesperson will not have such a negative impact on sales.

Additionally, as will be covered in the next chapter, you should be forecasting future demand and recruiting to this in advance.

Employee Value Proposition

In sales, a value proposition provides the concrete benefits a prospective client will receive from your product or service. Value propositions need to be based on research and a strong understanding of your territory or market.

Your employee value proposition is very similar. It provides a solution to attracting, securing, and retaining top talent. The employee value proposition is the set of benefits that employees and prospective employees will receive from being employed by your organisation. It, too, needs research and a strong understanding by your prospective talent pool. Each individual is unique and will value different benefits, but you can also target cohorts so that your employee value proposition will appeal to different groups. You need to gear it toward the groups that you want, be it risk-taking entrepreneurs or millennials.

Your employee value proposition works to attract candidates, increasing the size of the available talent pool in that more people will want to work with you. It will also increase the fit between candidates and your organisation since both parties will have a better idea of what is required and what is being offered. Your employee value proposition will send a clear signal as to the type of company you are, your values, and your promises.

In the securing phase, the more attractive your employee value proposition, the lower the new-hire compensation premium you will have to pay. Candidates who are attracted to your employee value proposition and wish to join your company will ask for less money to leave their current job and join you.

The correlation between pay and your attractiveness as an employer is significant in the hiring phase (securing your candidate) but also applies throughout the employment lifecycle. Money is rarely a long-term motivator, and people rarely leave an employer just for money. However, if the money is high enough, some people will be prepared to tolerate a perceived hostile work environment for a period of time. You must ask yourself if these are the employees you want and if you are truly getting the best from them.

If you do not want to pay a very high premium to hire or retain employees, work on making your employee value proposition more attractive and aligned to the values of your target employees.

Equally if your employee value proposition is unattractive, candidates may still join but they will seek compensation through increased remuneration.

In terms of retaining talent within the organisation, having a strong, authentic employee value proposition improves employee motivation, effort, and retention. People want to keep working with you, they understand the expectations, and they see the value and are aligned to the company mission.

Of key importance to your employee value proposition is both understanding your company culture and being able to express this in compelling and easily understood terms. Hiring needs to be a two-way process. The clearer you are about your company culture and the expectations you have of all your employees, the easier it will be for candidates to make the right decision about joining

you. If you do not hire people who fit your organisation's cultural aspirations, you will struggle to maintain the consistent high performance that is so essential to business success. Culture does not mean hiring people who are all the same (apart from being quite probably illegal, it will stifle creativity and growth and ultimately cost your business money). However, it is about hiring people who share common goals that are consistent, such as personal and team success, business growth, and customer service excellence.

Myths and Stories

When examining your company culture, you need to consider both the aspiration and the reality. Honestly facing up to where you fall short of your aspirations is important. These will form part of the myths and stories in your company. If these are not understood and ultimately managed, your culture will never change. The more you expose your potential hires to your organisation

Myths and stories are a critical part of your organisation's culture. They occur naturally but need to be taken seriously. Conscious and consistent effort should be expended to create myths and stories that are congruent with the company you want to be and culture you want to have.

You will also have recruitment myths and stories. You need to listen to these since they will be communicated to potential new hires. If they are not serving you well, you need to invest the necessary time and energy to develop new ones.

(which is a good thing), the more they will hear and the more they will get to know it (warts and all). Hearing about the “real” company and culture needs to be a positive experience for them.

An example of a disconnect might be where your values state that you believe in collaboration and team work, yet you reward a salesperson who gets good personal results at the cost of others’ wellbeing. A recruitment-related myth would be telling candidates that you want to ensure that there is a mutual fit, yet deny them free access to talk to existing staff.

In getting to understand your culture and values, you should also consider your company description, vision, and goal statements. Are these congruent with your values? You should identify the behaviour that would be consistent with these goals and values. Test this by considering the behaviours that are most reinforced through your promotion and remuneration practices (especially commission and bonus). Discrepancies here will erode your employee value proposition and ultimately impact your ability to hire the best talent. If you believe in the value but the reality does not match up, be explicit about the value being aspirational and be transparent about the steps you are taking to make it a reality.

There are also external sources where prospective employees can check out your company and validate your employee value proposition. Social media channels are clear. Interestingly, there is quite a bit of chatter about candidates ensuring that their social media footprint represents the person they want to be seen as by a potential employer. In fact, most recruitment agencies will view candidates’ social media footprint and encourage them to tidy it up (pictures on Facebook, LinkedIn profile, etc.). There is less written about prospective employees checking out the informal side of an employer via social media, i.e., how you talk to your customers

on Twitter, what people say about you on Facebook, etc., but this happens now and will only happen more as time goes by.

Glassdoor is another way to gain insight into how your employees view you as a recruiter and employer. It is a site where employees and past employees leave anonymous feedback on working at the company. This includes what you are like as an employer, what it is like to be interviewed by you, and salary information. It is increasingly used by candidates to learn about the reputation of an organisation based on people who have interacted with it already. It has a lot of “best place to” reports: best place to work, best place to interview, and so on. As an employer, you need to check your Glassdoor profile from time to time. Not only will it tell you how you are doing but it will also give you an idea of what is important to your people (and by extrapolation, your prospective new hires).

Do Something Today

- ✓ A useful exercise is to do SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analyses—one for your company as an employer and one for it as a recruiter. Be brutally honest with yourself. Ideally get input from employees. If you recruit a fair amount, try this exercise with two different sets of employees: one set that has been with you less than six months and one that have been with you five to ten years or more. The difference, if there is one, will tell you a great deal.

My Company as an Employer

Strengths	Weaknesses
Looking internally at your company as an employer; list your strengths. Think about this from the point of view of your employees. An example might be that you have a great employee on-site gym.	Here you should list your weaknesses. An example here would be that car parking is challenging near your office.
Opportunities	Threats
When identifying opportunities, it is helpful to take a broader view, looking externally to your organisation. An example here could be that you have the office space to build an employee gym.	Also looking a bit more externally, an example here is that a competitor is relocating to the area.

My Company as a Recruiter

Strengths	Weaknesses
Here you are looking internally at your organisation as a recruiter. An example here is that you have a vibrant and well-visited Facebook page.	You take quite a long time to make hiring decisions, which has led to candidates dropping out.
Opportunities	Threats
An example here is that you know that by investing in the interface you can improve your employee portal.	Your competitor has just upgraded their employee portal and it is really strong, while yours is a bit cumbersome to use.

Benefit to Your Organisation

For your employee value proposition to benefit your organisation, it needs to be consistently aligned across the whole find/attract, select/secure, and join/flourish employee lifecycle.

Find/attract includes:

- **What the prospective candidates experience with your brand, product, or service.** Many will be direct consumers, others will know people who are, and others still will be impacted about what is said in the media and social sites about you.
- **Your company website.** You might not be able to change it, but you should certainly review it and look at what it says and how it says it. If the tone you encounter online is not consistent with your employee value proposition, you will need to find a way to compensate for this when hiring. If you are the business owner, you should review your website to ensure that its content is fully aligned with the employee value proposition.
- **Your career or job portal (or website).** This needs to align with your main website—abrupt changes in tone between these two vehicles can be confusing. You may choose to have a more personal and informal approach on your career site, but it still needs to line up with your core message unless you want to risk sounding false. This is particularly important if you are trying to appeal to certain sectors of the market—if you try too hard, they will spot this and reject you.

Select/secure includes:

- **How people get in touch with you if they are interested in working with you.** Your approach to speculative applications and the demands you place on interested prospective candidates all make a difference.

Many years ago when applying for jobs at my university hiring fair as an arts major in a time of high unemployment, I was pretty dedicated to applying for jobs and willingly filled in application forms regardless of length. A friend of mine who was blessed with a degree in a much scarcer skills market (engineering) refused to apply for anything with an application longer than two sides.

Many companies missed out on his skills.

This has remained an important lesson for me in recruitment.

- **The interview process.** The criticality of getting the interview process right was discussed earlier in the chapter.
- **The hiring manager.** This person is probably the most important element of employee value proposition alignment in the recruitment experience. This applies not just to the one who is intended to be the immediate line manager but any others who are involved in the interview and recruitment process. They need to be prepared, trained, interesting, and, most important, interested.
- **Communication during the process.** Interview invitations and acceptance or rejection letters all need to convey the message and the value proposition.

Join/flourish phase includes:

- **The first day.** Indeed, the first 20 minutes of the first day is all important and can make or break a new hire's connection with the company, colleagues, and the job. The day

There is a classic HR/recruitment joke that sums up the first-day issue perfectly. You die and float up to the pearly gates to be greeted with a choice: entering heaven immediately, or having a quick look round, then popping down to hell to check things out, float back up, and make a one-time decision on location for the rest of eternity.

Curiosity causes you to have a look round both options. You check out heaven, which is lovely and tranquil with people floating around in bliss; you drop down to hell and are invited in to an amazing party, fabulous outfits, drink, food, fun, music, dance—you name it, it's happening. Checking back in you say, "Heaven is lovely, but I'm afraid it is hell for me." You return to hell, knock on the door, and are horrified. People are miserable, it's hot, and everyone is dressed in burning rags. You gasp and ask, "What happened? It wasn't like this yesterday!" The response? "Yesterday we were recruiting. Today we are back to normal."

needs to be planned and orchestrated to the half hour. This does not mean that new hires cannot be left alone; indeed, giving them some alone time is good practice. But they should have specific things to do during this time.

- **Onboarding or induction programme.** This needs to be properly planned and managed. Responsibility can be given to your new hire, but overall accountability needs to lie with their manager.

- Other aspects of this phase, all of which need to be fully aligned, include:
 - Interactions with colleagues.
 - Goal setting and accountability.
 - Leadership.
 - Learning and development.
 - Performance management.
 - Reward and recognition.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on culture and attitude that underpins the whole employee lifecycle. Key messages include:

- Build a company-wide culture of recruiting where every manager and employee is a recruiter.
- Invest in training your recruiting managers.
- Be candidate-centric (focusing on the candidate's needs), sell to the candidates (authentic selling, not sales pitching), build relationships, and make fast decisions.
- Think about the change equation and consider where the candidate sits in terms of each element—dissatisfaction with the present, vision of the future, and first practical steps. Consider also their resistance; explore and mitigate this.
- Trust is an important component in successful hiring. When hiring consider the elements of the Trust Equation: credibility, reliability, and intimacy versus self-interest.
- Build processes that mean that you are always recruiting, not just when you are facing a vacancy.
- Understand and develop your employee value proposition.

- Use SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to evaluate your company as both an employer and a recruiter.