

Recruiting Staff



What workers want
Creating a plan
Sourcing and attracting
Making an offer

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About This Publication



There's a saying in business that you're only as good as your people—so businesses are motivated to learn the best ways to attract top talent.

This book contains recruitment tips and strategies gathered from interviews with a dozen Alberta businesses operating in a variety of sectors and locations across the province. Topics include the following:

- **The trends that are affecting recruiting decisions and tactics.** This book examines the need to compete with high-paying sectors, the unique difficulties of finding workers in smaller centres and the importance of succession planning.
- **What employees want from workplaces today.** Base salary is always important, but what are people looking for beyond that? Alberta businesses talk about recognition, respect, growth opportunities, flexibility, work-life balance and more.
- **How you can attract qualified workers.** Once you know what workers want, you can decide what you're able to offer them. Creating an inviting workplace culture and a positive employment brand are two good starting points.
- **Why you should have a recruitment plan—and how to create one.** There are key steps in creating a recruitment plan—from understanding why people leave to knowing what your competitors are offering.
- **Tips on how and where to find workers.** Not sure what makes a winning job posting? Should you post your ad on your company website, on social media or in a newspaper? What about employee referrals? We asked Alberta businesses for their advice on sourcing the right people.
- **Strategies for evaluating resumés and conducting interviews.** It's not easy to screen piles of resumés and shortlist a select few people to interview. This publication offers tips to make sure you're choosing the right candidates.
- **What is involved in negotiating and making a job offer.** You've found the workers you want, and now it's time to get them on board. Here's what you need to know to make an offer, negotiate a salary and write the letter of offer.
- **Additional information and resources.** This book provides a list of further resources to help you.

Recognizing the Factors Affecting Recruitment



In recent years, Alberta has become known across Canada as an excellent place to find work. Its growing economy and low unemployment rate mean workers have choices, so employers are stepping up their recruitment efforts.

Low unemployment

A low unemployment rate can make finding workers more difficult in certain sectors. Even in times of higher unemployment, industries requiring staff to have special training or education may find it challenging to attract those workers.

Through all cycles of Alberta's economy, labour competition endures. Aligning recruiting demands to labour supply for many occupations will continue to pose challenges. The result for some companies could be

- staff shortages
- overloaded staff
- higher employee stress
- lower productivity

Understanding special challenges for rural businesses

Businesses that operate in smaller towns around the province may find it harder to fill job vacancies. The talent pool is often reduced, and it can be hard to compete with larger centres that offer higher salaries, more amenities and a more varied cultural environment. Companies may need to be flexible, to focus only on truly essential qualifications and to consider

- targeting candidates who grew up in the area
- starting an employee referral program
- marketing the company as growing and forward-thinking

- promoting the benefits of the community, such as schools, housing and lifestyle
- promoting ways their rural position may be a strength for their area or market

Competing with high-paying sectors

The ability of some sectors to pay above-average wages can make it hard for other businesses to compete. Rick Harcourt, president of Harcourt Recruiting Specialists in Edmonton, believes the energy industry in Alberta sets the dollar bar high. "Wages in that sector tend to be higher, even in skilled positions, so they draw a lot of people. That makes it tougher for companies who may not have the revenue stream that many energy companies do."

Even within high-paying sectors, competition can be intense. Chris Massie, operations manager at About Staffing Ltd., says his firm handles work for numerous clients in oil and gas servicing, placing many engineers and technologists into jobs. It's a very competitive market, he says. "Somebody else can always offer more, and the best candidates are interested in more than just compensation."

Understanding how to find and keep the best people for the job means knowing

- where and how to look
- how to compete with other businesses
- how to evaluate candidates as a "good fit" so you have the best odds of retaining them

The cost of employee turnover

Recruitment challenges will lessen if you can reduce employee turnover. Recruitment and onboarding are expensive, and high turnover can hurt business output and morale.

Calculating replacement costs

HR experts consider that the cost of replacing an employee is as much as 70 to 200 per cent of the employee's salary. That means if you need to replace an employee who was making \$50,000, it could cost you anywhere from \$35,000 to \$100,000.

Why so much? Consider the costs you may not have thought about, such as

- managers' involvement in paperwork and exit interviews
- severance pay and accrued vacation
- costs related to the vacancy, such as temporary help or overtime for co-workers
- recruitment costs, such as running a job posting or paying third-party recruiter fees

- costs related to
 - screening
 - interviewing
 - reference checks
 - writing contracts
 - relocation expenses
 - a signing bonus, if required
 - orientation and training for the new employee

There are also indirect costs, such as short-term productivity losses and the possibility of mistakes and unhappy customers during the vacancy or transition.

Taking 100 per cent of salary as a low-end cost estimate, you can calculate your total annual cost of turnover using a formula like this:

Annual # of employees who left × average annual salary and benefits = annual cost of turnover

Minimizing employee turnover is all about hiring the right employees in the first place—and then keeping them happy. (See *Understanding What Workers Want* on page 6 and *Finding Potential Employees* on page 23.)

An aging workforce

One reason for Alberta's labour situation is obvious: its older population is heading into retirement. The first baby boomers began to reach retirement age around 2011. Provincial statistics show that more than 837,000 Albertans were over age 55 in 2012, and that number is expected to reach 1.3 million by 2041. It makes good business sense to ensure that knowledge is passed from retiring employees to remaining key staff.

Succession planning

When a long-time employee retires, an employer may lose a career's worth of knowledge and experience. Consider your succession needs ahead of time by identifying and developing employees who can fill key positions.

Succession planning involves ongoing knowledge transfer, which means capturing skills and information



and continually sharing them with other employees and other parts of an organization. This planning can help you prepare for when employees retire or otherwise leave your organization. It also builds a solid foundation for promoting, expanding or reorganizing your workforce.

Finding younger workers

National demographics show that Alberta is able to attract more young workers to the job market than other provinces. HR professionals say that great places to look for promising young workers include

- career fairs
- job boards
- student newspapers
- college and university clubs
- internship and co-op programs
- referrals from existing staff

They are also finding candidates on social media: nearly half of the millennial generation (people born from approximately 1977 to 1997; also known as generation Y) use sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to find work.

AltaGas Ltd. has been recognized as one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People by the Canada's Top 100 Employers project. Nicole Arienzale, director of corporate HR and organizational development, says one of the company's flagship offerings is its New Graduate Development Program, a two-year rotational program that puts recent top university graduates through four six-month rotations throughout the company. "Once those two years are complete, they have a well-rounded view of what AltaGas is all about."

FIND OUT MORE

Youth Employment Strategy (YES)

youth.gc.ca

Assists young Canadians with employment. Contains an Employer section with funding initiatives.

National and global mobility

We live and work in an increasingly mobile world. Some Alberta businesses are recruiting further afield. For example, BioWare Canada, an Edmonton-based studio that develops high-quality video games, commonly recruits outside their home city.

"We have a very diverse set of skill needs—everything from engineers and computer programmers to artists to very technically skilled designers," says Aaryn Flynn, the company's general manager. "That results in us typically having to look outside of Edmonton—and then sometimes even out of the country—to get the best people."

Here are several approaches to mobility for employers to consider:

- **Find workers willing to relocate.** This trend is known as labour mobility and provides a larger pool of qualified candidates who are ready and willing to move from other parts of Canada or the world.
- **Plan for working remotely.** Virtual mobility means that, in some sectors and jobs, people can work from home or from almost anywhere there is a computer and Internet access. (See *Flexibility and Work-Life Balance*, page 9.)

- **Gauge interest in moving around.** Not only are some people willing to move or travel for work, they may even think of it as a perk. Many members of the millennial generation say they hope to work afar at some point in their careers. In some sectors or companies, the ability to offer this possibility can be a draw.

FIND OUT MORE

International Experience Canada (IEC)

cic.gc.ca/english/work/iec

This bilateral federal work experience program provides international youth mobility opportunities.

With these recruitment factors at play in Alberta, it pays to be an employer of choice. A strong reputation can bring potential candidates to you, so you don't have to work quite as hard to source them. HR experts say tailoring your recruitment strategies to suit a variety of groups or types of employees results in a more robust and flexible strategy that can better attract a diversity of workers.

Understanding What Workers Want



When businesses need to compete for the best workers but can't top the pay rates offered by competitors, the best way to stand out is to offer something unique.

Incentives beyond base salary

What do recruits want most? Factors such as base pay, job security and benefits will always be important to workers, but there is plenty of room for creativity when it comes to other ways to make your workplace inviting, say HR specialists.

“First of all, you need to be at a parity level for salary,” says Rick Harcourt, president of Harcourt Recruiting Specialists. “For every role, there’s a baseline, and if you’re below that mark, it’s going to be hard to attract people. Once you’re at that mark, the other pieces come into play.”

The key is to understand your ideal employees and their values, offer what you can and compensate as much as possible for what you can’t. That compensation could include

- better benefits, such as pension plans, health insurance and dental plans
- attractive perks, such as recognition programs, on-site daycare, and gym or transit passes
- a unique work culture—one that strongly appeals to the types of employees you seek



“Candidates want to know: first, are they paying at least market? Two, what are my responsibilities? What are my opportunities? Am I going to be able to grow? Three, what is the reputation of the company, the people I’m working with, the products? All other pieces and perks are more like, ‘Oh, that’s kind of cool, I get that too.’”

—Rick Harcourt
President, Harcourt Recruiting Specialists

Recognition and respect

Workers prize being respected. Many studies show that workers want

- their opinions to be valued
- their work to be appreciated
- their contributions to be rewarded

If you want to attract the best and brightest, say employers, highlight your recognition strategies when recruiting.

Not sure what types of recognition to offer? The only limits are your imagination and budget. See *Showing Your Appreciation*, this page, for some ideas. Choose recognition options that suit your workplace culture. Then make sure you get the word out:

- Mention recognition plans in job ads.
- Emphasize your recognition programs during interviews.
- Strengthen employee referrals by encouraging staff to talk up recognition rewards.

Considering individual values

Remember that recognition can take different forms for different individuals. Consider each worker and have a variety of recognition styles to appeal to different personalities. Some people want recognition to be very public, while others don't want to be singled out. Some value time off, others value money and still others value entertainment or social events. Consider whether your recognition program is flexible enough to appeal to a variety of people. (See *What Different Generations Want*, page 12.)

Keeping it sincere

No matter who you're recognizing, whatever you do, make it genuine. It's also worth remembering that while a formal recognition program can be valuable, simply remembering to say thank you goes a long way.

Keep it timely—don't wait for an annual review to recognize someone. Instead, think in terms of the next tweet or email blast to give kudos where due.

Showing your appreciation

Looking for creative, affordable ways to recognize employees? Ideas to consider include

- public recognition in a speech or presentation
- gift cards or giveaways
- preferred parking or a free transit pass for a month
- free food or beverages, such as gourmet coffee on site
- discounts on company products or services
- social events, such as barbecues or seasonal parties

“AltaGas celebrates results and employees' achievements regularly. We are a very dynamic and active organization. Our people work very hard at their jobs, so it is important to take a step back and recognize the great work that they are doing. For example, in the past few years, AltaGas has had a ski day where our Calgary employees come out with their families, and Cross Country Canada athletes and coaches teach them how to cross-country ski. As Cross Country Canada is an organization that AltaGas sponsors, this becomes a social event—a recognition event—and reinforces our focus on corporate philanthropy too.”

—Nicole Arienzale

Director, Corporate HR and Organizational Development, AltaGas Ltd.

Growth opportunities

Businesses confirm that workers want challenges that offer a sense of accomplishment along with opportunities to grow professionally, lead and take on more responsibility. Spell out opportunities during the recruiting process; it could mean the difference between a qualified worker choosing your offer or someone else's.

Here are some other ideas:

- **Workplace development opportunities.** Offer health and safety courses, language training, leadership training or lunch-and-learn seminars.
- **Mentorship.** Provide formal or informal mentorship opportunities to newcomers or employees who are looking to move into other positions.

- **Free tuition.** Pay the tuition fees for employees looking to earn job-related certifications or post-secondary credits.

Jocelyne April, HR coordinator for Alberta North at Associated Engineering, says it's important for staff at her company to learn from each other, so the company offers an active mentoring program.

"It works both ways, with the youth mentoring the senior employees and the seniors mentoring the youth," she says. "It's a formal, voluntary mentorship program with a one-year commitment. Staff members register and identify what it is they would like to be mentored on, or to mentor on. Our baby boomers are really keen on sharing their expertise."

“ We often challenge our team to create positions within our company. If you see a position that hasn't been created, but you think there's a need and you think your skill set would fit in, you can create new ladders to climb. It's not just about taking a traditional route to climbing that corporate ladder; we encourage our employees to find their own routes each and every day. That opportunity is huge for young professionals. ”

—John Stanton Jr.

Partner and Chief Executive Officer, Running Room Ltd.

A competitive benefits package

Whenever possible, a recruitment strategy profits from a full benefits package, including insurance, extended health care and some form of help with retirement savings, such as a group purchase plan or defined contribution plan.

If you can, try to offer a package that is at least on par with your competitors. To stand out, it may be wise to offer a benefits menu that employees can choose from to tailor their options to their needs.

"In Alberta today, you've got to have good benefits if you want to be considered a top employer," says Kelly Blackett, executive vice president of human resources at Canadian Western Bank. "Our employees also have the opportunity to participate in a share purchase program and/or other stock-based incentive programs. We feel like that is a huge differentiator for us, in that we want every employee to be a shareholder and to make every employee feel like they've got a role to play in the success of the organization."

Flexibility and work-life balance

Showing how you offer work-life balance may give you an edge in a tight labour market, especially with younger workers. And don't misinterpret recruits' interest in work-life balance as a desire to work less. It's not about *how much* work gets done—it's about *when and how* the work gets done.

Work-life balance programs offer a number of business benefits. They can help companies to

- reinforce recruitment
- raise retention
- decrease absenteeism
- boost punctuality and productivity
- increase employee satisfaction and relationships
- encourage participation in training and education
- compete successfully for new talent
- engage younger workers

Providing flexible work arrangements

What does flexibility in the workplace look like?

Examples include

- telecommuting
- flex time
- part-time schedules
- shift flexibility
- phased-in return from leave
- a compressed or shortened workweek
- job-sharing
- any combination of these that suits an employee's needs

For example, a potential recruit might want to work nine nine-hour days in a two-week period while taking every second Friday off and also working from home on Mondays. Such a schedule would still result in working about 40 hours a week while offering considerable flexibility.

"We have what we feel is a pretty healthy benefit where our offices are closed on the first and third Fridays of every month," says Brendan Rothwell, manager of staffing at Encana Corp. "Most people here, in general, think of Friday as a day when you may not have to be in the office."

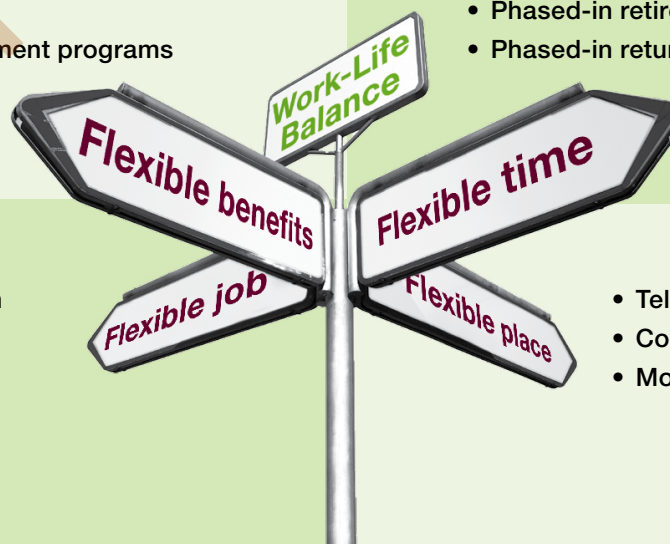
Finding what works for staff

- Leaves
- Dependant care
- Employee assistance programs
- Wellness programs
- Customizable investment programs

- Shift flexibility
- Compressed workweek
- Voluntary part-time/reduced hours
- Phased-in retirement
- Phased-in return from leave

- Job redesign
- Job-sharing
- Job rotation

- Telecommuting
- Communal work spaces
- Mobile office arrangements



Offering balance in the workplace

Other options that could help employees feel more balance in their work lives are

- opt-in social events
- on-site child care
- on-site fitness facilities (or paid memberships)
- at-work services (e.g. haircuts, uniform laundry, lunchroom shopping)
- personal leave days
- casual dress days
- private rooms for making personal calls
- free or subsidized meals, or occasional barbecues
- encouragement of email-free weekends
- no meetings first thing in the morning
- on-site yoga classes or massage therapy
- proximity to walking trails, basketball courts or other recreational sites
- proximity to shops, services or restaurants
- paying to take a spouse or family member along on a business trip
- occasional paid leave to do volunteer work

Changing Common Misperceptions About Work-Life Balance

Myth	Fact
It's a private issue.	Research links work-life imbalance to increased depression, marital problems, fatigue and stress-related illnesses—all of which translate into increased absenteeism and reduced productivity.
It's a parenting issue.	Not all caregivers are looking after children. Nearly a third of Canadians care for a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, a disability or needs related to aging.
It's just a stage in life.	Employees of all ages appreciate work-life balance—the younger generations perhaps more than anyone. And they may favour an employer that offers it.
Work and life are separate domains.	Work and life are closely linked, and changes in one almost always affect the other. Also, technology makes it possible for people to have their work with them 24-7.
Technology will help.	Most Canadians think technology is actually increasing their workload by letting their work follow them everywhere, raising supervisors' expectations of what they can achieve as a result.
Little can be done.	Given the variety of flexible work options, offering work-life balance does not have to be very costly or challenging while keeping employees happier, healthier and more productive.

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Building a company balance plan

What's the right amount of work-life balance for your company to offer? These steps may help you to design a clear plan.

Step 1. Assess your needs

Consider why change is needed and what kinds of change will best suit your workplace culture and employees. Think about how you would answer the following questions:

- What flexibility options are already on offer and how effective are they?
- What are your workers' requirements? Consider
 - child care
 - elder care
 - other obligations or interests
- How would better work-life balance help achieve your company's business goals?
- What alternatives can you think of for resolving flexibility challenges?
- What mix of work-life practices are possible?

Step 2. Plan the right mix

Consider budget limits, support systems and relevant legislation. Keep in mind that practice should support policy and vice versa. For example, if your policies say people can work part time, but part-time workers are often passed over for promotions, it's not a reliable option.

““ The interest in work-life balance seems to be more prevalent with the younger generation. It's a challenge with construction projects to accommodate that at times, but we try to because if we don't, we end up losing workers to a competitor. It is an employee's market. ””

—Kent Dietrich

Workforce Manager, PCL Builders Inc.

Step 3. Test it out

Test your new balance plan with a few people and tweak as needed before rolling your plan out to staff. Decide how you will measure return on investment. Consider monitoring

- rates of absenteeism, turnover, overtime or other indicators
- employee satisfaction measures
- productivity targets and results
- exit interview data
- employee participation statistics
- program evaluations
- costs

Step 4. Spell it out

The best balance plan is one that staff members know about and understand. Written guidelines

- clarify practices
- signal that the company is serious about the program
- help supervisors implement the program
- simplify orientation for new employees
- make it easier to promote your new work-life balance options to potential recruits

Ask for employee feedback on the plan so that communication runs both ways.

Step 5. Lead by example

If managers say work-life balance is important, but then don't exhibit balance themselves or reward only those who prioritize work over their home lives, it sends a contradictory message. Business owners and supervisors should walk the talk.

What different generations want

Baby boomers, generation Xers and millennials can have different approaches, expectations, priorities and behaviours. Understanding what motivates each group can help you recruit.

Here are some general profiles attributed to the generations. Of course, these profiles vary for individuals.



Working with Different Generations

	What should you know about them?	How can you attract and retain them?
BABY BOOMERS (born between 1946 and 1964)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May no longer want a full-time commitment ■ Are often inclined to work past age 65 out of interest or need ■ Are a repository of important skills, knowledge and guidance for new hires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offer flexible work arrangements that allow time for elder care or parenting ■ Baby boomers are less likely to be unemployed, so be proactive when recruiting ■ Factor in social media, where boomers are among the fastest-growing segments
GENERATION X (born between 1965 and 1976)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have an entrepreneurial streak ■ Value work mobility and development over salary ■ Aren't afraid to leave a job if they feel undervalued or don't have room to grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide professional development and lateral as well as upward mobility ■ Offer interesting projects, give them autonomy and reward their self-reliance and innovative thinking ■ Highlight the work-life balance offered at your company
MILLENNIALS / GENERATION Y (born between 1977 and 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Value work-life balance ■ Value a team-oriented, friendly work culture where they can make a difference ■ Priorities include social connections, flexibility, a sense of community, interesting work, and frequent feedback and support ■ Are more likely than gen-Xers to switch jobs when offered more money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offer a culture of flexibility ■ Make maximum use of technology ■ Be as transparent as possible regarding compensation, rewards and promotions ■ Work to build and sustain a sense of community at work ■ Listen to and stay connected with your people

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An attractive workplace culture

Your company's management style and workplace culture should support the priorities and values of the people you want to recruit.

Helping new hires fit in

Whether you recruit provincially, nationally or internationally, if you bring in people from out of town, it's important to help them and their families develop a social network quickly. According to a number of HR professionals, about 25 per cent of relocations fail because employees don't settle in well—a costly problem for the businesses.

For example, BioWare Canada frequently recruits from outside of Alberta and even outside of Canada, and does its best to get new employees settled quickly.

“We have 380 people from dozens of countries,” says Aaryn Flynn, the company's general manager. “We have a full orientation program, we have a good community of expats from other countries who bond together and help each other out, and we have family events. We know that for people coming from foreign places, it's especially important to get their families excited to be here as well.”

Creating the right environment

Workplace culture is all about making sure your ideal employees will be happy where they work.

“In my former job, competing with [some industries] was extremely difficult for professional positions, and even for basic clerical positions—we simply couldn't match the salaries that were being paid,” says Bob Sartor, president and CEO of Big Rock Brewery. “So we had to create an environment that would trump just money. That's what we do here at the brewery. What can I say—we have fun! People want to work for Big Rock because we're innovative and it's a fun, relaxed environment.”

“We have a monthly activity for staff where we get together. On Friday, we've got the World Cup event, three-on-three soccer in the parking lot, then we have a big barbecue afterwards—things like that. We create an environment that is different from the stereotypical head office. That certainly appeals to the younger professionals who've made the decision that they want to combine a fair salary with a great work environment.”

—John Stanton Jr.

Partner and Chief Executive Officer, Running Room Ltd.

Assessing your workplace culture

Workplace culture is something you can feel, but it may seem to defy description. Use the following exercise to understand your workplace culture so that you can describe it to potential employees:

- Write a one-page description of your company that defines its current approach to the following factors:
 - Demographics.** Is your workplace mostly youthful? Older? Culturally diverse?
 - Attitude and energy.** Are people having fun? Is the atmosphere lively and social, or more reserved? Is the environment fast-paced? Creative? Serious? Do projects mainly require teamwork or independence?
 - Schedules.** Are workdays long, or does the office empty out by 4 p.m.? Are schedules flexible?
 - Dress code.** Is your workplace casual, traditional or something in between? Is there an official uniform?
 - Employee recognition.** What kinds of achievements get recognized? How? How often?
 - Travel.** Can new hires expect opportunities for travel?
 - Vacations.** Are people encouraged to take more than one week off at a time?
 - Other leave.** What are the company's policies on other types of leaves?
- Summarize your one-page description of these elements into a single paragraph.
- Identify four to six words in the paragraph that you think best define your current culture.

Consider who your culture might appeal to most, and ponder how to target your recruiting accordingly.

Cultivating a culture of diversity

To attract the widest pool of potential candidates, companies should create a welcoming and inclusive workplace that clearly values and encourages diversity of culture, age and gender.

Give some thought to what people may need from you as an employer in order to fit in:

- **Consider barriers.** Get advice on the obstacles some people may face. For newcomers to Canada, the barriers might be mainly linguistic or cultural.
- **Imagine what people might need.** If your workplace is, for example, trades-oriented and you'd like to achieve more gender diversity, consider setting up a peer support group or mentorship program.
- **Make it inclusive.** A mentoring program may be appreciated by all of your workers, not only the group you had in mind at first.



To help people fit in, consider not only what *they* need to know but also what their *co-workers* need to know or how they can help. Educating staff can help make your workplace more welcoming. For example, show employees how best to accommodate the needs of colleagues with disabilities by adapting the physical environment or communicating differently. Make this inclusive action by staff an expectation within the workplace.

Jocelyne April, HR coordinator for Alberta North at Associated Engineering, describes her company's employment equity plan: "We developed the plan when we qualified under the Federal Contractors Program; it became a requirement at that point," she says. "We've established that we do not have any barriers, whether in terms of visible minorities, physical handicaps or women in management especially. We have more and more women engineers on our staff now. The number of females going into engineering studies has grown exponentially over the past 10 to 20 years."

“ We have women in both the body tech and service tech trades as well as service advisors with a Red Seal service ticket. We also have women in management positions, which in the automotive world is not always the norm. There are more women now than when I started, which was just three years ago, and I believe that goes with hiring the best people, male or female. ”

—Cindy Donaldson
HR Director, Davis Automotive Group

Creating a Recruitment Plan



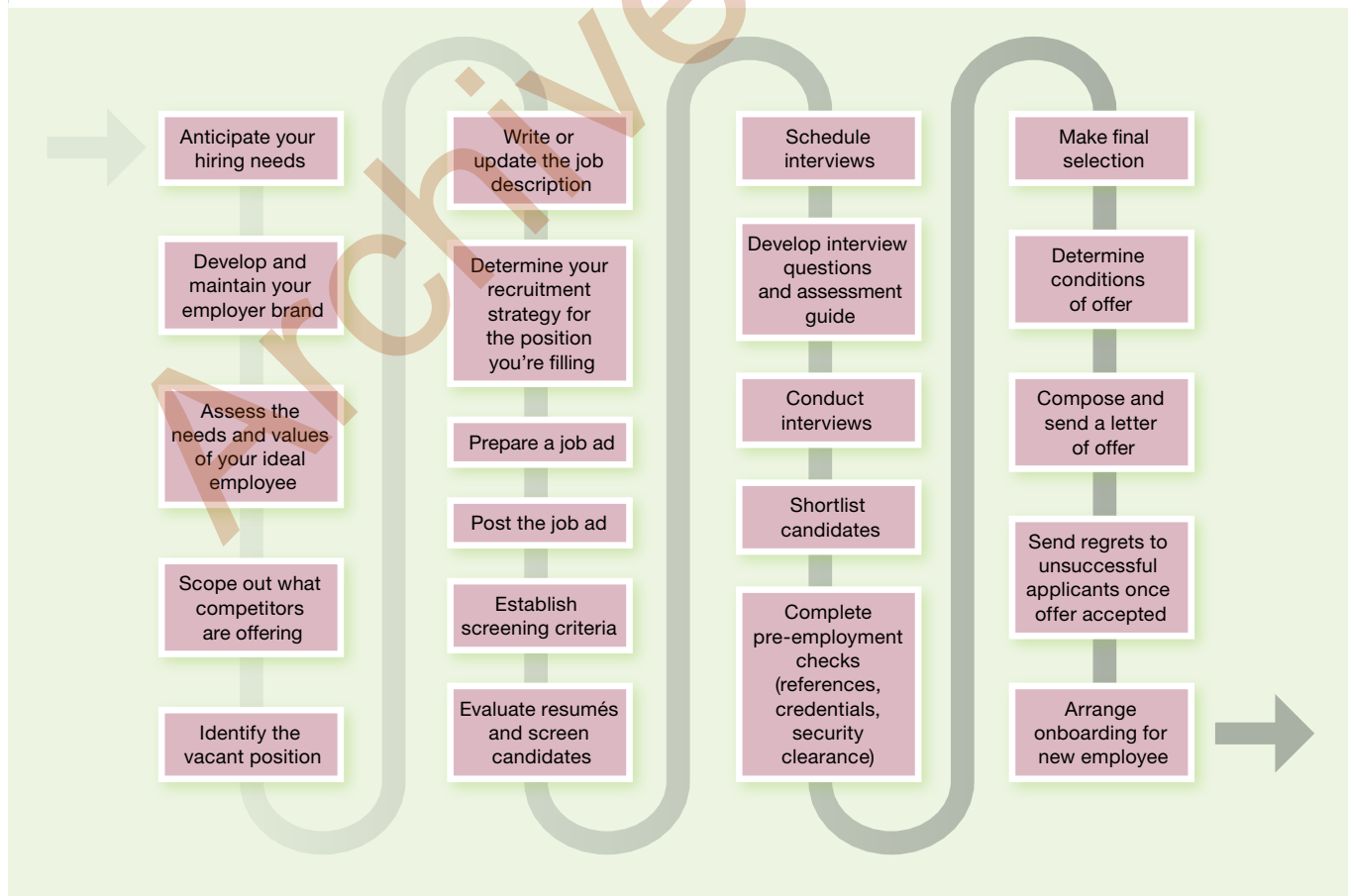
Recruiting can be expensive. Before you jump in, it pays to create a recruitment plan that takes into account your company's unique challenges and objectives.

Understand the recruitment process

A good recruitment plan outlines the skills and experience your company needs to keep it operating and growing. It communicates relevant policies and practices to everyone who has a stake in hiring decisions.

The chart below shows the steps involved in a typical recruitment process. You can use this as a template and tweak it as needed.

Steps in the Recruitment Process



Know your organization

Each organization is unique, so there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all recruitment plan. It's a good idea to get to know your organization, in order to

- assess your business development priorities
- communicate your company's qualities effectively
- target the candidates who are most likely to be a good fit

"Quarterly, we look at where our position stands in relation to the market," says Bob Sartor, president and CEO of Big Rock Brewery. "You have to! You can't wait and do it once a year. It's just too hot a market for that."

Here are some broad categories to think about:

- **Know your company's vision, mission, values and culture.** You can better assess candidates' fit with your organization and use your organization's characteristics as selling points when you're recruiting.
- **Know your hiring needs.** Identify any changes that might create a need for new employees, skills or qualities—for example, pending retirements, increased sales, new product lines or developing technologies.

- **Know the work.** Identify the main tasks you need new hires to perform and whom new hires would report to. What knowledge, skills, attitudes, experience or qualifications are essential? Which ones are nice to have?
- **Know what you already have.** Evaluate your current workforce and understand where the talent gaps or excess capacities are. Could you meet some of your needs by reorganizing work or redesigning jobs rather than hiring?

"We have a formal recruitment plan," says Aaryn Flynn, general manager of BioWare Canada. "We include the positions, the skill sets, the differences between junior and senior employees. We look at productivity issues and see what we need to meet our goals. We balance those needs against the other options: Should we outsource more? Are there things we can do to make our internal team more productive? Then we decide what to do."



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Identify productivity issues and growth opportunities

Where are delays or breakdowns in production coming from? What will it take to close up those gaps? Assess your business model and performance compared to targets. Be clear on what needs your recruitment plan is meant to address and the goals you expect it to achieve.

- **Consider how you can expand your production and business.** Does your production line need new skills to expand? If so, see how your recruitment plan will factor in those opportunities.
- **Start by assessing what you have.** Could you meet some or all of your goals by reorganizing or retraining existing employees? Mentorship programs or in-house bridging programs can help to close knowledge or skill gaps and prepare employees to take on new or expanded roles.
- **Evaluate your growth needs compared to the existing labour pool within your area.** Will you need to look outside of your industry or the province to find candidates?



FIND OUT MORE

Canada-Alberta Job Grant
albertacanada.com/jobgrant

Government employer program for workplace training.

Measuring the impact of HR

Human resources experts say recruiting is moving beyond just trying to align with business goals and is starting to focus on how recruiting directly affects those goals. Companies want to see a direct connection between the recruiting choices they make and business results.

Look to the future

It pays to be forward-thinking about your staffing needs. Think 10 or 15 years ahead about your HR needs and what steps you can implement today to address them. If you're regularly filling certain types of positions, consider creating a long-term strategy that will address that shortage and promote those positions on an ongoing basis. For example, you could

- involve your company in local or provincial training initiatives
- align your organization with apprenticeship or internship programs
- develop contacts and alliances with educational institutions
- promote your employer brand to those occupations regularly
- establish and expand a mentorship program
- network to promote any training or educational opportunities you offer

Assess the labour market

Understanding the current and projected labour market is an essential early step in building a recruitment strategy. Labour market information (LMI) can help you make labour market decisions. LMI includes data such as

- jobs and salaries
- employment sectors
- hiring trends
- employment conditions
- new technologies
- working conditions
- the cost of living

When you conduct LMI research, try to answer these questions:

- What is the current supply and demand of workers (regionally, provincially, nationally, globally)?
- Who else is competing for the same workers as you?
- What does a competitive recruitment package look like for the talent pool you want to target?
- How hard might you need to work to find qualified workers?

Going national?

Alberta-based businesses that have (or want to develop) a national presence may benefit from labour market information at the national level. A good place to start is with the Employment and Social Development Canada site (esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/lmi). This website offers information about national labour market trends according to region as well as national data on

- wages
- labour supply and demand
- other recruitment factors

This information can be useful even for strictly Alberta-based businesses. People from other provinces may be willing to relocate—and strategically targeting them may give you a competitive edge in recruiting.

Kent Dietrich, workforce manager with PCL Builders Inc., says the hardest positions for him to fill are those in the skilled trades, especially carpenters. “It can take three to four weeks to fill a vacancy; this can have significant impact on our construction schedule. In any given week, we may have vacancies for 20 to 30 carpenters.”

Know where to look for labour market information

A wealth of information about the labour market in Alberta is available online through the OCCinfo site at alis.alberta.ca/occinfo and at **whortleberries**, including:

- Alberta labour force profiles
- labour market forecasts
- wage and salary information
- quarterly and annual updates on unemployment rates
- skills shortages by occupational group

FIND OUT MORE

Alberta Labour Market Information

work.alberta.ca/lmi

The *Alberta Labour Market Outlook* offers a current snapshot of the province’s labour market conditions, including factors affecting the workforce and statistics showing changes in the labour market.

Canadian Labour Market Information

albertacanada.com/canadalabourmarket

Provides national labour and employment data as well as fact sheets.

Research what the competition is offering

Successful Alberta companies say it's important to know what your competition is offering to attract and retain workers. When pay rates are similar from one organization to another, many prospective employees will choose the company that offers the most attractive overall compensation package.

Such packages could include

- **paid leave**, including vacations, family leave, sick leave and personal leave
- **unpaid leave** for a special circumstance such as extended travel or to care for an aging parent
- **wellness programs**, such as stress management education or coverage for extended health services like acupuncture and massage
- **traditional benefits**, such as health and dental plans, life and disability insurance, stock options and group retirement savings plans
- **perks**, such as preferred parking privileges, frequent social events and small gifts to recognize achievements

“It is important to understand the marketplace in terms of total compensation and to know what your competitors are doing,” notes Nicole Arienzale, director of corporate HR and organizational development at AltaGas Ltd. “We are fortunate in that there are a number of market surveys that are available to us and in which we participate. Outside of that, there are a number of publications that are available to employers that will give them specifics in terms of what certain positions or roles are paying.”

In addition to surveys and publications, some other ways to research compensation packages include the following:

- **Scour job postings.** Whether online or in print, job postings offer a useful overall picture of what your competitors are offering. Remember that if you're looking at out-of-province postings, the cost of living in other areas may factor into what's being offered.
- **Start networking.** Potential sources of information include
 - friends
 - colleagues
 - suppliers
 - clients
 - business and trade associations
 - employment agencies
 - local chambers of commerce

Consider data analytics

Hiring the right people from the outset can mean better productivity and reduced turnover. Some companies are turning to data analytics to help support decision-making.

For example, jobs posted on career websites can be a rich source of information about overall labour market patterns, but analyzing them all on your own would be difficult.

Data analytics can indicate

- where your recruitment money is best spent
- where the candidates you want are looking
- where and how your competitors are posting jobs
- how effective your advertising strategies are

Cost is a consideration. Many analytics tools offered may be pricey for small businesses, although some are geared toward those smaller businesses. Some can be accessed online by paying a monthly user or subscription fee, while others may involve purchasing software. An online search for “data analytics for small businesses” will give you some options.

Keep in mind when considering if data analytics are right for you that there may be a learning curve in running and interpreting the results.

- **Take advantage of public sources of information.** Check social media sites for available information, or do online searches for articles and studies. Provincial and federal government sites are also useful places to look.

FIND OUT MORE

Government of Canada Job Bank

jobbank.gc.ca

Site where employers can post jobs and access *Job Match* and other services.

Understand why people leave

Sometimes, valued employees will leave your company for reasons beyond your control—for example, to join a partner in another city or to go back to school. Other times, the decision to leave may be for employment-related reasons such as the following:

- **Greener pastures elsewhere.** Competitors may be offering better growth and leadership opportunities, paid training, higher salaries or more comprehensive benefits packages.
- **Poachers and headhunters.** Competitors or recruiters may boldly approach your best employees and present them with incentives to move.
- **Workplace issues.** Unresolved issues in the workplace, such as difficult co-workers, unpleasant relationships or feeling undervalued (or overworked), can prompt staff to move on.

“We certainly are open to rehiring people and we have successfully done so. For example, we have had some engineers leave AE because they wanted to be exposed to other engineering practices that we don’t offer. They go out and work for another firm and then they come back to us, which is awesome because they bring that new knowledge back with them too.”

—Jocelyne April
HR Coordinator, Alberta North,
Associated Engineering

What about succession planning?

Knowing how your organization will retain the valuable knowledge held by exiting key employees is critical. It will be even more important as the baby boomers leave the workforce in greater numbers. For tips and strategies, go to alis.alberta.ca/publications and view or order the resource *Succession Planning: Retaining Skills and Knowledge in Your Workforce*.

Talk to people on their way out

Conducting exit interviews with staff who leave can give you a candid perspective on

- your organization’s culture and processes
- trends in salary and compensation among your competitors
- problem employees or other sources of discontent

“We routinely conduct exit interviews,” says Kent Dietrich, workforce manager at PCL Builders Inc. “We want to know how we’re treating people, how and why they leave. Reputation is huge; how we treat people is how we get people. Word of mouth is probably our biggest recruiting tool.” PCL also conducts an employee survey annually and uses the results to develop an action plan.

FIND OUT MORE

Workplace Bullying

alis.alberta.ca/tips

Consider the impact of workplace bullying on your employer brand and have anti-bullying measures in place. For more information, review the ALIS tip sheet *Bullies at Work: What to Know, What You Can Do*.

Build a recruitment plan: A template

This item has been either discontinued or is out of date. It is provided for informational and research purposes.

Recruitment Plan	Date: _____	Notes
What are our company's vision and mission?	Vision: Mission:	
What are our three most important company values?	1. 2. 3.	
How would I describe our company culture?		
What kind of employee will fit in well with our company culture?		
What are we offering to employees that is of most value to them?	1. 2. 3. Other:	
What are three good reasons why someone would want to work for our company?	1. 2. 3.	
What are our hiring needs right now?	Positions:	
What will our hiring needs likely be in three months?	Positions:	
What will our hiring needs be in six months?	Positions:	

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<p>What are our productivity challenges? Can any of them be solved without hiring new people?</p>	<p>Which challenges can we use existing talent to solve?</p>	
<p>What direction(s) are we trying to grow this company in?</p>		
<p>What is the labour market assessment for geographical area where we need people?</p>		
<p>What are some potential recruitment sources we should consider?</p>	<p>e.g. who to use for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ networking opportunities ■ online advertising ■ employee referrals ■ print ads ■ third-party recruiters ■ campus recruiting ■ other 	
<p>What are competitors in our sector offering in base pay and other key compensation?</p>		
<p>When people leave our company, what are the most common reasons cited in exit interviews?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	

Finding Potential Employees



Who are the right people for the positions you need to fill? How can you be sure they'll represent your company's values and fit in well with your workplace culture? And what are the best ways to find them?

Become an employer of choice

Becoming an employer of choice is a long-term strategy for attracting talent. It ensures that the employees you seek can easily recognize what stands out about your company that might make them want to work there. Connecting your marketing and HR efforts can greatly improve results.

- “Part of it is just looking at recruiting as a marketing function as opposed to a purely HR function,” says Rick Harcourt, president of Harcourt Recruiting Specialists. “Really, you’re trying to sell your brand, as an employer, to buyers who are potential employees. Recognizing the nature of a candidate-short market, treat your brand and your recruiting as a marketing effort as opposed to a screening effort.”

Brendan Rothwell, manager of staffing at Encana Corp., says his firm uses social media for branding, with a view to recruitment. “A lot of what we post on our social media channels, we try to do in light of recruitment and really driving our brand home—that we’re a great place to be, a great place to work,” he says.

Talk it up

To be an employer of choice, the best advice is this: if you’ve got it, flaunt it. “We’ve been on the 50 Best Employers in Canada list [*Maclean’s*] for the better part of a decade,” says Kelly Blackett, executive vice president of human resources at Canadian Western Bank. “We’ve won the Most Admired Corporate Culture in Canada award [*Waterstone Human Capital*] twice. In 2013, we won the Alberta’s Best Workplaces—Best Overall Workplace (750 Plus Employees) award [*Alberta Venture*]. I do think these awards help us to attract people. It’s an important differentiator for us, and we do advertise it when hiring.”

“Employers really need to be cognizant of what their brand is, who it’s speaking to, what they represent and where they’re going. That broader ‘why’ of a company can connect with that broader ‘why’ of an employee wanting to work there. That is huge. That’ll make up for compensation, location, size of the company and the tools available, as long as you can connect the why.”

—Chris Massie
Operations Manager, About Staffing Ltd.

Employer of Choice Self-Assessment Tool		
Business practice	How are we doing?	Rating (1-10)
Workplace culture	Our workplace style and culture support the priorities of our employees and reflect their values.	
	Our workplace culture is positive, supportive and energetic.	
Employee development	Staff members have opportunities to boost their skills through internal or external training. We may also cover training costs.	
	We have mentorship programs to help develop staff and move junior employees into leadership positions.	
	We provide lots of opportunity for employees in terms of career paths and performance development.	
Commitment	We are clearly committed to our staff. We show it regularly through our daily interactions, as well as social events, perks, rewards and other methods.	
Respect	We respect and understand the cultures and personal situations of our staff.	
	We have policies that encourage and promote respect, and we don't tolerate discrimination and harassment.	
	We recognize and celebrate our employees' achievements regularly, and we welcome their input at all levels.	
Work-life balance	We understand and are responsive to the unique needs of each of our employees, including situations like caring for dependants and flexibility regarding benefits or transportation.	
	We are flexible about scheduling working hours and locations.	
Job security	Our employees feel their workplace is stable. They sense that staff are safe in their roles and the company is running well.	
Benefits	We offer a competitive and flexible benefits package, including insurance, extended health coverage and retirement savings options.	
Empowerment	We enable our staff to manage their own work, and we entrust them with responsibility and authority to make decisions.	
	We encourage and act on suggestions about how to improve on things in our daily work.	
Social responsibility	Our business is involved in our community, either directly through donations, policies or sponsorships, or indirectly by supporting our staff in their efforts.	

Create the right job posting

Ultimately, potential candidates will read your job posting and weigh it against their own backgrounds, interests and career ambitions when deciding whether to apply.

Aim to create an enticing posting that gives people an accurate feel for your workplace culture and the work. Ask yourself questions such as the following:

- What is unique about your company and environment?
- How can you sell it to your ideal candidates?
- What are candidates looking for?
 - Opportunities to advance?
 - Work-life balance?
 - The chance to make a difference?
 - Employer social responsibility?
 - Job security and stability?

Adapt your key messages and writing style to your target audience.

Pay attention to how you communicate

“You have to be on point with your messaging from the start of the process” when you create a job posting, advises Chris Massie, operations manager at About Staffing Ltd.

“I think you need a really clear job description and job ad...I think you need to be really honest with the people coming in and what your expectation is of them. If they can't meet it, then that's fine. They just move on, and you just move on. It has to be a win-win for everybody. It's part of ensuring a good fit.”

—Cindy Donaldson
HR Director, Davis Automotive Group

Job postings

In creating a job posting, think about not only the criteria you should include but also those you can't. Be sure that your posting does not refer to any requirements that might violate human rights legislation. See *Knowing What You Can (and Can't) Ask*, page 35, for more information.

Also, be careful about using words like “necessary” or “must have.” Most HR experts say it's better to hire someone who has most of the qualifications you need and is a good fit with your workplace culture than to choose someone with all of the qualifications who may not fit in. You risk turning away potentially excellent candidates if your initial screening criteria are too strict.

“We've had a lot of success, as an employer, by tweaking the way we communicate in our job postings. The traditional approach—describing your company, the position, job responsibilities, job qualifications—is really bland and static. Instead, we've started to communicate to an individual by talking about you, what you will learn, what skills you will develop, what the first three months will look like for you, as well as the next six months. We really try to tap into candidates' future vision of themselves, and how that aligns with their vision of the company's position.”

A recent campaign by Big Rock Brewery shows how a recruitment strategy can be tailored to a unique industry and working environment. “When we wanted to recruit an artist in Vancouver, we posted on social media but we also put something in the *Georgia Straight* [Vancouver's lifestyle, news and entertainment weekly],” says Bob Sartor, president and CEO. “The ad went something like this: ‘Hi there, we're looking for an artist who loves craft beer. Wait a minute, that's way too broad. We're looking for a graphic artist who loves craft beer and lives in and around Vancouver. Wait a minute...’”

The ad generated hundreds of responses, says Sartor. “We have to be creative. We can't use conventional media; we can't use headhunters. That's not how people in this industry get recruited.”

Choose appropriate recruitment strategies

The chart below presents a variety of recruitment practices that are well suited to small- to medium-sized businesses. It's worth keeping a few things in mind:

- **One plan does not fit all.** Consider your own challenges, systems and needs.
- **One strategy is not enough.** A solid recruitment plan should include a mix of approaches.
- **Keep an eye on the results.** Assess where changes to your plan may be needed. Ask for input from current employees and recent hires. Measure and quantify your success with each strategy, and refine the plan if needed.

Recruitment Strategies			
Strategy	Description	Pros and cons	Success factors
Networking	Setting up booths at job fairs, trade shows and conferences	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opportunity to brand your company and build relationships ■ On-the-spot screening interviews are possible ■ May net a large number of applicants <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be more expensive than other methods ■ May cast too wide a net, forcing you to spend time filtering out unsuitable candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Choose venues carefully to ensure they are a strong match for your industry. ■ Be prepared to conduct interviews on the spot. ■ Use the opportunity for employer branding: highlight why and how your organization is different or better than competitors.
Employee referrals	Offering rewards to existing staff who recruit new employees	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Makes a recruiter out of every employee ■ Referrals are, in effect, “pre-screened” for fit ■ Employees typically recommend a good quality of hire ■ Low-cost recruiting method <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May cause you to be seen as a “closed” shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make your referral program a fundamental part of your workplace culture and celebrate its successes. ■ Regularly communicate the program’s purpose, goals and procedures. ■ Develop an employee referral form. ■ Use your company intranet to post job descriptions and remind employees that referrals are welcome. ■ Allow employees a choice of rewards, such as cash bonuses, weekends away and charitable donations. ■ Offer a prize draw for employees who make referrals, whether successful or not.

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Strategy	Description	Pros and cons	Success factors
Internet recruiting	Posting job ads on your intranet, your website, job boards, industry and professional association websites and business networking sites (such as LinkedIn)	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inexpensive compared to print ads ■ Global market rather than local market access ■ Instant communication ■ Postings can be much longer in size, more regularly updated and run for longer than print ads ■ Levels the playing field for small firms and not-for-profits ■ Ease of response may encourage “passive seekers”—those currently employed who might be persuaded to move ■ Large volume of databases and search options available ■ Recruitment from own website offers opportunity for employer branding and promotion <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Large volume of databases and search options can be overwhelming ■ Full utilization may require upgrading and integrating of technical infrastructure ■ May be difficult to choose the best sites for the right exposure ■ May not reach certain groups of people ■ May require technical expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add a “Careers” section to your home page and update it regularly. Use it for employer branding even when there are no current vacancies. ■ Provide online application forms or the ability to upload resumés. Develop an automated response to acknowledge every applicant. ■ Ensure your website is mobile friendly so even those without a home computer can see your posting and respond online. ■ Use business networking sites as a tool for locating “passive seekers.” ■ Use other social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to advertise vacancies. ■ Experiment to find the job sites that are the best match for your candidates, from government job boards to others such as Workopolis, Monster, Indeed or Kijiji. Each appeals to a different audience. ■ Choose good-quality keywords. ■ Use regional targeting and search-based advertising to market your postings to specific people based on their Internet searches. ■ Investigate the best niche sites for posting ads, such as industry or professional associations. ■ Recognize that print ads are still a viable way to reach certain workers in particular industries. Assess your market before proceeding.

“ We pay our employees a bonus . . . for successful referrals because we think that’s one of the best ways to drive fit. We think the best ambassadors of our organization are our existing employees, and employee referrals are one of the most successful sources of hiring people for the bank. ”

—Kelly Blackett

Executive Vice President, Human Resources, Canadian Western Bank

Strategy	Description	Pros and cons	Success factors
Print ads	Placing an ad in a newspaper, magazine or trade journal	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Job seekers in some industries (e.g. hospitality, retail) still rely on these ■ Quick way to reach a wide audience in certain sectors ■ Can double as an opportunity for employer branding <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be expensive ■ Response rates can vary ■ In many sectors, print ads are being edged out by online advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assess your sector and industry to determine whether your ideal candidates are looking online instead. Choose your publications and sections carefully. ■ Test the ad with employees in your target audience but outside of your organization. Does it make them want to work for you? Do they read the publications where you're planning on running the ad? ■ Track your results. Are you getting the responses you expected (and need)? ■ Consider running a cost-benefit analysis of print ad response quality compared to other methods.
Third-party recruiters	<p>Using employment agencies that refer candidates and charge a fee if placement is made</p> <p>Using executive search firms that are paid on a retainer basis</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offloads work to outside specialists ■ Can be more efficient ■ Pre-screens applicants ■ May provide access to (and better success with) currently employed candidates <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More expensive than other options ■ Quality of service may vary ■ May pressure applicants or managers for a fast fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Choose the agency carefully, as it will represent you. Check references and track record. Consider several agencies before making your choice. ■ Look for recruiters with specific expertise in your labour market. ■ Carefully define contractual terms in writing (e.g. pricing, timelines, performance measures). ■ Work with several recruiters, if the range of postings requires a broader net than one agency can provide. ■ Keep careful records to verify referral sources and dates of application.

Strategy	Description	Pros and cons	Success factors
Campus recruiting	Recruiting in post-secondary and private training institutions (e.g. career fairs, co-op programs or apprenticeship programs)	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can target people with specific qualifications ■ Potential to fill seasonal needs ■ Co-op placements let you try out candidates who may be suitable for long-term employment ■ Opportunity to hire top talent before someone else does <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Career fairs require planning and can be costly ■ Smaller organizations can be overshadowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connect with campus career centres or placement services to ask how you can participate and recruit through them. ■ Forge partnerships with local high schools and post-secondary institutions. ■ Consider sponsoring a student in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), work experience or co-op placement. ■ Offer worksite tours. ■ Participate in career fairs. ■ Contact teachers of evening or extension courses.
Rehiring “boomerang” employees	Opening your doors to former employees	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easier to know if the employee is a good fit ■ Boomerang employees are already familiar with your organization and its products, services and workplace culture ■ Recruits who are returning from competitors may bring useful new knowledge <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May be good reasons why they left in the first place ■ May be inclined to jump from employer to employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Find out why these employees left your organization the first time. ■ Ask why they want to come back. ■ Try to determine what new knowledge or skills they may be bringing back with them.

“We’re very connected to the universities and we actually recruit right from classes, looking at students who haven’t even graduated yet. We get their names and contact them after they graduate. We work with the professors directly and we participate in the classes. About a quarter of our new hires come straight from university.

—Aaryn Flynn
General Manager, BioWare Canada

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Strategy	Description	Pros and cons	Success factors
National recruiting	Recruiting and hiring workers from outside of Alberta, but within Canada	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be a means to acquire necessary skills and experience ■ May add a fresh perspective to region-based thinking ■ Can aid in networking with suppliers and markets outside Alberta <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some provinces' training certifications may not be accepted in Alberta in certain occupations ■ May need to pay relocation expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult national job and resumé banks. ■ Check out the Government of Alberta's site for national labour market information (albertacanada.com/canadalabourmarket). ■ Service Canada also has useful data in the Employer Resources section of the Government of Canada Job Bank. Go to workingincanada.gc.ca and choose the Employers tab.
International recruiting	Recruiting and hiring workers from outside of Canada	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be a means to acquire necessary skills and experience ■ Adds a cross-cultural and international dimension to your business ■ Offers potential to build relationships with foreign partners and markets <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Time and work required to get foreign credentials recognized ■ May need to pay relocation expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult job and resumé banks around the world. ■ Visit albertacanada.com to read about the latest developments and policies related to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program. ■ Contact your nearest Employment and Social Development Canada office for information about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the federal government's International Mobility Programs (esdc.gc.ca). ■ Seek information from Alberta's International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) (work.alberta.ca/iqas). ■ Establish programs to help newcomers settle in and grow roots. ■ Consider offering language training, if needed.

Evaluate your strategies

Evaluating the effectiveness of your recruitment strategies might be as simple as adding the question “How did you hear about us?” to your application form or interview process. Thorough, consistent record-keeping will help you evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies you choose in terms of cost, speed and outcomes.

Knowing which strategies yield the most effective results is key. For each strategy, consider using metrics such as

- volume of applicants
- response rate
- recruitment cost per hire
- length of time to hire
- vacancy, turnover and retention rates
- management performance rating of new hires

Recruit from within

Sometimes the best person for a job is right in front of you. Here are a few strategies to try when you’re experiencing uneven or unpredictable growth:

- Consider quickly moving current employees into new positions where the skills they already have will make a bigger impact.
- Try to figure out which employees seem underused.
- Find out more about what employees can do or where their career ambitions and interests lie. You may find hidden talent that can be put to use.

“We always look within first,” says Bob Sartor, president and CEO of Big Rock Brewery. “Your safest hire is somebody who is already aligned with your core values and fits in culturally.”

FIND OUT MORE

Professional Associations

alis.alberta.ca

Professional associations may help you advertise your career opportunities to their members locally and across the country. Visit alis.alberta.ca and search for “professional associations” to find contact details for ones that could be relevant to your business.

Diversify your talent pool

Aside from being a practical solution to recruitment challenges, diversity in the workplace offers significant business benefits. Forward-thinking businesses are using diversity to help set themselves apart from the competition, attract new clients, access new markets and benefit from outside-of-the-box thinking.

“Diverse teams lead to better business outcomes. We have a very diverse customer base, so it’s very important for us to have employees who reflect that diversity,” says Kelly Blackett, executive vice president of human resources at Canadian Western Bank.

Recognize diversity as a recruiting advantage

How can diversity help with recruiting?

- As part of your business culture, diversity helps you make use of employee networks and build bridges to communities of talent that may have been going untapped.
- By building relationships and posting job notices with agencies and organizations that help under-represented sources of talent, you can gain a competitive edge in recruiting while developing your company’s reputation as a diversity-friendly place to work.

Chris Massie, operations manager at About Staffing Ltd., says his company does a lot of work with an educational institution that offers high school upgrading, English as a Second Language (ESL), continuing education and other programs. “It has an ESL language school and its mission is to integrate new Canadians into Canadian society and provide them with the tools they need to secure meaningful and gainful employment. That gives me access to candidates who might not be considered by the general marketplace but who often do very well with some training.”



IQAS assessments

If you already have reliable, hard-working employees who have foreign qualifications and experience related to jobs you need to fill, consider having their credentials assessed before you go looking outside the company.

The Government of Alberta International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) assesses international educational credentials and compares them to Canadian credentials. Assessments are meant to increase newcomers’ entry into the job market, educational institutions and professional regulatory organizations. You can find more information online at work.alberta.ca/iqas.

Temporary foreign worker or internationally educated professional?

A **temporary foreign worker** is someone from outside Canada who has been granted permission by the government (e.g. through a work permit) to work within Canada in order to fill a short-term labour or skill shortage. These individuals are not permanent residents or Canadian citizens.

An **internationally educated professional** is someone who received training and education in another country. These persons may be permanent residents or Canadian citizens.

Know where to look for diverse talent

To recruit for a diverse workplace, consider the following talent pools:

- **Aboriginal candidates.** Develop relationships with Aboriginal organizations:
 - The network of Aboriginal Human Resource Council offices (aboriginalhr.ca) helps link Canadian employers with Aboriginal workers.
 - You can post a job on **AboriginalCareers.ca**, a Canada-wide Aboriginal career portal.
 - Check out Aboriginal Link (aboriginalink.com), an organization with sector and regional databases of 28,000 urban, rural and remote centres that allow you to connect with 1.5 million Aboriginal people across Canada.
- **Workers of a gender under-represented in your field.** If your business is male dominated, increase your talent pool by recruiting more women; if your workforce is mainly female, look for men. For example, look for information about recruiting women at Women Building Futures (womenbuildingfutures.com), a not-for-profit organization that provides training and support to help women build careers in the trades.
- **Younger or mature workers.** Look at the average age of your workforce. Could you benefit from specifically targeting other generations? Consider opening the door to youth. You may benefit from their energy, ambition, new ideas and abilities with technology. If your workforce is already youthful, don't overlook the benefits of bringing in mature workers who can offer experience, stability, a guiding hand and mentorship.
 - Connect with younger candidates by getting in touch with YOUCAN Youth Services in Edmonton (youcan.ca/edmonton). YOUCAN helps youth who are transitioning into employment or back into education.
 - **Nextsteps.org** is a City of Calgary youth employment centre that helps youth with career development and employment. Also consult the Youth Transitioning or Mature Worker pages under Job Seekers – Job Search Resources on the ALIS website (alis.alberta.ca).
- **People with disabilities.** A disabled individual may be an excellent candidate for your work and regardless whether their disability is mental or physical, may need minor or no accommodations. To tap into this market, start with Community Disability Services Alberta (cdsalberta.com), with seven regions provincially. Their website has a Find a Job section as well as a section for employers. Another option may be EmployAbilities (employabilities.ab.ca), an Edmonton-based community organization dedicated to serving people with disabilities or who face barriers to employment. The organization offers a website for career information and employment placement services. There is also useful information on the ALIS Persons With Disabilities web page (alis.alberta.ca/personswithdisabilities).
- **Other under-represented groups.** Community organizations that support people with barriers can be good places to connect with a range of groups that are under-represented in the workplace. Try online searches using keywords that represent the groups and communities you have in mind, or search for “community service providers” in your area.
- **Newcomers to Canada.** Newcomers are often overlooked—even though they may be highly skilled—because their credentials and training are from outside the country. If you're interested in hiring newcomers, consider using an immigrant-serving agency that may already have done some pre-screening. A good place to start is the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (aaisa.ca), which can put you in touch with agencies across the province that help newcomers find work.
- **International recruits.** If you're looking to recruit from outside of Canada, familiarize yourself with the various provincial and federal immigration programs available. A good place to start is the Government of Alberta's Opportunity Alberta (albertacanada.com) website, which has a section for employers.

Be tech savvy

The challenge lies in deciding which Internet tools to invest your time and energy in, since different types of workers are best found using different technology channels. Try to find out where your target candidates spend most of their social media time or where they look for work. For example, if your organization focuses mainly on corporate recruiting, sites such as LinkedIn may yield good results. For many other jobs or organizations, social media sites such as Facebook, Craigslist or Kijiji can be useful places to look.

Search-based advertising on Internet search sites such as Google or Bing can also yield good results. Users of such search engines receive ads customized to their search criteria. For example, a local welding company could have their recruitment ad appear whenever people within a region search for the term “welding job.”

Ensure your website is mobile friendly

If your company website has a careers page or a feature that permits job seekers to apply online or upload a resumé, it’s to your advantage that they can also do these things from their mobile devices.

Being mobile friendly, says president and CEO Bob Sartor, is “monstrously important” for Big Rock Brewery. “Not only for applications—everything has to be phone friendly. When you’re not mobile compatible, you’ve wasted such great native content opportunities.”

Rick Harcourt, president of Harcourt Recruiting Specialists, agrees. “Being able to apply from a [mobile] phone is huge,” he says. “I think that’s one of the biggest trends right now: people having the ability to search and even contact or apply from their mobile device.”

Consider live video interviewing

Depending on your sector and the types of roles you need to fill, the impression you get from a job applicant based on a video interview using software may help you decide whether it’s worth paying for the candidate to travel to a second interview.

Chris Massie, operations manager at About Staffing Ltd., says he absolutely recommends video interviewing for some roles. “You do miss out a little bit on the natural rapport and body language, but at least you have access to how people communicate. Your options are essentially a telephone interview, a [video] interview or flying them out.” Flying them out is costly and a telephone interview does not give you a full picture, so a video meeting is your best option, says Massie.

Jocelyne April, HR coordinator for Alberta North at Associated Engineering, says she uses Skype often. “That works well as a first-round interview. Typically our process would be to conduct a first-round interview, either by telephone or preferably via [video conferencing software], if we find someone we want to consider but that person is not living here in Edmonton. That gives us a good sense of whether we want to bring the candidate in for a face-to-face interview.”

Don’t rule out remote workers

Your pool of qualified candidates can expand significantly if some of the positions you’re trying to fill can be staffed remotely. Technology continues to make such arrangements more and more possible for certain types of work. The growth of remote work is also rewarding companies that refine their ability to identify and attract rural candidates or look worldwide for certain roles.

Evaluating Candidates



You've found enough worthy prospects to start the interview process. Now it's time to evaluate applications or resumés, set up interviews and conduct reference checks.

Knowing what you can (and can't) ask

Throughout the recruitment process, you are expected to know what you can't ask about—in job descriptions, reference checks and interviews.

The *Alberta Human Rights Act* protects equality by banning discrimination and harassment on the grounds of

- age
- ancestry or place of origin
- gender
- marital or family status
- physical or mental disability
- race or colour
- religious beliefs
- sexual orientation
- source of income

When you write a job description, remember to

- use gender-neutral language
- avoid referring to requirements that would exclude someone based on any of the above grounds

There are a few specific things to remember during reference checks and interviews:

- Don't ask questions about the applicant's medical history, ethnic background or marital or family status.
- Dexterity tests, stress-handling tests and medical exams for physical ability must be job-related.
- Drug testing may not be permitted, but is more likely to be considered reasonable for work where safety is a major consideration, such as operating heavy equipment. (Applicants should be advised that, once hired, they might be required to pass such tests or exams.)

FIND OUT MORE

Employment Laws

alis.alberta.ca

An Employer's Guide to Employment Rules is available at alis.alberta.ca/publications. The tip sheet *Human Rights and You: What Can Employers Ask?*, available at alis.alberta.ca/tips, also provides concrete examples of appropriate and inappropriate questions.

Assessing applications and resumé

Should you ask candidates to submit an application form or a resumé? Your choice may depend on the position you're hiring for.

At the professional, managerial or executive level, candidates will probably expect to submit a resumé. A resumé gives you much more detail about candidates' achievements as well as a sense of their writing style, language skill and ability to organize material. However, in some industries, including hospitality or retail, an application form may be your best bet for processing large numbers of applicants quickly, because you can compare them easily based on standard categories.

Checking a resumé or application form

On your first pass through a resumé or application, there are some basic things to check:

- There are no gaps in information.
- All critical skills are listed.
- All needed educational qualifications are present and dated.
- Achievements seem appropriate for the job.
- There are few or no spelling or grammar mistakes.

Cindy Donaldson, HR director with Davis Automotive Group, says she “absolutely” notices poor spelling and grammar, but whether to disqualify a candidate on that basis depends on what you're hiring them to do.

“We look at those things, but it's important to realize that people often hire someone else to write their resúmes for them. If a technician sends me a resumé and his spelling isn't perfect but he's a Red Seal tech with all the right training, I certainly wouldn't discount him. In today's labour market, I couldn't do that anyway,” she says. “Of course, that doesn't mean I'm not impressed by the good ones.”

Automated assessment tools: Pros and cons

Depending on your hiring needs, processes and budget, it may be worth looking into online skill assessment tools, which are becoming more mainstream. There are tools available to measure

- knowledge
- aptitude
- personality
- cultural fit

If you hire a large enough volume of employees on an ongoing basis, these tools can make the process more efficient and significantly impact the quality of new recruits.

An example is the psychometric testing done by Big Rock Brewery. “We have a set of core values that we actually test against,” says Bob Sartor, president and CEO. “It ensures that when we bring somebody on board, there's a very high likelihood they will fit in nicely and be very happy here. It's typically done online. It's a series of questions and scenarios that cover certain situations and how you react to those.”

When choosing an assessment tool, consider the following:

- Pick one that produces results that are easy to interpret.
- You won't get useful results using a tool that isn't tailored to your target recruitment group.

Remember that automated tools can screen out valuable candidates, especially newcomers whose English language skills may not be as strong or who don't know specialized terminology.

“ My key advice in terms of evaluating candidates is not to skip steps. Taking each step is important—everything from reviewing the resumé to going through the interview process and the reference check process. These are important steps in evaluating a candidate. ”

—Nicole Arienza

Director, Corporate HR and Organizational Development, AltaGas Ltd.

Interviewing candidates

You have a short list of applicants. Now you're ready to set up face-to-face interviews to decide which one is the best fit. Candidates also think about fit, so keep that in mind when you introduce yourself and the company.

Developing questions

Follow these steps to prepare for the interview:

1. Go back to the job description and establish the selection criteria. Which skills are critical? Which are "nice to have"?
2. Consider what you want to know about each applicant. Typical questions include the following:
 - Why do you want to work here?
 - What is most important to you in a job?
 - Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - What sort of supervisory style do you prefer?
 - What areas of personal development would you like to work on in the next year?

Behavioural versus situational questions

There are two main kinds of interview questions:

- **Behavioural questions** focus on getting the candidates to tell you about projects they've actually worked on.
- **Situational questions** focus on asking the candidates to explain how they would handle certain hypothetical scenarios.

For example, a behavioural question might be "Give me an example of a workplace improvement you initiated," whereas a situational question might be "If you were going to implement a significant workplace improvement, how would you begin?"

Harjinder Sidhu, HR advisor at the Shaw Conference Centre, prefers behavioural questions. "We ask about relevant experiences in the past where they've demonstrated customer service. So it's not focusing on what they would do, it's what they've actually done."

Jocelyne April, HR coordinator for Alberta North with Associated Engineering, agrees. "Ask for specific examples. So instead of, 'Tell me how you manage your time,' I would ask, 'Can you give me a specific example of when time was an issue for you in meeting a project delivery, and how you addressed that?'" Get them to tell you a story."

Whichever type of question you choose, keep your questions open-ended and stay focused on the job, starting with general questions and moving to more specific ones.

Sample behavioural questions

- Please give us an example of a work situation where you had to deal with conflict, either with a customer or a co-worker. Tell us how you handled it.
- Describe a situation where a fellow worker or supervisor had expectations that you felt were unfair or unrealistic. How did you deal with that?
- Can you recall a work-related situation where you recognized a problem and took action to correct it?
- Give us an example of some research you've done. What did you decide or recommend as a result? How did it benefit your employer?
- Give us an example of a time when you acted according to a policy you didn't agree with. What was your thinking behind that?
- Can you describe a group situation where you were the only person with an opposing point of view? How did you handle it? What were the results?



Conducting interviews

The usual steps include the following:

1. **Open the interview by making the candidate feel welcome and at ease.** Before you launch into your list of questions, offer coffee or water, make some small talk and provide information about the job and the organization.
2. **Take notes.** You may think you'll remember everything you heard, but after you've finished interviewing eight candidates, without notes all you may have is a lingering general impression. It can be a good idea to rate the candidates on a variety of measures as you work through the interviews. A scoring system like the *Applicant Rating Guide* shown on page 39 can help you identify the ideal candidate at the end of the process.
3. **Close interviews by thanking candidates for coming in.** Let them know when they can expect to hear back from you. If you plan to shortlist your top candidates and invite them back in for a second interview, explain this as well.

“You have to make it very casual. You have to make the candidate feel comfortable,” says HR advisor Harjinder Sidhu, who often interviews applicants for jobs with Shaw Conference Centre. “If you structure and push them—question, question, question—they’re going to feel pressured and won’t answer well. It has to be formal but informal at the same time. A smooth transition when you’re asking questions is also important. And it’s always good to have two people running the interview so there’s not any type of bias.”

Applicant Rating Guide

Name of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Directions:

- Write important skills or competencies in the left-hand column.
- Assign a percentage for each skill based on how important it is to the job.
- Rate the applicant for each skill by putting a ✓ in one of the numbered columns.
- Multiply the rating (at the top of each column) by the percentage and record the result in the right-hand column.
- Total all numbers in the right-hand column to arrive at the applicant’s summary rating.

Key skills or competencies	Weight (%)	(1) Poor	(2) Fair	(3) Good	(4) Strong	(5) Exceptional	Skill rating
		Very little or very basic— would require considerable support	Some but limited— would require some training and support	Proven track record— may require limited or occasional support	Demonstrated expertise— could function well and independently from the start	Outstanding qualifications at expert level— able to coach or train others	
Total Rating							

This item has been either discontinued or is out of date. It is provided for informational and research purposes.

Top tips on interviewing

Sell your company brand

“I think it's important to have a really strong interview process in place and not treat it traditionally, in the sense that ‘I have power over you as the interviewer.’ You have to treat it as a conversation between equals, recognizing that the applicants have multiple options they can consider. You really have to woo these people and get them to buy into the mission of the company and the projects it works on.”

—Chris Massie
Operations Manager, About Staffing Ltd.

Have two interviewers present

“We always have two people present during interviews, so we can interview from more than one perspective. I'm not an engineer, so I can't ask technically based questions, so I always have an engineer with me in interviews no matter what the level. I listen and watch for body language.”

—Jocelyne April
HR Coordinator, Alberta North, Associated Engineering

You may need a second interview

“Sometimes to really get down to what they're capable of and what they're looking for in a position, it takes that second interview. It may not be substantially different from the first, but typically there's more ease, so you can get a better sense of the person and what they offer.”

—Cindy Donaldson
HR Director, Davis Automotive Group

Let them interview you

“I tend to ask a lot of questions myself and then I let people ask questions of me for the second half, especially if someone is moving all the way to Edmonton from another province or country. It's important they have a chance to get comfortable with the idea of the move.”

—Aaryn Flynn
General Manager, BioWare Canada

Be well prepared

“We create a list of questions around lifestyle and retail that are designed to be very open. We have a list of around 15 specific questions for each level of the team they're joining, and those 15 questions are designed to get the prospective employees talking so we can better understand whether they can actually perform the job. In retail, you have to be able to create dialogue and communicate.”

—John Stanton Jr.
Partner and Chief Executive Officer, Running Room Ltd.

Make them tell you a story

“Make sure you get concrete examples. We've seen a trend toward behaviour-based interviewing, which is, ‘Tell me about a time when you did this.’ It's less theoretical and more talking about practical experience that relates to the role. The other key thing is to figure out what is really important for the role in terms of what you want them to accomplish, and to focus more on that than on creating a background shopping list.”

—Rick Harcourt
President, Harcourt Recruiting Specialists

Look for fit with your workplace culture

“When we interview, we try to sense an affinity for our products and for fit with our culture. Everybody's done it—you hire somebody and you haven't really done a good job determining if they fit in your culture. That's even more expensive than not having that person in the first place. In our process, we look at two things: affinity for what we do—you have to love the product—and the second piece is your value system has to match.”

—Bob Sartor
President and CEO, Big Rock Brewery

Checking references

Checking references is an essential part of the hiring process. Aim to speak to people who know the candidate and his or her work very well, such as direct supervisors, clients, co-workers or customers (depending on the work). Whenever possible, try to speak to people directly. Responses provided by email can more easily be coached or biased.

What should you ask about candidates during a reference check? Find out

- what their job title was and how long they were in that position
- whether they did the work they've indicated on their resumé or in interviews
- any other positions they held with the company
- what some of their most significant achievements were
- whether they were punctual, reliable, personable and cooperative
- how well they worked independently and with teams
- whether they have leadership potential
- what their biggest weaknesses might be
- how suitable they are for the job you're considering them for

Some companies have a policy of providing only factual reference information, such as confirming the dates when the person worked for them, job title, salary, etc. Usually this policy is designed to protect the company from a libel suit. A release form signed by the candidate authorizing you to ask the reference more subjective questions may be helpful.

Listening between the lines

Some HR experts recommend listening for what is *not* being said in order for reference checks to really be useful. Few people will provide you with references who do not think well of them, so it can be difficult to get to the truth.

If the reference tells you that he or she prefers not to comment on something, or tries to refer you to someone else—or if there is a long pause while the person decides how to answer your question—consider it a red flag.

“If you call a reference and they seem to be hesitant to give an answer, that in and of itself might be a statement that encourages you to look a little more,” says Rick Harcourt, president of Harcourt Recruiting Specialists. “The other thing to keep in mind with references is that one bad one should not necessarily be a knockout factor. Sometimes a person just feels burnt by the person who left.”



Conducting background and criminal record checks

Background and criminal record checks are routine for many positions. These are usually conducted only after a conditional letter of offer has been made. Typically, these checks are made when a position involves working with money or with vulnerable populations, such as children or the elderly (in which case the candidate may also be required to undergo a more extensive check). The applicant must provide written consent. Be sure to apply the same standards to everyone you're considering for the same job.

More information about criminal record checks is available on the RCMP website at rcmp.gc.ca or on local police service websites.

Bondable?

For some positions, you may require that employees be bondable. Anyone previously convicted of fraud is generally not bondable. Bonding companies and insurance firms that handle commercial insurance (not the police) provide bonding certification.

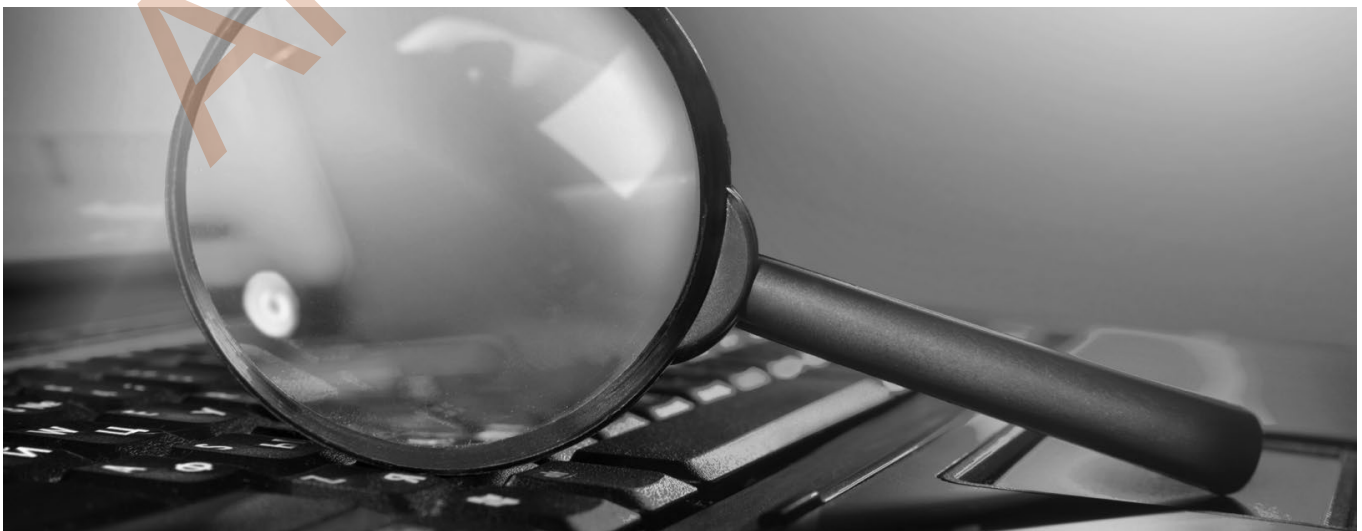
Checking social media

Some employers investigate potential employees' social media activity and other web presence to assess their professionalism and communication skills. However, this seems to be a grey area in HR.

"I've heard that it gets done," says Rick Harcourt, president of Harcourt Recruiting Specialists. "I don't know. It sounds like the jury is out in HR circles on what is valid and what is not. It seems like checking LinkedIn is a green light across the board, but checking Facebook is murkier water in most HR circles. I guess there are two pieces. One is that you never want to do anything that could be seen as related to prohibited

grounds. The other piece of the puzzle is that if someone is an incredible engineer, but they build model Smurf villages on Saturdays, does it really matter?"

In the end, with accepted practices all over the map, it may come down to your industry and the position you're looking to fill. As always, it's best to know your responsibilities under human rights and employment legislation and be cautious when it comes to any activity that could be thought of as discriminatory. See *Knowing What You Can (and Can't) Ask*, page 35, for more information on discrimination and protected grounds.



Making an Offer



When you've found the right candidate, the next steps are to negotiate the compensation package and then make your offer.

Negotiating salary and benefits

A successful salary and benefits negotiation should leave both the employer and the prospective employee feeling positive. What to offer the candidate and how flexible you may need to be depends on

- your need for the employee
- how much difficulty you had finding his or her skill set
- market pay ranges or publicly posted salary ranges for the position
- the level of the position

Start by trying to identify your candidate's most recent salary and benefits. Adjust your offer according to whether he or she is making an upward, downward or lateral move to your organization. Know your limits and base them on solid, logical factors, such as

- set salary ranges
- market pay rates
- salaries earned by employees already doing similar work

You can expect some candidates to try to negotiate not just salary, but the entire compensation package, including paid vacation, severance packages, job flexibility, sales commissions, health and life insurance benefits and even job title. This is where it will help if you already know what is commonly offered in your industry and location.

“To be quite honest, the money is a pretty early discussion, because we need a salary range just to make sure we're not wasting each other's time. That's probably the most important thing I've learned over the years. In Alberta in particular, there's always somebody—no matter what industry—who will pay you more. So we often start by asking if they can give us a salary expectation range. Our philosophy is, why go through the whole process if you're thousands and thousands of dollars apart from each other?”

—John Stanton Jr.
Partner and Chief Executive Officer,
Running Room Ltd.

Writing a letter of offer

Having successfully negotiated with a qualified candidate, you're most of the way there. Close the deal by providing a written letter of offer that represents your intent to enter into an employment contract. It doesn't replace an actual contract. However, it may give you some legal protection in certain situations, and it can also establish a working relationship that is clear from the outset about the terms of work.

Typically, this letter should include

- position title and description
- start date and location
- compensation—base salary and anything more, such as stock options, profit-sharing, commissions or bonuses (Don't include anything that cannot be guaranteed.)
- insurance and health benefits such as insurance coverage (These can be outlined in the letter and provided in detail separately.)
- paid time off, including vacation, sick leave, personal days or other paid leave
- retirement benefits, if any, such as a group RRSP or defined contribution plan
- hours of work, including whether they are flexible or can involve telecommuting
- any reporting requirements
- details about the probationary period
- details related to travel expectations, if any
- details related to any relocation expenses your company may pay for
- the date by which you would like a response from the candidate

Having time to consider

Give your candidate sufficient time to review the letter of offer and make a decision. What's meant by "sufficient time" can vary, but it usually ranges from a few days to a week. It's generally thought that by the time negotiations have reached the letter stage, the candidate should have a fairly good idea about whether he or she is going to take the job. Someone who asks for more than a week to think it over may be less enthusiastic than you thought, or may be stalling to compare your offer with another one.

Keep in mind that while you may be hoping for a quick and simple response, some candidates will counter your initial offer letter. Usually these will be more sophisticated employees who are filling higher-level positions or have significant career experience.

“AltaGas takes onboarding very seriously, particularly if you consider the effort required to get an employee in the door. We want to make sure we are giving our new employees what they initially need to succeed in their new role. AltaGas has a core training program for all employees, and we look for feedback from employees after the first month, and again after the third-, sixth- and ninth-month anniversaries. This is to ensure we aren't leaving any gaps in the information the employees may be receiving and that we are addressing any concerns they may have in their early days with AltaGas.”

—Nicole Arienza

Director, Corporate HR and Organizational Development, AltaGas Ltd.

Negotiating after the letter

In most cases, you and the new candidate will have agreed on the terms of the job by the time you reach the letter stage. However, there are exceptions. Whether to continue negotiations after the letter is your call.

“People do sometimes want to negotiate after we’ve given them a letter of offer,” says Aaryn Flynn, general manager at BioWare Canada. “We decide whether we’re going to negotiate or not. If we can’t, we just say, ‘Look, we’re giving you the most serious offer we can, let us know your thoughts.’ Or we could say, ‘Okay, we’ll

offer you another \$5,000 upon relocation.’ A candidate trying to negotiate is not a red flag for us depending on the credibility of their position. If someone is being offered \$100,000 and they suddenly want \$300,000, then it’s goodbye. But if someone says, ‘Look, you know, I need my wife to travel here with my two kids and I just can’t do it with the \$15,000 in relocation, I need \$20,000’—well, we might do that.”

Receiving signed acceptance of the offer

Even if a letter of offer has been signed by both parties, it is still not a contract. It simply spells out in writing your intention to hire and what you plan to offer the candidate. If your circumstances change, you are legally allowed to take back the offer. But if your candidate has spent a significant amount of money based on your written offer (for example, hiring a moving company or paying a non-refundable deposit on a new home), or has given notice to her current employer, you may be expected to offer some form of compensation.

Remember, it is also courteous to provide short letters to applicants who did not get the job. You don’t need to explain your choice. Simply be respectful and leave the door open for future opportunities.

Initiating orientation of your recruit

Once you have successfully recruited a candidate and signed a formal contract, it is time to shift your focus toward orienting your new recruit to his or her new workplace, role and colleagues. Your goal here is to help the person settle in and feel comfortable as soon as possible. An effective orientation process is an investment and does take some time, but it will pay off in the long run as a critical bridge between recruitment and retention.



Wrapping up the recruitment process

Now that you’re armed with the experiences and examples given in this publication, you are well equipped to navigate the world of finding, attracting, assessing and ultimately hiring qualified talent for your workforce.

- By understanding what employees want, you’re able to align your recruiting message properly with what resonates with recruits.
- By knowing and promoting your company brand and its strengths, you can make yourself stand out as an employer of choice.
- By having a comprehensive recruitment strategy, you’re equipped to engage the labour force with focus and initiative.
- Through proper interviewing and negotiating strategies, you have confidence you’re getting the right fit for a successful employee.

Resources

Government of Alberta

Resources on occupational health and safety, Alberta's employment standards and other workplace topics for employers can be found at work.alberta.ca.

Information is also available directly from Alberta Works Centres across the province. To locate a centre near you, visit alis.alberta.ca/awc. Or call the Career Information Hotline at **1-800-661-3753** toll-free or **780-422-4266** in Edmonton.

Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website

alis.alberta.ca

Here you'll find work search resources, job banks, company and industry research links and more. OCCinfo provides up-to-date information on Alberta's occupations. Browse through more than 500 occupational profiles and learn about their employment outlook as well as wage and salary ranges by region.

Workplace Tip Sheets

For articles on workplace strategies for employers, visit alis.alberta.ca/tips and search by keyword, topic or audience.

HR Series for Employers publications

For free copies of the human resources publications listed below

- order or download from alis.alberta.ca/hrseries
- call the Career Information Hotline
- go to an Alberta Works Centre

An Employer's Guide to Employment Rules

Employing a Diverse Workforce: Making It Work

Labour Market Information for Your Business: A Practical Guide

Leaving Your Small Business: Your Plan for a Successful Transition

Retaining Your Staff

Safe and Healthy: A Guide to Managing an Aging Workforce

Succession Planning: Retaining Skills and Knowledge in Your Workforce

Thinking About Layoffs? What You Need to Know Before Letting People Go

Employment Standards

Employment Standards Contact Centre

To answer your questions about legislation that applies to Alberta employers and employees, contact the Employment Standards Contact Centre at **1-877-427-3731** (toll-free) or **780-427-3731** (Edmonton) or visit work.alberta.ca/es.

Employment Standards Tool Kit for Employers

The tool kit offers concise explanations of Alberta's *Employment Standards Code* and Regulation, including real-world examples, best practice guidelines, templates, checklists and sample letters. View at work.alberta.ca/es-toolkit or order a hard copy by calling the Employment Standards Contact Centre.

Employment Standards videos

To understand and comply with the Alberta's Employment Standards through video modules, go to work.alberta.ca/esvideos.

Occupational Health and Safety

Questions about legislation or employer supports for managing a safe and healthy workplace can be directed to the Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre. Call **1-866-415-8690** (toll-free) or **780-415-8690** (in Edmonton) or visit work.alberta.ca/ohs.

Occupational Health and Safety Tool Kit for Small Business

The tool kit includes practical tools to help small businesses comply with occupational health and safety legislation. View or download at work.alberta.ca/SMB001 or order a hard copy by calling the Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre.



Other resources at a glance

This item has been either discontinued or is out of date. It is provided for informational and research purposes.

<p>Aboriginal Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps organizations create aboriginally inclusive workplace cultures Aboriginal Human Resource Council aboriginalhr.ca database of 28,000 Aboriginal centres of influence Aboriginal Link aboriginallink.com
<p>Apprenticeship and Industry Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> industry workforce training programs tradesecrets.alberta.ca
<p>Coaching and Mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> templates for coaches, mentors and supervisors chr.alberta.ca/coachingtoolkit
<p>Disability Services and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> individualized employment and training supports assistive technologies modifications in the workplace Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) humanservices.alberta.ca/dres provides skill development, education and employment services to individuals with disabilities or barriers to employment EmployAbilities employabilities.ab.ca
<p>Employer Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> business management consultation, information and services The Business Link businesslink.ca advice on labour and training challenges for small and medium-sized businesses Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses cfib.ca
<p>Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources on current HR trends and practices Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA) hria.ca consultation on developing workplace policies Alberta Human Rights Commission albertahumanrights.ab.ca for federally regulated industries only Canadian Human Rights Commission chrc-ccdp.ca/index.html
<p>Immigration Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlement agencies in Alberta Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies aaisa.ca

<p>International Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work experience program providing international youth mobility opportunities International Experience Canada (IEC) cic.gc.ca/english/work/iec information on immigration and finding workers internationally Citizenship and Immigration Canada cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications foreign education and credentials assessment International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) work.alberta.ca/iqas immigrant work program for eventual permanent residence Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) albertacanada.com/opportunity/immigrating/ainp
<p>Job Postings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> post recruitment ads and access Job Match service Government of Canada Job Bank jobbank.gc.ca
<p>Labour Market Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessing provincial, national, international labour pools custom recruitment fact sheet tool employer subscription service: ABWorkforceInfo.com/subscribe Alberta Workforce Information ABWorkforceInfo.com Alberta labour force profiles and labour market forecasts wage and salary information updates on unemployment rates updates on skills shortages by occupational group Alberta Labour Market Information work.alberta.ca/lmi economic trend reporting analysis of workforce demographics and influences Conference Board of Canada conferenceboard.ca
<p>Labour Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary Foreign Worker Program International Mobility Programs Labour Market Information Employment and Social Development Canada esdc.gc.ca
<p>Women in Trades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trades training for women in all sectors Women Building Futures womenbuildingfutures.com
<p>Youth Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> federal program for youth employment initiatives employer funding programs for hiring young workers Youth Employment Strategy (YES) youth.gc.ca

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Got employees? Get made-in-Alberta answers.

HR

Series for Employers

The HR Series for Employers features best practices from Alberta employers just like you. From recruitment, retention and employee engagement, to employment related legislation, these publications give you tried-and-tested answers to your questions.



Check out all the titles in the series at the
Alberta Learning Information Service website.
Download or order online free of charge.

alis.alberta.ca/hrseries

Alberta Government

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Recruiting Staff

In such a competitive job market, how do you find and attract the right workers for your workplace?

This resource provides successful strategies and advice from Alberta employers and HR experts. You'll explore solid recruitment strategies for your business that will aid in attracting the talent you want. ■

