

1. Jim Stroud Talks About the Tools that Recruiters Need to Drive Business Success
Transcription

Speaker 1:

You're listening to the HR Bartender show, a casual blends to talk about all things work. Here's where you get practical advice about how to be a better employee, manager and leader in today's workplace. So grab your favorite beverage, pull up a stool and join us in the conversation. The bar is always open. Now, here's your host Sharlyn Lauby.

Sharlyn Lauby:

Everyone, thanks for being here. I'm your host, Sharlyn Lauby, author of the blog HR Bartender. Before we get started today, I want to take a moment to thank our founding sponsor, Ultimate Kronos Group, also known as UKG.

Speaker 1:

To be a powerful productive business you need powerfully happy people. Two leaders in workforce management and HR have joined forces to become UKG, Ultimate Kronos Group. With comprehensive HR solutions they'll help you create more meaningful connections within your workforce that will make your people smile. UKG, our purpose is people.

Sharlyn Lauby:

In this first season of the HR Bartender show we're talking about the future of work. And, with me is Jim Stroud to talk about the future of talent acquisition. Jim is the vice-president of Marketing for Proactive Talent, a recruitment strategy consulting and staffing company that specializes in recruiting optimization. He's also a blogger, writer and podcaster helping organizations and job seekers find better ways to connect. Jim is the author of five. Yes, that's five books and you can learn more about him at jimstroud.com. When he's not online he loves spending time with his family and searching for the best chocolate chip cookie. And Jim, before we actually get in this work-related stuff, I need to know the best chocolate chip cookie out there.

Jim Stroud:

Oh, that's difficult because there's so many that I like. I think my favorite right now is the Great American Cookie Company which I get at the mall, when I would go to the mall frequently. Has been a while since I've been there, but they have really great cookies.

Sharlyn Lauby:

I might have to see if they sell online.

Jim Stroud:

Yeah.

Sharlyn Lauby:

Now it's been a while since you and I have seen one another.

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Jim Stroud:
Yeah, that's right.

Sharlyn Lauby:
I remember the first time we met in real life, it was at SourceCon. So tell me, how are you doing? How's your family? None of us are getting out and interacting as much as we would like to so I just want to kind of say hello and how are you doing?

Jim Stroud:
I appreciate that. I am doing fine. Family's doing well. No COVID disasters over here, knock on wood. It's just been interesting from a working perspective. I've worked from home for so many years so when things were locking down, it was still business as usual for me. And my family was understandably was concerned about how things were panning out and what was going to happen next. But I think we've gone through the worst of it, although they're I think they're trying to signal a second lockdown. Hopefully that won't be the case, but as of now, everything is good. We have plenty of toilet paper stocked up in case it goes south.

Sharlyn Lauby:
It's interesting. At the time we're recording this, I'm reading headlines about people stocking up on toilet paper again. You never know, just it's good to always have some spare toilet paper around the house, I think that's one of the lessons that we're learning from this.

Jim Stroud:
Most definitely.

Sharlyn Lauby:
You touched upon what's kind of happening right now with recruiting and what's going on with the economy and regardless of what... Maybe it's just me, but regardless of what's happening in terms of like what the unemployment numbers are, what's going on with the economy, finding the best talent continues to be a business priority and that really starts with sourcing. If you think back on how you and I met, we had a conversation about sourcing and I'm not sure everyone realizes how complex the sourcing [inaudible 00:04:12] is. So, wondering for those people who are listening in can you talk a little bit about the art and science of sourcing?

Jim Stroud:
Usually when people hear sourcing in our circles, novices they think it's all about creating just the right billing search in Google to make resumes magically appear and that's certainly a component of it. But sourcing, in my opinion, it's all about finding qualified, interested and available candidates that your client can afford to hire. I think people really leave off that last bit about finding the candidates that your client can afford to hire. That is especially important because it means that you're not only a researcher, good at searching in that, but it's also means that you are a bit of a strategist as well. You know what the talent market is nationally

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and for your location, you know what the hiring trends of your client is, you know your client's competitors and where they tend to hire from, you know what the average salary is for the role that you're looking for and what your rivals are offering, even in terms of benefits.

Jim Stroud:

So that when you present a candidate from a rival organization you'll already know how to deliver a sales pitch to them, that's appealing to them. You know the tools being used by your client's competitors and what someone who works at company X with a certain job title is likely to know. So you'll know right off the top, if or not they'll be a compelling candidate or not. Based on all that you know the best places to find talent or find the budget of your client. Sourcers are also a bit of a sales person, because they have to be able to intrigue a prospect to learn more about a new job, even when they may be perfectly fine where they are. They also have to convince the client, whether that's the recruiter or a hiring manager directly that the strategy they're using define these candidates we'll give them the best possible outcome so that they're not spinning their wheels from the very beginning.

Jim Stroud:

Such being the case, when I present a candidate based on a certain type of strategy then the recruiter or the hiring manager will interview them quickly before they get away. I think a lot of times people take for granted how much strategy and thought leadership goes in to putting together a sourcing strategy that works from the beginning. I think a lot of times people look at sourcers as order takers and those who look at their sources as order takers and treat them as such do themselves a disservice.

Sharlyn Lauby:

And, one of the big takeaways for me is that sourcing is very strategic in the organization. And speaking of strategy and sourcing strategy, some HR departments have dedicated sourcers within their talent acquisition function. And in other companies, talent acquisition professionals do their own sourcing. What are the pros and cons to each strategy? How would a company know whether they should have dedicated sourcers and talent acquisition professionals or a blend? Somebody who does both.

Jim Stroud:

I think the pros and cons are both centered around time. Talent acquisition leaders have more to do than source so they're limited if they do their own sourcing, they cannot develop pipeline strategies or speak to as many prospects as they would like, because they have so much to do. Plus sourcers could be doing so much extra stuff that will pay off dividends on down the road. Take for example, that could be creating a competitive intelligence database, meaning that when they talked to so many candidates from so many companies they can see the trends and they'll know from those trends the best sales pitches to give to candidates from a certain company. So for example, if I know that people at company X really hate the blue carpeting at their office, back when they would go to an office, then I would leave a note in the ATS or when

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I talked to the recruiter, I would say, "Okay, when you talk to this particular candidate, because they come from company X where they really hate the blue carpeting, I really want you to stress how great and wonderful and plush our red carpeting is."

Jim Stroud:

That's the kind of information that sourcers can be developing, but of course, TA leaders wouldn't have time to that level of detail. Sourcers could also be doing job title research which is where sourcers can in a sense pre qualify talent. So they can say, for example, a hiring manager you want a software developer and we call our software developers, programmer two over at company Z they call them programmer one. And they use the same tools that we use over at company Z. They also have this type of experience at company Z so hiring manager, recruiter, whoever the client is. If I present someone to you from this company with this job title then pretty much they're in line with what you want for this particular role that I'm recruiting for. A sourcer can take the time to develop that kind of intelligence which again, will pay dividends on down the road.

Jim Stroud:

Then they also can be doing things like what I call time, travel sourcing. So if say you have a need for a senior software engineer and they have an initial requirement is that they should have seven years worth of experience. And, you know that people who have seven years plus worth of experience and special certain tools they're hard to find, because a lot of times these types of folks don't put all the information in their LinkedIn profile, because they are tired of recruiters inundating them with requests. Well then sourcers could take the time to say, "Let me do a Google search." And, in Google search, you can do a date range on your search. And let's say, let's look for people who were maybe on their way to being a senior software engineer, maybe look for junior software engineers from five years back and then reach out to them and say, "Hey, what have you done recently?"

Jim Stroud:

And even though at the time of that resume they have five years experience, but since a couple of years have passed since then they may be qualified now. So, sources can be searching the internet for older resumes and then updating them and then also going inside of the ATS for old resumes that way as well. So, these are types of things that sources could be doing. I'm a big proponent of having your own sourcing team to do this type of thing. TA leaders, even recruiters who do their own sourcing it does them a disservice overall, I think, because they have many things to do and a sourcer can be dedicated to do all this kind of stuff. And if they doing projects like this, it'll pay off dividends on down the road.

Sharlyn Lauby:

I know in my career, I had to do my own sourcing just as you were describing all of the things that sourcers can do. I think back on the searches that I've done in my career and go, "Oh my

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gosh, I would have loved someone doing that for me so that I could spend my time on other things."

Jim Stroud:

Yeah. It would have reduced your time to fill too. I noticed that's always a lovely thing that clients want to hear how a quick fill on our rec.

Sharlyn Lauby:

The other piece of the conversation as we're talking about saving time it made me realize how much technology needs to be a part of the process. It can play a huge role in helping organizations find talent. I have to admit, I'm also amazed at the number of companies that do not have a recruiting technology solution.

Jim Stroud:

Yeah.

Sharlyn Lauby:

In your experience, because I know you have a strong tech background. What are a couple of things that companies can look for when they want to make an investment in a recruiting technology sector?

Jim Stroud:

Yeah. Great question. We get actually at Proactive Talent, we get a lot of questions about that very thing. So much so we created this free tool for comparing different recruitment solutions and I'll send you the link, to share with your network. Maybe you can include in the description there if you like. But for now I'd probably say I would advise companies to consider things like how well the technology tracks user activity that's important, how well it tracks traffic sources, tracks trends in the data, is the data hosted on a secure cloud? Does it have an open API to allow partners to develop complimentary solutions and so on? It really depends on what they're buying, whether that's an ATS or CRM or whatever. But as I said, we have a free tool that people can download that help them sort that out and I'll be sure to send the link out to you.

Sharlyn Lauby:

Great. And we'll be sure to put that in the show notes so that listeners have access to it.

Jim Stroud:

Cool.

Sharlyn Lauby:

One of the challenges and I'm sure you're hearing about it too. I'm getting a lot of HR pros come to me and say, "We want to make sure we're recruiting a diverse workforce." What kinds of

things should organizations be focused on right now to make sure that they are bringing diversity into the workplace?

Jim Stroud:

Well I'll speak from a sourcing perspective, because it's on my mind now from the previous questions. I would say target companies with diversity and inclusion officers, because if they have diversity and inclusion officers then they've already created or initiated some initiatives to attract diverse talent in their ranks. So, if a company has DNI officers there's a chance that they may have more diversity in their ranks, as opposed to companies that do not have DNI officers. Take advantage of their work when you're targeting companies to source from. And you can also do a search on Google or DuckDuckGo which is my favorite search engine. And you can do a search on say female friendly companies. And if you do a search on female friendly companies, you're going to see in the search results lots of companies that may have been awarded or have been cited on a blog post or an article about their initiative to recruit more women.

Jim Stroud:

So if you have an initiative to recruit more women then targeting those companies may be advantageous for you. Same thing for searching on autism friendly companies or doing a search on what are called best for companies. So if you do a search on best companies for the blind, you'll see companies that have a sweet spot... They have special initiatives for hiring people who are visually impaired or best companies for deaf workers you'll find companies like that as well. Of course, you can always advertise in different diversity related job boards, but that's a little tricky with some diverse demographics especially if they are disabled, because they tend not to reveal that they are disabled because they are very concerned about discrimination. But there are ways to still source them, even though they don't necessarily admit being disabled or rather reveal being disabled.

Jim Stroud:

So one way to find people like this is to look at different resources that they would be sensitive to. So for example, if I wanted to find visually impaired software testers and they are out there, what I would do is I would go to, I forget the actual sure association, but it's something for the blind. There are different associations for the blind, but the resource I'm thinking of is that there are magazines that are written in braille and there are computer magazines that are written in braille, Wired Magazine being one, PCMag being another, I forget there are a couple of others that I don't remember of. But I know for sure Wired and PCMag. So, if I put an advertising in a braille edition of Wired Magazine or braille edition of PCMag chances are I'm going to find someone who has an interest in technology who happens to be visually impaired. So I would do things like that.

Jim Stroud:

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And then I also would, from a TA perspective, pay close attention to census data. I've seen a lot of companies virtue signal saying that, "I want to have 50% diverse workforce, 50% minority and 50% women in my workforce by 2025." Or something like that, right? And, "We're going to have half of our laboratory are going to be female scientists and half my laboratory is going to be Asian or Hispanic or whatever." They boast all of these things they want to do, but if you look at the census data, you can say, "Okay, according to the U.S. Census data, there are not as many people in this demographic that have jobs in the area that we are recruiting from." So you can say that I want to have half of my laboratory field with female scientists, but a TA leader can say, let's go to the census research and we see, there are not that many women in STEM jobs in the whole country or the whole world.

Jim Stroud:

It's great to have that kind of goal, but it's more realistic to say, "Hey, we'll be lucky to get so many in our organization, especially if we're competing with the rest of the world who also have similar diversity initiatives." So having a bit of realism or reality check in the beginning of all, that will save a lot of people, a lot of different headaches in that regard, I think.

Sharlyn Lauby:

Speaking of a reality check, that kind of leads us to our last question together. We have no idea what next year is going to bring. We started out 2020 talking about unemployment rates being historically low, everyone's searching for the same competitive talent landscape. If companies can only do one thing in 2021 to set their talent acquisition function up for success, what should that be?

Jim Stroud:

I will offer up a controversial response. I would say the best thing they can do is to figure out the fairest way to pay their remote workers. Facebook is working on that right now actually, they said that as of January, 2021, that they're going to pay you based on location. On one hand, somewhat normal because people have been doing that all along, but on the other hand, it opens them up for a lot of controversy and debate. For example, let's say I'm a software engineer in California. I'm getting paid \$225 and then my pal who also works for Facebook, who's a software engineer in Atlanta and he's making \$175. And so they're going to say, "Hey, how come I'm getting paid less as you are in California and we're both working remote? Since I'm remote, I can be anywhere in the world what does it matter that you're getting paid more than I am and we're doing exactly the same thing?" So you have that.

Jim Stroud:

And then you have also this issue of, okay, you're paying people in this one city, the majority of population is African-American. And in California, in that city, the majority of the people there are white so you're paying white people more than black people. That's going to kind of be a can of worms right there. I think companies should pay close attention to Facebook, they have the money to fight, they do the legal battle to see what will happen. Twitter is looking at them,

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Google's looking at them. They haven't made such a decree yet on their workforce. Everybody's sort of looking at what'll happen with Facebook in that regard. I think that is a huge can of worms is going to erupt in January when this thing is enacted and either they will stick with it and make it work or they'll say, "Oh, no, we didn't. We didn't mean that." And they'll stop, but either way, whether they can master it or not, it brings up a lot of questions about fairness in pay.

Sharlyn Lauby:

And we know that there's a relationship between pay and recruiting.

Jim Stroud:

Oh yeah.

Sharlyn Lauby:

There's definitely a relationship between those two factors and if you want to... And that kind of brings us back to where we started our conversation. If you want to bring the best talent into the organization, pay and perks and benefits all have to be considered as well. So when we're thinking about future of the function we're not just talking about the mechanics of hiring people, but we're talking about the tools that recruiters have in order to make that hire.

Jim Stroud:

Oh yeah. There's also another interesting perspective on it as well, if I may offer this one up too, there's a lot of talk about, of course, about diversity. We're very sensitive to that here in the States. And there's also companies wanting to make money because they're in business to make money and to protect shareholder value. So, if everyone is working online and there are people in say the Philippines or India or Croatia or wherever and they can do the same software work and they can do it cheaper and they're working. And because of their location I can pretty much outsource it virtually to other countries based on their demographic, they meet a certain diversity initiative that I'm trying to hit and I can pay them cheaper. That is something companies may look at from a bottom line perspective. I think that could also backfire from a PR perspective.

Jim Stroud:

If you want to give jobs outside of the country and you have people here in the country that can do the work, but that's the classic H-1B Visa war for talent argument. I think this is going from the classic, "We need to import more workers because we just need them." And some would say, "No, you just want cheap labor." Well, the same argument has kind of get transferred virtually to, okay we won't import any more workers we'll just pay workers to stay where they are and we'll pay them cheaper. It'll be a whole lot of money to them, but it won't be as much as we would pay if we have it here in America. So, January is going to be really interesting, I think, around pay when Facebook's initiatives goes live.

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Sharlyn Lauby:

And not just Facebook. I mean, I think that there are going to be other companies out there who are going to use this same logic and they're going to have to balance out the goals that they are trying to accomplish with their talent strategy.

Jim Stroud:

It's a definitely a tight wire act because the pay, not only does it play with the bottom line, not only is it potentially a PR disaster if it goes the wrong way, but it also affects your employer brand. What if you do this initiative where you're saving money by virtually outsourcing and your brand could be why work for a company that doesn't put American citizens first? So they may hamper them from hiring certain people in America if they can't do the job... if they can't find someone outside of the country to do the job and they need someone in country for whatever reason, maybe need to come into the office because of security or whatever reason. And you can't hire someone internal to your city because you have all this bad publicity of sending jobs outside of the country.

Jim Stroud:

So your employer brand gets dinged and it's harder for you to recruit longterm so maybe you're getting a short-term profitability, but long-term, you won't be able to recruit anybody in your country which could present issues of that sort as well. Technology is great, but you still may need people inside your company to look to work face to face with people so you may have other issues there too. If that makes sense.

Sharlyn Lauby:

It does, because if you're a sourcer who can't source then that becomes increasingly difficult for you to bring talent into the organization. If people won't return your calls and you're trying to engage or you're trying to find individuals that all becomes a part of the talent equation.

Jim Stroud:

True. And, if your people are all overseas and their 9:00 morning calls are at 3:00 in the morning your time that affects the company culture too.

Sharlyn Lauby:

It does. You and I can spend a whole lot of time kind of going off on this tangent, but your time is valuable. So I just want to give you a big thanks and cheers again, for those of you listening in that was Jim Stroud of Proactive Talent sharing his insights on the future of talent acquisition with us. If you want to connect with him and I know you do be sure to check out his contact information in the show notes. That was a really great conversation, I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did, but don't go away just yet. In a moment I'd like to share with you my takeaways from the discussion that we just had.

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To be a powerfully productive business. You need powerfully happy people. Two leaders in workforce management and HR have joined forces to become UKG, Ultimate Kronos Group. UKG creates comprehensive HR solutions designed to make employees happier and build more meaningful connections within your workforce. They've even done that for themselves being recognized as one of the top places to work. And, UKG's 12,000 employees helped thousands of businesses build better cultures every day. When you're ready to make your people happier, UKG is ready to work for you. UKG, our purpose is people.

Sharlyn Lauby:

Thanks again for listening to the HR Bartender show. I thought this episode with Jim was particularly interesting, because it really addresses that catch-22 that organizations can face when it comes to bringing talent into the organization. On one hand, we want to bring in the best people, we want to bring in the people who have the most skills, who have the most energy, who are going to contribute at a high level, but we have to balance that with the fact that we don't always have a blank checkbook in order to do that. And as talent acquisition professionals, as human resources professionals, we have to work to get with the rest of the organization to put a strategy together that's going to allow us to bring the best talent into the organization. That's going to meet our organizational goals, but do it in an effective and efficient way. That's going to allow us to continue to attract and retain employees.

Sharlyn Lauby:

So, I hope you enjoyed this episode. I hope that if you did enjoy this episode, you'll check out my conversation with Chris Mullen, where we spend a little bit more time talking about talent and technology. And until then I look forward to seeing you next time.

Speaker 1:

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