

CAHRS Partners have the opportunity to benchmark with other partner companies on HR topics of interest. The benchmarking is typically conducted with 5-7 other CAHRS Partners selected by the company that initiated the request. The CAHRS office identifies the appropriate connections at selected companies and the benchmarking company then schedules 1:1 phone calls to explore their questions.

Examples of recent requests include: Sponsorship Initiatives, Organization Designs and Structures, Diversity Metrics, Talent Management Practices, Competency Models and a variety of HR Policy Questions (i.e. Relocation, Cost of Living, Airline Mile Usage, etc.).

CAHRS partners find this more qualitative approach to benchmarking very valuable for revealing novel insights and practices, as well as for building their network. At the conclusion of the process, the benchmarking company shares an anonymized summary of their findings with the participating companies and CAHRS, who then makes them available so all partners can benefit from the learning.



CAHRS Benchmarking Summary—Proactive External Pipeline Sourcing, Talent Acquisition

Five companies participated in this benchmarking effort as part of the CAHRS program. Stakeholder conversations focused on organizational best practices related to proactively recruiting and keeping warm passive, external talent. As organizations continue to evaluate the strength of both their internal (i.e., succession planning) and external (i.e., proactive sourcing) bench strength for key talent areas, this stakeholder exercise aimed to provide key insights that could help both with the design of Talent Acquisitions organizational structures to best support these activities. These discussions also aimed to help better understand the role that business leaders and recruiters/talent acquisition associates played in these activities to better understand scope of activities.

In the sections below, the summary responses aim to provide an overview of each structured interview topic and were collected from representatives of these organizations December, 2019 to January, 2020. The responses have been deidentified to protect the identify of respondents and the organizations involved.

1) *Has your talent management philosophy shifted to a focus on external passive talent? If yes, explain the shift.*

Common across all organizations represented, respondents indicated both small and large shifts in the TA recruiting model, with most respondents indicating that these shifts targeted specific talent (e.g., niche skills, capabilities) and in areas which were limited/difficult to recruit. Some organizational changes were described as small changes, iterative to the business feedback and data all while driven by the organizational vision of the leader. While other respondents

For most respondents, comments consistently stressed that proactive sourcing of key talent required an in-depth understanding of the talent and market for this talent. However, the implantation of the TA structures differed between descriptions of the TA organizational design. For example, one organization stood up a practice that was centralized to a specific type of talent (e.g., recruiting teams or COEs) which were consistent year to year and required a significant, long term investment for talent while this talent was early in a degree program. Alternatively, another stakeholder described a more agile approach (e.g., a rush model) where proactive sourcing was stood up in response to the specific business needs and driven by asks from the business leaders in an individualize approach.

- 2) How have you formalized processes to engage business leaders to network and activate this external passive talent?**
- a) What methods/approaches have you deployed?**
 - b) What is the balance between recruiters and business leaders in keeping this talent warm?**
 - c) Do these activities differ based on type of talent you are working to engage?**

A commonality amongst nearly all of stakeholder participants was the use of dedicated sourcing (e.g., COEs, specific recruiters) for key talent.

In some organizations, sourcing was used to develop pipelines of untouched talent that could be activated when the “right” opportunity emerged in the organization in high need areas of the business. One respondent stressed that activating “untapped” talent was beneficial to their organization so as not to “activate” talent early so that they might instead explore opportunities before their organization had a plan in place for an open requisition. However, for the majority of organizations, sourcing was used for specific, identified gaps in the organization’s capabilities and skills in high impact roles and were often tied to a specific business need that was immediate or 30-60 days out.

Specialized recruiters were also commonly mentioned in responses and were used to recruit key talent areas (e.g., Global Talent Scouts, Practice for key areas, Executive recruiting) or high-volume, consistent talent needs (e.g., University recruiting) dependent on the business.

Respondents differed, however, on the role of business leaders in proactive sourcing. For some, exposure to proactively sourced talent was only in response to an open requisition via interview, while some organizations courted passive, specialized talent via the use of business leader outreach via standing touchpoints or networking events. As indicated, organizations differed in their approach for when non-recruiting resources are brought into proactive talent awareness and outreach. In some instances, there was no business involvement in proactive sourcing prior to candidate review for an open role.

Again, common amongst stakeholders was the TA design of a fit-for-purpose approach in their recruiting techniques. The technique, high-touch vs low touch approach, and energy expended were said to differ greatly based off of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs), level, and availability of the talent being recruited.

3) How do you track and measure the health of your external passive pipelines and does your organization currently take the strength of external pipelines into account when they discuss succession planning?

a) Specifically, what metrics do you track related to external talent pipelines?

Consistent across participants, respondents indicated the difficulty in objectively evaluating the “strength” of external proactive talent until the availability of an appropriate open role and evaluation by the business occurs. In a few organizations, participants indicated succession planning strength of the business informed talent acquisition focus for proactive sourcing efforts to address expected gaps and provide an external bench of opportunity for key deficiencies. One respondent indicated that Talent Acquisition is an active participant in succession planning conversation in their organization, with a seat at the table.

Respondents consistently reported common recruiting metrics used by most organizations and suggested how these metrics could indicate proactive sourcing benefits via directionality.

Common metrics reported include:

1. Time to fill
2. Cost per hire
3. Hiring manager experience survey responses
4. % of external hires for certain roles
5. Source of hire

One respondent indicated that no hiring metrics are tracked or reported out by their organization.

4) Do you report out to business leaders on ROI of these external passive talent initiatives?

Respondents indicated cost reduction was a common ROI reported for the investment in proactive sourcing strategies of Talent Acquisition practices. For example, one organization would report expected cost savings for filled head count comparing charge back of internal recruiters and associated activities to expected cost for external options (e.g., agencies, head-hunters).

Unique to one respondent, in their organization Talent Acquisition owns employee experience from sourcing through post-onboarding. This respondent indicated that ROI was also assessed by hire outcomes such as performance appraisal two years out from hire and whether talent is added to succession plans for key roles.