Guide for Building and Scaling Sourcing in Fast-Paced Organizations



Contents

Part 1. First Signs You Need a Sourcing Team in Your Organization.
Part 2. Sourcing Function: Trying to Resolve the In-House VS. an Agency Argument.
Part 3. A Checklist For Building an Internal Sourcing Team from Scratch.
Part 4. Tips on Running an Efficient Sourcing Department.
Part 5. 5 qualities Your Sourcing Team Should Have.
Part 6. 15 Sourcing & Recruiting Metrics: How to Measure Your Hiring Success

Created in partnership with


Mikael Korpi


Guillaume Alexandre


James Mottram


Anastasia Pshegodskaya


Kate Hotsyk


Yves Greijn


Neha Dixit-Naik


Monika Nemcova

Part 1. First Signs You Need a Sourcing Team in Your Organization

Written in partnership with Mikael Korpi and Guillaume Alexandre



The yes-or-no answer to *“Do we need a sourcing team?”* does not exist.

Sometimes it is coherent to decide that the time has not come yet. Organizations tend to operate in the mindset where sourcing and recruiting functions are merged. And it seems logical for Heads of Recruitment Department or Senior Recruiters.

- Why expand our hiring team?
- How having sourcers can make our recruiting processes better?
- Is there an ROI in bringing in new people with a narrow focus on sourcing?

But there are times when companies struggle: Initial reach-out, screening, and interviewing processes are fine-tuned exquisitely. On-boarding and adaption systems are highly praised by newcomers. Employer’s brand is one of the best in the specific market. And still, some positions go unfulfilled for months.

In this case, you might need a dedicated sourcing professional or even a separate in-house sourcing team.

For the sake of clarity we keep in mind that sourcers are technical specialists with the following responsibilities:

- **Researching the market** to determine market size, candidates' income expectations, and more. Including the data on companies, your perfect candidate may be lured from.
- **Sources determination and prioritization** to provide the company with a satisfactory number of qualified and ready-to-engage leads.
- **Long-listing candidates** and juxtaposing their experience and skillset with the position's requirements
- **Initial reach-out** to present and "sell" the position to potential candidates
- **Passing the short-list to the recruitment team** with best-fit interested candidates

So let's take a look at a few exact symptoms which may indicate that you need to build a sourcing team.

3 main signs that you need a sourcing team

To pick these out, we had to consult someone with tons of experience in sourcing and recruitment fields alike. The list below is prepared with the help of Mikael Korpi, a tech sourcing and recruitment practitioner who currently helps Vincit to attract tech talent.

"These flags appear in companies no matter the size or location. And when something goes wrong while facing such challenges, it is easy to blame some internal processes' failure or external forces. In many cases, it is just the question of the sourcing functions falling behind in the organization"

– Mikael Korpi

1. Inbound recruitment efforts are not efficient enough

What to look for?

Take a closer look at the amount and quality of applicants to any given position, and the average time you spend hiring.

You may discover that the position's requirements seem to set a bar that is too high for existing candidates in the pipeline. If that appears to be a common challenge throughout all the hiring processes in your company, it is time to bring in sourcers.

How can a sourcing team help?

Dedicated experts will establish a new set of applicants' sources, designate priorities and increase the quantity of right-fit contenders for the job in the shortest amount of time. They will also suggest some fine-tuning of the employer brand, which is now failing to attract the right candidates.

In other words, it's time to free your recruiters from technicalities. Let them do what they do best with the "warm leads" shortlists they will get from the sourcing team.

2. You are hiring unique professionals in a competitive market

What to look for?

Spend some time exploring the current market job market for your open positions. Maybe there's a queue of companies lined up already for the potential candidates and competition is much higher than you expected.

This is common for many fields including tech recruitment. Lack of research and data leads to unattractive job descriptions and offers. Sometimes this effect is amplified with an opaque job market with a lack of tools to discover these few potential candidates.

How can a sourcing team help?

Over their careers, sourcing professionals develop a very specific skillset. You can think of them as private investigators or analysts who conduct OSINT.

Need a candidate's contact info that is not listed anywhere else? Need to know where the experts in this field hang out on the Internet? Need a strategy for approaching this exact type of professionals? The sourcing team is here to help.

They will also help you with a strategy to capture the attention of this specific person from a specific company and provide you with a chance to lure them in.

3. Your recruitment is fully dependant on outsourced partners

What to look for?

Evaluate your gain from such partnerships. They may not be too committed to diving deep into your market specifics, and all peculiarities of the internal requirements. That is what sourcing is all about.

Going back to the beginning of this list of signs, outsourced recruitment partners might be a reason for inefficient hiring. And it's a rare case if they might help with finding a tough-to-get potential candidate with a unique skill set.

How can a sourcing team help?

Building the in-house sourcing team will help drop the costs of those partnerships. Hence, your business sales margin will grow.

Such a team will dedicate the sourcing toolkit to closing your specific tasks. That will spare you from the horrors of getting 0 leads from an agency, which scatters its resources on multiple clients.

How do I know if the timing is right? Is it about the numbers?

The first things that may come to mind are the company's size, revenue growth, sales plans, the sheer count of unfulfilled positions over a certain period… or other similar numbers.

Like, if we hit a specific threshold in any given metric, then it's time to build the sourcing function. Yet, that particular magic number might not exist.

To sort this out, we've asked a Geneva-based professional tech sourcer and sourcing trainer Guillaume Alexandre to help us with this question.

“That has nothing to do with the company’s size, for example. There are smaller businesses, where managers are heavily involved in the recruitment processes, with no recruiters needed. Yet, the type of profiles they are hiring requires sourcers.

And on the other hand, there are huge enterprises, which operate well on the volume of applicants created by job ads. And in that case, they are good without the sourcing team

So it is not about metrics. It is about your organization deciding to capitalize on existing employer brand and being fully in charge of all its attraction strategy”

– Guillaume Alexandre

Step by step guide to get the timing right

Step 1. Analyze recruitment-related data

- Include the number of hires made, the most common hiring sources (job boards, referrals, agency, campus management, etc.).
- Look at the exact roles of your current team and their skills.
- Determine how much time they are dedicating to talent sourcing weekly.

Step 2. Analyze the budgeting side

- Look into the currently allocated budget and budget spent on external agencies
- Take into account the savings you are going to make with the internal sourcing team
- Make sure there are sufficient funds in place at the moment to build teams, get tools, etc.

Step 3. Determine gaps and get the answer

- Match the results of this analysis with your future needs and your current global attraction strategy.
- If there are gaps, which the sourcing team will help close, then the time is right.

When you definitely do not need a sourcing team:

- You only need to hire junior or junior-to-middle positions in the nearest future
- You get plenty of good external applications from actively interested candidates

- Your company needs to fill higher positions, but don't need any "superstar" hires at the moment

How to substantiate your decision to stakeholders?

Let's get back to Guillaume Alexandre, who gave us two great tips for a proof of concept that the sourcing team is what your organization needs at the moment:

Tip #1

For example, take the last 30 people you've hired at a great cost thanks to an external agency. Having their names and contact info now, it takes 5 minutes to check whether they are on LinkedIn, GitHub, Dribbble, or similar.

Suddenly you may realize that with the necessary sourcing tools and skills it would have been so easy to get this information from publicly available sources.

Tip #2

Try raising a question if recruitment is a strategic function for the company. Of course, it is! Everybody agrees that bringing enough of the right people on board is the key to the company's overall success.

If so, why leave such a crucial function to someone from the outside, like the external partners. Or why miss out on such an opportunity to realize it fully within the company.

Conclusions

There are a lot of challenges In sustaining and improving overall recruitment efficiency. And starting the sourcing division from scratch can be an answer to many of them.

Part 2. Sourcing Function: Trying to Resolve the In-House VS. an Agency Argument



In this part, we take a deep dive into aspects of building a sourcing function in your company and persuading your stakeholders to make solid strategic decisions and efficiently allocate budgets. We provide a few insights from sourcing and hiring practitioners who will try to answer the good old question *“Do I need to hire a sourcing team to do this in-house, or is it an agency’s job?”*

Agencies and RPO

The basic idea around sourcing in recruitment is that sourcers convert people into candidates and recruiters convert candidates into employees. Sometimes a good job ad could bring you a ton of quality candidates, while in other cases the pipeline may remain cold and empty.

There are a lot of processes to fine-tune and control while trying to fill a position. From engaging with candidates who are already in your applicant tracking system (ATS) to nurturing the passive ones for whom there is no fitting role at the moment.

There are two main approaches for working with external contractors on these tasks:

The first is the standard agency approach.

Here professional recruiters have several customers and numerous positions to fill for those customers. They receive data inputs from your company like candidate requirements and search for talent to pass you the CVs after a brief initial contact.

They have their sources, connections, and partnerships which is obviously a great advantage. Yet, usually, they are not sourcing or working with passive candidates. Agencies work with their own ATS and previous applicants they had in the past.

The upside here is that such agencies can help you scale faster and are great at fulfilling junior-to-middle positions. On the other hand, with agencies, it is hard to capitalize on all your investments in the employer brand. More often than not they don't even mention the company's name while engaging with potential candidates. Secondly, agencies are not invested in exploring all ins and outs of your goals and business requirements. Your task is just one of many in the pipeline for each agency's employee.

Lastly, and most importantly, data is the key. Leaving that data and the knowledge about the market to external partners is a short-term tactic that can not win strategically in the long run.

The second is the Recruitment Process Outsource (RPO) approach.

Here the level of engagement and commitment varies. Such contractors tend to offer themselves as long-term partners with a tailored and more hands-on approach.

RPO partners are devoted to sourcing and recruiting for a specific company. They keep working on fulfilling the specific position despite probable difficulties. Such contractors are usually more efficiency-oriented and tend to formulate quantifiable metrics from the start in the SLA.

This is a good choice when your recruitment team has neither enough of the right candidates nor the resources and time to source them. Here you can split the workload by having an

RPO partner work with passive candidates while assigning your internal department to concentrate on the active ones.

The downsides are pretty similar to the previous approach with all the information left unknown. Such as who has been contacted by them, how they have been contacted, etc. It is basically a black box.

Internal sourcing team.

There is a lot to consider before deciding to develop the sourcing team in-house. In the meantime, the advantages of such a decision over outsourcing this work may be another immense argument to support the idea. The main perks of an in-house sourcing team are:

- Immersion into the industry

The agency recruiter will have a lot of customers across industries, including your competitors. And while his/her sales-minded attitude is a nice way to get the right candidates on board in a short time, you might miss out on a lot of opportunities due to the specifics and volumes of an agency's work.

In-house sourcing experts are concentrated on your business and are deeply submerged into the industry and the context of the provided requirements.

- Candidates retention

The in-house sourcing team is better at communication and empathy-building. They have a profound understanding of the skills and qualities needed from a candidate to show strong performance and to be more successful in the role.

This creates additional filters for screening and provides additional means to discover "hidden gems". As such are candidates with diverse experience and skill sets now working in positions that may not seem relevant at first sight.

Hence, the overall retention metric benefits from these aspects.

- Values transmission

Your company probably invests a lot of money in the employer brand. Always seeking creative ways to explain how great/different they are, what an employer of choice they are. This value proposition might get lost within the processes of an agency.

The in-house team is constantly transmitting the values of your company overall and the employer brand in particular on all stages of talent sourcing and engagement. It makes a great tandem with internal recruiters who complement this by embedding the same values in the hiring and adaptation phases.

- Full control

This comes back to the point already mentioned a few times in this article. Data. The in-house recruiting team develops and supports relationships with candidates and builds a handy database for future acquisitions.

Internal sourcer controls what has been already done, who has been contacted, and how. He can keep nurturing passive candidates in the pipeline, offering them the right opportunity at the right time.

Your internal team also doesn't have any contractual obligations to other companies competing for the same talent. They can engage with any candidate that could be a great match. Agencies have stop-lists of candidates that have been hired by them to other clients.

What about the cons?

The downsides of developing an in-house sourcing function are pretty straightforward.

Firstly, Having an internal team requires a longer-term vision and strategy than for an agency or RPO. Sourcing experts become the employees of your organization, so you need to make sure there will be a career path for them at some point in the future.

Other major thinking points are ROI and economics. As with any other hirings, there is time spent on sourcing and recruiting new members of your internal sourcing team. There are infrastructure costs to provide them with space and tools. And, of course, the payroll.

There are specific cases when leaving the sourcing to external contractors is more than ok. Especially if your investments and ambitions about the new team do not correlate with the capacity and scale of your hiring strategy.

Comprehensive chart

	External Contractors	In-House Sourcing Team
+	• Proprietary sources, connections, and partnerships • Scalability • Awesome at sourcing talent for lower positions on less competitive markets • RPO might do a great job of sourcing candidates for you (with the right SLA) • Great choice to complement your lack of internal resources if requirements are not too high • Ready-made solutions for recruitment support (marketing)	• Devoted to your business goals and hiring strategy. Understand your pains and requirements better • Provide higher retention rates with an overall higher quality of candidates • Help fulfill the tough positions on competitive markets • Build a database and nurture passive candidates • Higher response rates • Transmit your values properly and capitalize on your employer brand • Full control over data
-	• A lot of data is kept on their side. Black-box approach • Low levels of immersion into the industry and your specifics • Misunderstood values and brand, over or underselling the employer • May source for your competitors at the same time • Prices may impress you in a bad way • Lower overall candidates' quality	• Require long-term vision and strategy • They are your employees which means greater responsibility • Greater long-term investments into salaries, tools, and infrastructure • Time spent on hiring and adaptation • Far from being a turnkey solution at the beginning • Needs at least one great talent sourcer with strong connections at the start

Conclusions

The choice between outsourcing or building an internal team requires a deep dive into your specifics and should be purely data-driven. Analyze sources you already use for hiring. Evaluate the availability and accessibility of the talent out there in your specific market for your open positions and certain requirements. Figure out the current workload and measurable KPIs of the current team. It's a challenge that calls for profound analysis.

Part 3. A Checklist For Building an Internal Sourcing Team from Scratch.

Written by James Mottram from Elements Talent Consultancy



We've invited James Mottram, Lead talent acquisition and research partner at Elements Talent Consultancy, currently embedded at Monzo Bank, to scrutinize a few fundamental questions about building an in-house sourcing team. All in hopes that working these out helps you immensely and bolsters your progress on this thorny path.

Understand what sourcers do and the problem they solve for you

Let's start with essential points about what great sourcing professionals are **not**. They **are not** junior recruiters or an internal agency. Treat them as partners to your recruiters, working alongside them to achieve the same goal of bringing terrific talent on board. Make it clear from the get-go that your recruiters will benefit from this partnership. A sourcing partner will allow them to improve their processes, expand their candidate pool and free up their time!

Introducing a new team is a considerable change, and established teams can be wary of such a shift. To grant a smooth alliance you can start with giving clarity on this relationship and separating responsibilities.

This separation should be easy because sourcing practitioners have several niche skills and capabilities. Before making any further steps with your in-house sourcing, make sure that you are clear about what they can do for you, i.e. why you are doing it in the first place.

You need an internal sourcing team because they are:

- **Research experts.** Sourcers are crucial for talent mapping. They will gather market intelligence, analyze your competitors, enrich data points with necessary context, and deliver all the needed information right to your stakeholders for supporting solid decisions.
- **Outreach masters and relationship builders.** See them as marketers who know how and when to deliver just the right message. When that message hits, they are your people in the frontline to deepen and broaden the relationships with potential candidates, nurture the passive ones, and so on.
- **Challenge solvers.** It's not enough to have the tools to find people. There are intricacies to the right time and place for each tool. There is a need for experiments, fresh approaches, tool recombinations for different markets, or specific challenges for each one. There's also a need for constant adjustments to new data, tools, and feedback in an ever-changing environment.
- **Domain experts.** Sourcing is different from market to market, across regions or even cities. They understand where to look, how to engage, and how to conduct interviews depending on the circumstance. And that is what makes the internal sourcing team so valuable. They are also great in getting the context of a role and what it needs to achieve in order to sell it effectively and to identify left-field candidates.

How to prepare your recruiting team to get the best from the in-house sourcing team

The deployment of your sourcing team should not end with them passing a candidate to recruiters. Sourcers are not only a beneficial extension to the existing recruitment process but a crucial part of it.

These are some ways you can get the best from your sourcing team's relationship with your existing recruiting team.

Developing the feedback loop.

Your goal here is complete visibility into the entire process. Give sourcers access to in-depth feedback from hiring managers and interviewers at every stage of their candidate's process. This context empowers them to be more targeted in their approaches and more informed in their initial screen. Including the sourcing team in detailed discussions about potential talent is always a good move.

Providing additional touchpoints with the stakeholders.

Create opportunities for the sourcing team to deliver additional context for hiring managers or other stakeholders on any candidate. They may act as an intelligence unit, e.g. when a CV does not show the full picture. The research done by the sourcing team can reveal the hidden potential given the positions candidates held in the companies they've worked in.

Getting specific research assignments done.

As I said before, the sourcing team members are domain experts who can contribute research and data on the market. This is a great way to expand your stakeholders' understanding of your hiring challenges and shows them where they may need to adjust requirements.

But who should hire and train your sourcing team, and who should define your best sourcing practices?

Like with all complex projects, there is a crucial point of determining the first step. And the first step here is usually a person. A sourcing expert to be precise. But there are two ways of taking this forward:

Option 1. Start with one great sourcing lead

You'll have to start with someone who can quickly build an understanding of your needs and requirements, determine what type of talent you need in the sourcing team given the positions waiting to be filled, and overall recruitment strategy.

Perhaps a sourcing lead or senior sourcer is what we are looking at here. Someone who is going to source and engage with great sourcers themselves. A lot depends on this person, so proceed carefully.

You'll want someone with knowledge of the best sources of talent in your market. This could mean an advanced knowledge of LinkedIn, Google x-ray sourcing, Github, Stackoverflow, Twitter, Xing, open web searches for speakers lists and personal profiles etc. — whichever tools your future sourcers have to be proficient in as well.

Since your first sourcing practitioner will be working with others in the recruitment team, make sure that anyone involved in sourcing panels knows the exact value sourcers can add. Potential candidates for your developing sourcing team will be put off by anyone who thinks of sourcers as "candidate machines" instead of partners in the recruitment process.

Option 2. Start with an external sourcing consultant or contractor

There is nothing wrong with starting your internal sourcing team by inviting external help. This is a great way to bring in great sourcing talent quickly.

Consider the possibility of temporary engagement with senior sourcers/researchers from an embedded talent consultancy. They'll be bringing with them the best sourcing practices from a large and established sourcing team.

They can help identify talent, select the team, and build out the best sourcing processes for your needs so your hires can hit the ground running.

Conclusions

There is no perfect formula to develop a great in-house sourcing team from scratch, but considering the listed steps should start you on a good path.

Part 4. Tips on Running an Efficient Sourcing Department

Interview with Anastasia Pshegodskaya, Remote, ex-GitLab



We've invited Anastasia Pshegodskaya, ex Sourcing Manager leading the global team at GitLab (now Senior Recruiting Manager at Remote) to share insights about the life of sourcing practitioners, recurrent challenges of building and running sourcing departments, defining sourcing metrics, and more.

Q: Anastasia, as a Global Sourcing Manager, what daily responsibilities do you have within your job, and what your ideal workday looks like?

A: Once you become a Sourcing Manager, your life dramatically changes and the range of stakeholders grows every day. Since I'm managing a global Sourcing Team, which is responsible for sourcing across all geographies and business units, my day-to-day routine includes meetings with Hiring Managers, other Recruiting Leaders, Recruiters, and my team.

Together with that, I spend quite a lot of time on reporting and tracking our team's progress as I strongly believe that the success of a Sourcing Team could be easily measured and converted into numbers. Thanks to multiple reports we've built and customized (along with

our Data team) we're always able to spot our roadblocks and opportunities and remove process inefficiencies early on.

It wouldn't be me if, when describing my ideal workday, I didn't mention leading and coaching my team. I have a separate calendar that reminds me of having regular career development meetings with my team members. I'm always on the lookout for development opportunities for my team members. It's my manager's responsibility to show my team all the variety of directions they can pursue while still contributing to the success of our team.

To sum up:

- Find a common ground and partner with the ever-growing number of stakeholders;
- Build and customize reports to track team's progress;
- Keep seeking development and coaching opportunities for your team members.

Q: When it comes to building or growing a team of sourcers, what qualities are you looking for in your potential hires?

A: The most important quality any sourcer should possess is curiosity that drives them to ask questions. In my opinion, this is a general trait that distinguishes passionate professionals of any kind but in the sourcing world, where your success depends on your research, this quality is crucial.

Another quality that I'm always looking for in a Sourcer is their ability to share their knowledge with others. Be it tools, reach-out templates, various sourcing techniques, I expect members of my team to share those with their peers and treat our team's success as their own. Another way to think about teamwork is to admit that being a top performer in the most successful team means much more than being a top performer among very average individuals. Only by sharing your knowledge with others, verifying your hypotheses together, brainstorming, and collaborating within the team will you be able to level up your game.

To sum up:

- Look for curiosity and open-minded people;
- Search for potential and passion as distinguishing traits;

- Assess candidates' capability to share knowledge and perceive the team's success as their own.

Q: How do you evaluate sourcing skills? What is the fastest way to see if the person is good?

A: There are two things I'm always looking at when interviewing for a Sourcer role: how broad someone's professional horizon is (i.e. how many different sourcing tools and techniques a person knows) and whether they are able to apply their knowledge to practice without overcomplicating the search.

That's why I'm always asking people to tell me about the hardest role a person worked on and the way they tackled that challenge. This question not only shows how deep someone's knowledge is but whether or not they're able to structure their search, use a tree-ring approach, and move from the most simple and straightforward technique to more complex ones if need be.

To sum up:

It's not only the number of tools a person knows but their ability to apply this knowledge to streamline their own workflow and minimize the effort.

Q: Can you name things every tech sourcer should know (compared to non-tech)?

A: That's a great question! I've started my career within Tech Recruiting and always felt like it's a niche group separated from other Recruiters. However, the more experience I gain, the more convinced I become that if you're a good Sourcer or Recruiter and understand the hiring flow, you'll be successful at any role assigned to you.

That said, of course, Tech Sourcers should possess specific knowledge about tech stacks and where their candidates "hang out" but it doesn't mean that successful Non-tech Sourcers shouldn't have the same in-depth understanding of the market they source for.

To sum up:

- Always look at the bigger picture and go beyond the sourcing function;
- Expand your knowledge of tech stacks;
- Discover where your potential candidates hang out.

Q: What are KPIs that a sourcing team manager can set for a sourcing team member?

A: In my opinion, every stage of the recruiting funnel should be measured and become a metric for the Sourcing Team. This means that Sourcers' performance would be evaluated based on their candidates' conversion rates: how many sourced prospects convert into candidates, how many of them successfully pass the screening stage, assessment, team interviews, etc.

While these metrics are based purely on numbers, they show not only the number of candidates submitted by the sourcers but, most importantly, their quality. One of the crucial KPIs for the business is the percentage of sourced candidates that get hired but since there are a lot of factors at the end of the hiring process a Sourcer has no influence over, I'd strongly recommend making the percentage of Sourced Offers one of the KPIs.

With modern ATS, there is a wide range of data you can pull from the system. This allows Sourcing Teams to become really creative in setting their KPIs depending on the business needs. For example, quite often I see contribution to the company's diversity as one of the Sourcing KPIs. So, don't limit yourself to traditional success metrics and always ask yourself what your company and its leaders define as an additional value of the Sourcing Team.

To sum up:

- Remember that every step is measurable;
- Look at conversion rates to evaluate the quality of your sourcing strategy t;
- Stay creative with using modern ATS tools to set your KPIs.

Q: How do you define the successful work of a sourcer (if we go beyond meeting the KPIs described above)?

A: The successful work of a sourcer results in:

- higher candidate quality (conversion rates),
- reduced time-to-hire,
- increased diversity of your talent pools and hires,
- raising the hiring bar,
- increased company efficiency by bringing talent from economically attractive locations.

Q: What are good sourcers looking for when they are considering new job opportunities? How to attract talent?

A: I think all people are looking not only for an attractive job description but for opportunities for growth and development when they consider new career prospects. Unfortunately, the latter is quite often overlooked in the recruiting world at companies where sourcers are still considered to be “Junior Recruiters”. So if you are aiming to attract top talent to your company, make sure that you build a clear career path for them to grow and thrive.

You should be ready to invest in your Sourcing Team: mentally (thinking about their future as professionals) and financially (being ready to spend money on training and up-to-date software to equip your team with the needed knowledge and tools).

If you’re committed to your team’s success and view your Sourcers as individuals with their own passions and ambitions, your offer will be hard to resist.

To sum up:

- Never perceive sourcers as “Junior Recruiters;
- Get ready to invest in your team in various ways;
- Build career paths for your newcomers beforehand.

Part 5. 5 qualities Your Sourcing Team Should Have

Written in partnership with Kate Hotsyk, Lead Talent Sourcer at A-Players Recruiters



For this Part, we had great help from Kate Hotsyk from A-Players Recruiting to discover the most meaningful baseline skills and qualities every exceptional sourcing professional should possess.

Kate is a Lead Talent Sourcer Consultant with 5+ years of fruitful hires for startups and fast-growing organizations. She helped grow teams at widely-recognized Relocateme.eu, DataRobot, RefaceAI, Shelf, Mindvalley, Reddit, and many more.

What distinguishes the best sourcers from the rest

Before we get into skills and qualities, let's take a quick look at the endgame. What are you getting at the end of your journey? What does a truly great sourcer bring to the table?

You may work hard on building the employer's brand and all the perks and programs in order to attract potential talent. Yet, the pipeline remains somewhat dry.

The thing is when the time comes and your perfect candidate starts actively searching for a job, your company's brand will be on the shelf along with many others. Especially in competitive markets with high demand for niche specialists such as IT.

On the other hand, according to this report from LinkedIn, 90% of global professionals are open to hearing about further career opportunities while still being employed. The precision of that number may be questionable, but it seems completely logical to keep one's hand on the pulse of the job market at all times.

And that's when sourcers come in.

Their responsibilities include establishing and maintaining firm and warm contact with those top performers. A lot is required to achieve that. In-depth knowledge of the market, latest trends in compensation packages, talent supply and demand, and sourcing tools, complemented by a profound set of hard and soft skills.

This is where a great sourcer gets a huge edge. If you are looking to get one into your team or help your existing talent grow, what are the qualities to look for?

The portrait of a perfect sourcer

1.Exhibits proof of mastery in a research

42% of job applications don't meet your requirements, and at the same time studies show that sourced candidates are twice as efficient as the ones who applied. You know what your goal is here: attracting those >86% of candidates who are not actively searching for a job.

Sourcers know what type of information is needed and where to find it. Their arsenal includes unique data points and rare tools. Everyone knows that you have to go beyond LinkedIn and explore GitHub, or StackOverflow, or Reddit.

Well, the great sourcers take that research a step forward.

They operate the same advanced search techniques and data points to discover connections others missed.

Their creative approach to recombining those tools and techniques almost looks like turning information into intelligence.

And they can do wonders to help discover potential talent in some hidden corners of the web and craft the right message to reach out to them (we'll talk about it later in this article).

Try asking about the use cases in the interview and you'll see the difference.

2. Craves personal development

It's common to stay updated with the latest developments in one's field. The Internet is filled up with sourcing content, courses, and more. We tend to subscribe to a few relevant media outlets, look at some new tools coming at the sourcing market, revisit educational materials from time to time to check up on our knowledge of the fundamentals.

If you want to hire a great sourcer, look for those who are:

- passionate about their self-development and permanently ongoing education;
- more inclined to networking and social activities (say, a sourcing hackathon);
- overall more open to non-conventional education methods if those provide an edge on the market.

Speaking about unconventional and gamified educational sourcing content, you may check out "sourcing games" as an example, or view Amazing Hiring's sourcing hackathons recordings on our YouTube channel. Btw, running sourcing hackathons is a great way to attract talent, see their actual skills, and hire the best to work for you.

3. Possesses good content creation skills

Every now and then we all struggle with those cold emails or spend too much time crafting that first message on social networks. So there is no secret that some form of copywriting is a desired skill for any sourcer.

Yet, there is so much more content to be created on the way, and a great sourcer knows that. Look for those who go beyond the emails or pitches.

They know how to transmit brand values right.

They use exceptional research (or, as we called it earlier, intelligence) to personalize their emails or LinkedIn requests.

They are also glad to tell a story about how they designed a perfect answer on Quora, kept a conversation going somewhere on Twitter, or constructed a post that got a ton of upvotes on Reddit.

Kate remembers how once she congratulated GitHub users owning the Arctic Code Vault Contributor badge with the fact that their code will be kept inside of a Norwegian mountain for 1,000 years. This got her a 40-45% reply rate which is above the average.

In other words, there are times when content is king in sourcing efforts too.

4. Creates a call to action instead of waiting for one

This may be a great point for any role in the company, but it is especially important for sourcers. Sourcers can get a brief from a manager and quietly retreat to a lonely sourcing bubble to do their jobs.

Note that great sourcers would have quite a different answer to a question about their work process. They are inclined to be involved in more processes and create a sense of full visibility for the recruiting team. They work hard on creating a perfect workflow. They promptly share insights and data.

They feel at ease connecting with more people on the team and getting a deeper understanding of the project and its requirements for candidates.

So pay attention to see if a potential in-house sourcer is prone to waiting for a manager’s command. They will be those that come to a project meeting uninvited to listen to all the details about a new job opening and trust us, you won’t be annoyed by that.

5. Feels that sharing is a core of sourcing

Some sourcers are happy to share knowledge, some aren't. Nonetheless, there is a huge community around sourcing and its capabilities. Many of us are active in our own way, putting some interesting cases out there, helping out the newcomers, and so on.

You'll see that great sourcers care about sharing much more than others. For them, It's a way to build a personal brand and an immense boost to one's perception of an expert. Here are just a few ways how advanced sourcers share their experience:

- They can act as "coaches" to others, participate as experts in as many formats as they can handle
- They put out there a lot of content in a "how-to" manner, bringing true value to the community
- They drive some great initiatives which are aimed purely at helping their comrades out, e.g. sourcing schools or huge lists of handy resources, etc.

Conclusions

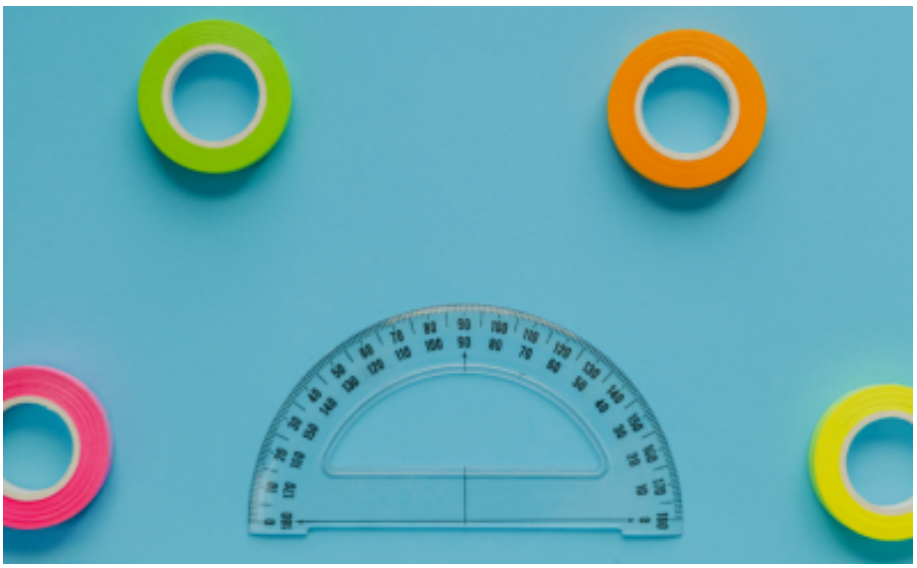
As you can see, the qualities that underscore great sourcers may seem pretty common and straightforward. Yet, it's important to notice that best-of-breed sourcing experts always take those skills to the next level, while improvising and improving along the way.

In our experience, it seems like a close-to-impossible task to find this set of skills and qualities fully arranged in a potential candidate to the sourcing team. Hence, consider spending much more time (and forgive a lot of mistakes) on the existing recruiting talent you decide to grow into sourcers internally.

The good thing is, most of the above-stated qualities are not inherent and may be trained over time. Just understand the scope of potential investment in this kind of development.

Part 6. 15 Sourcing & Recruiting Metrics: How to Measure Your Hiring Success

Written based on materials provided by Yves Greijn, Lead Engineering Sourcer (ex-QuantumBlack, now Miro), Neha Naik, CEO of recruitgyan.com, and Monika Nemcova (AIHR, ex-Content Marketer from harver.com)



SOURCING METRICS

Source of hire

There are some ways to find the best recruitment channels: the employee survey, usage of applicant tracking systems and web analytics.

% of referral hires

There are several reasons why companies should focus on employee referrals. Referred candidates are usually hired faster, stay longer and have greater job satisfaction. Cost per hire is also lower. Measuring the percentage of referral hires helps evaluate the efficiency of your referral program.

While referrals account for less than 3% of applications, they make up over 12.5% of hires. You can use this number as a benchmark and if the percentage of referral hires at your company is lower, look for ways to optimize your employee referral program.

Source quality

This kind of metric helps to trace the efficiency of various recruiting channels. There are a lot of different sourcing channels: job posting sites, company's careers page, recruiting agencies, social networks, etc. But not all of them we can consider equally.

For instance, social media attracted 1500 candidates per month whereas recruitment agencies can engage 500 applicants. Initially, we might think that social network is a more effective way to attract potential candidates. But if we dive deeper, it is better to analyze which channel brings more hires. Through 500 applicants we can hire 25 people when the social network might bring irrelevant candidates, and the company hires only 10 out of 1500.

Sourcing Channel effectiveness

Nowadays recruiters use so many sourcing channels – job boards, referrals, careers site, social networks, and so on. Analyzing all the channels is very efficient- by comparing the percentage of applications with the percentage of impressions of the positions, recruiters can understand the effectiveness of various channels and on what source they should focus on.

Sourcing Channel cost

In order to calculate the cost-efficiency of the different sourcing channels recruiters include ad spend, the amount of money spent on advertisement. The sourcing channel cost per hire is measured by dividing the ad spend with the number of visitors who successfully applied through the job opening.

$$Sourcing\ channel\ cost = \frac{Ad\ spend\ per\ platform}{Number\ of\ successful\ applicants\ per\ platform}$$

RECRUITING METRICS

Time to Fill

This kind of metric shows the period of time between search and hiring a new candidate. Time to fill offers a clear picture of the efficiency of your talent acquisition strategy. Being able to break down the time to fill a metric and compare it across positions or departments is key for optimization and planning.

$$Average\ Time\ to\ Fill = \frac{Total\ Number\ of\ Days\ of\ Open\ Jobs}{Total\ Number\ of\ Jobs\ Open}$$

Application Drop Off Rate

Application Drop Off Rate shows the proportion of candidates who start but do not complete the application process. Through this metric recruiters can understand what exactly they need to change during the application process. This metric not only creates a better candidate experience, but also gives the organization better access to top talent.

For instance, the majority of job applications are not optimized for mobile phones and a lot of potential candidates just will not waste their time on completing of inconvenient applications.

Time in Workflow Step

This kind of metric shows the time a candidate spends in each step (recruiters can see it in their company's ATS). There are can be a lot of workflow steps but the most common are phone screens, submissions to the hiring manager and interviews. Time in the Workflow Step is highly useful for identifying bottlenecks in the hiring process.

Offer acceptance rate

The difference between the number of candidates who successfully accepted a job and the number of candidates who got an offer is the offer acceptance rate.

Taken as a percentage, this rate represents the percent chance that someone will accept a job offer from your company. For example, if you extend 10 offers within a given year, and 7 candidates accept those offers, your offer acceptance rate would equal 70%. Typically, the higher this number is, the better.

$$Offer\ Acceptance\ Rate = \frac{Number\ of\ Offers\ Accepted}{Number\ of\ Offers}$$

QUALITY OF HIRE

Time to hire

Time to hire shows the amount of time from the moment an applicant is approached until the candidate accepts the offer. To determine "time to hire" a sourcer needs to answer these three questions:

- how many technical screens should the recruiter do for this position?
- how many pre-screens sourcer or recruiter needs to do?
- how many people sourced the relevant candidates?

"The key to making TimeToHire actionable is to break it down into its components, examining those for hints on where to optimize your hiring process for speed. Once you've broken your process into steps, figure out how many days on average your candidates spend in each phase. . . . Once you've identified your 'problem areas,' you can investigate the source of the slowdown and take focused action to remove blockers." — Jeff Moore, head of staffing for Google's Consumer Hardware business.

$$Average\ Time\ to\ hire = \frac{Total\ number\ of\ Days\ the\ applicant\ was\ approached}{Total\ Number\ of\ Days\ of\ Open\ Job}$$

Quality of hire

This metric might be difficult to calculate. When the quality of an employee's achievements is measured, there always can be a subjective assessment of a candidate by the company's

staff themselves. But if the company sets the standards of quality the talent acquisition team tracks, it will end up with individual and company-wide quality of hire metrics that also measure the success of the firm's efforts.

The most common way to calculate the quality of hire is by calculating several quantifiable recruitment metrics that indicate quality: performance reviews, hiring manager satisfaction, retention measure.

Quality of hire is the input for the Success Ratio.

$$Success\ Ratio = \frac{Number\ of\ Hired\ Candidates\ Considered\ Satisfactory}{Total\ Number\ of\ Candidates\ Hired}$$

Cost per hire

Cost per hire is a crucial metric because it helps recruiters analyze their recruiting budget for the year. It's the average amount of money the company spends on hiring a new employee.

There are the best ways to calculate cost per hire: the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), have created a standard formula for calculating cost per hire (CPH):

$$Cost\ per\ hire = \frac{Total\ Recruitment\ Cost}{Total\ Number\ of\ Hires} = \frac{Total\ Internal\ Cost + Total\ External\ Cost}{Total\ Number\ of\ Hires}$$

Selection Ratio

The selection ratio refers to the number of hired candidates compared to the total number of candidates. The selection ratio provides information such as the value of different assessment tools and can be used to estimate the utility of a given selection and recruitment system.

$$Selection\ Ratio = \frac{Number\ of\ Hired\ Candidates}{Total\ Number\ of\ Candidates}$$

Retention Rate (First-Year Attrition)

The main point of this metric: for how long do they stay with the company. Through analyzing retention rates recruiters can identify which positions are the most difficult to keep filled and the reasons why people left the company.

This metric is of paramount importance because it helps recruiters to understand why candidates who leave in their first year of work fail to become fully productive. That kind of employee usually costs a lot of money.

First-year attrition is a useful recruitment metric because it tells the company's team how well they're retaining employees. The measuring of this metric is the following:

The company began in 2018 with 35 employees and ended the year with 45. In that same year, lost 5 employees. To calculate your first-year attrition, you need to divide the number of people who left the company, in this case, 5, by the average number of employees across the year, in this case, 35 + 45 = 80.

So, the calculation is the following:

5 / ((35 + 45) / 2)= 5 / 40= 12.5 %

$$First-year\ attrition = \frac{The\ Number\ of\ People\ who\ left\ the\ company}{Average\ Number\ of\ Employees\ across\ the\ year/2}$$

Candidate job satisfaction (or Candidate Net Promoter Score)

Candidate job satisfaction metrics give a great opportunity to track whether the expectations set during the recruiting procedure match real working days in a company. If a candidate is not satisfied enough it means the mismanagement of expectations or incomplete job descriptions.

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a metric commonly used to gauge consumer satisfaction, but it can also gauge the satisfaction of candidates.