

## **PRESENTERS:**

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**Melis Melikoglu**, Global Recruitment Manager, Unilever (London)  
**Adam Yearsley**, Global Head of Talent Management, Red Bull (London)  
**Max Blumberg**, Founder, Blumberg Partnership  
**Dr. Jessica Bigazzi Foster**, Senior Partner, RHR International  
**Syreeta Brown**, Managing Director, Citi (London)  
**Ed Gunzeln**, Global Recruitment Operations Manager, Shell (Paris)  
**Chloë Touati**, Founder, Authentic Talent Consulting (Paris)  
**Vincent Mattei**, Recruitment and Mobility Manager, Thales (Paris)

**Gillian Pillans** summarised the research report, based on 231 survey responses, 52 interviews with practitioners, experts and academics, a content analysis of the careers sections and all related social media sites for 30 leading global companies across 13 industries, and a review of relevant academic and practitioner literature.

The research found that resourcing strategies are changing in the following ways:

- More direct sourcing of candidates, mapping the talent market, and reducing reliance on agencies/headhunters
- Greater use of social media and digital tools to source and engage with candidates
- Improving the connection between business strategy and resourcing, particularly through strategic workforce planning
- Being more proactive, for example building external talent pipelines
- Improving the candidate experience and investing in the employer brand
- Creating more diverse pipelines

While 65% of respondents to the CRF survey reported that their organisations have an explicit resourcing strategy that drives recruitment activities, far fewer report that the resourcing strategy is closely aligned with the organisation's business strategy:

## **How strategic is your approach to resourcing - really?**



# Resourcing- How HR's Core Competence Is Evolving

A key recommendation for the HR function, therefore, is to **focus resourcing on supporting execution of the business strategy** by:

- Building intelligence on the availability of key talent, what that talent is looking for, and how to position your organisation to attract that talent
- Conceptualising resourcing as an input to strategy, not just an action item
- Working out how your resourcing strategy needs to be competitively differentiated
- Investing in strategic workforce planning.

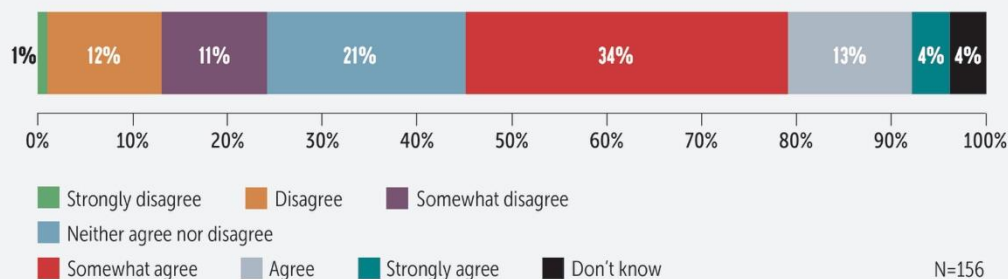
The research found room for improvement on the alignment of recruitment to other people processes such as succession planning, assessment and development of high potentials, and onboarding. For example, only 52% of respondents to the CRF survey reported that their organisation assesses external hires and identifies 'high potential' employees using the same or similar criteria.

A second key recommendation for the HR function, therefore, is to **view resourcing as an integrated, end-to-end people process that connects seamlessly with other people processes**. Some key questions to consider are:

- What does your organisation do with data gathered about a candidate during the recruitment process, once they've joined? For example, do you use it to improve onboarding?
- How does external recruitment connect with succession planning? Do you include external candidates or have external talent pipelines?
- Do you use similar criteria for assessing the potential of external candidates and internal hipos? Should you?

The research found that the selection methods organisations are using are rarely highly effective at predicting which candidates will be the highest performers:

Figure 14: To what extent would you agree with the following statement: 'The methods used for assessing candidates in my organisation are highly effective at predicting who will be the highest performers.'

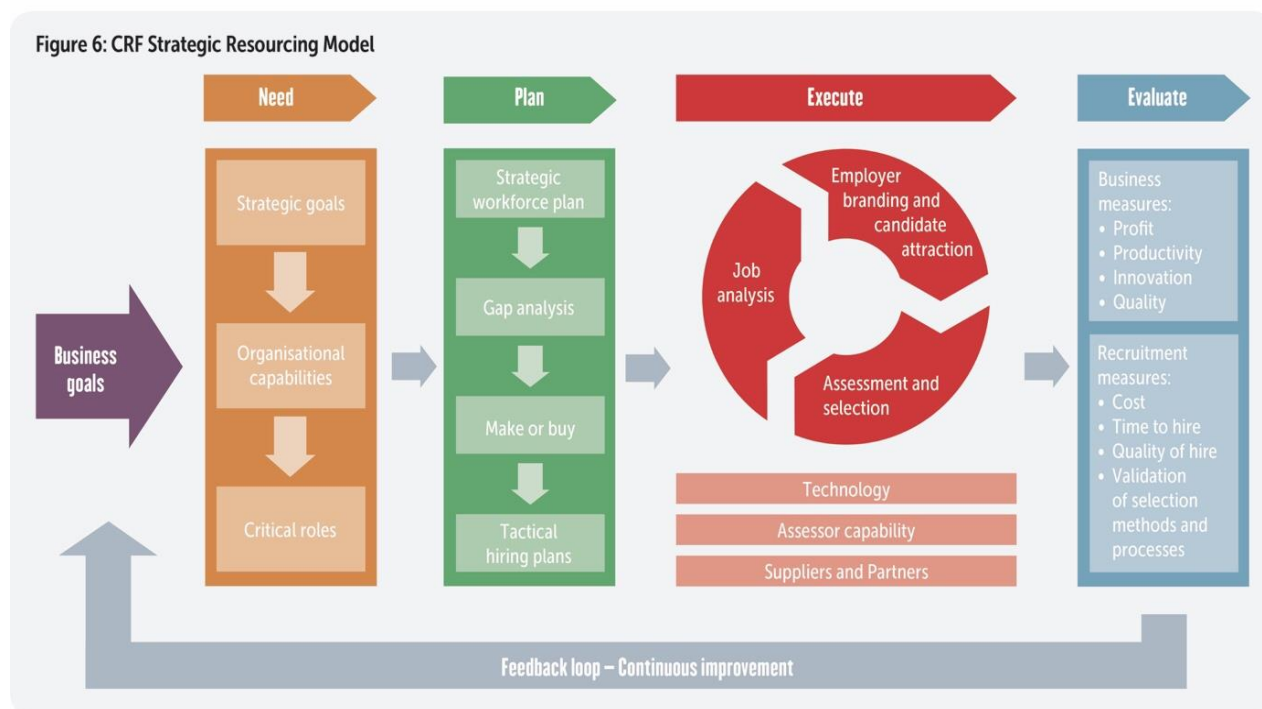


Source: CRF member survey, May 2018

A third key recommendation for the HR function, therefore, is to **build a robust, science-based approach to resourcing**. To do this, organisations must:

- Build a robust methodology and apply it consistently - balancing accuracy, cost, fairness, and user experience in pursuit of business goals
- Develop an evidence-drive process underpinned by job analysis
- Invest in assessor quality- formally train your assessors; assess and update the training
- Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate- monitor outcomes in order to improve the process.

The CRF Strategic Resourcing Model is a diagnostic tool organisations can use to guide their development of a science-based, strategic resourcing strategy that is closely aligned to the business strategy and integrated with other people processes:



**Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic** shared his insights on the 'war for talent'. It is perhaps better conceptualised as a 'war on talent', as evidenced by the following:

1. Employee engagement is very low- about 30% at those companies that actually measure engagement.
2. There is a high number of passive job seekers in today's employment market.
3. There has been a general rise in self-employment, even though the self-employed typically work longer hours, earn less, and contribute less overall to the economy.
4. Entrepreneurship rates have increased.

Generally speaking, while twenty years ago talent sought positions at blue-chip companies such as Unilever, and ten years ago talent wanted to work at tech giants such as Google and Facebook, today talent wants to be the next Mark Zuckerberg or Elon Musk.

This all suggests that there is too much job market inefficiency. The gap between supply and demand must shrink, and HR has a role to play. Despite a well-established science of talent, there is still too much reliance on intuition in recruitment. To move from intuition to evidence-based assessment, HR must get the basics right:

1. Measuring performance- Organisations today are awash with data, but not all data can or should be used. Generally, there is more and clearer data applied with a higher level of rigour for lower-level positions in organisations (for example, Uber drivers). Data for higher-level positions is lower in quantity, less robust, and less rigorously applied. Organisations should focus on acquiring usable performance data for roles throughout the organisational hierarchy.
2. Measuring potential- The core dimensions of potential are universal— ability, likability, and drive. There is a lot of excitement about innovative talent tools that harness new technologies such as AI or gamification. They may offer advantages in terms of speed, cost and candidate

experience, but are based on old methods and assess the same core dimensions of potential:

**Figure 18: A comparison between old and new talent identification methods**

Old methods	New tools	Dimension assessed
Interviews	Digital interviews Voice profiling	Expertise Social skills Motivation Intelligence
Biodata	Big data (internal)	Past performance
Supervisory ratings		Current performance
IQ		Intelligence
Situational judgment test Self-reports	Gamification	Job-related knowledge Big Five personality traits or minor traits
Self-reports	Social media analytics	Big five personality traits and values (identity claims)
Resumes	Professional social networks	Experience Past performance Technical skills Qualifications
References	(LinkedIn)	
360s	Crowdsourced reputation / peer-ratings	Any personality trait Competencies Reputation

Source: Adapted from Chamorro-Premuzic *et al.*, 2016

3. Remember that progress is incremental. HR has moved from a scientific to a bureaucratic to a strategic era and may now be on the cusp of an AI-driven revolution. But all progress is built on previous foundations.

## **Case study 1: Unilever**

**Melis Melikoglu** took us through Unilever's new graduate recruitment process. Unilever's challenge was to update an iconic global approach that had an outdated, lengthy process to manage a huge volume of applicants for few roles in a changed talent market. Unilever saw this as a real opportunity to disrupt the recruitment process. They developed a three-stage process.

- Stage 1: After supplying only minimal personal details (no CV, no cumbersome application form), candidates move immediately to a series of gamified assessments. The games assess cognitive, social, and emotional factors and provide immediate feedback to candidates.
- Stage 2: Those who are successful at Stage 1 move to a second stage based on digital interviews. The interviews are powered by artificial intelligence which evaluates candidates based on speech patterns, voice-generated emotions, and facial gestures.
- Stage 3: Those successful at Stage 2 are invited to a one-day immersive 'discovery centre' which includes interviews with senior leaders and a series of bespoke job simulations. Candidates are made an offer or rejected by the end of the day and receive immediate feedback.

Developing the new process was cost- and time-intensive, and there were implementation challenges around change management and ambiguity, but it has been very successful:

- The candidate application completion rate has increased from 50% to 96%
- The time to hire has been reduced by 15%
- More than 90% of candidates give positive feedback regarding the process, ranging between good and excellent
- Hiring managers are very satisfied, reporting that the process is easier and leads to faster decision making
- The process has thus far saved Unilever over 1 million euros.

Unilever also busted some myths along the way:

- 'Candidates don't like assessment. Gamification is a fad and has no reliability or validity'. – Candidate feedback has been very positive, but sample size and data quality are essential for

AI-powered tools to work effectively. It is also important that gamified assessments are fun to complete and that feedback is personalised and instant.

- 'Assessment leads to poor quality candidates and a lack of diversity'. – Unilever has found just the opposite.
- 'Humans recruit better than technology'. – Unilever has found digital interviewing so successful that they are rolling it out globally, with questions adapted for experienced hires.
- 'Technology means you lose the human touch'. – Unilever has again found the opposite. Personalised feedback is key to this.

## **Case study 2: Red Bull**

**Adam Yearsley** discussed the convergence between HR and marketing. Both are about influencing choice. At Red Bull, marketing influenced HR to:

- Think of employees not as 'human resources' but as **collaborators** who choose to apply their skills in your company.
- Recognise that employees are **conscious consumers** of HR products; if they aren't adopting they are exercising choice and it is essential to respect this.

Like all organisations, Red Bull's challenge is to balance finding the right people (a key HR task) with providing a positive candidate experience (a key imperative for brand image). Red Bull incorporated psychological and marketing principles into the development of their interactive assessment tool, Wingfinder.

Wingfinder identifies a candidate's strengths across four areas— connections, thinking, creativity, and drive. All candidates take the assessment as part of the Red Bull selection process, though it is also available to the general public. The assessment uses psychological research to predict the likelihood of employability and career success in knowledge-based jobs. Using images rather than text, and with a dynamic visual design, the assessment is more engaging and allows a rich dialogue with test-takers, compared to traditional text-based assessments.

The tool helps candidates self-select. Wingfinder is designed to encourage the 'right' candidates to apply and dissuade the 'wrong' candidates from applying, while at the same time leaving all prospective candidates feeling positive about their experience with Red Bull.

**Max Blumberg** offered an answer to the fundamental question 'what does good look like?' by describing how Rentokil, the multinational services company, significantly improved the effectiveness of its 700-strong sales function by undertaking a data-driven job analysis exercise. The sales team was not reaching targets, and the CEO wanted to apply a scientific approach to solving the problem. Max supported the business in a scientific analysis of what distinguished high performing sales representatives. As well as analysing sales performance, sales managers had to rank their employees based on their potential. Max ran focus groups globally to determine the traits that distinguished the highest performers. He then tested various ability and personality tests to identify which best measured those traits.

The company then redesigned the recruitment process based on the factors the job analysis had determined were the best predictors of high performance. The company ran A/B tests to compare the old and new methods of recruitment. Sales representatives hired using the new process achieved significantly higher performance in their first 12 months – 32.9% higher in the US, 17.8% in the Netherlands, 17.6% in the UK and 16.8% in France.

Max shared some typical candidate selection issues:

- Many line managers treat recruitment processes like a tick box exercise
- There is little agreement on what high performance looks like in some roles
- Sometimes people are recruited who perform well technically, but don't really fit the organisation's culture
- Many managers are not great recruiters
- Attrition of new recruits is high
- Recruitment of tomorrow's high performers is poor
- The recruitment process may not be legally justifiable.

The Rentokil analysis led the business to redevelop and standardise the recruitment process globally and to introduce new induction programmes and recruitment and induction training for sales managers. Rentokil estimates that this work has led to a 40% increase in sales performance, and that the project has delivered a return on investment of over 300%.

One element of success was that line managers and HR leaders had ownership of the process, and the project was visibly championed by the CEO. While consultants tend to offer off-the-shelf

homogenised solutions that seldom allow companies to differentiate from each other, engaging line managers in a scientific process can encourage buy-in and prevent 'tick boxing'.

**Gillian Pillans** interviewed **Dr. Jessica Bigazzi Foster** on the subject of strategic resourcing and creating an end-to-end view of talent. Insights included:

- Typical barriers to connecting resourcing to the business strategy include inertia, the 'tyranny of the urgent' (leaders often have competing urgent needs, and resourcing often falls down the list), and clarifying who has ownership of resourcing decisions.
- Collective ownership of recruitment decisions is one strategy for linking resourcing to the business strategy. Collective ownership provides HR the opportunity to act as an influencer and to help create a common language between stakeholders (often, disagreements about candidates occur because stakeholders are using different languages).
- There are practical strategies for operationalising recruitment goals. For example, 'we need to recruit for digital skills' could involve creating specific roles and/or finding creative ways to bring new types of talent into the organisation, such as locating them in a different space or adopting differentiated incentive plans.
- There is no magic number or benchmark for striking the right balance between internal and external recruitment; it depends on your specific business needs. That said, if the balance is tilted wildly in one direction or the other, problems are likely to arise.
- One broad organisational challenge is convincing business leaders of who they need as opposed to who they want. This is not a problem that can be solved in one conversation. It requires multiple conversations, consistent messaging, and time. It is useful to help leaders understand the tradeoffs; HR is not trying to take the decision away, but to guide the conversation.
- There should be more joint conversations between talent acquisition and talent management.
- HR should engage in future-oriented planning for succession; it is easier to find talent 1-2 levels below what you need with the assumption of quick upward progression.

### **Case study 3: Citi**

**Gillian Pillans** interviewed **Syreeta Brown** about Citi's five-year journey to a new recruitment process. The imperatives of cost, employer brand, and a global talent base required them to radically

rethink recruitment. It was a huge change management and culture exercise, but change has been achieved. Today, Citi has combined 120 different approaches across different regions into one global recruitment process. Some key insights from the journey include:

- The time and cost investment was substantial but is paying off in savings over time.
- Engaging senior leaders, getting their buy in, and sharing ownership of the process was essential to its success. HR had to be willing to be the 'grit in the oyster' to enable change.
- Identifying enthusiastic stakeholders to be 'enablers' of the process was hugely beneficial.
- HR had to talk to people; there were many robust conversations because of fear around reputation and risk.
- Recruiter capabilities are changing; today's recruiters need to behave more like marketers. Building these capabilities is tough and is a work in progress.
- Today Citi uses social media to showcase the business, target job ads and mine data. They have found this cheaper and more effective than traditional recruitment marketing.

## **Case study 4: Shell**

**Ed Gunzeln** described how Shell has used scientific methods based in evidence and data analytics to improve the predictive validity of its graduate assessment process, which attracts over 100k applicants globally every year. Shell has a long history of developing talent from within – 83% of current senior leaders began their careers as graduates there. However, its longstanding graduate recruitment process had ceased to deliver desired business results – it was expensive, took too long and only 38% of successful candidates went on to be high performers. Shell has implemented a new process with the following features:

- It measures three key elements - cognitive ability, potential and personality.
- A streamlined, virtual process. All assessments are completed online or via a video interviewing platform. Applications are mobile enabled and take 7 minutes to complete on average. It's only once a candidate has received an offer that they attend a Shell office and meet Shell employees in person.
- Better matching of candidates to specific graduate vacancies.
- Reduction of time from application to offer from five months to 42 days on average.
- Higher ratio of offer to numbers of candidates at the final stage, which suggests unsuitable candidates are being effectively screened out earlier in the process.

Shell has used key learnings from implementing the new process to refine its approach.

- Candidates used to have to complete both an e-assessment and a video interview. This led to both a high candidate withdrawal rate at this stage, and it was time-consuming for internal recruiters to screen video interviews for unsuccessful candidates. The solution was to decouple the e-assessment and video interview, so only candidates who pass the e-assessment are invited to complete a video interview.
- It has added instruction videos for online interviews to improve the candidate experience.
- Candidates are matched to active vacancies at the start of the process, so the company only progresses candidates for whom there are open vacancies available, and this has reduced the volume of interviews and resulting recruiter workloads.

## **Case study 5: Thales**

**Gillian Pillans** interviewed **Chloë Touati** and **Vincent Mattei** about the organisation transformation underway at Thales and the implications for the resourcing function. Thales – a French multinational company that builds systems for the defence, transportation and aerospace sectors – operates in a market where success requires developing the capacity to adapt rapidly to technology-driven change. Thales is redesigning its organisation for agility. This has also meant rethinking the competencies Thales hires ('what' to recruit) and taking a more robust approach to selection ('how' to recruit), based on using proven methods that predict performance potential. In designing and

recruiting people to fill roles in the new resourcing team, it chose to role-model a new approach to recruitment. Candidates for recruitment roles were assessed against a new competency model, with agility and willingness to learn at its heart. The company designed a robust selection process involving ability tests, structured interviews and an assessment centre that measure the new competencies.

Chloë and Vincent shared some important lessons learned:

- You can't expect the business to buy in to a more evidence-based approach to recruiting unless you are prepared to adopt the same approach within the recruitment function. The change you are looking to achieve across the organisation has to start in your own team.
- Successfully implementing a new recruitment model requires investment in change management. It's important to engage candidates in the process so they understand what's being assessed and why and are more likely to accept the outcome.
- If you want your recruiters to adopt different recruitment techniques, you have to invest in their retraining. This is not just a one-off event and requires continued monitoring, support and feedback.

Throughout the day, there were many Q&A sessions, opportunities to ask questions, and a closing panel discussion. Some highlights from these sessions are summarised below.

- **Question:** What practical steps can organisations take to improve senior leadership's satisfaction with the resourcing process?  
**Answer:** Hire competent HR people and get senior leader buy-in.
- **Question:** What general factors should one look for when hiring?  
**Answer:** Some technical skills are usually helpful, learning ability is important, the importance of social skills is increasing, and motivation is important- although, with motivation, it should be the 'right amount', not 'as much as possible'.
- **Question:** Are there practical steps for reducing bias in recruitment?  
**Answer:** This often involves removing biographical information on candidates, so recruiters have to focus on gathering objective evidence.
- **Question:** How can candidate experience be improved?  
**Answer:** Give feedback. It is neither kind nor ethical not to give candidates feedback, and now with new technologies there is no excuse for not doing so. Giving feedback will enhance employer brand.
- **Question:** What are some 'do's' for taking a strategic approach to resourcing?  
**Answer:** Commit to it being a long process based on rigorous criteria; there are no shortcuts. For example, if using the CRF Strategic Resourcing Model as a guide, pay attention to all of the boxes and to the connections between parts. Each piece must be fully engaged.
- **Question:** There is a great focus on Millennials in today's job market, but what about attracting older people?  
**Answer:** Identify places to go to find those groups that you are trying to recruit. For example, McDonald's was known as an employer of teenagers and young adults but used targeted media to recruit older adults and mothers returning to work. Organisations can also focus on simple, easy-to-use design in application platforms and assessments in order to attract candidates of any age.
- **Question:** What is good practice when training assessors?  
**Answer:** Have assessors explain their decisions. Invest in at least some basic training of assessors and assess that training. Do not even build a process that doesn't include assessor training, and regularly top-up training as conditions change.
- **Question:** What can less 'sexy' organisations do to attract and retain talent?  
**Answer:** Think about how you position your company's products or services; find your uniquely compelling story. Emphasise opportunities for employee impact at your company, which might be smaller at a highly sought-after employer. Articulate your company's culture but remember that it is crucial to be realistic about what your culture is actually like.