
The 4 A's of Talent Acquisition

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Introduction

The 4 A's of Talent Acquisition is a simple assessment focused on the one question hiring managers must consider when bringing a job to market: **How long will it likely take to fill this job?**

It is critical that all the questions be answered thoughtfully by all the stakeholders in the hiring process. As well, while completing this assessment the company's internal recruitment organization and/or a consulting search professional should be consulted for relevant market data.

The 4 A's Instruction Table

Instructions

Read the question and explanation in the left-hand column, marking with an X the checkboxes as appropriate. Total the number of marked checkboxes from left column and write it in the parentheses in the right-hand column.

Add the assessment values from the right-hand column and write the result in the column next to Assessment Total at the bottom of the table.

4A's Assessment Questions	4A's Assessment Scale (1-4)
Availability of Top Candidates When considering the availability of top candidates, the first target should be candidates from direct competitors. The second target should be those from related companies, partners or alliance organizations employing executives with profiles that can be commercialized seamlessly in your space. Candidates with a historically shaky career path and/or questionable performance achievements should be removed from the list of top candidates. They may be hireable but not qualified for consideration for the purposes of the 4 A's Assessment.	

<p>Priority should be given first to top candidates who are both in the region and in the market, then to those who are in the region but not actively in the market. To put it another way, what is the total availability of candidates from direct competitors regionally? Also, hiring managers must be advised on the use and practice of non-compete agreements (NCAs) that may be an obstacle to hiring direct competitor candidates. A qualified recruitment or executive search professional should be able to assist you in this.</p> <p>Lastly, is your company open to and has it budgeted for relocating top candidates into your region, thus increasing the pool of top candidates?</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region looking to make a career move? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region not looking to make a career move? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there top direct-competitor candidates available regionally? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company open to relocating top candidates? 	
<p>Accessibility & Approachability of Top Candidates</p> <p>The obvious first question a hiring manager must ask is: Who do I know can fill this role? Who can I call? And once I have exhausted my list of internal and external candidates, what tools and budget do I have available to acquire top candidates? Of the recruitment tools available, which have worked in the past?</p> <p>For hiring managers who have an internal recruitment organization at their disposal, such a resource can be a valuable tool. However, because of anti-competition laws, it may be challenging for an internal recruiter to proactively engage a top executive from a direct competitor. The fastest and most efficient path to direct competitor recruitment is likely therefore via a well-networked, outside, executive search professional. Such a professional should be able to get on the phone and go after targeted direct competitor executives who are on a clear career path, though not necessarily in the job market, who may be intrigued to hear about a new career opportunity.</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can the company get to top candidates using their existing internal and external network? <input type="checkbox"/> Can the company get to top candidates through advertising, posting and social media? <input type="checkbox"/> Do company executives have the time or does the company have an internal recruitment organization ready to source, follow up and close top candidates? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a qualified external executive search professional available who has accessibility to top candidates? 	
<p>Appealability of the Job Offering</p> <p>In the current job market, top candidates will likely have multiple opportunities to consider. Furthermore, with social media, top candidates are finding out about new opportunities hourly. For those executives who are not in the market, they will have to be incentivized with a top overall candidate value proposition (CVP). Ideally, the CVP should include a greater title, a better career path and a virtual office option. Lastly, there must be some new or unique offering.</p>	

<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company offering a greater title to attract top candidates? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company offering a better career path to attract top candidates? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the role include a virtual office option? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there an intriguing or unique offering? 	
<p>Affordability of Qualified Candidates?</p> <p>Of course, all hiring managers and internal corporate stakeholders have internal employee equity they must deal with. As a result, the goal of human resources is to stay at or below market compensation in acquiring talent. However, doing so may protract the hiring lifecycle and makes it nearly impossible to acquire top talent. Companies must consider that the cost of acquiring new talent will almost certainly be greater than the acquisition cost the old talent. While this concept runs against the human resources concept of internal equity, in direct competitor recruitment, it cannot be ignored.</p> <p>Further considerations must be given to the availability of equity, especially in instances of talent moving to a startup or ones making a lateral financial move. Having a top benefit plan can go a long way in helping with this. Top-of-the-market benefit plans with a vacation policy of over two weeks, a 401(k) with a match, and a solid medical and dental plan with small or reasonable low employee contributions all contribute to the Candidate Value Proposition (CVP).</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the compensation plan in line with the market? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the compensation plan above the market? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the compensation plan include equity? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the benefit plan better than on the market? 	
Assessment Total	
<p>Assessment Result</p> <p>Position Most Likely to Fill Fast</p> <p>Position Likely to Fill at Market</p> <p>Position Will Fill Below Market</p> <p>Position Is out of Market</p>	<p>13-16</p> <p>10-12</p> <p>9-11</p> <p>Below 9</p>

4 A's Assessment Case Studies

Case Study 1

Company: International Infrastructure Software company hiring a regional sales executive in LA.

4 A's Assessment Questions	4A's Assessment Scale (1-4)
<p>Availability of Top Candidates?</p> <p>X Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region looking to make a career move?</p> <p>X Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region not looking to make a career move?</p> <p>X Are there top direct-competitor candidates available regionally?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the company open to relocating top candidates?</p>	(3)
<p>Accessibility & Approachability of Top Candidates?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can the company get to top candidates using their existing internal and external network?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can the company get to top candidates through advertising, posting and social media?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do company executives have the time or does the company have an internal recruitment organization ready to source, follow up and close top candidates?</p> <p>X Is there a qualified external executive search professional available who has accessibility to top candidates?</p>	(1)
<p>Appealability of The Job Offering?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the company offering a greater title to attract top candidates?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the company offering a better career path to attract top candidates?</p> <p>X Does the role include a virtual office option?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is there an intriguing or unique offering?</p>	(1)
<p>Affordability of the Candidate?</p> <p>X Is the compensation plan in line with the market?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the compensation plan above the market?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the compensation plan include equity?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the benefit plan better than on the market?</p>	(1)
<p>Assessment Total</p>	(6)
<p>Assessment Result</p> <p>Position Most Likely to Fill Fast</p> <p>Position Likely to Fill at Market</p> <p>Position Will Fill Below Market</p> <p>Position Is out of Market</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">13-16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10-12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9-11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Below 9</p>

Case 1: 4 A's Assessment Brief

The offering is below-market, includes only marginally better compensation and benefits, would be a lateral financial move and offers no exciting value proposition and no career path growth. It comes as no surprise that this role has been open for over 6 months.

Positives: The company is solid financially, with a decent client base and a virtual office option.

Recommendation: The fastest fix is to increase compensation and benefits to above market and offer equity.

Case Study 2

Company: Start-up security software SaaS offering in voice Bio-metric identity space
3-year-old company in the top third of the market in cash compensation with a very unique value proposition.

Recent hiring history: 12 executives in 6 months in sales, operations and client services.

4 A's Assessment Questions	4A's Assessment Scale (1-4)
Availability of Top Candidates? X Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region looking to make a career move? X Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region not looking to make a career move? X Are there top direct-competitor candidates available regionally? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company open to relocating top candidates?	(3)
Accessibility & Approachability of Top Candidates? X Can the company get to top candidates using their existing internal and external network? X Can the company get to top candidates through advertising, posting and social media? <input type="checkbox"/> Do company executives have the time or does the company have an internal recruitment organization ready to source, follow up and close top candidates? X Is there a qualified external executive search professional available who has accessibility to top candidates?	(3)
Appealability of The Job Offering? X Is the company offering a greater title to attract top candidates? X Is the company offering a better career path to attract top candidates?	(4)

X Does the role include a virtual office option? X Is there an intriguing or unique offering?	
Affordability of the Candidate? X Is the compensation plan in line with the market? X Is the compensation plan above the market? X Does the compensation plan include equity? X Is the benefit plan better than on the market?	(4)
Assessment Total	(14)
Assessment Result Position Most Likely to Fill Fast Position Likely to Fill at Market Position Will Fill Below Market Position Is out of Market	13-16 10-12 9-11 Below 9

Case 2: 4 A's Assessment Brief

This company offers a great CVP (Candidate Value Proposition) and above-market employment offering. This company will continue to fill mission-critical positions fast.

Recommendation: None

Case Study 3

Company: Top-tier wealth-management company

Position: Senior wealth management officer-NYC

40-year-old, big name, top-of--market company

4 A's Assessment Questions	4A's Assessment Scale (1-4)
Availability of Top Candidates? X Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region looking to make a career move? X Is there a high enough number of top candidates in the region not looking to make a career move? X Are there top direct-competitor candidates available regionally? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company open to relocating top candidates?	(3)
Accessibility & Approachability of Top Qualified Candidates? X Can the company get to top candidates using their existing internal and external network? X Can the company get to top candidates through advertising, posting and social media? X Do company executives have the time or does the company have an internal recruitment organization ready to source, follow up and close top candidates?	(4)

X Is there a qualified external executive search professional available who has accessibility to top candidates?	
Appealability of The Job Offering? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company offering a greater title to attract top candidates? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the company offering a better career path to attract top candidates? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the role include a virtual office option? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there an intriguing or unique offering?	(0)
Affordability of the Candidate? X Is the compensation plan in line with the market? X Is the compensation plan above the market? X Does the compensation plan include equity? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the benefit plan better than on the market?	(3)
Assessment Total	(10)
Assessment Result Position Most Likely to fill Fast Position Likely to fill at Market Position will fill below market Position is out of market	13-16 10-12 9-11 Below 9

Case 3: 4 A's Assessment Brief

The company is at the top of the market and competes against other companies who are also at the top of the market. In addition, the company from time to time has to overcome restrictive employment documents and Non-Compete Agreement issues (NCA's) with top direct-competitor candidates. The company has a great brand but, in the end, offers the same job with just a different business card. There is no new compelling Candidate Value Proposition, but the company has recently raised cash offers above the market. Still, some positions have taken too long to fill.

Recommendation: The company should consider relocating qualified executives into their region. This would increase the candidate pool and reduce the issues around NCAs. In addition to increasing cash offers, this company needs to consider offering other incentives such as sign-on bonuses, a guaranteed first-year bonus, and executive deferred compensation. More importantly, the company should strive to hire the next up-and-comer. In doing so, there will be more candidate interest around a greater job title and a rising career path.

Conclusion

Considering the 4 A's prior to commencing an executive search will enable the hiring manager to take a fast snapshot of what to expect around the time to hire. Moreover, it will give the hiring manager the opportunity to make changes before embarking on what could turn out to be a below-market and protracted talent-acquisition initiative.

LHI Executive Search along with our NPA worldwide partners would be happy to provide you with a complimentary 4 A's Assessment Analysis around your mission-critical talent acquisition needs.

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