Big Data and The Art of Scientific Interviewing

Setting the right expectations with the candidates and having the right set of analytical platforms would allow any organisation to improve its recruitment process.

Like me, if you are into soccer, there aren't many ways to describe how bizarre the current season of English Premier League is. Leicester City, a club that was last year fighting for survival and was in the last place, is seven points clear and the favourites to win the league, while billion dollar mega franchise clubs like Manchester United, Chelsea and Liverpool are struggling in the mid table.

All over the world pundits, punters and analysts have their head scratching. Nothing can better describe Leicester's season than a dream run. But on a closer look, you know that's not the truth. Since narrowly escaping relegation last May, Leicester City has done what can be best described as sound recruitment decisions. Players like Riyad Maharez, N'Golo Kante' and Shinji Okazaki were recruited from ordinary clubs, but soon they became pillars of change. But more interestingly, none of these players were in the radar of any other major clubs. So, are these big clubs spending wisely?

What the story of Leicester indicates is that for every candidate that you recruit, there always is tens or hundreds of better candidates. Your organisation's size, revenue or your recruitment budget doesn't indicate that you can acquire and retain the best talent. Often candidates are hired on subjective observations and intuition (best described as "gut feelings").

Now this is a reality that HR managers and directors around the world have been privy of for a long time. But lately, this blind side is getting attention. Thanks to big data analytics tools! A combined study by Jibe and Beamery highlights that 71 per cent of recruiting professionals see analytics as a high priority in recruiting success.

Data-driven recruiting

Every time the recruiter is into the talent pool looking for the right candidate, it can best be described as being lost in an endless library hunting for the best book in the universe. Today, enterprises can leverage enterprise grade predictive analytical models to identify talented candidates. The objective is to inculcate data mining best practices to create a huge talented candidate pool.

On having the necessary depth in terms of access to talent, they can go a bit further to screen the candidates based on their qualifications, experience, certifications and more. Having an analytics system undergo the screening process and analysing the resumes would mean that you are removing certain human factors like logical fallacies and confirmation biases from the process. That is not to indicate that an automated system wouldn't have its faults, though they would tend to have better accuracy and reliability than conventional models.

The art of scientific interviewing

Interviews are time-intensive and crucial in any recruitment. As an interviewer, you probably have 20-30 minutes to understand if a candidate is the right person for the job. Not making use of this time can be disastrous for your team and the enterprise in a long run. Harvard Business Review points out that 80 per cent of employee turnover is due to bad hiring decisions. This makes the utilisation of the time extremely important. For that you have to ask the candidate the right questions.

Imagine a candidate walks through the door. You have a web-based application that has all the details necessary for the interview on your laptop. It has his/her qualifications, experience, achievements and also a list of questions that you should ask to get things started.

In fact, this application is integrated with an analytical tool that can parse through historical data and ongoing trends determining the right questions that would assert whether the candidate is as good as he/she claims to be. Not to mention, the application records all responses which can be fodder for future intelligence during interviews. An interesting update in the future would mean the application can record candidate's response and throw questions based on them. Welcome to the era of scientific interviewing.

Finding the right candidate is imperative for any organisation. Setting the right expectations with the candidates and having the right set of analytical platforms would allow any organisation to improve its recruitment process. No matter how small they are. After all it was good players that have led Leicester City to the top of the Premiership Table.

*The article is authored by **Manish Soota**, VP-Pre-Sales & Solutions, **CIGNEX Datamatics***