

# Action Research on Talent Recruitment of Guangzhou Zz Cross-Border E-Commerce Company

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## Abstract

This study investigates the talent recruitment challenges faced by Guangzhou ZZ cross-border e-commerce companies in the process of rapid expansion in the international market. This study uses qualitative research methods to answer two key questions: What are the current problems in the recruitment strategy practice of ZZ company? How to adopt better strategies and techniques to improve talent acquisition efficiency. The study aims to determine that ZZ companies' heavy reliance on traditional recruitment channels makes their recruitment inefficient, resulting in job requirements that do not match the qualifications of specific candidates. The paper proposes strategies to improve recruitment efficiency and access to high-quality candidates, such as using broadening recruitment channels, improve recruitment efficiency and so on. In addition, these strategies point the way for the company to achieve future growth by implementing a cohesive approach to staffing. The results of the study will provide practical suggestions for SME talent recruitment in the field of cross-border e-commerce.

**Keywords:** Talent Recruitment, Cross-Border E-Commerce, Recruitment Strategies, Talent Acquisition

## Introduction

Guangzhou ZZ Company is an emerging cross-border e-commerce startup that mainly relies on internet platforms such as TikTok and Amazon to develop international markets. Through these platforms, ZZ companies can not only rapidly expand overseas markets but also build closer connections with consumers around the world. With the continuous development of business, ZZ company's demand for high-quality and adaptable talents is becoming increasingly urgent. However, as a startup, ZZ faced some challenges and difficulties in the recruitment process.

First, due to its small size and limited brand influence, ZZ companies often do not have the advantage to compete with larger companies when attracting high-quality talent. In addition, the particularity of the cross-border e-commerce industry requires employees to have a specific international perspective, cross-cultural communication skills, and the ability to adapt to market changes quickly. However, fewer candidates can meet these requirements in the actual recruitment process, and even qualified candidates may have higher expectations regarding salary and development prospects. As a result, ZZ companies face severe challenges in finding and retaining talented people suitable for business development.

In view of these problems, this study will adopt the action research method. Through the continuous evaluation of the existing recruitment process, this study will help ZZ company identify the main obstacles in the recruitment process and explore improvement strategies, so as to develop a more efficient and adaptable recruitment plan, and help it to timely supplement talents meeting the needs of cross-border e-commerce industry in the process of rapid expansion. Promote the long-term development of the enterprise.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What are the current issues of recruitment strategies in the practices of ZZ company ?

RQ2: How to adopt better strategies and methods to improve the efficiency of talent acquisition.

### **Research Objectives**

The main purpose of this study is to deeply understand and analyze the problems in the recruitment practice of ZZ Company through action research and put forward a series of operational optimization schemes.

RO1: To analyze the issue recruitment strategies in the practices of ZZ company.

RO2: To introduce more recruitment tools and strategies to improve the efficiency of talent acquisition.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Talent recruitment*

Recruitment is a vital function of HRM that involves looking for, attracting, identifying, and selecting the right manpower to ensure that the organization works to achieve its aims and objectives. This section of the literature review will explore the main theories, the empirical studies that are out there, and the current practices in recruiting talent. The paper will highlight changes to a few new concepts, for instance, advanced technologies, globalization, and shifting workforce dynamics.

### **Talent Recruitment Theory**

#### *Person-Environment Fit Theory*

The Person-environment fit theory, articulated by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), posits that recruitment success is contingent on the alignment between an individual's characteristics and the organizational environment. This concept highlights the significance of aligning candidates not just with the job specifications, but also with the company's culture and principles. Doing so can boost job satisfaction and improve performance.

### *Signaling Theory*

Signaling theory, introduced by Spence (1973), suggests that job seekers rely on various signals from potential employers to make application decisions. These signals include job advertisements, employer branding, and the recruitment process itself. Effective signaling can attract high-quality candidates by conveying a positive image of the organization and the opportunities it offers.

### **Empirical Studies**

#### *Job Advertisements and Applicant Attraction*

Breaugh and Starke (2000), found that the content and clarity of job advertisements significantly impact the quality and quantity of applicants. Detailed job descriptions that clearly outline responsibilities, qualifications, and benefits tend to attract more qualified candidates. Conversely, vague or generic job postings can lead to a mismatch between job requirements and applicants' skills.

#### *Employer Branding*

Employer branding has emerged as a crucial factor in talent recruitment. Collins and Stevens (2002) demonstrated that a strong employer brand enhances job seekers' attraction to an organization. Employer branding efforts, such as showcasing organizational culture, values, and career development opportunities, can differentiate an organization in a competitive labor market and attract top talent.

### **Technological Advancements in Recruitment**

#### *Online Recruitment Platforms*

The advent of online recruitment platforms has revolutionized the recruitment landscape. Platforms such as LinkedIn, Indeed, and Glassdoor provide employers with access to a vast pool of potential candidates and offer tools for targeted recruitment campaigns. Research by Girard and Fallery (2011) highlights that online recruitment can streamline the hiring process, reduce costs, and improve the quality of hires.

#### *Artificial Intelligence and Recruitment*

Artificial intelligence technology has revolutionized recruitment methods by streamlining and improving different parts of the hiring process. Tools driven by this technology can effectively sift through resumes, evaluate how well candidates match the job, and forecast their potential job performance.

### **Globalization and Talent Recruitment**

#### *Cross-Cultural Competencies*

The worldwide expansion has ramped up the battle for skilled workers, making it crucial to emphasize cross-cultural skills during hiring. Companies active in global markets are looking for people who have a deep understanding of international markets and are culturally aware. Tarique and Schuler (2010) emphasize that global talent management practices, including international recruitment strategies, are essential for attracting and retaining talent in a globalized economy.

### *Remote Work and Talent Access*

The shift to working from home, which gained speed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, has opened up the talent pool to include people from all over the world. Companies can now hire individuals from various places, using remote work tools to include them in their business activities. A study by Mas and Pallais (2020) found that remote work flexibility is increasingly attractive to job seekers, making it a vital consideration in modern recruitment strategies.

## **Contemporary Recruitment Strategies**

### *Data-Driven Recruitment*

Analyzing data is now a fundamental part of today's recruitment plans. Companies rely on data to spot trends in talent, improve their hiring methods, and forecast the results of their hiring efforts. Research by van Esch, Black, and Ferolie (2019) suggests that data-driven recruitment can enhance decision-making, improve hiring efficiency, and align recruitment practices with strategic goals.

### *Candidate Experience*

The candidate's experience is a critical determinant of recruitment success. A positive candidate experience can enhance an organization's reputation and increase the likelihood of attracting top talent. Conversely, a negative experience can deter potential applicants and damage the employer brand. Studies by Hausknecht, Day, and Thomas (2004) indicate that transparency, timely communication, and respect throughout the recruitment process are crucial to fostering a positive candidate experience.

## **Start-Ups and SME Strategies**

Start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are key to growing the economy, coming up with new ideas, and creating jobs. The study looks at the strategies these businesses use, exploring important ideas, factors, and current challenges. By bringing together related research, the study hopes to give a full picture of the strategies these businesses face.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

### *Resource-based View*

The Resource-based view (RBV) posits that the strategic resources a firm controls are critical to achieving competitive advantage. This perspective emphasizes the importance of unique resources, capabilities, and competencies that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). For start-ups and SMEs, leveraging these unique resources can be essential for differentiation and growth.

### *Dynamic Capabilities*

Dynamic capabilities refer to the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). This framework is particularly relevant for start-ups and SMEs, which often operate in volatile markets and must continuously adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

### *Entrepreneurial Orientation*

Entrepreneurial orientation encompasses the processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to new entry (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). It includes dimensions such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. A strong entrepreneurial orientation can enhance the strategic agility of start-ups and SMEs, fostering innovation and competitive positioning.

## **Strategic Approaches**

### *Market Entry and Expansion*

Strategic market entry and expansion are crucial for the growth of start-ups and SMEs. Entry strategies can include niche market targeting, leveraging digital platforms, and forming strategic alliances (Covin & Slevin, 1991). Internationalization strategies, such as exporting and foreign direct investment (FDI), are also critical for scaling operations and accessing new markets (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004).

### *Strategic Alliances and Partnerships*

Forming strategic alliances and partnerships can provide start-ups and SMEs with access to resources, knowledge, and markets that would be otherwise inaccessible (Gulati, 1998). Collaborative strategies enable these firms to leverage complementary strengths, share risks, and enhance innovation capabilities.

### *Resource Acquisition and Management*

Securing and managing resources well is crucial for start-ups and small to medium-sized businesses to keep going and expand. This includes securing financial capital, human resources, and technological assets. Strategies such as bootstrapping, venture capital, and crowdfunding are commonly employed to address financial constraints (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

## **Contemporary Issues**

### *Digital Transformation*

The digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for start-ups and SMEs. Adopting digital technologies can enhance operational efficiency, customer engagement, and market reach (Nambisan et al., 2019). However, the digital divide and technological obsolescence pose significant hurdles.

### *Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*

Sustainability and CSR have become integral to the strategic agendas of start-ups and SMEs. These enterprises are increasingly adopting sustainable practices and engaging in CSR activities to enhance their brand image, comply with regulatory requirements, and meet stakeholder expectations (Jenkins, 2006).

### *Talent Management*

Attracting and retaining skilled talent is crucial for the success of start-ups and SMEs. These firms often face competition from larger enterprises for top talent and must employ innovative human resource strategies to build a capable and motivated workforce (Cardon & Stevens, 2004).

## **Research Method**

This study used qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These methods were used to gain insight into ZZ's current hiring practices, identify existing shortcomings, explore potential improvements, and design a long-term talent pool mechanism.

### *Semi-Structured Interview*

The semi-structured interview method was conducted with key stakeholders of ZZ company, including the CEO, HR manager, operations manager, marketing manager, finance manager, customer service manager, and company employees. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to explore all aspects of recruitment in depth while ensuring that the discussion focuses on the core questions of the study. Each interview focused on the perspective of each manager's department, particularly how they approach recruitment within their department, and collected their views on recruitment strategies, challenges, and personal opinions. In addition, interviews were conducted with employees involved in the recruitment process to understand better their roles, involvement, and feedback on current recruitment practices.

### *Focus Group Discussion*

The focus group discussion invited senior executives from three similar small and medium-sized cross-border e-commerce companies to participate. The group included the CEO, the HR manager, the marketing manager, the operations manager, the finance manager, and the customer service manager. They talked in a group to get a wider view of the industry and to discuss what they think and do together, especially about hiring people. They talked about their plans, what works best, and the problems they have getting good workers.

### *Data Analysis*

The paper analyzed the information from guided interviews and group talks by sorting it into codes, finding main points, and grouping the answers to the questions. The main subjects were the usual problems in hiring, how to make finding good workers faster and better, and how to create a lasting system for having a group of skilled people to choose from.

## **Research Findings**

### *Single Recruitment Channel*

An investigation into ZZ Company's recruitment practices indicates that the company heavily relies on outdated traditional recruitment methods that do not meet the demands of the modern job market. The over-reliance on traditional recruitment websites and offline channels has led to a lack of innovation and diversity in their recruitment strategies. This narrow approach fails to fully leverage modern recruitment channels for broader coverage and engagement opportunities. Additionally, the company has not yet fully utilized cross-border e-commerce platforms to attract international talent and provide a global perspective on the recruitment process. The absence of a multi-channel recruitment strategy not only limits the company's ability to attract a diverse pool of candidates but also puts the company at a competitive disadvantage in the talent acquisition market.

### *Lengthy and Inefficient Recruitment Process*

ZZ Company's recruitment process is deemed too lengthy and inefficient, particularly in resume screening and interview scheduling. The current resume screening process heavily depends on manual operations by the human resources department, which not only consumes a lot of time but also results in inefficient matching between candidates and job requirements. This manual approach is prone to errors and does not effectively utilize technology to streamline processes. Consequently, the hiring cycle for some key positions has been unnecessarily extended, causing the company to miss out on potential top talent who might have accepted a competitor's faster hiring process. Inefficient interview scheduling further exacerbates the problem, as it delays the entire hiring schedule and can lead to a poor experience for the candidate, potentially discouraging qualified individuals from pursuing opportunities at ZZ Company.

### *Unclear Talent Demand Positioning*

ZZ Company's recruitment process is hindered by a lack of clear and specific talent positioning, which affects the company's ability to attract and retain the right candidates. The company has failed to segment talent needs across different functional areas such as technology, marketing, and operations. This results in overly general job descriptions that do not resonate with job seekers who are looking for specific opportunities that match their skills and career aspirations. A lack of clarity about the skill requirements, salary ranges, and career paths of different roles can confuse job seekers, leading to a mismatch between their expectations and what the company has to offer. This lack of clarity not only hinders the hiring process but also negatively impacts the company's employer brand, potentially preventing top talent from considering ZZ Company as an employer of choice.

## **Recommendations for Action**

### *Broaden Recruitment Channels*

To adapt to the ever-evolving job market, ZZ Company must expand its recruitment channels beyond traditional recruitment information publishing platforms. While platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed remain essential, the company should harness the power of popular social media platforms like TikTok and BOSS Zhipin, where many job seekers are active. These platforms offer a more dynamic and engaging way to reach potential candidates. Additionally, ZZ Company can establish partnerships with universities and technical training institutions both domestically and internationally. By developing talent training programs that focus on cross-border e-commerce and digitalization, the company can attract top graduates in these fields. This strategic approach not only diversifies the talent pool but also ensures that the company is at the forefront of industry trends and technological advancements.

### *Improve Recruitment Efficiency*

ZZ Company needs to streamline its hiring process by embracing technology. Implementing AI-driven resume screening can significantly improve the efficiency of the initial candidate selection phase. By using intelligent algorithms to analyze resumes, the company can quickly identify the most qualified candidates, reducing the manual workload of HR personnel. Additionally, an intelligent interview scheduling system can automate the process of scheduling interviews, thereby reducing recruitment time and improving the overall candidate experience. The company should also utilize self-optimizing algorithms for job postings and skills-matching filters to identify only the most suitable candidates. This approach minimizes

the number of applications and resumes for less critical roles, allowing HR departments to focus on more strategic recruitment activities.

### *Precise Talent Positioning*

To attract the right candidates, ZZ Company must refine its talent targeting strategies. Each position should have clearly defined talent needs, with precise skill requirements and a clear career path. A detailed job description with specific responsibilities, qualifications, and expectations will help attract well-matched candidates. Additionally, competitive salary and benefits packages should be designed to reflect the value of each position and the company's commitment to employee satisfaction. By providing a clear understanding of what the company expects and what candidates can expect in return, ZZ Company can effectively attract and retain top talent.

### **Conclusion**

An in-depth analysis of ZZ Company's recruitment process reveals the main factors behind recruitment inefficiency and employee turnover and provides options for optimization strategies. Among the various strategies used by ZZ Company for recruitment improvement, diversifying recruitment channels, utilizing AI technology for resume screening, and accurately positioning job needs can lead to improved recruitment effectiveness, the acquisition of high-quality talent, and the provision of reliable talent support needed for cross-border e-commerce business.

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