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the difference between talent acquisition and recruitment.

Talent acquisition and recruitment: two related concepts that are hugely significant for any organization targeting sustainable growth and success. At first glance, it might seem that these terms have the same meaning, but in fact there are significant differences between the two.

To ensure your HR function is operating as effectively as possible, and your business is prepared to overcome its biggest challenges and seize opportunities, it's vital to understand the distinctions between talent acquisition and recruitment.

recognizing the differences

On the most fundamental level, the differences between talent acquisition and recruitment are connected to time. Talent acquisition is about taking a long-term view of how you can equip your organization with the skills and experience it will need to continue performing and delivering results into [the future](#). Recruitment is a more immediate, reactive process, essentially focused on finding candidates to fill roles that are currently available.

Effective talent acquisition is heavily reliant on strategy and planning. Before embarking on a talent acquisition project, it's important to prepare by doing some research on the current position your business is in, and where it's likely to be at a given point in the future. This level of understanding will help you understand your talent requirements and inform your preparations for finding and acquiring the people you need.

Recruitment can prove just as vital to maintaining the health and productivity of your organization, but rather than a strategic, long-term

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approach, it depends on efficiency and decisiveness to ensure you are making the right hiring decisions for your immediate needs.

Another useful way of conceptualizing recruitment and talent acquisition is to think of the former as linear, with a clear end point, and the latter as a cyclical, ongoing approach to anticipating your future needs and building up a pipeline of talent.

when to recruit and when to acquire talent

Simply put, you need to recruit when you have a vacant role that needs to be filled as soon as possible. Recruitment is about making sure your business has the human resources it needs to function on a day-to-day basis.

When you set out to recruit a new employee, it's likely you will have a clear idea of the sort of person you're looking for and the key skills they should have. One of the most common scenarios companies face is having to find a replacement for someone who has left. In this situation, you will know exactly what tasks and responsibilities the new recruit will have to take on, and the experience and attributes they will need to do the job properly.

Talent acquisition is a more in-depth process that comes into play when you are looking at the bigger picture of how your business wants to grow and evolve in the years to come.

There is a good chance you will need to come up with a talent acquisition strategy if you operate in a niche marketplace and require very specific skills and expertise in your workforce to succeed. One of the clearest examples of this is the tech sector, where firms that can't innovate and evolve with the times will be left behind.

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Kathleen Quinn Votaw, founder and CEO of HR consulting firm TalenTrust, told [Jobvite](#) that talent acquisition strategies are most important in industries with the greatest skills shortages.

“Overall, we’re seeing the competition for top talent continue to heat up, and skills shortages are part of the fuel,” she said. “A technology firm seeking developers, for example, may need an overall talent strategy around strong culture, unique benefits, and enhancing and leveraging its employment brand.”

Securing [long-term leadership](#) of your organization could also depend on effective talent acquisition. An experienced leader who is about to retire or move on to another company will be difficult to replace with short-term recruitment, but if you are prepared with a strong talent acquisition strategy, your next leader could be ready and waiting.

Similarly, if you are planning to expand into a different market or will soon embark on a major new project, you might need to give some serious thought to the vital skills and experience that will help you succeed.

Another important consideration for businesses today is [employer branding](#), which is closely linked to talent acquisition. Having a strong, attractive brand can make you more attractive to talented candidates, who in turn can boost the profile and appeal of your organization if they choose to join you.

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Jill Larsen, senior vice-president for talent acquisition at Cisco, [recently spoke to Randstad](#) about the company’s strategic efforts in this space. One of the points she made was how important it is for brands to differentiate themselves to attract talent.

“We’re doing a lot of different things with our brand to make Cisco more accessible to talent,” she said. “We’re talking to many different audiences

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with relevant messaging. We have to because we're competing with start-ups, with incubators, as well as some large companies, for critical talent and skills."

With such clear differences between these two concepts, there should be little doubt about when you need to recruit and when you should be focused on talent acquisition. Finding the most effective and reliable strategies in both areas will help your business overcome its challenges and prepare for the future.

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