TMi
G R O U P

How to hire talent in large
numbers when its distributed
across multiple locations
at low cost-per-hire without
comprising quality of hire?

A white paper on

multi-location large scale hiring

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Background

Most large scale recruitment projects are complex to deliver for the sheer numbers to be hired in specific timelines. However, the complexity of the project can increase exponentially if the following parameters are included:

Multi-location – An organization with presence in multiple locations vary (selection criteria, assessment methods etc) in the the way they hire in each of these zones. Making it extremely difficult, if the recruitment project mandates hiring only local talent for local requirements. Availability of talent across regions is not homogenous and so each territory needs to be approached differently.

Simultaneous hiring – Another dimension which will stretch your resources as you are expected to simulataneously focus on requirements of multiple locations. Demanding large pool of resources and increasing cost-per-hire.

Distributed hiring – Yet another parameter that troubles project manager maximum. As it requires them to interact with local teams of the organization for completing the recruitment process. At most large organizations, branch units typcially have their own unique way of working though receive directions from the corporate office.

Any recruitment project which is outsourced is typically measured aginst the expectations as listed below:

- Speed – What is the average turn-around-time for the hires to be on board?
- Cost – Is the cost-per-hire reduced?
- Consistent Quality – Are the hiring process adhered to? And is there an audit to ensure the requirements are met?
- Service – With great insights and consulting approach, do the recruitment partners add value to the project?

TMI Group recently executed a large scale, multi-location, distributed hiring project for an insurance major. This white paper details our approach, uniqueness, lessons learnt and the impact of the project. Documenting the key learnings of this project, we believe will be of immense value to anyone managing in such projects.

Project Background

Life Insurance in India is a fast growing industry. And a majority of the insurers realize that a strong pan-India presence (including local areas) is key to their growth. Our client, a reputed group in the country chose to achieve annual growth targets equivalent to the growth achieved over 7 years. And so, it had aggressive expansion plans.

We educated our client on the effectiveness of ur Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) services. As a solution to tap all the sourcing channels by following a "standard recruitment process". Along with robust technology to enable online tracking & real-time monitoring. And received top management's buy-in.

Of all recruitment projects, hiring sales personnel for the life insurance industry is a tough one. Primarily because, a majority of individual pursuing such careers have failed. And also,
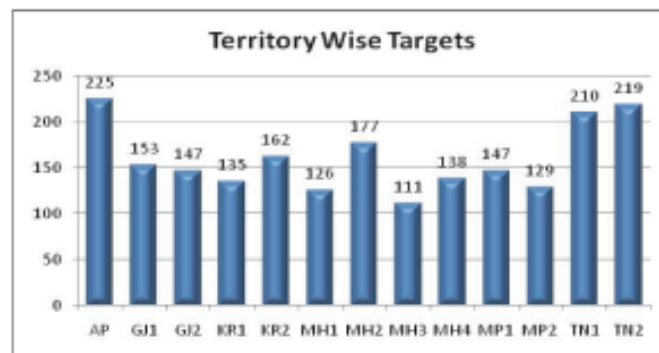
because Sales Managers are at the lowest levels of heirarchy on the insurance company rolls. Typically, their role involves recruiting a team of insurance advisors to sell insurance products. Perceived as an extremely tough job, most candidates prefer to give it a go over pursuing it. So, the challenge at hand was to sell "insurance careers" and not just manage a recruitment project.

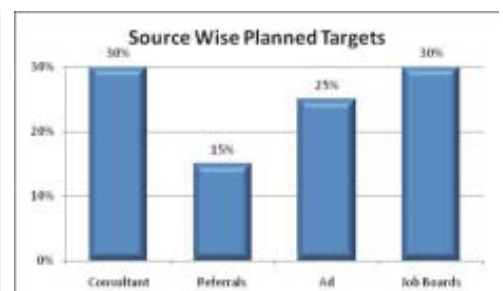**The project specifications were as under:**

- Recruit 800 Sales Managers
- Across 8 States & 165 branches (targets broken by branches with "son of soil" requirement)
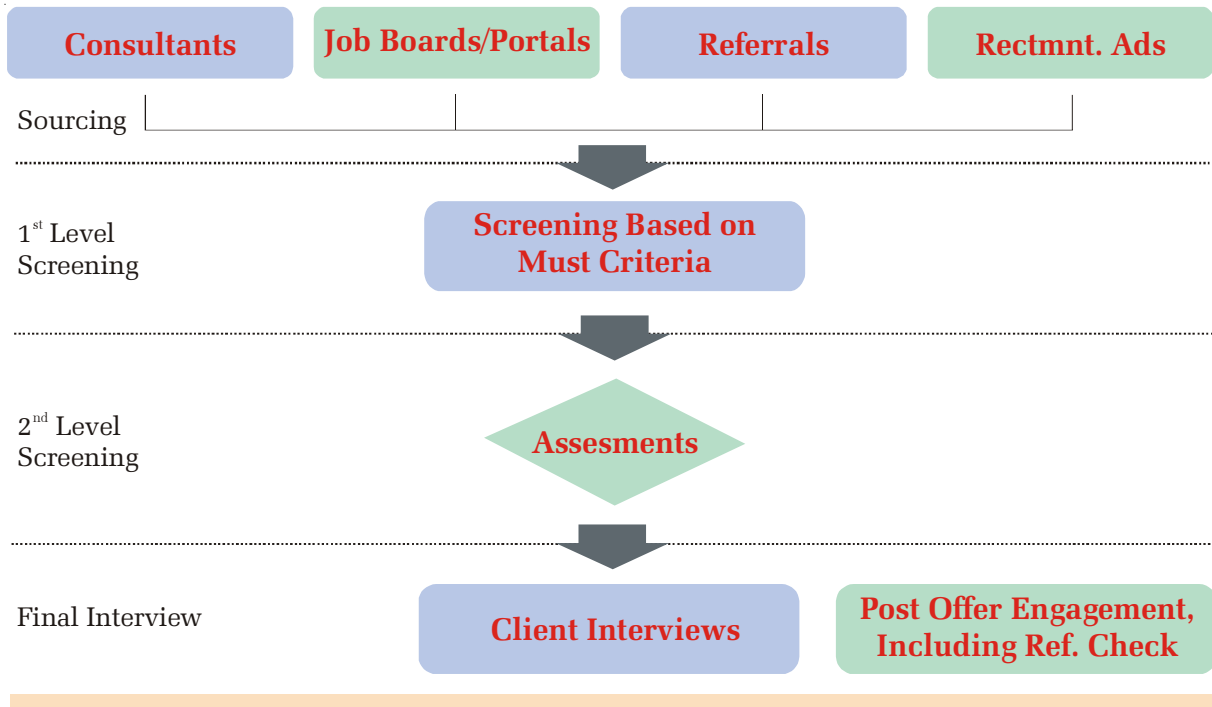- Provide resources within 4 months time.

Project Plan

We suggested the client that this project would need to tap all available sourcing channels and source wise targets were planned. Suitable project plans were prepared and approved by the client. The planned source wise percentages & monthly targets were as under:

Process

The recruitment process planned & agreed with the client is as under:

	Consultants	Job Boards/Portals	Referrals	Rectmnt. Ads

Sourcing

1st Level Screening — Screening Based on Must Criteria

2nd Level Screening — Assesments

Final Interview — Client Interviews | Post Offer Engagement, Including Ref. Check

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Scope of Work

- Media strategy & design of all creatives for advertisements & communication material

- Sourcing, through
  a) Consultants
  b) Through Referrals
  c) Job Boards
  d) Advertisements

- Response Management
- Resume Shortlisting
- Assessments
- Interview Coordination
- Offer & Joining coordination

Numbers Achieved

Territory Wise Numbers Achieved

	AP	GJ1	GJ2	KR1	KR2	MH1	MH2	MH3	MH4	MP1	MP2	TN1	TN2
Target	225	153	147	135	162	126	177	111	138	147	129	210	219
Actual	225	167	167	119	156	171	168	132	169	156	123	194	192
% age	100%	109%	114%	88%	96%	136%	95%	119%	122%	106%	95%	92%	88%

Monthly - Planned v/s Actual

	March	April	May	June	July
Planned	300	600	600	300	
Actual	408	481	423	271	155

The above chart clearly indicates that we met region wise requirement of >90%, except in 2 locations. Finally, against an initial target of 1800 the number achieved was 2139 sales managers.

We were to meet 1800 numbers in 4 months, against which we recruited about 1600. The delay resulting due to the novelty of the RPO concept, and more efforts on educating the entire client team, existing consultants on the roles & approaches.

TMI Group's Approach

Feb
- Project kick off-6th
- Mail to BSLI consultants from Corp HR-18th; 9out of 602 responded
- Lack of internal clarity on RPO role & expectation mismatch
- Advertisements released in Mah, TN, Ker & Guj - response poor
- Cvs from Job Boards downloaded and mailers sent - response poor

Mar
- RPO scope & role clarified internally by Project Head -1st
- RPO Team sent across locations for consultant activation - 105; All the Pms were met and specific requirements understood
- Leaflets designed, printed and distributed through paper inserts, malls, areas frequented by sales persons
- Candidates Kits & Consultants Kits prepared and distributed

Apr
- Cvs from Job Boards downloaded & given to consultants for local folow up
- PMO wise field team and back end team assigned
- Added 80+ new consultants to work on the project
- Senior members of RPO trained the staff of Consultants on Insurance Industry
- Consultant invoicing verification process through RPO

May
- Consultants Meets held in various locations along with the local Pms by Senior members from RPO; Mementos for Best Performers given
- During such events, Pms could explain what they are looking for in candidates
- Classified ads released and leads passed on to consultants
- Delays in payment of consultant in voices

Jun
- RPO team in HO (Mumbai) to help streamline consultant in voice process
- Fiedl team at PM Offices to input in voices in to the TPV
- Tracked consultant payments and resolved isues

Value addition for the client

Besides meeting the numbers we have added value to the client on the following dimensions:

- Enabled process adherence across locations
- Website set up for candidates to apply online and for answering their queries
- Call centre set up for candidates to call in – contacted over 24000 candidates over phone & for preliminary assessment
- SMS gateway helped in reaching the candidates in a fast, sure & unobtrusive way (sent out about 50,000 sms). SMS gateway also used for 2 way communication and for assessing "call to action" of the candidates.
- 207 active consultant base for the client
    a. Designed & distributed consultant kits
    b. Conducted road shows for the consultants and trained their teams on how to hire for insurance industry (sell Sales as a career, then insurance as an industry and then the company)

Speed 2000+ hires in 4 months 165 locations across 8 states		**Cost** Cost per hire less by 20% than budgeted
	What we achieved?	
Quality Process consistency across locations Employer branding & candidate engagement		**Service** 95% numbers met in 95% locations 207 active consultant supply chain built for client

    c. Shared job board CVs with them
    d. Released classified advertisements & passed on leads to them
    e. Included rewards & recognition for top performers
    f. Presented mementos to all consultants for contributing to the success of the project.
- Cost-per-hire reduced by 20% leading to savings in excess of Rs. 60 lacs
- Employer branding material (click here for details)

Challenges Faced/Lessons Learnt

- Distributed hiring projects need local partners to ensure conversions – Needs extensive travel to locations and local coordination. We have now built an extensive network of local consultants & sourcing partners.

- Centralized hiring needs strong back end to screen – Increases interview hit rates. Else, results in ineffecient use of interview panel's time.

- Client expectation setting & management critical to success - Lack of understanding of the role of RPO internally with the client team.

- Centralization of post-offer and post-joining engagement to ensure efficiency and result in decrease of drop-out ratio. There is a lot of post-offer activities which need to be coordinated better.

- Sharing of best practices across different territories

- Sourcing approach different in different territories – Reliance on any one source for candidates would be disastrous. The drop-out rates at each stage of the recruitment process is very high, and adequate buffers need to be planned & pipeline has to be sufficient.

- Concerns of consultants that RPO will use their data and lack of understanding – Took us a lot of time & effort to get the buy-in of the existing consultant base.

- Delays from client-side in sending consultants mails & direction about first working with the existing consultants.

- Low response from job boards & to advertisements – While there are enough number of profiles available on the job boards, this is mainly restricted to tier 1 & 2 cities. Further, conversion levels were very low, and face-to-face meeting with the candidate is required to sell insurance careers.

- Candidate referral is another important source, specially in the insurance industry.

- Different interpretations and expectations from the candidates in different locations.

Conclusions

Large scale, distributed hiring, in a given time line although tough, is achievable provided you ensure the following:

- Local sourcing partners/consultants. You need a consortium of consultants spread across the required locations. This is particularly critical in the insurance industry due to the perceptions of candidates that an insurance sale is very difficult.

- Candidate referral program – You have to target to obtain atleast 2-3 references from each candidate. This particular source has higher conversion rates as the candidates are aware of the industry and are encouraged by their friends.

- Project management – While this sounds obvious, keeping daily tabs on multiple locations, simultaneously will demand that you have your processes, systems, templates, trained team with required resources "ready".

- Technology – Not having a technology supported project management is a nightmare and makes the processes unauditable. Rejected candidates will seep through and you will not be able to certify the source of the candidates.

- Client support – With such large projects, on certain ocassions across few locations, the objectives seem to vary. So, you need an influential project leader from the client side, and from the RPO services proviing team.

Once you take care of the above, a consortium backed RPO solution for such projects yield the following benefits:

- Meet distributed number requirements
- Reduce cost-per-hire
- Develop consistent processes across all locations & hence quality
- Opportunity to build a robust MIS making necessary corrective actions to be data-driven
- Enhanced candidate engagement (this is almost forgotten in such large recruitment projects) enables positive inclination towards the company
- Gain right employer branding through each communication with the candidate.