

Hiring Freeze mistakes, and how to avoid them in 5 steps

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The COVID-19 health crisis has shaken many companies and industries lately. Nobody imagined that their supply chain could be severely affected overnight, and/or their sales could plunge by up to 80%.

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Obviously, one of the first consequences is personnel reduction, and many companies choose to immediately move to “hiring freeze” mode, completely stopping their talent acquisition processes.

However, we have to remember that this crisis, like all of them, will not last forever and once we return to normal (or rather, to a new normal), companies will have to be better prepared in terms of talent to be able to climb the recovery hill successfully. The worst scenario after the crisis we are experiencing, is to get out of it and not be ready to start again at full steam!

Here are 5 tips on how to deal with this situation and avoid making the most common mistakes of a “hiring freeze” mode:

1. Distinguish critical from non-critical hires

A critical position is one that puts a company's basic operational continuity at risk. Divide your vacancies into two groups: critical and non-critical. The premise is simple: critical hiring must continue, while the rest can go into a “pause” status.

2. Stop the hiring, not the process!

The most common mistake faced with a hiring freeze is to completely halt candidate mapping, attraction, and assessment efforts. The key is to continue the process and pause at the time of hiring. If this crisis will last for a couple of months, it will take twice as much to start from zero a recruitment process for the positions that were left on hold, and that could be devastating for an already suffering business. Continue with the process of identification and attraction, even prepare and internally approve the offer letter to extend it at the right time.

3. Clarity and transparency, above all

For this strategy to work, there is only one way: be clear and transparent with the candidates. Explain that the selection process will continue (in a virtual way, evidently), the phases of it (very important) and that the hiring will take place once the company determines that the contingency has passed. The vast majority of candidates will be willing to wait. You'll be surprised!

4. Plan A and Plan B

At IMSA Mexico, we always recommend our clients to reach to the end of the process with a candidate A and a candidate B. If candidate A does not accept the proposal or we lose it in the final stage, we'll then be ready to continue with candidate B. This strategy becomes particularly relevant for a postponed-hire tactic.

5. Seize the opportunity

Remember that every crisis represents opportunities for some industries. Sectors related to shipping and delivery, online learning, grocery stores and remote access technologies, among others, will hire thousands of people derived from the contingency. Bottom line: the war for talent continues for everyone, and we must continue the battlefield identifying the best players to bring them to our court at the right time. If your recruiting department seems to be “idle,” this is a good time to do silent mapping of positions that are often difficult to attract and create talent intelligence that will surely come in handy later.

Above all things, we wish that you and your families and collaborators are well. We're all in this together!

Best Regards from the entire **IMSA Mexico**,
Lizette Ibarra



With over 19 years of progressive experience in recruiting and talent acquisition, Lizette has occupied throughout her career strategic positions in the area of Human Capital for various multinational companies such as Eastman Kodak Company, Johnson & Johnson and was previously a partner of an international executive recruiting firm in San Diego, CA. An Industrial Relations major by the ITESO, NLP Master, Certified Diversity Recruiter and Six Sigma Champion, Lizette has successfully recruited more than 120 executive-level searches and has contributed to the placement of more than 2,500 professionals during her career.

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