



Large Scale Staffing Initiatives: What To Do First

Following are observations made by Laurie Ruettimann, reporting for Dice, the leading job board and recruiting network for technology and engineering professionals.

Check out more of Dice's coverage from [ERE Expo Fall 2010](#)

Have you been asked to lead a large-scale staffing initiative? Do you wonder what is expected of your talent acquisition team as you embark on this new project?

Ed Davis and Kelly Penry of United Airlines addressed these questions and more at the 2010 Fall ERE Expo. Their session was titled, "[Strategic Staffing: Processes to Help You Deliver on Difficult and Highly Visible Talent Acquisition Projects.](#)"

Ed and Kelly are in the midst of a comprehensive merger between United Airlines and Continental Airlines. While there is not much overlap in the new organization when it comes to flight routes and airline staff, there is some overlap in the corporate arena. Positions are changing, some jobs are moving and the new company must increase staff in certain areas to meet future customer demands.

Ed has been a leader in the staffing field for more than 25 years and believes that planning is critical to any staffing endeavor—large or small. There are multiple planning strategies on the market, but he grabs a page out of the world of manufacturing, recommending that your staffing strategy should be fast, high quality or inexpensive. Pick two and get to work.

Kelly, who began her career in 2002 as a corporate recruiter for the Tribune Company in Chicago, noted that recruiters are more than just recruiters – they are sourcers as well. She asks her recruiting team to take ownership of the sourcing strategy as a way to create a vibrant, diverse and engaged talent pipeline. A good sourcing strategy leaves no stone unturned, and Kelly's team actively reaches out to alumni communities, furloughed workers and former employees.

During highly visible talent acquisition projects, Ed and Kelly agree that recruiters should become project managers. Ed believes that service level agreements (SLAs) are important to hiring managers and weekly meetings with top leaders are critical.

The session leaders were quick to point out that they are advocates of technology, but Ed and Kelly delivered a message with an “old school” vibe. They didn’t glorify the offerings of social media as a solution to complex talent acquisition projects. At one point, Ed shocked the audience by saying, “Cost-per-hire and time-to-fill are still relevant metrics.”

As the saying goes—everything old is new again.

View the [Seven Steps of Strategic Staffing slideshow here](#).