



Successful Recruiting in India

5 Pitfalls to Avoid!

India...

The sub-continent today offers fascinating opportunities that our clients are keen to take hold of.

India is a kaleidoscope of diversity and is still pretty much unknown and therefore an object of myths. So what are the real snares to avoid when one carries out strategic recruiting in India, recruiting which can make or brake success in business?

Here are 5 pitfalls to avoid, 5 pieces of advice to follow:

- 1. North India or South India?**
- 2. Castes and Company culture**
- 3. Self-Marketing**
- 4. *No problem!***
- 5. Speed without haste**

1. North India or South India?

There are a number of social, religious, linguistic and cultural differences... and in particular a cleavage between North and South India

- *These Western clients of ours, in the course of setting up a JV with an Indian Company, were planning to build a plant in the Southern part of the country. We were selecting profiles for them when plans changed and they decided to settle in Northern India instead... Would Southern candidates be culturally fit for the project? We assessed each one and made recommendations to our clients. Today, they are trusting us with new search mandates in both India and other countries*

Successful recruiting involves having the capacity to assess whether a 'different' manager will be accepted by his team members and whether he will be able to obtain their collaboration

2. Castes and Company culture

There is a change in mentalities due to intense urbanisation and to positive discrimination laws conducive to a 'smoothing' of castes. However, this ancient omnipresent social hierarchy is not about to disappear soon

- *In the course of an interview, our clients were troubled by an Indian candidate's references to the meaning of numbers and concluded he was « superstitious and that it was not good in terms of castes relationships». We respectfully pointed out to our clients that this was the case of virtually all Indians. These follow a calendar showing 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' days and they call upon a fortune-teller to know when is a good time to travel or sign a contract*

A Western manager would face other relational challenges. A Brahmin - of the 'superior' caste - will always be respected whatever his rank is in a Company. We act as advisors keeping in mind our clients candidates integration into their Company culture without direct opposition to their customs and without making abstraction of a very vivacious caste system

3. Self-Marketing

India's best qualified professionals know there is now a huge demand for their talent in a very dynamic employment market and they are rightly ready to seize every opportunity for professional advancement. Some clients of more conservative cultures (e.g. Latins) may misunderstand some Indian candidates mixed anglo-saxon style for 'pushiness' – and miss on good ones...

- *One client did not feel comfortable with a candidate's CV which he felt was "too self-marketing orientated" and contained "too many superlatives". He became suspicious by what he thought was "a constant hammering of results". How to discern between facts and assertions? We have specialist partner companies carry out verifications on candidates claims and we take up references in order to minimise the risk of unpleasant surprises*

Apart from our knowledge of remuneration packages by industry sector and area as well as quality of training offered in different schools, we benefit from extensive Indian networks in both India and abroad. We also ask candidates questions demanding precise answers as to what means they set in motion in order to achieve their concrete results, with mention of deadlines

4. No problem!

You will often get this as an answer to various demands. Does this always mean that there is no problem? Nothing is less certain but an Indian person will not lose face – and one should not make them lose face... *No problem!* is rather a declaration of intent that the person will do everything in their power to meet your request

- *Some clients wonder how they may discern between intent and the real capacity of candidates to achieve a project, solve a problem, integrate into a team or carry out an assignment in a different cultural or climatic environment*

Main qualities looked today for are (a) behavioural, e.g.: the capacity to adapt, to work as part of a team, to own a problem and commit to solving it, to be result-orientated... and (b) managerial: managing, motivating loyalty in and developing teams, offering quality reporting... Without candour nor an inquisitive spirit, we think we ask the right questions in view of submitting a good selection of candidates suited for our clients projects

5. Speed without haste

Operations or Human Resources Directors doing business in India place demands on their partners, namely for them to find adequate profiles within deadlines in harmony with the dynamic pace of this market - without sacrificing anything to the quality of the selection

- *One of our clients shared with us that « the current challenge for managers in India is to retain talent” . How, therefore, do you attract and retain Indian talent?*

We make every effort in order to select candidates who will stay and evolve within their new Company. We shed light for our clients on differences in behaviour as well as on expectations of candidates and advise them on incentives they offer them

ACCETIS International is an Executive Search firm which has been in its core business of direct approach for some 20 years. Its 200-strong staff works in 11 wholly-owned subsidiaries placing candidates in 30 countries in Europe, North America, China and India. We are specialised in middle to senior management profiles with different functions in the industry sector as well as distribution and services.

ACCETIS International offers the same level of quality of service in both Western and Asian countries with a structured process of direct approach – keeping a close and long-term relationship with its clients.

Major Groups and Western SMEs intending to launch or develop their activities in India call upon our proven know-how and intercultural experience for the recruitment of their managerial and strategic roles.

Danièle SCIALOM develops ACCETIS International business in India where she lived for 7 years. She carries out Executive Search assignments for Western Companies having operations or projects in the country. An English/French bilingual, she also knows Tamil and her experience of the culture and economy of the Indian sub-continent – as well as her extensive network of Indian talent in India and internationally - makes her a much appreciated partner by both our clients and candidates. If you wish to position yourself as a candidate or as an actor in your industry sector in India, please contact her via:

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