

# Centralize or Decentralize Recruiting? The Answer is Neither and Both

## Strategic emphasis calls for a “Center of Excellence” approach

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Anyone who has watched recruiting functions closely over the last 20 years will have observed companies’ deployment models shift from centralized recruiting, to decentralized recruiting, to HR generalist-based recruiting, to a ‘shared services’ model, and back to decentralized models. The constant shifting of strategies indicates clearly that the problem of finding the right talent at the right time cannot be solved through structural reorganization.

While all of these approaches have their pros and cons, the most optimal methodology for recruitment delivery is very much dependent upon each organi-

zation’s unique business needs, work style, and staffing needs. But, in all cases, core recruiting competence does not improve simply by changing the deployment model alone.

We have seen poorly-implemented models on all sides of the centralized-decentralized continuum. Decentralized functions can deliver some ‘close-to-the-client’ advantages, but often sacrifice many of the key efficiencies of centralized recruiting. Centralized functions can deliver greater efficiencies and cost savings but often fall short on effectiveness at the critical points of client engagement and service delivery.

And hybrid models of the two often look contorted, delivering many of the disadvantages of both with few/none of the advantages.

In today’s talent market, with demographic shifts, changes in work style preferences, talent market skills shortages, constantly shifting recruiting priorities within companies, and competition for rare and critical talent escalating between companies, excellent recruiting is no longer a mere operational requirement. It is a strategic necessity.

To help our clients gain the competitive advantage in recruiting, particularly in talent-scarce markets, we have helped them envision, design, and implement “Center of Excellence” based recruiting functions. The Recruiting COE approach offers a matrixed deployment model that centralizes recruitment strategy, operational (‘backroom’) framework, and methodology, while pushing the delivery system and engagement methodology out into the businesses. In short, the COE can offer the best, not the worst, of the centralized and decentralized models. And, the model provides complete flexibility and scalability that is often absent in more traditional deployments.

### Building A Recruiting Center of Excellence

The Center of Excellence model is not new to our clients in technology and scientific industries. When designed and implemented correctly, a COE seeks to organize around pockets of knowledge and expertise, not around the traditional hierarchical structure.

A COE delivers some key advantages that accommodate the main advantages of central and decentralized models. It allows central delivery of core, shared recruitment services, but also enables local delivery of business-specific recruitment services. It allows space in the recruiting function for projects that drive standardization around best practices across the enterprise, yet allows for business-specific adaptation and customization based on the differing needs of each business unit. A COE offers great process efficiency and clear structure, but is architected with fungible resources and delivery models that can shift on a dime to react to sudden changes of demand or business strategies.

A COE also offers a clear structure for efficient deployment and effective delivery.

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For instance, all operational elements that fit the following criteria should be centralized: shared IT systems such as ATS, RMS, and automated assessment tools; shared delivery methodologies and best practices; benchmarks, measures, and analytics; recruitment support/administrative functions; candidate sourcing and generation; university and other programmatic recruiting initiatives, and enterprise-wide selection standards and practices.

Delivery of recruitment consulting services, on the other hand, such as manager

rectly into business needs, goals and results. The COE model maintains the flexibility for local, regional and national delivery, while setting standards and implementing best practices across the entire enterprise.

Many organizations start slowly with a COE. Their initial focus may be at the transaction level and, once perfected, they move their efforts to higher impact activities. Others start with improving their service delivery and work backwards to the operational core.

**T**here's a great deal of flexibility with building a recruiting COE, in terms of how it is structured, where to begin, who to involve and when to engage. To learn more about DoubleStar's approach to developing a Recruiting Center of Excellence call 888.719.9311.



## The Roles and Responsibilities of a Recruiting COE

### Key COE Recruitment Functions:

- Strategic Staffing Planning
- Technology Optimization
- Recruitment Metrics Generation
- Employment Branding
- Marketing Collateral
- Research and Benchmarking
- Executive Recruiting
- University Relations
- Candidate Generation/Sourcing
- Vendor Management
- Process Standards & Practices
- Recruiter Development
- Candidate Care Support
- ERP Program Management

### Key Business Unit Recruiting Functions:

- Demand Forecasting
- BU-Specific Resourcing/Planning
- Recruitment Process Execution
- Manager Coaching
- Candidate Generation/Sourcing
- Advocate BP/BOE Standards
- Reporting and Analysis

engagement, coaching, needs analysis, etc. are best accomplished within the business units, and these should be deployed within the business, not from a central location. This assures the proper level of line manager coaching, higher levels of process advocacy, better candidate care, higher close rates, and close links with the business units that are critical to effective recruitment project and workforce planning.

Simply stated, a Recruiting COE provides the operational framework to drive adaptation of enterprise-wide best practices. It is an ideal way to tie the function di-

## The Future is Now

Forward-thinking organizations have already begun to make the shift toward a more matrixed delivery model that incorporates the "best" of both centralized and decentralized models. As c-level leaders are asking for more talent management information and data, the inefficiencies of prior models will no longer be tolerated.

We are on the verge of a quick revolution that will drive a COE-like approach for organizations that truly understand

the impact of talent on the business and want to leverage the asset as a competitive advantage. For those who execute well, the COE approach will yield unprecedented talent acquisition and management success.