Resourcing: Enhancing Efficiency and Revenue

Client Background:
The client is the German subsidiary of a UK-based customer services company with global presence in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The German subsidiary had a workforce of approximately 7,500 employees, including 5,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs).

Challenge:
The German business faced a significant challenge, as it was experiencing a monthly revenue loss in the seven-digit range due to inadequate resourcing for customer projects. The primary issue was an inefficient resourcing funnel, spanning from demand planning to onboarding and early retention. It was crucial to address this challenge promptly while considering financial constraints that ruled out immediate wage adjustments.

Execution:
The project's execution involved a comprehensive analysis to identify key areas for improvement that would yield swift and substantial bottom-line results. The primary focus was on reducing reliance on temporary and agency hires in favor of nearshoring and internal sourcing. While this approach resulted in a short-term increase in cost per hire, it proved advantageous in the long run by enhancing operational margins. Key improvement measures included:
- **Enhanced Integration:** Talent Acquisition was integrated into project pitches, fostering transparency throughout the project pipeline.
- **Refined Employer Branding:** A robust non-financial benefits and culture-focused employer branding strategy was developed.
- **Strategic Marketing:** Local marketing campaigns were optimized across social media and offline platforms.
- **Recruitment Team Realignment:** The recruitment team's responsibilities were restructured to enable more decisive decision-making.
- **Retention Focus:** Efforts were directed towards improving retention by reducing fixed-term contracts.
- **Streamlined Processes:** The number of candidate touchpoints was minimized, and process efficiency was improved, including the elimination of mandatory CV submissions.
- **Data Utilization:** Existing financial and recruitment data were merged and visually represented to enhance decision-making for both business leadership and Talent Acquisition management.

Results:
The project yielded several significant outcomes:
- **Cost Reduction:** Operational costs per FTE were lowered, contributing to improved margins.
- **Higher Hiring Rate:** The hiring rate exceeded 90%, ensuring a steady influx of new talent.
- **Enhanced Productivity:** Recruiters' productivity experienced an appreciable increase.
- **Enhanced Conversion:** The conversion rate from project pitches to actual projects was notably improved.

By redefining resourcing strategies and enhancing the efficiency of the resourcing funnel, the German subsidiary successfully mitigated revenue losses, optimized resource allocation, and established a more agile and productive workforce.

Employer Branding: Creating Consistency

Client Overview:
The client is a global fashion consumer brand with a substantial retail and production presence, employing around 25,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs).

Challenge:
The client faced a significant challenge in maintaining consistent employer branding, candidate experience, and selection criteria across their diverse operations. This lack of consistency not only led to an inconsistent customer experience but also impacted the overall brand perception. The challenge was amplified as the consumer brand had recently undergone a global relaunch. Moreover, numerous country-specific retail stores were operated by business partners who weren't obliged to adhere to corporate people practices.

Execution:
To address these challenges, a strategic approach was undertaken with the involvement of the global brand marketing team:
- **Brand Bible Development:** Leveraging the expertise and resources of the global brand marketing team, a concise yet comprehensive brand bible was developed in a rapid project sprint. This approach omitted candidate personas and instead drew on the attributes of the newly relaunched consumer brand, creating a solid foundation for employer branding efforts.
- **Guidance for Business Areas**: The brand bible served as a toolkit for local retail, production, and head offices, providing essential guidance for creating consistent content and collateral. This empowered each business area to work with their local recruiting and marketing teams, as well as agency partners, to ensure alignment.
- **Collaborative Roll-out**: The brand bible was introduced collaboratively with marketing and partner management teams. This joint approach highlighted the business relevance and significance of the initiative, emphasizing the positive impact on overall operations.

Results:
The project yielded tangible outcomes that streamlined employer branding efforts and enhanced consistency:
- **Comprehensive Guidelines:** Modular and user-friendly employer branding guidelines were established for a range of aspects including job descriptions, advertisements, collateral, event appearances (such as company booths), and interviewing and selection practices. A behavioral-based question catalog was also introduced.
- **Adaptability:** The guidelines offered both core and optional, market-specific brand attributes, allowing customization while maintaining the core brand essence.
- **High Adoption Rate**: Due to the agile and focused project design, the adoption rate of the new employer branding guidelines exceeded 90%, showcasing strong buy-in from stakeholders.
- **Positive User Feedback**: Feedback from users across various business areas was overwhelmingly positive, indicating a successful alignment of the guidelines with operational needs.

Though a formal financial evaluation was not conducted due to the project's rapid nature, the project's achievements were evident through its significant adoption rate, enhanced consistency, and favorable feedback. This initiative served as a pivotal step towards establishing a unified employer brand experience as part of a global fashion consumer brand.

Onboarding Gamification: Elevating Engagement

Client Overview:
The client is the German subsidiary of an US American biopharmaceutical services company, boasting a global workforce of around 20,000 employees, with 3,000 based in Germany.

Challenge:
The existing onboarding process faced a challenge of being unengaging, static, and at times irrelevant or repetitive for certain new employees.

Execution:
To tackle this challenge and infuse a sense of engagement into onboarding, a creative approach was undertaken:
- **Gamified Onboarding App:** Collaborating with a local agency, an innovative onboarding app was developed. The app's game design was inspired by the concept of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire.' Participants were presented with various categories and had to answer randomized multiple-choice questions, with one being the correct answer. The app's flexibility allowed employees to play at their convenience, such as during commutes or downtime, encompassing pre-onboarding, onboarding, and continuous learning phases.
- **Agile Development**: Applying gamification principles, the app was constructed using the scrum methodology, enabling swift development within a six-week timeframe. Remarkably, the project was executed at a cost below €10,000.

App Features:
The app boasted several features designed to optimize user experience and engagement:
- **Anonymous Alias**: To address potential conflicts with workers' councils and GDPR regulations, users could create an alias to maintain anonymity.
- **User-Generated Content**: Users could submit questions and answers, subject to admin confirmation, fostering user engagement and contribution.
- **Leaderboards and Badges**: Leaderboards and badges were incorporated to promote healthy competition and recognition among users.
- **Data Collection**: The app tracked aggregated usage data, which proved instrumental in evaluating usage trends and subsequently refining content.
- **Versatile Accessibility**: The app was made available on platforms such as Apple AppStore, GooglePlay, and later extended to web/browser versions.

Results:
The gamified onboarding app achieved remarkable outcomes that significantly enhanced engagement and learning:
- **High Adoption**: The app garnered impressive voluntary download rates among new hires, surpassing 90%.
- **Strategic Insights**: The collected data unveiled popular categories and areas where errors were frequent, offering valuable insights for tailoring learning and development strategies.
- **Extended Application**: The app's success transcended onboarding and was subsequently implemented in the field business to engage and train remote working associates.

This innovative gamification approach revolutionized the onboarding experience, ensuring engagement, interactivity, and continuous learning for new employees. The app's impact extended beyond onboarding, contributing to the growth and development of associates throughout their journey.

Diversity & Inclusion: Reshaping Perceptions

Client Overview:
The client is the German subsidiary of a US American multinational technology corporation, boasting a global workforce of approximately 200,000 employees, with around 3,000 in Germany.

Challenge:
The company and the industry at large faced an image problem, particularly concerning its reputation as a female-friendly workplace with a balanced work-life culture. This challenge stemmed partly from the perceived difficulty of maintaining a work-life balance. The goal was to elevate image scores and attract more qualified applications from female talent.

Execution:
Addressing this challenge required a strategic and collaborative approach:
- **Collaborative Communication Strategy**: Collaborating closely with the communications team and product marketing, comprehensive communication guidelines were devised. These guidelines incorporated talking points and real-life examples that showcased the open and flexible work culture facilitated by the company's office and communications products.
- **Personalized Role Models**: Selected colleagues were chosen to serve as brand ambassadors, highlighted as role models in real-life scenarios. To maintain authenticity, the campaign utilized genuine experiences, shying away from artificially generated content.
- **Trusted Third-Party Communication**: To enhance authenticity and counter potential marketing skepticism among the target audience, the communication was primarily conducted through trusted third-party channels. Editorial content in magazines, newspapers, and even television was utilized instead of relying solely on paid advertisements. This approach not only elevated authenticity but also inadvertently disseminated valuable product information.

Results:
The execution of this innovative campaign yielded tangible outcomes:
- **Elevated Engagement**: The campaign directly contributed to a noticeable increase in applications and contact requests from the targeted female talent pool.
- **Recognition and Awards**: The campaign's effectiveness was underscored by its recognition in the form of multiple awards, attesting to its success in reshaping perceptions.
- **Sustained Impact**: The foundational principles of this campaign continued to shape the company's diversity and inclusion efforts for over a decade, creating a lasting impact.

This strategic campaign successfully transformed the company's image, establishing it as an inclusive and appealing workplace for female talent. The approach's authenticity, personalized role models, and utilization of trusted channels resonated powerfully, driving positive perceptions and engagement within the target audience.

Talent Strategy: Building a Competitive Edge through In-House Development

Client Overview:
The client represents the Japanese subsidiary of a renowned US American biopharmaceutical services company, with a global workforce of approximately 20,000 employees, including 2,000 in Japan.

Challenge:
The client faced a dual challenge in the realm of Clinical Research Associates (CRA). These professionals, vital for client projects, were only considered billable once they achieved a specific experience level. The talent market for CRAs was constrained, resulting in industry-wide cannibalization. In the Japanese context, high agency utilization and lengthy external hiring lead times further exacerbated the problem. While acknowledging the need for more billable CRAs, the company was hesitant to invest in internal development, fearing that competitors would poach a substantial portion of trained CRAs.

Execution:
An insightful analysis of market dynamics and internal metrics paved the way for a strategic solution:
- **Graduate CRA Program**: Recognizing the potential of internal development, a comprehensive graduate program for CRAs was initiated. This program aimed to nurture and groom aspiring CRAs within the organization.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis**: A rigorous calculation was performed, comparing the investment needed against the projected additional revenue generated during the training phase. This evaluation yielded a neutral-to-positive ratio, validating the viability of the approach.
- **Incremental Productivity:** Integrating CRA trainees into projects alongside experienced resources boosted productivity without incurring extra cost for clients. This approach facilitated the accumulation of billable experience for the trainees.
- **Graduate Placement**: After an 18- to 24-month incubation period, the successful CRA graduates were poised to be offered to clients as billable resources, possessing valuable industry experience.

Results:
The strategic execution of the CRA academy yielded significant outcomes:
- **Enhanced Reputation:** The CRA academy bolstered the company's reputation both within the market and among potential talent pools, portraying the company as a desirable employer.
- **Quality Alumni Pool:** The ratio of CRA graduates being hired by competitors was within the calculated range, creating a pool of high-quality alumni available for re-hires.
- **Market Share Growth:** Following the initial investment phase, the company's market share expanded as anticipated, reflecting the program's success.

By embracing in-house development, the company not only tackled the shortage of billable CRAs but also advanced its market position and industry recognition. The program's holistic approach not only cultivated skilled CRAs but also demonstrated the organization's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering growth within the industry.