



Expand & Error-Proof Your Recruitment Efforts

7 Questions to Ask Yourself & 6 Steps to Take

Talent shortage can be a significant obstacle to growth and innovation, and currently the U.S. has a record number of unfilled job openings.

In a world where location has become a relative term, here's some advice for building strong, scalable teams while still growing your business...

Talent & Growth Goals: Is Your Company On Track?

7 Questions to Ask Yourself

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|---|---|-----|----|
| 1 | Are you struggling to grow your business as quickly as you need to? | Yes | No |
| 2 | Is it a challenge to hire qualified people to help you grow and scale effectively? | Yes | No |
| 3 | Are you having difficulties retaining talented team members because they leave for your competitors? | Yes | No |
| 4 | Is finding and keeping the right talent so expensive it's limiting your growth? | Yes | No |
| 5 | Does your company require employees with skills that are niche or in high demand? | Yes | No |
| 6 | Does creating your own training programs seem to be the only way to develop staff with experience relevant to your company? | Yes | No |
| 7 | Have you tried outsourcing certain business functions to little success? | Yes | No |

If you answered Yes to four or more of these questions, you're not alone. We've all by now read dozens of think pieces about the Great Resignation, and for good reason...

At the end of November 2021, there were **10.6 million unfilled job openings** in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Highly skilled jobs are particularly hard to fill, with the need for tech talent outpacing supply. By 2026, the **shortage of U.S. engineers will exceed 1.2 million**, and technical positions are among the top 10 hardest roles to fill.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Meanwhile, remote or hybrid working seems here to stay. **73% of employees want flexible remote work options to stay, and remote job postings on LinkedIn have risen by 357%.**

Source: Microsoft 2021 Work Trend Index / LinkedIn Workforce Insights

Talent shortage in "normal times" can be a significant obstacle to growth and innovation. With these further odds stacked against us, talent shortage can be detrimental.

To solve this problem, it may be time to think outside the box. Or rather, to think beyond borders. It may be time to look internationally.

Whether you're looking to hire software developers, data scientists, cybersecurity specialists, legal and finance staff, or customer service representatives in an overseas location...

Here's some advice for where to begin.

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6 Steps to Take

One business lesson learned during the pandemic is that location is a relative term.

Global lockdowns forced companies to adapt to a new era of remote working, and now that offices are re-opening, not everyone is eager to give up their new-found location flexibility. Coupled with the fact that in the United States, the demand for talent is outpacing supply – especially for highly coveted technical skills like cybersecurity, advanced analytics and software engineering – it's become difficult to compete for well-qualified employees.

In a world where remote or hybrid working is becoming part of the norm, how can you build strong, scalable teams while still growing your business?

Here's our advice:

1. Broaden your horizons

You can't afford to constrict yourself by geography. Typically, U.S. companies will first look to hire near their HQ or in cities with existing offices before broadening their search across the U.S. then maybe looking internationally.

While overseas expansion seems daunting, especially for those that haven't yet ventured abroad, it might actually be your most sensible, cost-effective option.

And given how the pandemic has created a new remote-first work model, global teams can now collaborate as if they were sitting together in corporate headquarters.

2. Develop your criteria for the right location

Your site selection search could generate a list of two locations, or a list of twenty. You will have your own requirements based on your product/service and the location of your current/future customer base. Whatever your particular needs, there are four attributes that have made global locations worth their salt during this period of uncertainty:

A talented, flexible workforce:

Identifying the availability of required skillsets is fairly straightforward (more on that in point 4), but it's now just as important to seek staff that are flexible in the face of change. Research (and talk to) U.S. companies already operating in each location. How have they fared there over the past two years? What was their transition to remote work like, and have their teams there continued to grow?

Quality infrastructure and connectivity:

A capable workforce isn't worth much without the technological infrastructure to support it. Investigate how successful local digital infrastructure has been in facilitating remote working. Research how upgrades like fiber-optic networks and 5G are being rolled out to support Industry 4.0.

Competitive costs:

Always, of course, a factor.

Economic diversity and investment:

Explore how local government has supported business throughout the pandemic and how they're investing in industry and job growth beyond just for economic recovery. A diverse economy spanning both services and manufacturing sectors coupled with strong government support for business indicates a healthy economic ecosystem, with future potential business opportunities for your company.

3. Develop reliable partnerships to help you make the right decision

Considering a new international operation can be daunting. To start out on the right foot, **the local economic development agency should be the first call you make.**

Day in and day out, they help companies navigate their international expansions. They can help you figure out where you fit into the local market and advise on how to attract the right talent—providing tailored guidance to help facilitate and de-risk the entire process.

Once you've made your decision, they can connect you with recruiters, law firms, accountants, realtors, industry groups and whomever else is needed to make sure you've taken care of every logistical and legal detail.

The top economic development agencies will work with and support you during every step of the process. They will keep that relationship and support going even after you have established an operation in the location. They should become your trusted business partner in the region.

4. Scope out the local talent

A competent, flexible workforce doesn't appear out of thin air. Government, academia and industry should work together to develop local talent that fits the needs of business.

When assessing potential overseas locations, strategic companies examine how local government invests in workforce development and whether they've continued to during the pandemic. They also look at the strength of schools and training programs in the region, which are the keys to qualified talent.

Research the programs offered by the local colleges and universities: Are they innovating their offerings to keep up with workforce needs, offering degrees in newer industry disciplines like fintech, legal tech and cybersecurity? Will they provide a reliable pipeline of paralegals/software developers/cybersecurity specialists/compliance professionals, or whatever kind of talent it is you need?

If not, explore how the government invests in alternative workforce training programs to fill those gaps. Do they offer upskilling or reskilling programs for employees at any stage of their careers? Are they investing in skills training and apprenticeships for students about to embark on a career? These efforts indicate strong investment in a future talent pipeline.

5. Once you've decided on your location, pick the right site lead

Companies expanding overseas must pick the right site lead. This person will establish, nurture, maintain and grow the business in your new market. The individual will represent your organization, its DNA and its culture.

The site lead is the single most important hire during a site selection process. Whether the choice is to recruit someone locally to provide in-market expertise or send someone from HQ to embed the culture first then recruit a second-in-command to take over after 2-3 years, weigh the decision carefully. It is often the difference between success and failure.

6. Confirm you're set up for long-term success

When it comes to economic development agencies, not all support is created equal. Financial assistance and tax incentives are common in many locations, but the key to success is finding an agency that takes a more consultative approach.

Ideally, the agency's support won't stop after the initial investment. Ask lots of questions after their pitch, not only about what logistical support they can provide when you're first expanding, but also about who specifically will be there for you after the initial "sale." Will they continue to help you after you've been in the location for 2, 5 or 10 years – helping you move from initial investment through to company growth through to (potentially) R&D and new product commercialization in the region?

The need to seek talent elsewhere is becoming increasingly necessary given the competitive hiring landscape in the U.S. As a result, businesses of all sizes – from multinationals to high-potential start-ups – are looking beyond borders to close the widening talent gap.

The smartest companies approach this process strategically.

They make the right initial decision for them, quickly and effectively navigate their new environment, then utilize their investment to not only fulfill talent needs but also to grow their business, service new markets, and innovate their product offerings.

Make sure you're one of them.

If you're contemplating international expansion, consider Northern Ireland, the region of the UK that's uniquely located on the island of Ireland.

Why Northern Ireland

More than 1,100 international firms have already discovered **Northern Ireland is the ideal location for business expansion.**

It's one of the fastest-growing tech clusters in the UK and ranks globally as a location for software development, cybersecurity and fintech teams.

70% of new investors choose to re-invest, continuing to grow teams in the region following initial set-up.

Companies benefit from our:

- Talented workforce
- World-class infrastructure
- Competitive operating costs - up to 30% lower than other UK & Europe locations
- High quality of life
- Business-friendly support
- Easy access to global markets, including the Great Britain and EU markets post-Brexit

Who we are

Invest Northern Ireland is the economic development agency for Northern Ireland. We help U.S. companies scale internationally, offering tailored overseas expansion guidance, financial incentives and soft landing support, which can include:

- Talent validation
- Employment, training and R&D incentives
- Market development
- Property selection

Testimonials

"Every time we open our doors to work every day in Northern Ireland, we save half a million dollars, and that is something that we don't take lightly."

Suren Gupta, Technology & Operations Executive Vice President, Allstate

"When we came to Belfast, we fell in love with what we saw. The people here were great. There was a warmth, there was a community around technology. The quality of the talent we've found here is beyond our expectations."

Keith Farley, VP & Managing Director, Aflac Northern Ireland

"Northern Ireland's strong pipeline of quality graduates and strong staff retention rates were keys to our decision to locate here. It gives us the confidence that we will have access to outstanding staff members to allow us to continue to expand, scale and be successful long-term."

Matthew Keen, Managing Shareholder, Ogletree Deakins

"We looked at various US locations but the calibre of talent made Northern Ireland the perfect fit for us."

Paul Vienneau, CTO, Payroc

"The Northern Ireland team is central to our growth plans and will enable us to deliver 24/7 'Follow the Sun' support to our global customer base."

Garvin McKee, Chief Revenue Officer, Agio

"We selected Northern Ireland as the location for this new center based on the high-quality software engineers with industry skills, along with a strong pipeline of graduates from your excellent universities. This, along with the practical and financial support from Invest NI, made Northern Ireland a very attractive location."

Xuan Yong, CEO & Co-Founder, Workrise

"We remain impressed with the excellent business environment in Northern Ireland, particularly the close working relationship between government, industry and academia."

Corey Thomas, President & CEO, Rapid7



Contact us to find out how we can help your company grow.

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