

## December

*Stacy Holland | Nov. 6, 2018*

**Counter cycle - December Recruiting Push We think it's timely to reassure people that in Q4, we as your search professionals are still very much engaged in finding talent for our assignments in the New Year. Take time and quiet to gather your "career inventory." If you want to talk with us at Exceptional People, we are a great sounding board. If you are planning to hire in 2019, run your questions by us for a pulse on the market.**

The following is an article written by Dr. John Sullivan, from December last year. We think it's timely to reassure people that in Q4, we as your search professionals are still very much engaged in finding talent for our assignments in the New Year.

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"We wish you exciting chapters in your career, forever-learning". Stacy Holland

Timing is always critical in recruiting, and sometimes the best way to land top talent is to wait until the major corporate competition is not active. Data reveals that for new jobs put out to search, December is 35 percent lower than average, while the number of applicants in December is about average (a great ratio for firms that are recruiting).

The second-lowest month for job openings is August. This "counter cycle" recruiting approach provides the best odds for firms other than industry giants because the search occurs when the number of posted jobs is low. Less recruiting is occurring because headcount budgets are depleted and many

hiring managers take time off of work in order to shop, go to holiday parties, or even to use accumulated vacation time before it expires. As a result of these competition reducing factors, there is generally a significant drop in large corporate recruiting during December.

So I am providing my annual year-end reminder for those who aren't aware of the advantages that come with "a December recruiting push." Take advantage of this period of low competition...

### Reasons Why December "Tis the Season" to Recruit

There are many benefits associated with recruiting during the slow December period, including:

1. Competitors have depleted their headcount budget — even well-branded competitor firms can't hire when their official headcount is exhausted toward the end of their fiscal year. So if your firm has available headcount, or if you start recruiting early for 2018 budgeted positions, your firm will likely have only limited competition from large corporate firms because most top firms won't even start recruiting for their 2018 headcount until the second or third week of January. And if you're seeking active candidates, of course with the lowest number of posted jobs of any month, your December postings have a much-improved chance of being noticed.
2. Some firms literally do no hiring during December — many firms place complete hiring freezes in effect toward the end of their fiscal year. Other firms (especially tech firms) completely shut down operations during the last two weeks of December. As a result, these normally fierce recruiting competitors offer no competition to those organizations that are smart enough to recruit during December.
3. Hiring managers are distracted, so any attempted hiring is slow or impossible — during December, most hiring managers and recruiters in the corporate world are distracted by shopping, holiday parties, and family needs. Year-end financial closeouts also keep many managers busy, and as a result, they devote significantly fewer hours to recruiting. In the cases where there is active recruiting, this lack of attention stretches out the time before an offer can be made. So, even if a major firm does post open jobs, fast-moving firms can capture top candidates in December before most other firms get around

to making a hiring decision. Make hiring decisions within 10 days during December.

4. Many employed individuals are rethinking their future at the end of the year — in most industries where the demand for talent is high, the top prospects are fully employed and are not actively looking for a job. But because the best are also forward looking, it makes sense for them to spend at least some time during the weeks before the end of the year reevaluating their current work and life situation. Part of that reassessment would invariably be rethinking whether they want to spend another year in their current job. Smart recruiting leaders can take advantage and proactively propose a new career opportunity to those who are reconsidering their future. In addition, if your focus is on sales and other jobs where year-end bonuses are paid out during December, you will find that December is the top month for turnover in these kinds of jobs.

5. Some employed individuals realize that they need more money — the holiday season means extensive shopping, travel, and Christmas party expenses. Many individuals realize that they need more money. December recruiting provides an opportunity to attract those who are experiencing money issues. And finally, remember that not every potential applicant celebrates traditional Christian holidays, so those who are not celebrating will have even more time to consider new job opportunities.

6. Few important events are scheduled, so recruiting targets can get away — there are no industry conferences, internal company off-sites, or other major corporate meetings scheduled during the holiday period. As a result, top prospects are not preparing for them, so they have more available free time to consider job opportunities. Because many employees and even customers take time off during this month, many major projects are essentially forced into suspended animation. Top-performing prospects also have more time for catching up on reading and learning, so candidates may be reading your employer branding materials for the first time during December. Many prospects also take their unused vacation in December, and as a result, on vacation, targets are much more available for calls and interviews

7. Recruiting targets are easier to contact when everyone is active on social media — almost everyone is highly active on social media during the holidays. That means your recruiting targets are constantly checking social

media for messages from family and friends. There is also an increased chance that they will see, read, and even respond to your recruiting messages. In many cases, your recruiting targets will also use their free hours during December to update their LinkedIn profiles, so recruiters can use those updates as an alert that these individuals may be open to new opportunities.

### Final Thoughts

Counter cycle recruiting is an excellent strategy throughout the recruiting year, but is especially effective in December. It may take some effort to convince your own managers and recruiting staff to initiate a “December recruiting push.” But the advantages far outweigh the negatives. And with the reduced level of activity, success is much easier to achieve.