

## How Can Highly Regulated Firms Promote Themselves To Candidates?

In a perfect world, most companies would like the person to work for them not because they get paid a lot, but because they love the job. On the other hand, there is a reason why Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Apple pay more than just about anybody else.

**Currently, loving your job is no substitute for *getting paid*.**

In the financial industries in New York and in Chicago, we frequently see the same issue: The most desirable firms tend to be the ones that offer the most money. Subsequently they're the ones who can pay the most to their candidates. These companies pay a lot but don't like to talk about it when compensation tends to come out mostly in the form of a bonus, rather than in the form of salary.

Still, great pay alone won't cut it.

You won't find many people in these environments saying, "*OK, I do something I hate doing but...they pay me a lot.*" No, you'll more frequently hear, "*I expect to do things that are very interesting to me and that I enjoy doing.*" To them, this expectation is a given.

Let's not forget the compensation in the form of other incentives. You might have a nice working environment but there could also be things like company-sponsored lunches, "Beer Fridays" and so on. Are we missing anything? Oh, that's right – ***the actual content of the job!*** You know, the challenging work with the kind of peers who are excited about what they do.

Now, with the amount of press that the extra incentives so often get, it may seem like the perks are all that candidates care about and are therefore the real difference makers. That's not entirely true. More accurately, ***candidates are swayed by the amount of information on a company they can access in advance.*** What we mean by that is the more candidates know about a company's vision, culture, plans for the

next several years, etc., the more they'll be able to envision themselves in that environment and want to engage further in the process.

This is where highly regulated industries and the firms within can face a bit of a challenge more so than others.

For example, in financial trading, it used to be that the hedge funds couldn't advertise what they did. They could only communicate their perspectives and only under the condition you were a credited investor. So if you're a programmer trying to get hired by a firm who isn't a credited investor, *how are you supposed to know what makes a financial trading firm particularly special?*

As we consider all the regulatory issues as to how much a highly regulated company can promote itself and not promote itself to attract strong candidates, how do they sufficiently communicate their message when they can't promise too much or tell too much?

Compared to a business like Google and Apple, whose products we use every minute of every day, it seems almost unfair. The familiarity with those companies is easy – most of them are in our faces every day. So the candidate is likely to have an easier time being aware of them. If someone is applying to Facebook, it's understood that they will be put through “the ringer” if they're going to join that environment. They know that and anticipate it. For these companies, getting two million resumes a year isn't unheard of.

Does a typical prop trading shop of 100 people get a couple million resumes a year? Not even close.

### **The “Testing” Workaround**

If you recruit within a highly regulated field, you may not be able to actively communicate *everything* about what “will” happen when a candidate enters your culture (overpromising is never a good thing), but there are ways to communicate certain characteristics related to your company in an objective fashion.

One such way is that you can promote the **tests** that candidates must take in order to be considered, then open up later on in the process with more information about your culture.

For example, about seven years ago, a financial trading company in Chicago would promote their tests for hiring without telling anybody their name. They'd communicate the challenge at hand to candidates and encourage them to take the challenge. If you were to succeed, the mystery company would let you know who they were and what they do.

In fact, many of the well-known companies do the same thing by offering tests as part of their process. What's more, if the candidate could demonstrate their proficiency in a certain subject matter, the likes of Microsoft, Apple or Facebook couldn't reasonably hold the fact that a candidate didn't go to or finish college against them. After all, their founders, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg didn't.

So these companies appreciate that there is a way to look for talent beyond traditional institutions, which is not to say they aren't actively and aggressively recruiting from CalTech, Stanford and MIT. They approach both traditional and non-traditional educational institutions. And any other avenues they can think of to attract the right talent.

**“Yes, but we're not Google or Apple. We can't advertise everything about ourselves the way those companies can.”**

True. Yet what you can do, even in a highly regulated industry, is to **partner with a highly specialized recruiter that is incredibly well-versed in a field such as financial trading.**

As our clients at Roy Talman & Associates have certain elements of their business that they need to keep very confidential, the fact remains that they also need to connect with and build relationships with very select talent. In this sense, working with us represents a well-balanced, “best of both worlds” solution: Protecting the firm in a compliant manner while putting it in front of the ideal candidates they're looking for. At the same time, those select candidates receive a higher level of insight and education from a recruiter on an exciting opportunity that they might not have otherwise known about in a more public setting. Going far

beyond sifting through resumes and screening candidates, we are able to evaluate the candidate for a cultural fit and, if certain tests or challenges are involved in the hiring process, we can shed light on how to prepare for them.

Being in a highly regulated industry doesn't have to block you from the best candidates you deserve. When you have a specialized partner to help you manage the level of communication during the recruitment process, it can keep the momentum of identifying and building relationships with high quality talent for your firm moving forward.