

# The Key to Success in the Skilled Labor Market: Top Management's Personal Involvement in Hiring

A new trend is emerging in the Russian business context that could dramatically change companies' approaches to recruitment. CEOs and major shareholders are increasingly taking a personal part in interviews, even for mid-level managerial positions. There are compelling reasons for this, not only related to the current labor market situation but also to the general strategies for company development.

We have already written about this (<https://danilovpartners.com/events/the-future-of-human-capital-in-sanctions-era-russia-overcoming-challenges-and-seizing-opportunities/>). Today, "Kommersant" published an article titled "Interviews at the Highest Level" ([https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6637017?from=glavnoe\\_1](https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6637017?from=glavnoe_1)), which details this trend.

Experts suggest that the increased interest of CEOs and shareholders in the recruitment process is a response to the complicating situation of hiring in a market with a deficit of specialized talents. According to Superjob company data, the number of job vacancies in Russia has significantly increased, while the quantity of quality candidates has decreased. Under such circumstances, additional involvement by the management can play a key role in attracting and selecting the most suitable employees.

Alexander Ponomarev, a senior partner in the company that recruits mid and top-level managers, First (Ward Howell group), asserts that the change in hiring approach is especially noticeable in companies with a staff size from 120 to 1000 people and a turnover from 5 to 20 billion rubles a year. Introducing a stage of acquaintance with the CEO even for candidates not applying for top management positions emphasizes companies' aim to ensure the best match between candidates' values and the corporate culture.

The creation of staffing committees and the implementation of new technological methods of selection reflect companies' efforts to improve the hiring process. In search of a balance between "technology" and the emotional component, organizations are aiming for an analytical approach that would reduce the impact of subjective factors on hiring decisions.

Importantly, this trend highlights the leadership's desire to step beyond traditional hierarchy and establish direct contact with key employees. This not only helps form an objective view of the company and market directly from the employees but also assists new talents in integrating more organically into the corporate culture.

However, as some experts note, this approach might complicate and prolong the hiring process, creating risks for companies due to the potential "hijacking" of candidates by competitors. Nevertheless, given the market's general trend towards "blind hiring" and companies' readiness to adapt candidates to their specific needs, integrating top management into the candidate selection process seems like a natural and justified step.

Also, in our opinion, besides narrowing the pool of quality specialists, companies will also need to raise the age benchmark for hiring top managers. Specialists in the 50+ age category not only engage in sports and are in great shape but also have much more extensive experience compared to their younger colleagues. Moreover, they show a high degree of loyalty and are aimed at achieving the long-term goals of the

companies they join, minimizing the tendency for “job-shopping” or moving between different employers in search of better conditions.

In an era of changes and challenges in the labor market, the personal participation of CEOs and shareholders in the hiring process shows not just a desire to select candidates carefully but also a willingness to actively participate in shaping the company’s future. Ultimately, success in the skilled labor market depends on how deeply the leadership is willing to engage in this process.

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