

SGBs Can and Should Seek Outsourced “Talent Solutions”

Lessons Learned from the Argidius-ANDE Talent Challenge

Outsourcing talent solutions to high-quality organizations saves time and delivers results

A common theme resonated after interviewing CEOs and Human Resources (HR) managers of Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) in East Africa: it takes a lot of work to recruit, retain and develop talent. SGB leaders recognized they often don't have the time, the people, and in some cases the skills to do the strategic and tactical work of recruiting and developing talent. They lament failed hires and untapped potential of staff but struggle to not repeat the same hiring mistakes or have no idea how they will make the time to get the best out of staff. They are seeking tools and solutions to help. There are services available in the market, but they need service providers that understand SGB culture and charge rates they can afford, as most offerings in the market are catered to multinationals and larger businesses.

A particular pain point comes when a small business get a large infusion of investment capital and need to scale up quickly. They need to get people hired, trained and developed quickly. They need extra hands—an extended team that they trust to whom they can outsource HR functions.

Two AATC finalists stood out in terms of seamless “outsourcing”. Although both of these organizations charge what they consider market rates for their services, the rates are designed for SGBs, with incentives for repeat business and strategies that incent partnership as they grow. These two finalists are Shortlist and Amani Institute.

Shortlist was cited as a desirable outsourced hiring solution—CEOs and HR managers lauded their ability to develop appropriate job descriptions, shortlist quickly and effectively, and find candidates that fit the organizational culture. Shortlist also provided onboarding tools. In particular, when an SGB needed to scale up with multiple hires, it was helpful to have what many SGBs felt was a full-service recruitment team and partner in Shortlist.

The Amani Leadership and Management for Impact (ALMI) program was the go-to outsourced leadership development service for many SGBs. The program became the solution to train managers with effective communication skills, giving staff the ability to manage peers and teams, and helping stimulate organizational culture shifts. These shifts included having staff solve problems and build up the confidence to lead the organization. In lieu of bringing training in-house, CEOs appreciated that their staff members would interact with other SGBs, learn from them and create a peer cohort.

Shortlist and Amani are two examples of how externally offered talent solutions customized for SGBs can help solve growth challenges and deliver high quality, cost-effective, and impactful ways to recruit, retain and develop current and future managers.