



Sílvia Forés decided to go into human resources hoping to help people in the development of their professional trajectories. Her areas of expertise are talent attraction and management, consulting, personnel selection, and headhunting for companies.

She has worked for businesses of all sizes in a variety of fields, and she has conducted exclusive selection processes for senior executives as well as talent consulting for excellence-oriented companies.

As a result of her experience, in 2014 she published *Sólo puede quedar uno. Diario de un proceso de selección* ('Only one can remain. Diary of a selection process'), which has become a referent for applicants willing to change jobs. With a realistic and entertaining tone, Forés provides some insight into the specific dynamics of selection processes, while offering key advice to avoid failing at crucial moments.

Forés is currently Director of Human Resources at Baker & McKenzie, the largest law firm in the world, and she is in charge of 120 employees in Barcelona.

In your experience, how can one attract millennial talent and those even younger?

Young people are drawn to projects that feel authentic and which have goals that fit their values. They are especially eager to learn, so mentoring and training opportunities do get a lot of points when choosing a workplace. Autonomy and flexibility are also very attractive.

What role does the management of social networks play on the personal branding of applicants in regard to talent selection and attraction?

On one hand, social networks have made spotting 'passive' candidates—that is, those not actively looking for a job—much easier for recruiters. On the other hand, even though recruiters do not keep track of the movements of applicants in their social networks at all times, when applicants get to the final stages of a selection process we do look for coherence between their résumé and the image they convey on those networks. Any applicant conveying an unprofessional image that may put a company's reputation at risk is unlikely to be recruited.

Considering that retirement age may be raised over the next few years and that one may find more senior talent in companies, how should the challenges of this new paradigm be addressed?

We should act on the basis that talent has no age. I do not understand why talent gets so many labels. It is true that workers will be increasingly experienced, and that different generations coexist already within companies. That is why programs of 'reverse' mentoring, where a more experienced generation of employees learns from younger staff, is extremely rewarding. I think that any company with an increasingly senior staff will have to take into account their ability to adapt to changes and the training needed to acquire new skills. However, it is not a matter of age as much as it is a matter of seniority, because employees who have held the same position for a long time may act in the same way they have always done without ever questioning anything, and that may lead to losing competitiveness in an age of constant and rapid change.

What incentives do you think can be valuable to an employee, in terms of attracting and retaining talent?

I'll focus on retention, since we already talked about talent attraction. After over fifteen years in Human Resources, I've come to the conclusion that, once salary expectations are reasonably covered, the main reason why people stay at a company is their boss. Finding a person who values you, from whom you can learn, who supports you and trusts you, is key to talent retention. Secondly, I would add a good working environment, which very often determines whether one stays or leaves.

Do you think that the best way to foster and attract talent for a company is to offer employees a space of well-being and health?

It is a factor that will become increasingly important, and, actually, it is already a reality for many companies that have hired services related to health and well-being for their employees. I would say that it is true that, nowadays, that kind of facility attracts talent, but I think that with time it will become a staple. We live in a world full of stress and great professional demands, and companies will need to be able to offer tools that allow their employees to take care of their own health and well-being if they want to keep their productivity levels.

It is clear that retaining talent in a company implies considering different motivations for different generations. Should companies adapt their offer and incentives accordingly?

Yes, exactly, each group of employees will value different things. Younger people may value the opportunity to travel and get training abroad, while employees with families may prefer having flexible working hours to take care of their children. Before making any proposals, directors of Human Resources must analyze the type of employees that make up their staff, so they can offer incentives based on what motivates them. A one-size-fits-all policy is not usually the best approach, unless the staff is extremely homogeneous.