The LHR Group

HOW TO HIRE LIKE A PRO, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE NEW & UNKNOWN

6 Lessons from Building Caratlane Tech Team @ Chennai, 2016

36 OFFERS; 63% JOINING RATE

From the LHR Vaults

Took us 20 years, you need just 20 minutes.

Why should you listen to us?

Because we have been doing this for years, and we are good at it. We get the results.

In the 19+ years that we have been in business, one of the most common problems we have encountered is not being able to attract top talent due to not being a renowned and established name in the industry.

This problem struck today's renowned Caratlane, too - in 2016.
Today, it is a pioneer in the jewelry industry, backed by TATA Group. However, the company was disrupting an established market when it was founded in 2010, and by 2016, despite growing in size and revenue, it was a relatively unknown name. This negatively impacted its talent acquisition.

That's when we came into the picture!

The LHR Group 🤝 CARAT LANE

Background of the case

Caratlane was a new company (not yet renowned in the industry), and was **struggling to attract strong tech talent to join them in Chennai**.
We worked with them to identify capable and available talent and then got them convinced **of Caratlane's vision.**

We were tasked with building a team, not just filling a couple of mandates. This was one of the most challenging yet rewarding projects for LHR.
And the learnings were invaluable - which we are proud to share with you.

Keep these 6 things in mind (1/2)

These may seem obvious, but 90% of the new companies we worked with didn't get them right.

Get Salary Benchmarking Right

In Caratlane's case, the first thing going against them was their salary offers, which were half the industry standards.

Start by salary benchmarking to offer competitive packages within your industry and location. **Even if you can't offer top-of-market rates, having a clear understanding of what's reasonable helps you stay competitive without overextending your budget.**

Offer equity, growth opportunities, or unique benefits to balance out any salary limitations. Read how in our EVP report.

Streamline Your Interview Process

In Caratlane, the CTO was involved from the very first interview round, taking up a lot of his bandwidth. We redesigned the interview process, looping him in only in the final round.

Top talent moves fast, and a drawn-out or unstructured interview process could mean losing them to competitors. **Keep a maximum of 4 rounds - 3 is the most ideal - 1st a HR round, 2nd a technical round, and the final round with CXO(s).**

Conduct Stringent Interviews

Caratlane was conducting easy interviews to keep candidates in the process. Being a new company doesn't mean lowering your standards. Stringent interviews showcase seriousness and selectiveness, signaling a "no-nonsense" attitude. This exhibits your commitment to building a high-quality team. **Focus on detailed problem-solving scenarios, industry-specific challenges, and leadership potential to vet candidates rigorously.**

Keep these 6 things in mind (2/2)

These may seem obvious, but 90% of the new companies we worked with didn't get them right.

Skills over Pedigree: Tier-2 and -3 Colleges

Caratlane wanted IIT/M candidates who neither preferred Chennai nor a new brand like Caratlane. What worked for them was Tier-2 college talent.
Let go of any obsession with pedigree. Execute skill-based hiring. Scout skilled talent in the top 5 to 10 colleges in the city (if Tier-1) or top 5 colleges (if Tier-2 city). They can be a goldmine for enthusiastic, hard-working candidates who are eager to prove themselves.

Have a Clear Vision; Communicate it Well

Use your vision as a key selling point during interviews, emphasizing the impact candidates will have in building the future of the company. Candidates today, especially younger ones, are looking for more than just a paycheck—they want to feel connected to the mission and values of the company. Be upfront about your vision, and consistently communicate how every role contributes to the company's growth and success.

Leverage Employee Referrals

Your existing network—whether through employees, investors, or partners—can lead you to high-caliber talent. Referred candidates are often **more reliable and culturally aligned, reducing the risk of bad hires**.
Design an incentive-based referral program to encourage your current team to bring in top talent from their network.

Our success with Caratlane

Caratlane tech team hiring project was a huge success. The numbers speak for themselves.
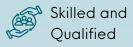
57	36	63%
OFFERS	JOINING	JOINING RATE

Hiring top talent as a new company may have its challenges, but by focusing on these key strategies—as we did with Caratlane and several other companies—you can build a team that drives your company forward.

From fair salary benchmarks to leveraging your vision to lock in quality candidates, these approaches can help you punch above your weight and attract the talent that will help your business thrive.

The employees acquired through the above-listed strategies have proven longer retention periods (70% of such employees go on to stay for 3+ years, compared to the average of 55%), which is critical if your company is in the growth stage.

Skilled and Qualified	Cultural fit and vision alignment	Happy with the opportunity

Your founding team matters as much as your product/service. It can either put your company on the fast growth path or deter it entirely from the track.

Choose it wisely.