



**TotalPicture Radio
IACPR Conference Interview
Rodney Moses, Vice President, Global Talent Acquisition
Research in Motion (RIM)**



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Welcome to a special [Inside Recruiting](#) channel podcast on TotalPicture Radio. This is Peter Clayton reporting from the IACPR 2010 Global Conference in Philadelphia.

Our guest today is Rodney Moses, talent acquisition leader, visionary and innovator. He is Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition at [Research in Motion](#), maker of the Blackberry line of products and solutions and participates as an advisor to group such as ERE, direct employers and jobs central and dot jobs. With the global perspective and past experience with both recruitment and HR at Coca-Cola Enterprises, PWC and other organizations, he has produced millions of dollars in costs savings and increased productivity and high in volume and high growth environments, champion Six Sigma, Black Belt projects and provided training to thousands.

Rod, thank you so much for speaking with us today on TotalPicture Radio.

Rod: Thanks Peter. Thanks for having me.

Peter: You've been with RIM for a little over a year as VP of Talent Acquisition coming from Coca-Cola, that's quite a transition in itself. So what surprised you, what's impressed you, what are your some of your immediate challenges?

Rod: I think coming from consumer products and actually, we do sell quite a bit of our products to consumers as well now but it's just the pace, the pace of technology, the pace of innovation is quite different than coming from a 100-year-old company that really the products have been around for a long time and so there's a whole different set of business needs. Coke is very relationship driven and RIM is very innovative and it's all driven by innovation and just the pace is just incredible. So you come in immediately behind.

Peter: I guess one thing that remains very similar in your two past assignments is you are in a really fiercely competitive industry. Does anything change in your approach to recruiting top executives so what's different in recruiting at RIM than perhaps at Coke?

Rod: I think they are totally two different kind of worlds as far as you know, Coke is looking for operational excellence in how they can improve on operation efficiencies so that's very important to them. I'm looking at it from a margin perspective. At RIM, we're looking for executives that can be creative, that are innovative, so it's a different perspective. It's all about innovation so we're not trying to put parameters around an executive's ability to innovate. So if we said go out and get this level of margin or this amount of dollars in revenue, we don't do that at RIM. It's all about – can you come up with a product that's better and that's never been created, that's never been done before and then can you come up with a market strategy to do that?

RIM is really founded on innovation and so there is not this drive to make analysts happy as much as there is to create a product that's never existed and to provide our consumer with a product that's just going to make them more efficient and more effective in their lives.

So there is a lot of similarities in the productivity because we are a productivity company but, it's just that the difference is about innovation.

Peter: I want to go back to this thought about competitiveness again, because I don't think there is a more competitive industry than the one you are currently in. As smartphones have exploded over the last few years with Apple, with now, Android, the new Windows 7 platform and RIM and it

seems to me that you guys are all out there trying to recruit basically the same top performers so how do you approach this?

Rod: Peter, you bring up a really good point not only is the industry is extremely competitive but recruitment for RIM is very complex because we have 600 carrier partners. Those are the folks that have technical know-how around relationships at the carriers and the phone companies and so it's very difficult. We don't want to recruit our customers but those are the folks that know how things work and operate within each of those carriers.

Another example is our strategic alliances. We have over 250,000 developers so we're also recruiting a lot of software developers and that makes the boundaries a little difficult because we don't want to recruit our developers that are actually out developing products for an apps for our customers and for our consumers and so that makes it a very complex.

We also have strategic alliances. So anyone that we're doing a partnership or relationship with, we have a very complex environment where we have to be very careful about who we recruit on top of, we do want to go after those same folks that you know, Google and Apple so we have our competitors and we also have folks in technology that we really like the types of skills. But also, the other part of that complexity for all of us is this thought of convergence because the types of folks that we're recruiting today that they don't exist. The jobs don't exist.

If you think of you've heard of the new LTE platform, there's the 4G and some are saying it's the same but the LTE or 4G engineers don't exist today. That's just the technology that's coming alive with your carriers right now. You'll start seeing it more in 2011, a little bit right now on some of your carriers are a bit rolling out 4G but this is one of many examples. If you think about it over a year ago, the tablets didn't have the kind of technology behind it and so you see the same thing at other industries like healthcare around and not having the skills today that you know, that you need for tomorrow, and so I think that it just adds on to that level of complexity for recruitment.

Peter: You bring up so many interesting aspects and dimensions to how you're recruiting because you're right, you don't want to go get somebody out of Verizon, one of your best partners, and you participated in Jeremy Eskenazi's panel here at the IACPR Conference on the Real-World Challenge of Global Recruiting. Talk to us about workforce planning and analysis on a global scale. You are based in Waterloo Ontario Canada; how does all of this complexity come together so you can go out and efficiently look for those people that you need to bring in to the organization?

Rod: That's a great question, and I think it's a challenge that probably a lot of technology companies have but I think the ones that are based, for example, in the valley they have there a lot of base of talent in their neck of the woods. For us, it's all about borderless recruiting so we have to really collaborate. We have to have a lot of shared and competitive intelligence across the board.

If you look at where our growth is and we're still growing at a 40% clip in North America but we're growing over 200% in Latin America and Asia and even in Europe, we have a significant growth rate. Having the skills and knowledge of the folks in those areas and then literally having this borderless recruitment opportunity where we share our knowledge so build a center of excellence on within recruitment to really handle a lot of that global sourcing, more global executive search and so that we can really break down those barriers where we're looking at talent across borders and we're able to access talent much quicker, much faster so we can mobilize and deploy talent much faster than we have been in the past.

I think those are some of the things that's really allowing us to get the talent quicker and certainly we always want to improve on that but I think that some of the things that we're trying to do is look at it from a very global perspectives of folks that sit on a team are not all based in Waterloo. They're based in the States. They're based in Europe and they're based in Asia and so they're based in the markets but they also work – some of them work virtually and it's all about having this collaborative information and really sharing that and then operating from a team being able to deploy quickly. With the convergence aspect of our market, we have to be able to change so the products that we're making in the future are not going to be the ones that we've made in the past and so folks that were geared up to make those types of products or work on those types of products have to really be redeployed to new platforms and so you have to have a workforce that's agile and is very flexible and that's the types of people that we're looking for as well.

Peter: Back to one of your challenges in being sensitive to making sure that you're not trying to recruit your partners or carrier partners, are there any other things that you have found to be really unique at RIM in doing global recruitment?

Rod: It's kind of funny. It's a lot of you know, what RIM does is it's a very humble company and we look for those types of leaders so the folks that have confidence in their organization but they're not arrogant, that can roll up their sleeves and do the work if they need to and so one of the things

that we've talked about here at the IACPR is being authentic leader and being able to not just talk the talk but walk the walk.

That's one of the things that we do. We have our unique leadership team that's still a founder led organization and so it's more about having and hiring people that fit into that kind of organization. We have a very unique culture that's based on that innovation.

I think people who really want to join a company and come in for a journey that they can come in and contribute to a foundation of something fantastic and be able to enjoy that experience is the type of company and it's not you know, something that you might not want to join from if you just want to work 8 hours a day or if you don't want to be you know, true contributor to a team. So those are the types of folks that we attract and those are the types of folks that we look for.

I think where our recruitment has changed, is it's gone from 5-10 years ago where there is a lot of posting and praying, to really developing these communities of talent where we're engaging in those of communities and so we have a unique ability to do that and a large part of that is that we have been able to put some resources behind that.

The company has very much a talent management mindset, and so I'm very thankful to be able to work for an organization that really puts talent at the top of the list and with appropriate resource to do that and certainly you feel behind the gun but that's part of being part of the fastest growing company in the world is that you're always going to be a little bit behind on the talent side.

Peter: One of Jeremy's mantras is that all recruiting is local basically, especially at a leadership level. I think one of the challenges organizations such as your face that is recruiting top leaders on a global basis is looking at customs, looking at the whole environment in Asia is very different in the culture is so different. Are you able to maintain the culture of your organization that you were just talking about and that unique DNA in Asia, India, Australia, in all over the markets where you perform?

Rod: I feel at home when I'm at any of our offices, especially whether I'm in Beijing in China or in our Singapore offices or even in EMEA. I think there is a common mindset and it's not coming from, per se, corporate or headquarters but there's just a common element in the types of folks that we're attracted to and that it really comes around and their ability to be innovative, to be flexible, to be creative and also to be really good at what they do and we spend a lot of time on recruitment and each of our markets.

The other thing is we've done a lot of sicomments. So we've done sicomments out of our leadership programs across the globe and that helps carry on that culture in each of those organizations but now we're starting to be the recipient of those sicomments coming back. If you look at China and India, they're going to be hiring as many people for example in North America and Western Europe, those companies are as we are in their countries and so that's the kind of growth that they're having and it's going both ways now. I think that's something that we've been doing for a period of time.

Clearly, the amount of growth in new markets, you can't pull out leadership quite yet in some of those markets you can put leadership in. But I think that's one of things that we've done very effectively. It's a good mix and balance of leaders that have been in the company for awhile with leaders that are coming in that have those skill sets and share the same values. So I think that's kind of one of the things that we've really been our key to success in our new and emerging markets.

Peter: That's really interesting because you look at a place like China, which really does not want to be the low cost producer any longer. They want to have the IP, the Intellectual Property. They want to own the patents. They want to be the ones who have the technology and so I mean, it really becomes very competitive going into a market like China and trying to recruiting because the Chinese now are trying to recruit the same people you are.

Rod: They are, and you're talking about our industry and there's a number of Chinese companies that are coming up very quick and they have access to suppliers and some of the same suppliers that we have so it makes it extremely competitive and that goes back to I think our founding philosophy around innovation. I'm just amazed that our company's ability to innovate and I think when people come in to our organization they want to hear from our CEO like, "What do you expect of me and how do you expect it?"

I think that one of the things that we do the best is to really sit down and say there is no parameters around your ability to innovate so we want you to shoot for the stars and I think that if you told people just to shoot you know, for the roof and they only got half way there and you say great job, they would never really, really achieve the greatness that some of the engineers and developers have and that's the kind of environment that we offer to employees and I think it's not for everyone but is very unique.

And so I think that goes across our borders and I think it's a shared commitment to the organization and really, I think people want to have this lasting... that's our legacy and they might have develop to several patents. They might have develop several products. They might have develop several parts of our devices but that's our legacy when they move on. That's the same way our motivator recruiters is your ability to hire someone innovative in this company is really what's going to drive the company's success. So I want to measure us on our ability to be innovative. So whether it's engineers coming in the door or it's sales folks and how many in that subscriptions have they added, because that's what's really adding value to the company not as measuring time to hire or cost the hire type of metrics.

Peter: Do you partner with any third party recruiters or RPOs, especially on a global basis?

Rod: We do have a large internal team that's both focused on internal executive search and internal externals, but we also have a number of third parties that we use. We've moved away from a traditional vendor, and we had – when I joined the company – over 400 vendors that were providing these services and we truly are trying to narrow the list down to a small group of partners and having partners that really can provide these services. I think the difference is it's because both ways I mean, we need to have that collaboration and knowledge sharing with them so that we can help them be more successful and likewise, I need to be able to identify talent in the market and bring it to us without these restrictions around do we have a statement of work in place or a letter of engagement for a specific search. So it's a true partnership, whether it's an RPO or traditional search firm. Those are the types of partnerships that we're working on and we're getting away from just hiring vendors. And I think that ...

Peter: They one off transaction stuff right?

Rod: They do one and then they hire somebody for me a week later. We're just trying to truly work with partners that can support us so there's boutique search firms or small and medium size search firms and then we have some of the larger firms that can help in markets. We're constantly emerging and opening up new markets and I'm just a believer that you have to have a high broad approach from a talent acquisition. You can't be all things to all people and can I recruit for specific position? Yes, but what would that take away from the resources of the rest of the business and so you have to kind of manage it in a way that's really productive to the business and I think that's the difference.

Every recruiter I talk to has a challenge. Saks Fifth Avenue here, they're trying to recruit a chef in their restaurant in New York City and then they've got a spa and they've got to hire massage therapists. This is not their traditional retail approach. Likewise, every business has its level of complexity around recruitment and I think you just have to set up your team that you can best serve your business and also have partners that can really step them when you need them to and have that relationship.

There is also going to be a lot of fluxes in the business, the ups and downs and you need to be mobile and you need to be agile and you need to be quickly redeploy teams and people. So I think if you have a team that's just designated for specific type of recruiting, they're not really going to be that flexible in the future. So I think that's where partners really can help out and we truly value them and treat them as partners.

Peter: This conference wraps up with a session on social media and mobile certainly has become synonymous with social media. Does RIM have a social media strategy for recruiting and how do you go about using sites like LinkedIn or Facebook or Twitter or Foursquare any of these things that are now on everyone's mobile devices?

Rod: We make some of the mobile devices so we're a key enabler for people and we're certainly proud of that, and we have a lot of strategic alliances with the social media companies. If you've checked out any of our new products or Torch or Bold or our new operating system, it's got a social filter so you can have all your – whether it's your Blackberry messenger or your Yahoo messenger, you've got your Facebook or your Twitter, you can have all your social filters go into one little icon that tells you when there's an update. It's a great tool. I've found I'm addicted to I did even if it's just watching other people's Facebook or whatever, it's a great way to stay connected and I think that's what we're doing from a recruitment perspective.

We've got a pretty intense focus and I think a lot of companies that are coming around... I was just speaking to a colleague in Europe that's trying to put together social media strategy to large beverage and old English tea company and they're just trying to figure out should they even invest in a social media strategy. So there's some companies are on very different stages and like I said, I think we're huge enabler and what we're trying to do from a recruitment perspective is making sure that's consistent to our brand and what we're trying to do is also reaching the types of folks that we want to communicate.

Clearly, we hire 1200 students every four months in our co-op program and a lot of those folks are developing our social media strategies and they're working on those platforms that we provide in our operating software. So we're very, very connected.

I think if you look at spending, companies have gone from spending money at the big boards, and that's where kind of recruitments going back with some tools like social media to where it used to be, where you're really developing these communities of talent you have to have this kind of engagement with people. You're no longer going to get the types of candidates that you wanted from posting and praying; you just can't go on a big board and post. Your strategy has got to be around the social media and connecting with people in different ways and you are today and I think it's an important strategy for us.

We have hired a new leader for our team that's heading that up specifically and so we're making a big investment. We're also making a big investment from how we do our advertising dollars, and I think that's where a lot of companies are going to start to see a difference in our recruitment activities.

You mentioned LinkedIn on me. I think it's a very effective business tool from a professional perspective and I think it's a little bit of a challenge for a third party provider since people are easily identified now and you can connect with them in your networks and really it's a powerful tool and we've got a great relationship with LinkedIn and that's one the benefits of working in a mobile space is we have connectivity to a lot of the original developers and partners with or alliances with the companies that are managing it. So we have a little bit of an inside hand.

Peter: I want to read to you the press releases from just one day on the Research in Motion site. This is from September 27th 2010.

RIM unveils Blackberry playbook, which is your new tablet.

RIM announces new Blackberry enterprise application development platform to accelerate creation of super apps for business.

RIM launches next generation Blackberry web application platform releases code to open source community.

RIM and web trends to launch free Blackberry analytic service.

RIM Launches Blackberry advertising service.

RIM announces BBM social platform.

That's all from one day Rod, yes so back to moving fast I guess so how do you and your staff keep up with the story must change in a weekly basis so much.

Rod: Most companies – and we talked a little bit about earlier about GE and some other companies that have more traditional workforce planning types of opportunities and you can kind of project that five years kind of where you want to go, what you want to do from the acquisition strategy or grow or develop people and really we're looking at every three months and being prepared to change. And so, if you're one of the key leaders of capabilities that we talked about this conference is people's ability to change and it's just if you don't like change, it's just not a place for you.

And to your point, just that one day of press releases it can be overwhelming to recruiters or employees. I find it extremely exhilarating I mean, I find it exciting and there is this addiction to work though that you get because you're always on, you're always connected and you're always... I mean, I have all my Google alerts and all those things that are always constantly bringing also the external articles not just the press releases that we're doing. And I think you have to be really diligent in your education and your knowledge of your company.

One of the things that we have on our – we have several folks on our team and like I said, I'm very fortunate but we have a knowledge and training transfer team so every week they're constantly updating our recruiters. Now I own things that we can do better, simplifying processes and things like that from a recruitment perspective but also bringing them news about the business, our products and our information about where the company is going.

So one is just keeping our team informed. We also have a competitive intelligence group on our team that's constantly reviewing what our competitors are doing and opportunities, where we may have opportunities. We often had competitors shut down sites where we have sites or we have an interest in retaining some of that key talent. It's all just staying aware of what's in the market. So that's the kind of things that they're looking for.

They're also looking at labor market trends and so areas on which should be making investments and feeding that information back to the business and so that's one way we do it.

The other way is just kind like of what you did this year, you're staying in tune and you're reading what's going on but it's a very complex environment to recruit in and obviously you just talked about one day press releases I mean, there's 15 million lines of code that went into our operating system six. So I don't think people -- there's just a lot of development time and that -- I don't think people realize what goes in to sometimes those things get developed in 60, 90 days and then they go to market. So that's a constant changing environment and really and then you have this converging of skills and capabilities.

So you have to be pretty flexible and you have to be persistent and be able to kind of get it and you have to have a little bit of thick skin but you have to have this sheer appreciation for the innovation and the work that we do and that's just where the excitement comes and I think you have to be passionate about the company and what we're doing and then you get on board and make a huge contribution and then that it's not for everyone. It's a very fast paced environment.

Peter: One last question for those listening to this interview that would be interested in exploring a career with RIM, what's the best way to connect with you in your team?

Rod: I think there's a number of ways I mean, I think the best way traditionally is our website but I think there's a number of ways to connect with our recruiters in the communities that you may work and live in. So they're all out on LinkedIn. They all have LinkedIn profiles are always open. They do a lot of job postings on LinkedIn and so that's one way of going about it.

Certainly, we're always open to getting that kind of feedback from candidates. We do a lot of candidate surveys so we want to make sure that we're constantly connected with our candidates. We have a team in Waterloo that also will help connect you with the right recruiter. If you go just to our info line on our recruitment site that someone monitors at 24/7. It's an appropriate response to candidates and it could be something simple like you're having hard time applying for a job to who do I connect with?

One of the things that we're doing a little differently and this is where the website is... where they use general information kind of email sites are helpful is we're really looking at this kind of talent differently so there's you might apply for a job but you may not match up for the job description but the types of folks that we're looking for only are even matched up to best 75% of the job description and there's going to be 25% of flexibility in that

candidate profile and that makes it difficult for the technology to do that kind of matching and so that's where you have to have this kind of conversation.

So we've created a group with our recruiters and our hiring managers sees talent advisory councils where they're presenting key talent that came in to our website that really wasn't for a particular job or it came in for a particular job but they have really good skills and capabilities that really wouldn't get picked up by any kind of ATS for someone. So they're having these discussions in presenting these candidates. I'm on this open forum to say, "Hey look at this person has this kind of background, and we don't even have a job description for this yet but this is the type of person, technology, background, education, experience that we're looking for and so we're taking it to another level on really matching key talent up with our organization needs and capabilities and that's not something I get to put on a job description so it's work in progress but we've just had just a profound discovery around some of the people that we were said, "Oh they would have got an email back saying thanks but you really didn't meet the needs to the job and now they're getting an email back on, this job is probably not for you but we've got some jobs down the road that are really going to be for you and how can we get you matched up with the right folks?

Peter: That's really interesting and I think that's really great that you're really going out there and proactively looking at these people who are applying because as you said, a lot of the ATS system are just not that picked up some unique thing that somebody might have in their background.

Rod: Well, we've talked about convergence earlier we're just constantly converging technologies and same thing has to happen with people. You have to look at critical skills and key capabilities and some of these personality traits around leadership skills and then I think the other jobs that we're looking for today, we've probably wouldn't get people especially you know, some of the new technology in our new products that we're rolling out, you're not going to have people to have that kind of experience so you know, look for someone that has 75% of those key capabilities whether it's engineering skills or the development skills but they're not going to be you know, specific into the product or market necessarily that you're in right now because either that talent doesn't exist or there's a very small labor market supply of those folks and how are you going to have to get over or you can continue to recruit those folks but you're going to have to get over there being an abundant supply and you have to create your own supply.

Peter: Rod, thank you so much for taking time to speak with us on TotalPicture Radio.

Rod: Thank you Peter for having me.

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