



CROP.

UNLOCKING GROWTH

How CROP Accountants Found Success with Kula's South African Talent

Interview with Pim van Roemburg, Partner at CROP Accountants & Consultants



OVERVIEW

In this interview, we highlight the decision-making process and choices that led to a successful collaboration with Kula. At CROP we faced significant challenges in finding qualified Dutch candidates in the audit practice to support our growth, prompting us to explore staffing solutions.

Our successful partnership with Kula began from a personal connection and quickly expanded as their candidates proved effective.

Previous attempts with recruitment agencies and internal departments failed to yield results, making Kula's organised and flexible process a standout.

Their support extended through onboarding and social integration, ensuring smooth transitions for new hires. South African candidates bring strong education and experience, and we strategically position them to grow within our company. While not every match is perfect, our overall satisfaction with Kula is high, making them a strategic partner in our expansion plans. We aim to incorporate South African colleagues across all teams and explore outsourcing opportunities with Kula Remote, leveraging their talent for sustained growth and enhanced client service.

Read on to discover how Kula helped CROP unlock growth



What were the main reasons to consider staffing?

The desire to grow and the lack of Dutch candidates were the primary reasons. In particular, getting enough good candidates for interviews was a major problem.

Which other solutions did you try, and why did they not work?

We tried using external recruitment agencies, we expanded our recruitment department and their activities. We even pre-paid agencies with fixed agreements, but none of this led to enough qualified candidates willing to come for interviews.

What were the reasons to consider Kula?

We started based on the personal relationship with Mennolt Beelen and then quickly tried with one candidate. When that worked well, we expanded to four candidates. Because CROP is a truly Dutch office, with much of the work done in Dutch, South Africa was for us the best solution. People there quickly understand Dutch, and after being a few months here, they also start speaking Dutch. Socially, South Africans fit well into the team, which is crucial for making this work effectively.



How did you value the start of the recruitment process?

The recruitment process is quite similar to what we know for Dutch candidates. First and foremost, it's crucial to establish clear criteria for recruiting candidates. We found that candidates with 5-8 years of experience at a top 10 South African firm fit best with us.

The selection process at Kula is well-organized. The personal video of candidates gives you a first impression of how they might fit into the team and culture.

It's important to maintain speed in the process, just like with Dutch candidates. We completed the interviews in a few in-depth video calls. Kula is flexible in this process, so per our request, we even included a step where the candidate met the team during the process. It's challenging to understand a candidate in just a few one-hour interviews, and this is similar to the Dutch recruitment process, though slightly harder due to distance and the cultural differences.

Ultimately, it's crucial to know what you're looking for. Besides the previously mentioned criteria, it's important that a candidate consciously chooses a career at CROP, aiming for a minimum of five years. It's vital to test these expectations well with the candidates.

How did the onboarding go?

Kula handles the onboarding very well, covering the process with the IND, housing, car, phone, etc.

It's also important that the candidate can fall back on Kula's social network of other South Africans in the Netherlands. This is particularly important at the beginning. Soon after, they become part of the "CROP family," and the Kula support moves more into the background. But it's reassuring for both us and the candidate that Kula also looks out for their well-being.



How was the experience of having them on the team in the initial stages?

From the first days, it's essential for the candidate to be socially integrated into the team. We've seen wonderful examples of this. The best is one of our teams that takes their South African colleague to Albert Heijn daily during lunch to introduce them to typical Dutch food. This strengthens the social bond of the entire team, which is beautiful to see! Another team even helped their South African colleague move house on a Saturday. This is the kind of team spirit we cherish and the family atmosphere we aim for at CROP.

How do you like the Kula colleagues? What is the level of education, and the quality of the work?

We find the level in South Africa to be quite good. They are well-educated and have the right experience, though still slightly different from the Netherlands. The Netherlands has many specific rules and practices unknown to South African colleagues. Therefore, we scale them back one step; a South African manager (with about seven years of experience) joins us as a Junior Manager, and that's also just feasible salary-wise. From that position, they can grow further. Social acceptance in the team and at clients is important, and we're glad to see this often goes well. It's almost comparable to the arrival of a Dutch colleague. With attention, they blend in well and feel comfortable and at home in the team, leading to good work relationships and results.

The future, how further?

The truth is not all candidates are equally good, which is also comparable to the Dutch recruitment process. However, we are generally very satisfied and see this as one of the paths to shape our future growth.

We see Kula as an excellent strategic partner. It's always about people, so there can sometimes be a mismatch. When that happened, we resolved it well with Kula. We could move on, and the candidate found a better fit elsewhere. Such things happen, but we resolved it to everyone's satisfaction.

We aim to grow to have a few South African colleagues in each of our five offices. We are also looking at outsourcing and see clear benefits with South Africans. We are therefore further exploring Kula Remote.

By smartly leveraging South African talent, we can expand, which is a crucial pillar of our strategic growth. This allows us to help our clients with their growth plans!

Unlock growth with Kula

For more information or to discuss your staffing needs, please reach out to:



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