

Hire and Retain the Best

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According to ManpowerGroup's 2011 Talent Shortage Survey, one in three respondents report difficulty filling vacant roles, while 28 percent of employers report a lack of experience in candidates as a key barrier to filling vacancies.

As organizations seek more specific skills and experience from employees, younger candidates are increasingly losing out to experienced workers. New generations of workers are not being adequately prepared for the marketplace. The key culprit: oversupply of "graduate-ready" individuals and an undersupply of "job-ready" candidates. Today's high school, college and even trade school graduation degrees do not merit job-readiness. A blend of the hard technical skills most in demand and interpersonal skills are not being taught.

By adhering to the following steps, employers and candidates can advance placement and development processes in today's Human Age, an era in which individuals are exercising a greater voice. Individuals' strengths and potential, which define talentism, have become the world of work's new capitalism.

Advice for Employers

Without using clear and contemporary strategies to hire, organizations are sending the wrong message to individuals as well as educators, which have traditionally been expected to prepare individuals for the world of work. To create courses that align with evolving job roles and technical requirements, educators need employers to collaborate to clearly define and provide continual updates on needed skills and competencies.

Flexible skills and a learning mindset, which enable individuals to adapt to diversified, cross-department roles, are more important than ever as slimmer businesses fight to remain competitive and sustainable. Hard skills are equally as important, yet rapidly evolving technology means many core technical skills quickly become obsolete. In short, employers seek flexible individuals with strong hard skills and workplace competencies (traditionally known as "soft skills"), yet continue to use outdated methods to attract and retain this talent.

Job Success Profiles, a new effective recruitment and talent development tool, is helping employers and educators align individuals, training and workplace roles. Organizations often recruit talent with job descriptions missing current and future role prerequisites and the context needed to develop the person hired into the role. Rather than simply itemize responsibilities, success profiles guide performance by mapping the mindsets, skills and core competencies that are required to deliver designated outcomes.

These profiles describe what the role is and how to do it by drilling into various layers of the job. Writing a job success profile requires responding to guided questions, such as: What does success look like in that general profession, as well as in the role itself? How does this management level relate to other leadership levels? How does this role succeed in the external marketplace? How will this role enable the company to stay ahead of its competitors?

Job Success Profiles are one tool used to fulfill an employer's comprehensive work force strategy that ultimately support the execution of their business strategy. As they reflect a company's direction, culture and role expectations better than traditional job descriptions, a smaller pool of more choice candidates are likely to apply for jobs defined by success profiles. Drawing from a more selective pool of stronger candidates enables employers to create a more robust talent pipeline that ensures they can find successful candidates for critical job openings in the future.

Organizations also use these profiles as a career-long training and development tool, ongoing training and development programs aligned with an employer's business strategy.

This multifunctional model of customizing career success per individual also maps a path for lifelong learning. As skills and competencies of employees need to be aligned with the changing needs of business, employers can use success profiles to help develop iterative training and development programs that enable each individual to learn in unique ways.

When it comes to training and developing employees, companies have traditionally sent their people on training courses that may be costly, time consuming and of no direct benefit to the company. Internal experiential training is gaining ground. For example, engaging employees through stretch projects that carry additional responsibilities is a practical approach as it enables companies to achieve desired business outcomes, while simultaneously training employees to broaden their expertise and perspective and take on new roles.

Finally, by learning what motivates and drives employees through better dialogue and social activities, employers can improve their recruitment and development practices. Much of the experience analogous to what's required in the contemporary workplace — being a good team player, communicating with empathy and demonstrating intellectual curiosity — can be cultivated in extracurricular activities. Businesses must work with governments and educational institutions to shape programs that foster these skills. For example, legislation in one European country enables all schoolchildren over the age of six to learn the game of chess. Studies have concluded that playing chess strengthens key skills like problem solving and critical thinking.

Advice for Individuals

Candidates today need to demonstrate that they can cross-functionalize or transfer their skills and capabilities to other roles and even industry sectors. ManpowerGroup's 2011 Workplace Skills and Competencies Study reveals that employers cite collaborative teaming as the number one competency missing in today's new hires and candidates. Interpersonal skills and enthusiasm/motivation levels follow.

To demonstrate that they possess the skills, motivation levels and mindsets that employers require — particularly a desire to learn critical missing skills — individuals need to create Employability Profiles, which supplement or replace traditional resumes or CVs. This profile, a sales tool, lists their current capabilities and skills, in the context of changing business priorities, and demonstrates their potential to accelerate business growth while adapting to evolving industry requirements.

For example, an alternative fuels engineer requires in-depth knowledge of renewable energy

to remain competitive but should stay atop of technologies developing across the entire engineering industry, such as within civil and chemical sectors. Individuals should also clarify how they will deploy their abilities to help companies face relevant challenges.

Individuals should adapt the way they present their skills and capabilities to employers, clearly communicating diverse and cross-functional capabilities to bolster their employability.

One in three employers globally struggles to find employees with skills to meet their needs, and this talent mismatch is escalating. Almost all employers in ManpowerGroup's 2011 Talent Shortage and Workplace Skills and Competencies Surveys are concerned that individuals entering the work force are not prepared to meet changing demands. And the quality and relevance of education is being blamed for failing employers and individuals. Action needs to be taken to develop a sustainable pipeline of future talent. Organizations will have to collaborate with educational establishments, redefine job requirements, implement success profiles and co-create iterative versus episodic training and development options. In turn, individuals need to enhance their sale ability by developing an employability profile that aligns with target employers' business strategies.

The world has entered a new era. Employers demand more from their employees and yet are reluctant to hire those who are unlikely to add value to their organization. Only by identifying what success looks like and committing to helping employees advance their businesses will today's employers truly unlock human potential and bolster competitiveness in the Human Age.

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