Deltek Special Edition

Talent Management

FOR DUMMIES

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- **Implement an effective talent strategy**
- **Attract, develop, and retain top talent**
- **Leverage technology for the foundation of your talent strategy**

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Publisher's Acknowledgments

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Introduction

*E*ver since the 1990s there's been talk of a "war for talent," and it's a battle that has taken on increased attention since the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009. The recession brought with it a significantly reduced workforce that was asked to do more with less. Meanwhile, the shift from manufacturing to service-based jobs accelerated. Increasingly, the attribute that organizations are using to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive edge is *people*.

Fast forward to the present. Many of the same conditions still exist even as the job market has recovered. The issue has been complicated by an increasingly multigenerational workforce and a growing influence of the Millennials, or Generation Y. Millennials don't like to stay in one place very long, and that's one reason the war for talent remains in full swing, affecting practically all organizations around the globe, whether they know it or not. The "war for talent" is especially acute inside organizations that deliver projects — often very complex projects — for revenue. For these companies, their people are generally the product and their primary billable resources. For these companies, people are the foundation of the business.

Why is a multigenerational workforce such a strong driver? For one thing, Baby Boomers were supposed to start exiting the workforce, but the recession delayed that big impact. Now it is accelerating and employers are experiencing a gap in competencies, skills, and most important, leadership. CEOs and human resource teams are finding their number one challenge to be attracting, developing, and retaining the next generation of leaders and other top talent.

Human resources (HR) teams have responded by transforming their strategy to successfully compete and remain relevant — thus was born the concept of talent management. It's a breaking down of walls, a consolidation of traditional HR functions into one "people" strategy. But that isn't the entire issue, because the talent management strategy has to be aligned more than ever with the larger business strategy. For far too many years, HR has worked separately from the business, focusing on transactional activities rather than aligning

people strategy with business outcomes and long-term business strategy. Thanks to talent management, the chief human resource officer has finally found the Holy Grail, the proverbial seat at the table.

The components of a robust, comprehensive talent strategy are quite broad-reaching, touching all facets of the business that involve people. There are more examples than you can count on your fingers, including recruiting, onboarding, compensation, benefits, learning and development, leadership development, health and wellness, high-potential programs, mentoring and coaching, organizational change management, personal and professional growth, culture, and technology. The importance of each area in the overall strategy differs by organization, and is influenced by both culture and business strategy.

When you think about Millennials, you invariably think of technology, so it's no surprise that technology is a foundation for every talent management strategy. Technology is a game-changer that has an impact on attracting Millennials, as well as many other aspects of that long but not-at-all-exhaustive talent management list above.

The war's on, but it's not too late to develop and implement an effective talent strategy. It's your chance to accelerate the human performance of your organization to the next level.

About This Book

Talent Management for Dummies, Deltek Special Edition, walks through the concepts of an effective "people" strategy in a way that's intended to be easy to understand and helpful for getting started on a talent management program. Flip through the various chapters and you'll find discussion of the different components of talent management, including acquisition, development, and retention of top talent, as well as the use of technology as its foundation.

The book provides insights into competing in the war for talent and successfully attracting, developing, and retaining vital members of your organization's team. Implementing the right talent strategy is more important than ever — the insights in these pages are shared with the hope of setting you down the path toward talent-focused success.

Throughout this book, you'll find numerous examples and references about project-based organizations with regard to talent and people. Deltek has powered project-based organizations for more than 30 years with products and services specific to the business challenges and needs of such organizations. Because of its vast experience with companies that deliver projects for clients, Deltek intimately understands the critical role *people* play in the overall success of a business — especially one that is project-based. After all, the business is comprised of people, and people are the greatest asset.

Although this version of *Talent Management For Dummies* references project-based organizations throughout, the talent methodologies and best practices referenced are extremely relevant and broadly applicable to all businesses that rely on their people to be successful.

Foolish Assumptions

We've probably not met, but because you've picked up and opened this book, I'm making a few assumptions:

- ✔ You're an executive, chief human resources officer, HR professional, or other type of business leader.
- ✔ Your organization is finding it challenging to negotiate the war for talent, and is in search of a new battle strategy.
- ✔ You would benefit from getting up to speed quickly on today's ideas on talent management.

How This Book Is Organized

Chapter 1: Find Qualified Talent . . . and Hire It Fast! — The old days of putting up a "Help Wanted" sign are history. Today's best bets include forecasting workforce needs, building a talent acquisition strategy, firing up an effective onboarding program, and tracking the results.

Chapter 2: Don't Lose Your Best Talent — Finding talent is just the beginning. Hanging onto the great talent already on your team is increasingly challenging, too. You need a strategy to keep employees engaged, track their performance, recognize their accomplishments, develop them for the future, and plan for succession.

Chapter 3: Invest in Your People — Talent development helps keep employees engaged and performing at their peak, but the most effective methods of learning are changing with the times.

Chapter 4: Leverage Technology to Manage Talent — Technology is the foundation of talent management, but you'll be best served if your tech solutions are integrated for easier access and more powerful data crunching. Plan on a change management strategy to get everyone comfortable with the technology.

Chapter 5: Ten Tips to Manage Talent Effectively — Hundreds of great ideas are out there for winning the war for talent; here's a sampling of wisdom.

Icons Used in This Book

In the margins of this book, you'll find some helpful icons. They're pointers, really, pointing the way to a key point you won't want to miss. (In this case, pointing is not impolite.)

Here's a helpful bit of advice that will further your talent management strategy.

Though every word in this book is there to be useful, the words next to this icon are particularly important.

Hiring people and keeping them happy is a path full of pitfalls and potholes; here is something to watch out for.

Where to Go from Here

Time to turn the page, and if you're a linear reader, that means moving ahead to Chapter 1. But the thing about this book is that you don't have to be linear if you don't feel like it. Go ahead and jump to Chapter 4 if you wish. Or the middle of Chapter 2. Read it back to front. Pick and choose the parts that are of interest to you — whatever suits your needs or your mood. However you move onward, please enjoy it, and good luck in your battles in the war for talent!

Chapter 1

Find Qualified Talent . . . and Hire It Fast!

In This Chapter

▶ Defining talent acquisition

▶ Forecasting your workforce needs

▶ Getting qualified candidates to hiring managers fast

▶ Tracking hiring milestones

▶ Enhancing the onboarding process

*W*hat are your organization's biggest challenges when it comes to recruiting? That question was recently posed in the "State of Recruiting" survey. The biggest challenge reported was finding good candidates, but a close runner-up was filling positions fast.

Of course, that isn't a surprise to anyone involved in recruiting. Most organizations find that it's hard to attract good talent — and the process of finding qualified talent bears little resemblance to the days when all it took to build your workforce was to hang a "Help Wanted" sign in the window.

A carefully planned talent management strategy lets you know your resource needs ahead of time, be competitive, hire the best talent faster than the competition, and stop wasting time interviewing unqualified candidates. You need to not only reduce the time for an open position to be filled, but also onboard new employees effectively so they can become contributing members quickly. This chapter focuses on effectively streamlining your process to find, attract, qualify, hire, and onboard qualified talent for your organization.

Understanding What Talent Acquisition Is

The best employees in the world won't do your organization a bit of good if you can't find them and get them onto your team. That's why talent acquisition is one of the most important parts of talent management. It all starts here. You want to locate and hire the right people, because hiring the wrong engineer or project manager costs you money.

REMEMBER

Simply put, *talent acquisition* is finding and acquiring new talent that will be a great asset for the organization. The best talent is a competitive advantage. Talent acquisition includes evaluating and deciding which candidate will be the best fit for the position, not only in terms of skills, but also cultural fit. The talent acquisition process continues after the perfect candidate has been found, by tracking that candidate through the hiring process and then onboarding the employee into the organization.

Talent acquisition is an evolving and increasingly competitive business. In today's climate, hiring companies must be ready to leverage new processes to attract the right candidates. In many organizations where people are the product — especially for companies that win, manage, and deliver projects for revenue — a truly competitive talent acquisition strategy begins with the ability to forecast when you need new talent. You must attract talent through appealing career sites, actively manage candidates through the hiring process, and onboard them into your organization quickly. Anything less won't cut it.

REMEMBER

The competitive talent acquisition environment isn't the only challenge — today's job seekers add challenges of their own. From Baby Boomers (born before 1963) to Gen X (born between 1963 and 1980) to Millennials (born between 1980 and 1995), they expect more from your organization as they consider their next career move. They demand career development opportunities, a great company culture, and a positive experience with everything from filling out an application to arriving at work on the first day. To secure top talent and provide a cutting-edge experience in this competitive hiring landscape, companies must deploy the best technologies and strategies.

Chances are, your organization struggles from time to time with high volumes when dealing with talent acquisition. You have to fill more open positions with the same or fewer recruiting resources. Recruiters handle more open requisitions, and must keep track of where they are in the process. Recruiters don't always have time to make sure all the steps are being met during the hiring process.

Recruiting mistakes can be expensive. If you hire the wrong candidate — then suffer quick turnover because you were rushed to hire, or your acquisition strategy was not well-thought-out — that can cost up to $300,000! That shocking number should be enough to make organizations sit up and take note of what they're doing to acquire top talent fast.

You need the ability to manage the entire application-to-hire process efficiently for every job and every candidate. Increased efficiencies mean less time wasted searching for information or guessing next steps — and that allows for more time finding qualified candidates. You can, indeed, efficiently manage more open positions with the same resources you have and support the growth of the organization. No more "dropped balls" trying to keep track of every job and candidate.

Forecasting Workforce Needs

You prepare for today's weather by checking the forecast, and you consult an economic forecast when you create business plans. Forecasting your workforce needs is just as vital, and is one of the most integral and important parts of the talent acquisition process. Doing so successfully involves understanding the organization's projected sales and pipeline, the potential for growth and potential for attrition, and how these things will affect the need for additional staff.

For example, say your organization just won a contract or a new project, or closed a major deal, and you've now determined that to execute the work, you need to hire five additional people. Like, yesterday. So, you're under the gun to find and recruit talent to fill these positions, and then hire and onboard them quickly so they can start getting the job done.

Sound familiar? Then you already know that isn't the best approach. Have you ever hired a few of the wrong candidates because you were forced to rush the recruiting and hiring process? Wouldn't it have been nice if the recruiting managers in your organization had known in advance that there was a potential opportunity in the pipeline — and that upon closing the deal, more head count would be needed in a hurry? In your organization, how do you know when you'll need talent?

An answer in the sales pipeline

Whether you make a product or sell services, your workforce requirements change as sales rise and fall. The HR team in your organization should keep in close touch with business development and other parts of the organization to understand if potential opportunities in the pipeline may require additional head count to get the job done.

Using this kind of information in the simple act of forecasting your talent needs can prevent delays in project kickoffs, as well as other problems linked to over-utilized resources. If business development and HR are communicating well and HR is aware the deal may close, the opportunity can be reflected in a forecast of resource needs. That way, candidates can be in HR's pipeline, ready and able to be referred to the hiring manager as soon as the business is won.

Keeping an eye on succession

A forecast of resource needs also helps you keep track of which employees may be retiring, leaving, or asked to leave. If these events are anticipated and shared with HR, then HR specialists can begin to plan for filling these holes with internal or external staff. They can prepare for a recruiting effort well before the vacancy occurs.

Solid departmental staff forecasting can prepare individual contributors to move up to management positions one day, and sometimes it allows your managers to become directors. Without planning, these promotions aren't always immediately feasible — lower-level staff may not be able to fill some positions because the roles require degrees or certifications. Forecasting staffing requirements ahead of time can help your

organization determine which staff can begin to prepare by completing training and certifications. This approach allows staff members to rise within the organization as others need to be replaced.

Learning not to be reactive

If you can keep your pipeline full of qualified candidates, you'll have good, fast options when you need to hire. And fast is important. On average, filling a vacancy takes 45 days, and that's 45 days of lost productivity. Reduce that time frame, and you'll be a hero!

Even if your organization has no immediate openings, you should be constantly on the lookout for quality candidates. Always be recruiting. Not only will you avoid having to react to hiring needs, but taking a more proactive approach helps you find the best applicants. Don't limit yourself to the candidates who rise to the surface quickly in a pinch.

Your pipeline of candidates can include both active candidates (those who have applied on your website or through another channel) and passive candidates (those who have a job and are not actively looking).

Getting Qualified Candidates to Hiring Managers Fast

So you're ready to hire for a position. You've written the job description, thought about the requirements for the position, and posted it. The applications are pouring in. Recruiting is pushing all those applicants to the hiring managers, but half of the applicants don't meet the needs of the job. So, how do you wade through the noise to identify the best candidates?

The volume of applications has grown by a third in just three years, and one in four applicants has applied to more than ten organizations. But quantity is not the same thing as quality. As many as 72 percent of applicants are considered to be low to average quality. Recruiters are in the hot seat — two-thirds of hiring managers in one survey said they aren't satisfied with the impact recruiters are having on the business.

To get the top players, you have to bring your A-game. The job market has shifted, and new methods of recruiting are coming into play. You need a recruiting strategy that's comprehensive and well-thought-out. Do you have one?

Make recruiting smarter

What attributes and skills does the candidate absolutely have to have to even be considered for the position? What traits will make the candidate successful in the position, or prevent success if they're absent? As you create the job description, be sure the must-haves are detailed, because that helps you identify the candidates who meet your criteria. With those details clearly spelled out, recruiters can turn their attention to the applicants who meet the requirements and discard the rest.

With the must-haves determined, now figure out the nice-to-haves. Is an advanced degree absolutely necessary for the individual to succeed in the position, or might relevant work experience also fit the bill? Can the candidate do the job from anywhere, or is working onsite essential? If the position requires public speaking, must the candidate already have that experience, or can it be learned on the job?

Prioritize the candidate experience

You hear this over and over again: "The war for talent is over and the candidate won." This is so true. If you want to attract the best candidates, you must provide them with the best candidate experience.

Indeed, every minute you spend thinking about the candidate experience — and the people going through your process — is a minute well-spent. Whatever you are doing to keep pace with the demands you face, the changes in workflow, the increases in volume, and the technology changes, be sure you take into account how your practices resonate with candidates. Consider the candidate at each step in the process, and you will be rewarded.

TIP

You need a great career site through which applicants can apply. Make it easy for applicants to apply for positions — even by mobile phone. If you do nothing else this year, do this one thing: Make it easy. It's the single biggest factor in your ability to attract great talent.

WARNING!

If a candidate has a less-than-stellar experience in your talent acquisition process, that one candidate may be only the start of the problem. The candidate community is engaged, vocal, and communicative. If you build a process that doesn't work for a candidate, that candidate may tear you down on social media. That makes the job of attracting other great candidates a whole lot harder.

Promote your employer brand

Existing employees can be fantastic salespeople when you're trying to attract great candidates to join them on the team. Their experiences can become part of your marketing. Put some of them, especially the biggest stars, front and center so they can help encourage high-value candidates follow them onto the team.

TIP

How do you market with the help of current employees? One way they can become a recruiting tool is by sharing their positive testimonials with prospective candidates. Get their insights on why they like working for your organization. Share that information with potential new hires in your various marketing efforts and during the vetting process.

Also, make sure your community-minded initiatives are part of the picture you sell. That's important for attracting many of today's employees, especially those who are part of Generation Y. They want to change the world and know that they're part of something bigger.

Looking beyond the résumé

TIP

Social media profiles are useful tools for researching and evaluating potential candidates. Don't just look at a résumé — thoroughly vet the candidate by checking out LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media profiles. Through those profiles, you can find out more about their interests and their character. Their social media postings may include

details that help you get to know them as a person, and may give insights as to whether they'd be a good cultural fit.

Social media also can offer a great way to engage with candidates, even those not necessarily interested in a position you're presently offering. Contacts through social media provide a way to build a relationship that could come in handy later, because even though that potential candidate is happy where he or she is right now, who knows what the future might bring?

Tracking Hiring Milestones

Let's face it, shuffling through a stack of résumés on your desk doesn't cut it anymore. The talent acquisition process is far too complicated. You need to keep track of the requisitions you have open, the candidates you have in the interviewing process, the candidates to whom you have offered a position, and the candidates who have accepted or declined an offer. Clearly, you need an efficient way to track candidates so they don't get lost or forgotten, or get bogged down in the process.

What kinds of things should you track? Here are some thoughts:

- Time to hire
- Cost per hire
- Quality of hire
- Recruiter efficiency

REMEMBER

You don't gain anything by tracking just for the sake of tracking. You must pay attention to what you're measuring, think about what the results mean, learn from them, and make better decisions based on them. Be sure what you're measuring matters to the business and helps make your process better, faster, and more efficient.

You can find automated ways to track, but you must understand what the collection of data means to your daily workflow and use it to improve your decision-making. Don't keep using methods that aren't working. Learn from your organization's experience, including both the good and the less-than-stellar.

Enhancing the Onboarding Process

Onboarding is a severely underrated, often misunderstood part of HR. The good news is that HR professionals are increasingly realizing just how important this process is for a successful talent management strategy. In a very real way, the onboarding of new employees can affect the entire tone of an organization, the levels of productivity, employee engagement, retention, and ultimately the bottom line.

REMEMBER   That's an incredibly big and broad impact, which is why onboarding is something that shouldn't be important only to the HR team. It should have the full support and backing of executives as well. Investing in a solid onboarding strategy can truly make a huge impact on the company's future.

Understanding onboarding

Onboarding is a whole lot more than just having new hires fill out legal forms and getting their picture taken for the company identification badge. It isn't just new hire orientation, either. *Onboarding* is introducing new hires to your organization, training them on the methods and processes of the organization, and coaching them as they begin their new career.

Perhaps you've been through an onboarding experience something like this: "Welcome to our company. Here are 506 forms to fill out and 25 videos to watch. I'll be back to get you for lunch at noon. This afternoon I'll give you a tour of the office, we'll take your picture, you can meet some people, and I'll give you ten books to read and let you go home early." That doesn't count as good onboarding anymore.

Using effective onboarding to reduce turnover

REMEMBER   The first few days of an employee's career with your organization are just as important as the recruitment process. Many companies are just realizing this. Twenty-two percent of staff turnover occurs in the first 45 days of employment, so you have to be exceptional right out of the gate. It's crucial that

your organization make the most of that time to impress the employee and do everything possible to set new hires up for a win very early on.

You can accomplish that in several ways. Successful onboarding engages with the employees on the first day. Have them do more than just compliance issues; let them interact with the company culture from the start.

TIP

Another key is to articulate clear responsibilities that the employee needs to perform daily in order to be successful. Next is to address culture fit, which should include explaining company jargon, introducing new employees to the events calendar, and matching them with mentors. Then, link onboarding to their desired skills, and deliver feedback early so they are sure to develop the right habits that are important to succeeding at your company.

You simply can't afford to have good people leave. When you attract new talent, you must make sure you get new employees ingrained in the culture as quickly as possible. Here's a thought recently overheard at a conference: "People never remember what they were told or what they read on their first day at a new job. However, they always remember how they felt at the end of the day."

Onboarding from the beginning

Onboarding starts the day your company offers someone a position. How many times have you (or someone you know) been offered a position, and then upon giving notice, discovered that you're now more valuable to your current company? All of a sudden, you're offered that raise that you deserved for the past three years. Now that you're leaving, you're more valuable than you were yesterday.

REMEMBER

If you're the hiring company, you don't want to lose that valuable employee even before he or she starts — just because the current employer finally made it worthwhile to stay. Your early onboarding can help ensure that you hang onto the great catch that you made. The end result of effective onboarding is an employee who is committed, more productive in his or her first year, and more likely to stay with the company for many years. That's a whole lot more than just new hire orientation!

Chapter 2

Don't Lose Your Best Talent

In This Chapter

▶ Lamenting lost loyalties

▶ Enhancing employee engagement

▶ Managing the team's performance

▶ Helping employees grow their careers

▶ Understanding the benefits of succession planning

*S*o you've found the right talent for your organization. The tricky part is over, and you can rest easy, right? Well, not exactly. After you've found and onboarded the talent, the next challenge in the employee lifecycle is *keeping* the talent.

This chapter explores the concept of employee engagement, a key to ensuring that your team is committed to the organization, performing at its peak, and helping deliver success. It spells out how performance management can help boost engagement, and discusses how career development and succession planning can keep the best employees on the team and ready to grow into new opportunities.

Is Employee Loyalty a Thing of the Past?

In olden times, most people looked for a job only when they needed a job. Either they lost their job or hated their job so much that they went looking for something new. Employees were loyal to the company and the company was loyal to them. Remember those days?

After several economic crises and changes in the market — including the 2000 tech bubble and the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009 — employees learned that just because they were loyal to the company, that didn't mean their jobs were secure.

REMEMBER

Now, people are simply not as loyal to their companies as they used to be, and the definition of what people consider to be "loyal" has evolved. In fact, a research study from Ultimate Software suggests that 25 percent of Millennials believe that staying at a job for just seven months indicates they're loyal. Boomers believe that number is five years. And CareerBuilder research suggests that by the age of 35, a quarter of workers have held five jobs or more. Among workers age 55 and older, one-fifth have held ten jobs or more.

People are now more open than ever to a new job and, in fact, 51 percent of workers who currently have a job are either actively seeking a new job or are open to the idea. The bottom line is that the majority of U.S. workers are "on the job market."

To use a homebuyer example, it's a seller's market. Employers no longer have the same level of power, and employees are more in the driver's seat. That means there's more competition to find, hire, and keep the best resources that are the key to executing successful projects and engagements for your clients. So, how do you retain your best talent?

Keeping Your Employees Engaged

REMEMBER

The first step in successful employee retention is making sure your employees are engaged. *Employee engagement* is the emotional and functional commitment that an employee has to his or her organization. More engagement means more loyalty and, in general, more effective work. Figure 2-1 shows why employee engagment matters.

Employees are more engaged and loyal to their organization when they feel they are valued, when they believe their work matters, and when they feel that they have supportive supervisors.

Employee engagement — the emotional and functional commitment an employee has to his or her organization

$**11** **billion** is lost annually because of employee **turnover**

Companies with **engaged employees** outperform those without by up to **202**%
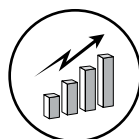
71% of all employees are **not fully engaged**

Figure 2-1: Lack of engagement is expensive.

What's the opposite? In many organizations, employees feel undervalued, or perhaps they don't have enough guidance on how to grow their career. They may perceive a lack of recognition for good work, or inconsistency in performance measurement and goal setting.

The result of these downers is disengaged or underappreciated talent, and those are the people who are more likely to leave the organization. Losing good employees is bad for the organization, but disengaged employees who *don't* leave also cause heartburn. They tend to be less productive, and their negative attitudes can turn customers off and send them looking for a better customer experience elsewhere. Lack of engagement can be expensive, as shown in Figure 2-1.

So, how do you get employees engaged? It takes a combination of such things as performance management, career management, and succession planning.

Start with a consistent, company-wide approach to performance management to enhance accountability, visibility, and employee recognition. Engagement can benefit as well through automating and tracking the performance appraisal process, establishing processes for goal alignment and goal tracking, and providing employee coaching.

REMEMBER

Ensuring a high-performance workforce that's motivated, developed, and loyal to your organization helps you to deliver quality products and services, and it's key for driving company profit. Automating your employee management system is an important first step to help maintain the level of motivation your company needs. A good management system allows you to assess quality hires, achieve results, and develop valuable talent for a more effective working relationship.

Understanding the Importance of Performance Management

For many organizations, the performance management process is a pain. It's more of a burden than a blessing. Usually it's a manual process, the process is often overly lengthy and complicated, and it's only done once a year. Some organizations don't give a high priority to performance management, and some don't do much of it at all.

Not coincidentally, employee disengagement is high at many organizations, according to the Society for Human Resource Management. The disengaged employees at these organizations don't always feel that the powers-that-be view them as valuable, and they don't feel that the organization invests enough in them.

These dissatisfied employees want to build their skills and move forward in their careers. They want to receive coaching and guidance to help them grow and advance their careers. Money isn't always the issue — in fact, people often don't leave organizations because they want more money, but rather because they don't feel they are recognized for the great work they do. Many organizations' best talent is at risk of walking out the door because of a dearth of recognition.

What's lacking in these cases is solid performance management. In many organizations, performance measurement and goal setting are inconsistent. They're the manager's responsibility, and aren't handled on a company-wide basis. Employees hope their bosses have some sort of fair and accurate performance-management system, but there's no guarantee, because employee performance and coaching is rarely a company-wide focus.

Performance reviews are often completed once a year, but there's a trend toward continuous performance management in which managers give ongoing feedback to help ensure accountability and keep employees on track toward accomplishing goals. This concept is especially important for businesses that manage projects, because it allows them to provide performance management throughout the project. With this type of review there is even the capability for a project manager, instead of the employee's manager, to review the employee for real-time feedback.

WARNING!

Disengaged or underappreciated employees are linked to decreases in customer satisfaction, because people are the face of the business. In fact, research has found that 41 percent of loyal customers say a big reason for their loyalty is that they've consistently noticed a positive employee attitude. Conversely, 68 percent of customers say a big reason they defected from a brand or company was their perception of negative employee attitude.

So, aren't you better off if those employees with attitude problems find jobs elsewhere? Well, in some respects, yes, and it pays to figure out how to replace disengaged employees more quickly. On the other hand, you're better off if they don't become disengaged in the first place, because whether an employee is engaged or not, replacing that employee is expensive, as shown in Figure 2-2. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the total cost of replacing an employee can be anywhere from 90 to 200 percent of his or her salary.
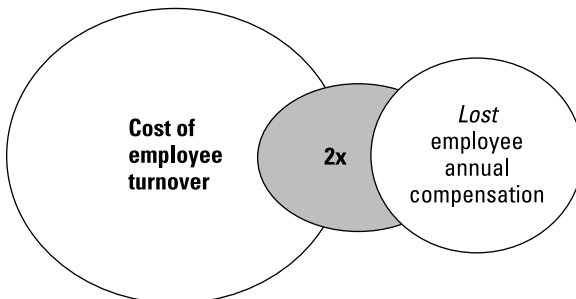
Figure 2-2: Turnover is a costly proposition.

The employee engagement problem is not an epidemic of managers uninterested in doing a good job of recognizing their teams and helping their people grow. Sure, some don't care enough, but the bigger problem is that among the majority who do care, many don't know how to do this well. With performance evaluation and coaching left up to the manager, it's done by some and not by others, goals are inconsistent, and employee recognition and promotions are not measured.

That's why a company-wide approach is so important. It enhances accountability, visibility, and recognition within the organization by automating and tracking the performance and appraisal process. A company-wide approach emphasizes goal alignment, goal tracking, and employee coaching.

Smart companies know this game plan gives employees constant feedback about clear, meaningful goals — that's how they know what is expected of them. Performance reviews may be about evaluating work that has already taken place, but they're also good opportunities to set goals for the future. Use them to inspire productivity and reward talent.

A performance management process should prod the entire organization with a consistent process to set goals, measure goals, and coach and recognize employees. Once this process is set, you can roll out a company-wide consistent framework for doing all these things. You can train managers in best practices to help them coach their teams and grow more effective teams.

A company-wide performance management approach is also an antidote to the common struggles companies have with employee growth. Solid employees want job and skills growth, but often they don't know what they need to do and what skills they need to focus on in order to move to the next level. One consequence is flat skills growth, which means employees aren't doing their work any better this year than they were last year. Another consequence is lower morale, a symptom of employees who don't feel that their work matters and that they are growing. And morale, whether high or low, is contagious.

How does a well-designed performance management process help? It allows for ongoing, interactive feedback coupled with clear development and coaching plans. That allows organizations to invest and grow employees, build high-performing teams, and create more engaged and loyal employees.

Performance management plays a key role in recognition, which is yet another area where many companies struggle. Who doesn't want to feel valued and recognized for their excellent contributions? And yet, according to Society for Human Resource Management research, about two-thirds of employees say they didn't get any recognition in the past year — and that's a prime reason many employees take off for greener pastures.

A performance management process helps solve this problem by providing goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. Monitor these goals, and you have something recognizable. It's a great way to gather peer feedback, identify coaching opportunities, and recognize excellent work.

REMEMBER

Performance management ensures that top performers get the visibility and recognition they desire, which helps to increase loyalty, reduce turnover, and cut down the heavy cost of replacing key employees. If you boost retention by just 5 percent, you can hope to increase profitability by much more — experts suggest that can result in a rise of 25 to 85 percent in profitability.

Engaging your employees

Give support, get engagement — Employees who say they have more supportive supervisors are 1.3 times as likely to stay with the organization and are 67 percent more engaged, according to research by The Energy Project.

Let employees know they're valued — Dissatisfied employees most often cite not feeling valued among reasons for their dissatisfaction, according to CareerBuilder research. It's a complaint shared by 65 percent of dissatisfied employees.

Make sure reviews are fair and accurate — Employees who see performance reviews as inaccurate are twice as likely to look for another job, according to research from Globoforce.

Make it clear what matters — What employee attributes are most important to the employer? Oxford Economics research finds that employees believe these things are most important to their organizations: job performance and results (46 percent); the ability to learn and be trained quickly (29 percent); and loyalty and long-term commitment to the company (28 percent).

Developing Employees and Planning for the Future

The most valuable employees are always considering career opportunities. Research suggests that more than two-thirds of those American workers who are currently employed are either actively seeking a different opportunity, or are at least open to the idea should an opportunity present itself. Think about that for a moment — a large percentage of your workforce is potentially in the market for a new job.

There's an answer within this sea of employee disengagement, but many companies don't take full advantage of it. Consider what happens when a great leader retires or moves on to another opportunity — who fills that role? Has the next leader been identified and groomed to move on into the vacancy? Or does the organization find it necessary to look outside to hire new leaders? If the answer is the latter choice, what's the message for those employees already on the team?

Those existing employees want to know they have a way to grow and advance within the company. If they don't see evidence that they can grow and advance, many of them leave. After all, according to the American Psychological Association, the top sources of work stress are low salaries and lack of opportunity for growth and advancement.

REMEMBER

Here's a stunning fact: A study from Towers Watson found that 41 percent of employees believe they would need to leave their current employer in order to advance their careers — they don't feel there are adequate advancement opportunities where they are. You can bet there are lots of great employees among that 41 percent.

Here's the sad part: Rarely do leaders and managers take a careful look at their current teams and organizations, identify who the next great leaders will be, and plan how to grow those people to take over when the time comes.

That failure causes trouble in multiple ways. First of all, imagine that a talented but disengaged employee named Jill packs up and leaves for a better situation where her advancement seems more likely. That leaves an immediate hole to fill.

And what if a couple months later, someone on the next rung up the corporate structure departs? Perhaps Jill would have been a good candidate to take over that job, but she's gone now. Sure, the organization could get lucky. Jill may be gone, but perhaps Bill will be able to step up and walk into the role successfully. That would surely be nice.

But it may not happen. If no one took the time to identify and grow potential internal leaders such as Jill, and no Bill is on hand to come to the rescue, the organization may have to look elsewhere. It may bring in an outsider who has appropriate leadership skills but must take time to learn about the business, the organization, and the culture. That's bound to cause slowdowns and disruptions, and the culture fit may not be good.

In a decent-sized organization, there are probably some managers who do a decent job of spotting potential leaders and helping them prepare. But many managers don't know how to do this, and it's too important a task to leave to chance.

Of course, there's a better approach. A carefully designed strategy of career and succession planning will help you easily identify and develop top talent within the organization — before the need becomes critical. Groom your existing talent to move up into key positions as they become available. Enhance employee engagement by creating career paths for your most valuable workers, and build supporting development plans designed to fill gaps and promote employee growth.

It's a win-win situation. Career development helps you develop employees, increase employee retention, and plan for the future needs of the organization so that you don't have to scramble to fill staffing holes. You'll be motivating and engaging employees by helping them plan the next phase of their career path. And you'll be pinpointing and planning the areas that require development.

Your career development plan will help managers and employees to develop career paths together. They'll be able to discover strengths and areas in need of development, with a detailed gap analysis that helps build development plans. Use the plan to easily locate your top employees and identify successors based not only on required skills, competencies, and job experience, but also on an employee's desire to hold the job.

After you've chosen potential successors and begun to build development plans to help them along their paths, you can determine the strength of your succession planning and uncover other areas that may need further attention.

Wondering how to accomplish this? Tools such as 9 Box Planning are available to help with succession planning. The right tools help identify employees who are ready for advancement, those who need development, and those that really should be transitioned out.

Being truly proactive about career and succession planning means taking additional steps and diving into data. You want to be able to analyze attrition data and identify whether employees separated voluntarily, involuntarily, or both. This kind of analysis helps your organization determine if you're losing your top-performing, high-potential talent, and why.

Career development is the secret to identifying key performers and future leaders. You'll reduce attrition involving key players by building fulfilling career paths that foster loyalty and longer-term employees.

Chapter 3

Invest in Your People

● ●●

In This Chapter

▶ Appreciating learning and development

▶ Understanding the old ways

▶ Introducing new talent development concepts

▶ Aligning programs to outcomes

▶ Getting the ball rolling

● ●●

*T*he best employees seek lifelong learning. They thrive on new challenges and new ways to succeed. Your organization must be ready to fulfill those needs if you want to keep those great team members from joining someone else's team.

This chapter focuses on talent development and the ways your company can build up the workforce you have. It explains why the market is shifting from in-person, classroom methods to new ways of learning. And it emphasizes why you should measure not just how well the learning program is accepted, but what impact it's having on real-life business metrics.

Knowing the Importance of Learning and Development

Transformation is the name of the game across the talent management functions, and some of the most dramatic changes are reshaping the learning and development area. Chief learning officers and other talent development leaders have been radically changing how they develop talent — for a number of reasons. There's adjustment to the goals and

priorities of Millennials. There are shifts in the ways adults learn, advances in technology, and changes in the ways business impact is measured.

REMEMBER Put it all together, and talent development is an increasingly critical strategy for retaining top talent and positively impacting employee engagement. Why is that? Remember, the top two reasons great employees leave an organization are lack of development opportunities and the sense that work is not meaningful. Employees — Millennials in particular — are much more likely to stay with an organization if they feel they're being developed and on a growth trajectory.

There are so many good reasons to prevent employee turnover. As you know, employee turnover is unbelievably expensive, up to twice the annual compensation. And if that's not enough, consider that the cost can be even higher, by quite a bit, when you start calculating in soft costs such as productivity, lost customers, and lost sales bookings. Think about the big contract that Business Development just closed, and now you're struggling to staff the project because of turnover in talent. Think about the industry expert who has a lucrative hourly billing rate, and what happens if that person leaves for a competitor. Simply put, if you are a project-based business — or any business — you need to hold on to your people.

REMEMBER Look at the issue another way. Any organization that doesn't invest in its talent through development is placing additional pressure and burden on the talent acquisition team to find more talent. Certainly, you can bring in new talent, especially for specific skills and competencies. But if that's your primary talent strategy, it's an unnecessary and costly risk.

> *"Do not tolerate brilliant jerks. The cost to teamwork is too high."*
>
> — Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix

Buying talent, which for many is a preferred strategy, helps an organization fill an immediate need. But it can result in higher compensation costs and take longer to ramp up to be productive. Newly hired talent may not fit in the culture, and that fantastic-seeming new employee may be a brilliant jerk who eventually exits the company. Invest in your high potentials and top talent to deliver on the business needs, and you'll improve both retention and employee engagement.

Talent professionals continue to overlook the cost of the lack of meaningful work, or the trouble caused when an employee doesn't understand how what he or she does every day positively contributes to the greater cause. The multi-generational workforce is driven by purpose-based and project-based work, which means that employees are inspired to go to work if what they do has real meaning from project to project — otherwise, they may seek work elsewhere.

Leaving the Old Way Behind

The traditional strategy for learning programs was — and for many, continues to be — *instructor-led training,* or ILT. Classroom training has always ruled as the preferred and best method of transferring knowledge to employees. Industry experts argue that ILT, especially for technical training, has proven results. After all, one cannot learn to write code from a video or earn the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification online only.

REMEMBER

In a post-recession era, employees simply don't have time to leave the office, or step away from billable work for multi-day classes, and budgets are limited. You can argue the case for a blended solution involving virtual courses, but ultimately the decision comes down to time and money.

Your most important consideration is the effectiveness of the training. Studies show that knowledge transfer from the classroom to the job is as low as 10 percent, as Figure 3-1 suggests.

Participants learn best if you:

Allow them to apply what they learned — 90%

Let them practice — 75%

Engage them in a discussion — 50%

Demonstrate how it's done — 30%

Present the subject audio-visually — 20%

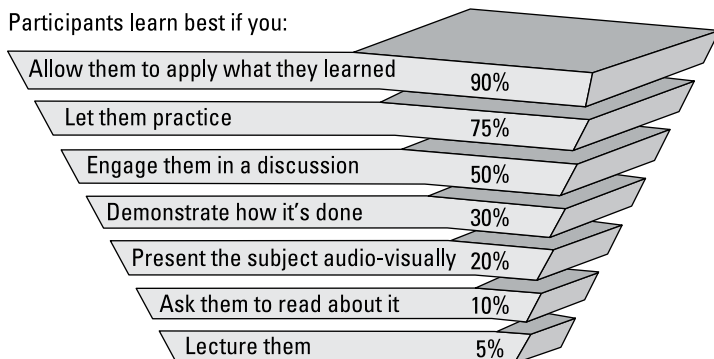Ask them to read about it — 10%

Lecture them — 5%

Figure 3-1: What's the best way to learn?

So why do it? What's the case for instructor-led training? Certainly, some IT and technical training requires a hands-on lab experience, the kind that's typically found in the classroom. But the other driver is that classroom training is easy to track and measure. You can count how many people participated, measure overall satisfaction with the class, track knowledge transfer with pre- and post-exams, and calculate the percentage completion for a team.

If you're familiar with the Kirkpatrick levels of training evaluation, those metrics fit in with the first two levels, measuring employees' reaction to training, as well as their learning. But the key questions are these: Does a particular learning experience help the employees' performance improve? Does it have a positive business impact? Ultimately, is there a positive return on investment (ROI)? Those questions correspond with Kirkpatrick levels 3 and 4, which pertain to how training affects the behavior of employees and whether there are measurable business results. Did the project stay within budget and scope? Were the deliverable dates met? Did you please your client?

For the most part, business impact has been greatly ignored, not because it's not important, but frankly because it's too difficult to measure. That's why measuring participation and completion rates has been the barometer for success with talent development. The question to ask yourself is this: Does that definition align with what the business leaders within your organization would want? If not, it's time to change.

Moving to Talent Development 2.0 — or Is It 3.0?

The good news for those die-hard ILT fans is that ILT is not dead. There will always be a need for classroom training, but it should be minimized and incorporated into the larger talent development strategy.

Why? Face it, the way adults learn has significantly changed and continues to evolve. Employees are doing more with less, which is why *just-in-time learning* — when and where you need it — now plays a bigger role than ever before.

Remember that the effectiveness of classroom training, or *formal learning,* is as low as 10 percent. The flipside is that

informal learning has the opposite success rate when it comes to knowledge transfer. It offers tremendous effectiveness. So start thinking about peer-to-peer, self-paced, performance support tools, mentoring and coaching, leaders as teachers, social learning, a learning library — and yes, facilitated workshops. A blended learning solution not only offers different options for different generations, but also provides a robust library of tools to enable just-in-time learning.

The following areas of focus have the biggest influence on talent development strategies today. These must be evaluated as part of the development process:

- ✔ **Culture:** Every corporate culture is different and unique to a specific organization, and that has a big influence on how employees learn. Core values must be integrated into the learning strategy so it aligns with established behaviors and priorities. Create a culture of learning, and encourage lifelong learning in the pursuit of both personal and professional development.

- ✔ **Business strategy and outcomes:** Talent development strategy must be directly aligned with the larger business strategy. The goal is to solve business problems and execute the mission of the organization through people. If you can't see and measure how a learning program improves the business outcome, don't implement it; but also, don't kill it if it's already in place until there is something of value to replace it.

- ✔ **Multigenerational workforces:** Four generations are now active in the workforce, and each has its own nuances with regard to how its members learn. A Baby Boomer learns in a radically different way compared to a Millennial. Boomers have a tendency to prefer formal training such as classroom learning, while Millennials prefer informal options such as peer-to-peer collaboration and mentoring/coaching.

- ✔ **Top-down executive support:** As with any good, successful program, you need support from the top. Buy-in from the CEO and executive team is non-negotiable. If the top-level leaders cannot see and articulate the value of investing in development, neither will the larger leadership team. What you need from the leadership is not simply buy-in, but active participation that's visible to the larger employee base.

✔ **Technology:** The right tools and technology provide the foundation for talent development programs. But move thoughtfully regarding technology. Remember to establish the strategy first, and then seek out the right tools to support it. All too often, companies implement the shiny new object and then reverse-engineer the strategy to fit the technology. Consider technologies such as a social collaboration platform to support peer-to-peer learning, social learning tools for leadership development programs, learning management systems to manage a library of learning assets, and performance support tools.

Developing Learning Programs for Specific Outcomes

It's important to avoid the trap of simply pushing out programs in order to declare success. There will always be the pressure to launch programs, but if they aren't aligned to specific outcomes, you'll expend lots of effort with potentially poor results. Determine the outcomes that are required to solve the identified business problem or need. If you're a good steward of specific outcomes, you'll support the larger talent management strategy, which in turn supports the business strategy.

That isn't to say there's no value in measuring Kirkpatrick levels 1 and 2, which track how employees react to training and how well they learn the lessons being taught. But those measures can provide a false sense of success. Budgets are always a challenge for talent development, so to change the tone of the conversation with CFOs and CEOs during budget planning, you must show business and financial impact.

Check out Figure 3-2 to see the traditional Kirkpatrick model measuring favorable experience of the event at level 1 to targeted outcomes and ROI at level 4.
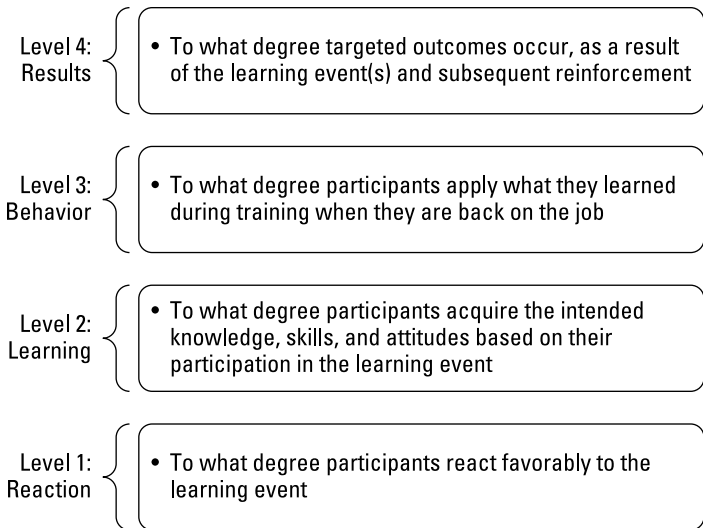
Level 4:
Results
> • To what degree targeted outcomes occur, as a result of the learning event(s) and subsequent reinforcement

Level 3:
Behavior
> • To what degree participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job

Level 2:
Learning
> • To what degree participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on their participation in the learning event

Level 1:
Reaction
> • To what degree participants react favorably to the learning event

Figure 3-2: The Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model.

Before you roll out a learning program, you must determine how you intend to measure learning development. You need a clear understanding of what success looks like. Too often organizations look back at a completed program to determine whether it was successful or not. But you can achieve Kirkpatrick levels 3 and 4 only if you establish a baseline in advance. A baseline enables you to measure your program's business and financial impact.

Consider the following when building learning and development programs for specific outcomes:

✔ Encourage and obtain corporate and business operation leaders' input.

✔ Determine how you will measure success.

✔ Determine the level of effort and investment in *all* the development programs.

✔ Be sure to emphasize the transfer and application of knowledge and growth of experiences throughout your developmental programs.

✔ Consider your learning and development programs with the "right talent participants" as a journey.

✔ Allow flexible structures to adapt and respond to change.

Responding to a Call to Action

A talent development program is an essential part of the overall talent management strategy that's intended to help your organization retain top talent and increase employee engagement. This kind of program ultimately will help you successfully support your customers. It can also play a role in talent acquisition, because having a reputation for developing talent from within is something you can market externally as a differentiator.

Here's some homework to help you start your journey toward talent development:

- ✔ Identify the current state of your talent development programs for your "right" talent.
- ✔ Analyze the content of your development programs. Is it aimed toward and focused on your "right" talent?
- ✔ Determine current costs versus future costs of development programs by delivery methods. Should you choose formal or informal methods?
- ✔ Identify and track the metrics associated with the development of your talent. Metrics should be focused on outcomes, including retention, engagement, coaching others, business impact, Kirkpatrick levels 3 and 4, and ROI.
- ✔ What tools and technology are required to support the development of your top talent?

Training is an event, while learning is a journey. So, do your homework and start your journey today to implement an effective and successful talent development strategy to attract and retain the best talent.

Chapter 4

Leverage Technology to Manage Talent

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*A*ny winning strategy needs a solid foundation, and for talent management, the foundation you'll build upon is technology. It can make your life easier, create a better experience for the user, and improve the bottom line. Creative use of technology can also help Millennials feel more at home within your organization.

But you don't want just any technology. You need the right technology, which is what this chapter is all about, from laying the groundwork to picking an integrated system to using change management in the adoption process. If chosen wisely and implemented successfully, technology can be a tremendous answer and the key to working more effectively and efficiently for all businesses, including those that are project- and client-based.

Making Technology the Foundation

Implementing and leveraging the right tools will help your HR organization automate many of the manual processes, freeing up resources to be more strategic rather than transactional.

REMEMBER

One example is the applicant tracking process. When you move applicant tracking from a manual to automated process, you'll have a significant, positive impact on HR resources, and just as vital, you'll be better able to better filter top candidates and speed up the offer to the winning prospect. That helps tremendously in the war for talent.

For project-based companies, time is money, so the faster you can hire and ramp up your talent for billable work, the more dollars to the bottom line.

Look at the question another way. No one would enter a war without the latest weapons and technology, so why would you do so in the war for talent? Remember what's at risk in this war: your ability to attract, develop, and retain top talent. The good news is that there's no shortage of cutting-edge technology for talent. The challenge is in the due diligence and selection of the right solution for your organization and for your type of work.

Just don't forget to put strategy first. With an overabundance of technology on the market, it's very tempting to chase the newest, shiniest object. Face it, who isn't guilty of this when tempted by the latest and greatest smartphones? Raise your hand if you're one of many who has waited in line at the Apple Store for the release of a new iPhone model.

REMEMBER

With regard to talent management technology, the sound approach is to establish the talent strategy first and then evaluate what's needed to execute the strategy. Technology is a tool that can be leveraged throughout the execution of the talent plan, but you have to make the plan first, not get the tool and try to build the plan around it. Yes, technology is the foundation, so it's a major contributing factor in the development of the strategy. Still, at the end of the day, technology is only a tool for a winning talent management strategy.

It's more important than ever that you consider integration with both front- and back-office functions through an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Having an ERP system built specifically for project- and client-focused companies is critical to success. Deltek is the leading global ERP provider with an integrated financial and talent management solution for project organizations.

Finding a Unified Solution for Technology That Works Better

Many organizations work with multiple vendors as they build their human resources information system (HRIS) solution. The vendor providing the applicant tracking system may be different from the one providing the learning management system, and yet another might provide the performance management solution. Does that make sense?

REMEMBER

Strong arguments exist for eliminating silos and implementing one talent management strategy, and it makes sense to take the same approach with the technology including on the ERP side. Managing multiple vendors can be time-consuming, often costs more, and ultimately delivers a poor user experience for the employee. A unified HRIS platform was hard to come by in the past, but it's a whole lot more feasible now that organizations are implementing one comprehensive talent management approach. Check out Figure 4-1 to see what makes up a unified solution for the talent management life cycle.

A unified platform crosses the entire talent life cycle of attracting, developing, and retaining top talent. Here are more details on the benefits of a unified solution:

- ✔ **Vendor management:** Consolidating multiple vendors down to one leverages your buying power and reduces IT resources required for support.

- ✔ **Strategic versus transactional:** Free up HR resources by moving operations work to a self-service environment, allowing HR resources to focus more on strategy and business impact.

- ✔ **Cost savings:** Multiple providers that are not integrated can be costly to an organization.

- ✔ **Consistent employee experience:** An integrated system is easier to use, and ease of use drives better adoption of the technology.

- ✔ **Single sign-on for users:** This is one more way to improve the user experience and build easier access.
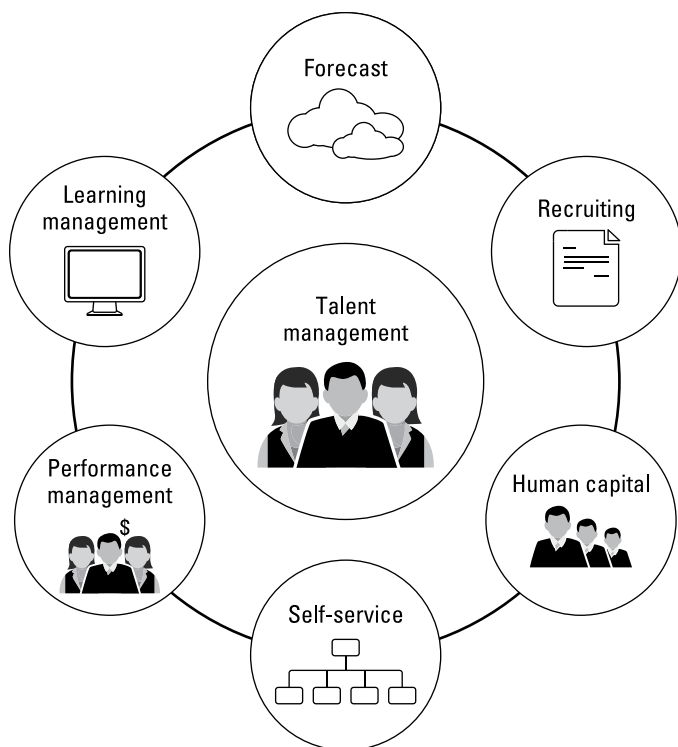
Figure 4-1: A unified talent management solution.

> ✔ **Big data:** An integrated system enhances the ability to data-mine across the single platform, rather than having to search across multiple systems that are not integrated.

> ✔ **HR metrics:** Integration improves the ability to measure success, especially those vital measures that are part of Kirkpatrick levels 3 and 4.

REMEMBER

Millennials are, of course, all about technology, so they're worth mentioning in this discussion. This is the first generation in the workforce that grew up with today's most common computing and communication technology, and they've carried that savvy into the workplace. Keep in mind that the majority of the workforce is now Millennials, and their influence and dominance will continue to grow. Technology is not optional, but rather is critical for attracting and retaining talent from this generation.

Take smartphones as an example. Figure 4-2 explains just how much Millennials rely on this one particular technology in their lives. When they come to work each day, they don't check it at the door.
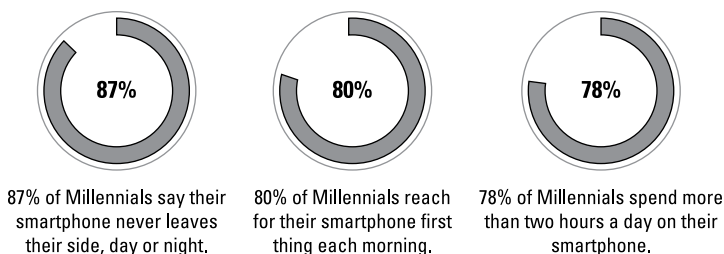
87%

87% of Millennials say their smartphone never leaves their side, day or night.

80%

80% of Millennials reach for their smartphone first thing each morning.

78%

78% of Millennials spend more than two hours a day on their smartphone.

Figure 4-2: Millennials love their smartphones.

So, how can you leverage the smartphone in your unified talent management solution? For example, can employees access the LMS and download training onto their devices? If they are consultants, can they enter their time or expenses from the road? You had better be thinking about it, because the Millennials certainly are, before they even consider your organization as a potential future employer.

Remember how important it is to provide just-in-time learning through a blended solution of learning assets and tools. Technology, such as mobile devices, can be critical for accessing knowledge when and where it's needed while appealing to the largest, fastest-growing generation in the workforce.

So what do Millennials want from technology? Here are some of the things that catch their fancy:

✔ **User interface:** The experience is the new battleground.

✔ **Taps replace clicks:** You've gotta go mobile.

✔ **Just-in-time knowledge and data:** Members of this generation demand everything, exactly when and where they want it.

✔ **Social everything:** They're big users of social media, social learning, and collaboration.

✔ **Integration:** Ease of navigation is king.

Changing Behaviors

No mention of technology would be complete without also discussing behavioral changes of the employee end-users. Any time you implement something new such as technology, you're asking people to do and act differently. However, adapting to change does not come naturally to human beings, and all the change in the world won't bring progress if its implementation and adoption aren't managed well.

Figure 4-3 shows acceptance versus resistance to change, which is a fairly balanced number. But, 50 percent sitting on the fence demonstrates where an effective change management solution can be most successful. Ignoring the behavioral component allows a larger percentage of the 50 percent to slip into the "resist change" category, which could ultimately kill the technology implementation. On the other hand, effective management of that change can pull more of those 50 percent onto the side of acceptance.

Organizational change management (OCM) is a structured set of strategies and activities designed to move a group of people from current state, through the transitional state, and into the desired future state. (Read more about it in *Organizational Change Management For Dummies.*)

An effective OCM strategy — along with arming and equipping the user with the right knowledge and tools — will help ensure the success of the implementation and the adoption of the technology. Don't forget, technology doesn't do you any good if no one is using the systems.
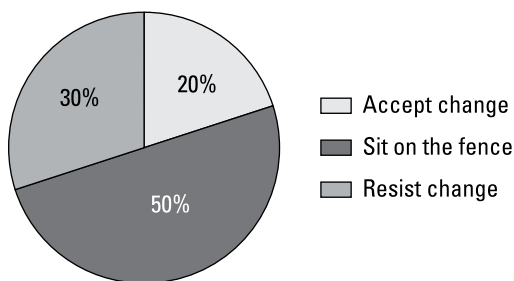

Figure 4-3: How well is change accepted?

Many different methodologies for change management are available, but some consistent components are common to all methodologies. They typical components of OCM include:

- ✔ Assessment of readiness for change
- ✔ Shared vision
- ✔ Communication planning and execution
- ✔ Impact assessment and transition planning
- ✔ Support of new behavior
- ✔ Measurement and feedback of results

Because an organization is a culture of living, breathing people, a successful OCM solution requires understanding of the culture — one size does not fit all. Although you can apply the same OCM methodology across multiple organizations, the tactical activities are influenced by how people within those organizations and cultures best communicate, learn, and manage projects and processes. Also, be careful of the generic OCM offerings in the marketplace. Consider an OCM methodology specific to technology implementations, such as the approach offered by Deltek's Talent and Learning Practice.

Ultimately, change is a choice for people, and many will resist it unless you can help them understand why the change is important, how it will benefit them personally, and how it will positively affect the business. Communicate, communicate, communicate — while equipping employees with knowledge and tools needed to successfully adopt the technology.

Finding Resources to Learn More

This chapter explored how technology is the foundation for your talent management strategy. It discussed how to successfully leverage the right solution: a unified platform that will help you meet business objectives while making it easier for users to access and accomplish what they need. This chapter also looked at driving and changing behaviors through the typical components that make up a successful organizational change management strategy. But this discussion really just scratched the surface.

The next step for you is to learn more about technology and OCM to help you develop a winning talent strategy. The following are resources to build upon your learning:

- ✔ *Organizational Change Management For Dummies:* `www.deltek.com/resource-center/dummies`
- ✔ Deltek Talent Management Solutions: `www.deltek.com/products/talent-management`
- ✔ Deltek University (DU): `www.deltek.com/education`
- ✔ *Project-Based ERP For Dummies:* `www.deltek.com/resource-center/dummies`

Chapter 5

Ten Tips to Manage Talent Effectively

In This Chapter

▶ Keeping lines of communication open

▶ Knowing who the stars are

▶ Watching for strengths

▶ Being as smart as your competitors

▶ Valuing diversity

▶ Defining success

▶ Making big plans

▶ Embracing the data

▶ Putting your efforts in the right place

*T*alent management is both an art and a science, and you need to master both aspects if you hope to win the "war for talent." You can find lots of philosophies out there for doing this well, and plenty of resources to help point you in the right direction.

Talent management is a topic for which entire college curriculum plans are made, all the way into advanced degrees. But there's value in simplicity and brevity, so here are ten tips for keeping the right people on your team, and keeping them engaged and producing their best work.

Keep Communicating

Employees can become disengaged when they don't feel like their contributions are valued, so make a conscious effort to show them gratitude and offer praise on a regular basis. But listening is a good idea, too. Understand their aspirations and frustrations, let them know you're listening, and act upon what you hear. It's a great way to build engagement.

The Stars Are Aligned

Earlier chapters discuss how the talent management strategy must be in tune with the overall business strategy. It's also vital to keep your best employees up-to-speed on the corporate strategy. They'll feel trusted, valued, and more empowered to make a difference, and their personal goals can then reflect those of the organization.

Emphasize Strengths

Talent development is a key to happier employees, but be sure to set the right tone. Development plans are certainly appropriate for addressing weaknesses and problems, but don't forget to also watch for potential, but unrealized, strengths and make recommendations for building upon those positives. If talent development is just about fixing what's wrong, you're headed for disengagement.

Think Like a Headhunter

You know there are executive recruiters out there with their eyes on your top talent. Do they know things about your best people that you don't know? You'd better catch up, or else someone may recognize a jewel before you do, and make an offer that's tough to refuse.

Be More Inclusive

There's beauty in diversity, and you should do all you can to nurture it. A diverse workforce can be a hotbed of creativity and fresh ideas, and research has found that employees of diverse organizations are 75 percent more likely to see their innovative ideas brought to life. What's the connection between diversity and innovation? Some suggest that leaders who embrace diversity also tend to be open to people speaking up and making their opinions known. And when opinions flow freely, so do innovative ideas.

Know What Success Looks Like

You must measure performance, but how do you know if it's good performance? You need competency models to define success, rather than relying on more subjective "I'll know it when I see it" approaches. This is one of many things that best-in-class companies are especially good at. They're also good at spreading such practices company-wide, which is another factor in broad-based, sustainable success.

Who's Ready to Move Up?

As mentioned earlier, it's vital to identify those team members with the potential to move up the ladder and lead, then nurture that potential while you wait for an opportunity to knock. Interestingly, studies show that more companies take time to identify potential leaders than actually follow through and help those future leaders grow. But success only comes with having both pieces in place. It can take time to develop potential leaders, sometimes years, which may be why it's an effort that some companies avoid. Still, if it works for sports teams and their minor league development systems, it'll work for your company.

Plan, Plan, Plan

When you hear words like "war for talent," you assume you need to be battle-ready as soon as possible. Well, yes, you do, but don't jump ahead quickly just for the sake of jumping. Take time to plan a well-crafted talent management solution if you're wanting it to be effective and sustainable (and one would assume that's what you're wanting).

Don't Be Afraid of Big Data

It does sound overwhelming, all this talk of data-mining to improve your talent management. A unified technology solution can help you get a handle on talent-related data with a minimum of fear and discomfort. Done right, perhaps with qualified assistance, your analytics can be straightforward and powerful.

Reduce Turnover, But Do It Right

Clearly, turnover is expensive and it makes sense to try to keep it to a minimum. But if you have a turnover problem, you need to explore the reasons to help properly stem the tide and be sure you're working hard to retain the right people. Low turnover sounds great, but what if that smaller number of people you're losing also happens to be your very best people? That's a low-volume, high-heartburn situation you'll want to avoid.

Win the war for talent

The components of a robust talent strategy are broad-reaching, touching all facets of your business. The talent war is on, but it isn't too late to develop and implement an effective talent plan.

This book details how an effective talent strategy can impact your company's success. After all, a successful business is comprised of people, and people are your greatest asset.

- *Understand* the concepts of an effective "people" strategy
- *Learn* how you can use technology to acquire, develop, and retain top employees
- *Accelerate* the human performance of your organization to the next level

Open the book and learn how to:

- **Acquire new talent**
- **Develop employees**
- **Retain your best people**
- **Use technology to drive your talent strategy**

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