



How a skilled workforce brings an organization's goals to life

Today's lightning-fast business environment delivers information around the globe only moments after hitting "Send." In our interconnected marketplace, nimble organizations have developed a rigorous decision-making discipline driven by the need to quickly deploy strategies in advance of the competition. And, even more indicative of the times, business models have changed. Previously siloed tactical areas like supply chain management, technology and even customer service are now tightly integrated into the profitability initiatives of organizations, becoming strategic equals to product, innovation, and sales functions, the old profit kings of days gone by.¹ The pressure is on for HR to take the same path, to elevate its game and align its activities with the business needs of the organization, synchronizing talent acquisition with strategy.

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The alignment of talent and strategy

When you apply talent to strategy, that's where the rubber meets the road. It takes a skilled workforce to bring an organization's goals to life; otherwise, those goals are purely theoretical—and unreachable. Or as Korn Ferry puts it: "A business strategy, even one rendered in meticulous detail, is simply a map. It may include turn-by-turn directions, alternate routes, travel time estimates, and a guide to points of interest along the way. Yet, to actually cover the distance between points A and B, you need a vehicle—talent—that won't break down on the side of the road."²

The only way to prevent a roadside breakdown is to make sure that an organization's strategy for acquiring talent is a direct reflection of overall business goals. It's time for HR to move from a service center philosophy to that of a full partner—a partner in profitability.

Opportunity knocks. It's time to answer

A reactionary approach to talent acquisition is no longer an adequate process for growth-oriented companies. It can result in less than effective hires, leave critical positions open for extended periods of time, and render a poor use of resources, including time and money.

Change, while necessary, is difficult to achieve and maintain for many organizations that remain immersed in tactical rather than strategic hiring practices. Yet the awareness of talent as a key driver in meeting business objectives is there: In a recent survey, 54% of employers said that talent has a medium to high impact on the company's ability to meet client needs. This is closely followed by an impact to business competitiveness and productivity.³

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even one rendered in meticulous detail, is simply a map. Yet, to actually cover the distance between A and B, you need a vehicle—talent—that won't break down on the side of the road.

Combine this with the negative financial ramifications of making a wrong hire and the impact becomes even more significant: In a 2013 study by CareerBuilder, more than half of employers in each of the ten largest world economies said that a bad hire has negatively impacted their business. And, in the US alone, 27% of employers surveyed reported that a single bad hire had cost them more than \$50,000.⁴

There's another factor that is important to consider, and that is the cost of leaving positions unfilled. The cost of vacancy has been calculated to be anywhere from \$7,000 to \$50,000 per day depending on the position. Key leadership positions could cost as much as a million dollars a week, a staggering sum. The length of many vacancies often exceeds 100 days, which can have an adverse effect on an organization's financial health.⁵

These costs and consequences can often be blamed on a disconnect between talent acquisition efforts and an organization's goals. To be effective, HR must move from the tactical to the strategic and work in step with the organization, instead of operating one step behind. A strategic HR process actively plans for both expected and unexpected vacancies. True talent acquisition management is an on-going process and must keep pace with the speed of the business. Talent is a competitive imperative; the race for acquiring the best and the brightest is only going to become more accelerated over the coming years.

The cure for lethargic decision-making: technology and automation

The old adage, "hire slowly, fire quickly," has been turned on its head. Now speed in hiring is an operational benefit. The good news is because of technology and automation, HR can not only hire quickly, but efficiently and accurately, meeting the needs of today with an eye to the future. The times demand it.

If you have slow hiring practices, you are already behind the curve, missing out on the acquisition of talent with critical skills, abilities and attributes who have no tolerance for lethargic decision-making. Today's top talent is looking for agile, engaged companies that have innovative business practices. The first access point many potential hires have with a business is through HR. A sluggish, antiquated manual process can be a costly turn-off.



By leveraging technology, time, efficiency and total alignment are assured. Today, operational goals can be quickly redefined to take advantage of market opportunities. Long-term strategy is often trumped by short-term opportunity. Without integrated solutions, opportunity advantages could become disadvantages because of inflexible hiring practices. For example: A company decides to expand its presence into a new geographic region. R&D decides to accelerate the launch date for a new product or service. A customer service call center forecasts a sudden influx of support calls for the next quarter. These and many other examples happen every day and can impact talent acquisition needs in multiple areas of a company. Sophisticated talent acquisition tools can keep step with organic growth needs such as these, so the cadence of progress is never interrupted.

What strategic alignment looks like

Technology may be the answer to keeping the alignment of business goals and talent acquisition processes in check, but not just any technology. HR solutions must support the organization at every level, whether it's enterprise, division or department-wide. And, the technology must enhance and streamline the collaboration between HR and organizational leaders so the application of the right talent at the right time becomes a natural course of doing business.

Technology also supports an organization's focus on securing a higher percentage of top talent. Strategic hiring leads to talent excellence, which in turn leads to enduring business success and competitive leadership.

More influence. Better results.

By employing the correct solutions, HR can assume a leadership role by strategically embedding its influence across an organization, leading to goal alignment, goal attainment and improved revenues.

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[Learn more about talent acquisition](#)



1. Dr. John Sullivan, "10 Ways to Align Recruiting Plans with Your Corporate Goals and Strategy: How Recruiting Can Prove Its Business Impact, Recruiting Trends Bulletin (www.recruitingtrends.com), March 2014.
2. The Korn Ferry Institute, Talent Strategy that Drives Business Strategy, 2014, p. 1.
3. Manpower Group "The Talent Shortage Continues: How the Ever Changing Role of HR Can Bridge the Gap" (www.manpowergroup.com), 2014.
4. CareerBuilder, 2013
5. Dr. John Sullivan, "The Cost of an Unfilled Opening."

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