

# Put together a winning healthcare team

How to select, hire, and retain the best employees

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## Introduction

It's a bad time to get sick. The population is growing older, rapidly transitioning from parenthood to patient-hood. And there's no denying that older people get sick more frequently and need more assistance from skilled healthcare workers. Those healthcare workers aren't getting any younger, either. Scores of Baby Boomers will reach retirement age in the next 10 years, which means experienced healthcare workers will be leaving the workforce and heading off to sunnier climes in retirement.

The pressure is definitely on healthcare organizations to keep up with demand. So, how can they go about recruiting and retaining talent?

Unified human capital management (HCM), which combines healthcare-specific functionality and system interoperability, provides one approach to bridging the talent gap.

## The growing talent problem

Talent recruitment and retention is a growing challenge for healthcare organizations, both because of a lower overall birthrate in many economies (leading to fewer potential workers) and because scores of Baby Boomers will reach retirement age in the next 10 years.

According to US Census Bureau projections, the number of Americans who are 65 and older will double to 88.5 million between 2010 and 2050.<sup>1</sup> This has critical implications for the healthcare industry, including greater patient load and an exodus of older employees from the healthcare workforce.

The move toward value-based care also has critical implications for the healthcare industry, since it pressures organizations to produce the best outcomes while reducing costs.

Because of the aging population and the move to value-based care, the need for high-performing clinicians and staff members is more pressing than ever.

The healthcare job market will experience more growth in the next decade than any other job sector, according to a report from Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. As Baby Boomers age, and as Americans continue to eat poorly and not exercise enough, healthcare costs will grow over the next decade and are projected to equal 20% of the GDP, or \$6 trillion, by 2020. To keep up with the ensuing demand for services, the number of healthcare workers would have to grow 30% by 2020.<sup>2</sup>

In another report, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that the healthcare practitioner and technical occupations group will add 2 million new jobs from 2010 to 2020, the second most of any major group. Registered nurses alone will account for 712,000 needed hires.<sup>3</sup> During that same time period, BLS projects that another healthcare group—healthcare support—will grow by 34.5% and create 1.4 million new jobs. About half of those new jobs will be in a single occupation, home health aides, which is projected to grow by 69.4%.<sup>4</sup>

1. US Census Bureau, The Next Four Decades: The Older Population in the United States: 2010 to 2050, May 2010, p. 1, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p25-1138.pdf>.
2. MedPage Today, Boom in Health Jobs Expected Over Next Decade, Emily P. Walker, June 23, 2012, [http://www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/WorkForce/33433?eun=g41f013d0r&userid=41f013&email=knowledge@eatright.org&mu\\_id=5511392](http://www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/WorkForce/33433?eun=g41f013d0r&userid=41f013&email=knowledge@eatright.org&mu_id=5511392).
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment outlook: 2010–2020, Occupational employment projections to 2020, C. Brett Lockard and Michael Wolf, January 2012, p.95, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/01/art5full.pdf>.
4. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment outlook: 2010–2020, Occupational employment projections to 2020, C. Brett Lockard and Michael Wolf, January 2012, p.95, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/01/art5full.pdf>.

The most critical healthcare shortage may be for registered nurses. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, nursing schools across the country are struggling to expand capacity to meet the rising demand for care given the national move toward healthcare reform.<sup>5</sup>

When it comes to filling key positions, where will you find the talent? How much will it cost to acquire and onboard talent? How much will it cost to develop your new hires? And how can you retain those people once you've invested in them so heavily?

## Unified HCM can help

Technology can play a major role in bridging this talent gap. In fact, a 2012-13 Global Talent Management and Rewards Study revealed that technology is integral to improving the delivery of talent management and total rewards programs.<sup>6</sup> And unified HCM should be your primary technology for addressing the complete talent lifecycle.

Unified HCM ties together software, content, service, and process to transform the way healthcare organizations work. Without a unified view of existing talent, it's extremely difficult to identify needs and opportunities. While business software can't eliminate the obstacles inherent to talent management, unified HCM technology can make them more manageable.

For example, unified HCM can help healthcare organizations:

- Select the right talent.
- Deploy and redeploy people.
- Develop talent.
- Measure the effectiveness of individuals and the organization.
- Reward people intelligently and effectively.

## Find and keep the best talent

### Talent recruitment

You can better select, develop, and retain healthcare employees—including your most critical talent, clinicians—with talent science, an emerging area of HCM that captures character traits such as empathy, attention to detail, and work ethic. You'll be able to move beyond "gut feel" into the realm of science and technology to hire employees who will embody your brand, succeed at their jobs, and stay with your organization. You'll have the tools you need to improve organizational performance, because talent science uses science, technology, and analytics to predictively link behavioral data to real business outcomes.

#### **Generate an ideal profile for each position**

Talent science software combines behavioral and performance data to generate a performance profile for a specific position. This profile is unique to each role in each organization, based on culture and strategy, and provides a consistent structure and a common language for evaluating people. In essence, it helps healthcare organizations ensure that they're hiring people with not just the job experience, but also the qualities needed to be successful.

5. American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Nursing Shortage, fact sheet, January 21, 2014, <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/fact-sheets/nursing-shortage>.

6. 2012–2013 Global Talent Management and Rewards Study, September 2012, Towers Watson.

When candidates apply for a job, they take an online pre-employment assessment. The talent science software compares the results of this assessment to the profile, measuring how the candidate differs from the established guidelines. This allows hiring managers to get a full view of a candidate before the first interview, which results in better employee selection and helps reduce employee turnover.

Beyond interviewing and hiring, healthcare organizations can use the profile to coach current employees and identify best-fit opportunities for succession. Hiring managers can receive behavioral data reports that they can use to uncover employee strengths and weaknesses, deliver high-impact coaching, establish short-term and long-term goals, and develop a strategy for career path planning.

The end result: Healthcare organizations have the information they need to hire people who are geared toward delivering a superior patient experience, and they can keep those staffers engaged and fulfilled, reducing turnover.

### **Simplify processes and reduce risk**

When you reduce turnover and simplify the process to find new hires, you can reduce the cost and effort associated with talent acquisition. Hiring managers can sort the candidate pool to find the best-fit candidates, and interview only those who have the greatest likelihood of success. Because talent science uses objective, defensible criteria to generate every hiring recommendation, you reduce the risk associated with a more subjective hiring process—that is, you reduce the risk of onboarding bad hires into your organization.

### **Improve time to productivity and streamline onboarding**

Streamline your onboarding process, making staff members productive sooner rather than later. With an automated onboarding solution, you can provide them with all the information they need, including where they need to report, how they need to dress, and which policies and procedures they need to follow. Your staff members will be able to assimilate into your work culture quickly, because all their “i’s” will be dotted and “t’s” will be crossed from a regulatory standpoint.

A strong human capital management platform must be able to support the end-to-end business process that extends from selecting the best talent through getting them onboard quickly, making them productive with strong training, and then supporting their ongoing need for information about their employment (payroll, taxes, benefits, leave, schedule, etc.) whenever, wherever they need it. Let’s take a look in more detail at how this process ideally works for retailers, including:

## Talent management

With HCM software tools, you can more effectively engage new hires, and personalize the pre-boarding and onboarding process of new employees. By doing so, you can make employees loyal to your organization before they walk in the door.

You can also engage workers with better technology. That's because employees' technology expectations have changed—whether those employees are younger generations just entering the workforce or experienced workers who have a rapidly growing level of technological sophistication. When they can change the channel on their TVs using an iPhone® while waiting for a plane to take off, why can't they get the information they need at work without accessing three different systems—or better yet, access it on that same iPhone when takeoff is delayed? Established employees are increasingly expecting the technology in their work lives to mirror that in their personal lives, and younger workers can't imagine anything else.

The bottom line? In the highly competitive healthcare arena, user experience can make a difference in retaining existing employees and attracting the best and brightest new employees.

### **Identify top performers**

Talent science helps organizations identify potential top-performing candidates who will provide better patient care. Candidates with a better fit to a specific role will become productive sooner, and achieve higher levels of performance.

Given the fact that patients have their choice of providers, and social channels make patient feedback instantly available on health system experiences, organizations that identify top candidates and keep them within the health system have the greatest likelihood of achieving the highest performance outcomes as measured by industry standards like HCAHPS and NDNQI.

### **Coach and develop**

Recruiting and educating clinicians and staff members is just the start. From there, you need to ensure that all clinicians and staff members are performing at top levels to succeed under value-based purchasing models, which specifically reward organizations based on patient care outcomes and patient satisfaction.

While an HCM system can help you objectively assess clinician and staff member performance, you also need to understand how individual performances relate to overall organizational performance. With advanced workforce analytics, you can pull information from your HCM, clinical, and financial management systems so you can see how talent initiatives and staffing decisions impact patient outcomes and the true cost of providing care. With healthcare-specific measures—such as the time it takes to perform a procedure, costs allocated to specific procedures or episodes of care, and staffing skill mix and related patient care outcomes—you can establish best practices and work with physicians and other caregivers to meet value-based standards.

### **Decrease turnover**

Healthcare entities need employees who stay longer, but also perform better. You lose productivity when a position is vacant, while increasing overtime to cover the empty position. Plus, you have to deal with acquisition costs and decreased efficiency when you're onboarding new hires.

Turnover also threatens your ability to improve performance, establish consistency, and promote quality. You can reduce turnover and improve service to patients with talent science software, which identifies predictive behavioral, cultural, and operational patterns that drive strategic key performance indicators (KPIs).

### **Increase performance**

Enhance performance by identifying—and filling—performance gaps

With an integrated HCM application suite, you can identify the skills that particular jobs and roles require. Then, when performance reviews and career assessments are completed within the HCM system, you'll easily be able to see the skills and abilities available across your organization, and identify gaps. By linking performance reviews and development plans to a learning system, you can immediately gain the knowledge you need to fill the gaps, so you can create a team that has the skills you need to succeed.

## **Conclusion**

Businesses have long known that people provide the greatest potential for building competitive advantage. Attracting and retaining top talent is especially important in today's healthcare environment, where the demand for workers is on the rise while the corresponding labor pool appears to be stagnant. HCM technology is not a panacea, but it can provide a solid foundation for a unified talent management strategy. Healthcare organizations that use it wisely are likely to find themselves with a powerful ally in the battle for the best and brightest.



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