



The New Meaning of Talent

Adapting to the Work and
the Workforce of Tomorrow





As the global leader in talent solutions, we take pride in what we do, connecting great people to great opportunities, helping businesses win and careers soar. Today, with \$12.3 billion in revenues and 500+ global locations, Allegis Group and its network of specialized companies provide a full suite of complementary talent solutions that solves nearly every workforce challenge to empower business success while consistently delivering an unsurpassed quality experience.

Our companies include Aerotek; TEKsystems; Aston Carter; Allegis Global Solutions; Major, Lindsey & Africa; Allegis Partners; MarketSource; EASi; The Stamford Group; and Getting Hired.

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Introduction

The nature of work is changing, and employers are taking notice. Demographic shifts are reshaping the makeup of the workforce. Demands for emerging skills have created talent shortages. New technologies and non-traditional work models are gaining prominence. As a result, today's companies must evolve their talent and business strategies.

The challenges of adapting to today's workforce trends, however, are very real. In fact, a recent Allegis Group survey found that 94 percent of 1,000 HR decision-makers believe navigating talent management trends and challenges today is more difficult than it was five years ago, leading to core business issues. Among those who expressed difficulty, areas of impact include longer hiring cycles (50 percent), increased costs (49 percent), lower productivity (38 percent), lower workforce engagement levels (38 percent), limited achievement of business goals (33 percent), and loss of revenue potential (27 percent).¹

Considering the business issues at stake, addressing today's talent trends is more than a nice-to-have ideal; rather, it is a priority that can determine an organization's ability to survive and grow. To help shed light on the issues, Allegis Group researched key trends and surveyed 1,000 HR decision-makers about their perspectives on how well their organizations are keeping up.

The resulting research reveals that talent is taking on a new meaning for companies today. Who does the work? How do companies secure the workers they need? What is the nature of the work itself? This report explores answers to these questions through the lens of six critical trends: the rise of the multigenerational workforce, the growing emphasis on transferable skills, the demands of multi-channel global sourcing of talent, the increasing emphasis on digital talent acquisition, the expanding use of flexible employment models, and a growing pressure to automate activities and processes.

Together, the issues point to a world of work where the traditional notion of the lifetime employee is no longer the norm. By asking the questions and exploring the approaches and strategies companies are taking to succeed, the research sheds light on paths to competitive success in the complex world of business and talent today.

Business Challenges

Among HR leaders who say it is harder to navigate talent management trends today than it was five years ago, areas of impact include:

50% Longer Hiring Cycles

49%
Increased Costs

38%
Lower Productivity

38%
Lower Workforce Engagement Levels

33%
Limited Achievement of Business Goals

27%
Loss of Revenue Potential



Source: Allegis Group

New Trends Shape *Who* Does the Work

Trend 1 The Rise of the Multigenerational Workforce

Today's talent landscape encompasses people from multiple generations who bring distinct perspectives into the workplace. The labeling of generations is approximate, with some variation of the actual years each was born. Nevertheless, Baby Boomers (born roughly 1945-1964), Gen Xers (1965-1979), Millennials (1980-1995), and Gen Zs (born after 1995) all work together, and each group has different expectations of their employers and their careers. For companies recruiting and managing workers across generations, those differences may be seen as obstacles to engagement.

Research highlights the issues companies face with workers of different backgrounds as 53 percent of HR leaders say that managing a multigenerational workforce brings with it several challenges. Leading issues include differences in communication styles (38 percent), managing expectations of in-office work against flexible and remote working (36 percent), and balancing needs for new ideas against the need to maintain a stable status quo (35 percent). Other challenging areas include diverse, preferred management styles (28 percent), managing expectations for speedy promotions (26 percent), negative generational stereotypes (19 percent), and company culture clashes (18 percent).² To address the demands of managing across age groups, employers can look beyond the differences in generational perspectives to arrive at areas of shared need.

Get Flexible About Work Requirements

The first shared trait across generations in the workforce is a desire for flexibility. For example, college-graduates aged 50 and older are more than twice as likely to set their own work hours

as less-educated talent who are newer to the workforce.³ Likewise, 74 percent of Millennials consider flexible schedules an important consideration when choosing an employer.⁴

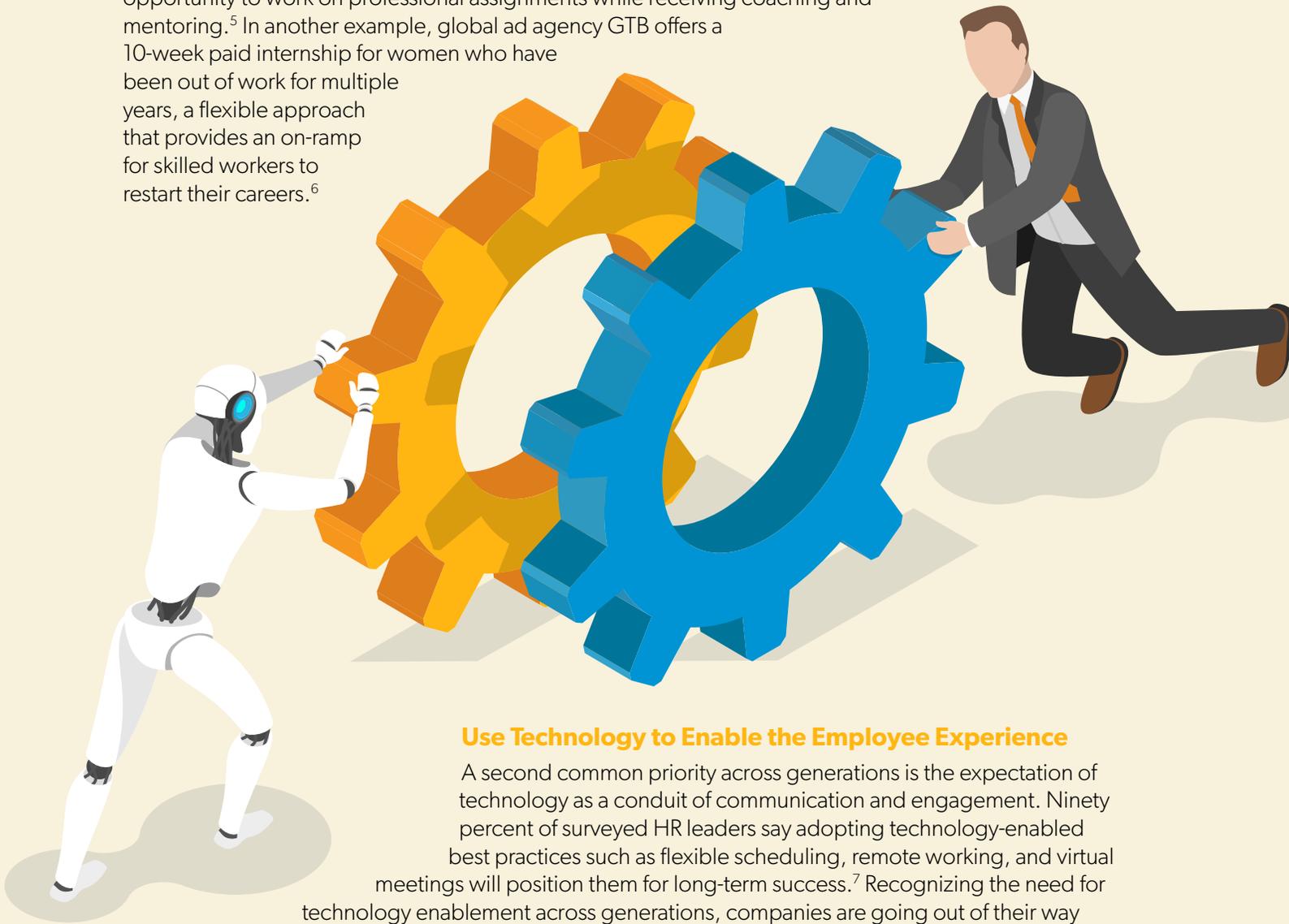
Many factors contribute to the changing focus on flexibility. Baby Boomers may want to set their own hours or work remotely as they approach retirement and seek to spend more time with family. GenXers may find themselves returning to the workforce after taking time off to focus on raising a family. Similarly, Gen Z and Millennial workers are experiencing career paths that replace



the concept of work-life balance with work-life integration, where work can be conducted remotely at any time of day and enable interactions with others at any location around the world.

To increase flexibility in work options, employers can increase the availability of contract or freelance options. Likewise, remote working is now a viable option for a large portion of roles, with technology enabling knowledge workers to conduct business anytime and anyplace. Also, part-time options can provide a strong opportunity to engage workers, such as Baby Boomers, who want to keep working while adopting a semi-retirement lifestyle.

Companies are already seeing the benefits of how improved flexibility boosts engagement across generations. For example, international energy and services company Centrica offers 12-week, paid “returnships,” giving seniors who have been out of the workforce for two or more years the opportunity to work on professional assignments while receiving coaching and mentoring.⁵ In another example, global ad agency GTB offers a 10-week paid internship for women who have been out of work for multiple years, a flexible approach that provides an on-ramp for skilled workers to restart their careers.⁶



Use Technology to Enable the Employee Experience

A second common priority across generations is the expectation of technology as a conduit of communication and engagement. Ninety percent of surveyed HR leaders say adopting technology-enabled best practices such as flexible scheduling, remote working, and virtual meetings will position them for long-term success.⁷ Recognizing the need for technology enablement across generations, companies are going out of their way to bring all generations into the digital environment. For example, AT&T established a group called oxyGEN that sponsors professionals newer to the workforce to educate seniors about mobile technology.⁸

Employees of all generations value resources that make tasks easy, fast, and transparent. Digitizing administrative tasks, from expense reporting to submitting payroll and performance management forms, frees employees from formerly cumbersome, manual processes. A central location for information accessible from desktop or mobile devices reduces the need for employees to make time-consuming searches and phone calls that sap productivity. In a desired situation, an employee could utilize a single system to seek a subject matter expert related to a project, a technical help desk resource to solve an IT issue, or an administrator to assist with a benefits or payroll question. At the same time, online collaboration is proving valuable for bringing together people and resources, quickly and effectively, overcoming the limitations of location or organizational boundaries.

Survey Insight: Technology and the Employee Experience

Surveyed HR decision-makers say that their organizations are challenged to adopt technology in ways that build flexibility into the employee experience — an essential trait for attracting talent with emerging skills:

1. Companies are digitizing some processes:



82 percent of surveyed companies **have fully adopted** at least one of the following technology-enabled practices: flexible scheduling, remote working, virtual meetings, and online chat.

2. Few have succeeded across the board:



Only **15 percent** **fully adopt all four** of these digitally enabled practices.

3. Change has consequences:



The use of technology creates anxiety, with **24 percent** of companies fearing that the flexible workplaces enabled by technology innovation may make it difficult for employees to build relationships.

4. But companies recognize the need for improvement:



90 percent of companies agree that **adopting these practices** would position them for future talent management success.

Source: Allegis Group

Give Employees Control Over Their Careers

The third priority shared across workers of all ages is a desire for career control. Every employee wants to succeed, but organizations may find that the definitions of success differ. For example, Gen Z workers may desire projects outside their comfort zones to expand new skills, while Baby Boomers may seek opportunities to teach others and share their knowledge built on years of experience. Note that these examples should not confine employers into thinking in terms of generational stereotypes. The more senior worker, for example, may be interested in learning from those who are newer to the workforce or be willing to take on projects to learn new skills.

For all workers, employers can embrace several practices to boost career opportunities. Provide visibility and transparency in communicating open positions. Offer mentorships and stretch assignments to all employees. Foster a sense of learning and growth, and, most importantly, encourage deep, inclusive relationships among employees, their peers, managers, and leadership to foster mutual career paths that work best for each individual. Processes and technologies can improve visibility and communication, but there is no substitute for a culture that pushes leaders to better know the individual employees who work for them.

A Common Set of Values Brings Together a **Strong, Diverse Workforce**



Tanya Axenson

Global Head of Human Resources, Allegis Group

Differences among generations in the workforce have gained much attention in recent years. Such increased awareness is understandable as employers seek better ways to engage employees who have varying career expectations and communication styles. But just as an employer needs to understand differences, an employer also needs to build a culture that transcends those differences and brings all employees together through a common set of values.

Allegis Group and its network of specialized talent solutions companies take an active approach to building a strong, inclusive employee culture. That culture begins with clearly stated principles:

- We believe in the importance of **character**. We attract and retain people who commit to high standards and who have the utmost integrity.
- We pride ourselves on working hard as a team to achieve positive results. Our people demonstrate a relentless **competitive spirit** that drives us to be the best in all we do.
- We build deep, inclusive **relationships** that foster trust and enable us to unlock peoples' maximum potential. We value differences and believe they make us a stronger company.
- We believe in **servicing others**. We approach every day with an uncompromising spirit of integrity and purpose. We strive to be the best at all we do, prioritizing the interests of others above our own. We also use honest and direct feedback to help improve our partnerships. And we expect our people to always do the right thing, prioritizing the greater good above self-centered interests.

Bring Your Authentic Self

With a stated set of values, our companies have a framework for fostering specific actions and practices that build an inclusive culture. From teaming up for volunteer activities to making time for person-to-person meetings that help us build relationships with colleagues, our culture is one where we recognize and celebrate both our commonalities and our differences. Each person can be their authentic self in such a culture, and that's a powerful value for our employees, our company, and the clients and candidates we serve.

Professionals with Disabilities:

Keys to Connecting with an Untapped Source of Talent



Jill Stutzman-Deaner

Director, Getting Hired, an Allegis Group company

While today's leading organizations seek to engage better with the multigenerational workforce, they also want to be more inclusive with their hiring practices to include individuals with disabilities. With one billion people around the world representing this demographic,⁹ it's a vital portion of the workforce into which organizations need to tap.

As a leader in disability recruitment hiring, Getting Hired is dedicated to helping companies attract, hire, and retain individuals with disabilities in their workforce. To do this, we created a list of practices and considerations for organizations as they embark on their journey to inclusive hiring:

- **Include disability in your diversity recruitment strategy:** With so many best practices recommended to effectively attract and hire individuals with disabilities, we find the biggest challenge employers face is knowing where to start. An experienced third-party partner, whether a disability recruiting consultant or talent solutions expert, is a valuable resource who can help you create an effective strategy.
- **Audit your website for accessibility:** Understanding how users with disabilities interact with content on your website is essential to being an inclusive organization. With captioned audio and video, the user experience is inclusive, and everyone in your workforce reaps the benefits. Several organizations, such as Wayfinder Family Services, Job Accommodation Network, and National Industries for the Blind, will conduct similar audits for free.
- **Partner with non-profit organizations:** Numerous community organizations are dedicated to building awareness and promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. Examples include the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Autism Speaks, Wounded Warrior Project, and the Epilepsy Foundation, among many others. Collaborating with these organizations through career fairs, conferences, or volunteer events can improve your employer brand when these efforts are promoted.
- **Provide disability-etiquette training:** From recruiters to top leadership, everyone in the organization should receive disability-etiquette training. By providing an understanding of the stigmas this diverse population faces, employers can boost the comfort level and productivity for all employees.
- **Make self-identification and self-disclosure easy for employees:** Revealing information surrounding disabilities can be deeply personal. However, anyone considering doing so is more likely to do it within an organization that showcases their inclusion of this population and celebrates their success stories.
- **Build an inclusive employer brand:** When professionals with disabilities search online for their next career move, make sure your organization's website and social media channels set the right, inclusive tone. A strong disability brand message is one that shows you take disability hiring seriously and that your organization is a welcoming place to work.

From finding and hiring talent to building an inclusive workplace, tapping into the population of professionals with disabilities requires commitment from across the organization. But in terms of employer brand strength and workforce quality, the results are well worth the effort.

Trend 2 A Growing Emphasis on Transferable Skills

A second talent trend is the rise of workers with transferable skills. In the past, industry experience was a key consideration for most jobs. Today, however, many new skills are applicable across industries and functions. A business analyst that had supported a website development project in the past may use the same skills to help develop a customer relationship management system. A data scientist with a history that includes designing recommendation models for an e-commerce site may move on to solve systems challenges in the healthcare industry. Marketing communications, account management, IT, and a host of fields all have transferable skills, and workers frequently change jobs to expand their experience. In fact, Millennials have held an average of 7.2 jobs between ages 18 and 28 (1.4 years per job), and Baby Boomers have held an average of 11.9 jobs between ages 18 and 50 (a much longer retention rate, but still only an average of 2.7 years per job).¹⁰

To attract workers with transferable skills, employers can begin by minimizing unnecessary demands in the job descriptions. Today, 63 percent of HR leaders in the Allegis Group survey¹¹ say recruiters and hiring managers include too many must-have demands in their job descriptions. One cause of excess requirements is that talent decision-makers

have little inclination to prioritize one need over another. These survey findings underscore the challenge of ranking job requirements. In the same survey, HR leaders were asked to rate how strongly their organizations approached trade-offs on pairs of competing priorities when considering candidates. Attributes pitted expertise against industry experience, employment history against emerging skill savviness, willingness to work in the office against comfort with remote work, and technical skills against soft skills. Respondents weighed each pairing and assigned points to each attribute so each pair would total 100. For example, if expertise were weighed at 40, then industry experience would be 60. In all cases, however, the overall ratings fell between 44 and 56 for the attributes in each pair.

As a result, no clear sense of prioritization is taking place, in effect turning every attribute into some level of requirement for every role. When attributes are not prioritized, it is no surprise that 48 percent of surveyed companies are challenged to attract and retain people with emerging skills, with an overemphasis on requirements contributing to the issue.

Survey Results: Employers are Challenged to Prioritize Desired Attributes

How did HR decision-makers allocate 100 points between each set of attributes on their importance to their organization when acquiring talent?

49 - Industry Experience

versus

51 - Functional/Role Expertise

50 - Employment History

versus

50 - Emerging Skill Savviness

56 - Willingness to Work in the Office

versus

44 - Comfortable with Remote/Virtual Work

52 - Technical/Hard Skills

versus

48 - Soft Skill/Human Competencies



Clarify the Goals of the Job

Several practices can be applied to help establish priorities and streamline requirements. In refocusing job requirements, the first step is to clarify the goals of the job. What outcome must the role achieve? A receptionist may have to answer the phone as part of the job; however, the job's real goal is to "help customers."¹² Web developers may have knowledge of a particular programming language as part of their job, but the goal is to produce a site that attracts users, provides a quality experience, draws leads, or sells goods.

With an understanding of the goals of a job, an employer can then ask, "What are the top three skills needed to produce the outcome?" For example, a web developer may require hard skills involving programming, content management systems, and database administration. Beyond those qualities, experience in roles or industries, or even remote or onsite requirements, may be less of a concern if the candidate has the primary qualifications. When industry experience is less important, companies can consider reaching out to candidates with transferable skills. The receptionist who took care of customers in a doctor's office is likely to adjust quickly to caring for customers in nearly any industry. Likewise, the web developer who has produced great work for a retailer will likely arrive at a positive result for an ad agency.

Screen for Learning Capacity

The second part of the solution is to take a forward-looking perspective in considering ideal candidates for a role. Rather than focus on what people have done in the past, consider ways to understand how a person learns. This focus is particularly important as organizations seek skills in fields that may not have existed until recently, such as the use of social media applications, marketing automation, or many artificial intelligence (AI) related skills. The rise of these newer fields may explain why only 53 percent of surveyed HR leaders say their hiring managers still insist candidates meet requirements for years of experience on a job description.¹³ The requirement is still enforced, but it is fading as a priority.

Instead of years of experience, other clues can reveal a candidate's potential. For example, companies can screen for learning capacity

and skill mastery by looking for candidates who have mentored others. A history of mentorship can indicate that a candidate possesses a level of mastery needed to pass on her knowledge. Another clue is to consider candidate achievements. When candidates clearly and simply explain achievements, they demonstrate a firm grasp of the objectives of a job. For example, digital marketers may relate their knowledge of search engine optimization, or they may talk about outcomes they achieved, such as traffic driven to a site or cost-per-click performance. The latter two accomplishments reveal a results mindset. Similarly, apps developers may talk about the language used to create an application, the number of downloads the app drew, or satisfaction rates. Once again, results-driven thinking shows that a candidate is able to learn skills and make changes needed to achieve core objectives — a valuable trait in a changing business environment.

Companies can also screen for learning and skill mastery by looking for the problems candidates are capable of solving. An organization may pose interview questions that ask candidates to relate a problem they solved in the past, or an employer may challenge candidates to a work problem. (For example, coding challenges are well-known ways of assessing programmer potential.) In effect, the activity presents an opportunity to show what a candidate knows, rather than depend on a degree or certificate to convey qualification. In fact, one of the world's leading technology giants no longer requires a college degree for employees to work for them; instead, it provides training for each specific field and employee.¹⁴ These examples reveal that staying focused on outcome-oriented perspectives can better identify candidates who can adapt to the demands of the business rather than simply perform a given task.

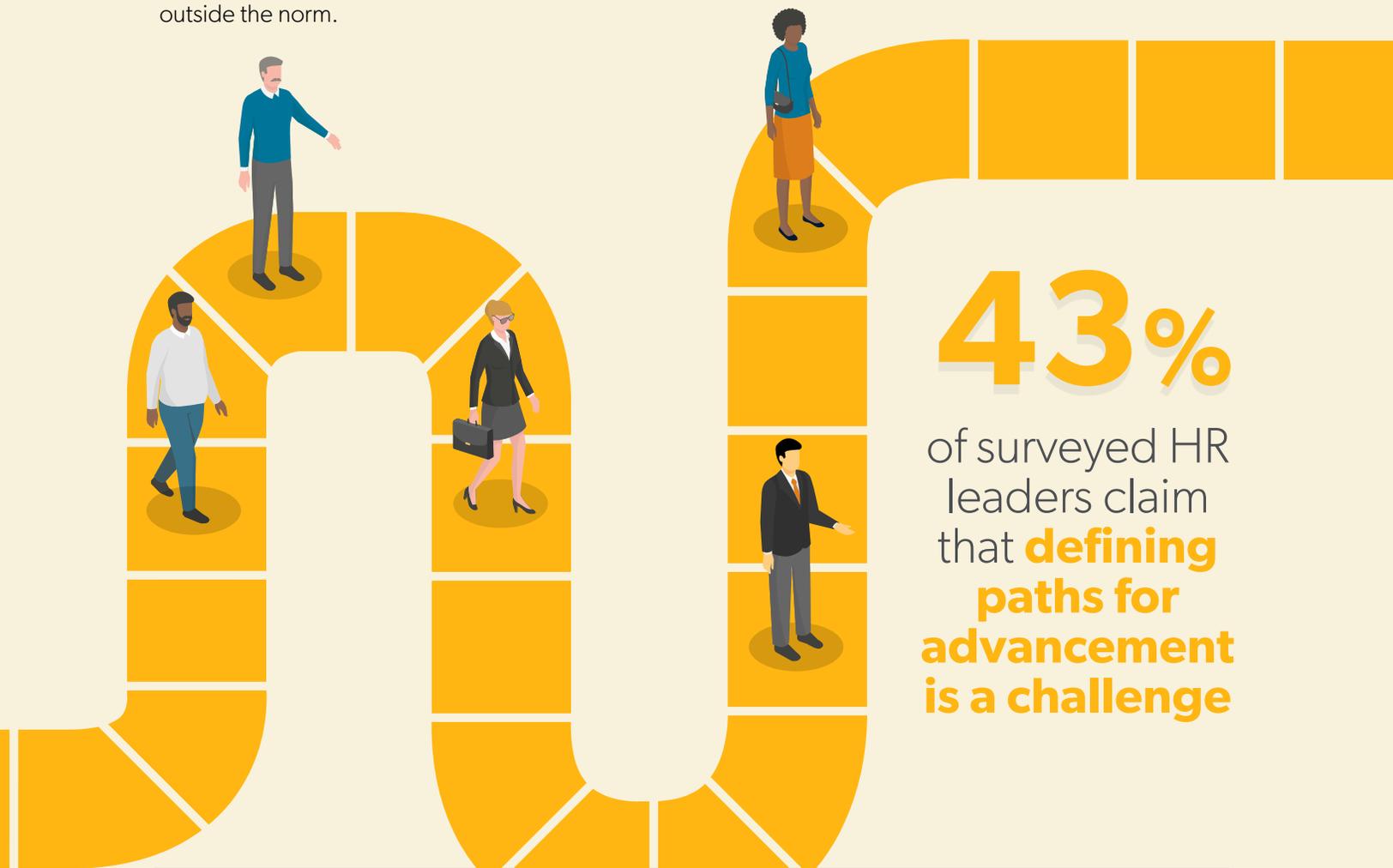
Define Leadership as Legacy

A third consideration for improving access to transferable skills is to provide employees with more creative options for career advancement, allowing employees to transfer skills from one job to another outside of traditional ladders. Unfortunately, 43 percent of surveyed HR leaders claim that defining paths for advancement is a challenge.¹⁵

New paths of career opportunity can be built more easily in a culture where leaders are defined by their legacy; that is, leaders are considered successful based on their ability to foster the advancement of the people they lead. Such leaders are likely to think more broadly about their standards for a given role or career path, rather than focusing on often-unnecessary details. This broader thinking can help leaders facilitate creative paths for talent to advance beyond their normal roles in the organization. Leaders are also likely to know people within the company and can broker opportunities for workers to advance or take on new projects and roles outside the norm.

Creative career paths can be found across fields. A department leader may oversee a designer who may have supported a project that involved brand strategy development. That employee's sense of user experience and messaging may prove valuable to another group in the organization that is exploring user experience enhancements or communications projects.

Allowing, or even brokering, a move for the employee can be difficult for a manager, particularly if that worker's contributions are essential to the current team. However, in a culture that recognizes leaders who promote their people, employees are more likely to get the support required to advance via non-traditional paths, allowing for fresh perspectives and greater opportunities for growth that benefit employees and the company alike.



Look Outside Your Comfort Zone to **Expand the Talent Supply**



Liz Huldin

Member, Allegis Partners Advisory Group and EVP, People and Organizational Capability, The Heritage Group

Many companies have grown accustomed to hiring people in the ways they've always done in the past. They may hire from the same sources, look for the same sets of skills or industry experience, and work with the same networks of professional acquaintances. Today, however, growth depends on new ideas and fresh thinking, and that often requires an organization to hire talent from outside its comfort zone.

But what does it take for an organization in a traditional field to break the mold and reach for talent where it had not gone before? The answer is to transform critical processes to open up new avenues of access to new sources of talent. Transformation means changing how operating companies within an enterprise work together, changing where talent acquisition looks for workers and skills, and changing how a company enables career mobility for its employees.

The Heritage Group is a great example of what it takes to achieve such a transformation. We are a private, decentralized organization, founded in 1930 with a portfolio of 30 companies and more than 7,000 employees across four industries — specialty chemicals, environmental services, construction and materials, and energy and refining. When I joined the company in 2016, a new female president (fourth generation) had come in who was focused on ensuring continued growth. Talent is a big part of the equation, and our leaders collectively affirmed their commitment to transforming their approach to talent management.

Since then, we have embraced a strategy that is fundamentally changing our talent capability. Today, we can hire people whom we never considered before. Our companies are positioned to recruit for

talent outside their respective industries. They have opened paths to share talent between our companies, and, in the process, we are giving employees more opportunities than ever for career advancement within the enterprise. The key to our success is a major commitment to building trust among all stakeholders.

Building Trust

At some point in nearly any change initiative, people will have to do something different than they've done before. They may not fully understand the reasons behind that change at first, and they may resist. To build the initial level of trust to support our vision, we spent a significant amount of time meeting and interacting with past and long-standing business members, as well as new people. We carefully studied our organizations and conducted interviews to better understand why our employees work here and what attributes are most important to them. We also conducted an all-employee survey across all 30 businesses. Using a cloud-based tool to interface with disparate systems, IT was not going to be a barrier. We found a way to build upon a strong foundation of independence to promote change and growth.

One would think this activity would slow down our transformation, as it involves a commitment of time, observation, and travel. The result, however, is a culture that moves quickly to embrace new changes, whether using a new technology or implementing a program across multiple operating companies. We call it a "go slow to go fast" approach. The slow process of building trust upfront leads to speed and agility in the execution of the strategy.

Hiring for Resiliency

In gaining stakeholder support, we needed to be clear about what kind of talent we are seeking to help us grow. Skills and experience are important, but resilience is the quality that determines how companies succeed in the future. We will always need resilient workers — not just people who have great skills but also people who are continuously capable of learning, adapting, and overcoming challenges.

To focus on the resilient hire, we identified critical positions and skills that we must invest in for the future. We also created development opportunities that our people simply didn't have in the past. For example, we implemented a leadership exploration and development program for mid-level managers. We also launched a program to accelerate connections between senior leadership and colleagues across our business units with the creative problem-solving capabilities of our early career, promising talent. Most importantly, we opened up paths of connection and career advancement across our companies. We have to give employees a way to grow and advance on their own terms.

In seeking external talent, we are refining our needs. It is important to recognize that the resilient worker of the future may not be confined by industry, experience, or hard skills. Today, we actively look for talent outside our industries because the people we find within a vertical don't always have the skill set to adapt to something different. We want people from other places and other industries who are familiar with entrepreneurial start-ups. These people have the mindset and ability to balance risk, develop others, and scale the business.

Every Organization is an Innovator

To compete for talent in the future, every company needs to commit to change and innovation. That means we have to compete for talent that may also be courted by the Googles and Amazons of the world. We don't have to be flashy to win great talent. Instead, we have to empower our talent to grow and develop, and we have to bring our story to the market, so more people know about the opportunity we provide.

Each of our companies offers a powerful career option for great workers, but together, the value proposition by our collective organization is exponentially greater. That maximum value proposition and value to the worker is what we strive to offer, and with the right strategy, we're starting to see our efforts at transformation lead to new sources of quality talent. Our experience reflects lessons that apply to any company striving to grow in a time of innovation and changing markets: question what works and commit to improvement every day.

*We will always need **resilient workers** — not just people who have great skills but also people who are continuously capable of **learning, adapting, and overcoming challenges.***



New Trends are Changing How Talent is Acquired

Trend 3 The Demands of Multi-Channel Global Sourcing

Employers today have numerous options for sourcing talent. The right worker may be anywhere in the world, and that person may be reached through many different channels of communication and interaction. Social media, job boards, freelancer sites, agencies, and even the company's own candidate database may all be sources of new talent. The variety of paths is creating challenges and opportunities for employers. Understanding how to navigate sourcing challenges begins with a clear view of all talent-related data. Unfortunately, 30 percent of HR leaders say their organizations cannot see the total demand for talent across the organization, 29 percent lack visibility into the total talent supply, and 34 percent do not have a central system to measure talent acquisition success.¹⁶

Lacking visibility into critical workforce data, organizations can suffer from long hiring cycles, high costs for talent, and issues with quality. To improve visibility, forward-thinking companies are investing in HR analytics and systems that bring the complex variety of talent data into a single environment that enables informed decisions about where to find talent, what engagement models to use, and how much to pay, as well as provide predictive insight on new skills needed in the future. Increasingly, HR departments view their ability to harness workforce data and build predictive analytics models as a core driver of future success, and 71 percent of companies consider it a high priority.¹⁷ Through the push for visibility and data-driven insight, employers can empower their talent acquisition function to better access a global supply of workers across many channels. Three areas of activity can help boost this ability.

Reconsider Past Models for Engagement

Often, employers continue to fill jobs as they have done in the past. If a full-time employee traditionally held a role, an organization may be tempted to seek the same type of worker when a

vacancy comes open. With visibility into the entire supply of available talent, employers can and should break out of this mold, and question their approaches and their options for every talent need instead.

71%

of companies consider harnessing workforce data and building predictive analytics as high priorities

Asking challenging questions about a job role can result in a strategy that creates a new model that better suits the employer's real business need. For example, an organization may engage a content developer as a contractor. Does it pay to bring that contractor onboard as an employee as she builds knowledge of the business and familiarity with the subject matter? A sense of loyalty and a consistent voice in the messaging may make the change worthwhile. Conversely, a vendor delivering on a statement of work (SOW) project may no longer be necessary as the project matures, and people become available to individually support progress as contractors.

Technologies are in play today that can help facilitate the discussion around talent models. For instance, the innovation team at Allegis Group company Allegis Global Solutions has developed a tool in its QUANTUM strategy and technology ecosystem that is evolving to bring clients through the questions and answers that determine the appropriate model for engagement.

The **QUANTUM** Total Talent Platform Puts Employers Ahead of the Curve



Kristy Sidlar

Executive Director, QUANTUM and Client Development, Allegis Global Solutions, an Allegis Group company

Today, the supply of talent for the companies we serve is complex and constantly changing. Contingent workers, freelancers, consultants, full-time job applicants, and current employees are all viable choices for most talent needs. Companies know they have to be proactive in sourcing workers of all types, but to do so, they must have access to all available talent in one place. Historically, this task has not been possible, and stakeholders (HR and procurement) drew from distinct talent pools through different silos and systems.

Our innovation team has developed QUANTUM, which solves this issue, creating a single platform that brings together all parts of the talent supply. But it's not just about technology. Highly experienced talent advisors are critical to ensuring hiring managers get the best type of talent in the best location at the best price – as quickly as possible. Using our platform, talent advisors provide clients with strategic guidance to identify specific people who can address a current or future talent need. Ultimately, we view QUANTUM as a strategy, not a technology, as our tools aim to support strategic and proactive talent decisions. The strategic function addresses the core demands of proactive talent acquisition and management, including the following.

Visibility to an Organization's Talent Supply

Our single platform contains data for the entire talent supply, including external candidates, current employees interested in career growth, and flexible workers – those who are immediately available and workers who are coming available soon. These workers come from the organization's HR information system (HRIS), vendor management system, recruitment marketing platform, its applicant tracking system, and staffing supply chain. They are organized into "talent clouds" that draw from across these sources.

Advanced Tools to Pinpoint Current and Future Candidates

Using advanced AI-enabled search tools, talent advisors can enter requirements or job descriptions, and the system searches all available sources to pinpoint candidates immediately. This process used to take days; now we can do it in seconds. The search capability learns over time and gets smarter the more it is used. In addition, a market intelligence solution built into the system provides detailed insight into the supply of talent by skill type along with a profile of pay rates by location to help arrive at a best-cost solution.

Human Support for All Stakeholders

The talent advisor leverages internal business intelligence and external employment market analytics to help hiring managers make informed hiring decisions that are based on hard data, not just intuition. Data-driven, consultative guidance ensures hiring managers onboard the right type of talent for their projects at the best price.

Every Stakeholder Wins

The true value of a holistic platform lies in its benefit to everyone involved. Hiring managers receive viable candidates in a fraction of the time taken with multiple, manual searches. Agencies in the employer's staffing supplier network proactively keep their candidates in front of every possible opportunity. Flexible workers with assignments coming to an end are systematically visible to hiring managers for upcoming projects prior to their end dates, and silver medalist candidates who were not selected for a role remain available and visible for future opportunities.

Make Informed Decisions About Pay

Beyond considering all models of engagement, the second priority in engaging talent is to think beyond what the role was paid in the past. Is there a spike in hiring for certain skills? Does a longstanding role now require new skills and technologies that are difficult to find, or is the talent supply out of balance with demand in a given area? The answers to any of these questions can result in a market rate that is more than the employer would assume based on past history, resulting in difficulty filling roles and poor quality applicants, or an employer paying too much for talent without the knowledge of prevailing rates. With changing market conditions, simply going to market with an uninformed pay rate is a potentially expensive guessing game that can be damaging to the business.

To look beyond past history as a guide to pay, companies can apply data science to gain a clear picture of prevailing rates, considering market conditions and emerging trends. Real insight requires context for determining how high or low rates are compared to the norm, drawing from both internal and external data to understand competitive pay rates by geography and industry.

Treat Changing Roles Proactively

The third priority for better acquiring talent across a changing workforce is to reconsider how new skills will affect the role being filled. Once again, past models for the makeup of a role and for the ideal candidate may no longer apply. Just a small majority (63 percent) of HR decision-makers express full confidence that their organizations are effective at predicting new skills that will be needed, and 45 percent consider their organizations to be effective at attracting talent with new skills. Only 56 percent of organizations say they are effective at developing new skills internally, and just 53 percent are effective at retaining talent with new skills.¹⁸ These tepid confidence levels reveal that companies have much work to do in staying ahead of new skills demands.

To better address emerging needs, employers can leverage predictive analytics to anticipate spikes in demand for certain roles and competencies. Such changes can come from causes as varied as a competitor moving into a location (increasing talent demand), a company laying off employees (increasing the talent supply), cyclical market demands that may drive talent availability, or, most recently, new demands for skills caused by emerging technologies (AI, as well as emerging data science and analysis fields). Understanding the demand, organizations can then create attraction and retention strategies to lay the groundwork for building talent pipelines that address roles that come into play in both the immediate and longer-term future.





Trend 4 The Increasing Emphasis on Digital Talent Acquisition

Today's consumers have grown familiar with easy, fast, and transparent technology-enabled interactions when shopping, and these expectations extend to candidates and employees as well. As a result, employers must adapt their processes to keep up with competitors who may be digitizing their talent interactions. The pressure for innovation is a very real concern as 40 percent of HR leaders say that digitizing how talent is sourced is a challenge for their organizations, and roughly a third of HR leaders are not confident in their organizations' ability to leverage digital sourcing channels to their maximum effectiveness. Areas where confidence was lacking include their companies' use of people aggregators (38 percent), email marketing (36 percent), social media (34 percent), search engine optimization (34 percent), search engine marketing (33 percent), and job boards (24 percent).¹⁹ Moreover, talent leaders are concerned their organizations may not be equipped to handle increased candidate traffic brought on by digitized processes, leaving a negative experience that can impact the employer brand.

Develop and Communicate a Clear Promise to the Market

Solving the digital recruiting challenge involves a commitment to a marketing mindset when engaging talent. Recruitment marketing requires an employer value proposition (EVP) that reveals to employees and candidates why they would want to work for a company. That EVP must be conveyed to the people that matter in a way they can be reached, whether through Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, or any number of digital channels. Today, 73 percent of HR leaders say recruiters and hiring managers need to improve their ability to develop the EVP.²⁰

The advent of recruitment marketing technology is bringing the effort to engage talent to life through a consolidated platform that can incorporate the messaging, the processes for triggering communications, and the capture of data on people and interactions all through a single venue. Through the implementation of a recruitment marketing platform, an employer gains the ability to enable and evaluate the promotion of jobs by channel based on return on investment, providing an objective path to continuous improvement over time.

Shape Processes to Drive a Compelling Candidate Experience

Another key to an effective recruitment marketing approach is to support messaging and targeting with real experiences that bring the EVP to life. A positive result for the candidate is rooted in a process or a workflow approach that the company applies to engage customers. Simply digitizing a cumbersome process will not necessarily improve the way candidates feel about their interaction with the company; instead, a careful assessment of all aspects of candidate engagement must precede any effort at using technology to improve the experience.

Two examples of organic improvement enabled by technology can be found in the application process. First, consider the time it takes a candidate to complete



an application. Employers may ask, “Is every piece of information necessary at the outset, from a complete career history to details of all skills, experience, location, and reference information?” It is likely that some information requirements can be reduced. At the same time, employers can streamline the cumbersome upload process. For example, employers may utilize technologies that automatically apply information from uploaded candidate resumes into digital fields, eliminating the need to make the candidate re-enter resume information into an online form.

The second element of improved candidate experience is responsiveness. To eliminate the proverbial candidate black hole of lost communication, companies can establish guidelines for responding to applications and apply tools to support the process. If the guideline is to respond within 24 hours, solutions are available to analyze the application, determine suitability, and provide a detailed reply as to whether a next step should be scheduled. If the process rule is to respond in 24 seconds, a chatbot can acknowledge receipt and ask questions to provide an initial analysis of the candidate’s information. This effort can determine top candidates for personal outreach and at the same time let other candidates move out of the hunt quickly and without undue conflict or confusion.

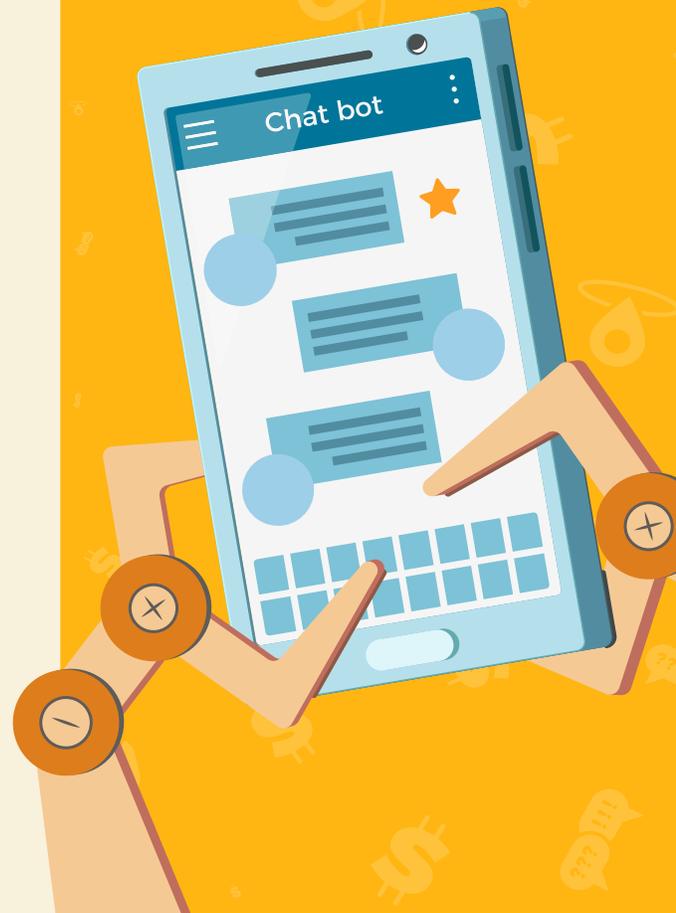
Foster an Ongoing Conversation With Talent Constituents

In a competitive marketplace, employers must develop and sustain pipelines of potential workers beyond those being sought for immediate vacancies. In this regard, the ability to create an ongoing process of interaction and value creation with candidates is essential. Companies can approach this ongoing conversation in two ways: by aligning strategies for active job seekers and by creating specific processes for engaging currently employed, passive candidates.

First, an employer can identify those who are actively searching online or updating their profiles in forums such as LinkedIn. An employer can then serve them with relevant opportunities through targeted job ads. The process is complex and time-consuming for overburdened recruiters, but technologies can automate this communication, providing value to both the employer and to the job seeker. For example, Allegis Group’s Connected Communities project is implementing a process that automates communications for

those who are updating their profiles and, in the case of flexible workers, connecting with those who are reaching the end of their assignment dates.

On the other side of the equation are workers who are actively employed, the passive candidates who may provide a high-quality resource for a future vacancy. Fostering relationships with these workers requires touchpoints that can be repeated on a continuous basis. For example, a solid thought leadership program can push out new ideas to a talent audience, sharing a perspective that emphasizes the company’s credibility in its field. At the same time, targeting technologies can examine the work experience of recipients and suggest opportunities or learning paths. The outcome of the continuous conversation is a relationship that can lead the candidate on a path toward developing new skills, considering new roles or, ideally, bringing that passive candidate into a new position with the prospecting employer.



Look Beyond Basic Requirements When Selecting Talent Technology



Jonathan Kestenbaum

Managing Director, Talent Tech Labs, an Allegis Group innovation partner

Technology will always play a central role in shaping how employers acquire talent. Through Talent Tech Labs, I have the good fortune to share in the success of smart companies that are building technology to empower everyone in the recruiting process.

As we host and mentor promising start-ups, and connect emerging innovators with talent acquisitions leaders, investors, and opportunities, we see first-hand the impact that innovation has on talent acquisition. Our experience has taught us that two big ideas remain true when it comes to building or selecting a technology to support talent acquisition.

First, technology innovation is about people. If considering using an application in your process, focus on how it affects the people around it. We know that certain technologies promise great features, but the real test of success is if it makes the daily life of recruiters, candidates, and hiring managers better.

Second, don't conduct research in a vacuum. We have found that forums for technology innovators, if done well, can provide real insight to buyers for much more informed technology decisions. The reason for this is you can get beyond the sales pitch at these types of events to see how an application really works, and you also hear the questions that others are asking.

The talent acquisition technology space is quickly advancing. It's exciting to work hands-on with tech builders who are changing the way this industry thinks and works. For those who adopt the right approach, technology can have an impact on a company's ability to acquire the people it needs to grow and succeed.



New Trends Examine *What* is the Nature of Work Being Done

Trend 5 The Expanding Use of Flexible Work Models

Today, the full-time permanent position is not the only viable or preferred career option for every professional. Workers of all backgrounds are adopting flexible work styles, whether operating as contractors or working through organizations that outsource their services to clients. These types of work present challenges for many employers who struggle to fully leverage available models to best suit the work to be done. Seventy-five percent of HR leaders say their organizations recognize the importance of strategically evaluating how work gets done, whether through permanent employees, contractors, SOW, or outsourcing. Only 56 percent of organizations use different engagement models to their full potential, leaving a full 44 percent of companies falling short when it comes to utilizing all worker types. Further, 39 percent of HR leaders cite effectively using multiple engagement models as a challenge, while only 21 percent have a holistic view of their workforce engagement options.²¹

Apply Four Considerations to Determine Optimum Work Models

The solution for effectively leveraging work models lies in a consistent and repeatable process for arriving at optimal decisions. First, assess the strategic importance of the needed skills. Only 43 percent of HR leaders say they always consider this aspect. Second, think about the length of need. Only 40 percent of employers always include the length of need in their decision-making. Third, ask how well is the organization equipped to manage and guide the people with the skills internally. Only 43 percent of HR leaders say the ability to manage talent is always considered in their organizations' decisions. Finally, the availability of the skill matters in the decision, yet only 37 percent of companies always include availability in their decision-making.²²

These four factors can influence the talent decision in many ways. For example, if the skill is not a core competency, engaging a contractor for three months may be more cost-effective than trying to fit the job into a permanent employee role. Examples could range across all fields, from hiring a finance and accounting professional who can manage an audit to engaging a marketing specialist to launch an online campaign or expand a commerce site. Another example may be a desired skill that is not a core competency but is important to the company on an ongoing basis. Here, a manufacturer may not specialize in building maintenance or an



online retailer may not specialize in managing call centers or help desks, but both need these skills as part of their businesses. In these cases, hiring vendors with an outsourced arrangement can fill the need.

Another example of a work model choice is a common situation when the skill is needed to accomplish a core function, yet there is little capacity to manage that skill in-house. For example, an organization may need to create a new manufacturing process and open a new facility for a product launch. The person needed to lead the transition may be required to have the technical expertise to set up new processes, which does not fall into a current role within the organization. Consequently, the employer may choose to engage an interim leader on a temp-to-perm basis, determining as the project unfolds whether the resource is needed as an employee or if the project is better supported by outsourced or contractor services.

In all cases, a flexible approach provides an advantage when securing talent, particularly for contractors and other flexible workers, but a traditional employee may benefit from the same level of flexibility. Employees may be offered opportunities for remote working, setting their own time and locations just as contractors may do in the same situation. Many innovative technology companies are putting flexibility into practice. For

example, StackExchange, a network of online question and answer sites, conducts thorough interviews to ensure quality of hire and then gives employees control over all aspects of their schedule and complete freedom in approaching their tasks and goals.²³ Total flexibility, however, remains elusive, with only 49 percent of HR decision-makers claiming their organization has fully adopted flexible scheduling and 40 percent fully adopted remote working. Video conferencing and online chat are adopted at similar rates (by 55 percent and 48 percent of companies, respectively).²⁴

While there is much room to improve flexibility for employees, HR decision-makers also cite anxiety over the potential, negative consequences of a digitized and flexible work model. For example, 24 percent claim employees may find it difficult to build relationships when working remotely. Twenty percent are concerned that their organizations do not have the updated/fast technology to support these practices. Sixteen percent believe flexible workers may have trouble embracing the culture and create challenges for scheduling meetings. Finally, 14 percent of HR decision-makers believe remote personnel may run the risk of being overlooked for promotions. Each of the issues has validity, and as organizations increasingly build digitization and flexibility into the work experience, these potential concerns will require attention.

Concerns About Flexible Work Models

HR decision-makers express anxiety over the potential, negative consequences of a digitized and flexible work model. Top areas of concern include the following:



24%

claim employees may find it difficult to **build relationships** when working remotely

16%

believe flexible workers may have **trouble embracing the culture** and **create challenges for scheduling meetings**

20%

are concerned that their organizations **do not have the updated/fast technology** to support these practices

14%

believe remote personnel may run the risk of being **overlooked for promotions**



Source: Allegis Group

Breaking the Talent Bottleneck:

Three Ways to Force a Nimble Workforce Strategy



Craig Fisher

Head of Global Marketing, Allegis Global Solutions, an Allegis Group company

Whether a company needs to build a website, develop an application, move to a new facility, or deliver a communications campaign, there are many ways to get the job done. The challenge is to ensure people are in place with the skills to do the work quickly and effectively. If not, the result is a bottleneck where part of a job stalls and the dependent activities are held up in the process.

For decades, companies have struggled to balance the costs of talent with the risks of work delayed or left undone. Talent needs change quickly, so hiring a permanent employee for every requirement is not the answer. At the same time, it is not easy to determine whether a contractor is the answer to fill a role — whether by skill, cost, or availability.

Today, we are working with employers who are thinking creatively to take the guesswork and the bottlenecks out of the talent equation. Thanks to technologies that bring the workforce together across geographies, worker types, and capabilities, employers can escape fixed strategies of the past. They can attack every piece of work with the right people and the right approach to deliver results as planned.

The key to a successful, adaptive strategy is to understand how to think differently and break the rigid, traditional process of getting work done. With that in mind, here are three ways companies are thinking differently about defining work and engaging talent:



Tasks and Accomplishments Versus Job and Responsibility

Delineate the work to be done by activity. What's the task? What's the outcome? What skills are needed to bring it to completion? For example, you don't need to hire a full-time designer to produce a handful of web pages, but you do need the dedicated attention of someone who is skilled in design, and you need some time from a person who is skilled in programming. A full-time employee or contractor may not be needed. Instead, the task can be owned as a piece of the work portfolio by any available talent, whether an external flexible worker, current employee, or potential new employee.



Talent Cloud Versus Traditional Employee or Flexible Worker

Build a pool of available talent, including current employees or available flexible workers, and bring their relevant information into a virtual environment that enables employers to identify the right person immediately. This is the “talent cloud” model, and it puts workers within reach of hiring managers who need to accomplish goals and complete projects. Notably, one of our clients has taken this concept to a new level. Instead of reaching out to its talent, it enables the talent to come to them, with employees “bidding” on posted tasks based on time to completion and skills required.



Anywhere Versus Onsite

If workers can work from home or remotely without obstacles or obligations, then that talent can be available for any task that falls within their capability. Technology is making virtual work easy, enabling employees to not only accomplish their work but also to interact with other workers easily through a virtual environment. Remote work exponentially expands the cloud-talent model, and companies can access any worker, anywhere, to make sure a task is completed on time.

Planning for the Unplanned

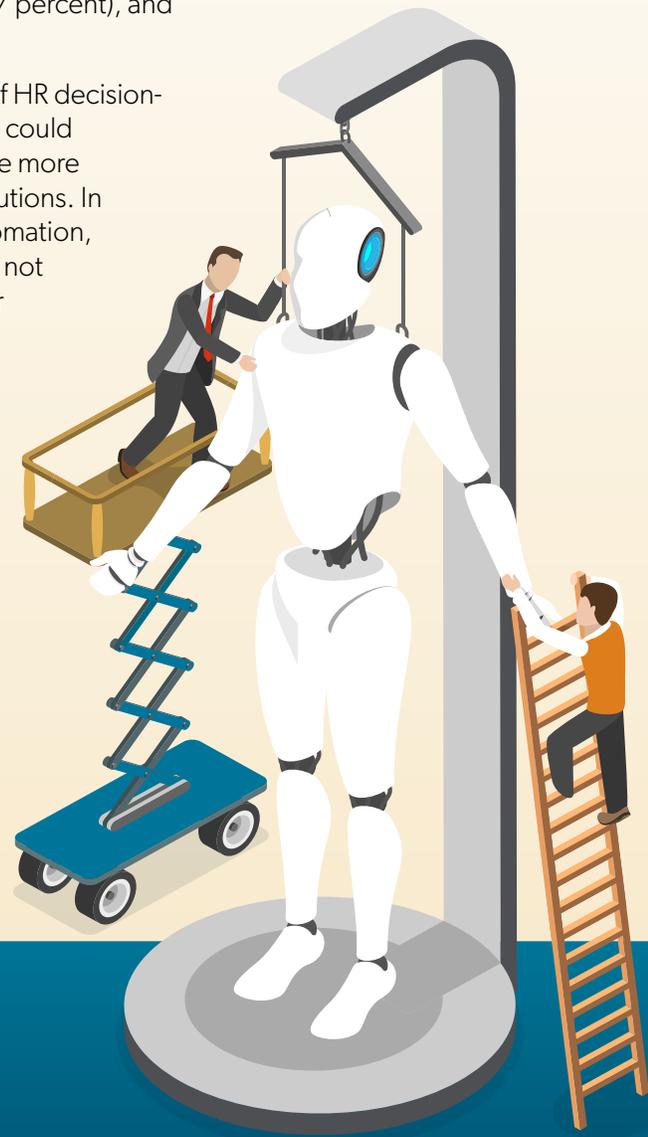
For years, companies have struggled with workforce planning and capacity planning. It’s one of every company’s greatest weaknesses. Staffing, outsourced solutions and services, recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), and managed services provider (MSP) solutions all serve to help employers flex quickly to adapt to changing demands. Today, a partner who can provide the flexibility of those talent solutions can complement a workforce model that puts projects, tasks, and outcomes first. Employers should expect the use of technology to provide greater visibility into all options as we move forward, and they should expect talent partners to provide advisory expertise to navigate change as well.

Trend 6 A Growing Pressure to Automate Activities and Processes

Beyond the trends that shape the way employers engage people to get work done, the world of work is also influenced by the increasing automation of processes. Among many innovative forces driving automation in business today, the rise of AI solutions is a strong driver of change. AI is extending opportunities for automation across all types of work, from manual tasks to skilled knowledge worker fields such as research and even some aspects of customer service. This trend creates concern among employers. In fact, HR leaders believe that within 10 years, between a quarter and a third of processes will be automated, including areas such as IT (35 percent), finance (32 percent), HR (31 percent), operations (30 percent), marketing (30 percent), sales (27 percent), and research and development (25 percent).²⁵

The obstacles to automation are very real. Nearly a third (30 percent) of HR decision-makers say automating jobs presents a challenge. The level of concern could be larger than HR leaders may state, as IT or operations may experience more challenges as they own responsibility for implementing automated solutions. In any case, companies remain unprepared to step up their efforts at automation, with 58 percent of HR decision-makers saying their organizations have not begun executing a strategy to map work processes or identify areas for digitization and automation in the future. In fact, a full 17 percent of HR leaders say their companies are years away from considering a strategic approach to automation or not even thinking about it. At the same time, many organizations have begun the process, with 42 percent reporting that their organizations are executing a strategy for automation.²⁶

Automation is not necessarily a means to directly replace humans with machines. Instead, the technologies involved often take on the low-value tasks that humans perform and then give those workers a chance to focus on higher-value activities. To gain the full value of automation opportunities, organizations are embracing a systematic approach to identify and prioritize where automation needs to be achieved and how the workforce can be adjusted to create the most value.



Automation Challenges

Companies remain unprepared to step up their efforts at automation. Among HR decision-makers surveyed:

30%

say automating jobs presents a challenge

58%

say their organizations have not begun executing a strategy to map work processes or identify areas for future digitization and automation

17%

are years away from considering a strategic approach to automation or are not thinking about it

Source: Allegis Group

Map the Processes That Comprise Each Business Function

For any business function, a successful automation strategy begins by assessing the processes for getting work done. How is the work being done today? Who is doing the work? What technology is being used? What is working well, and what is not? In an HR function, for example, the talent acquisition process contains distinct areas of activity, from sourcing talent to screening and onboarding. Within each of these areas, there are several processes including searching for and identifying talent, communication and candidate care, interview scheduling, and, once the hiring decision has been made, onboarding the new employee.

Determine Opportunities for Automation

Once processes are documented, organizations can assess what activity is productive, where the problems are, and what is costly. Processes that are not productive may be candidates for automation. A process that is rules-based may lend itself to the use of technology. Reconciliations, payroll decisions, and other activities that depend on decisions based on hard numbers offer some level of automation potential. For example, an organization may find it costly to perform all accounting reconciliations with a human being, so the company may set up rules to automate a portion of that job, allowing the human employee to focus on other aspects of the role. Second, an activity that is high in cost and yields a low return is a potential candidate for automation. For instance, new technologies are automating talent acquisition activities such as interview scheduling and initial resume review. These technologies are less concerned with replacing the human recruiter and focus instead on changing what the recruiter does to concentrate on more high-value aspects of candidate communication and relationship-building.

Coordinate Decisions About People and Technology

Employers must consider how automation influences roles for workers. For the recruiter, as new technologies take on resume review processes, the ability to advise candidates on their career paths may take precedence over the ability

to review resumes quickly. As another example, a company that adopts a customer relationship management (CRM) platform may automate payment processing and apply AI to target products and recommendations to customers, but the technology will place an increased demand for admins and architects who know how to handle the technology. A company may use chatbots to answer basic questions about billing, but the customer service representatives will likely be more consultative. To gain value from automation, the employer will need to be prepared to build pipelines of talent with skills that match the new demands of a technology-enabled workplace.

Instances of newly automated processes can be found across industries. Telecommunications company Vodafone saves time and money by using AI-powered video interviews. Job seekers record themselves answering basic questions, and robots assess candidate suitability across 15,000 different dimensions, from body language and facial cues to voice intonation and speech cadence. The top-ranked candidates are then scheduled for interviews.²⁷ In another case, financial services organization Morgan Stanley applied machine learning solutions to automate low-value activity for its financial advisers, enabling them to focus on providing service to clients.²⁸ These two examples highlight the new role of technology as a force for delivering on needs that were formerly driven by employees, leaving human workers to focus on higher-value activity.



Don't Settle for Small Process Improvements



Bruce Morton

Head of Strategy, Allegis Global Solutions, an Allegis Group company

For decades, new talent acquisition and management technologies have helped employers incrementally improve the processes they've always had in place. Toward that end, many innovations have focused on sourcing slightly faster, screening slightly more predictively, and making the employee experience one step more engaging.

Today, technology is changing that dynamic. Thanks to advanced data and AI tools, companies can now do things entirely differently to achieve larger outcomes. For example, I've seen how a large organization fixed a problem it had retaining quality help-desk talent. Rather than source and hire more employees quickly to stay ahead of the churn, the company shifted to a flexible work model similar to Uber and Lyft, building a different network of people who work from home and log in when they want to put in help-desk hours.

This model required a change in how the company allowed remote access through its firewall. It required a rethink of how it trained and retained contractors and freelancers, and it required a leap of trust. The result is a use of technology that fundamentally transformed a business process to bring work to people who like helping others solve technology issues. And, the company gained the service of talent it needed without imposing the burdens of full shifts. As a result, the company eliminated burnout among customer service workers and made soaring gains in service quality and customer satisfaction.

The lessons of this experience apply to any employer. With the power and flexibility of today's technologies, simply using them to make small improvements is no longer enough. To compete for talent with critical skills, and to achieve desired outcomes, companies need to make sure they are looking at their processes with a completely fresh view.



A New World of Opportunity

When it comes to the workforce of tomorrow, the future has arrived. Employers today face a complex and changing environment for acquiring talent, and new demands to ensure their processes are executed in a way that is competitive, fast, accurate, intelligent, and cost-effective. The trends driving the new meaning of talent are strong, from the rise of multiple generations in the workforce to evolving job requirements, complex global sourcing channels, digital talent processes, varied employment models, and automation.

*... the new meaning of talent is defined by a workforce that is **smart, empowered, and human.***

Employers may find that adjusting to the trends is intimidating. But in the emergence of new models of work and talent strategy, there is also great opportunity to achieve a competitive advantage. The organizations that commit to thinking systematically and creatively about how their business is changing can reap the benefits of smart, prioritized decisions that enable their people and processes to deliver the value demanded by today's markets. Whether driving customer satisfaction, creating new products, or delivering high-quality service, the new meaning of talent is defined by a workforce that is smart, empowered, and human. The companies that put these ideals to work are positioned to lead in a world of change, today and in the future.



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