

**THE RESOURCE**

VOL. VII, ISSUE IV

# HR INSIGHTS

Magazine

*from the eyes of industry leaders*



HOW TO PROMOTE  
CAREER GROWTH IN A

## **TOP-HEAVY** Organization

### IN THIS ISSUE »

The Future of Work

The New “Human Capitalists”

Realistic Job Previews

Common Recruitment Mistakes

# From The CEO

**At The Resource we are passionate about our story and the stories of evolution our clients have to tell.**



Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Hartung". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kathy Hartung, CEO

# THE RESOURCE

We like to say we are revolutionizing the way companies handle their greatest assets, their people. In practically every company in the US, the 80/20 rule still stands. You can *easily* identify your key employees, the cream of the crop. So often though, employees outside the top performing 20 percent get looked at as underperforming, when *really* it's just that they are in the wrong position.

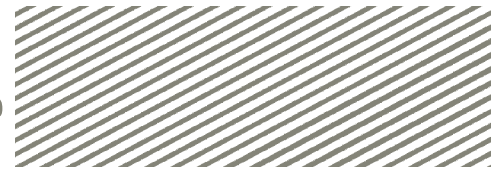
The hiring landscape is continually changing, as CEO, I felt that in my own company. Companies needed a hiring system that is a standalone predictor of future performance.

The Core Hiring System reveals the kind of position a person is designed for based on their core unchanging nature, and then matches them to a position within a company where they *will be* a top performer. By optimizing the talent you have, and positioning you to only hire the right people, we are showing companies the effect of having a top performer in every seat.

We dig in with our clients to understand each position based on specific revenue generating tasks to create a Job Blueprint. Then we use The Core assessment to go beyond a person's skill, experience or even attitude and look at how they are hardwired to perform the tasks the position requires. We work alongside you to ensure that you only consider future top performers.

Our mission is a top performer in every seat, in every company.

From the CEO to the leadership team to the entry level position, a person doing what they are naturally designed to do has the power to rewrite the story; the story of your company, the story of your life.



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# HR INSIGHTS

from the eyes of industry leaders

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## HOW TO PROMOTE CAREER GROWTH IN A

# TOP-HEAVY Organization

BY CHRISTINA CHAU



“There was no room for her to grow here, so Sarah left the company.”

“After being passed over for a promotion for the second time, Joe is interviewing at other organizations.”

“Jen’s been at the company for 10 years in the same role and needs something new.”

The names and details vary, but the same stories play out every day in companies throughout the country. Organizational structure, business performance, lack of turnover (because the company is so great that no one ever leaves)—any of these factors can prevent the best and brightest from moving up the career ladder. It just isn't possible to promote *everyone* who deserves to be promoted or to give raises to *everyone* who does outstanding work. When they don't get the promotions or raises they feel that they've earned, top talent starts looking elsewhere for better opportunities.

How can a company help its employees have careers that are healthy and growing when there's no room for promotion or raises? Fortunately, even when such rewards are outside the realm of possibility, there are other ways for an organization to help its people grow and develop.

### **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILL BUILDING**

When leaders think of skill building, what they usually have in mind is a course on Excel (or some other software program or narrowly defined skill). Rather than try a "one size fits all" approach that puts employees in classes that don't necessarily align with their personal goals (and therefore don't facilitate useful growth), though, a company should instead find out where its employees really want to be in their careers and help them build the skills they need to get there. Possibilities include training on presentation and public speaking skills (and more opportunities to practice them), courses that help employees learn about the latest developments in their fields, and opportunities to work with teams in different areas of the organization.

### **INCREASE ACCESS TO EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES**

Every company has high-profile projects that attract the interest of lots of people but have room for only a few select team members. Examples include assignments that involve meeting with clients, business travel, or access to high-level leaders. Star employees who are excluded from these projects often feel that they are missing opportunities to shine, learn new things, and start building their social currency. Find other great opportunities for them (such as face time with the CEO or someone else from upper management, for example) so they don't feel overlooked at their current positions . . . and then start looking elsewhere.

### **BUILD THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Opportunities to change careers, make internal moves, or get promoted aren't always well publicized throughout an organization, and people often learn about them only through "word of mouth" channels. In an environment where "whom you know" can be just as valuable as "what you know," star employees need to network within their own organizations and make connections that can boost their careers. Help top employees build their networks by pairing them with mentors, introducing them to other leaders and executives in the company, or organizing meetings in which they can meet people from all over the organization.

### **MAKE THEM PART OF SOMETHING GREAT**

Everyone wants to be part of something bigger than himself or herself. To help employees feel that they are making a difference, encourage them to align their work with meaningful purpose, empower them to suggest and make changes, give them ownership of their work, and show appreciation for their efforts and achievements. When given opportunities to be great, employees will find their own ways to thrive. ■

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Christina Chau, senior content manager at O.C. Tanner, has led focus groups and research projects across 20 countries and uses these insights to create content that helps companies engage and inspire greatness in their people. Chau has been with O.C. Tanner for over 10 years. She has previously worked in market research and marketing for IRI, Memorial Herman Hospital System, and Anheuser-Busch. She has a bachelors in sociology from the University of Michigan and a master's in marketing from Northwestern University. Chau can be reached at [Christina.Chau@octanner.com](mailto:Christina.Chau@octanner.com).

"Because his boss has another 15 years before retirement, Matt feels stuck and hopeless."



# IMPROVE TALENT ACQUISITION THROUGH

BY RAQUEL LAWRENCE



From the onset, marketers know that they're up against a variety of challenges to attract customers. Factors include market demand, consumer reviews, public perception, budgetary restrictions, and, of course, direct competition. In today's tight labor market, marked by low unemployment rates and widening skills gaps, recruiters can identify with many of those same challenges while trying to attract quality hires. Talent acquisition doesn't always connect itself to revenue generation for the business as well as marketing does; subsequently, it may not receive as many resources to get the job done. Still, unfilled jobs cost the U.S. economy as much as \$13 billion per month, or \$160 billion per year.<sup>1</sup>

# HR COLLABORATIONS WITH MARKETING

Therefore, it's imperative that employers build up their talent pipelines as well as their sales pipelines, both to avoid a costly talent shortage and to protect the growth potential of their businesses. Filling the hiring funnel starts with an engaging employer brand, which shapes job seekers' first perceptions of a company's work culture. When developing (or improving) employer branding and recruitment marketing, collaboration with marketing professionals can be incredibly helpful.

## EMPATHIZE WITH THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

With countless information resources at their disposal, today's candidates have a consumer mindset when searching for and applying to open jobs. They approach looking for a job much the same that they approach making a major purchase: they do research, compare the data, then make the final decision about whether to "buy." The impact of this information gathering cannot be overstated. For instance, when researching a potential employer 94% of working Americans visit its social media pages (and one in three workers have declined a job offer primarily because the company had negative online employer reviews).<sup>2</sup> By understanding this behavior, recruiters can begin to visualize the steps of the hiring process that are most crucial to the candidate experience.

If a company's marketing team has social media planners on staff, they can offer advice on company-approved methods for responding to negative reviews. Recruiting and marketing can also work together to create social media content calendars that highlight the best aspects of the workplace.

## LEVERAGE CULTURAL STRENGTHS TO CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

Social media is a fantastic vehicle for showing off an organization's unique culture. But before building out any content, HR must set the tone for what the company wants to convey by defining the employee value proposition (EVP). That definition lies in the answer to one question: "What do potential employees stand to gain by working for the organization?"

Enterprise Holdings (the parent firm of several transportation organizations, including the car-rental companies Alamo, National, and, of course, Enterprise) is one great example of a company that puts its people first. Its EVP highlights the organization's internal growth opportunities while simultaneously layering in some of its most sought-after employee competencies, such as integrity and teamwork.

For values-driven individuals who want to be proud of their career decision, Enterprise Holdings is the employer that provides the things you need to feel secure and successful in a reputable, team-oriented culture.<sup>3</sup>

Enterprise reiterates this idea throughout its career site—in job descriptions, training program details, internship program year-books, employee spotlight videos, and even in a "How to Apply" section that guides candidates through the hiring process.

Job seekers crave this kind of content. Fortunately, there's a good chance that an organization's marketing department already has the resources in place to produce the copy, images, and video elements that recruiters need. There's also probably a lot of useful content that can be repurposed in the company history or on the "about us" page on the website.

## COMMUNICATE WITH MODERN TOOLS

Amazing content doesn't accomplish anything if no one sees it. Google for Jobs helps job seekers find job postings more efficiently. But for companies that want to truly nurture and engage a quality pool of candidates, a candidate relationship management (CRM) tool is essential.

Salesforce, one extremely popular CRM tool in widespread use in marketing departments, enables marketers to keep ongoing records of prospect and customer interactions, send communications, and pass them through the sales process. In talent acquisition, a CRM tool has very similar functions. It allows recruiters to collect contact information, organize candidates into talent pools (by department, skillset, etc.), and send e-mails relevant to their specific interests (such as new job openings or thought-provoking content that's relevant to their fields).

Companies that want to attract job seekers need to figure out new ways to engage them (especially if they want to tap the significant pool of passive job seekers who aren't actively looking for new opportunities but would be interested in exploring good ones that come their way). The marketing department has long used some excellent strategies for connecting with customers by getting to know their wants and interests. By applying some of those strategies in a collaboration between recruiting and marketing, organizations can improve their outreach to prospective candidates. ■

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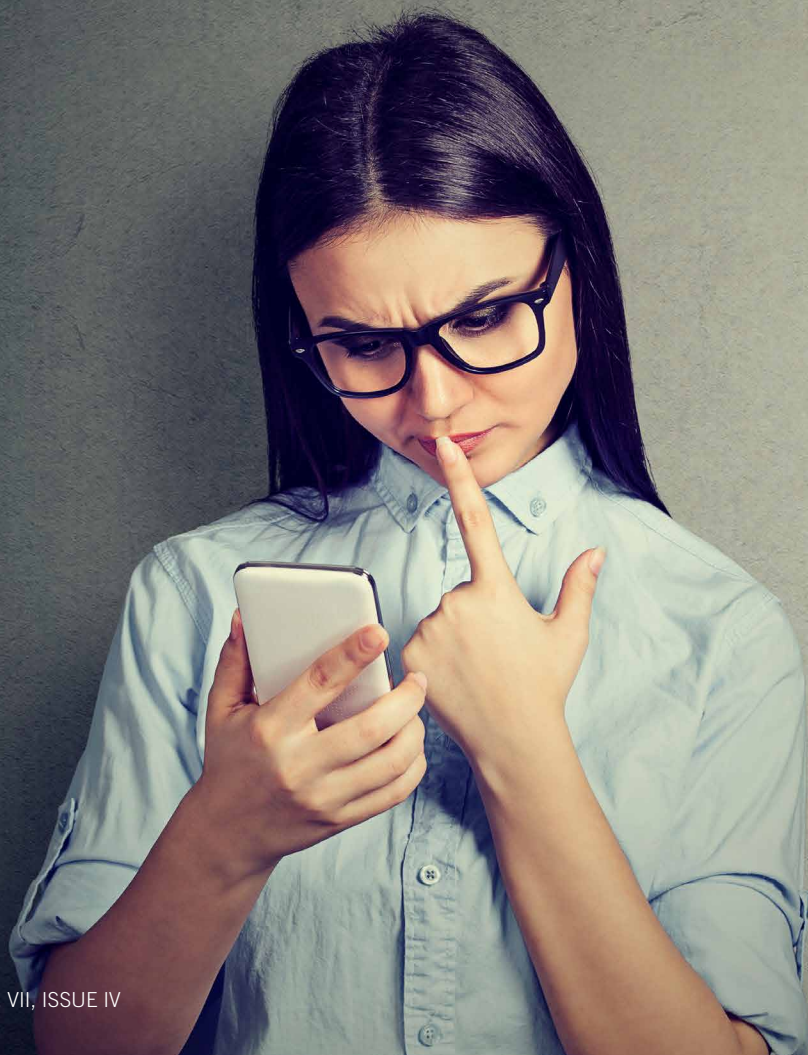
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# The Importance of the Preapplication Stage

BY ALLIE KELLY

Because candidates begin to form opinions about an organization well before they fill out applications on its website, companies that want to develop a great candidate experience need to build a better preapplication stage. The power of first impressions is well established: when someone encounters a new person, his or her brain immediately begins collecting information, parsing that data, and making judgments based on it. This happens not only in in-person meetings but also in online interactions with people, with brands—and with companies.





When people meet for the first time, they “automatically attend to and parse relevant information about somebody based on how important they are to [their] own motivations.”<sup>1</sup> When candidates first approach an organization, they immediately begin forming an opinion about it based on one clear motivation: their desire to work there. Therefore, the organization’s value to those candidates is proportional to how much it can help them. If candidates perceive the organization’s application process as difficult to navigate, their estimation of the organization begins to decline. But if, on the other hand, candidates perceive the organization as helpful and friendly, their initial estimates of the company are more likely to be positive.

Although the economy has recovered from the 2008 recession, finding a job is still a long—and exhausting—process, with the average job search lasting between five and six weeks.<sup>2</sup> (And because this is just the average, that means that many people have to wait even longer to receive an offer!) Job seekers are fatigued, which can adversely shape first their impressions.

Waiting so long for an opportunity can leave job seekers feeling frustrated and lost—and when a negative application experience is piled on top of that wait, they may end up with less-than-flattering impressions of a potential employer. An overly complicated or too-long online application, for example, can turn off candidates, with one study from Indeed finding that “companies with 45 or more screener questions are losing the vast majority, or 88.7%, of their potential applicants who abandon the process before completion.”<sup>3</sup> And thanks to the rise of company review sites such as Glassdoor, an employer’s

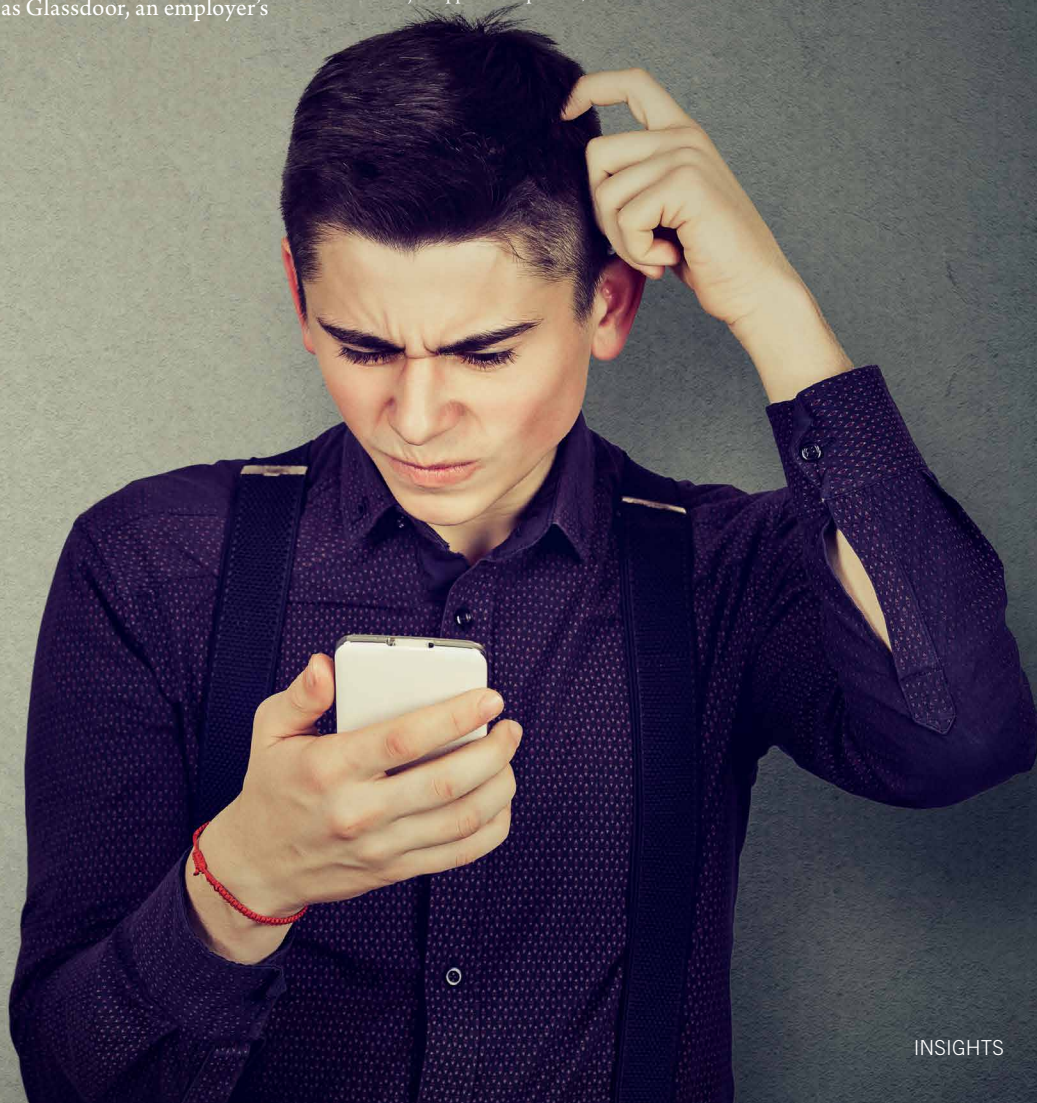
brand now matters more than ever: a less-than-stellar score on such sites could drive away top talent and make it more difficult for an organization to secure the best candidates.

A streamlined, intuitive, preapplication stage eases candidates into the application process and generates more opportunities for creating a positive candidate experience. With numerous automated solutions on the market today, employers can gain the benefits of making those improvements without having to devote additional resources to the hiring process. Knowing how important (and easy) it is to make the preapplication process better for candidates, companies should prioritize making that happen. ■

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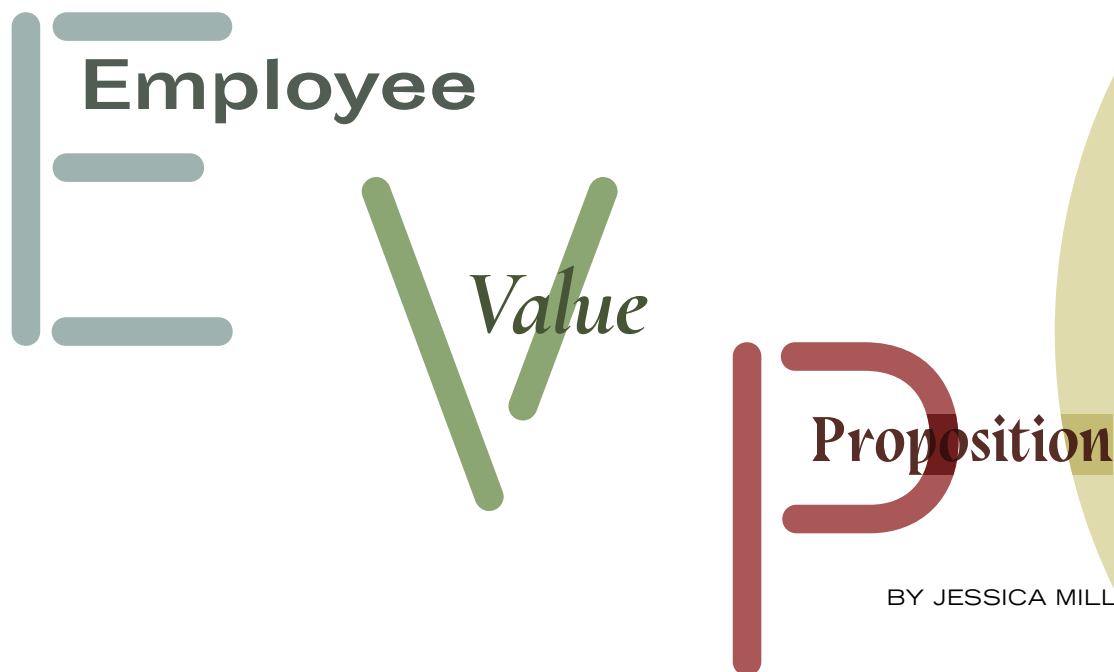
Allie Kelly is the vice president of marketing at JazzHR ([www.jazzhr.com](http://www.jazzhr.com)), where they’re on a mission to make recruiting and hiring easy, effective, and scalable no matter what growth looks like at your company. The Jazz Performer Platform doesn’t just help your company grow, it can help your recruiting process grow up, putting you on the path to hiring “Performers Only.”

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## EVERY COMPANY NEEDS AN



BY JESSICA MILLER-MERRELL

At its heart, an employee value proposition (EVP) is the unique set of benefits an employee receives in return for the skills, capabilities, and experience that he or she brings to a company. Connected to a company's characteristics and benefits and to the ways of working there, it exemplifies what the organization stands for. As the deal struck between a company and its employee in return for his or her contribution and performance, it defines an employer and differentiates it from its competition.

At the most basic level, an EVP represents everything of value that an employer provides to its employees—pay, benefits, training, career development opportunities, and so on. Not only does an EVP form the foundation of a company brand, but as something that is “marketed” to the workforce, it is critical to all internal retention efforts as well as to all external recruiting efforts.

### FOCUS ON THE EMPLOYEES

One mistake a company often makes when creating an EVP is to focus it on the company and its leadership rather than on the employees. For it to be an effective tool for recruitment and retention, an EVP must hold value to the employee—not to the company's leadership or bottom line (although those can both be welcome side effects of a solid, “walk the talk” EVP). It's easy to throw a few value propositions

into a statement and put it on a career site or have it stenciled on a wall. But an effective EVP must reflect the current values of the workplace—and that means doing some internal research.

Start by looking at morale. If a company's EVP talks about how much its employees love working there but its current employees roll their eyes whenever they hear it, the organization has two options: 1) rewrite its EVP or 2) focus on improving morale for its current employees before it starts marketing a value proposition to potential employees.

On the surface, improving morale may seem a neverending, overly broad, and ill-defined task. But because it is key to creating an excellent EVP, it's a task that HR professionals need to undertake—and it's a task they need to do well, because not only are employees the best advocates of a company's brand (so it's good to have them thinking and talking positively about it), but they can sniff out an insincere EVP statement from a mile away.

It's impossible to make 100% of an organization's employees happy 100% of the time, of course. But it is possible to isolate the one or two common complaints that contribute the most to negative employee morale. Anonymous surveys can help shed light not only on employees' negative perceptions about a company but on their positive feelings as well.

Once both are uncovered, start with the positives. Use what current employees love about the company to form the foundation of a strong EVP statement. If the surveys reveal, for example, that most employees rate the CEO negatively (don't forget to take a look at Glassdoor reviews, too) but love their autonomy and the fact that they're not micromanaged, that company's EVP could focus on the fact that its employees are empowered to make their own decisions and take risks without consequences, and that they feel their creativity is rewarded.

An employee survey can also identify issues that the HR department can easily fix. Consider the example of a company CEO who loved to promote the fact that he met one on one with each employee

# WHAT YOUR TALENT WANTS

## YOUR EVP

# WHAT YOUR COMPANY WANTS

every quarter. His employees, however, didn't exactly see those meetings as a benefit: they felt that they were akin to being "called to the principal's office" and took as criticism every suggestion or comment made during those meetings. When HR surveyed the employees about what they preferred, they said they would rather have more communication with their direct supervisors. They didn't care whether the CEO knew them personally or understood what they did at the company, but they *did* care about whether he could steer the organization in a direction that would have a positive impact on the company's bottom line. Once HR got this information from the employees, the one-on-one meetings were dropped and the CEO started sending out more regular and transparent updates on the company's financial health.

In addition to surveys, organizations can employ other strategies to develop an EVP that's centered on the interests of employees and potential candidates. For example, executive interviews and workshops with key stakeholders can increase understanding of talent priorities from a strategic perspective. Another option, qualitative focus groups, can enrich understanding of employee values and perceptions. And internally tested branding and marketing support (including optimal and differentiated messaging) can also help shape EVP development.

In all cases, however, employers should not assume that they know which parts of the employment package employees view as the most significant. If such assumptions are wrong, a perception gap can result in a weak EVP. And even when employers assume correctly, they could be missing critical opportunities to emphasize how the organization wants to learn about—and provide—what employees prize most.

### EXAMPLES OF EVP STATEMENTS

When building an EVP, companies need to remember that the most significant contributors to retention are development and career opportunities. Also important are the relationships and respect that

the employee builds within the organization, particularly those with managers and with peers. The most important question to ask when creating a company's EVP is "What do we currently offer to our employees in exchange for their time and effort?" The following EVP statements answer that question clearly:

- "At Goldman Sachs, you will make an impact." (Goldman Sachs)
- "From empowering mentorships to customized coaching, PwC provides you with the support you need to help you develop your career. You'll work with people from diverse backgrounds and industries to solve important problems. Are you ready to grow?" (PwC)
- "You can make a difference by helping to build a smarter, safer, and more sustainable world." (Honeywell)
- "Do cool things that matter." (Google)
- "Lead the future of beauty. When you love your work and the people you work with, amazing things can happen." (L'Oréal)

### A POWERFUL TOOL

After developing a clear and descriptive EVP statement, companies should share it with their employees, candidates, and new hires. Organizations should also follow SHRM's recommendation to review (and, if necessary, revise) their EVPs to make sure they remain relevant. Asking EVP-related questions when employees join or leave the company, during performance reviews, and in employee surveys can provide ongoing data about how employees perceive the EVP and how it meets their needs and expectations. ■

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Jessica Miller-Merrell is a workplace change agent focused on human resources and talent acquisition. Named to Haydn Shaughnessy's 2013 list of top 50 social media power influencers, she's the founder of Workology (formerly Blogging4Jobs). She can be contacted on Twitter at @jmillmerrell.



# the Reengineering of the

BY CECILE ALPER-LEROUX

The workplace has recently undergone a massive transformation in which many companies and HR leaders have had to relinquish several of the entrenched work and leadership structures that they hold dear (such as org charts and hierarchical management roles) in favor of strategies that enable flexible and adaptable ways of working. Unfortunately, this shift hasn't yet gained widespread momentum. Although many companies understand the value of workforce fluidity, they struggle to implement it.

The term *workforce fluidity* encompasses job fluidity, organizational fluidity, and identity fluidity. *Job fluidity* exists when people are not tied to or identified with specific job descriptions; rather, they flow among initiatives and supervisors to maximize their contributions. *Organizational fluidity* exists in organizations that accept the reality of how work gets done these days and encourage collaborative efforts that bring together diverse minds and skills. And *identity fluidity* exists when companies embrace new levels of self-definition and expression, with the knowledge that making people feel safe in their authentic uniqueness will create an environment that fosters innovation.

These examples of workplace transformation contrast sharply with yesteryear's rigid organizational structures, regimented ways of working, and uniform definitions of what constitutes leadership. Certainly, those ideas made perfect sense in the postindustrial era, when small shops gave way to large, unwieldy business organizations that needed to control a large labor force. The use of divisions, departments, and jobs based on a person's specific expertise ensured that work was appropriately doled out, supervised, and completed.

The problem with this static structure today is that it clashes with the dynamism of the global business environment and the current needs of people in the workforce. Thanks to distributed technology advancements, today's business is conducted in real time. Layers of management and delegation authority reduce the speed and flexibility of work.

At the same time, employees are increasingly being asked to participate in different projects and other initiatives under different supervisors. Titles and job roles seem almost superfluous in this environment of multiskilled multitaskers. Yet most companies still cling to their org charts and try to shoehorn modern workforce realities into an inflexible hierarchy.

Why is this the case, and how can HR become more nimble and lead the necessary change? According to Deloitte's expansive 2017 Global Human Capital Trends survey, "Rewriting the Rules for the Digital Age," 88% of the more than 10,000 respondents "believe that building the organization of the future is an important or very important issue," yet only 11% of them say they know how to do it.<sup>1</sup> To get a better understanding of these findings, I reached out to Josh Bersin, principal and founder of Bersin, Deloitte Consulting LLP.

Bersin highlights the workplace transformation by recounting his own workforce trajectory:



# Workforce

When I joined the workforce out of college in the late 1970s, I was given a job description and title and told how much I would earn. My boss told me what to do and wrote up my performance appraisal at the end of the year. . . . This workforce concept was based on the old industrial-scale model, which is now a disadvantage for companies, because it slows them down [and prevents them] from reacting quickly.

Today, however, many organizations are rethinking their structures and moving toward more team-oriented approaches. In fact, only 14% of the respondents to Deloitte’s survey “believe that the traditional organizational model—with hierarchical job levels based on expertise in a specific area—makes their organization highly effective.”<sup>2</sup>

Bersin observes that today, “leading companies [are] moving to a more agile, collaborative, and flexible way of working. Instead of a hierarchy, there is more of a network organizational structure.” As an example of this work type in action, he points to the now-common practice of forming a team of people from across the organization to take on a specific project. “People are collaborating with others who are not from their business area, lending their unique expertise and experiences to the task at hand,” he explains. “They jump on and off such projects on a routine basis.”

Today’s new ways of working are good for companies because they are good for employees. They increase employees’ sense of purpose, engagement with their work responsibilities, overall productivity, and personal happiness. People feel more in control of their lives. Moving from one initiative to another also puts people in close proximity to others who have different talents, which increases everyone’s range of skills. Best of all, these new approaches enable employees to coalesce around what is most important in business: serving the customer.

“Instead of focusing on efficiently executing the same task over and over, employees are empowered to make the customer happier,” notes Bersin.

What will it take for more companies to embrace this shift? First they must realize that workforce fluidity has already appeared in the workplace: the digital transformation of business is a powerful undercurrent tugging the organization toward more fluid ways of working. Once companies accept this reality, business leaders can then make the most of HR agility to usher in a more fluid, inspiring, and modern workplace.

To navigate this shift successfully, organizations would do well to follow Bersin’s advice and create mission-oriented project teams composed of individuals from numerous areas (e.g., marketing, sales, customer experience) and empower those teams to make decisions that benefit customers. At the same time, companies should also encourage empathy among employees so they can sense how people around them in the workplace feel about their work. By embracing these changes, organizations can help their employees find their own way in the new workplace and therefore reap the benefits of uninterrupted and innovative flows of ideas and collaborations. ■

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Cecile Alper-Leroux is Ultimate Software’s vice president of innovation. With more than 20 years’ experience in both national and global markets, she is an internationally sought-out speaker, thought leader, and visionary on human capital management trends, hot topics, and global strategies. She can be reached at [cecile\\_leroux@ultimatesoftware.com](mailto:cecile_leroux@ultimatesoftware.com).

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2. Ibid.





# The New “Human Capitalists”

BY LINDA BRENNER

The dramatic growth in competition for talent and the limited supply of candidates who can perform well in the most critical roles are two of the most rapid changes in the talent landscape over the last five years. It's not only a function of supply and demand: the mindset of top talent has changed in this environment. They now view themselves much more as investors than as employees.



What's common about these people is their critical importance to their companies. They are responsible for building and maintaining the intellectual capital that now supports some of the most valuable assets in the world, such as proprietary technology and databases, strategic customer relationships, and patents.

These "human capitalists" are experienced, savvy candidates with highly sought-after skills that are in scarce supply across multiple industries and geographies in the knowledge economy. They include software engineers, data scientists, and medical science liaisons, for example. Compared to workers in other areas, human capitalists in most important roles take longer, cost more money, and bear higher risks to recruit.

### WHY BUSINESSES DEPEND ON THEM

Human capitalists generate the intellectual capital that represents nearly 90% of the value of many modern companies and brings the most essential human capital to their organizations. In fact, a recent study of the Dow Jones Industrial Average revealed dramatic year-to-year increases in "the overall value of talent-driven intellectual capital." It also found that "the majority of the enterprise value—on average over 88%—was driven by the company's people instead of its tangible assets."

Unlike many other workers, human capitalists don't need to be told how they should achieve their goals (as in the instruction "Here's how I want you to build a new advertising campaign that goes viral"). Rather, their work focuses on solving for and achieving the desired result (as in the later assessment "Did that new ad campaign go viral?"). With that in mind, human capitalists who consistently achieve results that will help grow the enterprise value of their companies are literally worth their weight in gold.

### HOW TO WIN THEM

In light of these trends, companies that want sustainable success need to win the human capitalists. Implementing the following strategies will help them achieve that goal.

#### FIGURE OUT WHICH ROLES IN THE ORGANIZATION TRULY REQUIRE TOP-NOTCH HUMAN CAPITALISTS.

To identify those critical roles that drive a disproportionately large amount of intellectual capital, a cross-functional team of business leaders should discuss the organization's growth plan, figure out the talent implications of that plan, and then select the two or three roles that are most important to its success.

#### UNDERSTAND HOW HUMAN CAPITALISTS THINK.

These elite candidates treat their careers the same way that investors treat their stock portfolios: as investments. Therefore, they cannot afford to spend years (or even months) in any job that does not add to their future potential and personal wealth. Like financial investors, they expect a mix of "capital growth" and "dividend payout" consistent with their investment goals and risk tolerance.

- Capital growth is how human capitalists increase their capacity for generating future personal returns through

their ability to acquire certain experiences, knowledge, and skills as a result of this investment (employment) decision. A track record of successful "investing" in reputable companies adds fuel to their growth potential.

- Dividend payout refers to all types of rewards, such as salary, short-term and long-term incentives, perks, and benefits. This type of compensation is baseline and must be competitive; it won't sell the job on its own, because the potential for acquiring new experiences, knowledge, and skills (i.e., the "capital growth" opportunity) far outweighs the day-to-day compensation for these candidates.

### DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT TALENT ACQUISITION APPROACH.

Think of an in-house executive search strategy that goes much "lower" than typical executive search services. Regardless of the job's "level," this search requires unique techniques for passive-candidate sourcing and candidate management. It also requires a defined, thoughtful, step-by-step approach to attracting and winning such talent; highly credible, informed, and competent (and well-compensated) recruiters; and a deeply collaborative relationship with hiring managers and interviewers.

The total compensation package for the in-demand human capitalist roles must be carefully considered. For example, a company-wide compensation goal of being at 75% of market pay for a position should not apply to these roles. In fact, getting the right talent might require paying 200% of market—and recruiters must have the ability and flexibility to work intelligently within these parameters.

### DON'T FORGET ABOUT RETENTION.

At about the two- or three-year mark, human capitalists routinely (and privately) assess where they currently find themselves versus where they expected to be when they initially started their jobs (i.e., made their initial investments). At that point they either quit by choosing another, better "investment" or they "reinvest" by committing to another two to three years. (This cycle is similar to—but much less visible than—that of a financial investor.)

Clearly, the usual approach to talent acquisition and talent management simply isn't going to work with today's human capitalists. The solution? Start by identifying the organization's most critical business goals and the roles that are most important to achieving them. ■

Linda Brenner started Talent Growth Advisors (formerly Designs on Talent) with the vision of helping HR leaders drive faster and better results in talent acquisition and talent management. Visit them online at [www.talentgrowthadvisors.com](http://www.talentgrowthadvisors.com) or contact Brenner by e-mail at [linda@talentgrowthadvisors.com](mailto:linda@talentgrowthadvisors.com).

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# Common Recruitment MISTAKES— and How to Avoid Them

BY ERIC CZERWONKA

It's no secret that the ability to attract talent is crucial to the success of any organization. As anyone who has ever hired a candidate who turned out to be a bad fit knows, though, hiring the right candidate for the right job isn't an easy task. No matter how much effort goes into creating a smooth hiring process, problems can still crop up—and issues that seem insignificant on the surface are often the ones that cause the biggest problems. Therefore, when it comes to hiring the right candidates, knowing what to do isn't enough: it's also critical to know what *not* to do.

## Poor Job Descriptions

The dry and generic job descriptions of the past just don't cut it any more. Because today's talented candidates quickly lose interest in poorly crafted postings, hiring managers need to ensure that job descriptions are both comprehensive and engaging. With descriptive and up-to-date language (and no outdated job titles), a job description needs to clearly define exactly what the organization is looking for. Rather than resort to using bulleted lists of generic qualifications and duties, it should give candidates a sense of what the organization is about by describing the company's culture and goals and how a candidate would fit in if he or she decides to take the job.

## Failure to Recruit Internally

Hiring managers often don't think to look within, even though sometimes the perfect candidate for a job opening is already in the organization. Internal recruitment can enable a company to avoid expensive and time-consuming external searches. Additionally, because a current employee is already well acquainted with the organization's culture, business environment, processes, values, and mission, an internal recruit is likely to be up to speed faster (and even perform better) in his or her new role than an outside hire would. Internal recruitment has the added bonus of boosting employee morale

by motivating current staff to do their best work so that they, too, can be considered for new and exciting internal opportunities that arise.

## Too Much Dependence on the Interview

During the recruitment process, some hiring managers rely too heavily on interviews—a decision that can actually make them miss out on great candidates. Although an interview can be an effective screening tool, it can be shaped (often inaccurately) by both interviewer bias and some candidates' willingness to say nearly anything to get a job offer. Therefore, in addition to an interview, the recruitment process should also include exercises and tests that gauge candidates' abilities and skills.

## Lack of a Defined Timeframe

When the hiring process is either too fast or too slow, there's a great chance that a wrong candidate will be hired. In a rushed process, recruiters might take shortcuts or skip critical steps (such as background checks); on the other hand, foot dragging on the part of the company might drive candidates to look for job opportunities elsewhere. To help avoid these problems, organizations should create—and follow—a strict schedule for the entire recruitment process that states how much time to spend on reviewing applications, conducting follow-ups with

the applicants, and managing other steps of the hiring process.

## Poor Conduct by Interviewers

Although punctuality and professional comportment are expected of interviewees, interviewers don't always adhere to those standards themselves. There are plenty of "interview horror stories" out there about interviewers who show up extremely late for the interview, rush candidates through the process while giving them little time to answer or ask questions, answer phone calls and write e-mail while conducting interviews, discuss other candidates openly, or even mock the candidates sitting right in front of them. In this situation, a candidate might reasonably assume that if an interviewer displays such contempt for professional behavior, the organization as a whole probably doesn't hold professionalism in high regard. Because poor conduct by interviewers not only drives away good candidates but also damages a company's reputation, organizations should make sure that interviews are conducted as professionally as possible.

## Failure to Check References

In their zeal to find the perfect candidate for an open job position as quickly as possible, recruiters sometimes give references short shrift. But reference



checks are critical and should not be overlooked—both to ensure that the information presented by the candidate is accurate and to get a sense of a candidate’s skills and conduct. When speaking with candidate references, recruiters should focus on three areas:

- **Responsibilities.** Information about a candidate’s responsibilities in a previous position can help a recruiter assess his or her ability to handle the responsibilities of the open position.
- **Strengths.** A recruiter needs a sense of what a candidate brings to the table. Questions in this area should also consider any pay raises or promotions that the candidate received as a result of his or her strengths.
- **Weaknesses.** Although most references will rarely say anything directly negative, a recruiter can sometimes learn about a candidate’s weaknesses by paying close attention to how a reference speaks (e.g., hesitations, tone of voice) when asked about them.

### Hiring Underqualified Candidates

Some managers perceive confident and talented people as threats and therefore end up hiring less-qualified candidate. Consequently, they may end up with people who can’t do their jobs well—sometimes can’t do them at all. Smart managers,

however, appreciate the importance of having bright people in their teams, value the insight they bring to critical matters, and use the strengths of top talent to the advantage of the entire team.

### Rejecting “Overqualified” Candidates

When building candidate short lists, hiring managers often weed out applicants who have skills, education, or experience beyond what the open position requires and assume that they are “overqualified” for the job. But if those skills, education, or experience don’t make the candidate a great fit for the position, then he or she would actually be starting at a more or less similar level as any other applicant—so such “overqualifications” aren’t necessarily directly relevant. Rejecting those candidates out of hand not only limits the pool of good prospects for a particular position but could cause the company to miss out on someone whose skills could benefit the organization in other areas as well.

### Focusing Solely on Money

Some companies assume that offering slightly higher wages than their competitors is all they have to do to attract and retain top talent. Although salary is indeed one factor that draws candidates, today’s workers place a high (and sometimes *higher*) value on noneconomic considerations, such as meaning,

fulfilment, and purpose.

### Lack of Follow-up

One of the major frustrations interviewees express about the recruitment process is never hearing back from recruiters and hiring managers. At the very least, taking the time to inform candidates when they haven’t been selected is courteous. It also sends them a clear message that their time was valued—and perhaps leaves them feeling positive about the company and willing to consider future openings there or recommend it to their colleagues.

Because the recruitment process can be both costly and time consuming, companies need to do what they can to get it right. The particulars of every position are unique, of course, but by following some common-sense advice and avoiding poor decisions, an organization can help ensure that its recruitment process attracts the right candidates—and steers clear of the wrong ones. ■

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# THE FUTURE OF WORK

BY IRA S. WOLFE

That anguished sound echoing throughout offices, factories, warehouses, and other workplaces across the country is the collective cry of the millions of workers threatened by the likes of artificial intelligence, machine learning, drones, and even autonomous vehicles. Recent articles with headlines such as “Robots Are Coming for Jobs of as Many as 800 Million Worldwide” and “Workers at Risk as Robots Set to Replace 66 million Jobs, Warns OECD” deliver a dire forecast of imminent job loss. The near future, they say, will bring a robot apocalypse in which human workers become redundant.<sup>1,2</sup>

It is true that as new advanced technologies arise, some jobs will become extinct. But exactly how many jobs will be affected is not an easy number to pin down. Regardless of the number, humans won't

become obsolete with the advent of these robot workers. Rather, the more likely scenario is that robots will reinvent—not replace—most human jobs.

This reinvention creates an opportunity for workers to adopt new skills. But to take advantage of this opportunity, both employees and organizations need to embrace a culture of learning and accept the reality that they must work with emerging technology, not against it.

Although very few jobs can be fully automated, “in about 60% of occupations, at least one-third of the constituent activities could be automated.”<sup>3</sup> This means that as robots and other advanced technologies grow in use, the human skills needed to do almost any job will become different and more complex. Unfortunately, a large segment of our current workforce is ill-prepared for this shift, and if current trends hold only 43 million American workers will be qualified to fill the estimated 123 million high-skill jobs available in 2020.<sup>4</sup>

Here's the problem in a nutshell: the job opportunities that are available today are 21st-century jobs, but the way most people perform these jobs is still stuck in the previous century. Technological and workplace innovations are rendering skills obsolete (or at least outdated) at an ever-quickening pace. The market is struggling to keep up with these changes, and the shortage of skilled workers (the so-called skills gap that gets so much press these days) is showing no signs of improving any time soon.

So what are companies and workers to do as new technologies and robots proliferate in the workforce and employees start to lack the necessary skills to adapt? In order to facilitate a cultural shift around how their companies' employees view the “rise of the machines” and



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learn the necessary skills to work with them, HR and management should start by asking (and answering) the following questions:

- What human skills will be required to manage emerging technologies?
- What jobs in the organization are likely to be fully automated in the next five years?
- What tasks will automation be unable to perform better than humans?
- Which workers will be most severely affected by automation?
- How many current employees have the ability to fill the growing skills gap quickly?
- What new skills will human workers need to acquire in order to remain valuable members of the changing workforce?

Organizations now stand at the intersection of human and machine. What was fiction in the 1950s and 1960s is now reality. At the heart of this phenomena emerges what Deloitte calls the “no-collar workforce” in which humans “become liberated by mechanical ‘coworkers’ that not only automate entire processes but augment human workers as they perform higher-level tasks.”<sup>3</sup> Instead of a “robots versus humans” scenario, the future workplace is likely to be based on a “collaborative robots with augmented humans” scenario. Making this shift, however, will require addressing the formidable task of redesigning jobs and reimagining how work gets done.

Instead of technology helping humans become more productive, future work will be completed through the synergy and symbiosis of humans and robots working collaboratively. Each group will contribute specialized skills and abilities. As robot workers help humans become more productive, humans will help robots function at peak performance. And as technology gets smarter “on the fly,” human workers will need to get smarter, too.

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## Realistic Job Previews

BY SHARLYN LAUBY

“Tell me one of your weaknesses.”

No candidates want to answer that classic interview question with an actual weakness, so they often come up with things that can also be considered strengths, such as “I work too much” or “I have perfectionist tendencies.” Companies, too, are reluctant to show off their weaknesses during the interview process. But today’s candidates want realistic previews of both the organizations and the jobs for which they’re applying. Just as companies want to learn the strengths and weaknesses of candidates, candidates want to know the good, the bad, and the ugly of companies and positions.

A realistic job preview is an opportunity in the recruiting process to give candidates a sense of what it’s like to work at the company. It is designed not only for the company to see how candidates handle certain situations but for candidates to understand what working conditions are like at the organization to which they’re applying. Because it’s so useful for all parties involved, the realistic job preview is rapidly becoming a standard part of the application process.

One long-used realistic job preview activity is the in-tray exercise, a paper-based assessment scenario in which a candidate has to deal with numerous tasks related to a typical business day. (A newer, computer-based version of the

activity is called the inbox exercise or sometimes the e-tray exercise.) Technological advancements are now enabling companies to innovate new ways to provide realistic job previews to candidates, such as virtual tours of the office and videos of internal meetings; testimonials from current employees are another option that’s growing in popularity. In addition to distribution via “old school” methods such as website postings and e-mail, this information can be pushed to candidates via newer social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Accustomed to doing extensive research before making a purchase, today’s consumers are now increasing their research on job-related matters as well. (After all, someone who spends five hours comparing the features of two phone models will probably spend more than a few minutes checking out his or her possible future place of employment.) In response to this shift, smart companies are looking for new ways to give candidates an understanding of the employment experience—without sugarcoating any of the negatives—before they even decide to apply. Candidates who are fully informed about a company’s warts and still decide to embrace the organization are more likely to become engaged employees there. ■

Sharlyn Lauby is the author of *HR Bartender* ([www.hrbartender.com](http://www.hrbartender.com)), a friendly place to discuss workplace issues. When not tending bar, she is president of ITM Group Inc., which specializes in training solutions to help clients retain and engage talent. She can be contacted on Twitter at @HRBartender.

THE UGLY



# WHAT CAN THE BUSINESS WORLD DO TO SUPPORT THE SANDWICH GENERATION?

BY STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES INC.

## QUESTION:

With so much focus lately on Millennials, what can employers do to support another group of employees, the Sandwich Generation?

## ANSWER:

Employees in the Sandwich Generation, who are caring not only for their children but also for their own aging parents, often struggle to balance all of this responsibility. According to the Northeast Business Group on Healthcare, these caregivers miss an average of six days of work each year due to caregiving responsibilities, are less productive because of personal distractions, and are in poorer health than non-caregiving colleagues.

By providing the following benefits, employers can give employees from the Sandwich Generation the support they need to succeed in and out of the office:

- **Flexible work schedule:** This enables employees with personal obligations during the typical 9-to-5 workday to accomplish everything they need without having to take off to catch up.
- **Child care benefits:** Employers can alleviate the financial burden of child care by subsidizing care options, including backup care.

- **Senior care benefits:** In addition to helping employees find senior care options employers can also provide tips and guidance to give caregivers confidence to navigate their new roles.
- **Financial planning assistance:** As if managing personal finances wasn't already hard enough, this generation may also be making mortgage payments, helping pay college tuition, and managing their parents' estate. Access to financial planning allows employees to work caregiving-related costs into their financial plans and better prepare for the future.
- **Household help:** Employers can ease the burden of simple household tasks by providing meal preparation, housecleaning, and laundry services.
- **Access to elder care experts:** Senior care needs often arise suddenly, so providing information (through webinars, on-site seminars or even just contact information for local experts) can be extremely helpful to employees.

It's in employers' best interest to provide the tools employees need to manage their personal lives so they can do well and excel at work. Employers who offer these types of benefits show that they care about their Sandwich Generation employees. ■

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Strategic Human Resources Inc., is a national full-service HR management firm based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Its president and founder, Robin Throckmorton, can be reached at [Robin@strategichrinc.com](mailto:Robin@strategichrinc.com).

# WHY ARE WE SENDING OUR KIDS TO COLLEGE?

BY MIKE MCKERNS

**IN MARCH 2018, THERE WERE 6.6 MILLION JOB OPENINGS** and 6.6 million people looking for jobs.<sup>1</sup> In other words, at the same time companies were struggling to fill positions, there was a job available for each person who wanted one. Those open positions went unfilled for several reasons, but one in particular stands out: thanks in large part to educational trends and expectations, there is a major disconnect between the skills that employers need and the skills that job seekers have.

All parents want “something better” for their kids, and during the postwar years getting a college degree became a big part of that. For the past few generations, people have been pushing their kids to continue their educations after high school. Business, liberal arts, basket weaving—the field of study hasn’t really mattered as long as it leads to a degree.

That strategy worked for several decades: college became financially accessible to a significant part of the population, and a college degree (in pretty much any field) became an entry ticket to a good career. But over the past 15 years, the job market has changed dramatically. At the same time, college costs have skyrocketed to the point that Americans now “struggle with a collective \$1.4 trillion in student loan debt.”<sup>2</sup>

If higher education isn’t adequately preparing our kids to join the workforce but is saddling them with tremendous debt that they can’t address (because they can’t get good jobs), then why are we still pushing our kids to go to college?

I think it’s because the rise in accessibility of a college education has led to increased stigmatization of manual and skilled labor. Jobs that require working with our hands are now seen as “dirty,” low-paying, and low-status. Our society treats trade school as the consolation prize for kids who aren’t “cut out for college.”

Today you’d be hard pressed to find an unemployed (or even *underemployed*) electrician, plumber, or HVAC technician. Clearly there’s a high demand for people with good manual skills! But the solution to the staffing problem involves much more than just encouraging more kids to focus on building the specific skills that employers are looking for.

We need to address the problem more broadly by working to change society’s perceptions of certain careers and industries. (For example, most people would agree that “network support specialist” doesn’t have a very “sexy” ring to it.) We also need to work on smashing stereotypes about which types of jobs are supposedly “more suitable” for women or for men. And we need to do this work not just in the skilled trades but in technology-related fields too, so we can avoid having the huge number of unfilled tech jobs that are predicted for the near future.

If, like previous generations, we want our kids to have “something better” than what we have, then perhaps it’s time to rethink how we help them achieve that. There’s no guarantee that the “traditional” route of going to college will lead to good careers (or the ability to pay off the massive debt getting that degree will likely entail). So maybe we should start by helping them understand other pathways to other options—such as vocational schools and tradeskill training—that will enable them to make positive contributions to society. ■

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## WHEN IT’S TOO HOT TO COOK—DON’T!

When the summer swelter has fully arrived and no one wants to go anywhere near a hot stove or a flaming grill, take a page from the Spaniards and make some gazpacho! This delicious cold soup is incredibly refreshing on a hot day, and it’s a cinch to make: all you need is a knife and a blender (or a mortar and pestle, if you want to go old school!).

### Nutrition Facts

Amount per Serving

**Calories:** 127cal

**Fat:** 10.5g

**Dietary fiber:** 2g

**Sugars:** 1.5g

**Protein:** 2g

### GAZPACHO

**YIELD:** 4 servings

**TIME:** 15 minutes

#### WHAT YOU’LL NEED:

- 2 lbs fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 1 large cucumber, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 Tb olive oil
- 2 Tb red wine vinegar
- salt and pepper to taste

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Put everything but the salt and pepper into a blender.
2. Puree until smooth, then salt and pepper to taste.

**NOTE:** Perfectly ripe tomatoes should provide all the juice you need for this. But if your soup seems a bit thick after you puree it, feel free to add a little bottled or canned tomato juice to get it to the consistency you want. ■



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Every seat in an organization matters. By utilizing our CORE assessment to reveal the true, unchanging nature of every individual, we can ensure that employees are placed in a position where they will naturally perform at their highest level. We seek to individualize our services to meet the needs of both candidates and clients. We stay on top of trends and anticipate demand, creating solutions in a proactive, not reactive way. These strategies allow us to bring a revolutionary approach to Leadership Development, Permanent Recruitment and Staffing.

## CORE VALUES

Teamwork • Customer Focus • Innovation • Love What You Do





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