THE RESOURCE

VOL. VIII, ISSUE I

HR INSIGHTS Magazine

from the eyes of industry leaders

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF RECRUITING

As we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our Company in 2019, I feel compelled to reflect back on the incredible journey that brings us to this milestone. - *Kathy Hartung*

THE RESOURCE

So, as you read in the last issue, the opportunity on the horizon for us - after walking away form one of our biggest customers - was in new states! Well...let's just say it might as well have been another country, because nothing was even remotely similar to what we knew in NC. It pushed us out of our comfort zone and forced us to look at things differently to create something new, allowing employees new opportunities to grow. We invested in new software, created an extensive training program, and outlined new solutions to offer during slow periods. We also implemented a new expansion plan post-recession.

In 2011 we embarked on a rebranding campaign, which led us to several marketing agencies, a major Corporate Office change in 2013, and a name change in 2014 - from *Temporary Resources* to *The Resource*!

We incorporated the CORE Assessment and CORE Hiring System into our brand in 2016, along with Coaching & Leadership Development. In 2017 we added a new Hiring Solution option to significantly increase the candidate pool for our customers' needs. 2017 was another year for expansion, into 3 new markets: Salisbury, Lexington and Yadkinville!

The current labor market is the biggest challenge I can recall in my 35 years. We're tackling this challenge with new and innovative ways to solve our clients' needs, with the right people for their jobs. We enjoy coaching leaders and teams to grow and develop to be their best. We thrive in helping companies optimize their current workforce for growth and improved performance. I think the most exciting realization for me, 35 years into my career, is the satisfaction that the CORE Assessment - and understanding how/why I'm hardwired to operate - has allowed me to grow and develop into my best self. This allows me to make the contributions I was created to make, and to lift others all along the journey!

Stay tuned: As we celebrate our company's 40th Anniversary in 2019, I will continue to share more about our company's history, our new and innovative solutions, and our future beyond 2019!

> **"Are you operating as your BEST SELF? How can we help you be your BEST SELF? Call me. In 10 minutes after taking the CORE, I can begin to help you understand how..."**

Best Regards,

Kathy Hartung

Kathy Hartung, CEO

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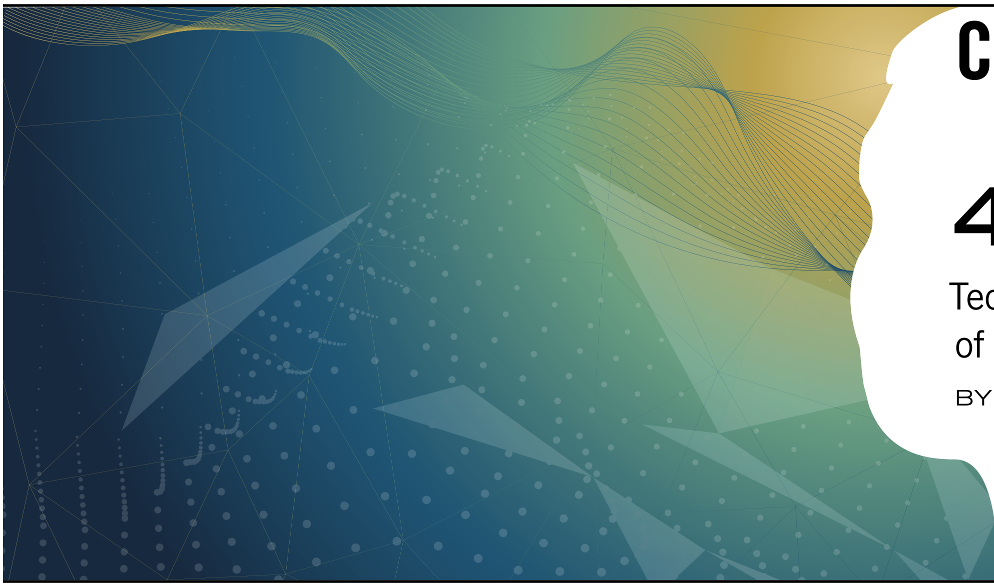
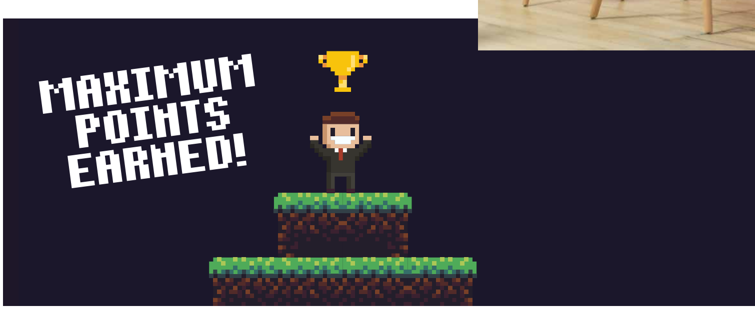


COVER STORY



HR INSIGHTS

from the eyes of industry leaders

BY TROY TEAGUE

Many industries undergo transformations every few years, and talent acquisition is no exception. Rapid change followed the arrival of applicant-tracking systems in the late 1990s, and today it's AI-enabled tools that are set to fundamentally reengineer how hiring is done. The adoption of those new tools is being driven in large part by candidates' constantly shifting expectations. (In the 1990s, for example, companies didn't need career sites but in the 2000s they did—and by 2012 companies that didn't have mobile-optimized sites were in trouble.) Therefore, organizations that want to provide consistently great candidate experiences must adopt a forward-looking mindset.

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Because artificial intelligence is poised to lead the way in shaping how companies treat their candidates, it's critical for hiring managers to develop baseline understandings of those technologies. Knowing what can be possible with emerging technologies (even when that functionality isn't yet available on the market) can enable companies to develop strategies for using them—and be ready to jump on those tools when they finally hit the market. Here are three areas that organizations should keep an eye on as they think about adopting and implementing new technologies.

USING AI AS A CANDIDATE GUIDE

Now that candidates are effectively consumers, organizations must provide them with tools to serve their needs. Chatbots that fulfill the human need for immediate answers, for example, can connect candidates to the right opportunities. This type of AI application can do more than just respond to key phrases. It can give a candidate direct access to information and personalized directions (based on information in the candidate's resume or from a conversation he or she has with the bot) to navigate what is often an indecipherable list of job titles and find an answer to the question "Where do I fit in this organization?" A company that employs this technology also benefits: AI provides a better way for it to engage with the increasing volume of interested applicants. (This example describes just one possible early, first-wave application of technology to reengineer candidate engagements. It probably won't be long before people start their job searches from their couches by saying "Hey, Alexa.")

USING TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE CONVENIENCE (FOR EVERYONE)

Once a company has connected with a candidate, the next step is to evaluate his or her abilities. In today's job market, most candidates are currently employed, which can make it very difficult to schedule assessments and interviews. Organizations can provide a better candidate experience—and increase hiring efficiency—by letting candidates complete parts of the hiring process on their own terms.

Consider the example of a healthcare IT company that used to screen every engineering candidate via an in-person interview in which the engineering team would give the candidate a problem and observe how he or she solved it on a whiteboard. Although this type of interview is a great way to see how a candidate processes data, it does require complicated scheduling and costs associated with bringing every reasonably qualified candidate onsite.

New technologies can replicate this screening step in a way that gives candidates the same interview coding experience on their own terms. For example, qualified candidates can complete several coding challenges offsite and record videos to explain their thought processes and approaches to solving each one. Because this entire process is asynchronous, the organization can consider more candidates and accelerate its recruitment of developers, as well as decrease interview expenses (by flying in only the top candidates for in-person interviews) and free up hundreds of hours for its engineering team.

USING AI TO SCREEN AND DRIVE CANDIDATE FLOW

With the rise of mobile applications, cloud storage of resumes, and easy access to information about employers, candidates have turned into consumers. Because it's easier than ever for someone to apply for a job on a whim, many companies have seen an increase in applications. As a result, recruiters are now spending the majority of their time reviewing incoming applications to find the best ones rather than actually placing candidates in new positions in which they will succeed. New AI capabilities are being developed to learn the measure for success and sift through applications and sourcing channels in order to connect recruiters only with the best candidates, thus ensuring that recruiters spend their time building relationships instead of wading through applications.

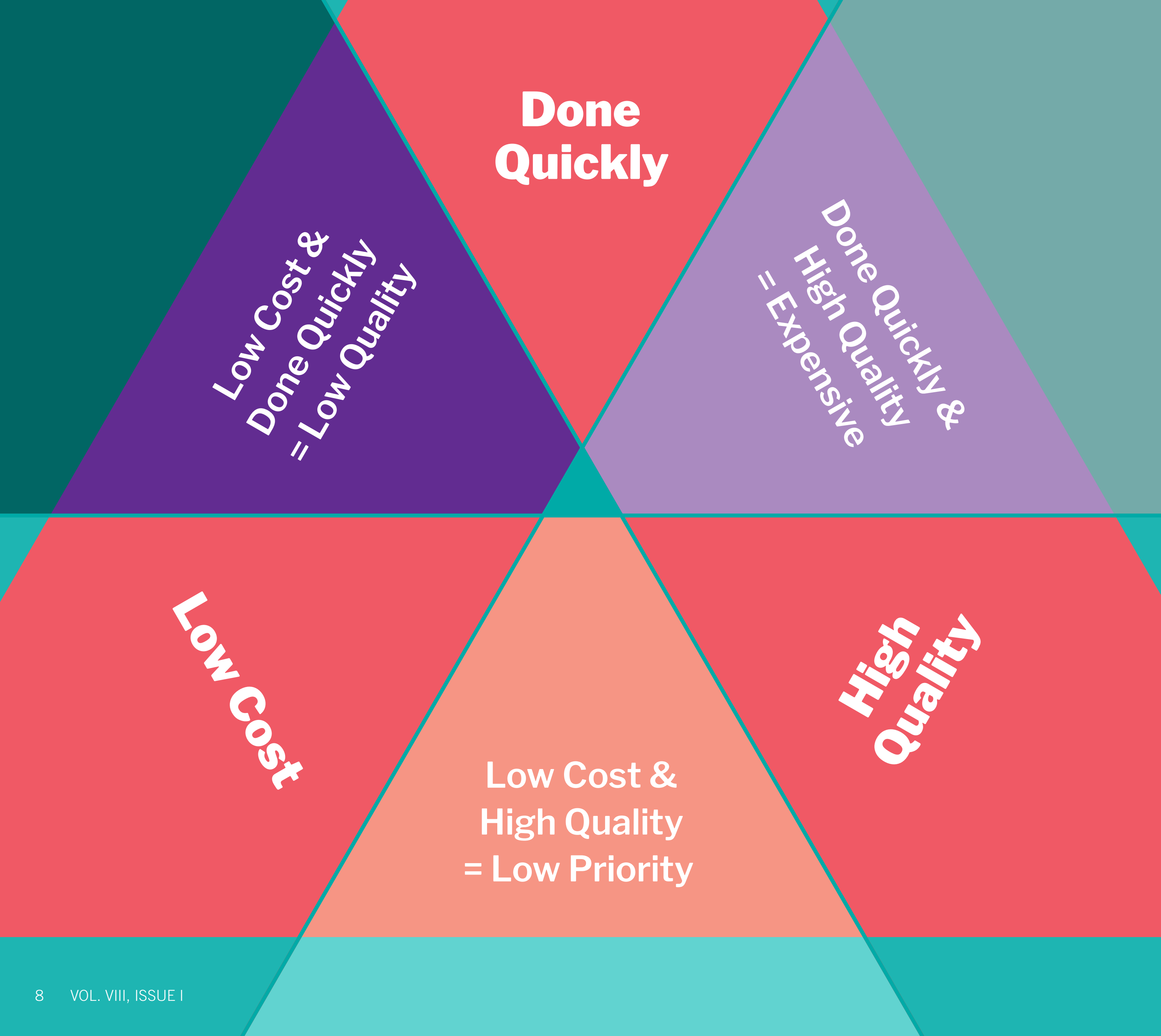
As long as companies need employees, recruiting will continue to be a critical area for every organization. With new technologies making HR functions more efficient and easier each day, it's clear that companies that want to improve their hiring processes will need to understand, anticipate, and embrace those new solutions. ■

As the director of recruiting for Cerner (www.cerner.com), Troy Teague focuses on talent acquisition for the USA, Europe, and India by developing strategies to identify and attract the best talent for Cerner's human capital needs. He ensures that Cerner has the right talent to execute for its clients and leads in the areas of recruitment, recruitment systems, reporting, recruitment marketing, veteran initiatives, and diversity outreach. He can be reached at troy.teague@cerner.com.

This article was originally published on the HireVue blog (hirevue.com/blog).

RECRUITMENT PRINCIPLES FOR EVERY HIRING SITUATION

BY THAD PRICE



On the most fundamental level, all effective recruiting meets key requirements in three areas: time (fast), cost (low), and quality (high). In most cases, two of the three usually come easily, but the third can be a real challenge for talent acquisition and recruiting teams to achieve. In order to compete in today's near–zero-unemployment talent market, recruiters must move quickly: candidates have more choices now than ever before, and sacrificing time is no longer an option. On a similar note, a recruiter who holds out for cost or quality may end up settling for a candidate who has been on the job market for some time and may not be the employee that the recruiter could have chosen if he or she had moved faster. In fact, dragging out hiring decisions doesn't actually improve hiring quality—it reduces it.

STREAMLINE AND PRIORITIZE RECRUITING WITH DATA

Data is at the heart of many of the decisions recruiters make, and it's also the key to improving metrics in time, cost, and quality. It's nearly impossible to separate time from quality and from cost, because when it comes to analytics the crossover effect is inherent in those three key areas. In order to hit all three components of the recruiting triad effectively, recruiters need to use metrics and predictive analytics to make the best-informed decisions about what to automate, where to spend time on high-touch tasks, how to target and reach candidates more quickly, and how to manage costs.

Using analytics beginning at the sourcing stage can help recruiters quickly identify top prospects for their hiring funnels. This is one function they can streamline via automation. Assessment programs and hiring algorithms allow recruiters to quantify the skills they've identified in top talent. At the same time, these tools also enable them to identify any candidate who is not a good cultural fit or who poses a turnover risk.

USE RECRUITING METRICS AND ANALYTICS TO DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE RESULTS

Applications of these tools could include strategies such as mining social media platforms, identifying the top job search aggregators with the best candidates, using specialized platforms to reach unique candidate audiences and optimize job advertising investment, and knowing which job titles appeal the most to potential employees. Streamlining sourcing can yield positive returns in the form of better, more efficient hires that will improve quality and time to hire—and ultimately save the organization money.

Because targeting is the key to reaching top-level candidates quickly, a hiring campaign budget should include support for a performance-based advertising model that provides the tools needed for precise targeting of possible candidates. For example, this model could consider what top candidates might search for not just when considering a job change but also when exploring career development. A targeted campaign based on keywords in those areas instantly broadens a job ad's reach not just to active job seekers but to passive candidates as well.

Because candidate funnels are built on strategy, efficient advertising helps recruiters drive qualified and highly targeted traffic to job postings more effectively than traditional job postings on job boards. Performance-based advertising differs from a standard cost-per-click ad in one significant way: unlike traditional digital advertising, job ads have an end date. Once a position is filled, it should and can be immediately pulled from an ad buy. The biggest benefit to performance-based advertising is that recruiters can set rules that are directly related to their ad budgets—to reach a certain audience, for example, or to target a specific conversion rate.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SEO AND GOOGLE'S ALGORITHM

Google for Jobs is pulling traffic from traditional job boards at a level never before seen in the history of online job sites. Recruiters can take advantage of Google's algorithm, which rewards certain features of job postings (such as salary ranges and keyword matching), to optimize their ads without putting the budget into cost-per-click ad buys.

All companies want to move faster, spend less, and find better candidates. Performance-based models are changing organizations' approaches to all three recruiting fundamentals. By using metrics combined with the right tools and strategy, recruiters can monitor their costs and focus on targeted quality candidates who meet specific criteria—and therefore achieve their hiring goals faster, less expensively, and more effectively than they could with traditional models. ■

Thad Price is the chief executive officer at Talroo (www.talroo.com), where he provides leadership, strategy, and guidance to all departments to ensure the company is moving in the right direction with the right talent. With more than 15 years of experience in online recruitment and the job search vertical, Price uses his cross-functional experience to turn client feedback into innovative products that help companies hire better.

Graphic adapted from original; source: Talroo

HOW TO ADDRESS *Implicit Bias* IN THE WORKPLACE

BY CHRISTY PHANTHAVONG AND PATRICK DEPOY

Over the past half-century, employers have made great strides in protecting employees and applicants from conscious bias on the basis of race, gender, age, and other protected characteristics. But what about unconscious—or "implicit"—bias, which "refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner"?[1] *Everyone* has implicit biases that are formed from his or her experiences over time.

Implicit biases may lead decision makers to unconsciously form opinions—and make employment decisions—about applicants and employees that are based on protected characteristics (such as race, gender, and age) and that negatively affect those individuals. For example, in one study readers were asked to review the same research paper, but some of them were told it was written by an African American student and others were told it was written by a Caucasian student. Not only did the reviewers score the "African American" student's work an average of nearly one full point lower (on a five-point scale) than the work by the "Caucasian" student, but they also offered far more negative qualitative comments on the work by the former (e.g., "average at best") than on the work by the latter (e.g., "has potential").[2]

Because implicit biases operate at a subconscious level, they may run counter to what someone consciously believes and thus make it difficult for that person to realize that they have shaped his or her decisions. Implicit biases *can* be unlearned, however. There are a number of actions that employers and decision makers can take to change or reduce the impact of implicit bias in the workplace.

Increase awareness. Workplace training should include discussion about implicit bias and strategies for counteracting it. Ask employees to take implicit bias tests to help them identify their own unconscious biases and learn how to be on guard for situations in which those biases could affect their decisions.[3]

Build networks. Encourage decision makers to look beyond their traditional avenues of obtaining referrals and identifying potential employees.

Increase exposure. Ask employees to actively take steps to learn about groups of people who are different from them and to find and discuss areas of commonality (family, shared hobbies and interests, etc.) with those groups.

Solicit input. Encourage employees to confront their own assumptions about people; to seek out and listen to feedback from others when evaluating candidates (whether for hire or for promotion); and to consider others' viewpoints, opinions, and experiences. Ensure that key decisions include the input of multiple individuals, preferably with varying backgrounds.

Don't rush. When selection decisions must be made, allow adequate time for information gathering. Avoid "gut reactions" and hasty decisions that may lead to biased decision making. Fully evaluate each candidate and be sure that decisions are made intentionally.

Strive for alignment and thoughtfulness. Ensure that decision makers agree on the key criteria for the decision at hand and that the criteria are as objective as possible; rather than relying on "what's always been done" or assumptions about what's "appropriate" or "necessary" for the role, choose the criteria thoughtfully, with a focus on skills and abilities (rather than mannerisms and style). Consider writing out the criteria ahead of time to reduce the likelihood that they'll be changed during the decision-making process in order to justify a particular candidate selection.

Ask questions. Encourage employees to question generalized statements about candidates and employees (such as "she is well liked" or "he is not a good fit") and to list both positive and negative aspects of each candidate under consideration. Push decision makers to challenge stereotypical categorizations or descriptions about people. (For example, if a female colleague is described as "bossy" or "aggressive," question what specific conduct led to that description and consider whether a male colleague would be described in the same way based on the same conduct.)

Avoid interruptions. Discourage employees from interrupting speakers during meetings. (And when interruptions do happen, actively "interrupt the interrupters" to ensure that voices are heard.)

Be fair in assignments and acknowledgments. Assign work and projects without making assumptions about employees' abilities (e.g., that an employee with several children cannot complete a time-sensitive, labor-intensive project); also assign "office housework" (e.g., arranging meetings, taking notes during meetings) and other administrative tasks fairly. Identify and acknowledge contributions and successes by all employees.

Implicit bias can lead to many problems in the workplace, and because of its hidden nature it can be difficult to detect and eradicate. Increasing awareness is the first step toward addressing the problem. When leaders acknowledge the existence of implicit bias and and actively work to tackle it, real change can occur. ■

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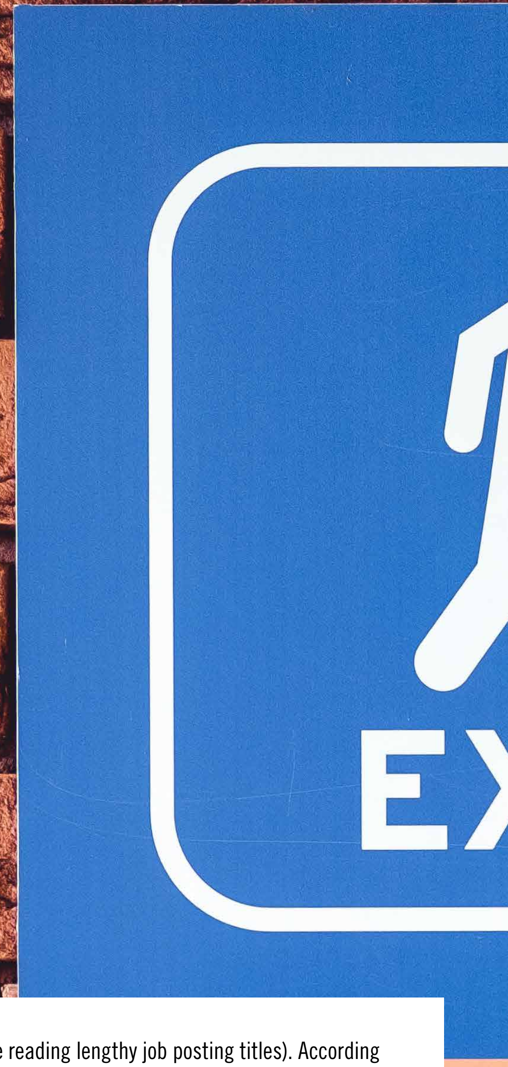
1. The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. 2015. "Understanding Implicit Bias." The Ohio State University website, kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/.
2. Arin N. Reeves. 2014. "Written in Black and White: Exploring Confirmation Bias in Racialized Perceptions of Writing Skills." Nextions website, nextions.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/written-in-black-and-white-yellow-paper-series.pdf.
3. One readily available version is the IAT test from Project Implicit at Harvard University, available at implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html.



6 JOB DESCRIPTION FAILS

BY STIJN DE GROEF

When struggling to retain employees, most HR professionals or talent managers start analyzing their company cultures, mentorship programs, onboarding efforts, and the like. But it often doesn't occur to most of them that employee turnover issues could start long before team members even step foot inside the office as candidates. In their quest to address retention issues, they frequently neglect to consider the job description.

As the first point of contact with candidates, the job posting serve as the organization's gatekeeper. Top-notch job descriptions attract the right candidates who can thrive at the company. Bringing such strong candidates on board increases employee engagement, reduces turnover, and optimizes productivity in the long run.

Poor job descriptions, on the other hand, can hook candidates who are unqualified or become toxic team members who will eventually leave the company (either voluntarily or involuntarily). What qualifies as a poor job posting? A job description that exhibits any of the following red flags could be unintentionally sabotaging an organization's efforts to recruit and retain incredible employees.

JOB DESCRIPTION FAIL #1: BUTTERED-UP LANGUAGE

When writing job descriptions, managers often use complicated language to sound more professional or to "inflate" the position in order to better appeal to candidates. But this "bait and switch" tactic can breed resentment among employees, which in turn creates a toxic office culture and leads to higher turnover.

Managers should instead stick with simple language that accurately describes the position. This doesn't mean that the job description should read like it was written by a surfer or that managers should go out of their way to make a position sound less exciting than it really is. They simply need to avoid unnecessarily complex language and communicate their companies' recruitment goals as clearly and effectively as possible.

For example:

> Under the general direction of the department's IT supervisor, the incumbent will be a full-stack web developer responsible for creating attractive and usable web-based interfaces for internal and world-facing tools and sites. Candidates should be comfortable communicating with sales people to develop working code on new sales software.

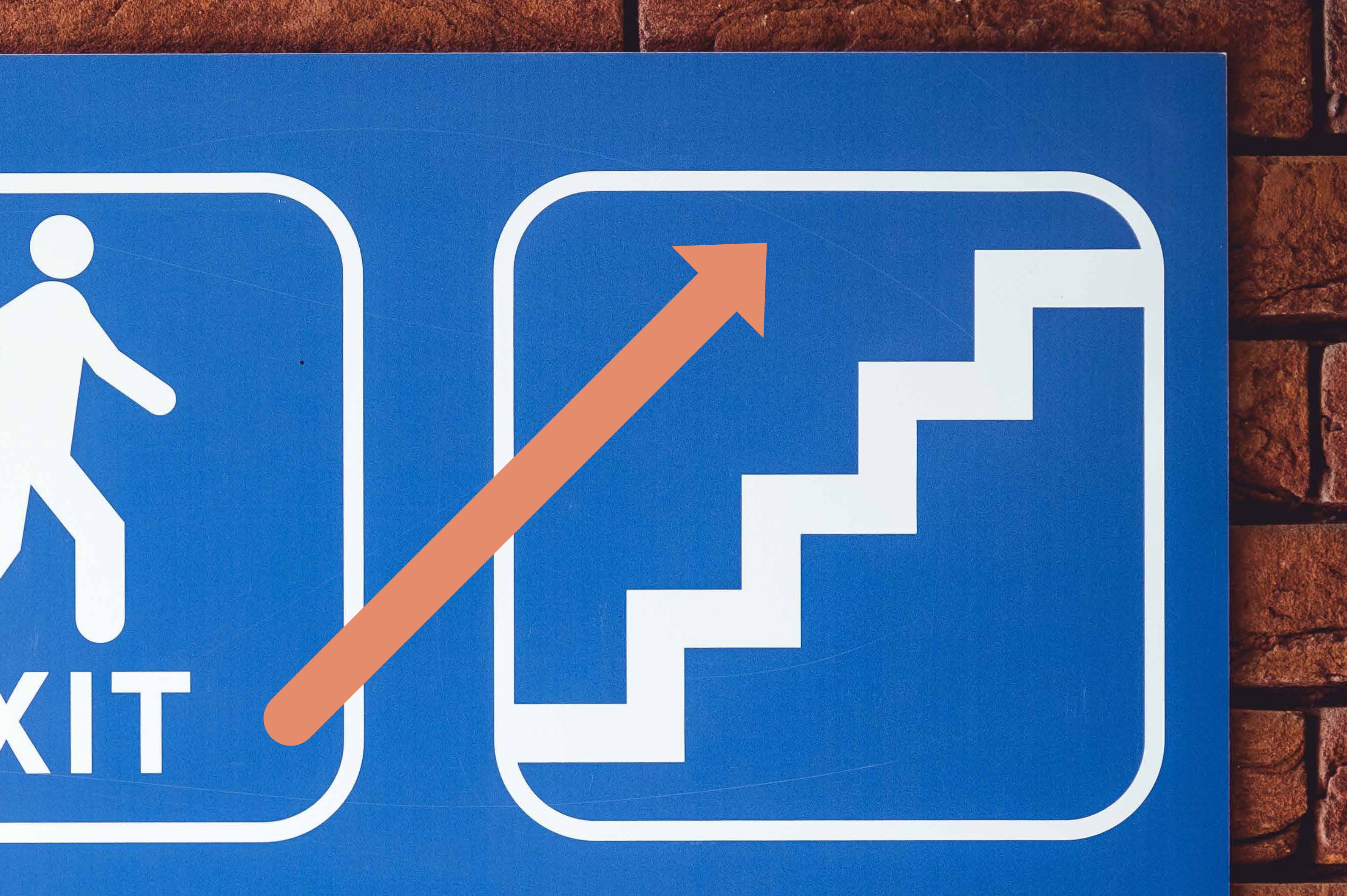
This job description is simply, to the point, and effective.

JOB DESCRIPTION FAIL #2: INCLUDING EVERYTHING IN THE JOB TITLE

Trying to attract highly qualified job seekers by including too much title bling can have the opposite effect by deterring potential candidates who don't understand insider lingo (or who won't spend the time reading lengthy job posting titles). According to the engineer who runs the job search engines at Glassdoor, long job titles are not SEO-friendly and tend to perform poorly in comparison to shorter, more succinct job titles that match well with common search terms.[1] In order words, companies should avoid extremely long job titles such as "Ninja Level Full Stack Developer Angular/JS/Python/ETC (Remote: Telecommute from Anywhere)" when a simple "Web Developer" will do just fine.

JOB DESCRIPTION FAIL #3: SHODDY WRITING AND PRESENTATION

Companies that want to sound like legitimate organizations and appeal to top-notch candidates should use proper grammar and punctuation. That seems like a no-brainer, but it is stunning how many organizations don't subject their job descriptions to proper editing before posting them. Job descriptions with misspelled words or six question marks at the end of each sentence wind up looking more like e-mail spam than legitimate job descriptions. Incorrect grammar, sloppy formatting, and bad syntax will make job seekers run away faster than a company can say, "Apply here."



JOB DESCRIPTION FAIL #4: TRYING TO FIND A PERFECT MATCH

There's a reason that recruiting professionals call the perfect candidate a "purple squirrel": it's very unlikely that they will ever find one. Not only is the search for a perfect candidate futile, but having unrealistically high expectations can actually prevent recruiters from seeing a great employee who may not be 100% what they're looking for but who could become one of a company's most loyal and capable employees.

To avoid intimidating candidates with unrealistic experience requirements, recruiters need to differentiate between what they want and what they need before they start writing up job descriptions. For example, requiring expert-level experience for a job that could probably be done by a middle manager with additional on-the-job-training likely won't yield a viable candidate when trying to source a large candidate pool. There's no need to have lower standards. It's simply a matter of considering whether a job posting might needlessly rule out good applicants—and then adjusting its content and language (perhaps with inspiration from job spec templates already tailored for different job profiles and industries) to indicate an openness to promising candidates, not just perfect ones.

JOB DESCRIPTION FAIL #5: NEGATIVE TALK

Negative language in a job description—in particular, detail about what candidates can and can't do before they're even hired—can make candidates feel as though they're being lectured and decide to pass on a job posting. Be wary of negative words (such as "don't," "shouldn't," "unable," and "never") and instead use positive words (such as "can," "succeed," and "accomplish"). Switch out absolutes for open-ended, inviting language aimed at developing a relationship between the candidate and the company.

Job descriptions should definitely avoid using racist, sexist, elitist, or otherwise discriminatory language. Offensive language (whether intentional or unintentional) can not only be extremely harmful to the organization's reputation, but may also be illegal, depending on local laws. Aim for neutral, professional language that doesn't color the message with any biases about gender, sex, race or politics.

JOB DESCRIPTION FAIL #6: WALLS OF TEXT

Most people who read an article or book filled with giant, unbroken paragraphs soon find their eyes glazing over as they struggle to find the important information in a wall of text. The same goes for job seekers: they want to get the key data quickly and easily! Job descriptions should get right to the point and spell out details such as the qualifications candidates should have, the pay and employee benefits, and how to apply for the position. To avoid making applicants work unnecessarily or boring them to tears, keep paragraphs short and succinct to ensure that readers get to the end. In the age of tweets, most people probably prefer to read a paragraph's worth of information in just one sentence.

As the old saying goes, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." That rings especially true in recruiting, where a job description has the power to attract—or repel—candidates. By paying closer attention to all that a job posting conveys, organizations can improve their chances of catching the eye of top talent. ■

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1. Guest contributor. n.d. "How to Make Your Job Descriptions More SEO-friendly." CareerPlug website, www.careerplug.com/make-job-descriptions-seo-friendly/.

Gamification in Business: 5 Success Stories

BY CHARLES COY

In 2011 a group of online gamers collectively solved a problem in three short weeks that had puzzled scientists for decades: they found the structure of an enzyme that helps AIDS-like viruses reproduce. This discovery has become a go-to example that illustrates the benefits of gamification, a trend in which game mechanics are applied to nongame situations to encourage users to behave in a certain, desired way.

In the HR community, companies are increasingly implementing gamification to drive higher employee engagement, boost productivity, and encourage healthy habits, among other outcomes. Tapping into people's innate love of playing games encourages employees to solve problems while generating measurable results for the organization. Five companies, in particular, have successfully implemented creative gamification programs

CISCO EMPLOYEES PLAY THEIR WAY TO BECOMING SOCIAL MEDIA MASTERS

CHALLENGE: Cisco had invested in a global social media training program for its employees and contractors to build and leverage their social media skillsets. But with over 46 courses in the program, it was overwhelming for employees to figure out where to start.

GAMIFIED SOLUTION: *Cisco introduced three levels of certification for the program (specialist, strategist, and master), as well as four subcertification levels for HR, external communications, sales, and internal partner teams. It also mixed in team challenges to incorporate a healthy dose of competition and collaboration into earning social media certifications.*

RESULTS: More than 650 of the company's employees have received one of the social media certifications. Collectively they have taken over 13,000 courses.

DELOITTE MADE LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR SENIOR EXECS "ADDICTIVE"

CHALLENGE: Deloitte had built a leadership training curriculum for senior executives but had trouble encouraging executives to start and complete the program.

GAMIFIED SOLUTION: *Deloitte turned to Badgeville (a tech company that specializes in gamifying websites and platforms) to introduce elements such as badges, leaderboards, and status symbols that measured how many executives were participating in and completing courses.*

RESULTS: Deloitte saw a huge drop in the average time to complete the training curriculum, and a big increase in the number of users who return to the site daily.

ENGINE YARD SENDS EMPLOYEES ON MISSIONS TO GROW ITS KNOWLEDGE BASE

CHALLENGE: Cloud application management platform Engine Yard had invested in a Zendesk knowledge base to encourage self-service and community troubleshooting, but employees and customers weren't engaging with the knowledge base as fast as hoped.

GAMIFIED SOLUTION: *Engine Yard implemented into its platform Badgeville's game mechanics that rewarded contributors with achievements and introduced missions that users could complete for additional recognition after completing customer surveys or reporting bugs.*

RESULTS: The company saw a 40 percent improvement in customer support response time.[1]

100% OF GOOGLERS SUBMIT TRAVEL EXPENSES THANKS TO GAMIFICATION

CHALLENGE: Like many companies, Google needed more of its employees to submit their travel expense information in a timely manner and on a regular schedule.

GAMIFIED SOLUTION: *Google employees receive a travel allowance for each work trip. Google gamified the expense process by letting employees who didn't spend their entire allowances choose what happened to the remaining money. (They could receive it in their next paycheck, for example, or save it toward a future trip or donate it to a charity of their choice.)*

RESULTS: Within six months of the program launch, Google had 100 percent compliance on travel expense reporting.

MICROSOFT STAFFERS AROUND THE WORLD WEIGH IN ON LANGUAGE LOCALIZATION

CHALLENGE: Microsoft has myriad language localization needs for its many products, and ensuring that translations were accurate and made sense was a huge challenge for just one team.

GAMIFIED SOLUTION: *Microsoft developed the Language Quality Game, which (via a very simple Silverlight application) let users view screens to check for language accuracy. Microsoft included intentionally poor translations to make sure its employees were actually paying attention.*

RESULTS: Four and a half thousand users reviewed 500,000 screens to correct or improve translations based on their native languages. Microsoft Japan actually took a company-wide day off to play the game and ended up winning the leaderboard. ■

Charles Coy is the senior director of analyst and community relations at Cornerstone. Responsible for evangelizing about Cornerstone's innovation in talent management technology solutions, he is interested in the ways that technology can affect how organizations evaluate, motivate, and value their employees. He can be reached via Twitter at @oleskoo.

1. Pete Wolfinger. 2013. "Game On: How Gamification Is Changing Business." SHRM blog, March 4, blog.shrm.org/trends/game-on-how-gamification-is-changing-business.

The Elements of SUCCESSFUL ONBOARDING

BY ANDREW TAYLOR

© Elena Koycheva / UnSplash.com

First days can be overwhelming for new hires, especially when they are joining large teams or large organizations. Because a new employee's initial experiences can set the tone for his or her engagement, every organization should put its best foot forward by including the following three steps in its employee onboarding plan.

CREATE A SCHEDULE

A great onboarding experience starts with a great onboarding schedule. Think of that schedule as an itinerary that details each day of onboarding and allots time for key objectives, such as introductions to processes, meetings with team members, and time for questions. An onboarding schedule is a success if a new hire never asks, "What should I do next?"

INTRODUCE NEW HIRES TO THE FAMILY

Familiarizing new hire with their coworkers (as well as some of the team dynamics) is mission critical for a successful onboarding. These introductions give them a feeling of belonging and a chance to start building relationships with their new teams. Additionally, asking for help becomes a lot easier when someone knows where to go for it.

Assign a Mentor

New hires need some time before they're able to add value to their teams. As they work to get up to speed, they will probably have a ton of questions. Pairing each new hire with an experienced employee provides an immediate source for an answer to those questions and helps new team members acclimate to the organization's culture significantly faster.

If new employees aren't integrated well, than all of the other steps of the hiring process—reviewing resumes, conducting interviews, and making a selection—have been a waste of time. That's why managers need to develop and implement onboarding plans that provide a new hire with the tools and support he or she needs to succeed. ■

Andrew Taylor is an experienced marketing copywriter, specializing in the human capital management (HCM) industry. He has been writing for Ultimate Software, a leading provider of cloud-based HCM solutions, since 2017. To learn more about Ultimate Software, visit ultimatesoftware.com.

5 Benefits of Microlearning

BY SHARLYN LAUBY

Social learning, mobile learning, and e-learning have recently been joined by a relatively new type of learning that involves acquiring content in small units or bite-sized pieces: microlearning. Although it's been given that name only fairly recently, microlearning has actually been around for a while. In fact, people engage in it all the time. (For example, consider how often people who want to acquire a new skill right away learning it by watching a two-minute video on YouTube.) The ease and widespread availability of microlearning opportunities make them ideal additions to any organization's current learning strategy.

1

Microlearning is easy to produce. Its focus on topics that are generally less complex than those addressed by other types of learning means that microlearning options can be designed and implemented with greater speed. Note, however, that "easy to produce" isn't synonymous with "inexpensive." Because microlearning, by definition, takes less time to do than standard training, it is usually more cost effective to produce. But it is possible for an organization to offer more microlearning options than other types of learning options, which would then increase the overall cost.

2

Microlearning is flexible. It can be classified as "on demand" if participants can access it whenever and wherever they wish. It can also be categorized as "just in time" if it's used to teach someone something new (or refresh their knowledge of something they've learned earlier) immediately before they need it.

3

Microlearning is accessible. People who are trying to engage with the organization shouldn't get the runaround. Because microlearning usually focuses on a single concept, it can be implemented through fairly simplistic means, easy for the company to share, and easy for employees to view.

4

Microlearning can complement an organization's existing programs. It can serve as a refresher or reminder for someone who has already been through a traditional classroom learning experience. Instead of searching through all the resources from the "full" session, an employee who needs a particular piece of information can make use of the relevant microlearning session.

5

Microlearning can be a coaching tool. Helping people reach their goals includes sharing with them resources that will improve their skills and knowledge. Managers can recommend microlearning sessions to employees who are stuck and need some assistance.

The existence of so many different ways to learn means that it's easier for people to find the learning methods that work best for them. Companies need to figure out how to find a balance between giving employees access to such opportunities and justifying the time and resources that go into making them available. The tremendous flexibility of microlearning can yield more than one kind of return on that investment, though, and offers solutions that aren't possible with conventional training options. ■

Sharlyn Lauby is the author of HR Bartender (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.

8 Key Steps to **Building a Culture** of Performance

BY LYNNE LEVY

Moving from a traditional, once-a-year performance-management process to a continuous performance-development process can help a company improve engagement, productivity, and retention. But there is no one-size-fits-all formula for this evolution. When deciding to make changes, some companies choose to pilot them before fully rolling them out, others go all in right from the start, and others tie the implementation of something new to changes in other processes and software. Regardless of its size, though, any organization that wants to build a culture of performance must take a close look at the company as a whole and be prepared to change mindsets and culture, promote new leadership skills, and revise processes.


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ESTABLISH A GROWTH MINDSET

An organization that wants to build a culture of performance must first embrace a growth mindset, an attitude that assumes that all employees have potential, encourages them to develop it, and rewards them for improvement. Only in a growth-mindset environment can continuous performance development truly flourish.

- Focus on one area of growth at a time (such as active listening and learning from mistakes, for example). People are much more effective when working on one task at a time than when trying to tackle several tasks simultaneously.
- Make learning social. Allocate time for teams to reflect both on what went well with their completed projects and on what could have been done better. At the beginning of a quarterly meeting, for example, a team could analyze the "mistake of the quarter."
- Integrate the growth mindset throughout the various talent processes, including leadership development and hiring. For example, ask candidates not only about their current skills but also about which skills they are working on.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

To emphasize that feedback is a normal part of growing and learning, encourage leaders to discuss the feedback they receive and how they learn from it. When a project launch goes poorly and an executive says, "I own this error" in front of hundreds of employees, for example, that sends a very strong message throughout the entire organization. By publicly discussing what went wrong, what the team learned from it, and how he or she will make changes moving forward, that executive helps create an environment in which it's safe and acceptable to acknowledge mistakes—and learn from them.

COMMUNICATE EXTENSIVELY

The reinforcement of culture change requires ongoing communication and internal marketing to support that effort.

- When teams embrace new processes, take the time to reward and publicly acknowledge their efforts. (Social recognition and special shout-outs at company meetings are just two possible ways to do this.) In fact, it can be even more meaningful to praise people who make mistakes but learn and grow from them. This makes it safe to fail and learn.
- Once a month, have a company-wide event at which everyone requests feedback from each other. Market this event internally with plenty of signage (maybe call it "Feedback Friday"!) and serve food to make it a community celebration.

BRING EVERYONE ON BOARD

Everyone (including executive leadership) at all levels of the organization must be on board for it to succeed at building a culture of growth and continuous development. When just part of the organization learns how to give and receive feedback, that doesn't build the support and momentum needed for the change to succeed throughout the organization. Change can be an uncomfortable process, but it's easier when the entire organization goes through it together.

WORK ON ONE THING AT A TIME

Build excitement, momentum, positivity, and community around one aspect of continuous performance development by having the entire organization focus on changing or developing one habit at a time. For example, encourage all managers to start having monthly check-ins with their employees. Once that's accomplished, move on to something else.

BE PRESCRIPTIVE AND REQUIRE ACCOUNTABILITY

Rather than just tell employees and managers to "have continuous development through check-ins," give them guidance on how to do this. Specify how often check-ins should happen and be prescriptive about what should be discussed during them. (For example, questions covered at an operational check-in might include "What did you do well?" and "Where did you get stuck?" along with "What will you do differently next time?")

At the same time, hold managers and leaders accountable. If they're expected to have monthly check-ins with their employees, for example, track which leaders are—and which leaders are not—having those meetings. Remember that any behavior change involves some pushback at first, so be prepared to understand and coach around resistance.

BE PATIENT

Moving to a continuous development process takes time. Changing behaviors, encouraging new mindsets, and helping people be comfortable with an intrinsically uncomfortable process aren't things that can be accomplished overnight.

DEFINE SUCCESS AND MEASURE PROGRESS

To evaluate whether a transition to continuous performance management has been successful, answer these three questions:

- Is there an increase in ongoing communication between individuals and managers?
- Is the quality of those conversations improving?
- Is engagement improving?

Establish baseline measurements and remeasure key metrics as changes are implemented. At the same time, set realistic and inspiring goals for the six-month, one-year, and two-year marks. As progress is made on each success metric, celebrate that achievement as an organization.

Moving to a culture of ongoing performance development will enable an organization to improve its productivity, engagement, brand, and employee retention. It will inspire employees. It will drive employees to love going to work. It will enable work to become more human. ■

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hand with pen image: ©iStock.com/kyoshino

QUESTION:

We try to have an "open" and fun work environment that helps build lasting and important team relationships. Lately, though, the fun been getting out of control. We want our employees to feel comfortable and free to banter. But we also have work that must be done. How do we reign things in without stifling the fun?

ANSWER:

Balancing fun with productivity in the work environment can be like walking a tightrope. But if done carefully, it's possible to create a productive work environment that is collaborative and fun—but not distracting to the team. Here are some ways to achieve this:

- To avoid distractions in the main work areas, encourage the use of huddle rooms or conference rooms for meetings.
- To minimize the banter without stifling the opportunity for collaboration, set expectations that employees use break time for fun and work time for work.
- Don't be afraid to let people know when the fun gets a bit out of hand. (Team members who are distracted by the fun may welcome that friendly reminder.)
- Encourage employees to be considerate about technological distractions. (Text message tones, ringing phones, and the like can be annoying to some.)
- Provide many options for employees to gather outside the main work areas. Break rooms, huddle rooms, conference rooms, and sitting areas all create spaces where they can get away when necessary.

That said, having fun in a work environment can actually improve productivity. People who are happy in the workplace are more likely to work harder, stay longer, maintain their composure in a crisis, and take better care of the organization. When leaders lighten up and create a fun workplace, the result can be a significant increase in the level of employee trust, creativity, and communication—which in turn lead to lower turnover, higher morale, and a stronger bottom line. ■

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HOW TO KEEP YOUR RESOLUTIONS IN 2019

BY MIKE MCKERNS

THE START OF A NEW YEAR often brings with it new goals and aspirations. How many times in the past have you set a New Year's resolution to stop procrastinating, eat better, work out more, drink less, or read more? And how many times did you actually manage to achieve that goal? If you struggle to stick to your resolutions, you're not alone: most people are in the same boat.

If you want to increase your chances of keeping the promises you make to yourself at the beginning of the new year, I have a proposition for you. Instead of choosing a huge goal that is broadly defined and can be affected by many factors, focus your energy on accomplishing a very specific task that you can control and hold yourself accountable for doing it *every day for an entire year.*

Instead of stepping on the scale on Friday to see if you lost two pounds that week, spend the entire year holding yourself accountable every day for not snacking after 6 p.m. and never grabbing seconds at the dinner table.

Instead of promising yourself to "save more money," embrace strategies to cut your spending every day for an entire year. Forgo that afternoon coffee run to Starbucks, for example. Or skip lunchtime excursions to local restaurants and pack a lunch box to the office instead.

Instead of making a New Year's resolution to "work out more" in some vague and undefined way, set your alarm clock one hour earlier than your usual time and use that time to do a minimum of 15 (or 30 or 45 or whatever target works for you) minutes of physical activity every day. The activity could be an aerobic workout in your basement, for example, or a spin class at the gym or a brisk walk in the neighborhood—what the activity is doesn't matter as long as you commit to holding yourself accountable to doing it.

Instead of declaring that 2019 will be the year in which you are in better contact with your far-away friends and family members, come up with a plan to set aside time every day to reach out to one of them (say, a phone call to Uncle Frank one day, a handwritten birthday card mailed to your cousin Gwen the next, or a quick "Hey, it's been a while! How are things with you?" e-mail to a former roommate).

Instead of aspiring to read more books, set aside time every day (maybe half an hour between dinner and television watching, for example) to actually spend time with a book in your hands. Don't worry about how many pages or how many books you need to get through in a certain amount of time. Just engage in a minimum amount of daily reading.

Instead of resolving to stop procrastinating in general, figure out daily strategies to stop the distractions that can get you off track. For many people, e-mail and social media are the biggest attention hogs (and time wasters). So limit how much time you spend on them every day (perhaps a fixed amount, such as half an hour after breakfast and half an hour after dinner, for example).

Whatever you're interested in changing or improving about your life—your diet, your fitness, your hobbies, your connections—you can't expect to succeed without a plan. When goals are too vague or too big, they're much harder to achieve. So increase your odds of success by narrowing your focus to one specific task or activity that you can work on a little bit each day. Before you know it, an entire year will have passed, and you may find yourself pleasantly surprised to have achieved something that, when viewed as a huge undertaking, had seemed impossible before. ■

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A "SOUPER" COMFORT FOOD

Comfort foods are what we turn to when we feel sick, cold, or sad—or just when we want to enjoy something cozy and filling. Cheese is a big player in many comfort foods (think macaroni and cheese, grilled cheese, and pizza), so it should come as no surprise to see it share center stage in this soup. In just about half an hour, you can have this one-pot meal ready to go!

TOMATO CHEESE SOUP

YIELD: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

2 Tb extra-virgin olive oil
4 cloves of garlic
1 small onion, diced
1 28-oz can of tomatoes, diced or crushed
1 28-oz can of fire-roasted tomatoes, diced or crushed
4 cloves of garlic
4 oz of cream cheese, softened
salt and pepper to taste

Nutrition Facts
Amount per Serving

Calories:	300 cal
Fat:	17.5 g
Dietary fiber:	8 g
Sugars:	1.5 g
Protein:	8.5 g

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan, then saute the onions and garlic until soft (about five minutes).
2. Add the tomatoes (and their juices) and 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer, partially covered, for about 20 minutes.
3. Mix the softened cream cheese into the soup, then season with salt and pepper taste. ■

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