

THE RESOURCE

HR INSIGHTS

VOL. XII, ISSUE VI

magazine

from the eyes of industry leaders



MANAGING DIFFERENT WORK STYLES



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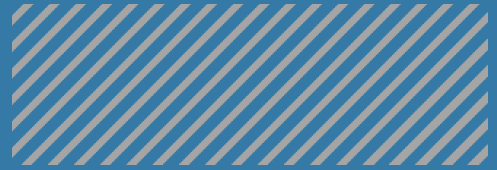
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How to Be Great at Goodbyes: Strategies for Successful Exit Interviews

BY RYAN CROKER

Because replacing an employee is an expensive and time-consuming endeavor that typically costs thousands of dollars (or more), it's important that someone who is preparing to leave an organization go through one crucial process that can have a big impact on the efforts to recruit and hire their replacement: the exit interview. It's HR's last chance to find out just what makes that employee tick—what they want in a job, why they are leaving, and whether something about the work environment or company culture made them want to leave. Following exit interview best practices can yield valuable insight. And organizations that don't take advantage of this opportunity may find themselves replacing their next employees sooner than they'd like.

What Is an Exit Interview?

Simply put, an exit interview is a conversation that a company representative has with an employee

just before they leave a job. Its goal is to gather the departing employee's feedback so that the organization can improve and reduce future turnover. Employee exit interviews typically take one of two forms:

- **One-on-one meeting.** During this direct conversation with an employee, a company representative (usually from HR) asks questions about the employee's time at the organization (including their thoughts about it) and endeavors to ensure that the relationship ends on a positive note. The individualized nature of this interaction gives it a personal tone.
- **Exit survey.** When many employees are leaving at the same time or if HR is unable to meet with someone who is leaving, a written survey can enable organizations to gather information from departing workers. It's a less personal option than one-on-one meetings, but it does yield a data archive that the organization can consult as needed in the future.

Goals of Successful Exit Interviews

There's a common perception that an exit interview helps only the organization and not the departing employees. When done correctly, though, it can actually benefit both parties.

Genuine feedback. The point of an exit interview isn't to get bland, vague answers to generic questions. Even if it's difficult for the organization to hear, genuine feedback is extremely helpful. Therefore, the company representative must be unafraid to ask tough questions. The key to getting that information during offboarding is to make employees feel safe and to reassure them of the value of their feedback. The time of an employee's departure from a job is when they are likely to feel the most comfortable being frank and honest.

An amicable separation. Exit interviews should take place whether the employee is leaving voluntarily or involuntarily.



In either case, the process should be as positive as possible, even when employees are airing grievances or upset that they have been let go. Failing to be kind and patient can result in long-term issues, such as data breaches.

Explanation of the offboarding process.

Offboarding can be a complicated process, and employees often need help understanding issues such as health insurance coverage, severance packages, reapplication processes, equipment return, and noncompete clauses. The exit interview is the ideal setting for discussing and resolving any lingering questions about these (and other) topics.

Support for an employee's transition.

An employee moving into a new phase of their career might not be sure how to navigate what comes next. They may need help setting up COBRA insurance, for example, or they might want the exit interview to provide feedback on their performance so that they can understand what changes they may need to make in the future.

Protection for the company's reputation.

People talk. Employees tell their friends and family about their current and previous employers—and they're not afraid to dish about them. Simply giving employees a chance to get things off their chest in the exit interview can prevent them from spreading negative opinions about the organization. At the same time, the interview can be an opportunity to clear up misunderstandings and diffuse some of the negativity.

Exit Interview Best Practices

By following these six practices, HR can increase the effectiveness of their exit interviews and create experiences that yield valuable information that organizations can actually use.

Schedule the exit interview (and communicate its purpose).

Although an exit interview can take place at any time between when an employee decides to leave and their last day, many HR leaders prefer to schedule it on the employee's final day, ideally right before the employee walks out the door for the last time. To make the process as smooth and

productive as possible, HR should plan the interview well in advance, emphasize its importance, and describe the types of questions that will be asked. That way, everyone will be prepared and ready to go at the start of the interview time.

Include a neutral party. To encourage an employee to be frank and honest, the person conducting the exit interview should not be their direct manager or a close coworker. Even when the employee has a good relationship with their manager, it can be hard for them to feel comfortable sharing everything with someone they know well.

Encourage openness by reinforcing confidentiality. Most employees have no desire to burn bridges when leaving a job, which is why many are hesitant to share honest feedback. Interviewers should assure employees that confidence will be maintained and that their feedback will not be directly tied to them. Departing employees who might want to return at some point down the road won't want any negative comments coming back to haunt them.

Prepare appropriate (and useful) questions. Interviewers who try to wing it with exit interviews usually end up kicking themselves afterward for forgetting crucial questions or getting sidetracked into unproductive conversations. By outlining the interview and writing down questions ahead of time (and even doing a little bit of research on the departing employee), interviewers can avoid wasting time and help employees feel seen.

Express excitement and support.

It's always disappointing when top performers leave, but organizations that genuinely care about their employees should be excited that they're taking on new challenges. Where appropriate, companies should express appreciation for their departing employees' contributions and enthusiasm for the next step of their journey.

Implement the feedback. If nobody learns anything from an exit interview, there's no point in doing one. The most important thing to do after an exit interview is to make needed changes based on the information it yields. Not all exit interviews will provide actionable knowledge, but at

the very least they can shed some light on trends or patterns.

Common Exit Interview Mistakes

Avoiding the following pitfalls can help ensure that the last interaction with a departing employee has with the organization is both positive and fruitful.

Denying or dodging critical feedback. It can be easy to take a defensive stance when someone is providing a lot of feedback (let alone criticism). Whether those criticisms are fair or not, though, the exit interview isn't the place to try to refute or argue against them.

Oversharing. An interviewer (especially one who has a close relationship with the departing employee) might be tempted to respond to exit interview feedback with a bit of insider information (e.g., "Between you and me, you're not the only one to report that behavior from her"). It's especially important for interviewers to maintain a professional boundary and not let slip anything that could create legal problems for the company.

Pressuring or forcing employees to participate. Some employees won't want to do exit interviews. This can be disappointing for the organization, but forcing their participation likely won't result in any productive outcomes. If they need to sign any paperwork or complete any procedures, give them a task list and due dates; as their final day approaches check in to ensure that all of their offboarding ducks are in a row.

When it comes to offboarding, information is HR's best friend. The exit interview is the perfect place to make sure that both the organization and the departing employee have the most helpful information possible. By keeping the interview goals in mind and following best practices, both parties will be able to part on great terms. ■

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Improving Accessibility in the Workplace

BY HEATHER VAN HOUTTEGHEM

Although business leaders and human resources managers are increasingly working to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI&B) in the workplace, they often overlook one important aspect of DEI&B: accessibility, particularly in meetings. By mitigating the impact of a disability that could impair a person’s ability to perform day-to-day activities, accessibility makes it possible for all employees to access their work environments effectively. Disabilities exist in a variety of forms: they can be genetic or acquired through trauma, illnesses, chronic conditions, or the aging process; they may be temporary or permanent; and many of them are invisible. To improve their efforts in this area, organizations should examine misconceptions about accessibility, address challenges to creating more accessible workplaces, and explore the crucial role of HR leaders in these endeavors.

6 MYTHS ABOUT MAKING MEETINGS MORE ACCESSIBLE

1

“It’s hard to get this process started.”

Begin by asking employees what they need to be able to participate. Employees with disabilities are experts in what they need to thrive. They can advise their leaders and help their organizations take action in small steps.

2

“It’s expensive.”

Accessible meetings don’t need to cost more money. If employees already use assistive devices or other accommodations to do their work, chances are they can use those same devices or accommodations when they attend and participate in meetings.

3

“Meetings will be less fun.”

Meetings can be fun while also being accessible. The best meetings allow everyone to feel fully engaged, be themselves, and share what they bring to their roles. Meetings don’t have to take place on a ski hill or at an amusement park, and if organizations believe that offsite events must feature physical activities or new scenery in order to energize employees, it’s likely that something fundamentally important is missing from their day-to-day work experiences.

4

“The company has no employees with disabilities, so there’s no point in making meetings accessible.”

There are more people with disabilities than most people think. Not only are many disabilities invisible, but the majority of disabilities are also acquired as people age. So the fact that an organization hasn’t yet had a request for accessible meetings doesn’t mean it won’t—and it doesn’t mean that its current employees won’t benefit from accessible meetings. Furthermore, making meetings accessible sends a signal internally to all employees—and externally to the organization’s clients, its customer base, and the talent it wants to attract—that the company supports accessibility.

5

“It’s time-consuming to prepare for an accessible meeting.”

All effective meetings require preparation. It doesn’t take more time to prepare for an accessible meeting than it takes to prepare for a traditional meeting. And if the organization creates some standard practices for accessible meetings, meeting planners will just have to follow a checklist.

6

“There’s no benefit to accessible meetings if no one with a disability is attending them.”

Everyone benefits from accessibility. Plain language, captions and other assistive features, considerations such as lighting and ambiance, and other accommodations can benefit anyone.



TIPS FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

HR can play a key role in making meetings accessible and inclusive by implementing these strategies:

- Determine if the organization has a set of policies about accessible meetings. If such policies do not exist, HR can brainstorm with department leads to generate ideas for policies and practices that enable all employees to participate fully.
- Be prepared to have conversations about disability. Many employees feel uncomfortable disclosing a disability. They may benefit from a welcoming, open environment in which they know they can speak privately and receive assurances that their disclosure will lead to no negative repercussions.
- Understand the range of accommodations that employees with disabilities may request and be prepared to suggest accommodations if an employee isn't sure what will help them succeed.
- Understand how assistive technologies work and which companies supply them.
- Look for ways to use employee education to improve accessibility. For example, it may be exciting and helpful to have everyone take a sign language class or learn about Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Support the formation of employee resource groups (ERGs) related to DEI&B.

Leveraging Employee Knowledge and Experience

Organizations that haven't considered accessibility in their diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts still have some work to do. Fortunately, many employees can offer their perspectives and recommendations to help companies create fully accessible workplaces. Adding optional survey questions about disability status to HR questionnaires (for example, those that ask employees to provide or update their personal information) can help organizations identify employees who have accessibility concerns and are willing to share their thoughts about them¹. Organizations that pursue and embrace strategies for improving workplace accessibility create an environment that fosters inclusion, engagement, and success. ■

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To learn more about creating a positive workplace culture and to hear from experts on HR, payroll, talent, and more, visit The People Purpose Blog at ukg.com/people-purpose-blog.

1. Note, however, that these surveys must be presented to all candidates and employees. Such reporting must be voluntary, and the organization should inform respondents that questions about disability are intended to help it fulfill its commitment to disability inclusion.

THE COHORT THAT DOESN'T WANT TO WORK REMOTELY

BY WAYNE TURMEL



In conversations about returning to the office, there's a widespread assumption that "the dinosaurs in the C suite" are the only group that wants people to work onsite as much as possible. But another group is also clamoring for less remote work: the youngest and newest employees in the workforce, Generation Z and younger Millennials. Their desire for more time in the office is motivated primarily by their interests in social interactions and mentoring.

People in their twenties look to the workplace for much of their social interaction. Statistically, they are more likely than older workers to be single and, therefore, often don't have the family responsibilities that compel other employees to seek more flexibility and work-life balance. Many younger workers, especially those fresh out of school or those who have had first jobs elsewhere and are looking for a fresh start, have moved away from their friends or families in order to pursue new opportunities and find themselves in new cities, needing to rebuild social networks and support systems.

Most importantly, these younger workers want to belong somewhere. Claiming to have a best friend or intimate social circle at work is a significant indicator of employee engagement. This is the age when people hang out after work, date (sometimes their coworkers or their coworkers' friends), and start to settle into the neighborhoods or towns where they will spend significant parts of their lives.

But those darned kids aren't just looking for new people to party with. Young workers know they lack essential information. They want to learn as much as they can—and they want mentors to help them.

Employees new to an organization want guidance on what their new jobs entail. They want to understand how things are done there, and they want to learn about and be part of the company culture. Having entered adulthood during or just after the COVID-19 pandemic, many young employees have no in-office experience at all and don't know the basics of workplace etiquette, networking, and professional behavior. They want (and need) training, mentoring, and networking, all of which can be handled virtually but are far easier to do—and more effective—when they take place in physical proximity to others.

Younger employees aren't necessarily signing up for the traditional commute-to-the-office-8-to-5 grind.



What they are looking for is sensible flexibility. They want to do good work and know that some activities (such as socialization, training, mentoring, and coaching) make sense in the office. But they also know that there are plenty of tasks that don't require being in a central location at a specified time and believe that if they feel their brains work best in the morning or late at night, that's when they should be able to do their work.

As organizations consider what hybrid work should look like, they must consider all of the demographics of their workforces. When offering flexible or hybrid work to their younger recruits, for example, companies should examine whether they are maximizing the time those workers spend onsite. Most importantly, they should not assume that younger, more technically connected people want to avoid the office. ■

Wayne Turmel has been writing about how to develop communication and leadership skills for almost 26 years. He has taught and consulted at Fortune 500 companies and startups around the world and, for the last 18 years, has focused on the growing need to communicate effectively in remote and virtual environments. He can be reached at wayneturmel.com.

MANAGING *Different* WORK STYLES

BY JUAN BETANCOURT



It's no great secret that everyone works in different ways and that diverse work styles can often clash and lead to conflict. A well-balanced team that draws on the strengths of each member's work styles can lead to increased productivity, innovation, and efficiency in the workplace. But nothing hurts productivity and growth like a team that doesn't know how to work together. This often translates to lost time, workplace stress, financial costs, and employee departures.

All employees have practices and preferences that draw on their own strengths and weaknesses. Together, these different styles make up a team's culture. For teams to work together effectively, they must be aware of each member's ways of working, and leaders must be able to manage different work styles to their advantage.

Figuring out how to manage different work styles is tough! If team members don't feel challenged, motivated, or heard by others on their team, they will quickly disengage. And if they don't have complementary strengths and weaknesses, the result will be a group that is too uniform in work style and attitude, leading to reduced innovation and effectiveness. For instance, if everyone in a team thought only of strategies and end

goals without considering the details accomplishing those goals (such as structure, time constraints, quality), their execution rates would be low, and work would fall behind schedule.

IDENTIFYING WORK STYLES

To be effective, team leaders must understand and manage a variety of work styles every day. Asking employees to complete a quick four-question self-assessment can give leaders the information they need to achieve the optimal balance of work styles:

When it comes to solving problems, I tend to be more

- (A) deliberate
- (B) decisive

When it comes to relating to people, I tend to be more

- (A) reflective
- (B) outgoing

When it comes to my work pace or level of urgency, I tend to be more

- (A) steady
- (B) spontaneous

When it comes to processes and procedures, I tend to be more

- (A) cautious
- (B) freeform

Three or more A responses indicates a work style oriented toward stability.

Three or more B responses indicates a work style oriented toward change. And an even split between A and B indicates a work style balanced between stability and change orientation.

Having employees assume different thinking hats can improve decision making within teams. For example, one employee may be tasked with coming up with new ideas and encouraged to bring unpredictable (or possibly even outlandish!) ideas to a meeting. At the same time, another employee can be tasked with being more discerning and charged with asking questions and assessing the risks of different ideas.

Assigning each team member a specific hat to wear at different times and for different projects can open up possibilities for more inclusive discussions by giving a variety of ideas and perspectives a seat at the table. This approach helps bust the dreaded groupthink that often stifles innovation. It also shows that, in the right situation, every work style can be a strength.

SETTING A CLEAR VISION FOR THE TEAM

Managing challenging behaviors (such as steamrolling or overanalyzing) takes planning and communication. When beginning a project, managers should bring team members together to talk about



objectives and goals and answer questions such as “How does the project support the company’s values and vision?” and “How does each person’s role support the goals?” Everyone should be on the same page and work toward the same outcome, but each person may arrive at the final goal differently because of their individual work style. It’s up to leaders to focus or redirect their employees’ strengths, make sure they understand their roles, provide feedback along the way, and give them the support or independence they need to do great things. (And because leaders set the tone for their teams, they also need to be aware of their own tendencies, preferences, and blind spots.)

HARNESSING THE POWER OF DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AND INCLUSION

When a team can see and understand how each person’s unique work style helps the team, the group’s capacity for better collaboration increases. A leader should examine their team’s unique culture and identify the team members’ shared strengths as well as each individual’s contributions. Talking about how different work styles have benefited the team can help everyone understand and appreciate the impact of diverse perspectives and skills.

CHECKING IN REGULARLY

Because team dynamics can change, monthly team huddles help leaders conduct “temperature checks.” During these meetings, teams discuss differences, strengths, priorities, and actions for the future so that all members can work better together. Ongoing, frequent, and bite-sized assessments of a team’s culture increase members’ retention and engagement by driving better collaboration, more inclusion, and greater team effectiveness.

INTENTIONALITY IN TEAM MEETINGS

During team meetings, leaders should draw on their knowledge of each team member’s work styles and strengths. They need to actively engage more reflective team members who might not readily volunteer what they are thinking, for example, and tap into people who are wired for specific topics. Leading team meetings with intention makes the meeting more productive and yields better outcomes.

It’s also important to meet people where they are. A team member who relies on facts to make decisions, for example, does best when provided with information that supports why something needs to be done (and may do their own research to verify that data). Someone who is a real go-getter will appreciate

directness: a leader should tell this person where they stand and what needs to be done—then get out of their way and let them do it. And leaders should expect a team member who is very social to spend the first five to ten minutes talking about family, current events, or other updates before getting down to business. When interacting with employees in meetings, considering each employee’s personality and preferences will go a long way toward fostering the trust needed to execute the leader’s vision.

The variety of people on a team directly affects employee engagement, productivity, and retention. A leader’s ability to manage different work styles will shape the outcomes in all of those areas. By understanding their team members’ work styles (and their own) and how they influence team culture, leaders can bring balance to their teams, thus allowing each member to do their best work. ■

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THE BEST TIME TO GIVE (AND RECEIVE) EQUITY COMPENSATION AWARDS

BY DAVID NYGARD



Equity compensation in the form of stock options, restricted stock units, and performance shares is an important vehicle that public and select privately held companies can use to attract, retain, and motivate employees. It can be awarded at any time, but

the most valuable equity compensation awards are often granted and received during economic downturns.

During those periods, companies face significant challenges and uncertainty. To survive, they reduce costs, increase efficiency, and bolster cash reserves. One cost-cutting measure is to decrease overall employee compensation, which includes lowering salaries, bonuses, and other benefits through reductions in force, freezes, or plan modifications. But companies must still maintain their top talent (especially during difficult times) because it's crucial to their long-term survival and success.



Equity compensation awards are an effective way for companies to retain their top employees during economic downturns without drawing down cash reserves. These awards grant employees ownership rights in the company, thus aligning their interests with those of other owners and creating a sense of commitment to the company's success. Employees who receive equity compensation awards are more likely to stay with the company for an extended period and work harder to ensure the company's success.

Equity compensation awards also provide a long-term financial incentive for employees. Share prices often reach




their lowest points during an economic downturn and rebound later as the economy picks up. When employees receive ownership rights over several years, the increase in share prices creates a strong monetary incentive for them to stay with the company and strive to achieve the organization's goals. This incentive is precious during economic downturns, when short-term cash rewards may be limited or nonexistent. (Additionally, equity compensation awards are tax-deductible expenses, which may reduce the company's tax liability and periodic tax accruals for a non-cash award.)

During an economic downturn, equity compensation awards can be used to attract new talent to the company from other organizations where existing incentives have been cut or awards are underwater. In a downturn, companies that reduce their workforces populate the labor pool with highly skilled professionals, and other organizations can entice those high-performing employees to join their teams by offering them equity compensation awards. (This approach can be especially valuable for companies looking to pivot their business models or expand into new markets.)

Cash is a precious resource during economic downturns, and companies may need to conserve it to survive. Because equity compensation awards do not use cash, they allow organizations to reduce the amount of cash they otherwise would have diverted to salary or cash incentive expenses. Companies can then use these saved funds to fund their operations and invest in new opportunities.

Finally, equity compensation awards can help companies retain control over their ownership structure during times of economic uncertainty. These awards are typically granted with certain restrictions (such as a vesting period or a lock-up period) to a group that is intrinsically tied to existing management. These "white knights" are especially valuable for companies facing hostile takeovers or significant shareholder disputes when ownership margins are tight. ■

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Is AI the Answer for a More Equitable Workplace?

BY ROULA AMIRE

Developing rapidly and gaining steam, AI is finding its way into more and more business applications each day. In particular, it has seemingly unlimited potential to streamline how HR professionals do their jobs, with the biggest and most immediate impact being felt on the recruitment side of HR. “Your imagination is the limit, really, of what it can do,” says Kevin Wheeler, founder and president of the Future of Talent Institute. In recruitment, for example, ChatGPT can help HR communicate with job candidates and write interview questions. It can also be used to create engaging job descriptions (which, Wheeler points out, isn’t a strong suit of many recruiters and hiring managers).

The general public isn’t totally sold yet on the use of AI in recruitment, though. One recent survey found that 41 percent of Americans reject “the use of AI in reviewing job applications,” and 71 percent “oppose AI use in making final hiring decisions.”¹ Additionally, equity concerns figure prominently in discussions about the use of AI-based applications in HR processes. Earlier this year, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) held a public hearing in which it explored “ways in which AI and automated systems in the workplace might support or hinder diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts.”² Concerns about accuracy and bias aren’t entirely unwarranted.

Joe Atkinson, chief products and technology officer at PwC, points out that the data from which generative AI pulls can “reflect or incorporate human biases because they’re made up in large part by the outcomes of countless human decisions and actions.” There have been some big misses in this area. For example, Workday is currently being sued because its AI-based screening tools “allegedly disqualify applicants who are Black, disabled, or over the age of 40 at a disproportionate rate.”³ Amazon’s (now shelved) experimental AI-based recruitment tool “did not like women.”⁴ Because AI is trained on existing data, Wheeler explains, when Amazon’s AI examined the history of the

company's technology hires and saw that they were almost all men, "it made an assumption that Amazon only wanted to hire men."

AI developers are learning from those mistakes, though, and are looking for ways to increase AI's ability to mitigate some of the human bias inherent to resume evaluation. For example, Wheeler says, "we know already that if you submit two CVs—one with an African American name and one with a European name—the European name will almost always get preferential treatment." AI can be instructed to evaluate the skills a candidate offers and to not look at their name.

In addition to candidate screening, AI can foster equity in other key areas of the workplace. When it comes to fair pay and promotions, for instance, it "might be able to do analytics and interpretation" on an organization's big data and "do more of the analytics associated with who's getting promoted and how long they stay and what pay levels are," says Tracy Brower, sociologist and author of *The Secrets to Happiness at Work*. (However, she adds, the company still needs HR professionals "to think about what questions we should be asking.") AI can also help improve employee learning and development. For example, AI can identify current employees who already have the skills needed for new roles and connect them with those opportunities. AI can also search for "parallel skills," Wheeler says, by looking at "what things could an employee do (even though they don't do them now) that their skills might match for."

AI can be used to improve the efficiency of HR teams in several ways. Automating routine tasks such as writing procedures, policy manuals, and FAQs can give those teams more "time to do more high-impact work," says Atkinson, and "create opportunities to completely reimagine how employees are supported" by enabling HR staff to be more creative, innovative, and strategic. He points out that AI can also free HR staff from addressing some of the more routine and basic employee requests, which has the added benefit of empowering employees to quickly obtain the answers they need (thereby reducing their frustration). Additionally, Wheeler adds, "AI technology can also help onboard new employees by sending out routine communications before they start and answering common questions they have about the company, the CEO, the organizational chart, or the company handbook."

Although AI offers HR a "big advantage" by creating a starting point for these documents, Wheeler points out that an HR professional is still needed to personalize the content. Brower agrees: "HR pros have a critical role to play in looking for nuance and figuring out through editing what's best for their culture, how they can best communicate all of that, [and] how it's best positioned."

Undeniably, AI can help HR teams be more efficient, but there are concerns about its potential to replace humans and eliminate jobs. "We need to be reassuring people, upskilling them, and preparing them for that next thing that they may not already be doing today," says Brower. "If

routine tasks are offloaded to AI, then those people could be doing more coaching with leaders instead, engaging in talent strategy work, or coming up with new and creative ideas for hiring, because the talent shortage is here to stay for the next seven to ten years." Some of those fears may be unfounded, though. In 2020 the World Economic Forum estimated that by 2025, AI will displace humans from over 85 million jobs but create 97 million new ones—a net increase of 13 million jobs.

Wheeler compares the arrival of AI to the arrival of bulldozers, which wiped out thousands of jobs in the construction industry but also created many new ones. "Some of the guys with shovels learned to drive bulldozers, and some learned other skills in that field," he says, "and I think the same thing is going to happen in recruiting. Yes, it will take some jobs, but we will continue to need that HR professional role in potentially expanded or different kinds of work."

Atkinson says we're far away from the day that any technology (including generative AI) can fully replace a human being. "In a world in which employers are still competing to attract and retain the best talent," he explains, "sustaining the human connection—particularly with HR—is likely to be more important in the future, not less." ■

Roula Amire is the content director of Great Place To Work, the global authority on workplace culture. Powered by its proprietary platform and methodology, Great Place To Work offers unparalleled data and benchmarking, the most respected workplace certification and lists, and industry-leading research and insights, all supported by a wealth of resources and a thriving community. To learn more, follow Great Place To Work on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram or visit greatplacetowork.com and subscribe to their culture newsletter.

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HOW TO INVEST IN RECRUITMENT SOFTWARE WITHOUT A LOSS IN ROI

Investing in new recruitment software can be a daunting undertaking. There's a lot at stake: time, energy and (of course) money. One of the most common fears in taking the leap to a new system is that it will lead to a decrease in ROI compared to the status quo. But fear of a new investment shouldn't hold anyone back from pushing their business forward! With the right people, processes, and technology, investing in new recruitment software doesn't have to mean a loss. In fact, when implemented properly, it can often lead to significant gains.



DETERMINE THE GOALS

The first steps of investing in new recruitment technology are assessing the organization's pain points and building a clear business case with its needs in mind. This information helps outline the purpose of the new technology and sets the company on a path for growth. The new investment should support the following three key objectives:

INCREASED VELOCITY

New technology should improve the efficiency of the recruitment experience. Whether an open position is for a senior manager or for an entry-level recent graduate, candidates expect the hiring process to be fast (usually wanting it to be finished in about half the time it actually takes!). To build efficiency, an organization must start by being realistic about how many employees it brings on board each year and how long it takes to fill open roles—information that can enable the company to understand its challenges and identify which tools will help resolve them. (For instance, an effective career site combined with employee onboarding and talent assessment

technology can move candidates through the recruitment process later in the talent journey and cut the time it takes to hire.)

REDUCTIONS IN SPENDING

Hiring costs have reached significant heights: by some accounts “the total cost to hire a new employee can be three to four times the position’s salary.”¹ The job market has changed dramatically in recent years, and talent acquisition teams are feeling even more pressure as leaders are asking hiring managers to source and engage talent with smaller budgets and leaner teams. But how can organizations reduce spending without damaging the quality of applications or the experience candidates have with their brands?

Whether it’s advertising costs or job board spending, companies should assess their overall recruitment budgets and how new recruitment software could help them cut costs. For instance, marketing automation tools can help build in-demand pipelines for future openings by nurturing the candidates already in an organization’s database, thus reducing advertising costs.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF HIRE

With 92 percent of C-level participants in one recent survey indicating “that their organization won’t be able to meet goals without the right talent,” hiring quality talent is, arguably, the most important factor in growing a business and meeting organizational objectives.² To attract candidates with the skills needed to support the business, companies must assess the experience candidates have with their brand. Slow career sites and laborious onboarding processes aren’t going to cut it in this digital era, and it’s important to look across the talent journey and find out where in the job search and hiring process candidates are dropping off. A talent suite can include products that help keep candidates involved and invested in the process. For instance, chatbots can help engage candidates early in their candidate journey and enable candidates and organizations

to communicate anytime, anywhere—thus streamlining the process for everyone involved.

NEW RECRUITMENT SOFTWARE HELPS EVERYONE

To truly understand ROI, organizations need to know the benefits that new recruitment software brings not just to the hiring team but to the entire organization. Business leaders in all departments favor technology that increases productivity and reduces costs. But it’s important to identify what each team really cares about and how this software will aid them in achieving their goals.

IT teams, for example, seek technology that offers secure, agile, and compliant platforms. Cloud-based recruitment software appeals to them for its ability to streamline processes and increase efficiency (and save money) by reducing the need for other applications and requiring fewer on-site staff to maintain the infrastructure.

As the teams responsible for protecting the company’s vital assets, finance departments are also attracted to the cost-saving aspects of recruitment software, which can consolidate costly existing technologies. Even taking into account the total cost of ownership, integration, data migration, and staff training, companies can see improved ROI, thanks to this software’s ability to facilitate more efficient recruitment practices.

THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY CAN MOVE A BUSINESS FORWARD

The hard truth is that organizations simply cannot afford not to invest in new recruitment software. AI and automation tools are increasing in popularity, and new advanced technologies are emerging every day. Companies that delay making investments in this area will miss out on the key benefits of this new technology: improved quality of hire, accelerated hiring processes, and reduced costs. ■

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BOOSTING EMPLOYEE MORALE, ONE PAW AT A TIME

BY JAMES MOUL

As the business world struggles to deal with the ongoing skills gap, the lingering impact of the pandemic-fueled slowdowns and shutdowns, and the stiff competition for talent, organizations are looking for ways to attract, engage, and retain their employees. The latest growing trend in this effort? Pet-friendly workplaces!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people grew accustomed to working at home alongside their pets. The animals, too, got used to having their humans around. For many pets and their owners, the transition back to the office—and away from each other—hasn't been easy. Pet-friendly policies can make the return to the office a bit less painful for those employees. Additionally, they also appeal to people who just generally enjoy spending time with animals!



Having pets in the office brings a ton of benefits. First off, pets are famously effective as morale boosters. (After all, who doesn't feel happier while petting a purring cat or scratching an ecstatic Golden Retriever under the chin?) There are numerous scientific studies confirming the positive link between being around animals and lower stress levels. And, of course, bringing pets into the office can help mitigate some employees' work-life balance concerns.

And those are just the individual psychological and mental benefits! The company's bottom line gets helped, too: when employees are happier, they tend to be more engaged—and therefore more productive. Also, pet-friendly policies can help a company stand apart from its competitors and make it a more desirable workplace for some. If a particularly talented, animal-loving candidate is weighing competitive offers from multiple organizations, the ability to bring their dog to work just might be the deciding factor!

On the surface, letting people bring their pets to work seems like a no-brainer. But before you throw the doors open to Fido and Fluffy, be sure that your workplace is ready to welcome them. Do you need to deal with open trash cans (aka "pet snack bars"), unsecured cables (aka "pet chew toys"), or anything else that might attract unwanted attention from animals? Do you have enough room to accommodate pets without them getting underfoot in hallways, meeting rooms, and other public or high-traffic areas?

And, of course, you'll need to come up with clearly stated rules for workplace pets:

- Pets won't be filling out any W-4 forms or signing up for the company's health insurance plan, but you should require their owners to provide proof that all of their shots are up to date and to make sure that they are potty trained in some way.
- Additionally, it's critical that office pets be well behaved and able to socialize with lots of different people (because everyone will want to say hello to them!) as well as other animals.
- You'll need to define exactly which types of pets are allowed. Cats and dogs are the ones that usually come to mind when people talk about pet-friendly workplaces. But what about other animals, such as birds, bunnies, or reptiles?
- To keep rambunctiousness, boredom, and chewing at a minimum, consider setting a minimum age limit for pets.

Finally, don't enact this policy by fiat. Not everyone will want pets in the office (some people have allergies, some are afraid of them, and some just don't like animals), so you'll need to consider their concerns, too. Ask all employees for their input (and consult with the legal and HR teams, too, to make sure the proposed policies don't run afoul of any laws), and work together to create something that makes everyone happy. ■

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RECIPE

BAKED BEANS

As the busy holiday season picks up steam, sometimes it's nice to have an easy dish that requires very little effort to put together and leaves almost no cleanup afterward. These Boston-style baked beans suit the bill! Pair them with a simple side salad, and you've got a meal that won't stress you out—and is perfect for wintry weather, to boot!

YIELD: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes (plus time to preheat the oven)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- ½ cup unsulphured (not blackstrap) molasses
- 4 Tb ketchup
- 4 Tb yellow mustard
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 2 15.5-ounce cans of cooked navy beans, drained (about 3 cups of beans)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

- In an oven-safe Dutch oven or casserole dish, whisk together the first seven ingredients. Add the drained beans and stir to combine well.
- Bake at 400°F until the mixture is bubbling (about 25 minutes).
- Let cool for a few minutes (at least until the bubbling subsides!), then add salt and pepper to taste.



Nutrition Facts

Amount per Serving

Calories: 373 cal

Fat: 1 g

Dietary fiber: 10.3 g

Sugars: 38.7 g

Protein: 15.2 g

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