

Circumventing the  
Great Resignation:



# Your Guide to Winning the New Talent Wars



**MBL**

**Y**ou've probably heard of it. Anthony Klotz, associate professor of management at

Texas A&M University, termed it *The Great Resignation*. It began April 2021, when **more people quit their job in a single month than ever before**, and it refers to a mass exodus of workers from their places of employment.

In May, Klotz warned of “pent-up resignations that didn’t happen over the past year,” as well as pandemic-inspired epiphanies about remote work and work/life balance prompting additional workers to “turn their back on the 9-to-5 office grind.” In the following months, the numbers of departing employees would accelerate, stemming from what *Atlantic* staff writer Derek Thompson called “a revolution in worker expectations.”

Needless to say, many executives and HR leaders are concerned about an intensifying *war for talent*; **innovative, industry-leading companies and organizations won't engage in battle** – they'll *listen* to their workers and prospects, and adjust accordingly. After all, *Forbes* already told us: the “workers will win.”

**So, why should you capitulate?**

**Simple:**

More than 50% of employees are actively seeking new opportunities, and two thirds of millennials, the fastest growing segment of the workforce, expect to leave their current job by the end of the year.

According to the Work Institute, employee turnover costs employers between \$600 and \$700 billion per year.

**Employee turnover causes:**

- Weakened employee engagement and morale
- Decreased productivity, proficiency and efficiency
- Lost intellectual capital
- Strained customer relationships
- Training costs
- Cultural impact
- Reputational impact

As Arianna Huffington explains in *Harvard Business Review*, “CEOs are leaning on their CHROs to **ensure their workforces are feeling supported**, because they know the future success – and in many cases, the survival – of their businesses depends on it.”

Amid the global pandemic, HR leaders received a mandate: to circumvent The Great Resignation by retaining and attracting top talent. And while we've long known that people-first companies drive higher performance, now might be the best time to shift the paradigm and proverbially put yourself in their shoes.

Think about it. It should come as no surprise that thinking like an employee helps HR leaders better serve (and retain!) their employees – and maybe workers aren't "resigning in mass willy-nilly" from their jobs but actually "reassessing" their lives and simply "making new choices" (Into & Overit, Overit, November 2021).

Perhaps the first step to winning the war on talent is to reimagine The Great Resignation as The Great *Reassessment*, a point of view proffered by Recode's Kara Swisher and NYU marketing professor Scott Galloway in a recent episode of tech and business podcast Pivot. If employees are reassessing their lives and making new choices, HR leaders need to strive to understand their employees' greatest fears and desires, and identify what is most influencing their career choices.

**Your success could be your path to the C-suite – and the very survival of your organization.**



# The Importance of Top Talent, Especially During a Crisis

With increased costs and decreased revenue due to COVID-19, it might've seemed like an ideal time to allow your higher-paid employees to leave the organization; however, not only is it never a smart business strategy to lose top talent to your competitors, top talent can be particularly critical in times of crisis.

According to author, lecturer and Forbes Council member Courtney Pace, "In crisis, cut dead weight (underperformers), not your MVPs (top talent)... Top talent are the exact employees you want on your team in crisis."

As associate vice president of talent, Pace oversees talent management, development and succession planning at FedEx Employees Credit Association. While she understands "top talent can be high-maintenance... your investment in them pales in comparison to their investment in your company."

Not only do top-talent employees often "do the tasks of two or more full-time positions," she explains, they "inspire others to rise to the occasion, work smarter and collaborate more effectively," increasing their value "exponentially."

Indeed, there are two fronts to the talent wars:

- Retaining the top talent you've already recruited, in the face of increasing demands and competition
- Attracting the top talent considering departing their current position, leveraging The Great Resignation for good



# How to Retain Top Talent, During and After COVID



Whether your staff is working in a single location, in offices around the country or world, from home full time, or partially remote and sometimes on site, the ways you encourage, educate, inspire and empower your employees will dictate the level of their engagement, the quality of their performance, and the length of their tenure with your organization.

Use the following seven strategies to guide you in your efforts at retaining talent in the near and long term.



# 1 Start Retention at Recruitment

No one forgets how they were hired, or how they were treated during the recruitment and application process. In fact, according to a study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), seven out of 10 workers are more likely to stay at their new company for three years or more if they experience a favorable application process. Keep that in mind when developing and implementing your strategies for attracting top talent; just because someone accepts a position doesn't mean they're planning on staying.

In addition, while you don't want to unduly prolong your recruitment and hiring process when you do feel positively about a candidate, remember to "never ever compromise a hire" (Liane Hornsey, former chief people officer at Google and Uber). The person you select should not only meet all the requirements for the role but share the company's values, represent an appropriate cultural fit, and demonstrate a commitment to remain with the company for an extended period.

"Retention starts right from the beginning, from the application process to screening applicants to choosing who to interview," says Dan Pickett, CEO of Infrastructure, a high-tech firm with a higher than 97% retention rate. "It

starts with identifying what aspects of culture and strategy you want to emphasize, and then seeking those out in your candidates."

Then, once you've filled the position, you need to create the best first impression with your new hire onboarding process.

As Harry West, Appirio's vice president of services product management, writes in *Entrepreneur*, "Ensuring your employees have a positive, engaging onboarding experience is just as important as making sure your application process goes well."

So, instead of leaving your new hire with a recorded video or online class, provide them with a peer mentor, train your managers to provide ongoing support, and deliver enough resources as part of the onboarding curricula to ensure they can succeed in their new position.

Unlike a new hire orientation, which should take a day or two at most, onboarding can last up to 12 months; what's important is not how long it takes for your employees to acclimate to their new role and the company culture, but how successful they can be as a result of your onboarding strategies and techniques.



Include a survey in the new hire paperwork (we've attached a tear-out sample at the end of this ebook!), check in with the new hire to track progress, and request survey responses at the end of the onboarding process. This will allow you to measure, iterate and optimize over time.



## 2 Train Your Managers to Support Your Retention Efforts

From studying millions of managers and organizations worldwide, Gallup has found that “the role of the manager is a dominant factor in the employee experience – from onboarding and performance to development and retention.” In fact, only 15% of employees are engaged at work and one in two have left their job “to get away” from their manager at some point in their career.

While poor managers cost the US economy nearly \$400 billion annually, the three in 10 who possess at least a basic talent for management contribute to a combined 48% higher profit for their companies.

Being an effective manager isn't easy, and it's the role of human resources leaders and C-suite executives to train mid-level management to create a culture conducive to team success.

Most importantly, this must include:

- Embracing and soliciting feedback
- Celebrating successes
- Intelligent delegating and collaboration
- Maintaining consistency in policies and vision
- Coaching and mentorship
- Flexibility
- Inclusion and equity



# 3 Commit to Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

According to Forbes Insights, “a diverse and inclusive workforce is crucial for companies that want to attract and retain top talent.” Indeed, 62% of employees between the ages of 18 and 34 – and more than half of all employees – believe their company needs to improve diversity, and 67% of job candidates are actively seeking out companies distinguished for their diverse workforce.

Of course, it’s not enough to hire a diverse workforce; if the (diversity of) people you hire don’t feel they are treated fairly and respectfully, are known and appreciated for their unique value, and belong to the group, they’ll quickly become disengaged, damaging employee morale and accelerating turnover.

Furthermore, as Dr. David Rock, a thought leader in the human-performance coaching field, explains, “You can’t eliminate bias simply by outlawing it.”

So, in addition to actively recruiting from a larger, more diverse talent base, you need to *evangelize* diversity and inclusion across your organization and facilitate radical inclusion and equity by:

- Focusing on intervention (and not only bias reduction)
- Inviting your employees to help the organization better identify points of conflict and possible resolutions
- Focusing on workplace (and not personal) issues
- Keeping the conversation going to maintain accountability
- Providing resources that educate and empower employees
- Staying flexible in content and delivery



**Lacking diversity? *You're not alone.*** Many companies are not only reimagining their recruitment process but reconnecting with their employees to ensure everyone feels respected, valued, and included. [Download My Guide to Achieving Diversity](#)



## 4 Encourage Flexibility

Ninety-seven percent of employees are looking to be a “flexible worker” in the long term, and more than three quarters of workers say they’d be “more loyal” to their employers if they offered flexible work options. In fact, more than a third of remote employees say they’d be willing to take a pay cut of up to 10% to continue working from home, and companies that allow employees to work from home experience 25% less turnover.

So, instead of allowing team leaders to dictate work schedules, create a work-from-home policy, and offer it to all your employees. Then, train your managers to be flexible in extenuating circumstances and accommodate their employees in need.

If the nature of the work performed by your organization does not allow for full-time remote work, create an employee incentive program with additional remote work days as a reward.

## 5 Never Stop Communicating

One of the most common causes of employee discontent is lack of communication, which

often stems from top-down decision making with weak downstream channels. Human resources leaders and C-suite executives must make it a priority to consistently communicate objectives, instructions, decisions and opportunities – as well as provide constructive criticism and praise – to mid-level management, and train and encourage managers to do the same for their teams.

To facilitate ongoing and seamless communication:

- Actively strive to create a work environment that encourages open dialogue
- Create avenues for employees to provide suggestions to and ask questions of senior leadership
- Set goals for the month, quarter and year, and hold meetings to encourage and celebrate progress toward these goals
- Solicit formal feedback by distributing an anonymous survey or questionnaire that employees can complete on a monthly or quarterly basis
- At the beginning or end of meetings, inform staff that they can always email with suggestions – and that their input would be appreciated
- Split team and one-on-one check-ins into two segments for reviews and feedback, or restructure them as open-ended conversations aimed at shared successes and learning experiences

# 6 Incorporate Learning and Development into Everything You Do

It nearly goes without saying that the best way to prevent an employee from finding a better opportunity elsewhere is to offer them that opportunity within. Indeed, hiring from within not only provides a clear path to greater compensation and responsibility for the individual, it improves overall morale and retention by demonstrating to employees that they are valued and crucial to the success of the organization.

Of course, to ensure you're hiring the best candidates from within, you need to create a work environment that facilitates skills development and professional growth.

As LinkedIn explains in its guide *How Learning Programs Attract and Retain Top Talent*, "your organization needs to be a place where people advance their career. It needs to be a place where people are given opportunities to learn new skills and take on new challenges."

The LinkedIn survey of more than 10,500 recent job changers found that lack of advancement opportunity was the number-one driver of job change. Likewise, 83% of respondents to a survey by SHRM said

career advancement was "important" or "very important," and 78% said a clear career path would compel them to stay longer at their current organization.

To reduce your employee turnover:

- Include stipends and/or paid time off for learning and development in your benefits package
- Create and implement a peer mentorship program
- Integrate learning in every project and task, encouraging employees to ask questions and learn by doing

"Investing in your employees' education can help retain talent and intellectual property at a time when there's stiff competition for both," says Kevin Griffin, an IT advisor at Falco Enterprises and former CIO of GE Capital. "The need for new skill sets and evolving roles are in demand at a rapidly growing rate, so putting someone on a career path that doesn't have any room to develop is not only a career-limiting move for the employee, but a business-limiting move for the company."

# 7 Offer the Best Perks, Incentives and Benefits

In a gratitude survey of 2,000 Americans by the John Templeton Foundation, 81% percent said they'd be willing to work harder for an appreciative boss, and 70% said they'd feel better about themselves and their efforts if their boss thanked them more regularly. Happy workers are 13% more productive, so be sure your managers thank their employees publicly for their hard work (and not only for results), develop an incentive program, and reward successes with employee spotlights and creative gifts and perks. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, provide the benefits your employees want and need. Along with work flexibility and learning and development opportunities, these should include:

## A. Mental and behavioral health care

Even before the pandemic, the vast majority of workers believed their employers should have a mental health policy, according to a survey commissioned by Zapier. With COVID-19 and subsequent quarantine efforts creating short- and long-term psychosocial and behavioral health implications, the need has increased dramatically. In November 2020, the National Center for Health Statistics found that 36.3% of adults admitted having anxiety disorder symptoms, up from only 8.2% the year before, and a recent report from Mental Health America indicates that high rates of anxiety, as well as depression, are expected to continue.

## B. Paid Sick Leave and PTO

For years, the trend in HR had been to combine

sick and vacation days into one PTO bank, but this led to an increase in employees reporting to work sick rather than using one of their days, which increased the spread of illness in the workplace.

Now, with worker safety considerations at an all-time high, many employers are:

- Reverting back to distinguishing between sick days and PTO, encouraging employees to stay home when they feel ill (in line with CDC recommendations)
- Offering unlimited PTO, which not only improves employee retention (and recruitment) but benefits the business by preventing carryover and payouts
- Allowing employees to donate their excess PTO to fellow employees who may need additional time off, improving team morale

### C. In-Home Care Delivery

“While the pandemic certainly accelerated the transition away from facilities to home care, the transition has been underway for some time,” Paul Kusserow, CEO and President of Amedisys, tells Home Health Care News. “Care in the home is the most economical for all payers. It’s where patients want to receive their care – and it has proven, quality outcomes.”

Especially if your staff is still working remotely, even part time, you will definitely want to consider providing access to this type of care, whether for medical, behavioral or palliative care, or even social services.

### E. Digital Health

In addition to what has traditionally qualified as telemedicine or virtual care, employers are now offering stipends to employees to invest in other forms of digital self-care. This can include apps for meditation, sleep tracking, meal planning, physical fitness, and even maternity.

The annual fee for most mobile apps is relatively low, and some even offer bulk discounts to businesses and nonprofits, allowing HR departments to deliver significant ROI by demonstrating care for their employees at little financial cost.

### D. Telehealth and Virtual Care

As Business Group on Health explains in its 2021 report, “virtual care is here to stay.” When you offer virtual care to your employees, they have 24/7 access to everything they need to stay informed about their health and can make virtual appointments with a variety of doctors and other providers at times that best suit their busy lives.

#### Twelve of The Most Highly Rated Wellness Apps:



Calm



Headspace



Lifesum



MyFitnessPal



Sleep Cycle



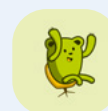
Nike Training



Strava



Mooda



Wakeout!



WOOP



Obé



Better Help

## F. Family Wellness and Care for Caregivers

A simple concept designed to address an immediate and long-term need, family wellness means extending wellness benefits to employees' families. At a time when travel outside the home is limited, more adults are working from home and some children are still homeschooling, offering financial assistance and other benefits to the entire family for much-needed stress relief will not only demonstrate your commitment and appreciation to your workers, it may directly impact your workers' physical and emotional health, as well as their productivity.

Since the pandemic began, parents have spent an additional 27 hours per week – or nearly the equivalent of a second job – on household chores, childcare and education, and about 50% feel that their work performance has suffered as a result, according to a survey by BCG.

While on-site preschools and nurseries were once the best employee benefit most workers could receive, forward-thinking companies are investing in alternatives that allow their employees to regain focus without worrying about their children.

Possible benefits could include more flexibility for your employee, such as allowing them to work early mornings or nights if they are homeschooling their child; extending

your paid family caregiver leave policy; providing in-home childcare; creating a childcare referral service with stipends for childcare expenses; and offering a caregiving assistance program that provides online education and support to caregivers.

Post-pandemic, these benefits could apply also to remote workers or employees who work from home part time.



## G. Personalized Wellness and Tailored Benefits

Employee benefits allow you to not only attract but retain your best workers because they improve morale and engagement, and build trust and commitment. With startups and other forward-thinking businesses offering more benefits – and more creative benefits – to attract potential employees, the competition has never been greater for HR leaders to think creatively about what would improve the productivity and effectiveness – and the lives – of their employees.

Examples should be targeted at *your* workforce, and could include:

- Student loan repayment programs
- Continuing education and college tuition reimbursement
- Pet insurance
- Summer camps and higher education investments (like 529 plans) for dependents
- Health coaching, on-demand fitness classes or gym memberships
- Meditation, yoga, acupuncture and massage
- Self-care subscription services
- Meal plans and snacks
- Happy hours
- Half days and mental health days
- Volunteering opportunities
- Commuting travel stipends or car service
- Vacation travel vouchers
- Local one-day or weekend retreats
- Additional holidays like Election Day and Juneteenth

During COVID, simple, cost-effective solutions may include laundry and dry-cleaning services, household management resources, errand running or concierge services, meal plans like DoorDash, and memberships to online and virtual wellness resources.

## H. Financial Wellness and Emergency Savings Accounts

It's well known that the majority of workers live paycheck to paycheck, and approximately 40% of US households would struggle to cover a \$400 emergency expense. Needless to say, this produces great financial stress and, according to SHRM, financial stress causes a 34% increase in work absenteeism and tardiness.

Unfortunately, since the outbreak of COVID-19, more employees are financially stressed than ever, whether it's due to increased medical costs, unforeseen expenses, stock market volatility, a partner losing a job, cuts to pay, raises or bonuses, or simply the fear of becoming unemployed.

To provide financial assistance, you could create payroll-deduction emergency savings accounts or offer student loan debt contributions or tuition fee reimbursements. To reduce financial stress and assist with long-term financial health, you could offer complimentary meetings with financial advisors, host workshops on topics like reducing debt or budget planning, develop a partnership with a company that specializes in employee financial planning, or provide a stipend for digital financial tools that provide on-demand financial advice or customized training and e-learning to improve financial literacy.

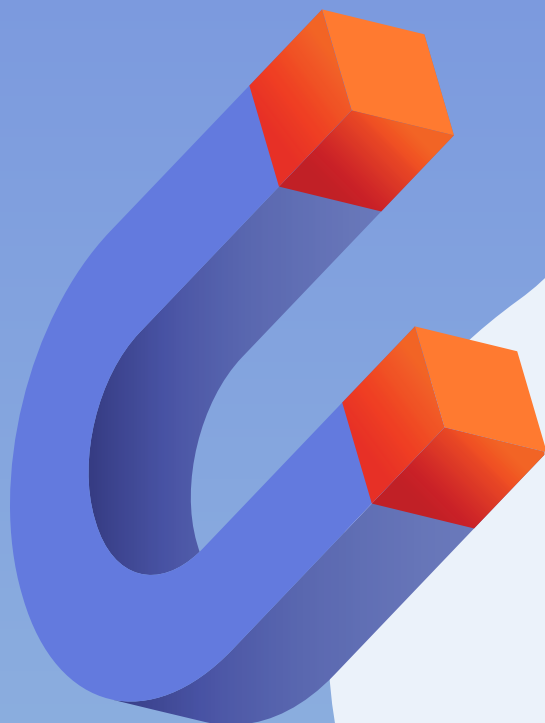
# How to Attract Top Talent, During and After COVID



More than 80% of Fortune 500 executives believe their companies don't recruit highly talented people, and with an increasingly global, remote workforce and The Great Resignation in full swing, the competition for top talent has never been greater.

Fortunately, offering a path to financial wellness is an optimal way to not only retain but attract top talent — and it's not nearly the only one. Plus, despite all the job postings and all the ad dollars spent on employer branding, there is great opportunity to separate yourself from your competitors, produce positive ROI, and recruit the future leaders of your organization.

Here are nine ways to take your talent recruitment to the next level.



# 1 Develop Your Recruiting Strategy

A recruiting strategy is your formal plan of action for successfully identifying, attracting, recruiting and hiring high-quality candidates for your open positions.

## A. Define Your Goals

Common goals may include:

- Growing headcount
- Improving diversity
- Reducing the cost of making a new hire
- Reducing the time taken to make a new hire
- Streamlining recruitment processes
- Empowering hiring managers to be more involved in the hiring process
- Becoming less reliant on external recruiters
- Building a stronger talent pipeline

## B. Define Your KPIs

As with any other initiative in business, your talent recruitment efforts must be measurable, and measured. Not only will your company executives expect quantifiable results, setting goals and key performance indicators will allow you to track progress and optimize your process.

In creating your talent acquisition goals, Indeed

recommends following the SMART goal setting framework, ensuring each goal is:

- Specific, like filling a particular role or creating a new team
- Measurable, with specific target KPIs such as the number of qualified candidates per job post
- Achievable, given your available resources
- Realistic, or aligned with your department's and organization's larger business objectives
- Time-based, with a target timeframe for when the goal will be achieved

Indeed has also identified the following KPIs as effective for measuring success against recruitment strategies:

- Number of qualified candidates per job post
- Time to hire
- Offer acceptance rate
- Source of hire
- Cost per hire

## C. Forecast Your Future Hiring Needs

Before you can start attracting and nurturing top talent, you need to plan your approach and budget. To estimate your hiring needs, speak with your managers to identify:

- Likely promotions
- Likely attrition and turnover
- Growth needs (e.g., new positions or teams)
- Skill gaps



## D. Profile Your Ideal Candidate Types

Create candidate profiles (or personas), based on your most talented and engaged employees and top recruits.

- Use your candidate database to identify trends in the types of people most likely to apply
- Speak to your most recent hires about what attracted them to apply
- Conduct interviews with the types of people you would ideally like to employ in the future to understand their motivations (try offering a gift card in exchange for a phone or video interview)
- Talk to your hiring managers about the types of candidates producing the most success
- Conduct an employee survey to learn more about the people who make your business successful (we've attached a tear-out sample at the end of this ebook!)

## E. Develop Your Sourcing Strategy

Common recruitment channels include:

- Careers site
- Digital and print advertising
- Social media and influencer marketing
- General, geographical and niche job boards
- Review sites
- Recruitment agencies
- Employee referrals
- Existing talent pools
- Job fairs and campus recruiting

## F. Refine Your Selection Process

The best way to retain top talent is to attract the right talent at the start. To optimize your selection process, ensure it:

- Gives every candidate equal opportunity
- Keeps your best candidates engaged throughout
- Includes hiring managers and other key personnel
- Minimizes admin

### Minimizing Admin

To streamline your recruitment and hiring processes:

- Introduce blind hiring, or the removal of information from résumés and applications that could result in conscious or unconscious bias during the selection process
- Use candidate scorecards to standardize and quantify your process
- Use an applicant tracking system and/or interview scheduling app
- Optimize your candidate communications, from your job descriptions to your scheduling emails, ensuring prospects have all the information they might need

## 2 Showcase Your Employee Value Proposition

While most company websites have an “about us” page, many don’t successfully demonstrate the value of working for that company. Likewise, though most companies post on social media, and some also have Glassdoor, LinkedIn or Indeed profiles, they often don’t follow clearly defined strategies for attracting top talent. So, before you even consider posting an open position online, coordinate with your marketing team to create a strategy and supporting content that will effectively showcase to potential employees what it’s like to work for your company. Expand the “about us” and “careers” sections of your website to include engaging, rich content that inspires and intrigues – and link to your profile on third-party sites like Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Indeed, Yelp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Then, enhance your profile on these sites using iterations of the same branded content to support your messaging and stand out from your competitors.

### **Not sure what qualifies as *engaging, rich content*? Here are three tips:**

**1. Use your employees.** Ask executives and managers at your organization for employees who could serve as compelling brand evangelists, and offer these employees the opportunity – with incentives, if necessary – to tell their stories of career transformation. As Gallop writes in its *Guide to Great Managers*, “Happy, healthy employees mean a better culture and a more productive, profitable company. They love their jobs and spread the word – setting you up to hire and keep more top talent.”


**2. Use your competitors.** Research what your top competitors are doing on their websites and social media accounts for inspiration; there’s no law against doing what they do, but better

**3. Use video.** Nothing expresses a feeling or emotion better than sight and sound together, so create videos to tell your story; this could include employee testimonials, interviews with senior leaders, behind-the-scenes office snapshots, animated company overviews, or whatever else you can think of that is fun, unique and true to your brand and company culture.



# 3 Make Your Job Posts, Ads and Applications Stand Out

There are 1.3-million employers on Glassdoor and 10 jobs added per second on Indeed, so separating yourself and your job listings is critically important to attracting top talent and meeting your target KPIs. Here are four tips for standing out:

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1. Shed the corporate veneer and get personal. Speak to potential hires, and whenever possible let your employees do the talking.
  2. Get creative in telling your company story, detailing an open position, defining an ideal candidate, or soliciting applications. Use videos and graphics, share anecdotes and testimonials, ask unique questions, and encourage atypical responses.
  3. Highlight your company culture. Detail for potential hires not only what would be expected of them in a particular role, but what they could expect from the company and their fellow employees. This will demonstrate your organization's commitment to its employees, as well as help you filter out potential candidates who would not excel in your work environment.
  4. Promote the perks. No matter what they are, display them prominently and provide as much detail as possible.

## 4 Offer More and Better Perks

Take your cues from companies like Facebook and Google – if you don't offer perks, you should. Survey your associates to ascertain what they'd most appreciate. Then coordinate with your financial department, C-suite and team leaders to determine what creative incentives you can reasonably offer beyond the traditional benefits. This could include work-from-home days, matching 401(k), stock options, mental health days, free food, gym memberships, childcare, company retreats, and more. What's most important is not what you offer, but that you offer your employees rewards for their hard work.



## 5 Be Flexible

While most perks could fall under the nice to have category, work flexibility – like health insurance and vacation time – is becoming a non-negotiable for more and more workers. Indeed, 97% of employees are looking to be a “flexible worker” in the long term, and more than three quarters of workers say they'd be “more loyal” to their employers if they offered flexible work options. So, create a companywide work-from-home policy, and offer it to all of your employees. Then, train your managers to be flexible in extenuating circumstances and accommodate their employees in need. If the nature of the work performed by your organization does not allow for full-time remote work, create an employee incentive program with additional remote work days as a reward.



## 6 Demonstrate Your Commitment to Learning, Development and Advancement

As LinkedIn explains in its guide, *How Learning Programs Attract and Retain Top Talent*, “to attract top talent, your organization needs to be a place where people advance their career. It needs to be a place where people are given opportunities to learn new skills and take on new challenges. And job candidates need to know about it.”

LinkedIn surveyed more than 10,500 recent job changers globally and found that lack of advancement opportunity was the number-one driver of job change. This was particularly true of millennials, the fastest growing segment of the workforce; 66% expected to leave their current job by the end of the year, and 63% believed their leadership skills were not being fully developed.

Likewise, 83% of respondents to a survey by SHRM, said career advancement was “important” or “very important,” and 78% said a clear career path would compel them to stay longer at their current organization. Meanwhile, only 20% reported being “very satisfied” with how their employers were managing their professional growth.

### **To ensure job candidates know about the opportunities within your organization:**

1. Include stipends or paid time off for learning and development in your benefits package
2. Explain how a new hire can learn, grow and advance in your job descriptions
3. Clearly define your commitment to learning and development in the careers section of your website, stating the mission and goals of your learning program and highlighting specific programs and technologies your employees have leveraged to enhance their skills and advance their careers
4. Add employee testimonials to your website and social profiles, featuring employees describing how they’ve developed new skills, used learning to transform their careers or advanced into leadership roles at your organization

# 7 Network, Network, Network

One of the most effective recruitment strategies has always been to leverage the networks of your existing employees – and there’s no reason to believe your top talent can’t attract top talent today. Employee referral programs have been known to improve the quality of new hires, increase employee retention, and save time and money on the hiring process. So, incorporate a referral program into your recruiting strategy, and follow these the helpful tips in developing your program:

- 1.** Coordinate with management to help set hiring goals, allocate the necessary resources, and promote the program within the organization
- 2.** Set clear, measurable KPIs and goals for the program, including number of referrals, number of referrals hired, placements through referrals versus other recruiting methods, length of time referred candidates have stayed with the company, and how managers and employees rate the program
- 3.** Create a simplified referral process, using an online referral tool, Google form, or email template
- 4.** Announce the program and provide clear instructions via email, intranet, Google doc or another method, and consider adding program information to your new hire onboarding documentation
- 5.** Offer a variety of incentives, including bonuses, paid time off and gifts
- 6.** Empower and inspire your employees by polling them on preferred incentives, hosting contests among teams, and publicly recognizing top referrers
- 7.** Integrate referrals into your company culture by hosting a launch event and periodic recognition parties, as well as promoting the program through your internal communications department
- 8.** Track your progress against your goals and KPIs, and iterate and optimize based on your findings

## Expand Your Network

Of course, like hiring from within, recruiting from the same talent pools can be limiting for organizations looking to invest in diversity, inclusion and equity — and reap the benefits.

When you recruit talent from outside your geographical area or immediate networks, you can attract workers who are typically:

- More diverse in their backgrounds, perspectives and skill sets
- More inspired and energized
- More adept at newer, increasingly advanced technologies
- Earlier in their careers
- At lower pay grades

In fact, according to Forbes Insights, “a diverse and inclusive workforce is crucial for companies that want to attract and retain top talent,” and studies show that a commitment to diversity and inclusion improves decision making, creativity and innovation, productivity, reputation, and employee wellness, morale, engagement and retention.

But that’s not all. Highly inclusive organizations are 120% more capable of meeting financial targets and generate 1.4 times more revenue and 2.3 times more cash flow per employee.

## 8 Don't Rush, But Don't Delay

“Never ever compromise a hire,” warns Liane Hornsey, the former chief people officer at Google and Uber and now EVP & Chief People Officer at Palo Alto Networks. She once left a position open for a year and a half because, while candidates with the applicable technical skills had applied, she couldn’t find someone who shared the company’s core values. For Hornsey, filling a role quickly is never more important than finding the right fit. So, if you’re having difficulty attracting top talent that meets all of your needs, consider not only looking outward by expanding your network but looking inward to better understand and articulate your employer value proposition and fine tune your job posting.

On the other hand, don’t prolong your recruitment and hiring process when you do feel positively about a candidate, particularly for less complex roles. Oftentimes, when a hiring manager or human resources department deliberates and delays the process, the candidate loses interest, finds another opportunity or is actively recruited by a competitor.

In addition to attracting top talent, winning the talent wars may boil down to toeing the fine line between jumping the gun and dragging your feet. (Of course, when you’re not sure, you can always count on MBL.)

# The Great Resignation and Beyond: Your Top Priorities in a New Era of HR

As the talent wars rage on, and you work to fine tune your talent recruitment and retention policies and practices, be sure to consider the following HR priorities identified by Gallup in a survey of 800 HR professionals in 60 countries across all major industries.



- 1 [Redacted]
- 2 [Redacted]
- 3 [Redacted]



# Building Critical Skills and Competencies

While at least a third of HR leaders agree that a lack of understanding of existing skill gaps and difficulty integrating continuing education into employee workflows may be a hindrance, nearly seven out of 10 consider growing critical skills and competencies to be the number-one priority for their department.

For this effort to be effective, though, HR professionals cannot rely on the traditional predictive approach to skills development, which Gartner research shows amounts to employees applying only 37% of the new skills they learn.

With a dynamic, “future-forward” approach, employees are able to apply 75% of the new skills learned, which is critical in an era in which the total number of skills needed for an individual role increases 10% every year, and one third of the skills present on an average job posting one year is no longer needed at all only four years later.

## **The dynamic approach includes three primary elements:**

- 1.** Anticipate and adapt to skill shifts as they occur, and empower a cross-organizational network of stakeholders who can identify and address skills as they shift in real time
- 2.** Abandon or decrease the use of traditional learning and development tactics like classroom training and e-learning libraries, and identify and incorporate strategies that leverage existing resources like content, people and skill adjacencies to develop new skills solutions
- 3.** Create channels for employees and the organization to exchange skills information for mutually beneficial and flexible skills development

For those skills that cannot be nurtured within the organization, HR professionals should continue to rely on outside recruitment – but using new tactics.

**Instead of replacing individuals by seeking similar candidates from within your network and among those attracted to the existing employee value proposition, prioritize skills, expand your network, and evolve the value proposition to appeal to changing candidate wants and needs.**

# Organizational Design and Change Management

In trying to adapt to the effects of the pandemic, many businesses have discovered that their historical focus on efficiency has created rigidity in their organizational design, workflows and networks that don't allow them the flexibility they need in today's fast-changing world. As a result, almost 50% consider organizational design and change management as the top priority for human resources.

According to Gartner research, only 19% of HR leaders believe their workforce can effectively change direction in response to changing needs or priorities, and fewer than four in 10 think their employees know whether they're focused on the right priorities for their clients.

Future-forward work design is what's needed to ensure employees can anticipate changes in needs and adapt their approach accordingly – and it's the responsibility of HR leaders to rethink work design strategies to overcome work friction across the organization.

To achieve this, work design must align with how work is actually done; it should not be the responsibility of employees to create processes where none exist, or create work hacks around the way their business unit is structured.

Gartner research shows that ongoing adjustments increase workforce responsiveness by 11% and drive 11% more employees to exert high discretionary effort – and the best way for HR to ensure that regular adjustments take place is to embed them into broader ongoing talent initiatives.



To prevent teams from being overwhelmed, **focus on outcomes, prioritize the highest-value tasks, and clarify desired outcomes and minimum inputs**



If resources are strapped, **devolve decision making and provide frontline employees with more ownership** since they often know best how resources should be allocated



When processes are too rigid, create a policy on how processes can flex to **enable more employee autonomy and ensure innovative ideas aren't diluted** by risk-averse consensus

# Current and Future Leadership

Strong leadership is especially important during a crisis, but only 44% of employees trust their organization's leaders to navigate times of great change. One of the biggest reasons is the lack of C-suite diversity.

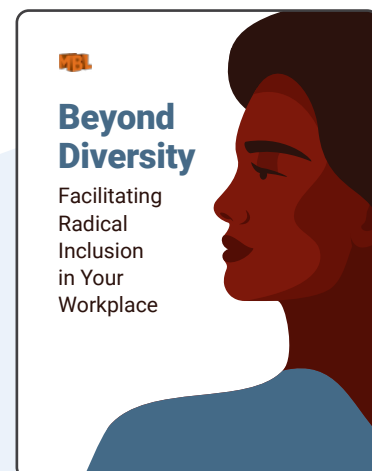
One solution is to not only employ a diversity and inclusion expert but incorporate them in a prominent role in the greater organization; these individuals are masters in creating connections, often have the most astute insights into the fundamental changes occurring in societies and companies, and have an unparalleled ability to identify opportunity, manage risk and transform the employee and client experience.

Instead of simply reinforcing the importance of mentoring, work directly with an employee's manager, and their manager, to define specific roles and responsibilities for development. This enables the employee to increase their senior-level exposure and spreads accountability across the organization.

**Rather than continue to pull from the same talent pools, force an intentional shift in your hiring practices to identify underrepresented talent. Then, ensure the future systems can identify potential successors, as well as facilitate inclusion and equity through networks and development.**

To tackle bias within your succession processes, redefine your model of who in the organization has the potential to be a successor (hint: it's anyone), and reengineer your process to focus on the role rather than the person.

For help, [use this guide](#)



## The Employee Experience

Not surprisingly, nearly a third of HR leaders now consider employee experience as their top priority. Indeed, pandemic or not, happy workers are more productive workers – and without a positive work environment workers aren't happy.

For historically brick-and-mortar organizations, and in organizations that did not offer work flexibility and remote work opportunities prior to the pandemic, the prospect of a future of indefinite remote work or a hybrid workforce has had what Gartner calls “huge implications,” with the “big concerns” being “how to preserve company culture with a more distributed workforce, and how to ensure employee experience evolves to keep up with employees’ expectations and needs in a changing environment.”

As Gartner explains, in “the hybrid work environment of the future,” employers, managers and employees can make location decisions together based on the understanding that the ultimate goal is for the work location to “drive the highest levels of productivity and engagement.”

For help, [use this guide](#)



## The Future of Work

With so much uncertainty, HR leaders are focused on the future, with 32% identifying it as a top priority. For many, the problem is that they don't know where to start; 62% don't have an explicit future of work strategy, and 37% struggle to adapt their talent strategies and processes with changes in their market. Plus, COVID-19 has significantly impacted the future of work, leading to new questions about post-COVID trends and how to plan for immediate and long-term adjustments like remote work, crisis management/response, and resilience.

According to Gartner, the “new imperative” is to **identify future of work trends relevant to your business by, for example, screening for relevance, impact and opportunity, to enable strategic and scenario planning.**



# Leading with Strategic HR

The talent field has changed, and human resources professionals are tasked not only with recruitment and benefits but guiding staff through an ever-shifting global pandemic, facilitating employee engagement and strengthening culture. The era of personnel management and administrative tasks is over. Today, the most successful companies are looking to support core business strategies with human resource strategy focused on talent acquisition, growth, and retention, as well as recruitment branding, employee value propositions, diversity and inclusion, and more.

In fact, says Arianna Huffington, “a distinctive feature of the coronavirus pandemic has been to elevate the role of the [chief human resource officer (CHRO)], who is often visibly helping CEOs manage the present and lead their companies into the future.”

This means the best HR leaders will not only help their organization but reposition HR as a strategic thought-partner and decision-maker. So what is strategic human resource management (HRM)? And what are the most effective HRM strategies?



# Strategic Human Resource Management

According to John Storey, professor of human resource management at The Open University, strategic HR is a distinctive approach to employee management that seeks to gain a competitive advantage for the organization by integrating and leveraging cultural, structural and personnel techniques to deploy a more highly committed and capable workforce. While there is no one universal definition of strategic HR management, the primary principle is to connect the HR function to the primary business objectives and improve business performance by developing and maintaining a work culture that inspires innovation.

The framework of HR as a strategic partner developed in the early 2000s, triggered in the late 1990s by a “new mandate for human resources” by David Ulrich, co-founder of The RBL Group and a university professor, author, speaker and management coach. At the time, Ulrich said, HR had become “often ineffective, incompetent and costly,” and should instead be defined by “results that enrich the organization’s value to customers, investors and employees.”

Ever since, HR’s role has been “facilitating that clear line of sight between the overall values and goals of an organization and what the individual employee recognizes as their specific contribution.” However, as *HR Magazine* points out, “an ongoing challenge for many businesses appears to be getting line managers to bring HRM policies and practices to life.”

In companies with effective strategic human resource management leadership, the HR department develops and implements programs that help solve the organization’s business problems and contribute to its long-term business objectives. When HR collaborates with the C-suite, the needs of the business guide the actions of human resources, and HR helps the business achieve its goals. In top-performing HR departments, this synergy drives every initiative.

The benefits of this synergy are extensive. The more closely HR and an organization’s leadership are aligned, the more effectively the company can anticipate and respond to changing needs and promote employee productivity and organizational success.

# Developing Your Strategic HR Plan

A strategic HR plan should include HR initiatives that promote the behaviors, culture and competencies needed to achieve the goals of the larger organization.

## The best strategic HRM strategies:

- Are based on an analysis of the organization and the external environment
- Take longer than a year to implement
- Shape the character and direction of the HR department
- Guide the allocation and deployment of organizational resources
- Shape the company culture
- Are revised on a yearly basis, and whenever necessary
- Incorporate the expert judgment of senior HR leadership and/or a third-party HR consultancy like MBL
- Target and track against quantitative key performance indicators
- Result in specific behaviors

## Your strategic HR plan could include:

- Assessing staffing and skills needs, and developing a dynamic, future-forward approach to training and development
- Developing and maintaining competitive compensation and benefits packages
- Designing and managing performance and rewards systems
- Analyzing competitors' recruitment and retention practices
- Creating policies, procedures and practices to facilitate diversity, inclusion and equity



## In developing your HR strategy, follow these five steps:

1. Evaluate the current situation, and conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of your organization
2. Envision and articulate a desired future, and create a vision statement that is inspirational, aspirational, compelling and concise
3. Formulate the strategy, with clear objectives that are relevant to the organization's position in the external market, recognize the organization's strengths and weaknesses, can be achieved and measured, reflect the organization's overall strategy, and can be effectively communicated and supported throughout the organization
4. Identify the primary actions required to achieve the objectives, set milestones for each action, plan contingencies, and determine the necessary resources
5. Establish mechanisms for evaluating progress, as well as opportunities to adapt and update accordingly

# Cultivating Your Strategic HR Skills

To lead a strategic HR department, be sure to grow the following skills:



Business expertise: understanding and speaking the language of the business



Change management: preparing and supporting individuals, teams and organizations in effecting organizational change



Organizational engineering: improving organizational efficiency, effectiveness, communication and coordination



Culture management: fostering a work environment that helps all employees contribute and collaborate at their full potential



Data analysis: inspecting, cleansing, transforming and modeling data to identify useful information, draw conclusions and support decision making



Marketing: leveraging happy employees as ideal brand ambassadors to customers, prospects and recruits





# Winning the Talent Wars

The workplace was changing well before the COVID-19 outbreak, but 2020 answered any remaining questions about whether we'd return to the brick-and-mortar office standard and 2021 demonstrated that workers are willing to sacrifice security for a people-centric work environment (whether that's at home, in the office, or built in to some hybrid model). Indeed, as Joe Galvin, chief research officer for Vistage, writes in *Inc.*, "Employees are finding themselves in the driver's seat with unprecedented leverage when it comes to how and where they want to work."

This is why employers are increasing their compensation and "explicitly advertising flexible work schedules," according to ZipRecruiter labor economist Julia Pollack, and why Wall Street firms are offering Peloton Bikes, five-figure bonuses, mental health days and additional vacation days to keep their young employees motivated and happy. This is why it's time to move past questions of whether company culture matters or how remote work works to more important inquiries regarding the employee experience. It's time to shift focus from efficiency to resiliency, built on community.

**So, are you prepared to strategically lead your HR department in retaining and recruiting top talent by embracing The Great Reassessment?**



# The **MBL** Difference

If you're looking for guidance on employee retention and recruitment, or human resource strategy, there's no better solution than MBL. At MBL, we are a true partner. We think of our work as building relationships, not as a business transaction. It's our mission to learn as much about your company and its needs as possible, so we can act as your guiding force. We will share our vast network of carriers, technology and wellness providers, and more, so you can keep your employees happy, attract new talent, and boost your bottom line.

[Consult with our advisors](#)





# The New Hire and Employee Survey



What is your educational background? \_\_\_\_\_

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What type of company do you typically work for?

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How would you describe your career so far? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is your current role? \_\_\_\_\_

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What made you get into this industry? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does your typical work day entail? \_\_\_\_\_

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How did you choose or realize your specialty(ies)? \_\_\_\_\_

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What skills and tools do you use most? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you define corporate culture, and how important is the culture of where you work? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you learn new information to improve your work performance? \_\_\_\_\_

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# The New Hire and Employee Survey



How is your performance measured? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your interests outside of work? \_\_\_\_\_

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What have been the most important factors contributing to your success in this role? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are the most important benefits an employer could offer? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your biggest professional challenges? \_\_\_\_\_

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Where do you look for new job opportunities? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your biggest personal challenges? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you like about our application process?

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What are your goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why did you accept the job? \_\_\_\_\_

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