PEOPLESCOUT
NEXT

FROM ADVICE TO ADVANTAGE

CONTENTS Q3/Q4 | 2020

63

45

NEXT

LOOKING AHEAD

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Meet the experts who contributed to this issue.

PEOPLESCOUT
NEXT

WELCOME

I am honored to be part of the PeopleScout team, the broader PeopleScout community and our PeopleScout NEXT publication—which just celebrated its second anniversary with a gold win in the 2020 Muse Creative Awards.

Also, as we move toward the end a year that has brought unprecedented adversity to individuals and organizations around the globe, I am honored to be at the helm of PeopleScout and our purpose-driven pursuit to find, engage and deliver the best talent. I find our mission deeply meaningful—especially at a time when having the right talent powering your business is more critical than ever.

Organizations today face an unpredictable future, but there are a few things that remain certain: the importance of finding the right talent to meet your business needs and ensuring that you have the right tools and technology to connect with the best talent efficiently and safely.

This issue of NEXT dives into those important topics and continues to focus on the concepts we introduced earlier this year as a response to COVID-19. This issue is again presented in three sections: New: Tackling the Challenges of 2020; Now: How to Be There for Employees in Response to Today's Most Pressing Issues; and Next: Looking Ahead. In the Now section you'll find an important special feature on Diversity and Inclusion. In it, we dig into the importance of inclusion, how to create effective employee resource groups and more.

Additionally, this issue contains a feature on workforce flexibility and what that means in today's world of remote work. You'll also hear from several of our internal subject matter experts on topics like why now is a great time for talent pipelining, the benefits of RPO in our new normal, how MSP and contingent labor programs can help maintain business continuity and how the pandemic is affecting your employer brand.

Thank you for being a part of the PeopleScout community and for the warm welcome you've extended as I've stepped into my new role. Over my first few weeks, I've had the opportunity to speak with many of our clients. For those of you I have yet to connect with, I look forward to getting to know you and your unique talent programs over the coming weeks and months.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact me or your PeopleScout partner directly to share your feedback on this issue of NEXT, discuss how we can best support you during COVID-19 and beyond or share anything else that may be on your mind.

From Now to Next,

Brannon Lacey
PeopleScout President

**YOUR GLOBAL
TALENT PARTNER FROM**

NOW TO
NEXT

NEW

TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF 2020

PREPARING & PLANNING FOR A HIRING RECOVERY

By **CHRIS GOULD**
Client Portfolio Leader

I don't need to tell you how different the world, economy and talent landscape look today compared to just nine months ago; we've all experienced it within our organizations, on our teams and in our own homes. However, despite the uncertainty of 2020, we can be sure that the job market will recover and hiring will begin in earnest once again. And, although we don't know exactly when this will happen, now is the time to prepare.

As I write this article, we are moving into fall in the U.S. Cities and states are reopening at different rates, and some regions are shutting down or adding new restrictions as clusters of COVID-19 cases pop up. Meanwhile, employers are dealing with new challenges as students head back to school – leaving parents functioning as both employee and teacher – and several large companies are anticipating new rounds of furloughs and layoffs.

On top of all that, how do you plan for your organization to start hiring again? In this article, I'll outline: the biggest challenges employers will face; how a recruitment process outsourcing provider is uniquely positioned to help with a hiring surge; and what employers should be doing right now.

A CHALLENGE OF SCALE

First, employers preparing for recovery face the issue of scaling their internal talent acquisition teams. Unfortunately, throughout the crisis, many have had to make reductions to their teams, limit or cancel contracts, and set aside projects. However, scaling back up in anticipation of a hiring surge isn't a simple process because the individuals who were laid off or furloughed may have found other positions inside or outside of your organization, or there may be another reason that they're unavailable for work.

This creates three questions about how to manage your internal team when you need to ramp up hiring again:

01 How quickly do you want to rebuild your own talent acquisition team?

02 How much risk do you want to take with the internal operational cost involved in pulling those workers back?

03 How realistic is it for a team to take on all of the challenges included in your hiring recovery, including reigniting talent pipelines and implementing new technology?

Meanwhile, the shift in the economy makes answering these questions more complicated. Plus, at many organizations, we're already starting to see that recovery hiring volumes will be higher than those that the previous team was managing. For instance, organizations like retail stores and quick-service restaurant chains have been operating with low staff. But, eventually, they'll need to undergo

a large hiring surge to get back to normal staffing levels before leveling out to their pre-pandemic hiring volumes. What's more, even if you decide to bring back your full internal talent acquisition team, you'll need to decide if they'll be able to handle this additional, temporary volume.

The other factor to consider when evaluating if your internal team is prepared to scale is the current high unemployment rate, which will translate into high applicant volumes. Nine months ago was one of the most difficult job markets to hire in; it was challenging to find someone for virtually every job, and recruiters were dealing with low volumes of

applicants. Fast forward to today and now we're seeing scores – if not hundreds – of applicants for every job posting. As such, talent acquisition teams will have to deal with not only more job postings, but also more applicants – which could potentially create a poor candidate experience if recruiters are overwhelmed and don't follow up with candidates.

So, to be prepared to take on higher hiring volumes, employers need to decide whether they will build their internal team or work with a partner. And, for leaders looking to reduce risk as recovery continues and the future is uncertain, working with an RPO provider is the best solution.

THE VALUE OF RPO

As an RPO provider, PeopleScout can immediately fill in the gaps and help teams scale. Specifically, we bring the expertise, the insights from across our client base and the people needed to supplement spikes in hiring.

Furthermore, depending on the needs of each organization, we can also: create a more automated hiring process; bring technology solutions; assist with sourcing strategies; or work on diversity and inclusion projects. Plus, we can provide value either through ongoing, operational support or on a strategic, project-by-project basis. Essentially, an RPO provider can provide businesses with the flexibility and scalability they need for the next several months – and potentially longer as the virus continues to affect the economy.

At PeopleScout, we have clients across different industries, segments of the market, geographies and sizes. As you can imagine, each client has its own unique situation, solutions, best practices and lessons learned. As a result, we can bring that broad expertise to each of our clients and use that experience to craft the best solution for each employer's needs.

In particular, when I think about the current challenges of scale from an RPO perspective, there are two significant ways in which we can help: 1) We can supplement internal talent acquisition teams by bringing in additional recruiters, and 2) we can add technology – automation technology and digital tools – to handle the increase in volume of hires and applications.

The best part is that when it comes to scaling with an RPO partner, the process is seamless on the employer's end. That's because we: develop a relationship as early as possible and train our teams on your processes; introduce them to your hiring managers; and prepare the right technology suite for your needs. That way, our teams are trained and ready to go, but we don't start our work until you are ready to hire. Then, when hiring begins, you don't have to worry about finding recruiters and getting them up to speed. Instead, when it's time to flip the switch and start hiring, our teams are able to begin working very quickly.

At PeopleScout, we have two ways to accomplish our speed to scale:

Our industry-specialized flex team of recruiters can be activated on short notice

Our global delivery centers provide 24/7 support and recruiting capabilities that enable a faster recruitment process.

Consequently, we can scale up these experienced recruiters very quickly. Then, as your needs change, we can scale the team back down.

Our teams also rely on our technology solutions to ramp up quickly. With Affinix™ Virtual Interview Management, our teams can automate on-demand virtual interviews and allow candidates to self-schedule their own live interviews, thereby saving valuable time.
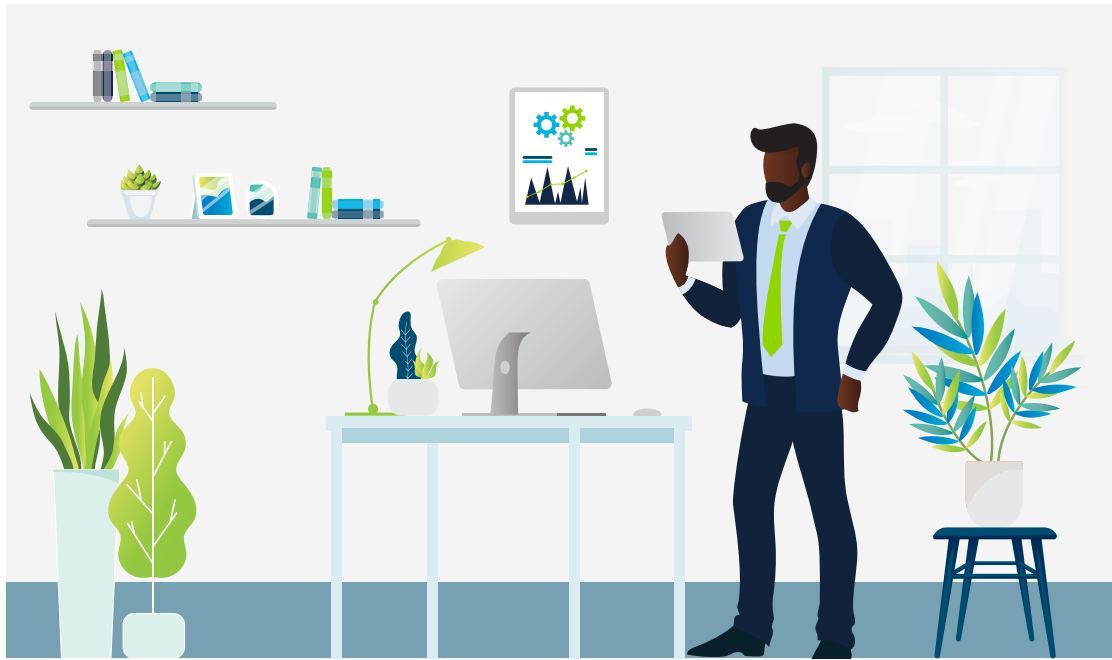
Here's an example of how quickly the process works: When one of our clients needed to ramp up immediately to provide aid after a major hurricane hit the southern U.S., PeopleScout quickly sourced and hired 100 workers in just three days.

From a client perspective, it's invisible. There's no risk in having to make investments, and there are no large teams to manage. You simply share with us what the demand is, and we build in processes to make sure that we're available to hit those ramps and, just as quickly, turn it off.

THE CONVERSATIONS YOU SHOULD HAVE NOW

Even if your organization is not ready to make hires now, you should begin having conversations about when and how you will hire when the time comes. That way, you won't have a week-long lead time.

If you haven't been hiring since the pandemic began, you may also need to revamp parts of your recruitment process for the health and safety of your employees and candidates. This means looking at a virtual solution that, depending on your needs, may include adding virtual interviews, interview scheduling, a remote offer and onboarding process or more. Now is the best time to work with your RPO provider to have the solution up and running when you start hiring.

When things do ramp back up, I think a big piece of a strong recovery for your organization will be timing. We know the economy is going to get better; we don't know exactly when, but we know it will happen. It's time to start these conversations and start planning.

HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTS TALENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

A Q&A with **EMILY GORDON**
VP of Global Implementation

By **NICOLE FUQUA**
Trend Writer

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and talent leaders around the world respond to the constant uncertainty, many are partnering with RPO and technology providers. Meanwhile, hiring and technology needs are changing quickly and frequently, which necessitates a nimble partner who can scale quickly. However, the days of implementing new programs in the traditional ways are over. Specifically, there are no days-long, in-person kickoffs or hands-on, face-to-face trainings. Now, it's all virtual.

At PeopleScout, Emily Gordon has risen to the challenge of building partnerships and implementing new talent programs without even a handshake. She has more than 21 years of experience in talent acquisition and has overseen sourcing, continual process improvement and client implementations. In particular, her expertise is in transitions, process improvement, team building, client relationship development and operational delivery.

We spoke with Emily from her home in Michigan about what implementation looks like right now.

HOW HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TRANSFORMED THE RPO IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS?

The first and most obvious change is that it has moved everything to a 100% virtual process. That was a big shift for us. We depended on in-person meetings and non-verbal cues. Implementation has been a human-to-human process. We've been really pushed to leverage technology and use new tools. We've also added an emotional intelligence expert, who is helping our internal teams and our customers adapt. We're interacting with stakeholders in different ways.

We're using a lot of video and doing lots of checking in, but we're also taking more breaks. In a traditional implementation, we'd have a big kickoff that would take place over multiple days. We'd meet in person and get the butterflies and

nervousness and excitement out. That's difficult to manage now; because of video fatigue, people have a hard time spending a full workday on camera in a video meeting. So, we break our kickoff into more manageable chunks.

That means that while implementations during the pandemic have moved faster than they did before, it feels like we're moving slower over the first few days as we get started. Relationships take longer to grow over video calls than they do in person. At the same time, we save a lot of time because we don't need to build in travel or work as hard to coordinate schedules. This speed is important right now because a lot of customers want to implement new solutions faster because they had to scale down so quickly due to COVID. Now, they're needing to ramp back up just as quickly.

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS LOOK LIKE NOW?

We've boiled the process down to four steps, and we use the acronym NEXT. It stands for Needs analysis, Engage and evaluate, eXecute and Transform.

In our needs analysis, we meet internally with our business development team and solutions architects, and we meet externally with clients to really understand their needs. We define what success looks like in this partnership and ensure that all their needs are met.

Then, we move into engage and evaluate, where we bring in even more stakeholders, including our PeopleScout client delivery teams. We go through every step of the client's current process and look for ways to optimize and bring in our expertise. We make sure there aren't any missed opportunities to accelerate success.

Then, we're in the execute phase, where we add in our technology teams. We start to test and bring our new processes into practice. We bring the full delivery team into place, complete trainings and get ready for go-live.

Finally, we move into transformation. When you think about an implementation, it is really just the beginning, right? Our philosophy at PeopleScout is that implementation is a process and not an event. When we get to that last phase, we're really at the beginning of our relationship with a new way of working established for both organizations.

WHAT ARE THE BEST VIRTUAL PARTNERSHIP BUILDING STRATEGIES YOU'VE DEVELOPED – ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO COMMUNICATION?

Video is so important. At first, I think people were shy about being on video all day, every day. We

13

broke up meetings to make it work for everybody. We also use collaboration technology to update our notes and project management tracking in real time so clients can watch everything happen. Building transparent communication virtually is difficult, so this has been an important step.

We've also learned not to be afraid to say, "I think we need to try that again." Sometimes, we need to have another call to dig into an issue a little bit more, or maybe the right stakeholders couldn't make part of a call. Sometimes, we ask the same questions two or three times throughout the process to make sure everyone is still on the same page.

A LOT OF TALENT ACQUISITION TEAMS ARE RUNNING LEAN RIGHT NOW. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE IMPLEMENTING RPO WITH A SMALL INTERNAL TEAM?

That's the best part about RPO, right? Whatever you're trying to implement – whether you're trying to expand scope or add technology – that's what we're made for. Just be honest about the team you have and the needs you have. If you don't have access to subject matter experts, let us know and be flexible. Maybe you previously had a reporting analyst, but now you can only provide access so that our team can find the necessary data ourselves. That's okay. That's our job. Our job is to bring the solution to you and to support you. It can feel overwhelming to start a new relationship. It's a lot of work. To get through it, we need to acknowledge that and talk about the support you need so we can help you get there.

A LOT OF ORGANIZATIONS FIND THEMSELVES NEEDING TO QUICKLY IMPLEMENT A NEW TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION, ESPECIALLY AROUND VIRTUAL INTERVIEWING. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THE PROCESS?

I recommend starting by selecting a technology solution that can be flexible and ramp up and down quickly. A best-in-class technology solution includes integrations, but that adds time and complexity when a lot of talent acquisition leaders are looking for speed. We encourage people to be flexible. We'll pilot a new solution in a certain way and then decide what integrations we need to do and where we can best spend our time and effort. You have to design the process around your immediate needs and then build it from there.

At PeopleScout, we use Affinix™, and that's always my recommendation. When a client needs it, we can just turn on our virtual interviewing solution. I just did this with one of my clients, a healthcare organization, where we had to get video interviewing up and running really quickly at the start of the pandemic. If you need that, we can do it.

ARE THERE ANY FINAL THOUGHTS YOU'D LIKE TO LEAVE US WITH?

Remember that change is always difficult. Having a good partner makes it better, but there will always be bumps in the road. Communicate. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Be vulnerable. Admit what's working and what's not. As an RPO provider, we are here as a consultant. Our job is to come forward with solutions to problems you might not even be able to articulate yet. So, be open. Implementation is hard, but it doesn't need to be painful.

BEST PRACTICES FOR LEVERAGING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND DURING A CRISIS

By **SHANNON BENNETT**
Digital Marketing Manager, Affinix Client Success and Strategy

By **VANGIE SISON**
Leader of Affinix Client Success

Will your employer brand survive 2020? It's a big question, but it is a real challenge for many employers right now.

This year has brought a perfect storm of challenges. Many talent acquisition and marketing teams are leaner than they were in 2019. On top of that, teams have seen budget cuts. Then, there's the increased scrutiny of employers everywhere; candidates are watching how you've kept employees safe during the pandemic, how you've managed to keep your employees working, how diverse and inclusive your workplace is, and how you've responded to questions of racial justice. It's tough.

At the same time, with so many challenges, it may feel tempting to put your employer branding strategy on the back burner, especially if you aren't hiring right now. But, that would be a mistake. Candidates want to hear from you, even if you're not posting any new jobs. Then, when it is time for your team to start hiring again, candidates will remember how you approached all of these challenges and what you said about them.

In this article, we'll walk you through how to evaluate your employer brand, how to craft the right messaging, and how to produce and share content with lean resources.

AUDITING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND IN 2020

No matter how much you've invested in the past building an employer value proposition and employer brand platform, now is a good time to audit how that messaging lands today.

First, bring your team together to answer this list of questions:
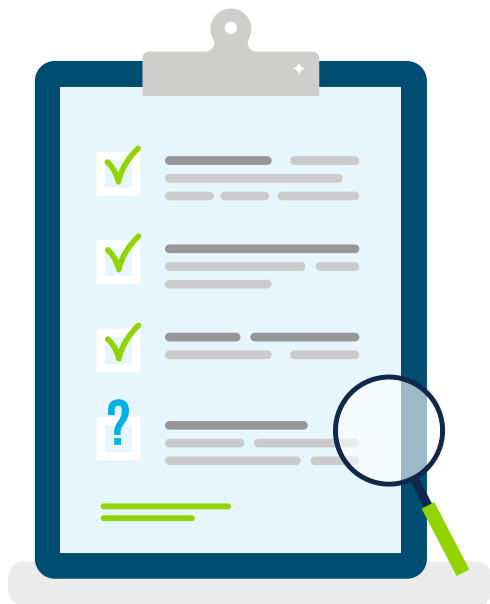
? What are our company values?

? What strategies are we using to share our employer brand?

? Does what we are saying reflect those values?

? Are those strategies relevant in 2020?

? Does what we are saying reflect the current reality?

? Are we connecting enough with candidates?

? What is the perception of our employer brand right now?

? Are we prioritizing the reality our candidates are facing?

Challenge yourself to answer honestly and identify where you have gaps. Specifically, evaluate both how your organization has responded to the challenges of 2020 and how you've talked to candidates about your response and see if they match up.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE SAYING?

Once you've identified the gaps and challenges in your employer branding strategy, you need to figure out the right things to say. Put yourself in a candidate's mindset. They may be asking themselves:

- **How will I support my family on unemployment?**

- **I want to return to work, but will I be putting my family's health at risk?**

- **Could I do this job from home?**

- **Will I have to interview with someone face-to-face?**

Candidates are facing a lot of stresses; keep this in mind for all of your communications. Then, as you decide what to say to candidates, think about your brand values and whether you are living up to them. Candidates and customers are craving authenticity right now. As you craft messages about safety and diversity, ensure that your messages align with your internal values and the lived experiences of those working for your organization. If you have work to do, be open about what you are doing. This will provide candidates with the guidance and assurance that matters most to them right now.

Likewise, stay focused on your strategies to an extent, but be willing to be flexible. For example, if your team uses a form of marketing automation, continue sending messages through the platform. However, it's extremely important to review all of your existing and upcoming campaigns to ensure that the tone and purpose still resonates in the current environment. Specifically, is your tone reflective of what employees and candidates are experiencing? Are those messages open and empathetic? Does the messaging fit with your current goals? While this is not the time to completely throw out your messaging and strategies, you do need to adjust where needed.

Finally, be as consistent as you can; otherwise, make it count. You're likely running with a lean team. This can make it difficult to produce as much content and communicate as often as you used to. For instance, don't feel like you have to keep up with your old social media or candidate communication schedule, but do make sure that the messages that you do send have meaning. You want your brand to stay visible, but you don't want to harm it by putting out something that doesn't resonate just to put something out.

EMPLOYER BRANDING STRATEGIES

After you've decided what messaging is appropriate for your organization right now, it's time to build it out. If you're working with lean talent acquisition and marketing teams, this will be an additional challenge. So, we've complied some strategies that don't require a lot of resources.

Activate Your Employees

Your employees are fantastic storytellers, and they're authentic. Right now, you're probably building talent pipelines while you wait for hiring volumes to increase. Your employees can share what it's like to work for your organization during these difficult times.

Next, reach out to a more talkative employee. Learn about how they've adapted to the challenges of 2020. Are they working from home? Are they working at an office, branch or facility? Do they have kids at home and need to balance work and schooling? All of these are stories that candidates will want to hear, but you won't have a good story to tell unless you ask.

Then, once you open up the conversation, there are a variety of ways that employees can contribute to your employer branding efforts. For example, they can:

- Share their story with their network on social media and professional networking sites.

- Amplify the messages that you post by liking, commenting and sharing.

- Contact alumni or other professional networks.

- Reach out to their colleagues, who can share more stories and spread messages further.

- Contribute to a niche blog or news publication (depending on your industry).

- Finally, talk to your employees about the ways they want to contribute. They may have exciting ideas that you hadn't considered.

Build Your Own Video Library

The massive shift to working from home has transformed our expectations around video. Nowadays, you don't need an overly produced, scripted and directed video to share. Instead, if you have great stories from your employees, share them quickly and easily through video. For example, jump on a video call with that employee and record as they talk about the ways in which their workday has changed. Or, ask them to shoot a quick cellphone video tour of their commute to their home office. Alternatively, if they're working on company property, ask them to shoot a short tour of the location, showing off the social distancing measures you've implemented and the PPE you've provided.

If a few employees take just a couple of minutes out of their day to help create relevant content, you can build a library of videos to appeal to different candidates. Then, if you're hiring for virtual roles, consider sharing a video about a short "commute," or the comfortable new home office chair that you helped an employee purchase. Likewise, if you're hiring for in-person roles, share videos showcasing your safety measures and diverse teams.

Maximize Your Reach

Once you've built the content, get creative about using the tools you have to share your message. For instance, do you have a CRM that can build a custom landing page to capture the profiles of candidates? Can you send automated emails to your talent pipeline? Are you sharing content on your social media? These are all examples of ways to utilize the strategies you've focused on before.

Even if you don't have access to this technology, you can still get your message out. In that case, reach out to that same employee and ask them and their team to share the video to their networks. Employees and candidates are savvy with social media; by posting to their LinkedIn, they broadcast your employer brand to their entire network. Then, you can share that post and build authenticity because the message is coming from a regular employee, not an HR leader.

We used this strategy with one of our clients at PeopleScout. Veteran hiring has always been important to them, but they were struggling to attract veteran candidates. So, we helped them: create content relevant to veteran candidates; build a landing page specifically designed for veteran candidates; and write and share relevant email and social media content. This allowed them to reach more veteran candidates and meet their veteran hiring goals.

DON'T LOSE FOCUS ON YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

These solutions should be part of an ongoing process. In 2020, we've learned how quickly everything can change, and your strategies and messaging have to keep up. This isn't a time where you can do just one review of your messaging to add in language about the pandemic or make just one social media post about racism. If your organization is still saying the same things it was in March and April, you're not resonating with where candidates are now.

So, as you complete your initial employer brand audit, think about the most critical areas that need to stay up-to-date. Then, set calendar reminders to review your external messaging. Or, plan to review it every time your organization sends out a significant internal communication.

In the meantime, if you need additional support, reach out to a partner like an RPO or talent advisory provider. This year has been challenging, but with the right approach, your employer brand will make it through.

NOW

HOW TO BE THERE FOR EMPLOYEES IN RESPONSE TO TODAY'S MOST PRESSING ISSUES

IN THIS SECTION:

FLEXIBLE WORK

INCREASED FLEXIBILITY FOR A MORE DYNAMIC WORKPLACE

By **ERIC DYSON**
Trend Writer

By **JASMINE PATEL**
Trend Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a multitude of changes to the workforce and talent acquisition this year – from rapidly changing business continuity plans to the widespread adoption of virtual hiring. But, perhaps the most significant of these changes is one that affects candidates, existing employees and organizations as a whole: the global shift to remote work.

Born out of necessity, these shifts in how work is done have given business leaders a chance to throw away the old employment playbook. As such, organizations can and should emerge from the pandemic with new workplace models and a workforce that is more engaged, inclusive, diverse and resilient.

But, don't just take our word for it.

According to FlexJobs, **76%** of workers say they would be more willing to stay with their current employer if they could work flexible hours.

76%

According to a survey by Upwork, **73%** of all departments will have remote workers by 2028.

73%

While many organizations had existing flexible work models in place prior to the pandemic, the sudden call for a balance between business needs and workplace safety compelled organizations to quickly adjust their traditional ideas of where, when and how works gets done. Then, in the initial months of the pandemic when many employees were required to work from home, organizations had to learn how to effectively manage, engage and communicate with a workforce scattered across multiple locations. Similarly, leaders and managers had to learn on the fly and are now more comfortable with the new workplace dynamic set in place during the pandemic.

However, while they're familiar with what leading a remote workforce looks like in practice, they might be wondering how to best optimize the program for a sustainable future. And, as more economies reopen and businesses determine who to bring back to the office, organizations are faced with a new workplace reality – one that might look different for each organization.

But, this is not just about office-based workers; increasingly, retail, manufacturing and consumer goods industry leaders are having conversations about distributed manufacturing models – where individual workers are spread across multiple locations, facilitated by remote monitoring and management. Clearly, the conversation needs to extend as far as it can to settings where face-to-face engagement is vital.

However, more than half of older workers in the U.S. don't have the option to work from home because their job duties require them to be on-site. Consequently, as organizations plan their flexible work models, they should consider shifting work responsibilities and time expectations in order to support the safety of their most vulnerable workers.

Whether you implemented programs prior to the pandemic, had to adapt and adjust quickly, or are looking to further evolve your flexible work strategy, the guidance found in the following articles will address solutions to common challenges.

In this section, we: take a deep dive into various flexible work models; offer strategic leadership tips and best practices; and provide practical, real-world examples of how flexible work can provide your organization with a competitive advantage.

THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

By **ERIC DYSON**
Trend Writer

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, workplace flexibility was surging in popularity with 54% of global respondents reporting that they worked remotely 2.5 days a week, according to a survey conducted by Regus. Now, the pandemic has transformed flexibility from a desirable perk into a powerful people practice – and one that is expected to stick around long after the pandemic subsides, according to recent research from Mercer.

In fact, COVID-19 forced organizations around the world to transition their workforces into a virtual work model overnight – an adjustment that would force a mass experiment on a global level. Leaders quickly embraced flexibility in the workplace because they had no choice; but, before too long, many began to recognize its benefits, such as reduced travel and real estate expenses, increased employee productivity, and more efficiency – all of which fall right to the bottom line.

In this article, we'll cover what workplace flexibility means today and why organizations should consider extending workplace flexibility into the post-pandemic environment.

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY IS HERE TO STAY

Now that employees have become accustomed to commuting less, are embracing virtual collaboration and are working from the comfort of their own homes, it's likely that our new era of workplace flexibility is here to stay, especially for office roles. The tech industry, in particular, has led the charge with Google, Salesforce, Facebook

and PayPal extending remote working into at least next summer, while Japanese tech company Fujitsu is halving its office space and giving its employees unprecedented flexibility.

What's more, almost half (48%) of the U.S. employees surveyed by communications consultancy the Grossman Group said they wanted to continue working from home after the pandemic and that the shift to remote work had positively influenced their view of the company.

Therefore, as organizations transition out of crisis mode and regain a sense of stability, they have a window of opportunity to permanently embed far greater and broader flexibility; this could build upon the work-from-home model and reshape the workplace of the future with a hybrid model in which teams are distributed across multiple locations and work flexibly in a variety of other new and established ways.

HOW EMPLOYERS BENEFIT WITH MORE FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

A BROADER TALENT POOL

When your workplace culture allows talent to work from anywhere, your talent pool instantly becomes global. As a result, your organization can source and recruit talent across the country or across the globe. And, with the establishment of communication tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Slack; secure intranets; and video conferencing, distance is becoming less of a hurdle in collaborating with talent globally.

IMPROVED EMPLOYER BRANDING

Offering flexible workplace policies communicates to potential employees that your organization is committed to helping its employees achieve a better work-life balance. In turn, this can help improve job-seekers' perception of you as an employer as you provide flexibility in the workplace. Moreover, many candidates will research potential employers to learn about how they responded to the pandemic. If your organization failed to provide flexibility to your workforce, it may damage your employer brand and, consequently, your ability to attract top talent.

COST SAVINGS

The most common benefit to flexibility in the workplace is cost savings. That's because the costs of business necessities – such as office supplies, real estate and utilities – are reduced when your organization provides employees the ability to work off-site.

HOW EMPLOYEES BENEFIT WITH MORE FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

MEET PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS

Prior to COVID-19, employees had a variety of personal obligations and family responsibilities to attend to. Add the rapidly changing pandemic landscape to the mix, and the need for workplace flexibility becomes even more crucial as employees' lives and living situations have been drastically altered. However, if you trust people to get their work done in a way that works for them, that trust is usually rewarded.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Flexible workplaces can also give employees an increased feeling of personal control over their schedule and work environment. Specifically, by allowing employees to set their own style for delivery, you appeal to the entrepreneurial spirit, which can be good for your employees' sense of self-determination. Plus, during uncertain times in which everyone feels as though they have less control over their lives, providing extra autonomy to employees can increase morale.

REDUCED COMMUTING TIME & COSTS

For some employees, commutes of more than an hour each way are not uncommon. To that end, employees working from home can potentially save 14 hours of time, untold money in fuel costs, and wear and tear on the road – not to mention the effect on well-being.

TYPES OF FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Despite the way most people think about it, workplace flexibility does not need to be a binary choice between working entirely in an office or entirely at home.

Rather, flexibility involves embracing any number of strategies that can yield a more nimble and productive organization. Below are some of the more popular forms of flexible work arrangements.

JOB-SHARING

Job-sharing is when two employees share the same role, which can be very appealing for your employees who may not want to work full-time, such as employees who need to care for their children who may not be back in the classroom. What's more, job-sharing can lighten the load of employees who have other circumstances affecting their ability to work full-time.

There are a number of ways employees in a job-sharing arrangement can manage their responsibilities. For instance, some employees sharing a role may segment the work by each taking responsibility for specific deliverables and tasks charged to them. Others may split the same

workload, with one employee working on projects and passing along their work to their job-share partner to do when they're off the clock. The model you and your employees choose will depend on the nature of the work performed, as well as the preferences and skills of each employee.

REMOTE WORK

The current crisis is serving as a large-scale remote working experiment, thereby demonstrating what works and what doesn't. And, the trend toward more flexible workplace models – accelerated by the coronavirus crisis – has had a positive effect on employees as a whole, giving people more flexibility in terms of location and time management.

For many individuals and teams, working from home will be their preferred flexible work environment for their needs. For other employees, however, the home environment may not be conducive to productivity. In either case, opening your office for limited staff or renting space in a coworking environment may be a good way to provide employees with multiple remote work options. Giving people the choice of where to work is an important principle to ensure that remote work is truly flexible.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

COVID-19 is not the first time that a global pandemic has altered work schedules. In fact, the 1918 flu pandemic forced then-mayor of New York City, John F. Hylan, to introduce new laws that required businesses to stagger working hours in order to reduce the chances of infection.

Similarly, many organizations can add flexibility simply by embracing flexible scheduling. While flexible self-scheduling is not new, COVID-19 was a tipping point, as well as a way of protecting essential frontline workers unable to work from home. Moreover, when you implement flexible

work shifts, employees can come into work and leave for the day at different times. Staggered shifts then reduce congestion in the workplace, especially if your staff works in a small office. And, it becomes easier to implement social distancing and reduce crowding in common areas, such as elevators, cafeterias, kitchens and bathrooms. This will naturally limit contact between employees and minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. As an added benefit, staggered shifts also help your employees avoid public transportation (and the associated risk of infection) during rush hours. Plus, the safety benefits of spacing out work shifts may also ease the anxiety that some older and more vulnerable frontline essential employees may be experiencing regarding returning to work during a pandemic.

THE GIST

In the end, increased workplace flexibility will become one of the legacies of the COVID-19 pandemic. But, for flexible work arrangements to work now and be sustainable in the future, both employees and employers must benefit. As a result, employees will need increased choice, autonomy and better work-life balance; in return, employers will gain higher productivity rates and a happier and more engaged workforce.
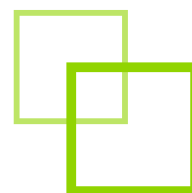
LEADING IN THE NEW REALITY: KEEPING EMPLOYEES ENGAGED ACROSS FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS
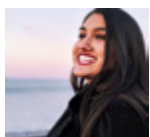
By **JASMINE PATEL**
Trend Writer

Improved employee satisfaction and overall productivity have proven that the new models of flexible work organizations implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic won't be going anywhere any time soon. In fact, 83% of U.S. companies surveyed by Mercer are considering implementing flexible working at a greater scale than they were prior to the pandemic. So, just as leaders had to adapt to managing remote teams at the onset of the pandemic, they will again need to readjust their approach as they lead teams across a variety of locations, schedules and unique work arrangements.

At PeopleScout, implementing flexible work to support our people is something we know well. One example of this is Emily Gordon, a single mother to a pediatric cancer survivor and PeopleScout's vice president of global implementation.

In late 2016, when Emily had her final interview before joining PeopleScout, she was sitting in a hospital hallway while her daughter was finishing her fight with pediatric cancer – or so she thought. Emily's daughter was nine years old when she battled cancer the first time and almost 11 when it returned. As a result, Emily's goal was to find a company in which she could both work remotely and continue to support her daughter and family. But, prior to COVID-19, there were limited options for people who needed to be adaptable and still work full-time to support loved ones. Thankfully, PeopleScout's work flexibility options gave Emily that opportunity.

Emily's team was willing to work with her on video, which enabled her to be in the hospital with her daughter for more than 100 days a year, while also exceeding work goals and supporting one of PeopleScout's largest RPO clients. In turn, Emily has been comfortable hiring people who also need flexibility, such as in part-time or split-shift roles. As Emily's story illustrates, the need for flexible work options exists outside of COVID-19. These unique situations existed before the pandemic and will continue when it eventually passes; it's up to organizations to have flexible strategies in place to support their workers.

Even with the variety of benefits of workplace flexibility, the management of it is not without its challenges. Chief among them is employee engagement, especially during COVID-19. When employees cannot safely interact in close quarters, making sure they remain motivated and attentive is not always easy. In this article, we outline tips for how to effectively manage and engage employees through the remainder of the pandemic and beyond.

> **My team was already leveraging technology and reporting to support communication, and when COVID-19 hit, we amplified that across the whole portfolio. We meet twice a week for up to an hour to just talk, listen, give updates and support one another. All it takes is a willingness to over-communicate. Flexibility does not mean less work or performance. In my experience, it means people work harder to achieve goals because they are grateful for the support and understanding that work is not one-size-fits-all.**
>
> **– EMILY GORDON, VP OF GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION**

COMMUNICATION

Communication was important before and throughout the pandemic, so it's no surprise that a strong communication strategy is at the top of the list for best practices in the new work reality. Regardless of whether you're leading in-person teams remotely, leading a remote team while you remain in the office, or a combination of both, frequent communication is paramount.

Specifically, managers should schedule regular check-ins with the team as a whole to quickly solve challenges, share knowledge, and communicate openly about what's working and what might need improvement. Likewise, one-on-one meetings are also important so managers and employees can share feedback and stay on the same page even if they're working in different locations. Keep in mind that, because many of these flexible work arrangements are still new, it might take some time to find the right meeting cadence that works for both parties. For instance, while it might start out as a weekly check-in, you may find that one employee prefers ad-hoc calls while another prefers a set schedule to keep them on track. Try to remain as flexible as possible when it comes to these check-ins; they're crucial for helping employees feel connected and cared for.

> **Quick Tip:** Remember to trust your people and approach communications with a sense of empathy and a people-first focus.

COLLABORATION

Because employees may be scattered across different locations, working different hours or job-sharing, it can be easy to feel a little disconnected from each other – especially for workers who are not regularly going into the office. Fortunately, leaders can help solve this challenge by leveraging the following tools and strategies that foster collaboration and connectedness across teams.

Create a Team Brief

Your flexible work model may see some people working special hours to care for kids or loved ones, while others are using a hybrid model to work both in the office and remotely on

alternating days. To ensure everyone is on the same page, it can be helpful to create a short team brief that outlines key expectations, covers how and when you'll communicate, and transparently shares each employee's schedule.

> **Quick Tip:** Utilize tools like Teams and Slack (or your preferred communication platform) to set messages for when you're away and when you'll be back online.

Encourage Video Meetings

While some employees are working in-person because their job duties require them to or they don't have the means to work effectively at home every day, others may be fully remote for safety and family obligations. However, if you're not careful, these employees can easily feel left out because they're missing out on the face-to-face interactions and impromptu conversations that naturally occur when people work together in the same office.

Fortunately, according to OwlLabs, 93% of people agree that video conferencing is effective at improving the connectedness of remote employees. Therefore, encourage calls to be taken on video so virtual workers have the opportunity to view and share non-verbal reactions, as well as their verbal insight. At the same time, pre-determine which meetings will be on video so employees have a chance to prepare. And, to combat video fatigue, be flexible in allowing people to remain off video if it is not conducive for them on a given day.

> **Quick Tip:** Ensure employees have the tools necessary for high-quality video calls, including proper audio and video equipment.
>
> **Quick Tip:** Create a digital space where meeting attendees can post thoughts and notes once they've reflected on the call. This can give remote employees the chance to contribute to the "meeting after the meeting" that often occurs in person.

Quick Tip: To enhance participation in video calls, show people how to ask questions in the chat, virtually raise their hand, and/or use breakout rooms so everyone has a chance to work and connect with one another.

Utilize Shared Dashboards

With people working various hours and in different places, staying aligned on goals and the work that is being done can be a challenge. However, by leveraging available technology, you can create team dashboards that share which projects are currently in progress and who is working on what. This can then give the whole team insight into the work that everyone is contributing, as well as the progress being made toward goals –regardless of when and where they're working. Digital project management dashboards are also a great way to assign tasks, track targets and share ideas.

Quick Tip: To boost connectedness, create sub-channels within your communication platforms to group individuals with similar professional skills and personal interests.

COMMUNITY

It's important that neither the in-person nor the remote teams become isolated from the other. As a manager, it's your job to ensure you're not mistakenly focusing more on one team over the other. To that end, a great way to build team culture and community is to spend some time each month on a virtual happy hour, coffee break or other team-building activity perfect for hybrid teams. Then, when the pandemic is no longer looming over us, it will also be important to make time to see people in-person when possible. For example, if you are traveling to the same location as an office or remote employee, set aside some time to meet them for

a cup of coffee or lunch. Or, if you normally have a virtual check-in at the time you're visiting, conduct your meeting face-to-face.

Quick Tip: To create equity between your remote and in-person teams, try to find unique ways to extend perks to virtual team members, as well. For example, when providing lunch for a meeting at the office, offer your remote workers a gift card for their lunch at home.

Quick Tip: Create opportunities for hybrid teams to connect with each other on a personal level. For example, if it's "bring your kid to work day" in the office, allow remote employees to bring their child to video sessions. This is an easy way to stimulate real connections between colleagues.

Flexible work models are quickly becoming the norm and are already proving to be an integral part of the way we work during the pandemic. The modes of work established in these instrumental months will pave the way for a future of flexible work beyond the current global health crisis. In that future, leaders will need to prioritize communication, collaboration and connectedness to create sustainable team engagement, productivity and culture.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

ADDRESSING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CHALLENGES IN THE WORKPLACE

By **ERIC DYSON**
Trend Writer

By **JASMINE PATEL**
Trend Writer

Diversity, equity and inclusion have long been a key point of discussion in many organizations' human resources departments. While the topic has always been top-of-mind, events in 2020 have shined new light and emphasis on the importance of social justice, anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion. Meanwhile, organizations throughout the U.S. have acknowledged the work that still needs to be done in creating human and civil rights that are fundamentally equal, and the rallying cry of demonstrators has echoed across the globe.

However, according to a PricewaterhouseCoopers Global Diversity & Inclusion Survey, two-thirds of respondents indicated that their organizations had not adopted practices to reduce unconscious biases and other barriers to inclusion. Moreover, even among organizations that had adopted such practices, employees were not likely to be aware of the efforts.

For some, part of the ongoing challenge to creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace stems from an organizational lack of knowledge of internal issues. For others, it's a desire to rectify unconscious biases without the experience or the right institutional framework and resources in place.

Fortunately, if you're looking to implement effective change within your organization, this section is a helpful place to start. In this section, we'll: offer practical advice on addressing sensitive issues and conversations around diversity; outline the importance of effective inclusion; and provide tips for creating employee resource groups to foster a better sense of community within your organization.

At PeopleScout, we believe our strength lies within our diverse workforce and that our future depends on the inclusion of everyone – regardless of background, beliefs or gender. We hope that this section can help enlighten talent professionals to inspire the change they want to see in their organization.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSION IN YOUR DIVERSITY PROGRAM

By **JASMINE PATEL**
Trend Writer

The seemingly never-ending obstacle course of 2020 has been filled with highs, lows and everything in between – from a landmark ruling for LGBTQ+ workers to an international awakening to systemic racism and a global pandemic that has affected the lives of millions. But, as organizations around the world face a future more unpredictable than ever before, one thing remains certain: the business case for diversity and inclusion (D&I) is stronger than ever.

However, in order to face unique challenges, organizations will need unique thinking – the kind that only comes with a truly diverse team, whether that's in age, gender, sexuality, race or otherwise. In fact, according to a report from the World Economic Forum, companies with above-average diversity scores report nearly 20% higher revenue due to innovation. Moreover, an article from The Conversation cites research from more than 300 Australian studies that conclusively shows how workplace racism has a direct, detrimental effect on performance, accounting for an estimated 3% loss in average annual gross domestic product.

That said, the driving motivators for organizations to foster effective D&I programs should not be focused solely on performance metrics, but rather the desire to make employees feel represented, understood, respected and cared for. And, while most companies are able to increase their levels of diversity, they struggle with cultivating a culture in which those diverse voices are heard, thereby leaving room for improvement in their inclusion efforts.

D&I: DEFINED

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace has been a hot topic for years; so, why does it often seem like minimal meaningful change has occurred? Unfortunately, the downfall for many organizations is the misinterpretation that diversity and inclusion are synonymous. To avoid making this mistake, it's important to understand the difference between diversity and inclusion and better understand why it's time to shift focus to the latter.

DIVERSITY

noun

[/dəˈvərsədē,dīvrsədē/]

1. The condition of having or being composed of differing elements, especially ... of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization.

Source: Merriam-Webster

This definition is relatively straightforward. It's also simple enough for most organizations to achieve by tracking demographics and collecting concrete data to ensure they hire and promote people of varying backgrounds.

According to Deloitte, "without a shared understanding of inclusion, people are prone to miscommunication, progress cannot be reliably evaluated, leaders can't be held accountable and organizations default to counting diversity numbers." Therefore, Deloitte goes a step further by using its research to create a holistic definition comprised of four distinct, yet connected, elements:

Fairness and respect: The starting point for effective inclusion is ensuring people are treated equitably and with respect – in both nondiscrimination and basic courtesy.

Valued and belonging: People will feel included when they believe their authentic self is valued by others and they feel a sense of connectedness with their peers.

Safe and open: Inclusion is experienced when people feel safe to speak up without any fear of embarrassment or retaliation.

INCLUSION

noun

[/inˈklo͞oZHən/]

1. The act of practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability).

Source: Merriam-Webster

It's more difficult to effectively measure results against this definition because every organization can interpret words like "including" and "accommodating" differently.

Empowered and growing: True inclusion happens when people feel empowered to grow in their role and do their best work, which is when diversity of thinking can emerge.

By looking at the depth of these definitions, it's clear that building and maintaining an effective inclusion program requires considerably more time and effort than it does to reformat a hiring process to increase diversity. Likewise, while diversity can be measured and those metrics can be used to set and achieve goals, inclusion calls for a continuous cultural reset.

INCLUSION REQUIRES ACTION

In a 2020 report by McKinsey & Company, data from three industries with the highest levels of executive-team diversity – financial services, technology and healthcare – showed that "while overall [employee] sentiment on diversity was 52% positive and

31% negative, sentiment on inclusion was markedly worse, at only 29% positive and 61% negative." Furthermore, the levels of negative sentiment regarding equality and fairness of opportunity (key indicators of inclusion) were also particularly high, proving that even more diverse companies struggle with effective inclusion.

So, what are some steps organizations can take toward fostering better inclusion? To gain some insight, LinkedIn asked Black talent leaders their thoughts on what talent acquisition teams could do to accelerate diversity and inclusion. Here are three of their tactics:

Change How & Where You Look for Talent

This starts with having diverse recruiting teams. Having recruiters from a wide variety of backgrounds will help employers change the way they think about how and where they find talent, thereby shifting their sourcing beyond the locations, companies and schools they've become accustomed to.

Make a "Top-Down Investment" in Diverse Employees

To build diversity into the succession plan, organizations should invest time, money, training and executive sponsorship into their diversity efforts, ensuring representation across the business. By hiring and promoting diverse talent, an organization sends a message of inclusion that ripples throughout the company and into the industry, positioning you as an inclusive workplace that recognizes the value of diverse talent.

Leverage the Power of Remote Work

Continuing distributed work strategies beyond the current crisis will allow recruiting teams to source, engage and hire talent where they are. To that end, organizations will no longer be limited to talent that lives in the same area as their physical offices, meaning they can expand their scope to locations that are historically diverse.

These tactics may seem like large feats – and they are. Building an organization that is truly diverse and inclusive is a huge undertaking that takes time, effort and serious commitment. So, while you work on the organizational overhaul, keep in mind that there are also some smaller steps you can take along the way:

- **Provide resources:** Inclusion can't be mandated; it requires the "changing of hearts and minds." However, organizations can do their part by encouraging open dialogue and providing educational resources, like this anti-racist reading list from DiversityInc.

- **Break up cliques:** We're naturally drawn to others who are like us, which can often result in cliques. So, create opportunities to position employees outside of their comfort zones and into work groups comprised of people from various backgrounds.

- **Form inclusive groups:** Create a dedicated task force focused on updating policies that promote your company's values. Project Include offers more suggestions for creating systemic inclusion here.

- **Offer professional development:** Offering development programs and mentorship opportunities to underrepresented employees who may have a steeper hill to climb can help them in their career ascent.

- **Showcase diverse talent:** Representation matters, and employees and candidates will understand how you value diverse talent when you celebrate and share their stories.

A CONTINUOUS JOURNEY

It can be easy to get lost in the mindset that inclusion is a "one and done" activity. Granted, that mindset does have a certain allure because it would mean that we could all rest assured knowing we've created a workforce that is 100% diverse and effectively inclusive. But, in reality, inclusion is a continuous journey that requires a concerted effort, focus and determination to create meaningful change. Think of it like a long road trip – one that requires multiple checkpoints, refuels and stops to check that you're still going in the right direction.

So, to ensure that you stay on the correct path, perform a regular inclusion audit that asks:

1 Does the organization have a continuous representation of diverse talent?

2 Is diverse talent represented in leadership roles?

3 Is there room to remove bias in the hiring process and/or promotion process?

4 Are we listening to employee concerns?

5 Are we regularly surveying employee sentiment regarding D&I?

6 Do we know what's working and what isn't?

7 Have we asked employees what they want and need?

It's clear that simply hiring diverse talent is not enough. While it is a start, it's only part of the solution. Rather, workplace experience and true inclusion is what will help employees feel represented and valued, thereby leading to diverse hires that stay, grow and thrive. The road ahead is a long one, but by implementing the strategies outlined in this article, your organization will be well on its way toward a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

BUILDING EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS & DRIVING CHANGE

By **ERIC DYSON**
Trend Writer

Creating employee resource groups (ERGs) is an approach you can use to build a more inclusive environment and address diversity and inclusion in a more holistic, community-based way. ERGs, also known as affinity groups, have emerged in the workplace as a standard component of diversity and inclusion initiatives. In fact, according to a report from Bentley University, nearly 90% of all Fortune 500 companies have ERGs.

For many organizations, the benefits of ERGs have evolved from their primary intent – to provide a forum in which members of an organization who share common interests, issues or concerns can meet to address those issues – into multifaceted benefits that influence an organization's strategic diversity and inclusion efforts in recruitment, retention, mentoring, leadership development, marketing, customer relations and return on investment.

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP?

The first employee resource groups were initially workplace affinity groups created in response to racial strife during the civil rights era. In 1964, Joseph Wilson, the former CEO of Xerox, developed the concept following race riots in Rochester, N.Y. Wilson and his African-American employees designed and launched the National Black Employees Caucus in 1970 to address racial tension and the issue of workplace discrimination.

Modern ERG programs are the enduring legacy of the courageous efforts of Mr. Wilson and his colleagues. In its most basic form, an ERG is an employee identity or experience-based group that helps employees within an organization build community and share a common cause.

ERGs are generally based upon building or strengthening community in order to provide support and contribute to personal and professional development in the workplace. And, while most ERGs are volunteer-based, some companies support organizers with a percentage of paid time off or other recognition, including leadership development opportunities.

What is the purpose of an ERG program?

While each ERG must define its purpose and goal, there are some commonalities. For instance, ERG programs:

Create an open forum for employees who share a common identity to meet and support one another in building their community and sense of belonging

Empower these groups by offering them financial or organizational support, as well as access to decision-makers

Facilitate a clear line of communication from ERGs to leadership in order to voice concerns and solve problems

Seek to advance a respectful and inclusive company culture

Provide a resource for leadership regarding employee and community issues, needs and policies

What does an ERG look like?

Likewise, ERGs come in a variety of forms. Some of the more popular options include:

| Diversity groups that foster a sense of belonging among employees who are part of a minority group in the organization | Volunteer programs in which employees can support charities and other volunteer initiatives | Affinity clubs in which employees with similar interests have an opportunity to socialize | Professional development groups that provide employees with the opportunity to share knowledge from other departments |

THE VALUE OF EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

ERGs deliver value to organizations and their workforces in multiple ways. Specifically, they build a sense of community and belonging for employees by connecting people in a social and professional way and encouraging interaction between employees.

What's more, according to a report from SHRM, 90% of companies examined said that ERGs helped make new hires more comfortable during the onboarding process, and 70% of organizations relied on ERGs to build a workforce to reflect the demographics of their customer base.

Moreover, ERGs empower employees by giving each group a collective voice to speak with decision-makers and management. Groups are also empowered to assemble and voice concerns as a community. And, ERGs support learning and development by offering formal and informal leadership opportunities and creating visibility for employees who are active.

Meanwhile, ERGs also provide a resource for leadership and decision-makers regarding staff/community issues, needs and policies. They also offer their expertise and experiences to improve equality and equity within the company. Plus, ERGs can also be an asset in business decisions to make better, more inclusive products and services.

Lastly, ERGs can also support retention. That's because employees are likely to stay with the company longer if they have built or are part of a strong community within the company and feel heard.

CREATING AN EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP

However, it can be difficult to know where to begin if you or other employees within your organization would like to start an ERG. So, below, we've outlined the steps you can take to get your ERG off the ground.

Align Your ERG with Your Organization's Broader Objectives

In order for your ERG to be successful, your purpose should be tied to your organization's overall mission and values. For example, is your organization focused on giving back to your community? Or, is your goal to build a more diverse workforce?

Either way, choose a topic around diversity and inclusion for your ERG that aligns with your company's overall goals. Then, consider writing a mission statement for your ERG that touches on your organization's core values. Showing how your ERG advances the organization's overall strategy will help earn support from other areas of the company.

Secure Executive Support

Executive support for your ERG is essential for continued success. To gain buy-in, find executive or C-suite sponsors who are personally committed to diversity and inclusion or social influence initiatives. Keep in mind that executives are busy and often focused on metrics; so, it may be helpful to come with talking points and data that showcase how an ERG will have a positive effect on your organization.

Make sure HR leaders are invested, as well, as you'll need their support to share ERGs during the new hire onboarding process and in promotional materials for the ERG.

Build Your ERG Team

Before launching the ERG, establish a communication plan and identify benchmarks for success, including long-term goals and potential challenges. Next, recruit colleagues willing to take on a leadership role, such as committing to a monthly meeting or making time to plan and execute events. Then, find other like-minded coworkers who are passionate about supporting your ERG; it's just as important to have members who are willing to participate and spread the word as it is to have leaders and planners.

Deploy Your ERG Program

A strong communications plan is a major component of an employee resource group's success strategy. Begin by creating a simple presentation that outlines the ERG's goals, events and ideas for participation. To that end, leverage your organization's marketing team and use your company's brand standards to create a logo for the ERG that ties it directly to the organization. This is an effective way to clearly communicate that your ERG is supported by leadership and is an important initiative.

Then, equipped with your members and materials, generate excitement for the ERG by hosting a company event. For instance, hosting a happy hour (virtually now, of course, due to COVID-19) is a great way to introduce your ERG's mission, lay out future events and recruit attendees to grow your group's core membership.

HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN SUPPORT YOUR ERG

Although your ERG may receive budgetary and organizational support, your company should not dictate which groups should form, who should join each group or what influence the groups should have. Rather, those decisions should be made by the group, whereas the organization can provide tools to work toward and measure that success. This could include charter documentation; a purpose workshop; road-mapping templates and exercises; budget tracking tools; support in setting and tracking objectives and key results; a platform for communication with their group and potential members; visibility within the organization; and meetings with senior leadership.

A sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace is important to empower employees and help them bring their whole self to work. As such, building a strong network or community is an essential important step in creating this sense of belonging.

Finally, in order to truly empower and support ERGs, it's important to give the members the autonomy to define: the scope of their group; membership eligibility; and, most important, what success means to them.

RACE IN THE WORKPLACE: HOW TO SUPPORT BIPOC COLLEAGUES THROUGH MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS
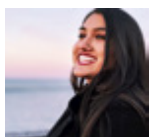
By **JASMINE PATEL**
Trend Writer

As more people across the U.S. began to recognize the systemic racism that many Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) were already facing, the injustices became a catalyst that sparked conversations around the world. Meanwhile, many organizations have heard the call to action and want to do their part in showing support to their BIPOC employees. So, how can organizations help drive effective change? Simple: Encourage employees to partake in open, honest and respectful dialogue with their colleagues.

Well, maybe not so simple. While now is not the time to be silent, it's also not the time to have unchecked and uninformed discourse on such a sensitive topic. So, to ensure everyone involved feels respected, heard and understood, organizations should create safe spaces where employees can listen, learn and have important dialogues with their coworkers, leaders and team members.

Engaging employees in conversations regarding race in the workplace can be challenging; while some people might feel hesitant to speak on a topic they may not know much about, others might be reluctant to share the injustices they've experienced firsthand. That's why we put together these tips for how to effectively reflect on racism through open dialogue; we encourage you to share them with employees across your organization.

BEFORE YOU TALK

Take Ownership

The first step in fixing the problem is acknowledging that there is one – and that you might be contributing to it. Recognize the implicit biases that contribute to racism and consider how you can unlearn them. As you learn, grow and begin your work toward becoming a better ally, leverage resources that can help guide you along the way.

Educate Yourself

Understand that educating yourself is no one's responsibility but your own. Likewise, before opening the dialogue with your BIPOC colleagues, it's important to have some background knowledge on the issue. For instance, avoid putting your BIPOC colleagues in a position in which they feel as though they are the "teachers" on racial disparities; instead, be proactive in

your own learning about diversity, inclusion and social injustices. Coming to the conversation with a basic understanding of the detrimental effect of the racial inequalities that BIPOC face will benefit you, your BIPOC peers and the effectiveness of the discussion as a whole.

Here are some resources to help get you started:

» Talks to Help You Understand Racism in America

» Anti-Racism Library

» How to be More Empathetic

» Additional Anti-Racism Resources

DURING THE OPEN DIALOGUE

If discussing race in the workplace is new for your organization, it may be helpful to host conversations in a moderated environment. Bringing in speakers with a background in racial justice work or designating a moderator to lead the discussion will alleviate any pressure your employees may feel about jumping straight to a one-on-one conversation. During a moderated dialogue, encourage your employees to:

Acknowledge Vulnerability

Conversations around race are difficult. To acknowledge the difficulty and vulnerability required for a discussion on such a sensitive topic, it can be helpful to validate what one another is feeling – whether it's grief, anger, confusion, discomfort or otherwise. At the same time, each person should acknowledge that while they are experts on their own individual experiences, no one has all the answers, and that's okay. The purpose of these conversations is to continuously learn and grow.

Step Up by Stepping Back

With Black professionals holding just 3.3% of all executive or senior leadership roles in 2018, it's not surprising that non-BIPOC professionals have dominated conversations in the workplace. Therefore, it's important to take care not to overpower the discussion. Instead, be purposeful in allowing the voices of your BIPOC colleagues to shine. Then, you can learn about their experiences and build a better understanding of their perspectives.

Engage Thoughtfully

As you work to understand one another's viewpoints, don't be afraid to ask genuine questions. By asking questions respectfully and with an open mind, you'll allow your BIPOC peers to answer without fear of being judged. In particular, word your curiosities with compassion so that the other party doesn't feel defensive or uncomfortable when sharing their experiences. Creating a safe space like this will form a strong sense of trust and respect that will go both ways.

BEYOND THE CONVERSATION

Continue to Check in

Make a habit of checking in with your colleagues regularly to continue the important conversations around race. As a manager, remember to ask about the professional goals of your employees and how you can help them work toward accomplishing them. Similarly, as a peer, help amplify your colleagues' successes – as well as the injustices they've faced – and always keep in mind how you can provide BIPOC peers with opportunities, resources and support.

In addition, check in with yourself. Know that there's always more to learn and more that can be done. While this guide serves as a starting point for the important conversations that need to be had across organizations, it is by no means exhaustive. Therefore, continue to look for ways to educate yourself, learn from others and be part of the change toward equality for all.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT IN PRACTICE

How can organizations facilitate intentional dialogue? Here are some of the ways we at PeopleScout and the broader TrueBlue organization are encouraging thoughtful discourse on race in the workplace:

Facilitating dedicated employee resource groups (ERGs)	Offering unconscious bias trainings	Scheduling discussion times for open conversations about race	Sponsoring an anti-racist book club

Utilizing a diversity and inclusion (D&I) hub to share information and resources	Encouraging employees to continue the conversation on internal social channels	Providing employees with reflection guides and resources

RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS

Starting the conversation around race in the workplace can be challenging and it's important to practice cultural sensitivity as you begin discussions. It's also essential to remember that, even in designated group or one-on-one conversations about race, not everyone will feel comfortable answering certain questions. So, make sure you give your peers a chance to come to you willing to talk – and don't be offended if they're hesitant. Here are some open-ended questions that respectfully inquire about cultural differences to help get you started:

1. What's your favorite part about your racial or ethnic identity?

2. Would you mind explaining a little more about why you feel that way? I've never thought about it that way before.

3. How often do you think about your racial or ethnic identity?

4. Have you ever felt you were treated unfairly because of your racial or ethnic identity? How so?

5. How has your racial or ethnic identity affected your personal life? What about your professional life?

6. Can you recall a positive experience around your racial or ethnic identity? A negative one?

7. Do you find value in forming relationships with people of different racial or ethnic identities? What can you learn from one another?

8. Have you ever felt left out of groups with people of different racial or ethnic identities than your own? How did this affect you? What could someone have done to make you feel included?

9. What aspect of your racial or ethnic identity makes you most proud?

10. What are some ways I can better support you?

NEXT
LOOKING AHEAD

HOW TO CAPITALIZE ON AN UNCERTAIN TALENT MARKET

A Q&A with **KRISTA SULLIVAN DE TORRES**
VP, Global Growth Operations and Solution Design

By **NICOLE FUQUA**
Trend Writer

It's been an uncertain year; we're all facing a lot of uncertainty. If there's one word everyone would like to retire at the end of 2020, it's "uncertain."

Unfortunately, uncertainty burnout creates neither more clarity nor more confidence. Therefore, talent leaders need to think long-term and take action to be ready for whatever lies ahead.

However, despite the challenges of 2020, there is a silver lining for employers. This year has created one of the best hiring markets that employers have seen in a long time. At the end of 2019, employers were facing skills shortages and record low unemployment; it was difficult to find candidates for almost any role. Now, there are a vast number of top-tier candidates who are looking for new jobs.

But, those in-demand candidates won't stay on the market forever and the employers that start hiring now will have a competitive advantage: They'll be able to capture those high-caliber workers first.

So, how do you get ahead? We asked PeopleScout Vice President of Global Growth Operations and Solution Design, Krista Sullivan de Torres, to talk about how employers can capitalize on the current talent market.

WHY SHOULD EMPLOYERS TAKE THE RISK OF BRINGING ON NEW EMPLOYEES DURING SUCH AN UNCERTAIN TIME?

For the past several years, we have been in a candidates' market. But, unfortunately, due to the pandemic and its economic repercussions, a lot of organizations have had to let go of strong, high-performing employees. This is the first time in recent history where there has been so much outstanding talent on the market – making now a great time to hire.

This moment is a perfect opportunity for employers to look strategically at their own organizations to identify key roles that contribute to their long-term success and then fill those roles with top performers.

Employers that act quickly will have a competitive advantage because they'll have the best people to guide their own recoveries. It can take a long time to onboard a new employee and get them up and running, especially in a strategic role. So, the sooner you start hiring, the sooner these new employees can add value to your organization.

ARE THERE ANY COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS YOU'RE SEEING ABOUT THE CURRENT TALENT MARKET?

I think there are two things. The first is about the quality of candidates on the market. Some leaders make the incorrect assumption that employees who are let go during layoffs are not top-performers. While that may have been the case for some

organizations in the past, with this pandemic, we've seen organizations have to make the really tough decision to lay off or furlough some of their best performers.

The other misconception is that some talent leaders believe that, because there are so many candidates on the market, they don't need to focus on candidate experience. Great candidates are always going to have options – no matter what the market looks like. It's true that there is an abundance of candidates on the market now, but if you want to hire the best people, you still need to provide an exceptional candidate experience.

WHAT SHOULD EMPLOYERS KEEP IN MIND ABOUT THE CANDIDATES WHO ARE ON THE MARKET RIGHT NOW?

It's important to be mindful of the fact that candidates are also facing a lot of uncertainty. They want to know if they're joining an organization where they will have the stability to stay and grow over a long period of time.

There is also a lot of fear of change, and passive candidates are less willing to take on new roles. As a talent leader, you should focus on having open, honest discussions with job candidates where you can address their concerns specifically.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO TO ENSURE THEIR HIRING PROCESS IS SAFE FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED?

Job candidates are worried about the health and safety of their families. They don't want to take a role or go through an interview process that would put anyone at risk. At PeopleScout, we're seeing a lot of clients move toward a fully virtual model to address these concerns. In fact, between March and September of 2020, we saw a 900% increase in the use of virtual interviews by our clients.

Throughout the pandemic, we've seen people adapt quickly and grow more comfortable with video interviewing and other virtual processes. Depending on the role, we're seeing companies add everything

from on-demand audio screenings to live video interviews. I think this will stay with us for a long time.

NOT EVERY EMPLOYER IS GOING TO BE IN THE POSITION TO START HIRING NOW. WHERE SHOULD THEY FOCUS THEIR EFFORTS?

If your team isn't in a position to make hires, focus on internal mobility and making sure your current teams stay engaged. This is especially important if your organization has gone through layoffs or furloughs that have left some employees with an increased workload. To support those workers, make sure that you have a clear communication plan around where the organization is now and what you anticipate for the future. Then, talk to employees about the existing opportunities in your organization that align with their own career goals. Find ways you can make adjustments or provide training now and, when new roles do open up, make sure you consider those internal candidates.

I also want to encourage employers not to lose track of their external candidates. This is a key time to focus on improving your candidate experience and building your talent pipelines. Be honest and clear about where you stand now and what your timeline is, but give them the opportunity to learn about your organization or even engage and build relationships with hiring managers. That way, when the time is right, it will be a quick process to reach out, move the candidate through the process and make an offer.

ARE THERE ANY FINAL THOUGHTS YOU'D LIKE TO LEAVE US WITH?

There are so many ways that organizations are dealing with this extraordinary time, and we can all learn from each other. This is a great time to reach out and network with other talent acquisition professionals or potentially engage with a partner to learn and share best practices. Because this is all still so new, it's a great time to be talking to your peers, networking and seeking out best practices.

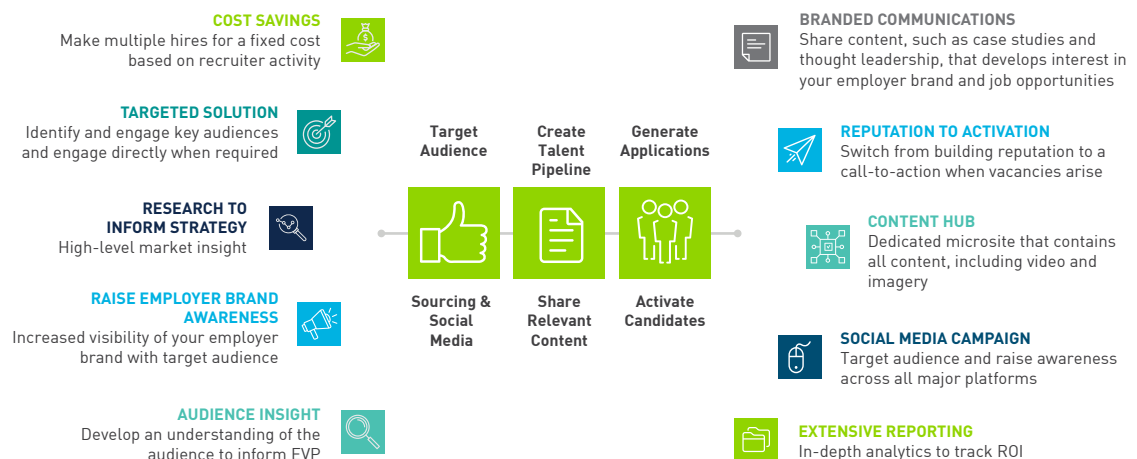# TALENT PIPELINING & CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT

By **ERIC DYSON**
Trend Writer

As we return to work, resiliency, business continuity and recovery are quickly emerging as critical priorities for business leaders. Fortunately, creating a talent pipeline for vital roles is one way that organizations can build greater resilience, have clear succession plans and ensure talent continuity. However, hiring freezes and uncertainty around when hiring will resume have left many talent teams in limbo.

That said, there has never been a more important time to focus on building your talent pipeline to ensure you have the best possible talent on your team and are well-positioned as things return to normal; you may not have positions to fill now, but by building a robust talent pipeline, you'll place yourself in a better position when we return to business as usual.

Below, we cover how to build a better talent pipeline, and offer engagement strategies and best practices for building stronger relationships with your candidate pool.

WHAT IS A TALENT PIPELINE?

A talent pipeline is a proactive talent acquisition strategy that seeks to identify, engage and recruit talent to build a robust pool of candidates to fill roles as needed. Similar to a sales funnel – in which leads progress through multiple stages of engagement and are eventually converted into clients – a talent pipeline moves potential job candidates through engagement stages that hopefully lead to making a hire. And, like most modern recruitment practices, talent pipelining has been derived from proven sales and marketing strategies.

COST SAVINGS
Make multiple hires for a fixed cost based on recruiter activity

TARGETED SOLUTION
Identify and engage key audiences and engage directly when required

RESEARCH TO INFORM STRATEGY
High-level market insight

RAISE EMPLOYER BRAND AWARENESS
Increased visibility of your employer brand with target audience

AUDIENCE INSIGHT
Develop an understanding of the audience to inform EVP

Target Audience → Create Talent Pipeline → Generate Applications

Sourcing & Social Media → Share Relevant Content → Activate Candidates

BRANDED COMMUNICATIONS
Share content, such as case studies and thought leadership, that develops interest in your employer brand and job opportunities

REPUTATION TO ACTIVATION
Switch from building reputation to a call-to-action when vacancies arise

CONTENT HUB
Dedicated microsite that contains all content, including video and imagery

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN
Target audience and raise awareness across all major platforms

EXTENSIVE REPORTING
In-depth analytics to track ROI

By using a talent pipeline, organizations can pick and choose from a highly qualified group of candidates who are already familiar with the organization. But, the key to a successful talent pipeline lies in candidate engagement because recruiting teams are not focused solely on filling open roles. Rather, they're thinking about how to best meet future talent needs by building better relationships with top talent. In addition to better candidates, talent pipelining also allows you to diversify your talent pool, deliver personalized candidate experiences and improve your overall employer brand.

TALENT PIPELINING ENGAGEMENT BEGINS WITH YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Talent pipelining is about influencing candidate behavior. So, the first and most logical place to begin when creating a talent pipeline is by answering the following questions:

? How do you generate interest in your organization?

? What differentiating factors set your organization apart from other employers?

? Why should candidates choose to work for your organization?

To find the answers to these questions, you'll need to turn to your employer brand. That's because, in a talent market that's reeling from the effects of a global pandemic and calls for increasing racial diversity, your reputation as an employer is more important than ever to attract high-quality candidates. What's more, at a time when candidates can quickly look up information about your organization – from compensation and benefits to the work culture and advancement opportunities – building a strong employer brand is paramount. In fact, according to the Harvard Business Review, a negative employer reputation can cost organizations up to 10% more per hire.

So, maintaining and personalizing your candidate-facing content should be a top priority in order to attract and bring top talent to your organization's talent pipeline. You can achieve this by improving your careers page and social media outreach with high-quality resources, guides and videos. But, exactly how do you position yourself as an employer of choice in your industry and fill your talent pipeline with qualified talent? Below are some simple steps that can help you get started:

Leverage Your Career Site

The first place many candidates will engage with your employer brand will be through your career site. Use this to highlight your corporate values and culture, as well as provide a real glimpse of what life is like for your employees.

Meanwhile, make sure that your employer brand messaging on your career site is consistent with what is on your social media channels, company website and review pages, such as Glassdoor and Indeed. Also, confirm that your career site is optimized for mobile, as many mid-career professionals are more likely to search for opportunities on their mobile devices. To that end, the easier it is to apply and interact with your organization, the more top candidates you will be able to add to your pipeline.

Engage Your Talent Pipeline on Social Channels

Social media has become a top recruitment marketing channel. Plus, according to Glassdoor, 79% of job applicants use social media in their job search, so engaging with candidates and presenting a positive employer brand on social media is essential.

For example, to build a stronger employer brand and engage with your target audience, promote authentic conversations about life within your organization and ask candidates to share what they seek in an employer. Additionally, celebrate

employee achievements and share real-life stories, photos and videos to show potential candidates what it's like to work for you. This will make it more likely that candidates will feel comfortable applying for positions at your organization.

Your Employees Are Your Best Advocates

Building upon your social media strategy, you can also consider employee advocacy as an effective branding and talent pipeline-building tactic. Employee advocacy is the word-of-mouth marketing equivalent for recruitment, so encourage your employees to tap into their networks, refer friends to open roles and bring more candidates into your talent pipeline.

Along the same lines, identify employees who can act as your brand ambassadors and, as such, share with their network the perks of working for your company and build a great referral pipeline for talent. Notably, candidates are three times more likely to trust your employees than recruiters to provide credible information about your work culture.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TALENT PIPELINE

Send Confirmation Emails to Candidates

Because 96% of job applicants want confirmation that their application has been received, sending

confirmation emails to candidates who have applied for open positions should be an obvious step. However, just 8% of job-seekers say they always get a confirmation from a potential employer. Fortunately, you can leverage technology and automate your communication to make sure emails are sent on time and reach candidates.

Additionally, in the confirmation, include a "thank you" for taking the time to fill out your application and let candidates know when they can expect to hear back about their application status. And, although you don't have to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates, do make sure you let them know that they have not progressed and, once again, thank them for taking the time to apply. This reply can be automated, as well.

Keeping your Talent Pipeline Warm During a Hiring Freeze

Perhaps there are talented professionals who are out of work and looking for new opportunities in your talent pipeline, but you're not be in a position to hire right now. If that's the case, it doesn't mean that your recruiting activity should be on hold. In fact, this is the perfect time to work on building and nurturing your talent pipeline.

Keeping candidates "warm" is a balancing act, especially in uncertain times. However, you can keep candidates engaged by sending them updated press releases, and managers can periodically send a personal note or text to keep the lines of communication open. You can also share updates about the conditions at your organization, statements your CEO has made, or other information to give them an understanding of how your organization is dealing with this crisis. The goal is that these efforts might impress candidates and motivate them to want to work with you even if you don't have an opening at the moment.

Consider Using a Chatbot

Undoubtedly, candidates in your talent pipeline will have questions for you – about the role itself, the application process, or the timeline between applying and hiring. So, if you have high-volume hiring needs or your internal recruiting teams are stretched too thin to answer all of the questions, consider deploying a chatbot to answer some of the most common questions; answering immediately can prevent candidates from losing touch with you or becoming frustrated.

And, if you're wondering whether candidates would be satisfied with answers from a chatbot, remember that modern candidates are already interacting with them – whether through online shopping sites or virtual assistants, like Alexa or Siri. Then, your only job is to determine what the most common questions are and craft answers that the chatbot can supply. Just ensure you have a process in place in the event that the candidate's question was not answered satisfactorily. In that situation, the question should then be routed to a human who can provide a more detailed or nuanced answer.

The landscape for candidates today is drastically different from past years. Consequently, empathy, flexibility and understanding will go a long way in building lasting relationships with candidates and successfully adapting to the realities of a post-COVID-19 world.
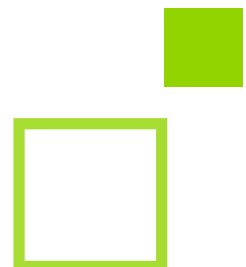
BUSINESS CONTINUITY & CONTINGENT LABOR: BUILDING A BETTER NORMAL

By **DAVID CORRIGAN**
Business Development Manager

The stark and apparent lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic are unparalleled in modern times. In particular, prevailing business models have been severely tested and weak points have been exposed as organizations and their workforces continue to cope with the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic. And, as organizations continue their rebound and recovery efforts, they must be proactive in their decision-making to maintain business continuity and build greater organizational resilience.

However, a business continuity survey conducted by Gartner Partners reveals that only 12% of organizations are highly prepared for the effect of the pandemic, and just 2% of companies believe they can continue business as usual – leaving many organizations to adjust and learn as they go.

What's more, COVID-19 has highlighted blind spots in many organizations' contingent workforce programs, including gaps in enterprise reporting of: where contingent workers are on assignment; how to effectively negotiate and communicate with staffing suppliers; and how to keep contingent staff informed of rapid operational changes.

So, to combat business continuity and contingent labor challenges, organizations need to reimagine their total talent supply chain and current operating strategies. In this article, we'll explore how organizations can best protect their contingent workforce and better prepare for business continuity challenges in the future.

WHY BUSINESS CONTINUITY MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER

Traditionally, business continuity plans were intended to minimize the effect of scenarios such as natural disasters, like hurricanes and earthquakes, or societal disruptions – such as civil unrest and war – on business operations and productivity. And, because organizations rely on business continuity planning to formalize, document and implement emergency management protocols, processes and policies, the plan should be a living, breathing protocol document that is continually updated – incorporating lessons learned and growing alongside your organization's evolving needs.

Unfortunately, the severity and pace of COVID-19 caught many leaders off guard. Prior to the pandemic, business continuity plans were created with information gathered in a growing economy with very little turbulence and historically low unemployment; as a result, plans

typically took a growth- and operations-first approach. Though that was suitable for a pre-COVID world, current business continuity plans need to be updated to put people first. Fortunately, by laying the foundation for business continuity during the current pandemic, you can build whatever structure you need as the situation evolves and new challenges and opportunities present themselves.

LEVERAGING CONTINGENT LABOR FOR GREATER BUSINESS CONTINUITY

During the early days of the COVID-19 crisis, contingent workers were initially perceived as a potentially vulnerable segment of the workforce. However, as organizations prepared to scale their workforce to the pace of demand, employers were hesitant to add permanent headcount in the face of economic uncertainty and, instead, increasingly turned to contingent staff to fill in the gaps. Moreover, according to a recent survey, 32% of organizations are "replacing full-time employees with contingent workers as a cost-saving measure."

Clearly, the cost savings of enlisting flexible, short-term workforce support to supplement traditional staff will continue as organizations regain their bearings and operate with leaner talent acquisition budgets. Plus, contingent workers can play a significant role in maintaining business continuity by keeping distribution centers and delivery networks staffed and operating; staffing positions in your organization's call center; filling skills gaps when employees are not available; and acting as health screeners and temperature-takers to reduce outbreaks in key facilities.

PEOPLESCOUT SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

At PeopleScout, our team partners with clients to implement virtual staffing programs to fill skills gaps due to layoffs, furloughs and shutdowns. For instance, when a client notifies our virtual staffing team of their talent needs, we create a requisition on behalf of the client, contact our top suppliers in the market, and make sure adequate staffing is provided on time and within budget. This highly responsive and dynamic contingent labor model provides our clients with greater flexibility, less downtime and better business continuity.

Preventing work stoppages altogether may be impossible. But, harnessing the skills and experience of contingent workers as part of your business continuity plan can certainly help reduce losses and keep your organization as productive and profitable as possible.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MEANS PEOPLE CONTINUITY

Many organizations have recognized the enormous human toll of the pandemic and, in turn, have prioritized the health and well-being of all workers. To that end, successful business continuity plans will hinge on an organization's ability to humanize and diversify both the substance and delivery of your candidate messaging. Specifically, now is not the time for your organization's employer branding initiatives to fall by the wayside. In fact, according to a LinkedIn study, the COVID-19 company posts on its platform that received the most engagement were those that used the following words more often in their messaging:

- **Health**
- **Help**
- **Social distancing**
- **Health authorities**
- **People**
- **Employees**
- **Support**
- **Public health**
- **Healthcare workers**

While there are several engagement strategies to convey your employer value proposition, it's important to keep in mind the circumstances in which most contingent candidates are likely to find themselves: perhaps recently unemployed, concerned for their safety and that of their family, and stressed from uncertainty. Therefore, your organization's greatest "value" will need to manifest itself in the form of empathetic, concise and compassionate communications.

Moreover, the right MSP provider can empower your organization to engage and communicate with contingent candidates at scale. In particular, communication campaigns should focus on providing skills development opportunities (such as free courses, certifications, learning centers and so on), while strategic social media messaging should

both raise awareness and extend your employer brand's reach, thereby further building your contingent talent pool.

Then, on-site, provide safety information wherever contingent workers are most likely to see it. This may be in the cafeteria, breakrooms or bathrooms. Make sure that it clearly states what to do in the case of an outbreak, and establish protocols to notify all contingent workers about outbreaks and facility closures. Providing subsequent changes to plans regarding work locations is also a crucial element to maintain business continuity and productivity.

Notably, organizations capable of preserving the human touch will be well-positioned to grow their talent networks with top-tier contingent candidates – further fortifying and stabilizing business continuity.

WORKPLACE SAFETY & WORKING WITH STAFFING SUPPLIERS

According to a survey conducted by Marsh & McLennan, nine out of 10 employees across all industries are worried about how the virus could affect them or their families. And, failing to provide adequate workplace safety not only carries compliance risks and financial penalties, but it can also affect your organization's employer brand and, in turn, negatively influence your talent program. Because of the inherent risk associated with working at an on-site location, contingent candidates are looking for reassurance from employers when it comes to their own health and well-being, as well as that of their families and communities.

Therefore, it's important to take time to reassess your staffing suppliers to ensure you're on the same page regarding protecting your contingent workforce. Begin your supplier assessment by asking all of the current and prospective staffing

suppliers to complete detailed, pandemic-specific assessments that account for the full spectrum of COVID-19 risks – such as security, employee health and safety, and financial distress. Essentially, your business depends on having a clear understanding of the current status of your critical suppliers, their mitigating actions, and your own exposure to risk and compliance concerns.

Similarly, when negotiating contracts with staffing suppliers, clearly define a joint safety program and identify the responsibilities of each party. In most contracts, the staffing agency provides general safety training, while a representative from your organization covers safety procedures specific to a work location. The staffing supplier and MSP provider are then responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with the program.

Furthermore, policies and procedures for site access, safety equipment provisioning and training should be developed for each contingent role. These should take into consideration any health and safety risks in the environment in which the person will be working. Be sure that the training addresses actions such as proper hygiene, mask policies, material handling and other policies intended to mitigate the pandemic.

PEOPLESCOUT SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

For one client, PeopleScout acts as a communications hub for 40 staffing suppliers. As part of this effort, we collect the acknowledgment in which each supplier agrees to be compliant with our client's health and safety protocols. This includes everything from directions on what to do when an associate is confirmed positive with COVID-19 to protocols for contact tracing and the safe return to work. We also collect data from all 40 suppliers and report all confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the client's health and safety leaders.

Lastly, keeping the workplace safe begins with prevention. So, consider deploying a team of non-medical contingent professionals to take temperatures at designated checkpoints in your facility with no-touch thermometers to help keep the workplace safe.

Business continuity in the age of COVID-19 is about more than just logistical and operational thinking; it's also about people – how to keep people safe, save lives and keep the economy running by getting people back to work. Remember to stay focused on your culture; in doing so, you'll ensure that your organization's values are authentic and the attitudes and actions of your leadership team will reflect these values

SUCCESSION PLANNING: MAINTAINING TALENT CONTINUITY

By **ERIC DYSON**
Trend Writer

The immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic by many organizations correctly focused on workplace safety, maintaining business continuity, and preserving relationships with key clients and suppliers. But now, organizations are rebuilding and preparing themselves for the new normal and taking a good look at their people, processes and systems, including creating or revisiting organizational succession plans.

Establishing a thoughtful succession plan is more important than ever and will continue to be a vital process as baby boomers move into retirement – and skills gaps and shortages that were challenges prior to COVID-19 continue to persist. So, in this article, we'll share best practices to design and execute a successful succession planning program to help your organization better prepare for workforce disruptions.

WHAT IS SUCCESSION PLANNING?

For some organizations, succession planning simply means making sure there are replacement candidates for key positions. But, for organizations with a more comprehensive view, succession planning is a systematic process to: ensure leadership continuity in key positions; retain and develop institutional knowledge within key employees for the future; encourage individual advancement; and ensure the stability or "bench strength" of key personnel.

Identifying employees as backups makes good business sense because it allows organizations to quickly fill vital roles with qualified successors. A successful succession planning program should also align talent management with an organization's culture, vision and strategies.

Identify skill gaps and training needs

Retain institutional knowledge in a knowledge economy

Replace unique or highly specialized competencies

BUILDING YOUR SUCCESSION PLANNING TEAM

The role of HR in succession planning should be to support business leaders, facilitate the process, and provide tools and guidance along the way. Engaging stakeholders – particularly senior leadership – is critical. As part of the process, plan to conduct interviews with them and invite them to take surveys and attend focus groups to get a better understanding of which roles are considered most essential to operations and the future talent needs of your organization.
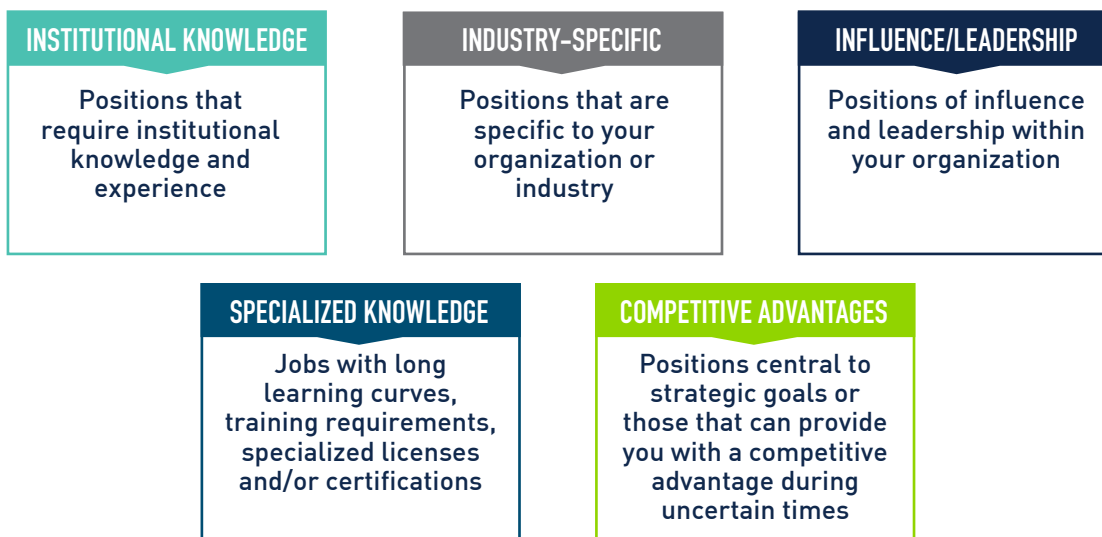
PLAN FOR BOTH PEOPLE & POSITIONS

The first step in succession planning is identifying which positions your organization should target based on urgency and how critical the roles are to your organization's operations. In particular, your succession plan should address both specific positions and individuals to ensure that you're covering all your bases.

When identifying individual employees as potential successors for a role, consider the following traits:

FLEXIBILITY
Flexible and willing to change roles and work environments

DEVELOPMENT
Interested in professional development and learning new skills

COMMUNICATION
A good communicator who works well with other teams and departments

When identifying positions to include in your succession plan, considering the following:

INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE
Positions that require institutional knowledge and experience

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC
Positions that are specific to your organization or industry

INFLUENCE/LEADERSHIP
Positions of influence and leadership within your organization

SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE
Jobs with long learning curves, training requirements, specialized licenses and/or certifications

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES
Positions central to strategic goals or those that can provide you with a competitive advantage during uncertain times

ASSESSING SUCCESSOR CANDIDATES

Once critical positions have been identified, it's time for your succession planning team to identify the employees who can potentially fit into those roles when opportunities emerge. But, what should your team look for in a potential successor? To answer this question, examine a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). The three terms may seem interchangeable, but they are distinctly different dimensions of a potential successor's qualifications.

- **Knowledge:** The candidate's understanding of key theoretical concepts important in the role

- **Skills:** The capabilities or hands-on experience needed for the application of theoretical knowledge important for the role

- **Abilities:** The innate traits or talents that a person brings to the role if selected as a successor

KSAs are the core competencies used when assessing talent and can create a better picture of a potential candidate's strengths and weaknesses. They're also useful in paving an organization's development programs and, eventually, a successors' growth in their new role. Consequently, it's essential for you and your organization to develop a KSA profile of each candidate and determine whether their attributes align well with a specific role.

Your succession planning team can start building KSA profiles by asking these three questions:

1. Where does the organization see the role evolving in the next three to five years?

2. What unique or specialized competencies are needed to succeed in the role?

3. What qualities should the new successor possess in order to thrive in the role and meet your organization's business objectives?

A successor does not need to be someone who will think, talk and react the same way as the incumbent; you just need to be confident that the candidate can step up to the plate.

DEVELOP FUTURE LEADERS TODAY

While every job is important, leadership positions within your organization would significantly affect your business if left open for a long period. In fact, according to SHRM's Selecting Leadership Talent for the 21st-Century Workplace report, the cost of replacing a senior executive can range from $750,000 to $2.5 million, and up to $52 million for a chief executive officer. Undoubtedly, leaders will be a significant competitive advantage as your organization rebounds and recovers. This means retaining, developing and leveraging future talent is even more important than it was pre-COVID.

Therefore, your succession planning team – which should include HR and other key members of your executive leadership team – should conduct a thorough review of the skillsets of each member of your leadership team and identify candidates with similar skills who could become potential successors. Your team should also determine skills that might be missing on your current leadership team and would be needed to emerge successfully from the pandemic and beyond.

PEOPLESCOUT SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

Design and delivery of leadership and development centers for a law enforcement agency.

» Our client's promotion criteria were historically focused on operational knowledge; we led a shift in focus to also consider leadership capabilities and behavior.

» We designed a behavioral framework aligned with national law enforcement standards, as well as local leadership aspirations and organizational values.

» We oversaw the creation of both operational and behavioral exercises for each rank in the law enforcement agency.

» We trained talent assessors and developed a digital assessment platform with automated feedback reports to create a more centralized process for succession planning.

LEVERAGE SUCCESSION PLANNING TO RETAIN INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

According to research conducted by Panopto, 42% of the skills and expertise required to capably perform in a given position are known only by the person currently in that position.

Institutional knowledge is a combination of experiences, processes, data, expertise, cultural values and information possessed by specific employees or teams within your organization. It can span decades and is comprised of your organization's tangible and intangible knowledge that defines who you are and how you operate. While some of this knowledge is translated into processes and policies, most of it resides in the heads and hands of individual employees.

For example, what happens if your organization's top sales manager decides to take an early retirement or accepts a new position at another organization? Do you have a ready replacement? If so, do they possess the deep institutional knowledge of your organization that's necessary to rally their team and engage clients effectively?

With succession planning, you can ensure that that knowledge-sharing can occur concurrently between an employee and their potential successor, giving the successor the unique opportunity to gain useful skills and knowledge without a long, on-the-job learning curve. Below, we outline best practices for training and developing successor talent.

Training & Development of Successor Candidates

Training and development for potential successor candidates can take many forms and should include both real-life scenarios and classroom-style training. Below are a few common exercises to help ease the candidates into their future roles.

Stretch Assignments: Just like the name implies, these employees will have to complete a set of tasks or assignments that stretch their limits. Examples include leading a special project, being assigned to a challenging task or chairing a committee.

Job Rotations: Enable successor candidates to rotate and assume different roles to obtain new experiences and learn more about the operations and processes of your organization.

Mentoring & Coaching: Create or leverage existing corporate mentorship programs and pair successor candidates with senior employees to provide candidates with ongoing guidance, deeper insights and career support.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Clear and concise communication makes the succession planning strategy much smoother. According to research conducted by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, around 25% of employees in line to take over a key role in an organization didn't know that they had been chosen for the role. Consider what this might mean – an employee might believe they have no real future at your company and, as a result, might make plans elsewhere.

Therefore, be sure to inform each employee you have identified as a potential successor – especially in the case of leadership roles – that they have been earmarked for a future role (without making an outright promise), and take this opportunity to determine if they're interested. While they might be content with their current position, knowing that you see real promise in them might make them feel valued, resulting in better employee retention.

A well-implemented succession plan will give your organization a sense of the investment you'll need to make should backups for key positions be necessary. Whether it's temporary or long-term, employees who are asked to assume greater responsibilities need support. Regularly checking in with employees will make you keenly aware of what they will need to be successful.

Remember, succession planning is not a one-off task. Organizations need to be agile to keep up with the fast-paced and ever-evolving world. As a result, you should regularly discuss and reevaluate your strategy with key stakeholders – including front-line managers, your executive leadership team and HR leaders – to make sure your plan is up-to-date.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Shannon Bennett
Digital Marketing Manager, Affinix Client Success and Strategy
Shannon is a digital marketer with more than 10 years of experience in the execution of marketing and sales initiatives, market research and creative digital branding (including print and digital graphic design and video editing). Shannon has a successful track record of developing and launching local and national marketing, social media and email campaigns, managing the creation and production of marketing collateral, including: content creation for internal and external websites, social media sites, press releases, surveys and more.

David Corrigan
Business Development Manager
David has more than 12 years of strategic sales experience across the talent landscape of workforce solutions, enterprise technology, and advisory services. As both an individual contributor and a sales leader, he has a track record of driving revenue growth through new client acquisition and the retention and expansion of existing clients. Originally from Manchester, England, David now lives in Parkland, Florida, with his wife Alanna and their three children.

Eric Dyson
Trend Writer
Eric has been a part of the PeopleScout team since 2017 as the content marketing and lead generation specialist in the Chicago headquarters. In addition to his contributions to PeopleScout *NEXT*, he also specializes in email marketing, thought leadership and digital marketing. Eric holds a bachelor's degree in literature from Valparaiso University.

Nicole Fuqua
Trend Writer
Nicole has been a part of the PeopleScout team since 2017 as the marketing content producer in the Chicago headquarters. In addition to her contributions to PeopleScout *NEXT*, she also hosts the Talking Talent with PeopleScout podcast and webinar series. Nicole comes to the talent acquisition industry after spending five years working as a journalist at television stations across the Midwest. She holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

Emily Gordon
VP of Global Implementation
Emily has more than 16 years of experience in talent acquisition, and has overseen sourcing, continual process improvement, and client implementations. Her expertise is in transitions, process improvement, team building, client relationship development, and operational delivery. She holds a Six Sigma Green Belt certification. Emily is a graduate of the University of Michigan.

Chris Gould
Client Portfolio Leader

Chris has more than 20 years of experience in RPO, global talent acquisition leadership and consulting. He has proven success driving talent strategies and operations; building and developing global, diverse teams; and working with business leaders developing cost and availability strategies in mature and emerging markets. His global teams have been responsible for permanent and contingent hires in more than 100 countries. Chris graduated from the University of Central Missouri and currently resides in Dallas, Texas with his family.

Jasmine Patel
Trend Writer

Jasmine has been part of the PeopleScout team since 2019 as the marketing content coordinator in the Chicago headquarters. In addition to her contributions to PeopleScout *NEXT*, she maintains PeopleScout's internal communications and manages the company's external presence on social media. Prior to joining the talent acquisition industry, she wrote for award-winning student newspaper the *Loyola Phoenix*, in addition to her work as a designer for her university's student social justice publication, *Mosaic*. Jasmine holds a bachelor's degree in multimedia journalism from Loyola University Chicago.

Vangie Sison
Leader of Affinix Client Success

Vangie leads Affinix client success, ensuring the satisfaction and success of PeopleScout's global clients by providing strategic planning and execution of talent attraction and engagement strategies using Affinix, PeopleScout's award-winning talent management technology. Vangie's career in the talent acquisition industry began in 2002. She built her expertise in talent marketing by executing recruitment marketing strategies for some of the world's biggest brands, leveraging technology to drive the employer brand promise and engage top talent. A graduate of Indiana State University, Vangie majored in marketing. She currently resides in Indianapolis.

Krista Sullivan De Torres
VP, Global Growth Operations and Solution Design

Krista Sullivan de Torres is a seasoned professional with more than a decade of human resources and talent acquisition experience. Krista's professional experience includes working in the consulting, manufacturing and healthcare industries. Her experience includes launching RPO programs for startup organizations, managing several aspects of RPO operations, and building a reporting and analytics program. Krista holds a BA in Mathematics from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

peoplescout™

A TRUEBLUE COMPANY

GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS
860 West Evergreen Avenue
Chicago, IL 60642
United States

EMEA HEADQUARTERS
265 Tottenham Court Road
London, W1T 7RQ
United Kingdom

APAC HEADQUARTERS
Level 7, 44 Market Street
Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia

To sign up for PeopleScout NEXT, visit www.peoplescout.com/next.