

Five Keys to Building Human Performance

By Marilyn B. Vojta

Our times have changed. In booming business times, retaining top talent was more important given the multitude of employment opportunities luring away your top talent. Companies found themselves looking at all kinds of creative ways to retain their best employees. Topping the list was hefty "short term incentive" programs, followed by more challenging career options and numerous other creative ideas. Experts calculated the cost of replacing an employee to be three times their yearly salary. And so, companies put together a variety of creative retention programs, Human Resource departments held "think tank" sessions on how to attract and keep top performers

And so the late 1990's and early 2000 time period was one of "romancing the employee." With the labor market so strong and low unemployment, retention became a very hot topic. The sharp rise in business and expansion of industries was stimulating the need for more people in order to achieve the demands of each company's aggressive goals. The recruiting efforts were moving faster and, harder to attain the demands of increased personnel. Recruiting became a technological maven with internet-based job sites that became a viable and easy way to reach perspective employees. The idea was that most people would "surf the net" when bored or discouraged with what they were doing. These job sites became "shopping malls" for unhappy employees looking to find another place that offered more of what was lacking in their present company or position.

Did corporations move too fast to hire in the highly competitive talent environment? Was the result that they compromised their selection of finding the best employees and found themselves unable to deliver the business results envisioned? Zig Ziglar says, "You don't build a business. You build people and people build a business." Many companies failed to establish a solid foundation of important criteria for employees to be successful. Recruitment became anyone who could do the job and retention took on a "whatever it takes to keep them" strategy.

Now with the employment market overloaded with displaced employees, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. Human capital continues to be vitally important to an organization but from a different perspective. Company's need to assess their ability to establish a foundation consisting of effective hiring criteria, employment security, and motivation techniques. In today's volatile downsizing business world and economic shifts, change will prompt a rethinking of the human capital investment. Five key components for organizational effectiveness will be:

- ❑ Assessing your talent portfolio. Do you have the right people in the appropriate positions? Is there a good mix of people and skill levels?
- ❑ What are the strategies to strengthen your talent portfolio? Training, mentoring, cross-functional exposure, enhanced responsibilities, etc.
- ❑ As the business grows will the people in place be able to enhance their skills? Know the competencies needed for individuals to be able to deliver the results projected.
- ❑ Do you project what you want your clients to believe about you? Establish a company culture that evokes the value and ethics important to achieve your business objectives internally and externally.
- ❑ Is senior management truly committed to the investment in cultivating talent? Develop a management approach that practices optimization of your people over time.

The future of human capital performance will be dependent on balancing the business building strategies with employee enhancement methodologies. Companies will need to look as carefully at this segment of their business as they do product development, marketing strategies and financial growth.

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