

Fatal (lack of) attraction

Why you could be 100%
wrong about the causes
of your talent problem

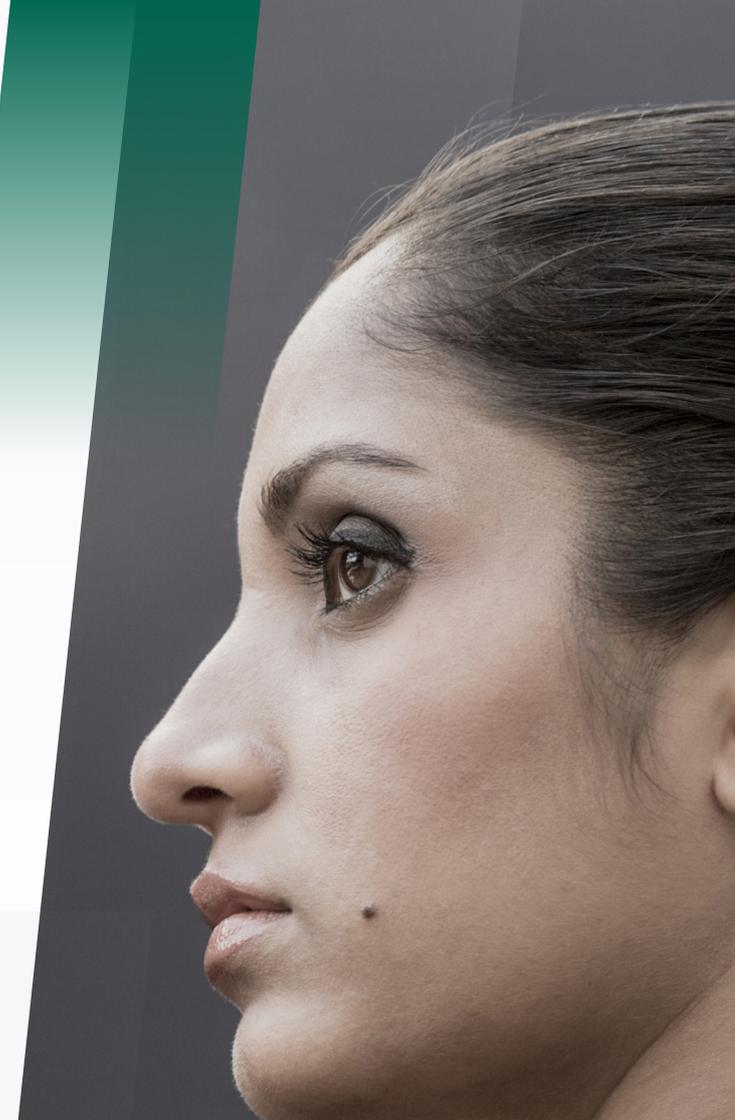


Introduction

Is your talent acquisition function underperforming, just when you need it most? Are you struggling to attract and retain the talent you need? Here's something to think about: perhaps the problem lies not with your TA team, but with the way your organization handles talent strategy as a whole. Today's leading organizations put TA at the forefront of their entire talent strategies. They're using TA in smarter ways, to help tackle chronic talent shortages and drive performance. Let's explore how they're achieving this.

The return to some kind of normality for business post-pandemic has been derailed for many by an unprecedented talent supply shock. For many businesses and organizations, this is a new attraction landscape, and the old ways of doing things will no longer cut it. The talent market right now is dynamic, not to say volatile, and tomorrow's winners will be the organizations who are able to get out ahead of it today.

So how are the smartest organizations managing talent? Their approach can be summed up as the creation of seamless talent journeys, from first contact to exit. This joined-up approach links talent acquisition and talent management together, creating a strategically-focused talent function that delivers consistently better results across the board; for employees, for TA professionals, and for the organization as a whole. We call this joined-up talent strategy the 'win-win-win zone'.



Enter the win-win-win zone

Talent wins: A more productive and engaged workforce, benefitting from a better employee experience.

TA wins: More strategic involvement and higher profile for TA professionals.

Organization-wide wins: Aligning talent strategy with organizational strategy delivers easier sourcing and better retention of high-performing talent.

Where data and people intersect

Data lies at the heart of this strategy, but data alone isn't enough. Only by developing the analytical tools to create actionable insights that intersect with the human needs and desires of your people, will you be able to succeed.

Every organization has access to useful data on its employees, gathered from the application process, interviews, assessments and reviews. This information, volunteered by employees, can cover an employee's experiences, skills, ambitions and knowledge-gaps. But often this vital knowledge is lost.



Turning the tide on talent shortages

In contrast, smart organizations create talent journeys that connect the candidate and the employee using consistent data flows.

The end result? Valuable candidate information is retained and spread across the business to guide development plans, assessments and talent management strategies.

At a time when there may be chronic talent shortages, establishing these information flows and building smarter talent journeys for a scarce resource has never been more important.





Transforming TA – from transactional to strategic

Smart organizations also effectively upgrade their talent acquisition teams from a transactional function with a strict focus on requisitions and targets, into a fully integrated function with a higher business value that offers real strategic impact.

Want to see this in action?

In the following pages we follow two people on their journeys from candidate to long-standing employee. That journey can look very different, depending on the integration of TA into an organization's overarching talent strategy. We take a detailed look at differences in how talent acquisition and talent management work together can impact your organization.



A tale of two talent journeys

Meet Mohan and Sandra. Both have highly desirable project and product management skills and are in high demand. There's little to differentiate them; both offer strong academic and professional qualifications, and relevant professional experience. However, when Mohan applies for a role at Complacent Industries and Sandra applies for a similar role at TrailBlazer Corp., they have very different experiences.



Stage 01



Attraction

Mohan applies for Complacent assuming he is qualified, although he's not quite sure. The role profile seems a little vague, and he doesn't get much sense of whether he'll fit well to this professional culture.

Sandra finds the role profile she receives from TrailBlazer very clear. It also mentions possible future career directions that interest her. As a result, she applies with confidence.

Takeaway: It's never too early to bring in a competency or leadership framework. A business that has back-tested not only the skills and experience, but also the qualities and behaviors needed, is more likely to get 'good fit' candidates who stay longer. Investing time and effort into refining your Employer Value Proposition is increasingly a central element in ensuring cross-business alignment.

Stage 02



The interview process

Mohan finds the interview a little unstructured but gives it his best shot. He finds more detail about the role by asking questions during the interview, but when he asks about areas such as potential career paths the answers are again, vague. He would love to fill certain skill gaps, which he brings up at interview, and Complacent assures him this won't be a problem.

Sandra's interview features some searching questions and, thanks to a clear and detailed job profile, she's well prepared. She takes on assessment activities, which adds to the sense of an organized employer with a clear idea of what they are looking for. Later on, she finds the interview is refreshingly two-way. Detailed questions make her feel more positive about the firm.

Takeaway: TrailBlazer's competency framework and role profiles are so robust because they are constantly updated. Talent management feeds back existing employee data, such as performance reviews and assessments, so it is genuinely delivering high-performing individuals. Talent acquisition uses this data to refine its frameworks and role profiles, targeting individuals with the skills and behaviors that have proved useful and successful within the organization.

This also makes TrailBlazer more agile overall; shifts in strategic direction can be quickly communicated back to TA, and the team can adjust its hiring profiles accordingly. Complacent Industries isn't doing anything particularly bad, but in a competitive talent market, not keeping up with the leaders can cost you dearly.

Developing talent profiles

What if you could isolate the things that make your very best performers stand out and encapsulate them into an easy- to-assess profile? Creating **ideal talent profiles** builds a consistent high-performing employee picture to assess people.

Key points



Consistency

Use the same profile across the entire employee lifecycle, from hire to retire.



Maximum data

Don't create profiles based on opinions, personal preferences or gut feelings. Use as many data points as possible from internal and external sources.



Define parameters

Don't define your profile using just hard and soft skills; use parameters, like identity, capability, responsibilities and expected outcomes.



Stage 03

Assessments and performance reviews



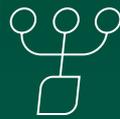
Both Sandra and Mohan have successful interviews and have started their respective roles. But it's here that their trajectories begin to alter.

Mohan is well-qualified for his job, but the training to fill a couple of skill gaps discussed in the interview has not yet appeared. He has to raise it as an issue at his performance review. The review itself is a little perfunctory and Mohan feels as though his assessors know little about him.

At TrailBlazer, performance reviews don't simply focus on performance right now. Assessors are also interested in employee goals and ambitions. They arrive armed with an understanding of the organization's future strategic requirements, as well as the employees most likely to fill them. It's only her second performance review with TrailBlazer, but because Sandra has already filled her skill gaps, she's ready to develop new skills and take immediate advantage of an interesting sideways move-one that suits the firm's business strategy.

Takeaway: Right now, Mohan's career trajectory has stalled, whereas Sandra has begun to make real progress. This comes down to seamless information sharing between TrailBlazer's TA and TM teams. The firm has invested in and is committed to furthering her skills. Her assessors are fully engaged with her career goals and she feels listened to. Mohan is feeling a general sense of frustration, dealing with well-meaning but unwieldy organizations.

Stage 04



Promotions and beyond

Sandra's career is flying. She has accepted several promotions and is regarded as a high performer across the business. Her development plan is helping her achieve her career goals and making sure her development matches TrailBlazer's strategic priorities. As a fully engaged employee, she's promoting opportunities in TrailBlazer across her network. Her positive experiences have made her a vocal ambassador.

Mohan has a promotion, but not at Complacent Industries; he's been approached by another company, which has impressed him with its clear focus on his development and professional growth. Complacent has to restart the process and find another employee.

Takeaway: What was originally Mohan's problem has become Complacent's problem. We're far away from TA's remit by now, but these small fumbles and a lack of alignment from the start of his journey have motivated Mohan to move on. Taken individually, each issue might seem minor, and some motivated employees can work around them and succeed. Put together, at scale, you have a slow bleed of talent that can ultimately hamstring an organization.

Sandra's story becomes a case study of potential identified and maximized-Mohan's is a tale of missed opportunities.

Real-world examples

Maximizing internal talent pools for a national broadband provider

We recently worked with a business set up to deliver a nationwide broadband network. Having achieved the physical rollout, the business was undergoing significant change and restructuring, switching from a construction employer to a digitally-enabled technology employer. We were asked to help the business begin its journey towards a fully integrated talent management system.

Our focus was on identifying internal talent and enabling intelligent internal recruitment. We helped the business to roll out our Intelligence Cloud software platform to bring increased automation and analytics to identifying and deploying internal talent. We worked with HR leaders across the business to identify internal talent and establish their next career challenges. This information was fed back to the TA team to check against requirements and introduce outstanding candidates to the hiring managers.

The result? 12 months previously, the onus was on candidates to search for and apply to internal roles. The entire process is now proactive and embedded into day-to-day operations.

Delivering a team of organizational catalysts to support digital transformation

We worked with a global pharmaceutical company to deliver a digital incubator; an agile team of disruptors seeded across the business, able to lead transformational initiatives and engage with patients creatively using data and analytics.

These weren't simply new roles; they were a new type of role and the business had no template for the right fit. We identified 'best fit' talent and then designed and started development initiatives, allowing the team to work effectively.

We decoded the strategic objectives within the incubator to identify the potential and behaviors that would drive success. We then designed a talent acquisition strategy covering internal high potential talent and external recruitment. We also developed a clear value proposition for the opportunity, and managed the recruitment process. Finally, we designed onboarding sessions and longer-term learning journeys for the team, based on the expected behaviors and role requirements. The result? Over 90 transformational talents identified, delivered and onboarded from internal and external sources over a 12-month period.

Using data to raise your talent IQ

Collecting data on employees can feel instinctively dehumanizing and reducing real people to datasets. When done in a talent-centric way, the result should be the opposite. When an organization 'forgets' important information volunteered by an employee, they are more likely to feel undervalued, like 'just another cog'. Enabling your organization to 'remember' this information effectively raises its Talent IQ, enabling rewarding and productive employee journeys.

Ensure a common data layer

Even if your organization operates separate applicant tracking and talent management systems, it's essential that they share a common data layer—so your systems are able to talk to each other. Once this shared information architecture is in place, you can create the iterative processes that will begin to shift your organization into the 'win-win-win zone'.

Advanced analytics

Once you have your data, how should you use it? Advanced analytics can correlate performance management data with other types of HR data, including assessment data to create talent profiles. Using new technologies, such as machine learning, can make sure that profile changes are reflected in real time, as new data flows in and organizational priorities evolve.



Are today's talent shortages just a TA problem?

A global firm was struggling with a significant downturn in successful requisitions and a big increase in time-to-hire. It used an RPO partner, and decided to bring back TA in house. It became clear the problem didn't lie with the management of the TA function, and the firm pivoted back to its RPO partner, taking on board strategic suggestions including strengthening the EVP, simplifying the interview process, making faster decisions, and integrating the TA team into the business as a valued partner, instead of an outsourced service.

How mature is your talent acquisition function?

Moving to smart, fully integrated Talent function is a journey. Many organizations have started that journey, but few reach the end. Use this chart to assess where your organization has landed.

Stage 01

Disjointed and basic

TA is fragmented or poorly defined and with no link to business objectives.

- Limited technology or metrics with some use of manual trackers
- Basic employer branding materials are in place
- Sourcing efforts occur on a role-by-role, reactive basis

Mohan and Complacent Industries

Complacent Industries is positioned at Stage 1. This is largely responsible for his disappointing employee experience.

Stage 02

Progressing and supporting strategy

TA is defined and loosely based on business needs.

- Recruitment processes are standardized but executed with limited consistency
- Proactive talent pools have been formed
- ATS is used, and ancillary technologies are tested





Stage 03

Intermediate and implementing strategy

TA has a regular interaction with the business.

- Recruitment programs and marketing campaigns enhance candidate experience
- Assessment strategy is defined and aligned to role types/levels
- Metrics support effective decision making

Sandra and TrailBlazer Corp.

TrailBlazer Corp. is moving from Stage 3 to Stage 4. Not all the possible technology and systems are in place, but the business is fast becoming an employer of choice and sees clear value in progressing the journey.

Stage 04

Leading-edge and driving strategy

TA is customized to directly support organization-wide objectives.

- Integrated TA model allows for seamless operation with the business
- TA team deliver with a competitive edge
- TA technology stack is candidate experience centered and best-in-class



Next steps – preparing yourself for the journey

Success involves looking at the end-to-end talent experience.

Start at the beginning. How are you attracting candidates and assessing them when they have applied or been put forward? Is information flowing freely between TA and the wider TM team? Do you have the right technology to collect, analyze and distribute the right data?

Building the right talent journey takes time –you need to build on your progress every year. Once your talent journey is optimized, you'll see significant benefits cascade across your organization.

Conclusion

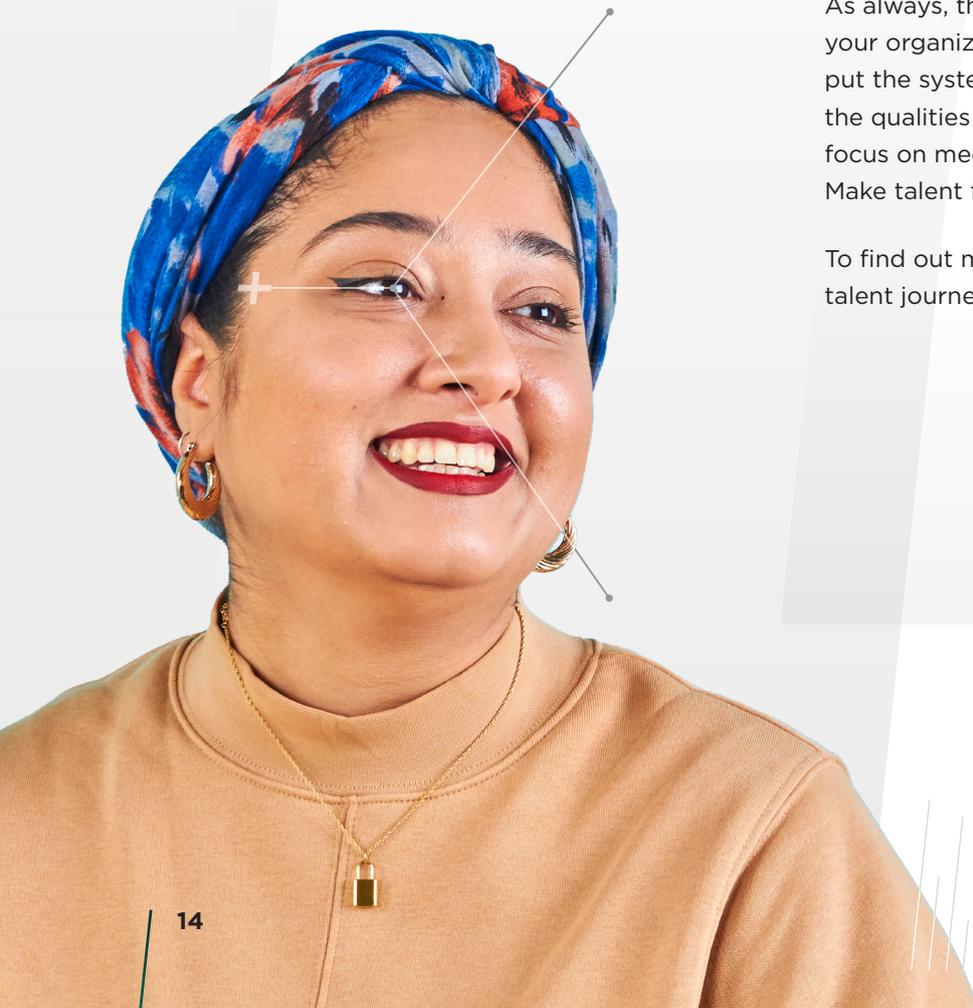
There's no magic bullet to transform your TA performance. But there is a clear strategy, combining consistent assessment and measurement, integration and alignment between talent acquisition and talent management, and a smart approach to collecting, analyzing and distributing data.

This strategy can supercharge your TA team, enabling it to deliver better-fit candidates at a lower cost and in shorter timescales. TA can pivot quickly to meet business needs and build up valuable talent pools that deliver game-changing talent across the business. Over time, TA is fully integrated as a value-adding business partner.

The firms leading the way with this strategy are using deep data analysis and introducing new technologies, like AI and machine learning. They also use shared data layers and iterate continual to improve processes. But this is no simple technological fix; its key to deliver meaningful and rewarding candidate journeys on a human scale.

As always, the employee should be at the heart of your organization's success. And the task is simple: put the systems in place to deliver talent with the qualities your organization needs, and then focus on meeting their professional development. Make talent front and center.

To find out more about how you can improve your talent journey, contact us today.



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