

## 5.13: Putting It Together- Workforce Planning

Although workforce planning is often described in simple terms—for example, Korn Ferry’s 5 Rs: right shape, right skills, right size, right site, and right spend—it is deceptively hard to put that framework in place, much less execute on it. Indeed, HR consultancy XpertHR lists “Understanding Workforce Planning” as one of the top 10 HR compliance challenges for 2019.<sup>[1]</sup>



Their research revealed not only talent acquisition challenges—virtually a universal issue given the current labor market—but also process issues. To put the data in perspective, let’s review the concept of workplace planning. As stated in Business Strategy and Workforce Planning, workforce planning is a complex research and design problem that involves developing a detailed understanding of a role, its requirements, and how that role relates to organizational strategy and to other roles within the organization. Decisions made during this process have implications for virtually every aspect of business, including finance, legal and operations. Decisions made during this process—in particular, job analysis and job design—also have a significant impact on motivation, satisfaction and retention.

Challenges cited by survey respondents include the following:

- 43% viewed aligning talent retention strategy with business objectives as very or extremely challenging
- 47% were very or extremely challenged by managing performance and providing professional development opportunities
- 52% of respondents were very or extremely challenged by ensuring employees and supervisors have the necessary skill sets now and for future responsibilities
- 50% of respondents were very or extremely challenged by creating a succession plan
- 49% were very or extremely challenged when it came to increasing employee engagement, morale and satisfaction.

Taking a strategic approach to workforce planning can address these challenges. As CalHR noted, “workforce planning informs recruitment, retention, employee development, knowledge transfer and succession planning.”<sup>[2]</sup>



In a competitive labor market, it is especially critical to assess the internal supply of labor accurately and manage it effectively. As author and educational advisor Sir Kenneth Robinson notes: Human resources are like natural resources...you have to go looking for them.” Assessment or identifying capabilities is only one part of the equation. Other key elements are creating an effective development framework—the workforce development plan—and developing “good jobs,” whether that’s through job analysis, job design or a combination of the two. A more experimental option supported by Dr. Wrzensniewski’s research is actively engaging employees in a job crafting process.

Day & Zimmermann HR SVP Beth Albright’s integrates these ideas in a coherent whole, observing that “fundamentally, people want to come to work, do a good job, feel like they make a difference and be recognized for their efforts.”<sup>[3]</sup> However, for that to

happen, a company needs to have the right infrastructure and processes in place. Albright argues that “if systems prevent people from doing a good job, you must fix them. If people aren’t being developed and trained, they can’t make a difference in the work they do.” A simple, wholistic concept. Complex—but critical—to implement.

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1. "The Top 10 Compliance Challenges in 2019." Xpert HR. Accessed September 12, 2019. ↵
2. "[State of California Workforce Planning Model](#)." California Department of Human Resources. Accessed September 12, 2019. ↵
3. Jerant, Frederick. "[How to Heal Human Resources](#)." Forefront Magazine. 2014. Accessed September 12, 2019. ↵

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