

Accelerating Talent for Tomorrow: Five HR Game Changers to Drive Business Impact



Talent is high on the board and CEO agenda these days, as top leaders increasingly recognize talent as a key asset for driving business growth and innovation. In a [Spencer Stuart survey of CEOs and board directors](#), for example, 69 percent said the changing workforce and access to talent was a priority they're addressing, and a further 17 percent said it was a priority not yet being addressed. In open-ended responses, CEOs and directors had questions about talent attraction and retention; the impact of generational differences on the workplace; navigating diversity, equity and inclusion; and how to increase and maintain engagement among employees, especially younger generations.

For human resources (HR) leaders — specifically the CHRO — the growing focus on building a thriving talent force today — and for the future — provides the opportunity to create a more strategic HR function and drive value for the business. In many cases, HR leaders must overcome significant organizational barriers to achieve these goals, including:

- » Inconsistent manager capability
- » Lack of business ownership of the talent agenda
- » Limited budget and funding

We have also found change and stakeholder management to be another critical barrier. Without the right change management to align stakeholders, identify resistance and ensure adoption, HR leaders may have a great plan in place, but lack the buy-in or commitment from the people they need to execute on it. Surmounting these key barriers is foundational to ongoing success.

To learn more, **we conducted a series of in-depth conversations with CHROs and talent heads of leading organizations around the world to understand how they are approaching these talent challenges.** These executives represent 15 industries and have more than 180 years of combined talent expertise. The insights we gathered reveal business opportunities that can be seized from these new talent challenges.


On a positive note, in our work with clients around the world, we have observed that organizations are able to surmount these barriers once equipped with the skills, insights and strategies to effectively execute on their talent initiatives. Thus, understanding and overcoming the barriers that exist within your organization will be key to ensuring you can drive your desired talent and business outcomes.

Five game changers for accelerating your talent for tomorrow

A new approach is required to effectively evolve talent practices, drive performance and win in the marketplace. We've identified five game-changing actions that will deliver the biggest impact. Now's the time to embrace change, try new things and push these strategies forward.

1. Make culture your competitive edge for attracting and retaining talent.
2. Transform the talent you have into the talent you need.
3. Realize that future-ready talent will need future-ready leaders.
4. Integrate diversity, equity and inclusion across all facets of talent and leadership.
5. Stay ahead of the curve with talent insights and analytics.





Make culture your competitive edge for attracting and retaining talent

The challenge

Almost every aspect of how we work has been affected in the past several years: how people collaborate and connect, what they expect from leaders and their expectations around career growth and advancement, workload and well-being. Hybrid and remote work, shifting employee expectations and tighter labor markets have created new issues for attracting and retaining top talent. Traditional ways of working no longer resonate with employees or with potential candidates.

The solution

Now is the time to evolve ways of working to focus on attracting and keeping the required skills and talent. The employee value proposition (EVP) is the human-centric talent “agreement” that employees enter with their employer and the foundation of your talent brand — serving as both an important recruitment tool and as a true reflection of the actual employee experience. Your EVP must accurately represent your culture and provide the tangible and intangible benefits and experiences that will drive talent to be wholly engaged. In recent years, we’ve found that fewer people think their organization delivers on the employee experience it promises — and when the promise isn’t matched by experience, it produces a credibility gap. Redefining the EVP in an authentic and differentiated way should be a top focus for leaders across the entire organization, not just the responsibility of HR.

Leading organizations ...

- » Define their desired employee experience and ensure it is aligned to their desired culture.
- » Focus on purpose, values alignment and the experience of belonging to stand out in the market.
- » Celebrate the stories about their EVP, to make it come to life and ripple outward.

“Keeping our talent engaged and our entrepreneurial spirit alive is a huge part of our EVP.”

GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT
GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES, APAC

“We need to create an employer brand that really inspires people to help attract our talent. You can give the best comp packages, but that won’t engage them. We need leaders that can engage this type of work ... that want to continue to learn and grow.”

VP OF TALENT MANAGEMENT
TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER, NORTH AMERICA



Transform the talent you have into the talent you need

The challenge

Evolving business requirements, talent shortages and the need for new skills, capabilities and mindsets are forcing organizations to rethink talent management practices that are no longer fit for purpose. Talent leaders we spoke with highlight that proactively developing their existing people is just as critical as continuing to source and recruit new capabilities in the market.

The solution

To successfully develop talent for tomorrow, leading organizations are investing in their people today. There is a huge need to shift from traditional talent management to more employee-focused practices. Career management, succession planning and career mobility are all current talent focus areas. Upskilling and reskilling, bridging the talent gap and radically prioritizing retention are also top of mind.

Leading organizations ...

- » Focus on internal mobility and talent sourcing, hosting forums between their executives and talent pools to increase executives' visibility to this talent and the talents' visibility to career opportunities across the organization.
- » Invest in career development by creating tailored learning paths for people to understand their career options and how their skills might transfer across roles or departments in the organization.
- » Change mindsets and build new superpowers to equip talent with skills for the future, including resiliency, agility, adaptability, openness, readiness for change and growth mindset.

"Talent management will be a key element to prepare the organization for the future, sitting the right people in the right places supported by different tools and processes."

GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT
CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY, EMEA

"Upskilling and reskilling our employees is such a need to stay relevant and is expected by our customers."

VP, HR & TALENT MANAGEMENT
GLOBAL RETAILER, NORTH AMERICA



Realize that future-ready talent will need future-ready leaders

The challenge

We know that leaders cast a long shadow: 77 percent of talent leaders told us leadership development was currently a critical business priority, ranking manager skills and capabilities as the top barrier to successfully executing the talent strategy. Disengaged, non-inclusive leaders neutralize the effectiveness of people practices designed to motivate employees. Middle management is suffering too, reporting feeling underdeveloped and unprepared for the future — in terms of capabilities and ability to lead. Employee turnover and a lack of clarity and direction from senior leaders have managers feeling overloaded.

The solution

The leaders of tomorrow need to be developed and equipped with skills and superpowers such as resilience, transparency, change leadership, inclusiveness, empathy and compassion. They also need to be able to connect work with purpose, build trust with and inspire their employees and manage hybrid teams. It is a lot, but all of it is essential. With the particularly challenged middle management segment in mind, the talent function should look for new ways to identify, develop and leverage talent to support managers in managing their teams more effectively.

Leading organizations ...

- » Shift mindsets to create a culture of shared accountability and recognize the collective need to develop talent.
- » Equip leaders for success now as well as in the future.
- » Provide ongoing learning that is pragmatic, evidence-based, simple and action-focused.
- » Embrace new models and replace traditional leadership development models.

“Transforming our leaders, ensuring they build diverse teams, engage talent and embrace high performance are critical factors for our future success.”

VP OF TALENT MANAGEMENT
GLOBAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY, NORTH AMERICA

“Train our people to have ambidextrous ability — the ability to lead and innovate; instruct and coach as leaders; deliver and change; perform and transform.”

HEAD, TALENT, DEVELOPMENT & DEI
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY, APAC



Integrate diversity, equity and inclusion across all facets of talent and leadership

The challenge

Diversity, equity and inclusion are really three distinct but interrelated constructs, and they are inextricably linked with business and talent strategies. Yet so many organizations struggle to embrace diverse perspectives or develop inclusive and equitable leadership and talent practices. Leaders remain challenged to operationalize these principles to drive desired outcomes. It is also worth pointing out that diversity, equity and inclusion can be defined very differently across regions, countries and even different business units within the same organization, adding a significant level of complexity for multinational or global organizations. Because of this — or perhaps in spite of this — 81 percent of leaders globally indicated diversity, equity and inclusion is a top business priority.

The solution

The individuals we spoke with recognize that diversity, equity and inclusion must be integrated across all facets of talent and leadership and serve as a key consideration in business and people-related decisions. It is imperative that leaders work to intentionally create an equitable and inclusive culture. To attract, develop and retain talent and, in turn, achieve superior business results, organizations must infuse equity into people processes and ensure their people feel they have a voice, can influence decision-making and are truly valued for their contributions.

Leading organizations ...

- » Start with a shared definition of what diversity, equity and inclusion means for their organization.
- » Engage their board and executive team to drive equity and inclusion across their organization.
- » Ensure they have broad perspectives within their workforce to better understand target customers and appeal to specific sectors.
- » Weave equity and inclusion into the fabric of all talent processes and programs as well as cultivate inclusive leaders who inspire talent.

“Pay attention to DE&I, it’s a part of everything we do in talent.”

HEAD OF TALENT

GLOBAL SPECIALTY CHEMICAL AND PERFORMANCE MATERIALS COMPANY, NORTH AMERICA

“Equity is a game changer for talent management. It opens up new talent pools and moves the dial on diverse outcomes ...”

GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT

GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES, APAC



Stay ahead of the curve with talent insights and analytics

The challenge

While there are several key enablers for advancing an organization's talent priorities, few promise to deliver as significant of an impact as talent analytics. In our conversations, the majority of leaders said that harnessing talent insights and analytics is a critical business priority, yet many organizations are not effectively leveraging data to make decisions and prioritize investments. Data is critical to understanding talent pipelines internally and within the broader talent marketplace. Without comprehensive data, organizations lack the ability to tell the talent story effectively, engage leaders in compelling ways or equip them with the critical insights needed to truly evolve the talent for the needs of tomorrow.

The solution

The organizations that are investing significantly in data and analytics capability — and in digital skills overall — understand this is about more than data and numbers. It helps them look ahead, remain agile, ensure their investments and initiatives are working, and experiment and adjust — all of which will help organizations differentiate themselves now and in the future. Effectively leveraging data and analytics will require new organizational capabilities and a shift in mindsets, not unlike those required for digital transformation.

Leading organizations ...

- » Boldly experiment, integrating learnings and implementing change in an iterative fashion.
- » Equip leaders to maximize talent analytics for decision-making and more equitable outcomes.
- » Leverage data to paint a full picture of the talent landscape both internally and externally.
- » Optimize the full potential of tools that already exist in their organization before investing in new applications.

"Tech has transformed what you can do in the talent space; if you have the right system this can help you drive to key decisions."

HEAD OF TALENT
GLOBAL SPECIALTY CHEMICAL AND PERFORMANCE MATERIALS COMPANY, NORTH AMERICA

"With data we need to identify talent resources and talent drivers; data and scientific research are our biggest assets."

VP OF TALENT MANAGEMENT
GLOBAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY, NORTH AMERICA

Identifying the game changers for your organization

Which game changers could have the greatest impact on your business success?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- » Do we have a talent strategy that is directly aligned to our business strategy and key objectives?
- » Does our talent strategy articulate our people philosophy and the organizational capabilities required to achieve our business goals?
- » Does it prioritize the programs we need to prepare our people for tomorrow? Do we have alignment and governance between the board, C-suite and HR team on the priorities, roadmap and investment for talent programs?
- » Is there leadership commitment and understanding of their requisite behaviors to unlock our people and teams?
- » Does the HR function have the right mindset and truly integrated ways of working to deliver on our talent priorities?
- » Can our service delivery model and existing technology enable HR to effectively deliver talent programs and priorities to the organization and provide a leading employee experience?
- » Do we have the capabilities across the HR function and the broader organization to design and deliver our talent programs and priorities?
- » Do we have the right insights and analytics to help design impactful programs and priorities and measure our progress?
- » Finally, do we have a comprehensive change management strategy in place to successfully activate our own game changers?



Change your game

Now's the time to seize the moment. With your business strategy as a compass, the game changers we have presented should help you to identify the opportunities specific to your organization's needs. We recommend fully embracing new approaches and prioritizing the people practices that will drive the greatest value now and in the future. Instill key enablers around governance, leadership, talent capabilities and infrastructure, including HR technology and analytics. And finally — don't forget about change management. Take this opportunity — and the fluid possibilities within this new landscape — to make your talent strategy a game changer for your business.





About Spencer Stuart

At Spencer Stuart, we know that leadership has never mattered more. We are trusted by organizations around the world to help them make the senior-level leadership decisions that have a lasting impact on their enterprises, on their stakeholders and on the world around them. Through our executive search, board and leadership advisory services, we help build and enhance high-performing teams for select clients ranging from major multinationals to emerging companies to nonprofit institutions.

Privately held since 1956, we focus on delivering knowledge, insight and results through the collaborative efforts of a team of experts — now spanning more than 60 offices, over 30 countries and more than 50 practice specialties. Boards and leaders consistently turn to Spencer Stuart to help address their evolving leadership needs in areas such as senior-level executive search, board recruitment, board effectiveness, succession planning, in-depth senior management assessment, and many facets of culture and organizational effectiveness, particularly in the context of the changing stakeholder expectations of business today. For more information on Spencer Stuart, please visit www.spencerstuart.com.

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