Unleashing the Power of the New Workforce

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Top 3 Hiring Process Management (HPM) Trends Going Into 2012

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The current crop of college graduates is one of the most educated, technologically advanced, and technically skilled to ever enter the workforce. However, new research suggests that the new generation of workers is deficient along one critical competency: interpersonal skills—the ability to form and maintain meaningful, productive relationships.

Although this phenomenon presents employers with a potentially debilitating staffing challenge, by systematically assessing new hires and providing them with targeted coaching, they can unleash the potential of this young generation.

The Changing Workforce

In the 1980s, the U.S. Department of Labor conducted a first large survey examining what companies want from their employees.

“The report identified five critical workplace competencies: locating and allocating resources, acquiring and interpreting information, understanding complex systems, technological literacy, and interpersonal skills,” said Dr. Robert Hogan, president of Hogan Assessments. “The inclusion of interpersonal skills as a critical competency was a historic departure from traditional thinking, which focused solely on cognitive ability.”

So, if employers are no longer focused on cognitive ability, what makes an individual employable? Hogan proposes a three-part model.

“We believe the answer is (a) whether the person is rewarding to deal with, (b) whether the person can get stuff done, and (c) whether the person can fit with the organization,” he said.

In other words, being rewarding to deal with depends on a person’s positive personality characteristics (interpersonal skills); getting stuff done depends on competence and ambition; fitting in depends on a person’s values or beliefs.

Additional research indicates that, in this model, being rewarding to deal with is the most important indicator of employability. Drs. Joyce Hogan and Kimberly Brinkmeyer content analyzed employment ads in newspapers across the U.S. over the course of a year. Of the total positions advertised, 47% percent required strong interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills were deemed essential for 71% of the jobs involving client contact and 78% of the jobs requiring coworker interaction.

Despite the importance of interpersonal skills, however, studies indicate that college students are graduating without having developed them.

Training Employability

Although the lack of job candidates with good interpersonal skills presents employers with the possibility of the first white-collar labor shortage, it also presents a tremendous opportunity. Good or bad interpersonal skill is a function of personality. Therefore, it can be measured using psychometric assessment and, like other counterproductive tendencies, mitigated through strategic self-awareness and coaching.

“The starting point in any coaching process is to narrow down the personality characteristics that are driving the problematic behaviors,” said Trish Kellett, Director of the Hogan Coaching Network.

Every person’s personality has a bright side and a dark side. Bright side personality, assessed with the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), is the characteristics that others see when we are at our best. Dark side personality, assessed by the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), is a set of strengths that, under stress or boredom, become obstacles to building and maintaining productive relationships.

“Poor interpersonal skill is usually driven by a lack of self-awareness about how certain personality characteristics show up in relations with others,” said Hogan Senior Consultant Dr. Susan Toback.

Personality assessment and feedback are designed to increase participants’ awareness of their counterproductive tendencies.

“Self-awareness is the keystone of success in the workplace,” Toback said. “Everything we do at work and in life involves other people, so our ability to form relationships and influence others is absolutely critical.”

Changing Behavior

Because personality is stable over time, Kellett said, without intervention, those who struggle with interpersonal skills will likely continue to do so. With adequate coaching, however, methods for mitigating off-putting behaviors can become second nature.

“At first, implementing behavioral changes is like putting a fresh coat of paint on an old house,” Toback said. “The changes might feel fresh, but at the same time can feel superficial or even unnatural. Eventually, though, the changes become ingrained behavioral tendencies and ways of looking at the world and other people. You learn to be better at reading people and managing your interactions.”

About Hogan

With more than 30 years of experience, Hogan Assessments is the global leader in providing comprehensive, research-based personality assessment and consulting. Grounded in decades of research, Hogan’s assessment solutions help businesses dramatically reduce turnover and increase productivity by hiring the right people, developing key talent, and evaluating leadership potential.
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TALEO

With over 38,000 employees including 20,000 police and fire employees, The City of Chicago’s mission is to facilitate the effective delivery of city services by hiring the best possible candidates and maintaining professional human resources practices and programs. The City is committed to a recruiting system that is transparent, efficient, open, and accessible to all qualified applicants.

Managing Extremely High Application Volumes

In a single year, the City of Chicago can receive over 200,000 applications. This high volume of applications, coupled with strict governmental standards, created a very rule-bound staffing process that was entirely manual and compliance driven. The result was a very slow recruiting process that sometimes meant a qualified candidate didn’t get called until long after they had already accepted another job. The City needed an efficient way to balance the critical need for improved effectiveness and responsiveness while balancing stringent compliance requirements.

Using Technology to Automate Screening and Compliance

The City needed to use technology to help them build and deliver a model to cast wider nets within Chicago and nationwide. Once the candidates were captured, they then needed to recruit them in an efficient, fair, and objective manner.

“Developing a prescreening solution that would balance the critical need for improved recruiting effectiveness with the strict compliance requirements, required the highly innovative and unprecedented use of Taleo technology,” said Homero Tristan, Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources at the City of Chicago.

Relying on Objective Standards to Pinpoint Candidates

The City developed a process to better work through the massive volume of resumes and introduced objective standards to ensure that only the best qualified candidates are considered for open positions. New process specifications defined for the first round of application prescreening (scoring) included the requirement to immediately reject and notify candidates who do not meet job-specific minimum requirements. They also required completely blocking the ability of recruiters to create, add, edit or delete scoring questions.

The decision was made to use Disqualification Question (DQ) functionality with a goal of completely automating the scoring process by allowing candidates to self-evaluate against job-specific scoring questions (DQs). Requirements for the second round of screening included a highly detailed process designed to meet the very strict compliance requirements placed on the City to limit process variance. The screening process was also designed to minimize recruiter discretion to the highest possible degree in selecting candidates for the referral list.

Automatically Grouping Candidates by Qualifications

The system was configured to automatically group candidates by Major (Required) qualifications, then rank-order candidates within those groups by Minor (Asset) qualifications. Beginning at the top of the candidate list, recruiters manually review candidate records, validate all candidate answers to both scoring and screening questions, and reject any candidates who have misrepresented their qualifications—thereby ensuring the integrity of the rank ordering. This process allows recruiters to simultaneously assess fit—evaluating additional factors such as career path/progression, scope of experience, and skill proficiency—and then reject candidates who do not meet these additional qualifications.

Saving Millions While Achieving Compliance

The City of Chicago improved recruiting efficiency and increased recruiter and candidate satisfaction without sacrificing strict compliance requirements. The unique configuration combined with a highly prescriptive prescreening process has resulted in the complete elimination of the time-consuming manual scoring process, and produced a measured reduction in the number of candidates who must be manually screened by an average of over 90 percent, with a corresponding reduction in cycle times. This faster, more automated process resulted in a cost savings of several million dollars a year. Additionally, the ability to store scoring and screening questions has created an opportunity to streamline signature approvals. The City also locks down the functionality by user permissions and only allows certain users to edit the questions libraries meaning the City can satisfy all compliance goals and thereby enable further future productivity gains.

Adding Value to the Hiring Process

Prior to introducing the automated scoring and screening process, there was little the Department of Human Resources could do to provide real value to the hiring process. The Department was administratively burdened with a highly inefficient, manual process. While there are still significant strides to be made, the new screening process has provided the catalyst for Department of Human Resources to remake itself into a more strategic, value-added function.

For more information, visit www.taleo.com/customer/city-chicago.
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2011 saw plenty of changes in the HR, staffing, and recruiting industry. As the year draws to a close, TalentWise has identified the top HPM trends for 2012.

1. Single Platform

According to research conducted by Aberdeen Group, to achieve Best-in-Class performance companies must centralize and standardize the onboarding process as well as automate to drive efficiency.1 Aberdeen found that companies with a standard onboarding process experienced 54% greater new hire productivity, 50% greater new hire retention, and two times the level of new hire engagement. Best-in-Class organizations are almost twice as likely to centralize the management of the onboarding process.

From the time a hiring manager identifies the person they want to hire, to when the new employee becomes fully-engaged and contributing to the organization, companies use multiple vendors to navigate the hiring process. HR is often managing vendors for screening, tax incentives, and onboarding—playing traffic cop throughout. There is an increasing need for HR professionals to manage their entire hiring process on a single, integrated software platform. A single platform allows seamless integration, plugging into recruiting systems on the front end and Human Resource Information Systems on the back end.

2. Employment Eligibility Verification, the Form I-9, and E-Verify

Managing Form I-9 compliance is becoming an even more critical task for HR organizations across the U.S. with increasing worksite investigations, significant penalties and fines, and the expansion of E-Verify.

The number of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) worksite inspections doubled from 1,191 in 2008 to 2,746 in 2010. Fines issued by the agency have skyrocketed from $675,209 to almost $7,000,000 in the same time frame. In 2011, ICE’s budget submission sought budget increases in their detention capacity and civil enforcement personnel. The trend is clear: I-9 audits are a key ICE initiative and the agency’s enforcement goals are aggressive.

The paper Form I-9 process can be error-prone and hard to understand. This one page form is so complex that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service provides a 69-page booklet on how to properly complete it. It seems unfair that companies are penalized when they make mistakes—even after good faith efforts at compliance.

Automating the historical paper Form I-9 process is another way companies can ensure forms are correct and properly stored. A recent study found that 54% of Best-in-Class companies automate new employee forms.2 Employment Eligibility Verification services today eliminate stacks of paper, help reduce errors, and improve compliance.

3. Social Media

Recent studies show 77% of HR, staffing, and recruiting professionals use an online career site for talent acquisition.3 Online content—especially popular social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and LinkedIn—have created a new and rich information source for HR, staffing, and recruiting practitioners sourcing and screening candidates. Social networks offer a free way to identify passive candidates (those not actively looking for a new job), verify a candidate’s résumé claims, unearth undesirable behaviors, and gain insight into a candidate’s skills, personality, and potential cultural fit. While benefiting employers, social media as a screening tool creates new legal concerns and should be used wisely to avoid potential pitfalls.

Employers who neglect to screen for informative online content expose themselves to unnecessary business risk and a potential negligent hiring claim. Conversely, employers who conduct this type of screening in-house expose themselves to protected class information and information not sufficiently job-related. This can lead to allegations of discrimination.

There is nothing wrong with rejecting a job candidate with personal characteristics that will result in poor or unsafe job performance. That is part of any HR organization’s mandate. However, when recruiters obtain such information directly, it may be hard to prove that only the job-relevant information was used in the hiring decision.

As social media adoption continues to accelerate, this sourcing and screening challenge will be even bigger in 2012. Prepare yourself by ensuring your protocols enable you to leverage the value of social media without the risk of discrimination and negligent hiring claims.

These significant trends bring unique challenges to HR, recruiting, and staffing professionals, and shape the way they’re thinking about Hiring Process Management (HPM) in 2012. We look forward to seeing what new challenges next year brings and working with these professionals to tackle them head on.

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For more information, visit www.talentwise.com.

1 Onboarding 2011: The Path to Productivity, Aberdeen Group, March 2011
2 Onboarding 2011: The Path to Productivity, Aberdeen Group, March 2011
3 Employee Screening Strategies, Aberdeen Group, August 2011
For more information on the companies that contributed to this white paper, visit their web sites, or contact them directly at:

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