

How to create a self-sustaining talent ecosystem

By  Lyndy van den Barselaar

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The fabric of many companies has been altered by a convergence of new demands, from the disruption of Covid-19, the changes needed to avert serious climate issues, and the balance of building workforces with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Heeding this call, companies around the world have pledged to act against climate change with an increasing focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. While climate issues are pressing, the social element of ESG is equally important and companies need to create a sustainable ecosystem for talent that applies a net zero approach to their workforce.



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The employee experience and how people feel about their company are key to driving talent sustainability. Yet data shows that businesses aren't doing enough to improve the experience of employees. This is supported by ManpowerGroup research [What Workers Want](#) which shows that workers want to be proud of where they work, with 81% of employees now expecting employers to provide training programmes to help keep skills up to date.

An organisation's people are its most valued resource. It is this talent that sets them apart from the competition and drives innovation and performance. Leaders must strive for a net zero approach to talent, where the aim for talent is for there to be zero waste throughout the talent pipeline through effective career mobility and building sustainable talent ecosystems. Yet many businesses are not using their most critical resource effectively.

Organisations are constantly competing to recruit and retain top talent — a challenge being made more acute by the skills shortages affecting most sectors. As such, organisations need to look holistically across their talent practices and reimagine how they attract, hire, reskill and redeploy talent to optimise the skills of their people.

To make the workforce sustainable, a company needs a complete picture of its talent and talent needs which is achieved with a talent sustainability framework that tracks three domains.

Acquiring and hiring talent to accelerate time to productivity

According to the ManpowerGroup report [The Great Realisation: Accelerating Trends. Renewed Urgency – A Look at the](#)

[2022 Labour Landscape](#), 69% of employers globally are unable to access the talent they need. But behind every challenge lies opportunity and now is the time for organisations to get even more creative in attracting, recruiting, upskilling, reskilling and retaining valued workers.

Organisations need to ensure their brand and sourcing practices provide frictionless candidate experiences that enable them to stand out and engage employees from the first touch to their last day. Employees also have heightened focus on a values-driven agenda, empathetic leadership and a culture of trust that will become a net positive for attracting and retaining talent and engaging teams with the employee value proposition taking precedence.

Engaging and evolving talent to create a higher-skilled workforce at an optimum cost

With more than half of all workers (58%) needing new skills to get their jobs done, the skills revolution is in full force. Reskilling and upskilling will become non-negotiable for individuals and organisations as roles continue to require more skills than before, with both technology and human capabilities most in demand.

This is supported by the World Economic Forum which estimates that one billion people will need to be upskilled by 2025. Organisations need to ensure that the investments they make in upskilling are focused on the right people who are engaged and want to stay. If they do, businesses can encourage good people to stay longer.

Through active career development, organisations can help employees to be more effective and achieve more throughout their time with the company. Further, implementing initiatives such as [coaching has also proven beneficial](#) as three in four workers (74%) who plan to stay for longer than two years have undergone career coaching.

Improve culture, retention and belonging by transforming leaders

Actions speak louder than words and people are no longer content with lip service and empty promises in the realm of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Though more than 30% of companies already deploy D&I training programmes, continued polarisation along lines of politics, race, identity and age means organisations will increasingly be asked to take positions on social issues.

All stakeholders – investors, regulators, customers and employees – will expect more transparency around progress, not just pledges, and will hold organisations accountable. As such, organisations will need to visibly action diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging so everyone can benefit from the economic recovery, technological advancements and climate justice.

As organisations think about talent in more sustainable ways — and build cultures and communities based on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging — they can create self-sustaining talent ecosystems. If the right talent sustainability practices are in place, companies can have a renewable supply of the right talent at the right time to offset the other side of the equation, creating a net zero approach to talent.

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