

Workforce Planning in an Era of Constant Change

by Alan Mellish, Director of Enterprise Products, Human Capital Institute



Organizations today are [reporting](#) significant difficulty hiring key talent, making strategic workforce planning more important than

ever. Unemployment is also shrinking in [many sectors of the economy](#), which means that closing talent gaps is a challenge that we can't ignore.

The better you plan for future talent gaps, the better prepared you are to address them. But in an era of rapid change, how do you keep workforce plans relevant to the shifting needs of the business? There's no silver bullet to solve this problem, which is why we're sharing a few strategies to help you address your workforce planning challenges with greater agility. Whether you're a team of one or a global center of excellence, these three key things can help improve your strategy and set you up for future success.

Identify key stakeholders and speak with them regularly.

Conducting regular check-ups with stakeholders in different functions and lines of business is a good practice for any talent professional, but it is absolutely crucial if you want to become better at workforce planning. Get to know these people and understand their long-term concerns. If they make reference to a new initiative or a strategic shift, such as entering a new market, take the opportunity to learn and discuss any talent ramifications up-front. Regular, informal check-in conversations with stakeholders are also a great way to make sure everyone is executing on their responsibilities for current workforce plans.

Use real-time data from outside HR. While talent data is obviously a crucial input for strategic workforce planning, we need to collect and analyze information from other areas of the business to get a more complete understanding of the business and its needs. Look for operational metrics that might signal a change in downstream talent needs. Consider financial projections that could impact your talent budget. Refresh your data regularly to ensure you're properly equipped to adjust workforce plans midstream.

Use storytelling to help stakeholders consider alternate scenarios. The flexibility of your workforce plan depends on your ability to imagine and plan for a range of possible futures regarding a key segment of your workforce. For example, what do you do if the talent supply goes up? What about down? Stays the same? One way to get your stakeholders engaged in this process is to create plausible, realistic scenarios for them to respond to, such as envisioning a larger-than-expected number of engineers retiring in 18 months.

Workforce planning continues to evolve as organizations look to be ever-more strategic in how they deploy talent. These three strategies will serve you well no matter where you are on the maturity spectrum.

Want more information on how to inject a little dynamism into your workforce planning efforts? Listen to this podcast with HCI's Bill Craib "[Workforce Planning and the Rest of the World: Times They Are A-Changin'.](#)"



+1.925.951.9000 | +1.877.WORKDAY (+1.877.967.5329) | Fax: +1.925.951.9001 | workday.com