



Can't Hire Talent?

Grow Your Own.

In today's employment market, your best supervisory and management candidates might be right under your nose.

Here's how to identify and develop promising young employees – and help them grow into your company's future leaders.

In this eBook you will learn:

- The advantages that your younger workers bring to your talent bench.
- How to identify leadership potential.
- How to set up new leaders for success.
- Easing the transition to minimize resentment among the rest of the team.

What's Up With These Kids Today?

Approximately 1 million members of the millennial generation, born between 1980 and 2000, enter the workforce each year. Currently, they make up the largest subset of the U.S. workforce.

Much has been written and said about millennials, some positive, some not so much. Whatever you think of the younger generation as a group, here's what they bring to your talent bench:

They embrace change. Millennials know that technology and the world around them are constantly in flux. They adapt and change quickly, making them far less likely to get mired down in the way things are "traditionally" done.

They want to make meaningful contributions. There is an upside to the millennial tendency to insert themselves in all manner of business decisions. They simply want to make real and meaningful contributions to the organization.

Young employees want to grow. Millennials want to expand skills so that they can make those meaningful contributions and achieve their personal career goals.

They thrive on feedback. Older employees are used to receiving meaningful feedback just once a year. Millennials, on the other hand, thrive on constant feedback so they know what they need to do in order to keep improving.

Millennials are tech savvy. They are in their comfort zone when it comes to learning new platforms and new methods for sharing information. They are also great built-in teachers for older employees who may be more resistant to technological change.

The Business Case for Developing Millennial Leaders

Cultivating young talent is just good for business. Tapping into your current pool and identifying high-potential employees for leadership offers unique business value.

You need a deep bench. Baby boomers are getting ready to retire en masse. If you want to maintain continuity, succession planning is a must. Developing young talent ensures you can call on a deep bench when the time comes.

The skills gap is real. Especially in industries like technology and manufacturing. Developing young talent will close the gap and insulate against hiring challenges.

Retention isn't what it used to be. People no longer spend an entire career at one company. Millennials are notorious job hoppers – not because they are disloyal, but because they are constantly seeking new opportunities to grow. If they can't grow with your organization, they will move on.

The world is changing. Technology, increasingly restrictive regulatory environments, changing populations, globalization and other factors are changing the way business is done. Millennials are highly adaptable and much more in tune with those changes, allowing your organization to remain agile.

Develop a Keen Eye for Spotting Growth Potential

High-potential employees stand out for a number of reasons. When it comes to identifying leadership potential in your current workforce, many senior managers make the mistake of confusing strong performance and high productivity for aptitude.

The truth is, your rock-star group contributors will not always be the best candidates for leadership.

If you think you have a high-potential employee on your team, ask yourself the following questions:

Does the individual have a strong, proven track record of delivering results that exceed expectations?

Does the person take charge and make things happen, rather than react to what is happening around them?

Do you trust this person to make their own decisions about the direction of their work?

Do others on the team seek this person out for help and advice?

Do others trust this person to lead projects, even though they lack a managerial title?

Can the individual stay focused on the end goal, rather than getting mired down in minute details?

How successful is the employee at managing multiple priorities?

In the face of unexpected change, does the individual adapt quickly and effectively?

Questions like these will help you see a more complete picture beyond output alone.

Think You've Identified a Leader? Test the Waters First.

Choosing to develop and promote the wrong person is a costly endeavor. You won't always get it right, but you can reduce the chances of getting it wrong by testing your theory first.

Before promoting high-potential employees, test them out on a challenging and meaningful project that requires the input and assistance of the entire team. Offer them the role of "project lead" and see how well they perform in the role. Evaluate how well they:

- Delegate work to others
- Communicate with the group and with you on progress
- Manage obstacles and setbacks
- Adapt to changes

To get accurate results, resist the urge to step in and micromanage the project. If you trust an employee to pick up the ball, make sure to provide the room for them to run.

Their Success Starts With You⁽¹⁾

Don't underestimate the difficulty of transitioning from contributor to leader. First-time leaders need guidance and support to succeed.

The numbers show just what new leaders are up against¹:

- According to subordinates, 20% of first-time leaders do a poor job.
- 26% of first-time managers felt they were not ready to lead.
- 60% said they received no training when they stepped into their first leadership position.
- 50% of all new leaders are ineffective, according to management.

¹http://insights.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/AbsenceOfSupport.pdf#_ga=1.176514469.1808802781.1461250880



Their Success Starts With You⁽²⁾

Give new leaders the tools to succeed by:

- Being honest about the challenges they will face.
- Providing them with off-site, formal management training, preferably with other first-time leaders.
- Being clear about the goals and expectations of the position.
- Matching them with a mentor who has similar skills and interests.
- Scheduling weekly check-ins to discuss how things are going and offer practical, actionable advice and feedback.
- Resisting the urge to step in when you see the slightest bit of trouble brewing.
- Offer them useful phrases to help connect with difficult or resistant employees like, "You have a lot of experience in this area, Bob, would you share with me some of your ideas," or "Susan, how was this problem handled in the past?"

Remember that front-line and first-time leaders directly manage the majority of your employees. Setting them on the course for success will keep the entire business on track.

Mentoring Matters

Mentoring is a cost-effective way to develop skills in high-potential employees, but the value in mentoring goes beyond top-line costs. It:

Promotes understanding between generations. A multigenerational workforce is difficult to manage. Mentoring relationships help break down generational barriers quickly and effectively.

Protects knowledge base. Knowledge is always lost when valuable employees retire or change employers. Mentoring keeps critical company knowledge alive with your most engaged employees.

Creates built-in sounding boards. Mentees are more likely to go to their mentor in the face of a challenge, rather than their manager. This can free managers up from dealing with internal skirmishes or other minutiae throughout the day.

Fosters idea sharing. Two heads are always better than one. When a mentor and mentee approach a challenge together, the result will likely be a more creative, effective solution.

Mentoring should be one element of a development program; it should not replace formal training methods.

Is a Mutiny Afoot? Nip Resentment in the Bud.

You may not be able to stop co-worker jealousy, but you can prepare your high-potential employee for managing resentment effectively.

Make it clear that relationships with former peers can and will change. They won't be included in group gab sessions, and invitations to lunch may dry up quickly. Offer your management trainee tips for dealing with changing attitudes such as:

- Recognizing that over time, some of those relationships may return; others will not.
- Focus on success. The best way to win over skeptics is to deliver real results that can't be denied.
- Understand how to walk the fine line between being assertive, or falling into aggressive or even passive actions. What a leader asks for, goes, but an aggressive approach will make the resentment worse and letting the team take advantage will lead to poor results.

You may lose a team member to resentment from time to time, but that's often the cost of doing business. If someone wants to move on, they will. It's probably better in the long run, as one resentful employee can destroy morale for the entire group.

Cement your company's future by developing young leaders today.

There is a serious war for talent going on in today's marketplace. Skill set gaps are common, and virtualization of the workforce means employers hundreds or even thousands of miles away can steal away local talent.

Developing young talent is just smart business. It deepens your bench, ensures a robust knowledge base, and in the end, promoting from within saves time, money and other resources.

Your staffing partner can help you develop strong strategies for hiring young talent with the potential to grow with your organization. Together you can build a plan for filling your pipeline and ensuring your bottom line today, tomorrow and well into the future.