

The **WAR** for **TALENT**



Steve Jobs once said, “The difference between using good hardware can be a 2:1 difference for a company. But the difference between a company with superb programmers vs. average ones is 25:1.”

The real secret to success is surrounding yourself with the best people. Organizations that take hiring and retaining talent seriously reap exponential rewards. Highly engaged employees who demonstrate alignment in technical skills and core values are what differentiate you from your competitors. In fact, studies show that businesses with highly engaged employees are 21% more profitable than businesses whose employees are disengaged.¹

However, with unemployment at a 10-year low and an ever-increasing skills gap in STEM careers, available talent can be extremely difficult to find. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for July 2017 was at 4.3%. And with the job market growing twice as quickly as the labor pool,² it's no wonder it's taking longer to fill open positions.

This is especially true in STEM

industries, where the predicted job growth from 2014-2024 is 8.9%, yet the unemployment rate for STEM workers in 2015 was a mere 2.5%.³

- Work-life balance—not just flextime, but also how supportive your company is towards employees' personal endeavors and family obligations

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In a recent interview, George Opitz, President of Brightwing, offers some strategies to combat today's war for talent.

How do you attract and acquire the best talent?

Take a hard look at your employer brand. Money generally isn't the prime motivator—employees are looking for a healthy, aligned corporate culture; social consciousness; and a strong market presence. You must consistently communicate the things that make your organization a great place to work:

- Personal and professional fulfillment

- Social consciousness
- Growth, advancement, and educational opportunities
- The caliber of your current employees, because people want to work with other smart and talented people

During the selection process, give candidates a preview of what being an employee looks and feels like at your organization. Think about the entire talent acquisition process: the job posting description, the application process, the first call,





the interviews, and the job offer. Is your talent acquisition process defined? Does it reflect your company's culture and the way you want potential candidates to perceive you?

I hear hiring managers say all the time, "The employee looked good on paper, but within five months we knew we had made a huge mistake." Instead of focusing solely on education, experience,

are not engaged at work.⁴ They are either actively searching for new opportunities or simply not performing at their highest potential. However, disengaged employees can be re-engaged to improve their performance and keep them at your company.

Finding people with compatible core values that are in line with the mission and goals of your organization is imperative for long-term success.

Even if your talent acquisition process does demonstrate your company's culture, you must still focus your efforts first on a prospective employee's core value match, and then their skills match. The national talent shortage makes it tempting to hire the most experienced or technically advanced candidate, but what happens if they don't align with the company culture?

Always keep in mind that while you can teach skills and give people experience, you cannot teach core values. Finding people with compatible core values that are in line with the mission and goals of your organization is imperative for long-term success.

and hard skills, start hiring people whose values match the job and match other top performers within the organization. Ask questions that require answers demonstrating candidates' actions and values.

How do you retain the best talent and ensure employees continue to perform at their highest level?

Employee engagement is critical to retaining talent, and it starts with the candidate experience. When you begin engaging job seekers during the submittal and interview process, you're showing them how they'll be treated as an actual employee. Today, 67% of American employees

Employee retention can be broken into five main action items:

1. It's essential to properly onboard your new employees. When you consider that 75% of job seekers believe that their candidate and onboarding experience with a company indicates how they will be treated as an employee,⁵ it's clear that efforts to engage them should begin from the moment they first begin the candidate journey.

2. You must provide employees with ongoing opportunities for growth. Studies show that this is especially important for retaining Millennials,⁶ but it's something that workers of any generation look for in a job. Career development



George Opitz

George Opitz, President of Brightwing, is an expert in the recruiting and staffing process as well as delivering organizational alignment, employee engagement, and performance management solutions to middle market organizations.

Brightwing is passionate about creating workplace environments where employees

thrive. Brightwing has been named a “Top Small Company Workplace” by Inc. Magazine, a “Cool Place to Work” by Crain’s Detroit Business, a “101 Best and Brightest Company to Work For” by the MBPA and Corp! Magazine, and a “Best Place to Work” by Dallas Business Journal. The company represents more than 550 consultants and clients nationwide. Headquartered in Troy, MI, Brightwing has offices in Dallas, TX and Weston, FL. To discover the Brightwing difference, visit www.gobrightwing.com.



in the form of regularly evaluated growth plans demonstrates to employees that they have a clear future in your company, giving them concrete goals to work towards. Succession planning can also have a huge impact on employee engagement.

3. Top performers know their worth and expect to be paid accordingly. That does not mean that you need to be aggressively ahead of the market, but you should be competitive.

4. There are a variety of amenities your business can provide employees that are not directly tied to their paychecks. Convenient services in the workplace (onsite gym, daycare), flextime, increased paid time off, volunteer time off, tuition assistance, office happy hours, and parties can go a long way towards creating a more holistic work environment that helps employees see your company as more than simply a job.

5. People want to be recognized for their hard work. Recognition isn’t necessarily about prizes or monetary awards—but meaningful recognition, whether in public or private, is essential. It helps to show employees how the work they’ve done has impacted the company. According to Opitz, “You want to help people feel good about what they’re doing if they’re doing good work.”

It’s no surprise that finding aligned, high-performing talent is difficult in today’s competitive job market—so when you discover the right people to support your organization’s mission and vision, it’s critical to keep them engaged long-term. Ultimately, talent acquisition is about people, which means that you must look beyond the resume and technical skills to the core values of your people.

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Understanding and investing in your employees is the key to winning the war for talent and enabling future organizational success.

¹Gallup State of the American Workplace 2016

²The War for Talent Is About to Go Nuclear. Here’s Why and What You Can Do, TLNT

³STEM Jobs: 2017 Update, U.S. Department of Commerce

⁴2016 State of the American Workplace, Gallup

⁵2017 Candidate Experience Study, CareerBuilder

⁶Millennials Want Jobs to Be Development Opportunities, Gallup