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Workforce Planning

When is the time to hire?

…identifying the tipping point

by Adele Taylor
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Do any of these sound familiar?

- Overtime is becoming the norm for you and your team.
- You find yourself taking on the day-to-day tasks of your staff members.
- Deadlines are being missed.

Then it's likely that you are short-staffed!

When to recruit…

One of the biggest problems facing organisations is knowing when to recruit. If you wait until you have a resignation it may be too late; you may lose good talent or adversely affect the morale of your teams.

It's time to be proactive and plan your staffing requirements.

'Talent pipelining' is very much a buzz word in big business. However it can be hard to identify what you need today let alone what you might need 6 months or more down the track.

Short term strategy: take a big picture focus

Don't just assume that you have to replace 'like for like'.

Before rushing out to hire someone, take a step back and consider your requirements:

- Could the team's work be reshuffled?
- Will such a reshuffle lead to a gap in another area?
- Could you bring in a temporary staff member, to cover a shifting demand or buy you time to design a role and recruit effectively?
- Do you need new skills not already within your organisation?

Evaluate your overall needs, workload peaks and your existing talent base. Look at both your short and long term needs.

And don't forget to ask your staff where they see the greatest need for additional resources. The information you get from them may just surprise you.

Organisations that invest time in achieving a balance between workloads and staffing levels maintain higher morale and greater productivity levels

Longer term: aspire to be proactive

Typically, recruiting is designed with immediate needs, not future needs in mind.

When you hire reactively, you may only find people who are actively looking for work at that time. You might find someone good but, more often than not, you may only find someone who is simply available.

On the other hand, if you are **always** looking for good candidates and keep a list of those candidates, you can choose from the best when you need to fill a role. Build relationships with them early on and stay in touch.
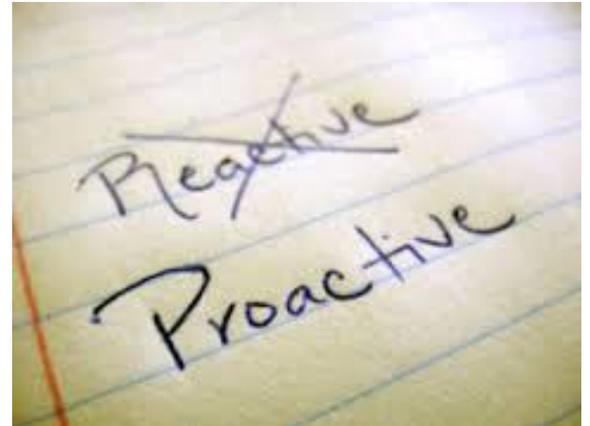
Try these 10 steps to help you establish a longer term, proactive talent strategy:

1.   Identify critical business roles - no point investing time planning for non-critical positions.

2.   Assess your current employee's skills for these critical roles.

3.   Recognise the gaps. Are the missing skills easily obtained? Can a good employee be taught skills for critical roles?

4.   Define your talent pool categories and categorise your current employees so you know where you want them to develop.

5.   Evaluate and track your employees - including tracking the promotion and turnover rates.

6.   Identify and define external, new candidates - ensuring you capture and assess past applicants for future opportunities or roles.

7.   Design attraction campaigns for external applicant pools.

8.   Refine sourcing strategies, monitor outcomes then review and refine again.

9.   Track the overall size and quality of internal and external pools of talent.

10.   Review frequently to ensure the changing needs of the business are still being met and skills for critical roles are identified.

Being proactive and taking the time to ensure you have both the plans and relevant staff in place means that your organisation can react quickly when times change and grow effectively.

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