Chapter 6

# IT Human Resources:
## Experts at Talent Management and Critical Partners to the CIO

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## ABSTRACT

*In this chapter, IT human recourse professionals will find confirmation of the important role that they play in ensuring the creation of a high performance department. They develop, recommend, and then lead the talent management strategy. As leadership needs arise, HR works with IT leadership to assess internal candidates, and if they do not fit, then they can assess and recommend external staffing firms with the appropriate expertise and reach. The human resources/CIO partnership will include leading the effort to develop a position specification, managing the candidates through the interview process, and negotiating an offer that often times must be customized to attract the ideal candidate. Finally, once selected, human resources will manage the on-boarding process to ensure that the recent hire has the support they need and can get up to speed quickly.*

## INTRODUCTION

The success of an IT organization is dependent upon the quality of its leadership. Leadership quality is assessed by human resources professionals supporting the IT organization, but assessment cannot take place in a vacuum. The human resources professionals need to start with a Talent Strategy. This roadmap will include the Chief Information Officer, the CIO's direct reports and the staff below them, and therefore will need to be customized to fit each level. As this is being developed a clear understanding of the company's culture and, if it exists, the sub-culture within IT must be defined. Without understanding the culture an appropriate fit and assessment of personal characteristics cannot be made. On the other hand,

while qualifications and experience are critical they are fairly straight forward to assess.

## Developing a Talent Strategy

Talent management has been a point of discussion for companies of all sizes and across all industries for many years. Human resource organizations play a critical role, but all managers and business leaders must commit time and resources to the process.

A talent strategy has many components that when tied together create a cycle. To be successful companies must follow the defined path and aggressively support the respective processes. Different points in the cycle emphasize external talent, while others focus on internal talent that may have been recently hired or have been with the company for some time. To begin, the talent management process the organization must have the capacity to target and be attractive to the relevant pools of talent. At the entry level where technical skills are critical this can mean offering an opportunity to work with leading edge technologies, continuous education and training programs, and flexible work hours.

As human resources moves forward with the selection, recruitment and hiring of talent behavioral characteristics and technical skills must be aligned. Next, on boarding is the induction process for new hires. Going forward, to maintain a competitive advantage, organizations must have a talent management strategy that offers continuous learning. Best of breed companies offer not only training but have formal mentoring programs as well. Defining roles that leverage an individual's competencies, communicating a career track and providing performance feedback is known to engage and retain talent. Through promotion and rotation the organization creates a leadership pipeline. Hiring at the technical, manager and Vice President level gives the CIO an external benchmark against the internal team.

Following the identification of future leaders, the talent strategy cycle comes full circle establishing process to secure effective and smooth successions. Finally it is generally accepted that to be successful the talent management strategy must be employee centric. An annual review with a formal 360 evaluation is a tool, but this tool must be part of a broader talent management strategy.

For example, in <u>Compensation Today</u>, Barry MacLean (2009) writes that a Talent Strategy is employee-centric and is focused on recruiting, training, aligning performance, planning for growth and development and identifying high-potential employees, and charting a course for their career growth. However to be comprehensive, measurable, and have impact the Talent Strategy must also include compensation management "which by contrast is all about jobs: what grades or bands they fall into, and what target incentives are associated with varying levels of jobs within the company." To retain and attract the strongest talent, a good Talent Strategy will go beyond the internal comparison of jobs and will include a market valuation of individual employees.

There are many approaches to determining market valuation and some require more resources (e.g., time, money, staff, etc.) than others. For managers and directors, entry level management, job posting and career web sites can provide quick but un-scrubbed data. Recruiting firms (generally contingency) will also have helpful data points and should be willing to offer an opinion based on their current view of the market. Do not look to online resources for data at the senior management level (Vice President and above). If the organization has a relationship with an executive search firm (retainer-based) consultant specializing in IT they will offer an opinion. While this may be at no cost, a fee will be charged for a more detailed study and human resource consulting firms such as Towers Watson & Co. and Hewitt Associates are specialists. Further discussion of market valuation follows in Compensation Management section.

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