

FEATURE

Are you an ‘employer of choice?’

Time to build a talent pipeline

By Stacy Pursell

I’m a big proponent of being proactive. It doesn’t matter if you’re a professional looking to grow your career or a team looking for its next great employee. If you want to be successful, you must be proactive. You must build a talent pipeline.

Building a sustainable talent pipeline involves identifying, engaging and nurturing potential candidates long before positions become available. There are four reasons to do so: Prepare for future vacancies, improve the quality of your hires, save time and money, and improve flexibility and adaptability.

Prepare for future vacancies

At the core of the talent pipeline lies the notion of preparedness i.e., the readiness to fill vacancies promptly and seamlessly, minimizing disruptions to operations and

preserving organizational continuity. Organizations equipped with a robust talent pipeline possess a reservoir of prequalified candidates, cultivated through proactive engagement and relationship-building initiatives.

When a position opens, these organizations can swiftly identify and onboard suitable candidates, decreasing downtime and ensuring uninterrupted workflow. This proactive stance not only safeguards against productivity losses, but also instills confidence among everyone involved, reinforcing the organization’s reputation as a reliable and resilient entity.

Improve the quality of your hires

A talent pipeline can help your team elevate the quality of hires, an outcome that reverberates throughout the organization,

influencing productivity, morale and ultimately, bottom-line performance. Unlike traditional recruiting methods that prioritize expediency over precision, a talent pipeline focuses on identifying candidates who possess the requisite skills and experience and align with the organization’s values, culture and long-term vision.

By investing time and resources in nurturing these relationships, organizations create engaged and committed employees, driving innovation, collaboration and sustained growth. The ripple effects of this approach are felt across the organization, as high-performing teams emerge, fueled by a shared sense of purpose and a commitment to excellence.

Save time and money

While the upfront investment in building a talent pipeline may appear substantial, the long-term cost savings it yields are undeniable. By cultivating relationships with candidates well in advance, companies minimize onboarding time and expenses, maximizing operational efficiency

and return on investment. The cost-saving benefits extend beyond recruiting to employee retention, as organizations with robust talent pipelines experience lower turnover rates and reduced training costs.

Improve flexibility and adaptability

In an era defined by rapid change and disruption, the ability to adapt and innovate is synonymous with survival. By maintaining a pool of pre-qualified candidates, organizations position themselves to respond swiftly to evolving market dynamics. This proactive stance insulates the organization from talent shortages and helps create a culture of innovation. The strategic advantage extends beyond recruiting to encompass talent development and succession planning, as organizations groom future leaders from within, ensuring continuity and sustainability in leadership ranks.

The blueprint

Now that you know why building a talent pipeline is so important, now comes the tough part – building one. The steps involved include identifying talent needs, building an employer brand, creating talent pools, engaging and nurturing, and continually evaluating and improving.

Identify talent needs

The journey toward building a talent pipeline commences with a comprehensive assessment of the organization's current and future talent requirements. This entails analyzing existing roles and anticipating future hiring needs in alignment with strategic objectives. By

understanding the skills, competencies and experience essential for each role, organizations gain valuable insight into their talent landscape and can tailor their strategies to meet evolving business needs.

Build your organization's brand

At the heart of successful talent acquisition lies a narrative that resonates with top talent and distinguishes the organization as an "employer of choice." Building an employer brand necessitates a multifaceted approach, encompassing internal culture, external reputation, and opportunities for professional growth and development. Organizations must proactively cultivate an image that appeals to candidates' aspirations and values, and they can do so by leveraging social media, the company website, employer review platforms and employee referral programs.

Create talent pools

Creating a robust talent pool—i.e., a repository of potential candidates across diverse disciplines and levels of expertise – entails engaging proactively with individuals who exhibit potential or express interest in future opportunities within the organization. Networking events, industry conferences, online forums and social media groups serve as fertile grounds for cultivating these relationships.

Engage and nurture

Building a talent pipeline calls for ongoing engagement and nurturing of candidate relationships—a process that requires time, effort and genuine investment. Organizations must provide candidates with relevant

and value-added information to keep them informed and engaged. Taking advantages of opportunities for interaction, feedback and professional development creates a sense of belonging and investment in the organization's success.

Evaluate and improve continually

Organizations must periodically review their recruiting and hiring strategies, assessing the effectiveness of their talent pipeline initiatives and identifying areas for improvement. This may entail refining candidate sourcing methods, enhancing the candidate experience or addressing skill gaps through targeted training and development programs.

It's never too late to start creating a robust talent pipeline. Doing so may not be easy, but it's also not an option. In fact, it's a necessity, especially for industries and professions in which qualified candidates are in short supply, including the veterinary profession.



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expert and the go-to search professional providing the most effective talent-centric solutions. Stacy is a thought leader on topics pertaining to executive search and recruitment, hiring and retention in the fields of animal health, animal nutrition, pet technology and veterinary medicine. She's the founder and CEO of The VET Recruiter and TVR Executive Search, and hosts "The People of Animal Health" podcast. Stacy is a certified personnel consultant (CPC) and certified employee retention specialist (CERS).