

By Steven Landberg

Savvy business leaders must develop strategies to keep IT talent.

Technology Talent Management

There continues to be growing demand for top global technology talent, especially information technology leadership with strong general management skills and select IT specialists. Talent is increasingly recognized as a key competitive advantage.

While quality hardware and software are generally available and somewhat ubiquitous, proven technology leadership and specialist talent to best apply, customize, integrate and use that technology to create marketplace advantage are relatively rare.

This is not a short-term problem. The upcoming retirement of baby boomer technologists portends a growing shortage of experienced leaders in the United States. Offshore technology talent also is in short supply. Markets such as India and China have growing domestic demand, as well as competing global demands, for their talent. Technology training is falling behind demand not only in the United States but also in key offshore markets.

Technology talent may appear to be available at short notice via a plethora of channels, including employees, contractors, consultants, vendors, outsourcers and offshores. However, the top technology talent to effectively lead, direct and integrate those resources is scarce. As a result, there's a growing need for business savvy chief information officers/chief technology officers, seasoned project management and effective vendor management talent. IT leaders with an understanding of how to manage global organizations, vendors, contractors and employees are in short supply. The demand for select IT specialists also is strong for security, compliance and enterprise resource planning integration experts.

Therefore, it's now imperative for business leaders to ensure that their organizations develop and implement effective technology talent management approaches, specifically talent acquisition and retention strategies. Those strategies need to focus especially on critical global technology leadership, project and vendor management, and key specialists talent requirements as well as address the overall technology talent needs for the organization.

In order to best obtain and retain top quality technology talent, organizations need to develop or update their technology talent management strategies to recognize an increasingly competitive marketplace. The effort should be addressed as a critical business process including the following steps:

- Inventory current internal technology skills and competencies throughout the internal organization and key external vendor partners.
- Develop short- and medium-term projections for key technology talent needs with a focus on global experience, project management, vendor management, security,

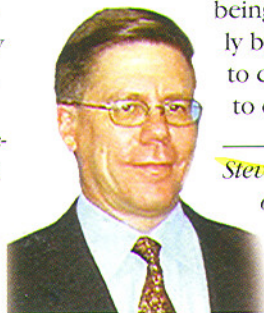
compliance and enterprise resource planning integration.

- Prioritize technology talent needs in terms of supporting current technology applications and, more importantly, for new critical technology deployment for maintaining or creating competitive advantage.
- Evaluate internal technology skills/competencies vs. prioritized talent needs and gaps.
- Evaluate alternative approaches to best meet priority talent gaps/needs, including full-time employees, part-time employees, contractors, vendors, consultants and/or outsourcers.
- Select best sourcing approaches for obtaining key technology talent requirements in the short and medium term.
- Establish a sourcing plan for each of those technology needs and channels.
- Integrate talent sourcing and supply strategies across channels and monitor for shifts in needs and supply levels.
- Develop CIO/CTO and key technology leadership position succession plans.

Top global technology talent is expected to be in demand both in the near term and foreseeable future.

Technology talent retention strategies also need to be developed for maintaining priority internal talent. Such strategies include determining priority technology talent satisfaction levels and needs; evaluating competitive pay levels, benefits, training, and especially development opportunities with a focus on priority technology talent; rapidly addressing key talent retention issues to minimize risks; and developing appropriate technology talent retention programs on a prioritized basis.

Technology talent sourcing and retention need top management focus as much as making other important strategic investment and supply chain decisions. The development and implementation of technology talent sourcing and retention strategies should be led by a combination of senior human resource, technology and business leaders to be most effective. Top technology talent was perceived as being plentiful and not treated well recently by many organizations. That will need to change for many organizations in order to compete effectively. **BR**



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