

Every Manager Must be a Talent Scout

The organizations that compete most successfully in the renewed “War for Talent,” will have a secret weapon, an army of talent scouts at every level of the organization. They will do this by ensuring that every manager of people looks in the mirror and sees a talent scout. In addition to his/her functional role, successful leaders must also effectively attract, grow and retain the necessary talent to execute flawlessly on their individual piece of the business strategy.

What was perhaps merely a “nice to have” for the 20th century is now elevated to a “must have” for the 21st century. The reasons are simple, and best illustrated by the following facts:

- In 2008, we will see the first big wave of baby boomers retiring. The queue behind them is simply not big enough to replace them. The BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics) projects that the US economy will have six million more jobs to fill than people to fill them due to baby boomer retirements.
- The average tenure of managers and executives is decreasing steadily over the past 10 years. (“100 Things You Need to Know: Best People Practices for Managers & HR”, Eichinger, Lombardo, & Ulrich, 2004, pg.86.)
- The major reason employees are looking to leave their present employer is lack of career growth and development, often blocked by a bad boss. “It’s the soft stuff that generally retains talent. It’s quality of supervision. It’s systematic advancement and opportunities to learn and grow. It’s recognition, listening and delegation.” (“100 Things You Need to Know, pg. 8)
- Futurist Jay Jamrog, Executive Director of HRI, the Human Resource Institute at the University of Tampa, predicts what he calls “The Perfect Storm,” a definite shortage of knowledge workers, a probable skill deficit, and maybe a labor shortage on top of that.

In the face of this evidence, organizations can no longer afford to relegate “that people stuff” to the HR team. The stakes are too high not to have every manager, every leader at every level, wearing a talent scout hat and being measured on the results they produce.

