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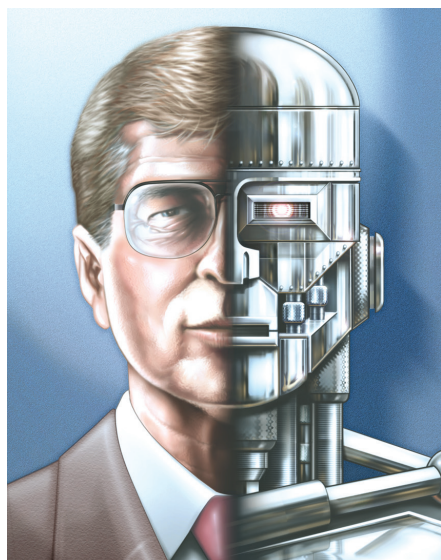
## Artificial Intelligence and Human Resources

**W**e've come a long way since HAL refused to open the hatch for Dave in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* almost a half-century ago. Siri reminds iPhone users of appointments, IBM's Watson beats the best human players on Jeopardy, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming more common in all fields of endeavor.

Will the increased use of AI affect HR? Absolutely.

### AI and HR

In a December 2015 article in ERE Media's online newsletter, TLNT, David Creelman points to three areas of HR



that AI is expected to affect: coaching, organizational design and matching people to work. AI's potential is powered by "deep learning," the ability of technology to learn through the process of solving problems.

One immediate area in which AI is likely to play an important role is bias-free recruitment. Rick Devine, CEO of TalentSky, a career services firm in Redwood City, CA, says that predictive technologies are here to stay, but what they are predicting will evolve to prioritize candidates' relevant skills, independent of where they acquired those skills. This will level the playing field by eliminating an array of hiring biases.

While the specter of AI may raise concerns among employees who fear that technology may one day make their jobs obsolete, a more-likely scenario is that AI will lead to different types of skill requirements in the future.

Jonathan Kestenbaum, executive director of Talent Tech Labs, a talent-acquisition technology consultant in New York, acknowledges that HR professionals may initially feel anxious about the impact of AI on their work. But, he says, "Implementing AI software simply eliminates mundane tasks and time-consuming data analysis to serve as an ongoing problem-solver for HR. These digital assistants will save HR pros from

falling into an inevitable pit of bias while providing predictive, impactful data and identification of trends to solve recurring problems in the HR process."

HR professionals are already pressed for time. AI can help by letting HR pros focus more on the human aspects of talent acquisition and personalizing the recruitment process, says Kestenbaum.

The full impact of AI on the HR profession remains to be seen, but those already dabbling in this realm suggest that the positives are very likely to outweigh the negatives for both employees and employers. HR has an important role to play here, too, helping employees understand the benefits that AI can bring and the new opportunities that may open up for them. ▲

### Hot on the Inside

#### Treat Ex-Employees Well ..... 2

Frequently, your ex-employees will be your best new employees.

#### Retention Strategies ..... 3

When it's hard to find good replacements, maybe it's time to work harder at retaining your good employees.

#### Workplace Civility ..... 4

Political campaigns seem to generate decreased civility, even in the workplace, and the current election season is no exception. How do you increase civility?

### For More Information:

**The Business Journals** — The role of artificial intelligence in people management

<http://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/human-resources/2016/06/the-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-people.html>

**ERE Media** — Tech Insights: Deep Learning, Artificial Intelligence, And The Future Of HR

<http://www.ere-media.com/tlnt/tech-insights-deep-learning-artificial-intelligence-and-the-future-of-hr/>

# Treat Exiting Employees Well—They May Come Back!

Employees who made a decision to leave their company often found themselves pariahs — cut off from communication with their former managers and even, sometimes, former colleagues. Many organizations had policies *against* hiring back former employees.

But these days, when finding good talent is more challenging, organizations often take a different approach: They continue to engage with the employee

welcomed back — not all employees should be candidates for rehire;

- The re-onboarding process is handled in such a way that the transition back is a positive one for all involved.

## Rehiring is Less Time-Consuming

“For large companies that experience normal workforce turnover, implementing recruiting geared towards bringing back former employees can be an effective, less time-consuming way of hiring talent,” says Deb LaMere, vice president at Ceridian, an international HR consultancy in Bloomington, MN. Boomerang employees, she says, are more likely to have left an organization because of something personal, such as an unexpected job offer or a family situation, rather than because of job dissatisfaction. Sometimes timing is the key, and re-engaging with talented employees who left an organization on good terms can be an effective way to find good talent.

## Potential Pitfalls

There are some potential pitfalls to be aware of, says Monique A. Honaman, CEO of ISHR Group in Suwanee, GA. “Hiring managers need to be careful not to settle for rehiring a former employee simply because this is the easiest route to filling an open position,” she says. This can be a problem when boomerang employees may be a good enough fit, but not the best fit. HR and hiring managers, she says, need to make sure they are exhausting all resources to find the best talent available.

There’s also a risk related to loyalty, she adds. If the employee left once, what’s to say they won’t leave again, especially if a better offer comes along? Hiring managers need to do a really good job of determining why former employees left, and why they want to return.

Still, it’s a potential talent pool that shouldn’t be overlooked. Employees themselves, particularly millennials, say

they are increasingly open-minded about the possibility of returning to work for a former employer. ▲

## Skills Gap Challenges

Chances are you’re in the middle of the skills gap buzz. Some call it fallacy; others call it reality. But it is the #1 employee-centric challenge today, according to research from an esteemed consultancy.

If you’re struggling through this issue, remember that we can help by identifying candidates that fit your needs and culture. In turn, your recruiters are freed up to focus on what matters the most: having strong, ongoing relationships with candidates.

Studies show that top companies improve their external sourcing capabilities when they ally with a staffing firm. They’re finding that this approach, more than any other strategy, ***allows them to double their recruiting efforts without having to double their HR staff.***

The very nature of a staffing service involves constantly recruiting and evaluating people. An essential part of our everyday life is a ***hands on process*** of sourcing candidates, and separating the chaff from the strong contenders. Our recruiting professionals are trained to engage people in the enduring tradition of person-to-person.

And we do it ***every day***, which makes us quite adept at the sourcing process. Think about that, and ask us how we can help you to bridge skills gap challenges and build a stronger pipeline of appropriate candidates. We’re real people here, and we’re here to help.



before and after walking out the door, just in case the grass isn’t quite so green on the other side of the fence.

And, in fact, the grass is proving not to be so green. According to a recent study, 76% of HR professionals who used to have policies prohibiting rehiring ex-employees say they’re now more accepting of welcoming those former employees back with open arms.

It’s not a bad idea, but it’s a move that needs to be handled strategically and well-managed by HR to ensure that:

- The off-boarding is smooth, so employees will still feel positively engaged with the organization;
- The right employees are being

## For More Information:

**Bloomberg** — Why More Employees Are Going Back to Their Old Jobs

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-01/why-more-employees-are-going-back-to-their-old-jobs>

**Forbes** — Candidates Are Now Competing Against Boomerang Employees For Jobs

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2015/09/01/candidates-are-now-competing-against-boomerang-employees-for-jobs/#7cf4830261f2>

# Refine Your Retention Strategies

**T**he tighter the job market gets, the more important is the ability to find, hire and *retain* good staff. How can you ensure that your employee relations practices are designed to meet their needs, keep them engaged and keep them onboard?

Retention begins at the beginning. You need to paint a realistic picture of your organization for candidates. You need to manage expectations from day one to ensure the right fit on both sides of the employment relationship.

Onboarding is the next step. Early interactions can boost the odds a new employee will stay around for a while.

Once on board, though, HR professionals and managers must ensure that employees' experiences on the job meet or exceed their expectations. What are employees looking for?

## Recognize What Drives People

"It is imperative for small-business owners and HR managers to recognize what drives people to work for a company," says Josh Denton, owner of Josh

Denton Consulting, in Duluth, MN. Is it the pay? The mission? Do employees see the organization as an entry-level player in the industry, which may lead to future job offers from competitors? Each employee is different and each company is different. Matching the right employees with the right organizations helps ensure alignment and fit.

S. Chris Edmonds, CEO of The Purposeful Culture Group, in Denver, says that "hiring for culture is the deal maker or deal breaker. If employees you bring into your team do not embrace your organization's common goals and shared values, then trust, respect and dignity are eroded." What happens when team members feel distrusted, discounted or dismissed? They quit and leave. Or worse, he says, they quit and *don't* leave.

## Voluntary Quitting Is Up

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, voluntary quitting has hit the highest level in nine years and has returned to pre-recession levels. Adam Calli, principal consultant for Arc Human Capital, in Woodbridge, VA, says that "employees who had to stay with their company, regardless of their level of job engagement, generation or pay, no longer do."

What matters most to employees? According to Calli, "Two of the most effective methods of retention are skill development and a clear career path."

## Team Leaders Are Key

Employees, it is said, don't leave their companies, they leave their managers. So, what do great team leaders do?

- They act daily to remove team members' frustrations.
- They genuinely enjoy their team members.
- They laugh with – not at – their team

members.

- They celebrate team members' efforts and accomplishments, not just at work, but in the community and at home, too.
- They give credit rather than laying blame.
- They hold team members accountable for results and service.
- They don't tolerate rude, aggressive or self-serving behaviors by anyone on their team.

## Investing in Employees

Companies must invest in their employees, says Denton, with training and development that allow high-potential employees to embark on new ventures within the company. You need to give power and decision-making ability to employees to help shape the company.

Employees need to be recognized for their contributions. That can take a variety of different forms, such as encouraging employees to share their stories with the company in the monthly newsletter or blog, giving days off for excellent work or gift cards for an extra bonus. Even better is recognizing employees outside of regularly established intervals such as the annual performance evaluation. ▲



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## For More Information:

**Business.com** – Follow the Leader: 7 Employee Motivation and Retention Strategies Used by Tech Giants

<http://www.business.com/human-resources/7-employee-motivation-and-retention-strategies-used-by-tech-giants-you-can-make-use-of/>

**Business 2 Community** – In-Demand Employee Retention Strategies for an On-Demand Workforce

<http://www.business2community.com/strategy/demand-employee-retention-strategies-demand-workforce-01607643#ZCCx8GoioP6b6OKI.97>

**Fast Company** – Four Employee Retention Strategies For The Modern Workplace

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3051379/know-it-all/four-employee-retention-strategies-for-the-modern-workplace>



## Keeping Civility in the Workplace

**I**f nothing else, the current election cycle underlines the necessity of civility in the workplace.

The volatility and polarization of political discussions often carries over into the workplace. In fact, a recent Society for Human Resource Management survey indicates that about a fourth of HR professionals believe that employees are more vocal about their political opinions this year than in the past. But only 24% had a formal, written policy to address political discussions.

What can HR do to ensure that employees don't step over the line between reasonable, civilized discourse and divisive dissension?

Mireille Wozniak-Michalak, founder of Petiole HR, a Cleveland area HR consultancy, favors a professional and respectful approach to communication with any co-worker, whether it be about politics, sports, etc. HR, she says, needs to be diligent in addressing complaints from employees and managers and dealing with those issues consistently. She says you should ensure that managers are trained to consistently address any disruption due to political discussions.

A non-solicitation policy can help curb posting of political items at desks, on bulletin boards or in lunchrooms. You may also need a dress code policy that addresses buttons, T-shirts, etc., that may be politically oriented.

However, says Wozniak-Michalak, be careful you follow National Labor Relations Board rules, which protect employees' right to engage in political discussions, as long as those discussions don't negatively affect working conditions or employment-related concerns.

Such political polarization at work isn't a uniquely American problem. Meredith Henson of Totara Learning, in Wellington, New Zealand, says that HR plays an important role in enabling and training managers to proactively identify and manage issues before they become an ongoing problem and evolve into an institutional norm.

"Staff members," she says, "need to feel they can safely express concerns and vent frustrations to managers or HR team members, and managers need to have the skills and tools to effectively manage conflict." This is where HR plays a vital role.



Early detection is the best mechanism for ensuring professionalism and civility within any organization. Ensure that all employees understand that colleagues with differing opinions or values have a valid contribution to make to the team and the company, and understand that acceptance and tolerance are vital to a maintaining a collaborative workforce.

Asking employees to avoid talking about things that everyone is discussing outside their workplace is unrealistic. But you need to have a strong workplace code of conduct and harassment policies, with accompanying training, to keep discussion within the bounds of civility. ▲

### For More Information:

**EEOC – Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace**

[https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task\\_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf](https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf)

**HR Legalist – The Great Debate: Policing Politics in the Office**

<http://www.hrlegalist.com/2016/07/the-great-debate-policing-politics-in-the-office/>

**SHRM – Limit Divisive Political Discussions**

<https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/Pages/political-discussions.aspx>