



Motivating Top Talent

Two recent reports offer guidance on motivating and developing talented employees in the current global economic downturn.

Motivating and retaining top talent

A report from OnPoint Consulting identifies strategies for motivating and retaining top talent in the current economic climate when the emphasis on bonus payments is no longer possible or appropriate. Previous research has found that earnings and benefits have a 2 per cent impact on job satisfaction and engagement compared to 70 per cent provided by job quality and workplace support.

The report suggests the following survival strategies:

- Create a sense of purpose - Engagement and retention improves when people understand how they connect to the "Big Picture" and how they make a difference.
- Provide meaningful work - Allowing people to do what they do best and make a significant contribution is key to engagement and retention.
- Solicit ideas - Involvement in decisions gives people a sense of control in uncertain times, shows them their opinions matter, and improves decision acceptance.
- Let people know where they stand - Setting tough but realistic goals is motivating even in a tough environment.
- Enhance trust and communication - Trust is built when leaders improve credibility by being candid, demonstrate reliability by ensuring their actions are consistent with business objectives and values, and are accessible.

Rick Lepsinger, president of OnPoint Consulting commented:

"Feeling connected to the people you work with also helps create a sense of purpose.... Providing opportunities to learn and grow is the icing on the cake.... Clear goals are only part of the equation. People need regular feedback so they know when they are on track and recognition when they achieve key milestones....The more people feel you are focused on them, rather than on yourself, the more they trust you."

Employee Goals and Talent Development

A report from SumTotal® Systems Inc., a global provider of talent development solutions, argues that implementing effective, universally-accepted goal setting for employees, coupled with a system for managing and tracking these processes can enable HR managers to make a significant contribution to improved organizational performance.

Richard Oyen, director of HR and talent development said:

"With the current economic forecast, it is now more important than ever to make sure employees' goals reflect the organization's overall goals to ensure everyone is working toward the same mission. **Contd.onPage 3**

What does...

Contd.from Page 1

Apart from this there are many other institutions that have HR courses. University students can follow these courses while studying for their degree. Today we don't see many undergraduates opting to study HR, even Management students often opt to follow accountancy courses. In my opinion, teaching of HR should start from the Advanced Level or Ordinary Level. There are many HR professionals who can work as part time teachers. Their knowledge and experience is very valuable and can be passed on to students.

In regard to employment, graduates should make an extra attempt to look for jobs. They must not expect the government to provide them with employment. Even if the government does provide a job, it may not be the job the graduate is looking for.

I would also say that the undergraduates should be given practical knowledge by allowing them to work as trainees in their respective fields for at least ten hours a week while studying for their degree. Therefore when they pass out of University they will have the confidence and practical experience to support their academic qualifications. This opportunity of working with an organization could also be extended to Advanced Level students.

What is your opinion about student participation in extra curricular activities? What role do musical and sports activities play?

Extracurricular activities make a man, a man. Educational activities alone cannot do that. Sports help a student a great deal

"Just Surviving" is

One guy walked in to a gym. He did some stretching, walked on the treadmill for 20 minutes and then used the exercise bicycle for 15 minutes. He spent another 10 minutes on a rowing machines, 20 minutes with weights and another 10 minutes each on a leg and arm machines before he went for a quick shower. Then he left the gym.

Another guy walked in to the same gym. He got into his gym attire and went around the gym to see who is there today. He stepped on to the treadmill and started it slowly while talking to a friend on the phone. While still on the treadmill he saw a friend walking in to the gym. He stooped the treadmill and went to greet his friend and had a small chat. When he returned to the treadmill someone else has started using the treadmill so he went to the exercise bicycle.

He was paddling the exercise bike for 5 minutes when he realized the television set above him is not working. He stopped and got out of the bicycle and went to the reception and asked the manager to fix the television. He was having a chat with the manager for the next 10 minutes where he was told that they are in the process of planning to get pay TV facility soon and all their TVs are being fixed. So the guy went back to continue his workout and realize that there are so many new people in the gym and most of them are young people.

Reap the harvest

The first guy would start noticing changes in him, both physically and mentally, after a few months, whereas the sec-



Nuwan Samarapathi
Corporate Trainer
NLP - Master Practitioner & Coach
(USA)
B.com- Marketing (AUS)

He was paddling the exercise bike for 5 minutes when he realized the television set above him is not working. He stopped and got out of the bicycle and went to the reception and asked the manager to fix the television. He was having a chat with the manager for the next 10 minutes where he was told that they are in the process of planning to get pay TV facility soon and all their TVs are being fixed. So the guy went back to continue his workout and realize that there are so many new people in the gym and most of them are young people.

ond guy would notice that he is not achieving his fitness goals. The second guy would also notice that not only is he not losing weight or becoming healthy but also he is gaining weight and would feel sorry for himself. He will be so disappointed in himself. Even after paying the membership fee for a full year, he would quit going to the gym because for him "going to the gym" is a waste of time. He would give up his plans to lose weight and will end up hopeless and depressed.

You may have heard the saying - "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there". What matters is not what you "achieve" at the end, but what you "wanted to achieve" and your results. It is perfectly fine to go to the gym, hang around and spend time talking to friends IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED TO ACHIEVE in the first place. But if getting fit and healthy was your goal, you cannot but feel disappointed in yourself when that goal was not reached.

We see many people feeling sorry for themselves as they claim not to have others around them take progressive steps and feel worse about their inability to reach significant milestones in their own lives. The main reason why many feel failed and lost is because they didn't have a clear goal to begin with and the discipline to see it through!

A Snapshot
Let's take a snapshot of what a worker experiences in a modern office. What we see in the snapshot fall under three categories: Routine experiences, Negative Experiences and Positive Experiences. Everything a worker does on day-to-day basis such as attending meetings, planning, achieving targets, KRAs evalua-

A Snapshot

Let's take a snapshot of what a worker experiences in a modern office. What we see in the snapshot fall under three categories: Routine experiences, Negative Experiences and Positive Experiences.

Everything a worker does on day-to-day basis such as attending meetings, planning, achieving targets, KRAs evalua-

tions, recruiting, inquires and complains come under Routine Experiences.

The stress and pressure of the routine work, interpersonal conflicts and rivalries, stagnation, work/life imbalance, disappointment and mundane tasks come under the Negative Experiences of a modern worker. The social recognition and prestige of having a job, financial rewards, work experiences, work-recognition, career developments, colleagues and new opportunities fall under the Positive Experiences of a worker. This snapshot is true and valid for an overwhelming majority of workers in Sri Lanka and around the globe.

If this is an inevitable reality, the real question is - how well are you balancing these experiences and how these experiences are influencing your goals and your journey?

Are you merely surviving?

There are three possible outcomes for all workers in a workplace: Perish, Survive or Thrive. Some people 'Perish' because they cannot handle the work pressure and challenges. A combination of routine pressures and negative experiences push them off the ladder.

Most people do better than the 'Perish' group. They don't quit but they merely 'Survive'. This group tends to sit in their "comfort Zone" and would not take any risks or challenges that would stretch them and push them to the next level. Workers in this group tend to stay in the same position for 10 - 15 years, keep complaining about their situation but yet resisting to change.

The third group of people sees challenges as opportunities to shine. They 'Thrive' under pressure and rise above the negative experiences. They take chances; they keep on updating themselves; they compete with themselves and get better at what they do. They are the ones who go to the gym with a clear objective, move from treadmill to the exercise bicycle and then to the next, finish the workout as planned and move on. This group hardly complains about their situation if it is out of their control. Instead, they focus on what is needed to be done by them, have clear personal and career goals in mind and as a consequence get results!

Some people look at them and say "they are very lucky". May be they are. But most importantly they are focused, goal oriented and hardworking. These qualities are proven to attract "luck"!

Nuwan Samarapathi

Corporate Trainer
NLP - Master Practitioner & Coach
(USA)
B.com- Marketing (AUS)
www.promindsweb.com
0773 66 00 94

Recruiting Technology: Honing your competitive edge

The Internet has upped the recruiting ante by increasing exponentially the number of candidates to whom you have access. But while you're frantically opening e-mail and screening out a similarly increased number of unqualified responses, the best candidates are often skimmed off the top by your competition.

To gain a hiring advantage, the best solution is to expedite sourcing and screening so your hiring manager can contact the shortlist of most qualified candidates more quickly. This may mean rethinking your recruiting processes, both in terms of organizational design and technical infrastructure.

Companies such as Agency.com, AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, The Motley Fool, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Unisys Corp. have adopted recruiting technology to help profile, match, and track candidates via the Internet.

"If I had to prioritize all the reasons, then improving recruiting efficiency and productivity was the No. 1 reason. This was accomplished by automating the resume flow, improving the website intake, and allowing recruiters to share candidates and see what others are doing. Those are the basic reasons why we needed a new system." (Company A)

"What we needed to do was to build some functionality to (1) attract the passive job seeker, (2) develop relationships with that passive job seeker, and (3) leverage technology to expedite the screening and interviewing process." (Company B)

Data Collection and Analysis

New recruiting technology offers powerful tools that can help you collect and analyze data, identify the top-performing recruiters in your organization, and understand why they're effective. The same technology can help you identify which recruiters and hiring managers cause bottlenecks by not using the system effectively. This new technology can also help you build stronger internal practices and troubleshoot competitive weaknesses by identifying:

- ▶ Which recruiting sources produce the most hires
- ▶ Which screening questions best identify highly qualified candidates
- ▶ Why and when candidates decline offers
- ▶ What types of marketing campaigns work best to make passive candidates active

Application Service Provider

(ASP): the New Kid on the Block

During the last year a number of new recruiting solutions offered by application service providers (ASPs) have come to market. An ASP is a Web-based application that contains much of the same functionality as a piece of software, but is accessed through a browser and does not require any desktop installation. An ASP sells or rents access to applications over the Internet or over a private network. The ASP model is designed to provide rapid implementation of relatively standardized solutions at a low cost. Clients don't have to buy software, build databases, purchase servers, or hire system administrators.

Evaluating Technology Solutions

The process of transitioning to a new recruiting system can take several months to more than a year. It starts with identifying your recruiting objectives, evaluating the capabilities of your current system, and compiling a detailed list of your requirements.

However, in terms of the final step-evaluating product providers-one key finding of the WetFeet study can simplify your task: Because many vendors offer tools that perform similar functions, the final selection is often made on the basis of such considerations as pricing structure, the vendor's implementation plan, and future product enhancements.

To Evaluate Recruiting Technology Providers, Ask These Questions:

1. Was the application designed to run on the Web?
2. Does the vendor understand your business?
3. What is the provider's customer service and support program?
4. What is the average time to implementation?
5. Can recruiters and hiring managers use the system easily?

Contd.onPage4



to develop a positive attitude and to learn to take on leadership roles. Today most schools have sports activities and different types of extracurricular programmes such as drama, musical activities and photography. These extracurricular activities give the students an opportunity to develop their career prospects by being involved in a field they hope to follow.

Following their school career, most students do not have the opportunity to enter University. Are there programmes to cater for them and what training opportunities should be available for these students?

There are many institutions that provide alternative training, however the financial factor plays a role in deciding their accessibility. There are many technical colleges which provide a major service. However these colleges are not as well recognized as universities and students themselves focus only on entering University. This mindset has to be changed and this change has to come from parents and teachers as well. In the past a student had to go to University in order to find a white collar employment. That is not true today.

How can young people make use of their talents in their future careers? What are the ways in which they can develop their talents?

Every person has at least one talent. We all know we have talents but we don't always make use of our talents. Even teachers may not be aware of the talents their students have. At Parent Teacher

Association meetings, teachers should discuss with parents and identify the student's talents. The student's talents should be recognized and the child should be given the opportunity to develop his / her talents. Part of the issue is that parents themselves sometimes do not like their children going into other fields. For example in a family where the father is an engineer he will often expect his child to also become an engineer but may not want the child to learn mechanical skills such as car repairing. In European countries equal importance is given to each field of employment. But that does not happen in Asian countries like Sri Lanka.

Do you have any general advice for aspiring young professionals? What skills should they develop?

Most of the time we see students focusing only on their specific area of study. But in addition to their chosen area, they should also develop their other talents. For example a student who is studying accountancy may also be a good singer and can pursue a part time singing career. This will provide mental relaxation which helps in studies as well. Talents are something that a person has inside himself or herself and these talents should be developed. Perhaps the student might one day go in to that field as a career. Many artists have started their careers in this way.

What advice would you give young people regarding English language skills?

A lack of English knowledge is not the fault of the students. They have limited opportunities to learn. We often see students

who have excellent passes in all their other subjects at the Ordinary Level examination, but have failed in English. This is a crime. I would list knowledge of English as the most important factor needed to find a job in the private sector. It is essential. The second most important factor is a basic knowledge of information technology (IT). A student with Advanced Level qualifications who has a working knowledge of English and IT is in a better position to find a job than a graduate who doesn't have those two skills.

Knowledge in these two areas also helps a student develop confidence and leadership skills. If you can speak English well you can interact well in any situation. Talented children are deprived of the chance to learn English because of the lack of good teachers. English should be a common language and the importance of knowing English should be stressed to schools and parents.

What attributes or talents do you think are desirable in a student who is hoping to go in to the HR field?

An HR person has to play many roles. They have to be able to train employees, recruit new employees, counsel and solve disputes, and motivate employees. An HR person may be very talented in one of these areas in which case he or she may be able to concentrate on that particular area. Recruitment is one of the most important factors in an organization. Selecting the right person for the job and that is often the key to an organisation's success. The two words 'HR' are very important. In my opinion, HR is two things - honesty and reliability. Any professional should have those two attributes. Honesty also means commitment and loyalty, and reliability means that you