

2010: Prepare for the Future Workforce Now, With Strategic Talent Optimization

Rebecca Callahan of SourceRight Solutions looks at the rise of the On-Demand Workforce and how current economic and market conditions are driving its growth in 2010 and beyond

What is the most powerful trend you're seeing for 2010?

Without a doubt, companies are looking to be more cost effective and risk compliant in their recruiting, hiring and management of a quickly evolving blended workforce—a workforce that includes both full-time workers and fast growing levels of on-demand talent, such as independent contractors and contingent staff. At the same time, companies want to maintain a high level of competitive talent acquisition capability. More companies are turning to integrated engagements of recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) and managed service provider (MSP) solutions as a way to meet these goals. Right now, the market is very dynamic from a provider, client and technology infrastructure standpoint.

What are the emerging practices that help acquire and manage a more “On-Demand” blended workforce?

Recent market research indicates that more than 75% of large employers believe a single, integrated hiring strategy for contingent and full-time workers will result in higher workforce quality and, consequently, are evaluating the appropriate mix between contingent talent versus employee headcount. Today's competitive realities have fundamentally changed the role of every executive responsible for talent leadership, who now find themselves in charge of a new strategic task—creating and maintaining an agile, skilled and motivated workforce that is able to shift quickly to meet fast-moving challenges and opportunities. The current pressures to accelerate new business strategies mean project-based talent is taking a larger role in workforce planning efforts.

What are the advantages of integrating the management of a blended workforce?

At SourceRight, we refer to the management of a blended workforce as “Strategic Talent Optimization,” a holistic approach that enables organizations to improve business performance and competitive advantage through flexible, on-demand workforce strategies. Using an integrated model, hiring managers have a single point of contact for talent acquisition and resourcing; and they participate in strategic intake sessions to determine the best talent to fulfill specific roles and business requirements—whether full-time, part-time, contingent, or independent contractor. An optimized strategic talent process also streamlines and standardizes tools, technologies and processes required to manage blended workforces, improving administration and costs, while minimizing the compliance risks associated with managing large populations of non-employee talent.

How has the economy increased the difficulty and cost of acquiring talent? Why?

There are several contributing factors at work. Many companies have cut back significantly on internal recruiter and other talent acquisition and compliance process resources. At the same time, companies are attracting unprecedented numbers of applicants for the few open positions they are filling. As a result of the current environment, hiring demand is fluctuating rapidly and unexpectedly, and there is often a mismatch between hiring demand and the costs of fixed recruiting resources. The ability to scale with these talent demand fluctuations will define the cost effectiveness and competitiveness in acquiring the top talent an organization needs during these uncertain times.

Has there been an expansion of global hiring?

We have seen increasing demand for global talent acquisition solutions. Today most domestic companies are engaged in global business activities and are looking to hire outside the United States to support new markets, products and client bases. They are making different hiring decisions than they've made in the

past. From the provider point of view, we are focused on our global capabilities to meet the increased demand and to ensure we can support local talent sourcing requirements as well as varying cultures, customs, and regulations.

What should buyer executives be aware of when choosing an Outsourcing Talent Acquisition provider today?

Many providers surged into the talent acquisition outsourcing market in recent years. Some of these companies lacked the necessary expertise or capitalization. Hence, a number have gone out of business and others continue to be on tenuous financial ground. Companies seeking an RPO/MSP engagement should ensure that the provider they choose is financially sound now and for the future. Talent acquisition methodologies and technologies continue to evolve everyday, which means outsourcing providers must also continue investments in their solutions to stay on the global cutting-edge of recruitment best practices and deliver the best talent in a cost effective and efficient manner. And with advances in recruiting techniques such as employment branding, social media and candidate relationship management, the outsourcer must have a global network of recruiting specialists with deep workforce planning, strategy and sourcing expertise

SourceRight Solutions, a division of SFN Group (NYSE: SFN). Rebecca Callahan has responsibility for strategic development and execution of business growth and operational excellence in the company's capabilities and leadership in integrated sourcing strategies that include recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), managed service programs (MSP) and professional contingent workforce services.