

# CHRO CONSORTIUM EXCHANGE

SEPTEMBER 5, 2018



*On September 5, 2018, nine human resources executives from major global organizations met by phone to share leading practices and discuss topics of mutual interest based on an agenda created through advance interviews. This quarter's discussion centered around talent strategies, talent leadership, and talent development.*

**HOST**

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Managing Director  
HR Performance  
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BRG

**HOST**

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Director  
HR Performance  
BRG

**FACILITATOR**

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Profitable Ideas Exchange

## QUOTES OF THE DAY

"One challenge in this space is retaining those experienced professionals [who] maybe didn't grow up [in our organization] and have the same networks."

"If you want to go through a digital transformation, you have to build digital capabilities, and digital talent wants to work with digital leaders."

"[We] try and build skills through a partnership versus necessarily trying to create it all ourselves."

"We've spent a lot of time on changing the expectations of leaders—that part of their role is to teach."

"All [our] integration and realignment has forced us to do a lot of rebranding, from both a corporate standpoint and an employee-value proposition, employment-brand perspective."

"Where once you were enemies and competitors, because of the disruption occurring, organizations are now grouping together, and I think that's the new normal."

"We're trying to deal with the upcoming attrition of the baby bust and keep alive. We're in a high-growth mode, so we're hiring fairly steadily, and the combination has made it challenging."

## BUILDING AN INTERNAL PIPELINE

### Key Takeaways

**Identifying and pipelining talent is often easier than hiring and retaining mid-career talent.**

One participant presented the challenges of retaining employees who are hired midcareer versus graduate level, who are experienced but did not gain their experience at that company. A discussion continued, with attendees echoing the challenge and adding the additional headwind of a workforce near retirement. One strategy being used is the early career pipeline strategy: pipelining interns and early career talent as opposed to hiring midcareer talent.



**Documenting transfer-of-knowledge plans in employment agreements can help systematically transition talent into more senior roles.**

In discussing the challenges around retention of a company's experienced talent, the pressing need for knowledge transfer and knowledge capture was highlighted.

One executive shared a company's strategy of proposing unique employment arrangements with employees who have critical knowledge and are planning to retire. The executive outlined how the company is proposing to help transition these employees from full- to part-time work, with knowledge transfer and mentoring included as key parts of the employee's updated job description.

One member cautioned to start shadowing employees with critical knowledge early. Continuing benefits at a reduced work schedule for retiring employees in exchange for staying longer to train replacements is a strategy that is seeing good results for at least one executive on the call.



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**Upskilling is an effective way to build your bench strength, especially in technical areas.**

Upskilling was discussed as a strategy being used, particularly in the field of research and development. Several members discussed the challenges of implementing upskilling across a global market. One potential approach to combat these challenges is the Leader-Teacher model. Participants suggested creating a core group of leaders who are available to coach and train employees. One executive shared that having a core group of leaders helps create consistency, especially for global organizations.

## WAR FOR TALENT – WINNING TALENT STRATEGIES

### Key Takeaways

**Downsized L&D departments and shorter employee life cycles; no talent development silver bullet.**

Many organizations reported downsizing their L&D departments during the economic downturn, and no longer have the budget or the capabilities to offer the same types of talent development. Further, it was pointed out that the corporate university model of developing talent worked well in an economy where employees stayed at one organization for the bulk of their careers.

Several participants shared that employee turnover was higher, especially during periods of high growth or large-scale transitions. One reported that 58 percent of their employees left after seven years of service. Another added that digital talent expects to stay in an organization only two to four years. For this, one member suggested using tools that will aide in and accelerate how leaders connect and transfer knowledge; they have embedded an approach of connecting with digital talent in their leadership courses and training.

A discussion of seeking out the best centers for talent continued, highlighting the use of open-sourcing of code in Silicon Valley as an example, which allows the open marketplace to provide research and development.

**“Borrowing talent” from alternate sources is growing in popularity, yet offers challenges in protecting IP.**

Several participants discussed limitations of the traditional build-or-buy talent strategy. In particular, members discussed the challenge of protecting intellectual property of their respective companies when partnering with “frenemies” or when operating in countries where IP laws are different. Other members pointed out that entire organizations have been successfully built on an open-source model and that a certain amount of specificity was required to create meaningful solutions. NDAs and other legal restrictions were discussed as possible solutions.

**Partnerships to “swap” talent are an effective way to quickly teach digital skills.**

One participant shared the productive experience of training existing leadership to be digitally savvy, building a “disruptors’ pool” within the organization that serves to attract digital talent, and building a digital leadership pipeline. Another participant agreed that the shift toward digital knowledge/capabilities requires attention and elaborated on additional talent strategies, including partnering with marketing organizations that are more digitally savvy. Instead of attempting to build these capabilities on their own, exchange programs with agencies allowed staff to quickly experience and learn new skills. The partnership allows smaller, more digitally focused agencies to swap staff with more traditional corporate marketing staff members. The participant indicated that the approach was attractive to agency staff who would like to experience a more corporate environment, but also immersed the corporate staff in a digital corporate culture.



**Global alliances offer an alternate source of “borrowed” talent.**

One participant discussed the management of alliances between distinct companies across the globe. This structured approach used by global talent management allows for the cross-sharing of talent and creation of strategies and career plans for talent across countries.

**ROI of partnerships is not the only metric for measuring talent development.**

Several participants shared thoughts on the metrics being used to evaluate talent strategy efforts, particularly around the build strategy. Two executives spoke to the importance of measuring the return on investment made with local universities and junior colleges with whom they have an invested relationship. Three participants discussed an alternative to broad metrics by conducting biannual talent reviews to capture succession and how employees are developing and progressing within the organization; as well as identifying critical talent retention and career progression trends.

**Demographic shifts emphasize the need for talent development practices.**

Ten thousand baby boomers retire every day, and the cohort that follows the baby boomers is Generation X. This generation has nowhere near the size required to fill all the positions being left by baby boomers. Millennials in most cases are not ready to take on these roles. These trends reinforce that talent is everything, and what CHROs are doing is critical to the company’s ability to deliver on strategy.

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**BIOS**

*Joe Bohling, JD*

**Managing Director, Global Practice Leader**

- Global Practice Leader for the HR Performance and Strategy / Dynamic Capabilities practice
- More than 20 years of experience in legal, operations, human resources, and business development executive and frontline leadership roles
- Served in top Chief Human Resources Officer positions for Fortune 500 companies
- Broad and deep experience in industries including manufacturing, media / telecommunications, consumer packaged goods, high tech, healthcare, higher education, and financial services



Joe Bohling brings over 20 years of experience in operations, human capital, performance improvement, learning and development, recruiting, staffing, health, welfare and retirement benefits, and business development leadership roles. He has proven expertise in developing and operationalizing strategy, comprehensive performance improvement, cultural advocacy, and executive coaching. He has served in top C-suite executive positions for Fortune 500 companies, including as Chief Human Resources Officer at Aflac, Inc. and Senior Vice President of Human Resources at CitiFinancial Auto / Citigroup.

*Angel Rodriguez, MBA*

**Practice Director, Human Performance Practice**

- More than 20 years in senior and frontline leadership positions for Fortune 500 and privately held companies, including Chief HR Officer roles
- Senior HR Executive for Frito Lay’s 43,000-employee field sales and operations organization
- Business and cultural enabler across all organizational levels
- Expertise in project and process management



Mr. Rodriguez served as the chief HR officer for WorldVentures, a travel and direct selling company, with over 250,000 representatives and headquarters staff. Before this, he served as the senior HR leader for Kellogg Co.’s international business, specifically for Asia, Latin America, and Europe, and was a key leader in the integration of the Pringles acquisition by Kellogg. He was also previously senior vice president of HR for United Surgical Partners International, a leading firm in the ambulatory surgery industry.

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