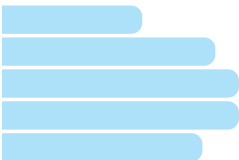




**WHITEPAPER** Author: Todd Smith



talent in action

**Ahead of the Curve:  
Aligning Staffing with the Company's Growth Strategy**

If your company wins a significant contract next month and needs to hire 300 people within 60 days, is your recruiting team up to the task? If your answer is a resounding “no,” it’s probably because you had no idea the organization was pursuing a contract of this magnitude.

Talagy is poised to help when you face these fires. We’re experts in recruiting and staffing. We hope that’s comforting, but we also understand you’d like to reach a point where you don’t have to sound the alarm quite so loudly. Are you feeling unprepared for the staffing challenges of today and tomorrow? If so, you’re not alone.

Too often, HR finds itself in a reactive role, struggling to respond to their hiring manager’s needs after they’ve become urgent. A key reason for this is often a disconnect between departments: those driving growth through sales and operations, and those responsible for securing the human capital that supports that growth. When the company is staffed appropriately for its business volume, it’s in a position of strength versus the competition.

How can you get – and stay – ahead of the curve? By aligning staffing with your company’s strategy. Establishing a workforce plan will help you anticipate headcount requirements and proactively source before needs arise. It can also provide the tool with which you’ll establish your department as a true business partner to your peers running sales and operations – beyond just anticipating hiring needs – by helping them manage company performance.

Workforce planning is a means of systematically marrying organizational priorities with the human capital needed to accomplish them. By seeding the planning process with current strategic objectives, HR can develop workforce plans that will help line managers accomplish those objectives. At the same time, these plans provide a sound basis for justifying budget

and staffing requests, since there is a clear connection between objectives and the budget for people needed to accomplish them. To be successful, workforce planning starts with a commitment from senior management to recognize the process for what it is: a strategic business tool. Human Resources, in partnership with line leaders, must lead the planning process and ensure the plan is institutionalized.

To be effective, workforce planning requires internal stakeholders to set aside preconceived notions and to be open to making adjustments in the human resource acquisition and management process that will better support the company’s success. Realizing objectivity is a challenge, many firms engage an expert in advising companies on the strategic use of labor, like Talagy.

An important precursor to starting the workforce planning process is research.

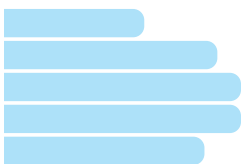
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### **Obtain a copy of the company’s strategic plan.**

You need to know the intended destination so you can help steer the ship. Educating yourself on the organization’s growth objectives will provide you with the big picture.

### **Meet individually with each business unit executive.**

Discuss their most pressing priorities, and clearly identify the barriers and the enablers to meeting each objective. Walk through their staffing model and evaluate its’ ability to meet near-term business needs. Conduct an informal supply, demand,





and gap analysis. Brainstorm potential solutions to close gaps, and make note of what your department can do to support this process. Review their headcount budgets at 90 days, 6 months, a year and beyond. Help each determine the ideal fixed to variable headcount ratio for the departments they oversee.

With cost efficiency in mind, be aware the effective use of variable labor is proven to save companies money by enabling them to meet just-in-time demand, staffing up during peak periods and releasing temps and contractors when business slows. The avoidance of obligations for unemployment and other benefits translates directly to lower labor costs. According to a Staffing Industry Analysts, buyers of contingent labor report median expense savings of 17%. Talagy has partnered with HR and hiring managers for over 30 years to reduce their labor costs. We can help you navigate this process with your business unit leaders.

#### **Ask to sit in on the next sales meeting.**

Being aware of what's in the company pipeline and significant deals with a high probability of closing will put you in a position to help the team anticipate resource requirements. You can then in turn put your recruiters and suppliers of contingent labor on notice.

#### **Assess your recruiting team's limitations.**

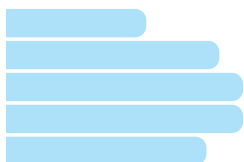
Compile the feedback from your meetings with business unit executives. Isolate commonalities and identify gaps impeding success across businesses. For example, if their perception is that your team is constantly playing catch-up, it could be the result of poor time management. If your average time-to-fill for open positions is beyond 90 days, ask yourself if the recruiting team needs an overhaul – or perhaps just a more streamlined process? Remember that each unfilled seat results in productivity lapses which ultimately impact company profits.

Now you have an educational foundation upon which to begin workforce planning. You're familiar with the organization's strategic priorities and those of the business units you serve, you've isolated the process improvements needed, and you've identified the gaps you must close to better serve your internal stakeholders. You are ready to draft the plan.

There are many books and resources on organizational development at your disposal that will guide you through this process complete with templates. Simply open your web browser and search "workforce planning" for more information.

#### **At a minimum, the plan should address the areas below:**

- » Occupations by grade and salary band
- » Compensation matrix including pay-for-performance criteria
- » Skills and competencies required for each position
- » Ratios of fixed to variable headcount by position
- » Current employee demographics
- » Diversity objectives
- » Retirement eligibility requirements
- » Turnover benchmarks
- » Forecasting process for human resource requirements in alignment with budget
- » Requisition process for both fixed and variable headcount
- » Recruiting, interviewing, hiring and onboarding process flows and relative timelines
- » Performance management
- » Succession planning
- » A futuristic competency model addressing how gaps will be bridged between where the organization/department is now and where it wants to be in the future (refer to notes gathered from meetings with business unit executives)





**During the drafting process, you may identify the need for technology enhancements to support plan objectives.**

Again, some research is required. Technology is the engine that drives your workforce plan relative to managing sourcing, interviewing, onboarding, and performance management post-hire. Do you need to install an applicant tracking system to streamline the recruiting process? PCRecruiter, iApplicants, and HRMDirect are among providers of robust ATS software. If turnover is a problem, post-hire support may be a worthwhile investment. Research performance management tools that will best enable your ability to support line managers in driving financial results. Talent management software like Silkroad's Wingspan and MicroStrategy's Human Resource Analysis Module are examples of tools that can help you provide stakeholders with visibility to employee productivity.

Once the final plan has been communicated throughout the organization, take ownership of keeping it alive! Remember that business priorities are constantly changing, and periodic adjustments will most certainly be required to ensure staffing continues to be aligned with the company's strategy over time. Don't wait to be asked for information. Develop and publish a scorecard highlighting progress against key metrics each month to keep everyone informed. Consider hosting a quarterly review during which the plan is reviewed and adjustments are made.

By aligning staffing directly with company strategy, the HR team achieves two things. It not only makes its own charge easier (as it can now operate in a more proactive mode) but it also casts itself in a new light with senior management by proving Human Resources is a business partner deserving of a seat in the boardroom.

About the Author:

**TODD SMITH**  
**ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

Todd Smith is our Engagement Manager, focused on developing and maintaining results-driven relationships with key Talagy customers. He draws on his substantial industry knowledge and expertise to provide exceptional solutions for our customers who enjoy the broad base of Talagy services.

