

# Talent at the Top

## Get a sneak peek at the 23 finalists for our Talent Acquisition Leader of the Year Awards.

By The Editors

Recent years have proven that nothing sets an organization apart from others more than its talent, and nowhere is that talent more crucial than at the top of the ladder. In the talent acquisition space, inspired leadership can help companies find and keep a workforce that is excited and ready to do big things in their industry.

This is why each year, *HRO Today* recognizes HR's greatest recruitment leaders with the Talent Acquisition Leader of the Year Awards. These are individuals who have helped expand their organization's employee base through ambitious recruiting

initiatives, dedicated attention to business needs, and a passion for putting people into the right roles. Sponsored by Cielo, the Talent Acquisition Leader of the Year Awards also acknowledge the difficult and innovative work that leaders do every day in areas such as employer branding, technology, staff development, engagement and retention, and financial analysis.

2017 brought a crop of 23 impressive finalists, who fall into one of three award categories. The winners will be announced at the *HRO Today* Forum on May 2. They are listed below in alphabetical order.



**Paul Abrahms**  
Corporate Vice President Talent Acquisition  
Huron Consulting Group

Paul Abrahms made significant changes to the talent acquisition process by putting several best-in-class processes in place: an internal sourcing team to build candidate pools; prioritization of job opportunities to fill critical positions within 45 to 60 days; and optimization of Huron's LinkedIn career page and its own branded website. Even with more than 600 hires in 2016, Abrahms' initiatives reduced third-party fees by 40 percent and saved the company more than \$400,000.



**Ryan Alexander**  
Director of Talent Acquisition  
Tenneco

Ryan Alexander was tasked with creating a talent acquisition function from the ground up for Tenneco. His solution? Building a business case for a talent acquisition team by demonstrating the value of having an accurate cost per hire. This drove down hiring costs while reducing time to fill and increasing workforce diversity.



**Matt Blunt**  
Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition  
FTI Consulting

Understanding the importance of streamlined processes, Matt Blunt brought consistency to FTI Consulting's recruitment practices by having kick-off calls, standardizing how candidates are presented to hiring managers, incorporating behavioral training, and implementing a new applicant tracking system. To help measure quality of hire, he introduced a hiring manager satisfaction survey to the process. It is distributed at the time of hire, then six months later, a performance snapshot is evaluated.



**Brendan Browne**  
**Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition**  
**LinkedIn**

With the goal of helping managers execute effectively and efficiently, Brendan Browne created a “Manager Toolkit,” which is comprised of tools including dashboards for customer satisfaction, employee referrals, team performance, compliance, and diversity metrics. Managers also have access to templates for guidance on employee feedback sessions and leadership development. After the launch of the toolkit in April, manager engagement/careers development scores have jumped—twice—between six and 10 points.



**Julene Campion**  
**Vice President, Talent Management**  
**Geisinger Health System**

With an aggressive growth plan, Julene Campion implemented a talent management model to attract and retain leading talent in three areas: physicians and advanced practitioners; clinical and nonclinical operations; and corporate. The approach is working: Campion and her team have recruited, onboarded, and engaged more than 3,000 new hires during the past year.



**Valerie Egan**  
**Talent Acquisition Strategist**  
**Girl Scouts of the USA**

To increase employee productivity and retention, Valerie Egan was the driving force behind the launch of the Girl Scouts’ “Talent Loop”: an internal career portal for employees. Previously, employees seeking new positions would do so in the same manner as external candidates—not the best employee experience. Now the Talent Loop allows employees to quickly apply for internal opportunities, which encourages skills development and retention.



**Barry Hirschman**  
**Head of Talent Acquisition, Region Americas**  
**Linde Group**

U.S. driver recruitment and onboarding were major challenges for Linde, but Barry Hirschman helped the company design and implement a sustainable recruitment and social media strategy. He was instrumental in leading the talent acquisition team, external service providers, internal business and HR partners in this endeavor, and his strategy helped Linde reduce their average number of open driver positions from 130 to 40 open requisitions. Hirschman was also responsible for revitalizing Linde’s employee referral program via behavioral and safety assessments, revision of policies and automation.



**Megan Holte**  
**Director of Corporate and Executive Sourcing**  
**Hilton Worldwide**

Candidate engagement is at the heart of Megan Holte’s talent acquisition strategy. The director of corporate and executive sourcing built an alumni network for boomerang talent, put together a referral program to ensure a white-glove experience to all referrals, and ensured processes were in place to communicate and engage with candidates. A main objective was to bolster diversity numbers and the organization is currently at a submittal rate of 96 percent diversity slate.



**Jeff Jurinak**  
Talent Acquisition Manager  
Health First

Jeff Jurinak led the charge of building Health First's talent pipeline by introducing the value of hiring new-to-practice nurses. By attracting and extending offers to those who were suitable candidates but pending graduation and successful passing of their nursing boards, the organization hit a record 2,802 quality hires, which almost doubled forecasted projections. Integral to this success was nursing school hiring events and a new onboarding program tailored to new nurses.



**Gregory Karanastasis**  
VP, Global Head of HR  
Pitney Bowes

Gregory Karanastasis reenvisioned Pitney Bowes's talent acquisition process by developing a new employee value proposition that is aligned to corporate brand strategy; designing a careers portal with content that went from a fragmented approach and 31 distinct career sites to one candidate experience; and implementing a strategic workforce planning process. These initiatives have produced impactful results: a .65 NPS with managers, 8.5 out of 10 candidate satisfaction, and 80 percent of jobs are filled below the average time-to-fill measure for the organization.



**Jill Larsen**  
SVP, Talent Acquisition, People Planning, and Services HR  
Cisco

How can an organization achieve such impressive results as reducing talent acquisition spend by 35 percent while also increasing the quality of candidate slate and overall satisfaction scores for hiring managers and new hires? Just ask Jill Larsen of Cisco. She leveraged their "We are Cisco" talent brand and implemented next-gen recruiter technology and advanced analytics to improve candidate sourcing and quality.



**Carol Morrison**  
Director, Retail Talent Acquisition  
Best Buy

Carol Morrison understands the value that military veterans bring to the workforce. In fact, she has implemented an enterprise-wide attraction strategy that has changed the way Best Buy recruits and retains service men and women. Capacity building, training for leaders, and mentoring are all key elements that have achieved the results the retailer was looking for.



**Kristin Murphy**  
Director, Talent Acquisition Center of Excellence  
Cox Enterprises

Kristin Murphy's well-executed strategy around social media has earned Cox Enterprises much success. A key to Murphy's approach is dedicated Twitter, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and Instagram channels with business-specific content around career opportunities, company culture, and employee testimonials videos about what they love about #LifeatCox. For any social media cynics, the proof is in the pudding: Social media conversation rates are between 34 and 43 percent, and 10 percent of hires in 2016 came from social media.



**Bill Neese**  
**Vice President, Talent Acquisition**  
**Paycor**

Data is at crux of Bill Neese's talent acquisition strategy for Paycor. With a rolling 18-month forecast that is aligned with recruitment capacity, Paycor can anticipate and plan for an annual hiring rate of 30 percent. Processes that help accomplish this include recruitment scorecards to optimize candidate pipeline data, a drip-campaign marketing mentality, quarterly interview workshops, and an interviewing toolkit. The results? Neese and his team have increased year-over-year hires by 41.2 percent with a reduction in cost per hire by 20.6 percent.



**Carol Robinette**  
**Head of Talent Acquisition**  
**American Red Cross**

American Red Cross' hiring process shifted from disparate to centralized under Carol Robinette's direction, creating efficiencies that allowed managers and recruiters time to focus on building talent communities. This process change has achieved impressive metrics including a reduction in agency spend by more than \$750,000, decreased time to hire, and a Military Friendly Employer designation.



**Meaghan Ryan**  
**Corporate Director, Talent Acquisition**  
**Seminole Gaming**

With the goal of increase employee retention, Meaghan Ryan improved Seminole Gaming's employee value proposition, application tracking technology, assessments, panel interview process, and realistic job preview videos. The new candidate experience provides the organization with more qualified talent with a better overall fit.



**Cathy Scarlett**  
**Vice President of Talent Acquisition**  
**BMO Financial Group**

With a focus on the future of the workforce, Cathy Scarlett has reenvisioned BMO's campus recruitment strategy and summer internship program to attract millennials, Gen Z workers, and in-demand skilled workers. Candidates are at the center of the recruitment experience with digital channels that showcase the company culture. New practices have shortened the time to hire by more than 50 percent.



**Kendall Smith**  
**Sr. Manger - Talent Acquisition**  
**EchoStar**

Integration of the recruiting process made a big impact at EchoStar. Kendall Smith's plan to implement a single applicant tracking system for EchoStar, Hughes, and Uplink Centers have streamlined process and provide a single point of excellence.



**Michael Spear**  
**Director, Talent Acquisition and Development**  
**Gategroup Airline Solutions**

Michael Spear's approach to talent acquisition is multifaceted through his use of labor forecasting tools, engagement of RPO and MSP, and alternative work schedules. His integral role in training and development of employees provide the means to map worker lifecycle, which encourages career growth. Gategroup is experiencing stronger employee engagement and increased retention and productivity as a result.



**Mieke Thorson**  
**Global Head of Talent Acquisition**  
**IHS Markit**

Strong leadership is required for a successful merger of teams, and Mieke Thorson brought just that when IHS and Markit merged to form IHS Markit in July 2016. The first step toward success? Thorson identified the need for integration among team organization, systems, and process. Then, once integrated she has brought the teams onto one platform for collaboration and business reporting. She is a true business partner and a critical resource to the CEO.



**Jennifer Toth**  
**Talent Acquisition Manager**  
**ACADIA Pharmaceuticals, Inc**

With an aggressive growth plan of doubling the size of the 133-person organization, Jennifer Toth's communication skills, attention-to-detail, and drive to find the best talent helped achieve the goal. In fact, her approach is attributed to an industry-low turnover rate of 7 percent.



**Katie Traviglia**  
**Director of Human Resources**  
**New American Funding**

Knowing that great people come from great people, Katie Traviglia zeroed in on improving New American Funding's employee referral bonus program. The concept is simple: For referrals that meet qualifications, employees may be eligible to receive a bonus, both after the new hire hits a 30-day and a 60-day milestone. Is it effective? Of the 1,125 employee referrals, 781 are still employed at NAF today—an impressive 70 percent retention rate.



**Kim Wells**  
**Recruitment Head, North America Operations, United States**  
**Atos**

Kim Wells significantly changed the recruitment process for Atos by providing transparency for hiring costs based on a rate card and training to work strategically with the organization's recruitment process outsourcing partner. New approaches have achieved a 15 percent decrease in cost per hire for the past three years.