Taking On Total Talent

With Michael Wachholz, president of the Americas and global head of contingent workforce solutions, Alexander Mann Solutions

alexander mann solutions

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president of the Americas and global head of contingent workforce solutions

The recruitment world has entered new era. With the advent of AI, machine learning, and advanced data analytics tools, HR professionals are now expected to deliver a hiring process that is modern, automated, and efficient. But even in this technology-focused climate, SHRM reports that creating a positive candidate experience is the top priority for organizations that wish to excel in their search for top talent.

As a result, total workforce solutions platforms have emerged to simplify the hiring and management of both contingent and full-time employees. These technologies aim to deliver a consistent experience to all workers while saving recruiters time and resources. Here, Michael Wachholz, president of the Americas and global head of contingent workforce solutions at Alexander Mann Solutions, shares some insights about how to leverage a total talent approach with a personalized touch for best hiring results.

Q: In a tight talent market, why is it important for organizations to take a holistic approach to hiring?

A: Finding, attracting, engaging, and retaining talent in a candidate's market is a challenge in nearly every industry, and to top that off, research shows at least half of all workers are set to be non-permanent by 2030 or sooner.

This disruption in the hiring landscape is compelling organizations to reconsider the traditional siloed approach to workforce management and to think about talent more holistically. A joined-up approach that leverages the best of both permanent and non-permanent talent engagement and acquisition strategies provides a consistent process for all candidates and gives organizations broader access to a fluid talent community.

Q: How can organizations position themselves to benefit from a total talent approach?

A: The key to achieving an all-encompassing talent solution lies in redefining the roles and responsibilities for all departments involved in hiring, from HR to procurement and from IT to marketing. All teams need to view the talent pool in a different way and reimagine the process of attracting and retaining critical skills in the business.

While this may be viewed as a challenge, it's just as much an opportunity for employers.

Establishing a total talent lens across an organization allows all parts of the business to tap into a broader population of skilled workers and access a deeper talent pool that was previously inaccessible.

For example, most organizations do not have an effective "alumni program" to re-engage with prior contingent workers because needs and candidate information are siloed and not shared across departments. With a total talent approach, employers can leverage the power of their company brand and network to avoid agency fees and hire someone who has already engaged with them.

Q: How can organizations effectively manage talent in this way? What is necessary for the change and success?

A: Technology has often been put on a pedestal as the "answer" for creating total talent solutions with the understanding that it will make processes more efficient by leveraging end-to-end by bots, AI, and other new digital platforms.

While technology is important, a successful shift to a total talent model can only be realized by increasing the value of candidates' connections to the companies with which they choose to engage for work. A technology balance needs to be achieved that allows for personalization and human connectivity. Anything that can be properly automated to drive value should be. But we cannot fall into the trap of over-reliance on technology. In addition, organizations need to carefully evaluate and select the most appropriate

technology stack to address their unique business needs.

Q: How does total talent improve the candidate experience?

A: As companies engage with a rapidly growing number of contingent workers, businesses have been faced with two seemingly different talent groups to engage: temporary workers and permanent employees. Both were treated as separate talent channels, requiring different strategies and engagement methods. As a result, an entirely different candidate experience has emerged along the way.

However, it has become increasingly clear that the differences between the two experiences should be reconsidered to attract and retain the best talent. In today's work environment, a temporary role can lead to a permanent one and vice versa. A change in circumstances can result in a full-time role becoming flexible, but the candidate experience shouldn't change just because the engagement model has shifted. The candidate-company relationship should be handled with the same care and attention regardless of how people choose to engage with organizations.

With a total talent approach, all candidates will be exposed to the same brand and experience, regardless of their employment model. As flexible workers inevitably become a more prominent part of our workforce, ensuring they are included in engagement strategies is crucial if companies are to be in the best position to compete for top talent.