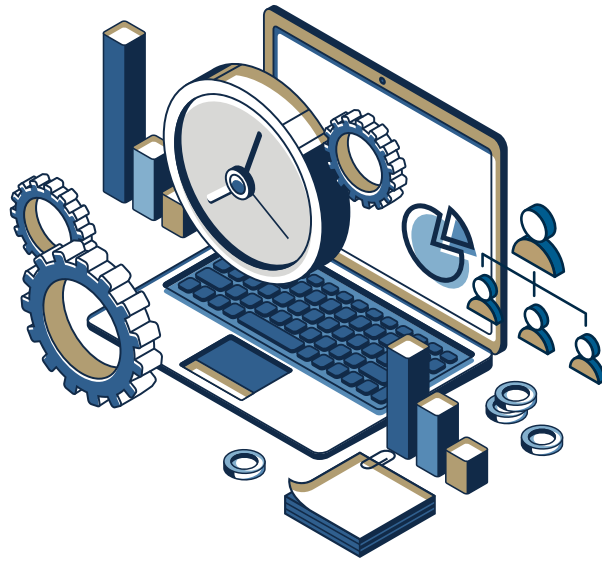




Redefining Recruitment

A GUIDE FOR HR PROFESSIONALS
SHIFTING TO SKILLS-BASED HIRING

January 2025



Understanding the Role of the HR Manager

The HR manager plays a pivotal role in an organization's recruitment, talent management, and workforce development process. The HR manager can be thought of as the glue that holds the rest of the workforce together.

When an organization shifts its hiring practices to a skills- or merit-based approach, the HR manager needs to shift his or her mindset on how to recruit, retain, and manage this new type of workforce. This is not an easy task, but with the right toolkit, this change can be implemented seamlessly and successfully.

An HR Manager is responsible for:

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The HR manager is ultimately responsible for effectively communicating with all the stakeholders involved in the workforce development and retention process.

Setting Expectations

Take ownership of the process and set an approach for transitioning to skills-based hiring.

- Determine which agencies will participate in this change (OPM, OMB, etc.) and identify their expected roles and responsibilities for the process.
- Highlight examples of roles in which degree requirements can be removed. Identify the key personnel who will need to approve the change in hiring practices (managers, cabinet heads, etc.).
- Communicate the importance of removing degree requirements to stakeholders across all agencies affected to increase awareness and promote buy-in.
 - This should be communicated for the roles identified with a focus on highlighting reasons why this initiative will be beneficial to stakeholders.
 - To increase awareness and promote buy-in, communicate across all agencies and individuals to increase awareness and promote buy-in.
 - Explain how broadening the pool of qualified workers can help expand employment opportunities for workers in their state, increase the number of skilled candidates working in the public sector, and mitigate talent acquisition and labor costs.
 - Explain that using skills-based criteria may require more effort upfront but results in hiring more qualified individuals. This should lead to more satisfied employees, higher employee retention, and less turnover, which will ultimately benefit the hiring manager and associated team in the long run.
- Develop a day-to-day project management structure that fits the agency and ensures all stakeholders are communicating effectively.



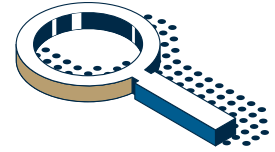
Identifying Skills

Begin by setting outcomes and deliverables:

- Develop a timeline for reviewing vacant roles and for finalizing new job descriptions (e.g., review xx number of jobs per week with a goal of having them complete by X date).
- Determine which positions to start with based on various criteria, including but not limited to:
 - Positions to which some non-degree holders have been hired recently.
 - Positions in which training is required for degree holders after hire.
 - Positions in which there are alternative routes to obtaining similar qualifications.
- For the identified list of positions, review the existing requirements posted for the role and identify the following:
 - If the job listing should still require a college degree.
 - If a degree is required, provide a reason why it is needed as well as what specific degree you are looking for (e.g., an MA in engineering, etc.).
 - If the job listing no longer needs to require a college degree.
 - To best determine the minimum and desired qualifications for a role, the HR manager should review and discuss the daily job responsibilities with the manager of the department, as well as with any individuals who are currently employed in that or a similar role.
- Highlight the number of roles expected to turn over annually (contract positions). Follow the same process above for all relevant positions.



Recruiting Talent



How to identify the right individual for a role:

- When interviewing candidates, provide an overview of the agency, the department, and how the role fits within the larger organization.
- Outline the specific role and associated responsibilities. Explain expectations for work/ life balance.
- Highlight the desired skills that would make an individual successful in the role. Ask if the individual has relevant experience. If so, ask them to explain it.
- Communicate where the role is within the organization, so the candidate can visualize how he or she would interact with others.
- Ask the candidate targeted questions that can help the HR manager determine the candidate's fit for both the role and the workplace. Try to gauge what is most important to the candidate (e.g., work/life balance, role and responsibilities, compensation, etc.).
- If technical skills are required, provide an appropriate assessment that mimics real-life situations. More details on example assessments are listed below.

Assessing Skills



- Keep a record of general skills to increase consistency and identify technical skills requiring additional training.
- Develop general skills assessments candidates can take to show they are qualified for certain middle-skilled roles.
 - *For example:*
 - For roles that require multitasking, ask candidates to discuss how they would handle certain situations (including prioritization, communication, etc.)
 - For roles that require proficiency in Microsoft Office, Excel, or other technical skills (e.g., data analysis), create simple assessments that candidates can take to show that they can sort, understand, and interpret data and manage calendars effectively.
 - For roles that require attention to detail, ask the candidate to review a one-page document and identify the errors on the page.
- For more technical skills assessments, work with the hiring manager to determine the most appropriate third-party tools to evaluate skills.

Training

For both new and existing employees that require additional on-the-job skills training:

- Offer access to online workforce training materials that support these individuals as they work through the process.
 - Determine what is available for free online and develop a curriculum for what is not currently available.



Based on the skillset needed, consider developing apprenticeship (skills training) programs where non-degree-holders can obtain the skills they need for the job.

- Many states have started developing apprenticeship programs. Consider building programs that incorporate hands-on training, additional online training, and skills assessments. Skills training programs can range from entry-level skills to become an administrative assistant to people management training for individuals advancing to leadership positions.
- Leverage outside expertise where needed.
 - Partner with schools, training providers, nonprofits, religious institutions, and other entities that offer skills training to encourage them to develop programs that instill necessary skills for roles across government.

Ensuring Familiarity with Technology Platforms

- Understand your existing technology platform and identify what criteria need to be added to better assess skills for candidates (e.g., skills lists, electronic submission forms to show candidate credentials, online assessments that candidates can submit with their application, etc.)
- If technological changes are needed regarding sorting criteria, identify what is required and who to partner with (either internally or externally).
- For the candidate experience, some states have changed their websites to include new filters. This way, individuals can easily sort for jobs that do not require a degree. Creating these filters for the employer can help HR managers sort through applications based on identified skills.



Managing Talent



- Develop talent management strategies that target your workforce, focusing on employee retention and satisfaction strategies.
- Understand what your employees are looking for and invest in personnel to increase retention. Provide training to keep them competitive, promote opportunities for advancement, and clearly define career pathways.
- Take pulse checks to ensure employee satisfaction and address conflicts head-on and with empathy.
- When individuals change roles, ensure a knowledge transfer and succession plan is in place. This will help to eliminate gaps during transitions and ensure that the department continues to work effectively.
- Track turnover and identify any trends in jobs with high turnover. Review the job requirements and skills required for these roles to hire better-aligned individuals for these roles in the future.

Measuring Success

Highlight the successes of the program by measuring progress and effectiveness. Identify key performance indicators, including:



- The number of positions that previously required a college degree but no longer do.
- The number of new individuals without a college degree who have been hired.
- The number of individuals without a college degree who have been promoted to new positions that formerly required a college degree.

Understanding Your Workforce

Understand what matters most to your employees and ensure they feel valued and engaged in their work.



- Today's workforce has different expectations than in the past. Understand what drives your workforce and ensure that they feel ownership in their role and that they have opportunities to grow, learn, etc.

**Recommendations for benefits and compensation are not included in this guide as they are not related to shifting hiring practices.*



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