



**STRATEGIC VISION,  
STRATEGIC CHOICES**

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**Global TA leaders don't just need to understand what's lies ahead, they need to plot the course.**



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**T**he role of TA teams has changed dramatically over the last two years. Whilst TA Leaders have broad shoulders, they are faced with an ever-growing number of challenges that directly affect the performance of a business and although they have had to become more agile and more creative with the resources at their disposal, ultimately there is a limit...

On 16th of June, we headed back to The Beaumont in Mayfair for what was to become one of the liveliest talent solutions dinners we've had for a while. In partnership with PeopleScout, TALiNT Partners brought together some of the most experienced TA leaders in the UK for a discussion focused on how to solve some of the most pressing challenges they face.

These had been identified from a previous discussion and covered five key areas:

- Strategic workforce planning
- Ensuring board-level and C-suite buy-in
- Building TA team capability
- Refreshing Employer Brand for a post-covid workplace
- Creating a successful Office Value Proposition.

The conversation was started by a Group HR Director from an aerospace, defence

and security company with comment on demand planning by saying that they continually re-assess their workforce demand mix (including perm, contingent, gig, graduates, apprentices) For example, given the shortfall of engineers in the industry, they have increased their focus on apprenticeship programmes in order to upskill the workforce.

A Head of TA from a business management software company that has recently been valued at £9 billion spoke to the fact that their TA teams are also focussing on how they create their own talent and upskill people internally to fill roles.

This clearly speaks to the trend of internal mobility becoming more and more important along with more attention being paid to succession planning even at relatively junior levels.

A counterpoint was offered by the Head of In-House Search in the public sector that was based on the challenge of attracting candidates into an organisation which is downsizing and given the reported pressures on the Civil Service to reduce headcount, is a very real challenge. And one which is likely to apply to more and more employers in the months ahead.





Talk quickly turned towards another key TA challenge: The shift in working situations since the end of the pandemic with employers having to re-evaluate their work-from-home strategies. There continues to be a wide range of approaches to this with no one-size-fits-all solutions, indeed, no established orthodoxy at all although it does seem clear that employers are increasingly promoting a return to the office for in-person work with very varied results. This proving difficult for TA teams to manage.

Because, regardless of what surveys say, money (and especially base salary) is what principally gets people to accept roles, although dinner guests felt that paying inflated salaries doesn't necessarily buy loyalty in the long run.

The business software Head of TA believes that a cultural fit is important and that it's not just about the money.

However, while money gets candidates to accept the role, culture and a sense of belonging makes them stay.

A Global Head of Resourcing &

Mobility at London-based law firm said that, in general, lawyers talk to billable hours and historically pay large salaries.

"Lawyers are saying, well, I work 2,500 hours a year regardless, so why not work those hours in a different location?"

Connecting people to purpose is what makes employees stay, said the Talent Director at a renewable energy company He said: "Employers need clarity and connectivity in their roles."

A Resourcing Director from a global financial services firm agreed. "Team charters work really well. Creating team charters that connect employers and get them to collectively agree to achieve in the business fosters a sense of purpose and belonging."

Candidates certainly have the upper hand in the current market and employers are having to adapt accordingly in order to find that scarce talent.

But the Head of Talent & Resourcing at a leading savings and investment company believes that people must work where they do their best work



and the question we should be asking is “Do our managers know how to manage people in different locations and in different ways?”

## OPTIMISATION OF TALENT ACQUISITION

The role of TA teams has changed dramatically over the last two years, and they’ve taken on a far greater role within the business. TA teams now have a louder voice in their organisations and are considered essential to business growth and success.

However, given that talent acquisition and resourcing is a relatively new corporate function, it is no surprise that it has a higher degree of variability in its capability than other functions and recent demands have meant there is often limited scope to focus on training and development of less experienced team members.

The Head of Talent Advisory Delivery at a talent solutions firm observed that TA teams seem to be looking for some kind of normality or, at least, less unpredictability in their roles considering the turmoil of the last year.

The most common areas for development and most important for supporting the organisation was to

increase expertise in sourcing expertise and relationship management.

But how do we train TA teams to meet those needs?

Guests felt that key focus should be on relationship management and sourcing of candidates. Hiring processes need to be quicker because if you’re talking to a candidate, you can be assured that another employer is talking to them too.

A Resourcing Director from a global financial services firm says that appointing a recruitment associate who effectively oversees and chaperones the hiring process frees up recruiters to build relationships.

What does relationship management mean to recruiters?

One guest feels that the role has changed. “It’s no longer about just posting the role online. We need to use talent insights to determine the best way to actually post the role.”

The Head of Talent Advisory agrees and believe that the role has to be bespoke to the person you’re talking to...



So, in conclusion, whilst our debate was varied and lively, there were a number of points on which we all agreed:

Regardless of whether your hiring rises, falls or stays the same, identifying the key skills and roles your organisation needs and having a strategic workforce plan is essential.

In order to get the necessary C-suite support and buy-in, you need to position Talent Acquisition not as an HR issue but as a business sustainability issue.

Post-pandemic, your EVP is almost certainly out of date and needs to incorporate a clear OVP as part of it. This is likely to include a higher degree of proximity to your places of work than some current thinking suggests.

The key areas for optimising your TA team almost certainly involves training on sourcing and relationship management.

It seems a tailor-made hiring process to suit the kind of talent you're wanting to attract is the way forward coupled with creating an Office Value Proposition that suits those you're hiring, TA teams are having to be agile in the way they work and if the pandemic has taught us anything, if anyone can do that, TA teams can.

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