

A background image showing a business meeting in silhouette. A woman in a dark suit stands on the left, gesturing with her hands as if speaking. Two men in suits are seated on the right, listening. The scene is set against a bright, hazy background, possibly a window or a screen, creating a professional and collaborative atmosphere.

**For purpose,
not
presence**

For purpose, not presence



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“*Candidate screening is becoming a deterrent, especially in technology. We hear candidates say, ‘I’m not a criminal. I just want to do code.’*”
Arsenio Bell, VP, Client Solutions, Guidant Global

Can a blended approach to Talent Acquisition resolve today’s challenges?

The pressure on resourcing has never been more chronic and acute. On May 26, 2022, Ken Brotherston, Chief Executive, TALiNT Partners along with Arsenio Bell, VP, Client Solutions, Guidant Global, discussed global barriers to successful talent acquisition and the potential synergies within a workforce that might combine permanent, contingent and gig employees. The group also addressed diversity and inflation as well as significant risks to employers of legal and tax issues in the new environment.

TOP CONSIDERATIONS FOR TODAY’S ENVIRONMENT

Kicking off the conversation, Bell noted four challenges his firm faces across the globe: the availability of talent, pay rates, stringent screening procedures and the difficulty of attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

“We are seeing a shift to a focus on employee experience to attract and retain talent,” Bell says. “Creating a blended workforce including permanent and contingent – even gig employees – can have a positive effect on recruitment, retention and cost.”

Brotherston recalled a recent study on the effect of price vs. experience. “We did a study five years ago comparing Amazon’s ability to attract contingent workers based on price vs. a major grocery company with a different approach,” he recalls. “By competing on belonging rather than price, the grocer reported better results than Amazon. You may not have to pay top dollar to attract and retain talent, but you may need to do more engagement.”

Carol Webb, Regional Lead, Contingent Workforce, Mars, noted that the experience of permanent employees vs. contingent workers can be vast. She says, “We have to change the model of ‘just get the bodies in the seats’ because there is a war for talent.”

One guest explained that, while healthcare workers have found a financial gold mine in contingent or “traveling” employment, they may be looking for more. “If you have 150 contingent employees, you can’t give them a sense of belonging,” he believes. “Those individuals value quality of life beyond large paychecks. So, when you can give them that sense of belonging, it’s easier to get them to transfer from temp to employee. And, in fact, the benefit package can rival what they are earning as an agency worker. Using this

approach, we have reduced our number of travelers from 1100 last year to 300 now.”

One attendee expanded on the topic. “People are attracted to people. You stay for people and you leave because of people. In this market, onboarding and first impressions for both permanent and contingent workers makes the difference in why people stay or leave. You have to make them feel committed and welcome.”

Candidate screening can be time consuming, intrusive and often a serious barrier to recruitment, said Bell. “We have seen a large energy company lose talent to a software organization because their screening requirements were so stringent. We’ve heard software developers say, “I’m not a criminal. I just want to do code.””

Making sure a client’s workforce reflects the community remains a significant challenge. “We try to get ahead of the problem at a structural level,” said Bell. “We work toward optimizing supplier results by providing a mentorship program for diverse

organizations. We are seeing results in creating returns in focus areas such as Native American, African American and Asian.”

Schlamp added, “Not only do you mentor suppliers, but you need to actually give them the opportunity to work with a larger company.”

IMPROVING PARTNERSHIPS WITH SUPPLIERS

Reducing the number of suppliers and improving their productivity is a key to recruitment success according to roundtable participants.

Schlamp recalled, “At first we had 300 suppliers. Within two years we moved to a preferred partnership basis. It was a difficult transition. You need to make everybody comfortable ahead of time. Those who oppose the transition might not be the right people to be in that cross functional conversation. It takes collaboration and alignment.”

Bell asked, “How can we move from having

KEY FINDINGS

- **Talent, rates, screenings and diversity challenge recruitment internationally.**
- **Mentorship and opportunity beginning with vendors can support diversity.**
- **Inflation affects employers, candidates and vendors in unpredictable ways.**
- **A feeling of belonging can provide a competitive advantage.**
- **Legal and tax considerations can put companies at high risk.**
- **Fusion of talent acquisition and talent management is a long-term trend.**



too many suppliers? Could we have just a few? Can we do direct sourcing? How can we get clients to a better place, give them support until they can be more self-serving?”

BENEFITING FROM A BLENDED WORKFORCE

Webb recalled, “When the pandemic hit, we realized we had to look at our workers as a total resource. We need to look at the tools we use to choose our workforce, examine the types of work and what talent to bring in for what kind of situation.

“We’ve implemented Workday and leverage the tools we have to bring contingent workers on board and making gig work more efficient.”

Kindred adds, “We can’t just focus on the front of the process. We need to tie the operator and the recruiter to the same stats so they both have skin in the game.”

REMOTE WORK STILL A MAJOR COMPETITIVE ISSUE

Schlamp brings personal experience to the question of remote work. “It doesn’t make sense to go into the office in Princeton when I need to visit clients in New York, Philadelphia or Ohio. We need to open up the opportunity for remote or hybrid work to get better talent.”

Webb summed up the issue: “We need to travel for purpose, not for presence.”

ADDITIONAL RISKS

Legal risks and inflation add to today’s challenges, Brotherston noted: “The risk to employers of hiring contingent workers is huge in the United States, Canada and the UK. The liabilities are virtually unlimited. Employers think that if they work through a third party, it’s done. It isn’t.”

Schlamp added: “Inflation is affecting us globally and locally. Our board wants us to predict what the impact is going to be in each category of employment—contingent, HR, executive search. But each is affected differently. When you look at traditional procurement, it doesn’t support the effects of inflation. We want to provide a positive strategy from a negative situation.”

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Kindred believes that experience alone isn’t enough to be an effective TA. “Work on your own craft,” he said. Read. “Do market research. Discover how the game has changed. Drive decisions from data.”

Bell added, “Take away the silos so more problems can be solved at once. Be open to a blended workforce. Protect against risk to make sure you are not destroyed with penalties.”

Brotherston concludes, “Be open to fusing talent acquisition and talent management into one talent function.”



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Renee Schlamp, Regional Category Management Lead, Munich Re



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