

## **The talent you need exists. You simply need to have a holistic view of it.**

You have opportunities waiting to help you find the talent capacity you need to support all the technology initiatives across your business. In fact you have no reason to fear the so called tech talent shortage.

I've worked in IT my entire career. We always had great technical teams that delivered successfully across multiple business initiatives. We became experts at adapting to business dynamics. And we leveraged every opportunity to balance people capacity within budgets. The key elements of the strategy are cultivating high-performing teams, effectively leading outsourced talent, and accelerating change.

High-performing teams take work. Dictating what people must do or micro-managing people will not result in high performance. Cultivating a true and honest relationship across a group of people is the first step to reaching high performance. Of course you need to select the right talent mix. And people do their best in roles that challenge them in areas where they can perform their best. And where they feel recognized, appreciated, and rewarded for their contributions.

Where this goes off the rails at times, is when a team leader allows hierarchy where it has no place. Sure a leader needs to be accountable for team performance, just like everyone else on the team. And an effective span of control together with empowerment are ways to improve performance. Yet experience has demonstrated that their needs to be One Team, even if that consists of internal and external people at different levels in their organization. Even the "water boy" makes a positive difference in the success of a sports team. And the best ideas often come from the sidelines. Treat everyone with respect and focus on how to make everyone a successful part of the team. (If it were not for the gentleman that brought me coffee while working "offshore" under severe jetlag my performance would have suffered!) You'll be amazed at how great you feel yourself, and how well the team performs!

To provide an example to make this clearer, I lead global sourcing for a large healthcare company. There were offices in several cities across the US and we had hundreds of external people working in these offices and "offshore". Communication is a challenge even with those we know, who speak the same

native tongue and who work in the same area we do. In this case people on “the team” who were external (from a faraway land) were put together in an area several floors below the internal team members. No surprise, the communication breakdowns and resulting issues were killing team performance. Once we integrated team members they learned to collaborate instead of just cooperate and wallah! team performance improved. Furthermore try things like encouraging disparate team members eat lunch together and have after work functions to accelerate any of the forming, storming, and norming that may be a challenge.

The second part of the strategy is to effectively leverage outsourced talent. You cannot outsource your accountability, your responsibility, or even your work. What you can do is collaborate with external people to both increase your capacity and reduce your costs. To do this effectively you need to lead these people just as you lead your internal people. Remember it is One Team. And leave the ego at the door; open your mind to what external people may be able to do to help you improve with your internal processes and technology.

Rather than pioneering, shamelessly steal what has worked for leaders of outsourcing. Select a model that is best suited for your “team” and adapt where needed to remove any wrinkles. Diversity is so powerful if you are open and eager to learn new ways of doing things and listening to what others have to teach you. Sure there needs to be a contract between you and your outsource provider, or external consultants. But know this, the contract only comes into play when you have failed to effectively leverage outsourcing and have handed the reigns over to your lawyers. Stay involved. Work hard. And refuse to work with any outsource provider who in any way denies you the opportunity to cultivate, lead and manage as One Team.

The third key ingredient to the strategy is to accelerate change. Again this should not bring an image of a dictator driving change. Accelerating change requires hard work. If your team does not understand where or why they are going how can they help? Cultivating a shared need for change and collaborating on the execution of that change is what produces great results. There is a great deal of discussion on this topic. And you can find models, including GE Change Acceleration Process on the internet. For now the key point is for your team to understand the need for change. Maybe the market is telling you? Maybe

technological change is demanding it? Maybe your business dynamics are forcing it? Then embrace it and collaborate!

Accelerating change is possible when the other two pieces of the strategy are evident. When you have cultivated a high-performing team, and you have figured out how to effectively leverage external talent in your team, then it all comes down to collaborating and executing change. To do that people need to understand what and why, believe in the team and themselves, and you as their leader need to break down any barriers.

So ignore the hype about a severe IT talent shortage. Instead execute a strategy to cultivate high-performing teams. Learn how to effectively integrate external talent. And collaborate on change to accelerate results. You will have the capacity you need to successfully deliver whatever is thrown at you and your team!