

Talent at the Tipping Point

by Stevan Rolls



As the global economy emerges from the deepest financial crisis in living memory, organisations will be confronted by a range of challenges resulting from underlying demographic trends, technology innovations and changing expectations of work:

- The working population of many of the developed nations is forecast to drop or remain static over the next 20 years. This, combined with increases in demand, is likely to result in significant talent shortages.
- Advances in technology and The Cloud have opened up the possibility of global talent pools, enabled by these new technologies and social media. Crowd sourcing is now being used as a means of delivering a wide range of work, previously managed through traditional job types.
- Expectations of work are also changing. Generation Y is looking for different things from their employers: greater flexibility, greater work life balance and more complex careers than the traditional hierarchical model.
- As demand for talent exceeds supply we might also expect to see more people opting to work as independent contractors, selling their skills in a more open market for talent.

These trends place stress on our traditional ways of acquiring and managing talent. What has worked for HR in the past will not guarantee success in the future. As we return to the “war for talent”, those organisations that think ahead and plan their talent strategies accordingly are more likely to win.

In my presentation I highlighted a sample of the strategies that Deloitte in the UK has adopted during the recession and as we've emerged from it:

Focus on recruitment

Deloitte in the UK has recruited steadily throughout the recession and maintained a recruitment organisation of considerable scale. For those organisations that have cut back on recruitment, re-tooling the resourcing department will be a significant challenge as recruiters become more and more in demand. For us, the focus has been on growing our recruitment channels, providing more routes into the firm for a more diverse range of candidates, from school leavers to experienced hires. A key part of this strategy has been our use of recruitment process outsourcing which has

allowed us to develop highly cost effective fulfilment of vacancies and provided the ability to scale the team very quickly. This has undoubtedly been a source of competitive advantage.

Investment in learning and development

Professional services is a people business, thus investment in the knowledge, skills and capabilities of our people is essential to our ability to deliver to clients. In addition, outstanding development is a core part of our proposition to our people. It's therefore not surprising that we have maintained a high level of investment in this area.

In addition to our core offering we have also invested significantly in our Global Deloitte University strategy, which focuses on delivering world class leadership development through realistic simulations and blended learning solutions which allow learning to be better transferred into the workplace. As part of this global strategy we have established centres of learning in two campus sites - one in Dallas and one in Brussels.

Focus on engagement

We have always had a very pragmatic and flexible approach to ways of working. However, as expectations of work have evolved it became clear that we needed to do more. As part of our Work-Agility programme we have significantly enhanced our approach in this area. Focusing on leader sponsorship, communication and simplifying programmes, we have emphasised the need to continue to change and develop everyday management behaviours that support flexibility. As part of this it has been important to identify role models and develop a small number of iconic programmes that offer tangible additional benefit to our people. An example of this is the "Time Out" programme, which allows people to take an additional one month's unpaid leave during periods of lower business demand.

Deloitte is a talent-based business so it will come as no surprise that we have maintained our focus on people throughout the recession and this will stand us in good stead for the future. However, as an HR function, we have also recognised the need to develop our approach and increase our contribution. Our business leaders are asking for more commercial insight, less process and higher levels of support for the really big challenges.

It's clear that, although we have always delivered, we also need to adapt and change: focusing on deconstructing process and bureaucracy rather than designing it in. This will cause us to reflect carefully and creatively on some of our firmly held beliefs about what it means to be an HR professional and let go of "process" in order to make a different contribution. I can't think of a more exciting challenge for us to take on!

Biography:

Stevan Rolls started his professional career as a consultant Occupational Psychologist, specializing in assessment and development. After working in consulting for 5 years he moved in-house to Head the Occupational Psychology and Organisational Development group for Ford of Europe. He has occupied a number of roles in professional services: Director of Recruitment with Arthur Andersen, Director of Employee Relations and Recruitment with EY and for the last six years as UK Head of HR for Deloitte. His current role encompasses four main elements. He is Head of HR for the UK Deloitte,

co-Chair of the EMEA Talent Council, Talent Partner for internal client services and UK/ EMEA representative on the Executive Member Firm Talent Council. Key aspects of these roles are as follows: Contribution to the development of Deloitte's Strategy and Global Talent Priorities; development and coordination of EMEA talent strategy; supervisory board membership for Deloitte's corporate University in EMEA; lead Partner Advising our Leadership Development Curriculum; development and implementation of UK Talent Strategy; ultimate responsibility for all operational elements of HR in the UK (250 Staff). Stevan obtained a PhD in Applied Psychology (Cranfield) is a Member of the British Psychological Society Occupational Division and a Chartered Occupational Psychologist.