

A portrait of a middle-aged Black man with a shaved head, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark blue pinstripe suit jacket over a light blue dress shirt and a yellow and blue patterned tie. The background is a dark, solid color.

FIVE HIRING MANAGERS DISCUSS TODAY'S TOUGHEST CHALLENGES



TRENDICATORS


HR Research & Insights by Engage2Excel™

Low unemployment and changing candidate expectations present unique challenges for today's hiring managers across all sectors.

The hottest job market in decades has presented significant challenges for hiring managers. After more than eight years of U.S. job growth, hiring managers have had to adjust to conditions where candidate experiences and employee expectations matter more than ever.

A hiring manager is, by definition, the individual who requests a position to be filled, the head of the selection committee and the person to whom the new employee will report. With employee turnover rates the highest they've been in over a decade, hiring managers across all sectors are working closely with their HR departments to identify candidates who will be likely to remain with the company and to maximize the engagement and satisfaction of current employees.

To gain a first-hand perspective on how companies are dealing with today's recruitment and retention challenges, we interviewed five hiring managers from the fields of consulting, financial services, healthcare, technology and retail. To encourage candor, we promised our interview subjects anonymity. While the circumstances are quite different, the stories presented on the following pages offer important insights on the strategies and tactics hiring managers are using to address today's toughest challenges.



Trendicators is the research division of Engage2Excel, a leading provider of employee recognition, engagement survey and talent acquisition solutions. Trendicators provides original research along with reports on insights and best practices from industry leaders and experts.

Developing talent from scratch to keep up with a high-growth consulting practice.

John is the VP of client services for a Chicago-based consultancy that implements digital platforms used by large companies to transform how they buy goods and services. He is the architect of a unique talent development program that has enabled the company to achieve a 50% annual growth rate over the past three years.

“Our methodologies, solutions and approaches for helping clients succeed are unique. But that’s not what we sell. We’re in the business of growing people. If we can’t attract and grow entry-level candidates, teach them to think independently and apply themselves to new challenges daily, then we can’t keep up with new business. In order to retain our top performers and maintain our edge as an industry leader, we also need to offer career mobility, advancement and competitive compensation.”

“The key to selecting the right talent is to create immersive and challenging experiences for candidates and team members to evaluate critical thinking, autonomous decision making and cultural fit.”

What have you tried that doesn’t work?

“We know that hiring based on experience and following canned interview scripts are both ineffective practices. Aptitude and intelligence are critical and our ideal candidates are prepared to challenge themselves and think independently in reaction to new and constantly changing situations.”

How do you identify ideal candidates?

“Determining which individuals will have the fortitude to persevere during a short hiring process isn’t easy. We use group interviews and assessments to identify high-potential candidates. Then, we run interactive problem-solving scenarios that enable our team to evaluate their critical thinking, autonomous decision-making and cultural fit. Post-hire, we conduct quarterly, team-based reviews for every employee in the company.”





Attracting candidates with the aptitude and fortitude to succeed in financial services.

Peter manages a successful regional office for one of the nation's largest financial services companies near Washington, D.C. He began his career with the company as a financial advisor straight out of college, 14 years ago. Today, Peter manages the investment and retirement accounts of more than 300 clients. As a regional VP, one of his principal leadership responsibilities is to oversee the recruitment and retention of new advisors.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the market for personal financial advisors is expected to grow by 15% during the next decade. However, fewer than 10% of financial advisors today are younger than 35, nearly 80% are male and minorities are significantly underrepresented.

"One of my most important goals, personally, is to attract a more diverse group of college graduates to the field of financial services. You hear and read disparaging comments about the attitudes of young people entering the workforce these days. Although some of it may have merit, I believe it's up to employers to do something about it."

What are you doing to attract younger, more diverse candidates? "The first thing we're doing is not waiting for them to come to us. Although we have excellent recruitment marketing resources, which account for a significant percentage of our candidates, our community-based initiatives yield the highest quality of employment prospects."

"We're not waiting for applicants to find us. Our community- and referral-based programs yield the best qualified candidates."

How are today's candidates different? "One major difference is ghosting; individuals who will sign-up for an interview and not show up. Many also have unrealistic expectations about what it takes to build a career. However, our referral-based recruiting efforts produce different results. Applicants referred by a client, coach or neighbor tend to have a different mindset about getting started in their careers."

What are your keys for effective recruitment and retention? "We use assessments and behavioral interviewing techniques, which are extremely helpful. Individuals who have participated in competitive sports tend to perform best in the long run. A key factor for us is to identify candidates who are disciplined, enjoy being challenged and find fulfillment in helping others plan for their futures."

"On the retention front, mentorship is critical. After an applicant passes their certification exams, they work with a senior advisor who is committed to helping them grow their career. We also invest heavily in technology and our younger employees have been instrumental in helping older associates leverage technology in serving their clients."

Overcoming unprecedented shortages of patient care professionals in healthcare.

Ellen is the director of nursing for a Northeast healthcare system that has been recognized as an innovator in recruiting and retaining nurses. The need for registered nurses is growing at twice the rate of all other occupations. Due to an influx of patients into the health system, the retirement of baby boomers, and educational bottlenecks, nursing positions aren't being filled fast enough to keep up with demand.

"Our region is among the hardest hit in the country for nursing shortages. We have had to become much more competitive in our compensation packages. We also work closely with the local colleges for recruiting and rely on travel nurses to keep up with increased patient volumes."

What are you doing to fill open positions?

"Our system is offering sign-on bonuses of up to \$10,000 and employee referral bonuses of up to \$5,000, depending on the position. In

addition, we have forged academic partnerships, offering community college scholarships for certified nursing assistants, and we provide tuition reimbursement to help nurses further their education."

How are you improving employee retention?

"The quality of the work environment is a major factor that influences retention rates. We are hiring more support staff to enable nurses to work at the top of their license and we have made a concerted effort to reduce shift and workweek length. Creating a culture that is focused on increasing the quality of patient care is a vital part of our retention strategy. We have a variety of employee recognition programs that celebrate career milestones and enable employees to recognize their peers for exceptional effort in demonstrating our core values as a healthcare institution."

"The current shortage has required all healthcare organizations to better understand and meet the needs of employees and to promote behaviors that improve the quality and safety of patient care."



Recruitment and retention challenges in the midst of a corporate acquisition.

Brett manages a department of 30 software developers for a Midwest company that provides advanced analytic technologies in telecom. A 20-year veteran of the industry, Brett started out writing code but found greater satisfaction in building, managing and motivating teams. His company has gone through several leadership changes in recent years and is now in the midst of a potential acquisition by a telecom giant with whom, coincidentally, Brett began his career.

“This is quite possibly the most difficult position I’ve ever been in as a manager. I’ve built my team from the ground up, often convincing people to leave jobs with larger companies in big cities in favor of more interesting work and a more affordable, relaxed lifestyle. Now, with the pending acquisition, I am relatively certain that there will be a force reduction that could impact up to a third of my most experienced team members.”

“By partnering with HR and other senior managers, we created a proactive strategy for communications and retention of key employees.”

How is this affecting you as a manager? “My challenge has always been to maintain a mix between experienced developers and entry-level engineers, who can take up to a year to become proficient. However, under the current circumstances, I am torn between my responsibility to the company and acting in the best interest of employees.”

What are you doing to address the situation? “Fortunately, I have a strong relationship with our head of HR. Together with other senior managers, we created a proactive strategy for engaging with senior leadership in regular meetings and providing employees with ongoing transition updates. We are continuing to recruit for all open positions and—most importantly—each manager has identified key employees who are critical to ongoing operations and knowledge transfer. Together with HR, we are entering into confidential meetings with key employees to offer retention bonuses and incentives.”



Getting new careers off to the right start in the beauty business requires recognition.

Tineka is new to her role as a regional manager, overseeing 35 retail franchise locations for a leading beauty care brand. She comes to the role well prepared, with 14 years of experience in managing the company's top retail location.

The \$46B hair salon industry has grown annually by nearly 3% over the past five years, employing 1.36M people in 2018. Tineka's goals for 2019 include helping store managers attract new talent, retaining top performing stylists and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction.

"My top priority is talent. Finding people with passion and motivation, getting them trained and—most importantly—providing employees with the recognition and incentives they need to succeed."

How do you manage talent development? "What sets our brand apart is consistency. That comes from our national training academy, which is the best in the industry. We teach our stylists how to deliver a great cut at an affordable price and keep customers coming back time after time."

What's your secret to retaining employees?

"We have great benefits, offer profit sharing after three years and are relentless about recognizing and rewarding employees. This includes length of service awards, as well as bonuses for performance and career milestones. We also hold an annual event where we bring in educators, do demonstrations and give out awards. These programs only work well because the values they represent are deeply rooted in our corporate culture."

"We have the best training program in the industry. However, the key to our success in retaining associates is providing a positive team environment that recognizes and rewards achievement."



Engage2Excel helps organizations create unique candidate and employee experiences from pre-hire to retirement. We understand what employees really want, because we look at the entire employee lifecycle through a scientific lens. We conduct original surveys, validate best practices from our client base of 2,700+ organizations and rely on over three decades of groundbreaking research by our chief scientific officer, Jack Wiley, Ph.D.

Engage2Excel's industry-leading solutions for recruitment, employee recognition and engagement surveys are tailored to each client's unique business objectives and are designed to help clients increase competitive advantage and improve bottom-line results.

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