

# Article: a New Talent Landscape

Zachary Chertok, July 31st, 2020

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Market-shifting forces are making the world less predictable since the outbreak of COVID-19 — in response, Zach Chertok, Aberdeen's analyst covering Human Capital Management (HCM), and Kim Pope, COO at [WilsonHCG](#), recently video-conferenced to discuss what has changed in the landscape for talent. Together, they looked at reasons to be optimistic moving forward, customer trends around recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), overarching challenges to recruitment and talent, and general insights about the market that may impact talent teams for some time to come.

Both contend that organizations need to improve flexibility in response to change — but in order to do so, they must become smarter about how they assess talent value and maneuverability. Zach noted that organizations must be capable of moving top-performing talent with vital skillsets to wherever their value can be optimized in the firm at any given time. As a part of this strategy, talent teams must deepen their knowledge about the talent world outside the firm. Kim affirmed this, noting that firms that focus on “talent math” are less likely to succeed in the long-term because of an unproven assumption that when economic times improve, former employees will come back if offered the right employment.

## Evolving Talent Strategies

Both found that there have been two evolving strategies that define firms' organizational culture:

- Lower-performing firms silo talent ownership to specific divisions and furlough or lay off talent to make ends meet using data within only the divisional silo.
- Higher-performing firms look at talent as a corporate asset and analyze all manners of performance data to optimize where people are most useful per a combination of team compatibility and the vitality of skillsets around corporate strategy pivots.

Kim pointed out that the first strategy depletes employee engagement and negatively impacts the firm's employer brand. When it comes time to rehire employees, firms coping this way will have trouble drawing in top talent. The second strategy looks at the long-term cost and returns of the workforce, and improves employee sentiment by showing that the firm is invested in people as drivers of change and response.

Zach added that firms using the second strategy have better prospects for growth and higher margins of net new revenue, even in hard hit industries like retail and hospitality. These firms are also more likely to partner with an outside expert to tie external knowledge and strategy advice into their HR, talent, and performance strategies. While outside recruiters contribute significant value as partners, RPOs

generate the biggest value return per dollar spent for the best-performing firms in terms of the talent response to COVID-19.

As organizations navigate the changes brought on by COVID-19, they need to ask themselves if they are ready to handle change caused by major outside drivers that they cannot control or predict. Sourcing the right partners and rethinking long-term about talent is a major component of talent readiness. There are reasons to be optimistic, however, because resources exist to weather the storm, to adapt to change, and to and come out ahead nimbler and more capable of finding good opportunities, even in times of certain disaster.

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