

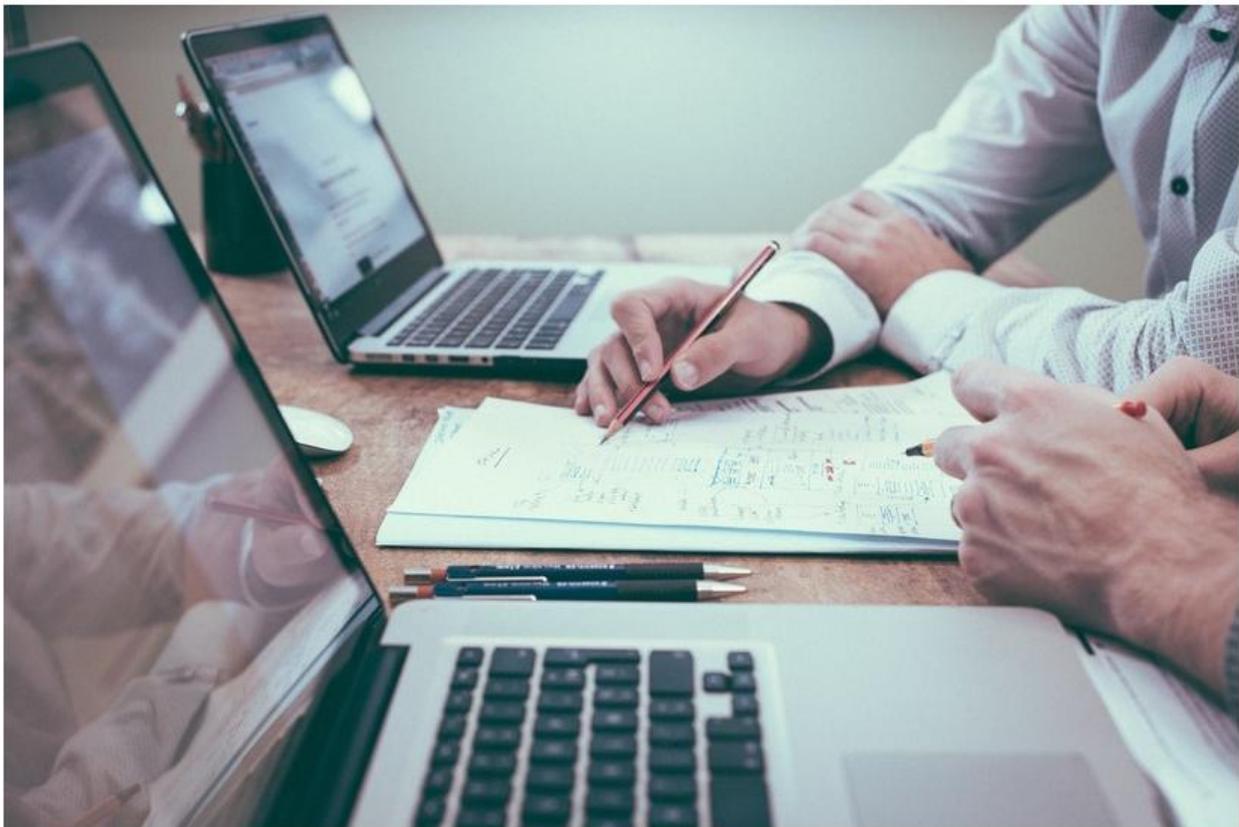
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Train Up Your Employment Brand

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In consulting with hiring managers (HMs), I often hear “I don’t have time to train, so you have to find me someone who can hit the ground running.” It’s understandable: when you’re shorthanded, the idea of adding training to your to-do list can be daunting. In today’s highly competitive job market, however, that approach is problematic.

Suppose a hiring manager, Natalie, needs to replace a Java Developer on her team. In her estimation, the person who can hit the ground running must have at least five years of hands-on experience. Given the tremendous demand for Java

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talent, though, it may take six months to find an interested and available Developer with those qualifications. Yet it might only take three months to train someone with a year or two of experience — and that person could shoulder at least some of the workload during training. “One to two years of experience plus the ability to learn quickly” is a much larger pool than “at least five years of experience.”

If your company frequently has openings for hard-to-fill positions, consider beefing up the company's capacity to train. Not only will it help you fill openings, but it also will enhance your employment brand. In addition, training can instill a sense of loyalty in employees and promote retention. I'm not talking about general training, like leadership development or conflict resolution. Rather, I want to focus on training in job-specific skills, like cost accounting, quality control, or property management.

Establishing a whole training department may be possible for larger companies, but there are other options for smaller and mid-sized organizations. Here are a few.

Train the Trainers

If your training budget is limited, you can handle training in-house and on-the-job, leveraging the expertise of managers like Natalie. At the same time, her expertise in IT doesn't necessarily make her a strong trainer. Strategically, the best investment of your budget may be to put your managers and supervisors through a train-the-trainers course. It will help them train faster and better, and it will enhance their ability to coach and mentor existing employees on an ongoing basis.

Leverage External Training Resources

There are plenty of training consultants and programs on the market, and most will customize their programs to your needs. More and more are online, making them less expensive and more convenient. A couple of examples of applying this approach:

- A fast-growing company needs to bring on 10 Inside Sales Reps for a new product launch. Rather than holding out for candidates who have inside sales experience, they could look for sharp people from customer service, retail, or hospitality. Then, using one of many sales training programs, they could put new hires through a two-week sales boot camp that combines online learning with the company's own product training.
- In the transportation industry there is a serious shortage of qualified diesel mechanics, so savvy employers are footing the bill for training and certification programs like that provided by Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

Develop a Formal Internal Training Program

If you have the budget, this option ensures that the programs are specific to your company's needs. There are lots of examples of successful programs — Proctor &

Gamble's training is almost legendary. According to [Max Nisen](#), of Quartz.com, Facebook trains engineers and Twitter provides the best management training in Silicon Valley. Your competitors may provide training . . .

Make Training a Core Part of Your Culture

According to [Gary M. Stern](#) on fortune.com, "a culture of learning can help both attract and retain employees." You'll still look for candidates with certain backgrounds, but those backgrounds don't have to be narrowly defined. The key is to look for motivated people with a track record of translating learning into action. Entice them with the opportunity for initial training as well as ongoing learning. You'll soon stand out as an employer of choice.