



## Strategic Workforce Planning and Talent Management

# Contents

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Introduction	3
What is Strategic Workforce Planning?	4
The Discussion	5
Where to Go from Here?	6
Contributors	7

# Jamie Leonard

Co-founder and Managing Director  
of The Recruitment Events  
Co. and RL100

The Recruitment Events Co. offers market leading events exclusive to the in-house recruitment community, focused on peer-to-peer learning.

For more on The Recruitment Events Co.  
[jamie@recruitmentevents.co](mailto:jamie@recruitmentevents.co)  
[www.linkedin.com/in/jamieasleonard](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jamieasleonard)



## About

The RL100 is a collective of 100 of the industry's brightest resourcing leaders in the UK who have committed their time to meet on a regular basis, discuss specific subjects and have their knowledge and insight form content that is then distributed to the wider in-house recruiting community.

Our goal is to redress the disparity of resourcing advancement across the UK and allow everyone the benefit of these leaders.

# Introduction

In an increasingly complex world the supply and demand of talent is becoming more strategic - automation, new technologies and data are changing our operating environments. In this digital world we need new skills and a workforce to be effective in the information age. And the tasks, tools and knowledge required are changing the jobs our organisations have today and will need in the future. In the near future we will need interface designers for thought controlled devices, commercial drone pilots and supervisors of AI contact centres. How do we as talent leaders prepare for this?

"A lot of businesses are not ready strategically, culturally or digitally."

# What is Strategic Workforce Planning?

Strategic Workforce Planning is a process that enables businesses to translate their business strategy into a year by year HR action plan. The word strategic is absolutely critical and distinguishes Strategic Workforce Planning from Manpower Planning. You cannot create a Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) without partnership and clear direction from the business and its multi-year business strategy.

SWP can be broken down into the follow stages:

- Define the Business's Strategic Direction
- Forecast the Demand and Supply
- Analyse the Gaps
- Develop the Multi-Year HR / People Strategy
- Develop the annual HR operational plan



SWP begins with the strategic mindset of leaders and their ability to recognise risks. The top 5 areas of immediate focus are:

- Increasing knowledge of practices and maturity levels of WFP
- Setting out a roadmap for change with goals and deliverables
- Determining 'build, buy and borrow' capability requirements
- Engaging the business through the ability to influence, understanding tolerance levels and making the language relevant to both strategic impact and operational outcomes
- Creating impact by translating strategy, work requirements and determining value led role segments



Without a Strategic Workforce Plan data means very little, and financial constraints prevent us doing the right thing as we don't have an informed medium term financial planning process. This means we are forced into more costly resourcing solutions. Also we risk losing critical skills which should be kept within the organisation.

There is an increased risk of unanticipated issues which impact the execution of the strategy and therefore expectations of delivery. And we keep changing requirements which prevents accurate demand signals being created and not enough time for centres of excellence to deliver. Overall it is hard to align the people plan, to fully leverage the value of HR and to be cost effective.

A Strategic Workforce Plan provides structure and direction and encourages strategic thinking and planning. It ensures the business is sustainable through:

- Securing key/critical jobs
- Identifying, proactively recruiting and developing future skill requirements
- Analysing and using demographics to balance the workforce
- Appropriately staffing the organisation and not putting it at risk from lack of skills or an abundance of employees in certain areas
- Identifying in advance a skill shortage in the market and addressing it before the organisation is negatively impacted

It is an evidence based workforce evolution strategy that enables an organisation to manage its workforce in such a way that critical roles and skills are both aligned to the overall business strategy and protected for the long term.



## The Discussion

Our RL100 members are at different stages of their SWP. One organisation with 42k hires per year across 30 departments, works with multiple workforce plans. Another implemented SWP early in 2017 by piloting in 2 regions and another has no SWP, working to budgets set by the executive team. This made for an interesting discussion.

One point raised was how exec teams should impact the SWP. It was agreed that engaging with lead teams to closely align SWP with strategic business planning and budgeting is critical. There is a danger that SWP can be seen to take a lot of time for little benefit, so talent leaders need to fully understand the operating environment in order to add value to the strategic business plan. There needs to be a strong connection with leadership models, with an emphasis on data for decisions.

There was much discussion around how to plan for the increasingly digital world. Is being 'non digital ready' the equivalent to being illiterate in today's workplace? Many of these roles don't exist yet in most organisations so does that mean a greater reliance on contingent workers? We need to be looking forward to anticipate demand to hire permanent teams to provide these skills. And strong leadership is just as important in managing this change as having the knowledge in-house.

"Tech companies looking for tech talent are struggling and this will continue. The future is scary"



Another discussion point was around hierarchy control and influence – where should SWP sit in organisation? SWP should cover strategic planning, financial planning, operational planning and rolling forecasting. Exec teams often make key decisions but are they qualified to do so? Is there an HRD on your board? Is resourcing part of HR, and if so should it be? All levels of management need to work together to establish a SWP that delivers the right number of people with the right competencies to do the right jobs at the right time.

"Until the last few years, resourcing was seen as an add on function to HR"





# Where to go from here?

## Recommended action plan

- Determine current state and maturity goals for WFP (transactional, operational through to strategic)
- Select 'Fit for Purpose' frameworks, methods and tools
- Design and integrate value led and integrated methodologies
- Determine investment levels for build, buy and borrow capability requirements
- Create a roadmap in line with change ambition, tolerance levels and risk mitigation
- Ensure the criticality and relevance to organisational performance expectations are well understood



## Key takeaways

- Ensure you fully understand the strategic direction of your business and the market in which you operate
- Build an accurate demand forecast at the very least and keep it as up to date as possible
- A SWP should form part of your talent strategy - have an annual plan and review at least quarterly
- SWP for every area of the business can be a pointless exercise, make sure you are clear how the business will benefit
- SWP should be an ongoing plan which evolves and can be predictive. Look backwards as well as forwards and identify trends
- Change what you do to become more a strategic function, rather than just reactive recruiters
- Work on developing a close relationship with the business and align with strategic business planning, talent management and budgeting cycles
- Organisations need to develop their own people to meet the increasing demand for digital skills which means ongoing learning and basic digital skills for all employees

# Contributors



ADRIAN THOMAS

Head of Executive Recruitment,  
The Cabinet Office



ADRIAN WIGHTMAN

Head of Resourcing,  
Innogy (was nPower)



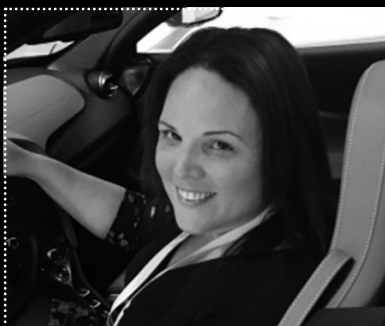
ANDREA MARSTON

Talent Acquisition Director-EMEA/  
APJ, Workday



BERTIE JENNER

Head of Recruitment,  
Zopa



GAIL SAMPSON

Talent and Acquisition Manager,  
McLaren Automotive Ltd



GARY FRANKLIN

Interim Head of Global Talent Acquisition,  
War Gaming



JAMES DRIVER

Interim Resourcing Manager,  
Britvic Plc



JAMES GILLARD

Head of Global Talent Acquisition,  
Travelport

# Contributors



JANE WOOD

Head of Strategic Resource Planning,  
BSI



MATT ANDERSON

Global Head of Resourcing,  
British Council



MELANIE HAYES

Resourcing & Development Director,  
Compass Group



NEIL ANDREWS

Head of Resourcing,  
Care UK



SANDY GREWAL

Interim Head of Resourcing,  
Red Cross



SARAH DINGWELL

Head of Talent Acquisition,  
Clarivate Analytics



ALISON FISHLOCK

Account Director,  
Cut-e



CATHY BRENNAN

Client Engagement Strategist -  
Global Solutions EMEA  
KellyOCG

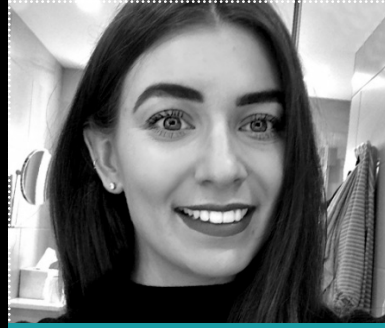


# Contributors



DEBBIE SMITH

Managing Director,  
Carve Consulting



EMILY LEWIS

Content Manager,  
Carve Consulting



JODIE GROVE

Recruitment Process and Candidate  
Experience Specialist,  
Meet and Engage



JON COONEY

Business Development Director,  
StepStone UK



JOVITA LALL

Talent Advisory Services Lead, EMEA,  
KellyOCG



ROSS DAVIES

European Bids & Marketing Manager,  
AIA Worldwide



HOWARD GROSVENOR

UK Director of Professional Services,  
Cut-e



JAMIE LEONARD

MD,  
The Recruitment Events Co

# Contributors



SAM BERTHOUD

Head of Commercial Development,  
The Recruitment Events Co



FRANCESCA RODRIGUEZ

Marketing Manager,  
The Recruitment Events Co



BOBBY LEONARD

Head of Client Development,  
The Recruitment Events Co

# Thank you!

PARTNERS

