

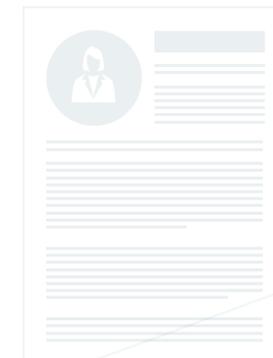
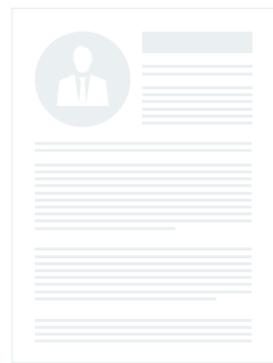
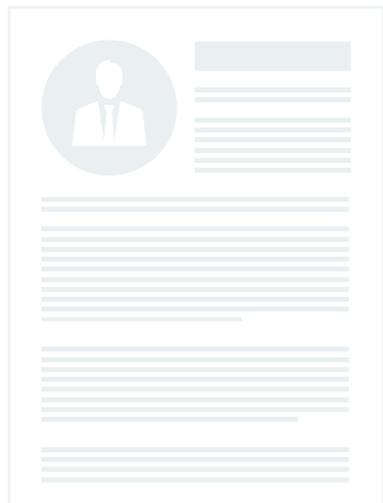
Four Ways to Build a Talent Magnet Organization

What It Takes to Attract and Retain Great People in Increasingly Competitive Talent Markets

Produced in Partnership with:

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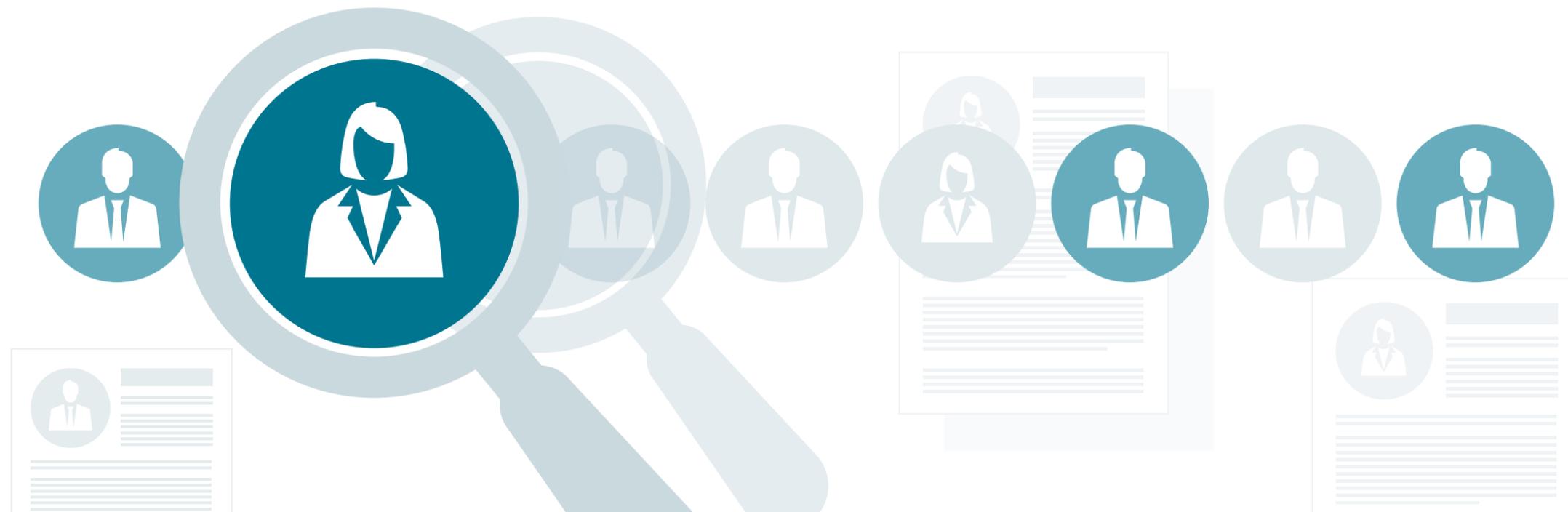


Research Summary

In a time when talent is scarce and even harder to retain, creating the right environment—the right culture—is essential. The right culture is magnetic. It attracts people to join and stick around. It's a culture that engenders trust, a sense of belonging, and provides opportunities to grow and thrive. Such cultures are highly desirable, yet few companies achieve them. One thing is for certain: leaders want them. Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends Report 2016 shows that 86 percent of organizations surveyed report that culture is a very important focus area. It's number three on the top-trends list, just after organizational design and leadership (both of which are intertwined with culture).

Talent, in 2016, is in short supply in many industries, and as in years past, this is when leaders take a heightened interest in culture and brand-building. Just a few years ago, the United States (and much of the world) was deep in recession. Culture was not a top priority—far from it. Cost-cutting and cash management were the priorities of the day, often in spite of employees' thoughts and feelings. Now—and moving forward—employee experiences and how people consequently think, feel, and what they say, will be key.

Culture has long been regarded as a source of competitive advantage. In fact, many believe it's the ultimate competitive advantage—it's unique and very difficult to replicate. What makes culture so elusive to those on the outside looking in is that despite being able to copy an organization's business practice or process, culture doesn't automatically transfer. It won't work the same way outside of the organization that created it. This is because it's difficult to replicate the human connections, the networks, the support, the relationships, and the genuine collaboration that hold organizations together.



How do great cultures happen? How are great cultures created? How are they sustained? Within organizations known to have growth-oriented, positive cultures for extended periods of time, what have they done? What have they not done? What have they focused on? What have they let go? The goal of our research was to uncover what is behind the cultures in organizations that are considered to be talent magnets. The data reveals what makes them special and unique. In this report, the insights and practices of these companies are shared to inspire and motivate you to discover what makes your culture unique and what you can do to make it magnetic.

To obtain credible, data-based answers to these questions, we interviewed and surveyed dozens of leaders, managers, and employees in firms known to be highly desirable places to work, also known as talent magnet organizations (TMOs) (see adjacent list). We asked which values were emphasized and which weren't. Examples include happiness, engagement, trust, focus, purpose, teamwork, creativity, etc.

The research sought commonalities and differences across the talent magnet organizations. We also assessed, to the extent possible, each firm's talent-management practices. Lastly, links were made to determine what talent-management practices, if any, helped create the positive culture.

What was discovered is simple in theory, but hard in practice. **Ultimately, talent magnet organizations live their values.** Without exception, each company created talent processes that perpetuated their stated values and purpose. This approach contributed to creating an enduring, positive culture. While the words and communications used to support each culture were unique, they were also transparent. The narratives they used to describe themselves both internally and externally supported their values. Leaders and employees make the values and purpose real, and passion and pride are plainly evident when hearing our respondents share them. Their values are part of the magnetism.

Talent Magnet Companies

Genentech

GoDaddy

Intuit

Kimpton Hotels
& Restaurants

Mayo Clinic

Netflix

New Balance

New Belgium
Brewing Company

Patagonia

Protiviti

Scripps Health

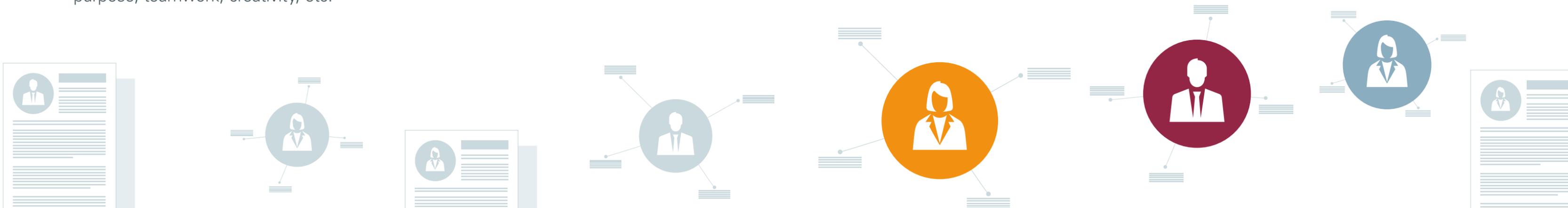
Slalom Consulting

Stryker

VM Ware

Wegman's Food
Markets

Whole Food
Markets

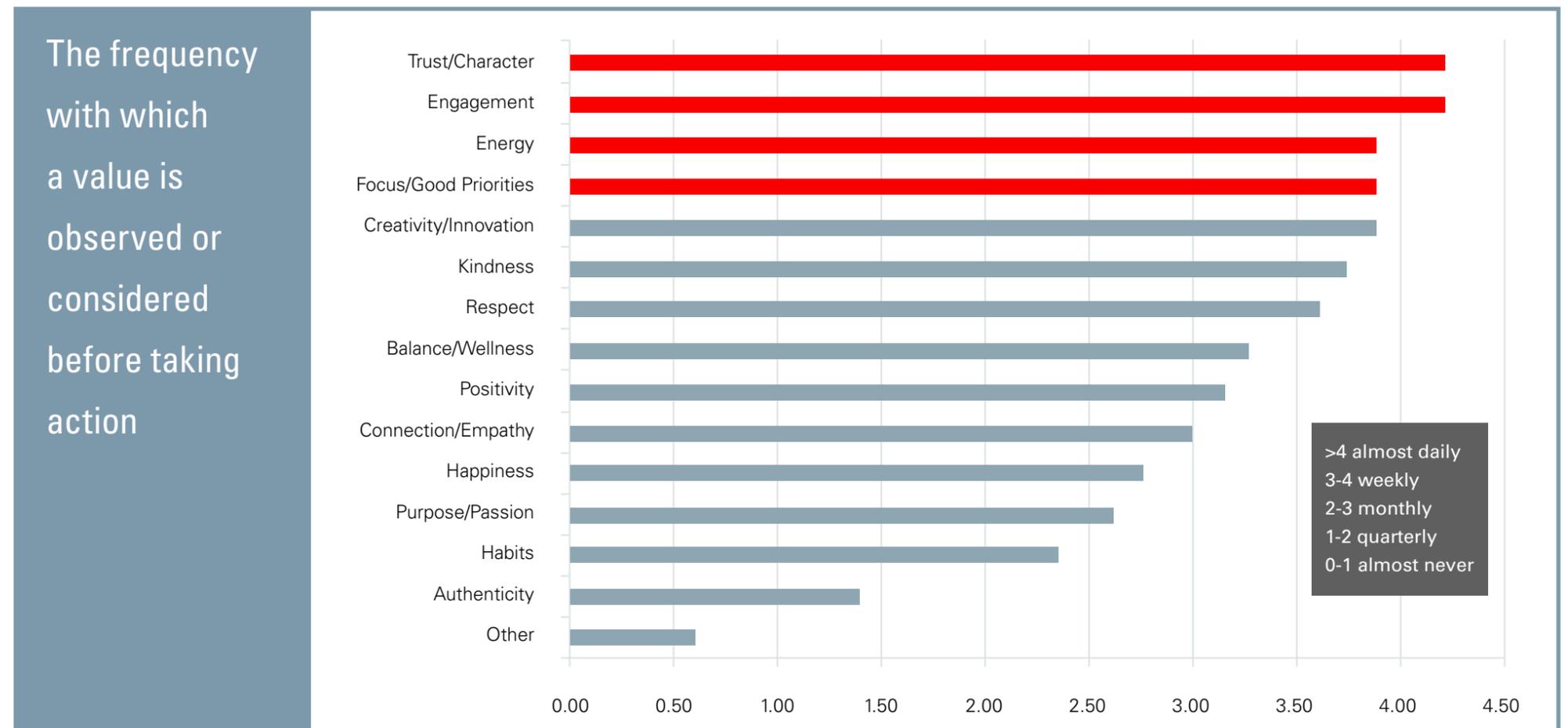


In talent magnet organizations, culture is the thread that weaves the story of who they are and how they function. It is the “true north” that is a conscious context for their processes and systems. When thinking about talent processes, talent magnet organizations consider the impact of their actions on the employee experience. They want to understand how a practice or an action will affect employees’ attitudes and behaviors. In no instance was a process put in place without considering how it would affect employees, and this was true throughout the employee lifecycle, from recruiting and selection, to goal-setting and development, to compensation and communication.

The insights generated were compiled from interviews, survey responses, and related research from Bersin by Deloitte, Fortune Magazine’s Best Places to Work 2016, CEB, Oracle, and a variety of other sources. The analysis was collected and synthesized during the spring of 2016.

Talent Magnet Organizations’ Observed Values

Which values strongly guide talent magnet organizations? The graph below summarizes the frequency with which a value is observed or used as a benchmark for decision-making or action. The higher the score, the more frequently—top of mind and real—that value was in an organization. Trust, engagement, energy, and focus emerged as most common. While other values certainly contributed to organizational culture, recognizing these top values can lend greater understanding of what drives behavior day-to-day in talent magnet organizations.



Executive Summary

authentic

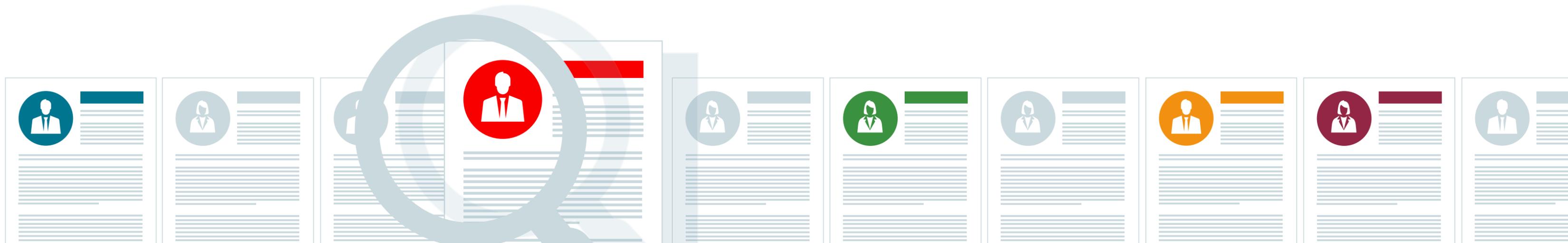
adjective | au·then·tic

Authentic: not false or copied: genuine; real. Having an origin supported by unquestionable evidence; authenticated; verified. Representing one's true beliefs; true to oneself. Entitled to acceptance or belief because of agreement with known facts or experience; reliable; trustworthy.

People gravitate toward authenticity—to the places and people who are what they say they are. Employees desire a workplace where talk is backed up by action; where there is no disparity between what a company does for its customers and how it treats its employees; where it embodies what it provides to the marketplace.

Authenticity is experienced when leaders act in accordance with the company's core beliefs and values. "Be who you say you are" seems like such a straightforward concept, yet something so simple is often very hard to do. Politics, ego, market pressures, internal competition, protecting one's turf—these can all get in the way of an organization being authentic and living its values. In a number of organizations, there remains a significant gap between leaders' words and intentions and what employees experience.

What is it like in your organization? Is there a gap between the values leaders espouse and what you and other employees experience on a daily basis? If you're like many, the answer is yes. Questions then arise: Why does the gap exist? Is the disparity significant or insurmountable? What can be done to reduce or eliminate it?



Translating Values into Culture

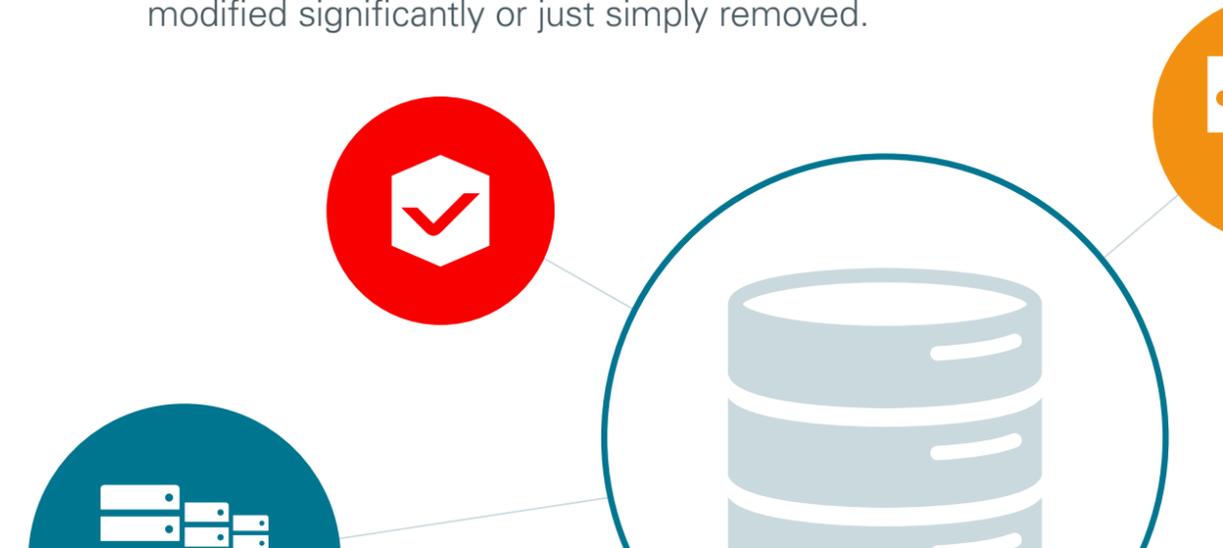
The research proved that talent magnet organizations most often translate their values and culture through the talent processes of the company: what people experience from prehire to retirement or offboarding. TMOs consciously create, perpetuate, and enhance employee experiences over time. They map what they want these experiences to be, implement processes and practices to achieve them, then ensure reality matches the intention.

Some perspective: when discussing culture, most literature focuses on self-awareness, empathy, team effectiveness, and interpersonal communication. These characteristics are excellent guidelines for how people collaborate, share knowledge and solve problems. All of these are fundamental when forming and enhancing your culture. That said, not much work has been done on a similarly critical dynamic: how talent processes (goal-setting, performance management, learning, internal mobility, compensation, and benefits admin.) affect the employee experience. In turn, this experience affects employee emotions, attitudes, mindset, and behaviors. TMOs recognize that talent processes affect the employee experience and actively work to create processes that promote the values, mission and culture of the organization.

By contrast, very few of the non-TMOs analyzed shared they had systematically addressed the link between talent-management practices and culture. This oversight likely caused the disjointed and often confusing employee experiences reported. Even in cases where certain groups had unique talent processes and positive things to share, such sentiments were seldom widespread. On the other hand, talent magnet organizations consistently had talent processes that supported a clear cultural identity. Examples include Patagonia, Wegmans Foods, Netflix, New Balance, and New Belgium Brewing Company. The identities of these and other firms just don't exist on paper. They are lived day-to-day by employees and this translates into other positive outcomes, including customer satisfaction, innovation, productivity, and economic growth.



Additionally, the research uncovered that TMO talent processes were intentionally created to reinforce desired behaviors. One organization created new and unique coaching, feedback, and goal-setting processes. Such processes were put in place to inspire more frequent and meaningful communication between supervisors and their direct reports. Interestingly, data also suggested that some commonly used talent processes (such as performance management) were oftentimes either modified significantly or just simply removed.



The final piece of our analysis explores the specific benefits of being a talent magnet organization, and the values that create authentic culture.

These include:



Trust



Engagement



Focus



Energy

In the end, what's become clear is that there are measurable commercial, cultural, and brand benefits to taking a clearer and more assertive role in designing, implementing, and enhancing employee experiences. If leaders really want a culture of high performance, they must champion the idea and take an integrated, systematic approach to achieve it. Those who lack a clear point of view, vision, and strategic roadmap to achieve the vision will struggle to create organizations where people can thrive. You can't disguise or change who the company is—no one can come in from the outside and define a company's culture or how to live it—it has to come from within.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

What Talent Magnet Organizations Know

TMOs have a clear narrative on how talent-management practices affect their employees and understand how the employees contribute to economic, cultural, and societal values.

With the above in mind, the learning from the TMOs offers four keys to becoming like them.

They are:

1. **Using employee experience journey mapping**
2. **Getting all functions involved in generating talent magnetism**
3. **Being honest about what employees should expect and delivering on it**



Qualities of Talent Magnet Organizations

What companies are talent magnets?

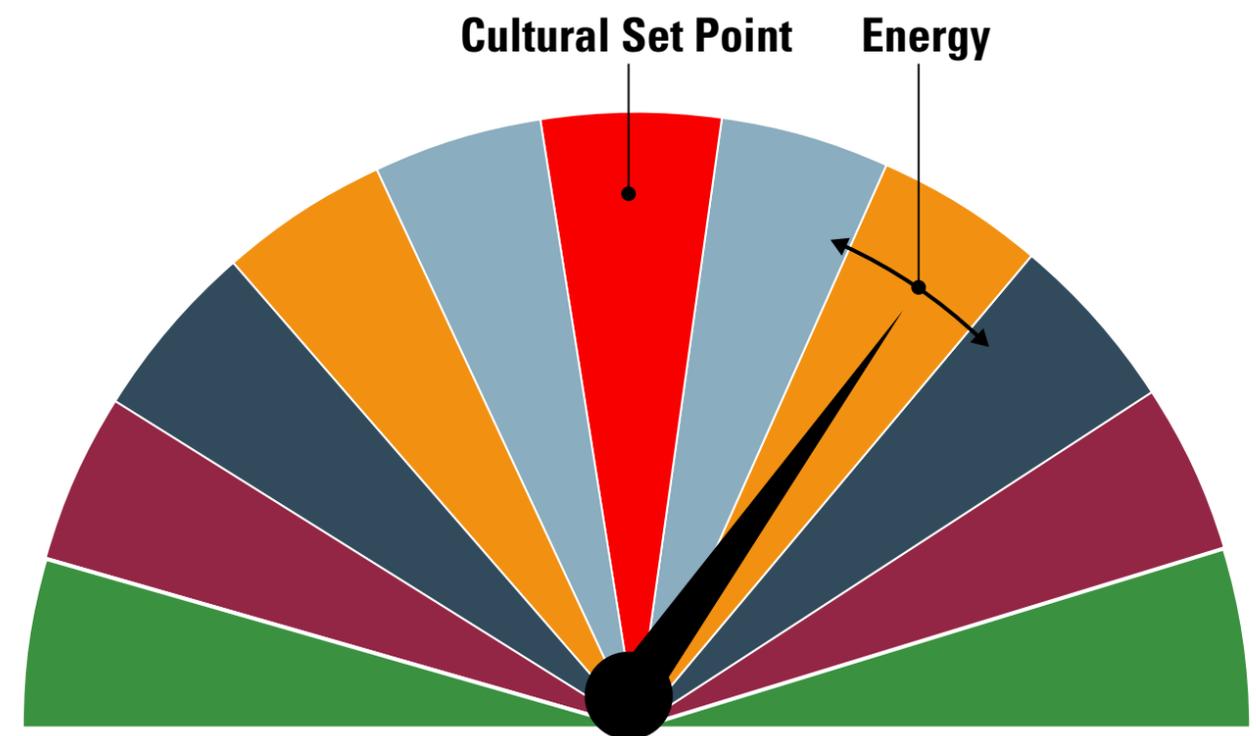
In addition to those previously mentioned, Whole Foods, Mayo Clinic, Intuit, Genentech, GoDaddy, Scripps Health, Stryker, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, Protiviti, and Slalom Consulting all embrace the keys to talent magnetism. TMOs represent diverse industries. Some are on the Fortune Best Companies to Work For list. Some are public. Some are privately held. Some are large enterprises. Some are mid-market. In all cases, each has an employee community that speaks enthusiastically about the exceptional quality of their day-to-day experiences—how they feel proud to be associated with the brand and its products and services. They are also knowledgeable on how those products and services are produced, taking into account the sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness of production processes and/or service delivery. The difference between real and expressed values is small and maybe even, in the best cases, non-existent.

How is culture created?

A good way to think about how culture works is to think about how the thermostat works in your home or office. It's summer. It's hot outside, so you set the temperature indoors at 70 degrees. You're comfortable, but then someone opens a window to let in the 90-degree-plus summer air. It starts to get hot inside and the air conditioning comes on to make the room 70 degrees again. The goal of the thermostat is to keep your home at 70 degrees no matter what external forces increase the heat in the room. Culture works the same way. Each company has

a cultural baseline, and when events or actions attempt to change the environment, behaviors take place that bring the culture back to its baseline.

All organisms do this; it's a biological law. The technical term is called autopoiesis—the self-maintenance and self-regulation of a system. When you hear about resistance to change in a culture, or initiatives being short-lived and things returning to business as usual, you are seeing autopoiesis in action. The people, the systems, the practices, are all trying to get back to their 70-degree baseline.



Embedding Behaviors in the Culture: How do the stated values of an organization translate into talent processes?

Take the case of Patagonia, one of the world's most highly regarded companies for product quality, commitment to sustainability, and treatment of its employees. This treatment is highlighted in the book by Patagonia's founder, Yvon Chouinard, *Let My People Go Surfing*. As the title suggests, the values of sustainability and kindness are not for brochures, posters, or websites. They are for the people to experience day in and day out. Sustainability speaks to the organization's environmentally conscious production processes and its product-recycling program, yet sustainability also relates to the work-life balance that engenders trust and continually energizes and engages employees. As Jill Dumain, Head of Sustainability and 28-year veteran of Patagonia, shares:

"I never thought I would be here this long. It's just been so enjoyable to work with such great people on such interesting and challenging projects. We're all really trying to do right by each other and the natural world, and the organization enables this. It's been a joy, and I still have to pinch myself sometimes that I'm really part of this incredible team doing all these incredible things."

This describes the culture of Patagonia and the feelings it evokes. Did Chouinard set out to build this kind of employee experience, rooted in his values, or did it just happen?

History indicates the employee experience was designed consciously and supported by decisions, practices, tools, processes, and (where appropriate) technologies. The research shows this did not happen systematically. Quite the contrary; for many years since Patagonia's inception in 1973, the culture was created in the absence of formal HR or talent-management processes. It wasn't until the early 2000s that more formal, thoughtful processes were designed and implemented. The ownership of talent processes was never delegated to HR. It has always sat with the executive leadership team, taking input from everyone in the organization. The leaders at Patagonia have remained continuous learners and insist on taking full responsibility for the maintenance of Patagonia's cultural integrity. As such, HR served, and continues to serve, as a facilitator of talent-management practices.

In this case, much like with other TMOs, senior executives didn't just "sponsor"; they took responsibility and ownership for the culture, remaining actively involved. They also clarified the experiences they wanted for employees, and made process, measurement, and technology choices consistent with those experiences. Just as importantly, they made conscious decisions on what not to do.



Why is it hard to create a magnetic culture?

Creating and sustaining a magnetic culture is seemingly simple. A leader is clear on the organization's purpose (the mission); where it's going (the vision); how it's going to get there (the strategy); and the way everyone will work together (the values/culture). The mission should be clear and inspiring. The vision should be attainable, yet challenging. The strategy should serve as a guide, yet allow for creativity and adaptability. Finally, the cultural values should also be clear, consistent, inviting, and inspiring. They should enable innovation, authenticity, collaboration, and all of the desirable attributes that create a positive and productive culture. Simple, right?

Not quite. High-value talent often leaves new employers quickly because there's a significant, sometimes vast, difference between what they were told the job was, what the organizational culture was depicted as, and what they actually experienced.

The top reasons executives leave within the first year are that the company wasn't as expected; the job wasn't as expected; or the opportunity wasn't as promised. This contributes to a high failure rate—Leadership IQ reports that only 19 percent of new hires can be classified as an unequivocal success.

This is an underdiscussed and undermeasured reality right now, yet it contributes to the fact that we have a workforce where 73 percent of people are disengaged or highly disengaged.⁵ Additionally, if employees are highly disengaged, chances are they are destroying value.

Why the disparity between what a company claims versus what it's really like to work there?

One key reason lies in this finding: values, by themselves, do not inspire behavior. Experiencing the behavior of others over time—their habitual words, tones, body language, and actions—is what inspires behavior.

When group behavior functions to influence the behavior of an individual, this is known as social facilitation. Social facilitation can be positive and beneficial, or negative and counterproductive. It can be consciously created and managed or left to evolve on its own. In our case, social facilitation affects how an employee feels, thinks, and acts; the basis for the stories they'll tell themselves and others about their employment experience. These stories become the organization's true culture.

Over time, repeated actions turn into cultural norms, like the daily habits observed, experienced, and displayed. Habits are what cause an entire employee population to move with some consistency and predictability. Again, this can be positive or negative. Ideally, as is the case with TMOs, magnetic behaviors like positivity, respect, and kindness become daily habits that breed trust. Despite this knowledge, most non-TMOs too often adopt talent processes that inadequately support such habits.

Case in Point: Performance Management

For decades, organizations have used a performance-management process to set goals, review accomplishments, provide feedback, and, in turn, allocate compensation—everything from merit increases and bonuses, to desirable assignments. In 2004, the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) did a study that all but proved that performance-management processes disengaged the person being reviewed as well as the reviewer him- or herself.

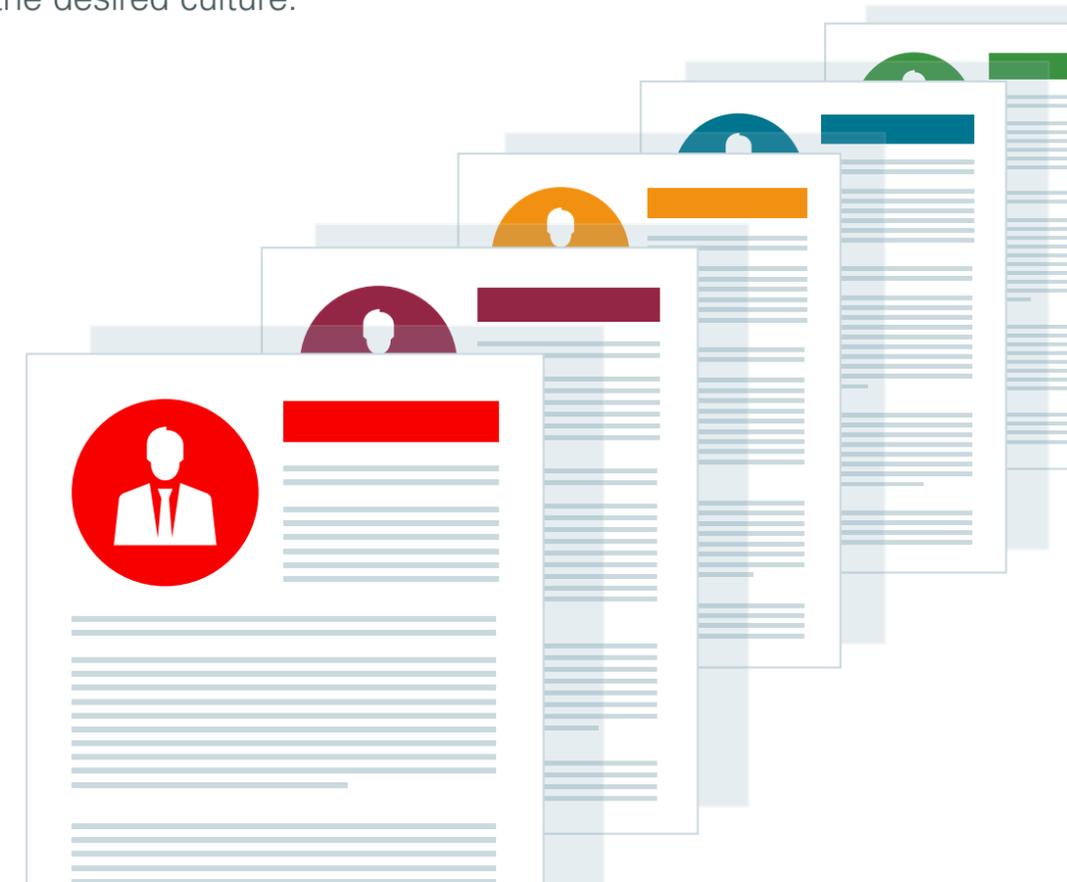
For over a decade we've known that performance-management practices can be highly ineffective, yet most organizations still use them in the conventional way. There's a lack of creativity in designing a better, more appropriate process, as well as a lack of courage to take a risk with something new. This ideology is now evolving.

A 2015 Bersin by Deloitte study suggested that 89 percent of organizations are either thinking of changing or are in the process of changing their performance-management process. Why so many? Forced rankings, a hallmark of performance management, are either explicit or implicit; hidden (secretive) or open (potentially shaming), thus the process often undermines the trust the workforce has with the organization and its leaders.

In addition, the supervisor may be doing his or her best and have the noblest of intentions, yet the performance-management processes in place might create an unwinnable situation. For example, managers may have to focus on the past or make compensation-adjustment decisions based on anecdotal information. They might have to force rank despite having a fantastic team that delivered diverse, hard-to-compare, critical contributions. In such a case, the organization might have the values of trust, integrity, and open communication, yet did not reinforce them through this process. If it had, there would be room to reward the team equitably (if warranted). There would be room to have honest dialogue on how the supervisor could add clarity and help command needed resources. There would be room to ask for, and get, more frequent check-ins to stay on course. Such outcomes align with stated values. In many cases, performance management, as well as other talent processes, prevent or hinder value alignment, resulting in frustration, negative feelings, and potentially detrimental behaviors.

In the simplest terms, people want to feel connected. They want great conversation. They want leaders to be compassionate and empowering by remaining curious and asking great questions. They also want to be heard. They want to be honest, and they want honesty in return. They want openness. They want to feel safe.

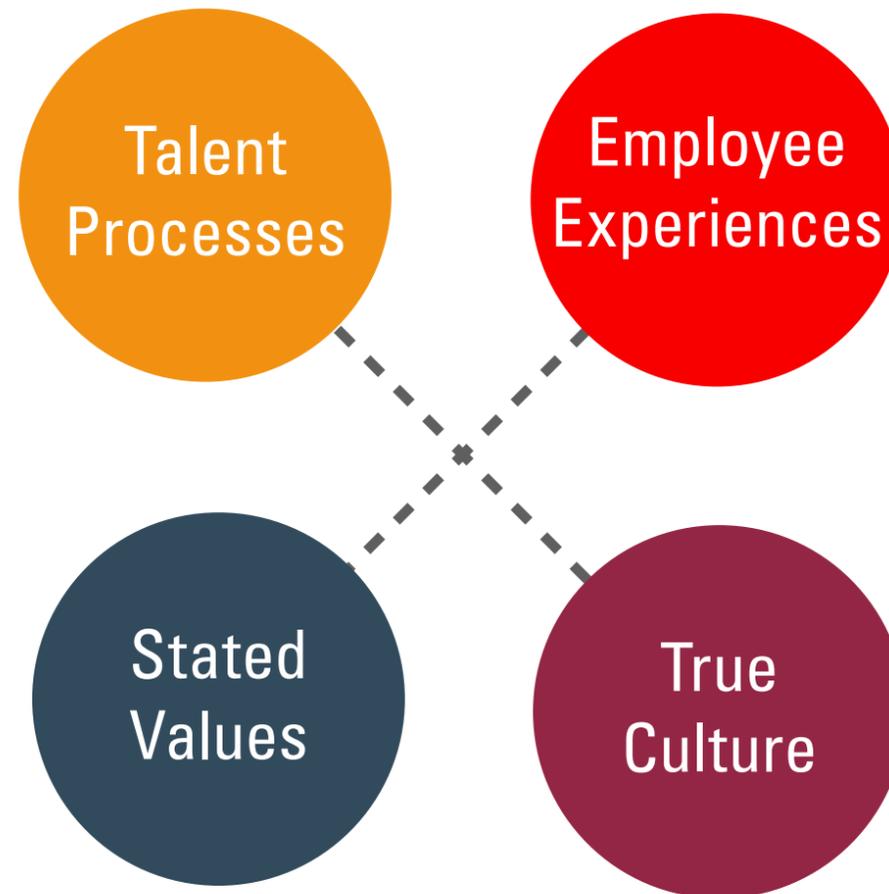
Performance management is just one example of how talent processes might support—or not support—the values of the organization and, in turn, the realization of the desired culture.



What has to be present to create and sustain an organization's true culture?

This diagram describes the link between values, talent processes, employee experiences, and culture. Observe that values inform talent processes and the employee experience, with the latter serving as the principal driver of the true culture.

This study identifies distinctions that are rarely appreciated and discussed in a systematic way. Even among the TMOs, many have made these linkages despite the lack of an integrated framework, common understanding, or common language. Few, for example, talk specifically of an "employee experience." TMOs do use phrases like "we do what's fair", "what's reasonable", "what's in line with our culture", etc. All suggest they do want to create positive employee experiences—experiences that enable the realization of ambitions. Non-TMOs, on the other hand, rarely use such terms. Instead, the employee experience they deliver happens in a process-centric way (best case) or simply unconsciously (worst case). Whichever it is, a suboptimal culture likely result.



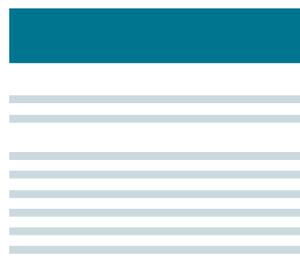
Four Keys to Building a Magnetic Culture

Great cultures exist and persist because they're sailing in a watertight boat with all instruments working and a skilled crew at the helm.

Organizations without great cultures have leaks or instruments that don't provide the necessary insight. There must be a systematic approach to culture if that culture is going to be intentionally created and well maintained.

Given the need for a systematic approach, four key lessons emerged from TMOs. They are:

- 1. Use employee experience journey mapping** to craft technology-backed processes and measures that align with organizational values and desired culture.
- 2. Get all functions involved in generating talent magnetism.** Facilitated by HR, creating culture involves Operations, Finance, IT, Facilities, Learning, Performance, and Recruiting. Bring these groups together and align efforts.
- 3. Be honest about what employees should expect—and deliver on it.** Once a new employee arrives, an existing employee changes roles, or new expectations are set, the experience sold should align, reasonably, with what actually happens (e.g. If it's a highly chaotic, creative role, say so).
- 4. Learn, explore, and adapt.** There is no finish line. Employees, external talent, technological innovations, etc. are continually influencing people's tastes, preferences, and behavior. This must be addressed and managed over time.



Why these four lessons?

These four keys have proven essential to creating positive employee experiences, as in the case of Jill at Patagonia. The talent-management practices that support these experiences are, quite simply, mature. This two-by-two chart highlights this dynamic—one that all TMOs shared.

Non-TMOs fell into three other categories:

1. Talent management for its own sake
2. An at-risk culture
3. Hope as a strategy

Number one, the upper-left quadrant, is where most organizations are today. They've perpetuated legacy processes or adopted out-of-the-box ones without ensuring that those processes align with the organization's unique values and culture. Some interviewed even admitted that the common belief among colleagues was that a new talent process—almost any process—was going to be better than what existed before. Sometimes this was true; sometimes it wasn't. When it was true, most often the talent processes and related technologies were woven into a consciously created, cohesive employee experience.



When it wasn't true, as was explored with performance management, the resulting process sometimes even inhibited a magnetic culture.

An at-risk culture is one that might be good for now, yet the underlying talent-management practices don't necessarily support the perpetuation of the culture. This is common in young, high-growth companies, or companies that don't have solid strategies to integrate cultures of acquired companies.

Hope as a strategy is a culture that neither has a positive employee experience nor mature processes. The hallmarks of organizations with this culture are multiple subcultures that are at odds. By definition, there's no guiding light, no modeling by leaders, and certainly few

(if any) talent processes that support a cohesive and positive employee experience. While seemingly dire, such a situation is a green-field site in that it's a platform for quick, meaningful change. There might not be much to uproot.

In whatever category your organization finds itself currently, know that there's hope. Even TMOs can't rely on their historical accomplishments and become complacent. Securing great talent is only getting more challenging, particularly for highly competitive industries and job families (engineering, nursing, etc.). As such, in order to become a TMO or something close to one, creativity and courage are called for. The benefits are certainly worth the extra effort.

Benefits of Being a Talent Magnet Company in the New Economy

As discussed, most organizations have values listed on their website and delivered in orientation materials, yet the real values are what's manifested through employee experiences day-to-day. In the case of the TMOs, some common outcomes emerged among employees.

They were:



Trust - breeds authenticity and commitment



Engagement - breeds confidence and evangelism



Focus - breeds productivity and balance



Energy - enables these and other attributes to travel through the organization

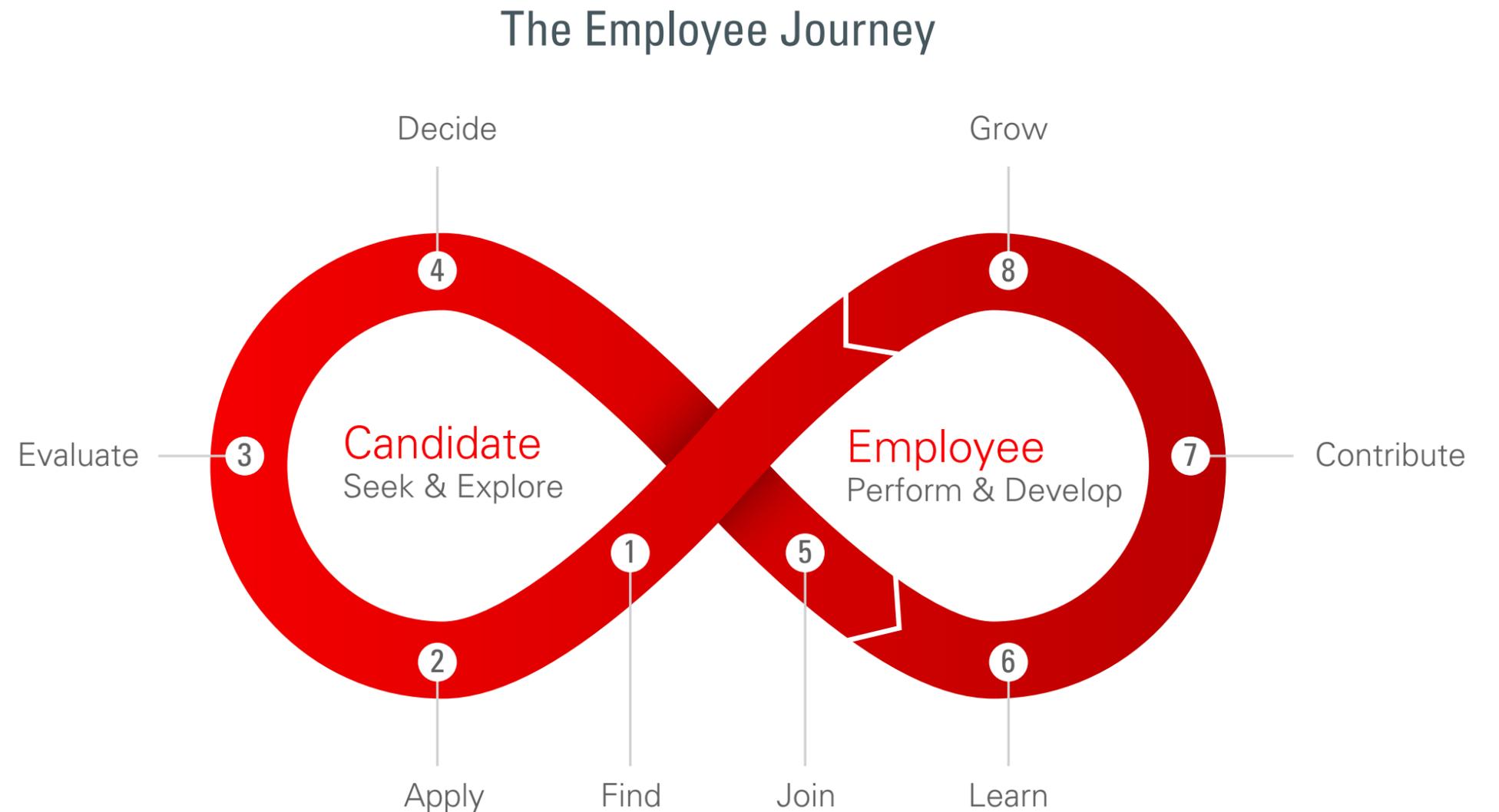
The first two, of course, are well known and often measured in employee surveys. The final two, however, are rarely measured and managed. Even so, the value of being focused and having energy is simple and clear. Particularly when viewed from across the entire organization, there's no doubt that the benefits of focus and energy become amplified. By contrast, when individuals or teammates aren't focused and energized, trust and engagement are compromised. In this way, our data proved what is probably a cyclical dynamic: it starts with trust, runs through engagement and focus, and results in energy. While this is a hypothesis that needs further testing, it is reasonable to surmise that those colleagues emanating positive effort and energy on priority tasks reinforce trust and inspire similar effort and energy in others. When compounded team after team, positive energy and success pervade the whole organization.

Can talent processes also disrupt trust, engagement, focus, and energy? Of course they can, as in the performance-management dynamic we considered earlier. Can they help enable these qualities? Can talent processes "stay out of the way" so these attributes can emerge or simply remain? Yes, it's likely. In TMOs, it's clear that talent processes were designed to not interfere with any of these attributes; they were designed to enhance or perpetuate them. This is why they exist at all. In the non-TMOs, trust and engagement may have been reported, yet the attributes of focus and energy were rarely identified.

Where to Start

With the four keys to creating magnetic employee experiences in hand, let's briefly explore employee experience journey mapping and where organizations spend their time designing, implementing, and maintaining talent-management processes and systems.

Employee experience journey mapping involves consciously crafting the key experiences an employee has with an organization. Collectively, these interactions help form an individual's belief system about the organization and, in turn, his/her attitudes and behaviors. With this in mind, let's walk through the graphic opposite.



End to end, it identifies key employee–employer touch points. Taking the lead from the TMOs, they represent opportunities to help shape the stories employees will tell themselves about their time at work. Touch points include how to join, learn, contribute, and grow. Others can be added as desired, particularly if additional touch points —employee surveys and communications, for example—are meant to enhance the employee experience.

Once identified, the ideal scenario involves living the employee experience as opposed to just thinking it.

The emotional journey is laid out through identifying a persona and how that persona travels through the employer’s processes. If you are thinking about the employee journey, look at what the candidate or new employee experiences; don’t just create some anonymous set of process maps.

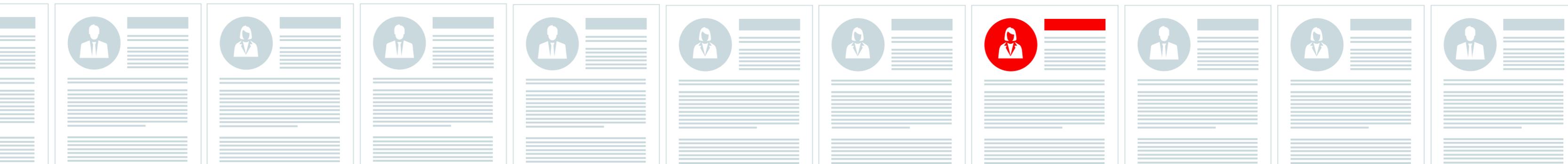
Steps include:

1. Documenting the initial map/journey
2. Evaluating emotional, psychological, and behavioral impacts of the experience
3. Considering trends and imminent changes
4. Identifying points of risk and opportunity
5. Designing the new experience(s)



“We take a look at an employee journey in terms of their interactions with their employer and/or potential employer, map the emotions triggered by these interactions and the eventual outcome—if we want to change the outcome, we change the emotional journey.”

- Oracle, 2016



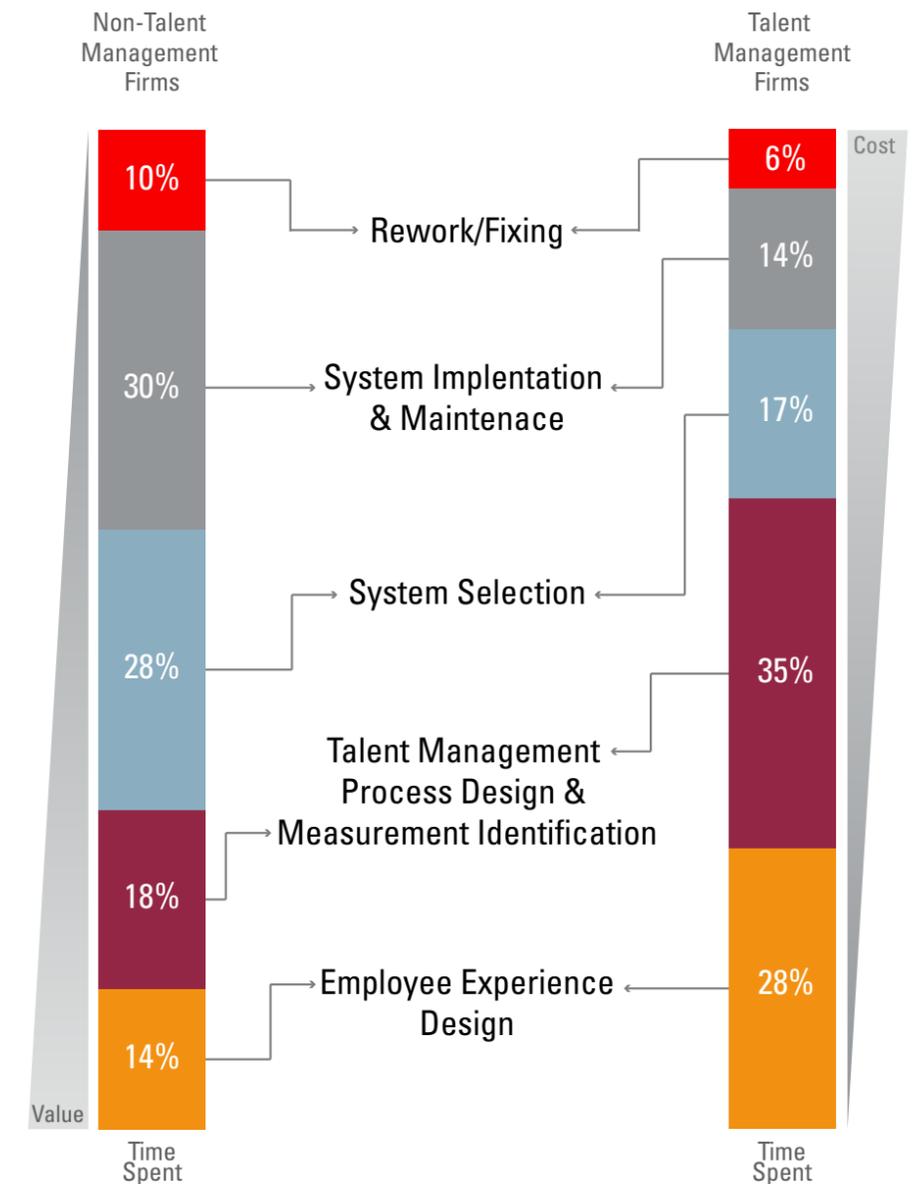
Whether it be this process or something similar, the need to convene a multidisciplinary team to design and implement an employee experience is essential (number 2 of the four keys to becoming a TMO). This is not HR's job alone. As the TMOs show, HR ideally facilitates the design and delivery of consciously designed talent processes. True "ownership" resides with all members of the executive leadership team, along with leaders at all levels of the organization. It especially requires ownership from the chief executive.

Taking this approach creates focus and efficiency when choosing technologies. Non-TMOs reported spending most of their time selecting, implementing, and maintaining talent-management technologies, which is necessary, but not sufficient—you have to go beyond selection and implementation and create great employee experiences. In that respect, the TMOs were different. Their time and effort spent designing the employee experience up front helped ensure talent processes, and technologies, delivered that experience. By doing this, they took an assertive leadership role in identifying the solutions that were appropriate for their culture. They didn't necessarily go with what was most convenient or least expensive. They went with the solution that best fit their vision.

This approach was shown to have benefits beyond what the employees experienced. It ended up that the TMOs were spending less time and money selecting, implementing, and fixing systems. What was implemented ended up having a longer shelf life. There were fewer HR transformations, system changes, and process changes. That doesn't mean they didn't improve; it suggests that improvements evolved with the organization rather than there being drastic changes. This wasn't true across the board; some did choose to step away and adopt significant change (learning maps and opportunity matching at Protiviti, for example). Even so, the commitment to planning up front suggests that changes, large or small, tend to have longer-lasting effects.

As such, time spent designing the employee experience up front leads to many cultural and financial benefits later, as the organization continues to evolve.

Talent Management Focus



*Representative only. Proportions based on the experience of the authors and feedback of those interviewed.

To quote the late great UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, “It’s not what you teach. It’s what you emphasize.” What the research made clear was that it wasn’t about which set of values were listed on a webpage or wall. It wasn’t even what leaders stated in all-company meetings or in the press. Instead, among TMOs, it is a continuous emphasis on the experiences leaders wanted for employees, supported by an ongoing, systematic effort to cultivate those experiences. Talent processes and technologies, thus, were designed and implemented to facilitate, not inhibit; to help create and sustain positive, productive interactions between the employee and the organization, as well as between employees themselves. When organizations didn’t take this approach, they often found themselves in a culture that didn’t align with business values.

Values aligned with behaviors and cultures can be rooted back to the four keys to becoming a talent magnet organization:

1. Using employee experience journey mapping
2. Getting all functions involved in generating talent magnetism
3. Being honest about what employees should expect and delivering on it
4. Learning, exploring, and adapting

These four keys are still not used by many organizations. Many leaders view talent management as HR’s job, then blame HR when there are talent shortages, ineffective development plans, or high turnover. As highlighted in this study, talent management should be the responsibility of all leaders, regardless of functional area, and regardless of level. In talent magnet organizations, HR staff function as subject-matter experts and facilitators of positive change. Executive leadership teams, and without exception the CEO, were not only “sponsoring” talent-management initiatives, they were also involved in them. They provided guidance with a clear vision of what the culture and related employee experiences should feel like, along with ideas on how best to deliver those experiences. Did they have all the answers?

Of course not, yet the clear vision empowered others (inside of HR and out) to design what was best for candidates, employees, and the organization as a whole.

In the end, culture is undoubtedly enabled or inhibited by talent processes. It is our hope that culture in your organization be consciously created and maintained, and that some of the learning found here will help guide the ongoing effort in your organization. The stakes have never been higher. High-value talent is already choosing the employers that offer the best experience—not only the most money, coolest title, and onsite perks—but the employer that has a clear purpose and value system, and underlying processes and technologies to support that purpose and value system.

Talent is drawn to magnetic cultures: to organizations that are true to their word and provide exceptional day-to-day experiences that make them feel trusted, engaged, focused, and energized. You have the four keys. Now, open doors and build and sustain a culture of passion, performance and engagement.

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