

The Guide to A Successful Talent & Skills Strategy

Responding to the talent
crisis now – whilst developing
the future skills required of
your workforce



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Introduction

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, new and emerging technologies had begun to impact the nature of the skills required of the workforce, and businesses as a result were being pushed to adapt.

In 2017 for example, a McKinsey Global Institute report, Jobs lost, jobs gained: Workforce transitions in a time of automation found that in around 60 percent of occupations, at least one-third of the activities involved in the job could be automated, implying the need for 'substantial workplace transformations and changes for all workers.'

During the early days of the pandemic, the CIPD and the Essential Skills Taskforce launched a new framework around what they referred to as 'essential skills' - listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork – and encouraged individuals, education providers and employers to use the framework to help shape and adapt their future skills plans.

STEM sectors in particular will likely be focussing on reskilling and upskilling the existing workforce and working closely with education providers to plan for the next generation of talent, whilst others in professional services, IT and communication type industries will be reassessing the 'essential skills' required, once most repetitive, admin-heavy tasks have been automated.



In this guide, we look at a three-step approach to developing your skills strategy, looking first at the here and now of the skills you need, how to develop your existing employees and then ultimately, how to create a culture that attracts, nurtures and retains talent.



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Step 1: Operational Skills

There's no point planning for the future if you're not set up for success today. Quite simply, you'll never hit your long-term business goals if you don't have the necessary knowledge and experience in your teams to help the business get to the next step on its journey.

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Skills training for the here and now

When it comes to ensuring you've got the right skills in place to meet the immediate needs of your business, these will mostly already be covered by your existing learning programmes – whether that be face-to-face training, eLearning, or a blended approach. Likewise, performance management processes should uncover any skills gaps that individuals may have when it comes to meeting the expectations of their current role and responsibilities.

Mentoring and coaching can be effective ways of upskilling individual workers, allowing more tailored support to be delivered where it's needed rather than investing in wholesale learning programmes that may not deliver great ROI. Smaller, bite-size microlearning and refresher training (with diagnostics tools to see where there may be gaps) can also be effective in reinforcing the key elements of larger training programmes or compliance courses.

Finally, if you're not yet utilising mobile-first, social & collaborative learning methods in your learning blends, then you're potentially missing a quick way to help you adapt. Employees will naturally pick up new knowledge and skills from those they work with on a day to day basis. Bringing more social elements into your programmes helps to expose each individual to a much broader range of colleagues than they are likely to come into contact with on a day-to-day basis. Enabling a way for employees to share expertise can help empower them in taking more control of their own learning, development and career paths.



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Access Learning Solutions give you the learning management tools and eLearning courses to empower employees to learn the way they want to learn, whether they're out in the field, on the frontline or in front of a desk. Our mobile-first learning experience delivers engaging training when and where they need it.

Managers can assign and track learning pathways for induction and onboarding programmes and identify and address knowledge gaps to support the skills you need in the here and now, whilst planning for the future skills needed of your workforce.

Want to know more?



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Step 2: Attract, develop and nurture

As with any change programme, it'll only be a success if you manage to attract and nurture talent and bring your existing people with you – simply introducing a new process or technology to 'solve' your HR and learning challenges, just isn't going to cut it. So, the second step helps you prepare for the future success of your business, and the lifeblood behind it: your people.

Future skills planning & talent management

How does your organisation attract and retain talent? Achieving a strong and consistent talent pipeline and crucially, a positive employee experience to retain it, is no mean feat. An employee's journey doesn't just start with a job listing and end with a new role elsewhere.

The pandemic has exposed the cracks in many businesses to their employees. Some failed to respond quickly enough to the new requirements of remote working, provided little or inadequate support and attention to employee wellbeing or have simply neglected their people strategy altogether. Neglectful businesses are now facing a mass exodus of staff with **38% of the workforce** looking to change roles in the next year, which in turn naturally creates rising recruitment costs, damaged reputation and decreased levels of productivity.

So how do you truly invest and develop your people and avoid letting talent go down the drain? Considering the journey and touchpoints throughout the employee lifecycle is vital; from attracting talent, through recruitment, onboarding, recognition and reward, to career development, reskilling or upskilling and mobility.



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So, however simple it may sound, when thinking about talent and skills investment it comes down to four factors:

- ① What are the potential new roles your business will need in the future?
- ② What are the skills, strengths, and not to forget ‘attitudes’ you are likely to need from your future workforce to meet the requirements of these new roles?
- ③ How do you put the right plans and processes in place to identify, develop and nurture those skills internally?
- ④ If these skills can’t be developed internally, what are the future talent and skills gaps you will need to fill?

Ironically, considering the skills of the people responsible for identifying the skills will be just as important!

Do your hiring managers have the necessary skills to interview and identify the best candidates for these emerging roles? Are they exploring all potential ways to attract new talent; from paid media, LinkedIn forums, expanding geographic remit and transferable skills?

Once you’ve attracted talent, you’ll need a strong onboarding and induction programme. This is possibly the most critical investment you make when it comes to L&D. An astonishing **9 in 10 new hires are prepared to leave within the first month** - so it’s vital that their first impression is a good one, and sets a positive tone for what to expect in the future - both when it comes to training, investment in their development, and their employee experience as a whole.

“Our Talent is our most important asset and we needed a system to cater to our different teams and job roles.”

Gatwick Airport

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When hiring, it's likely that you'll have some sort of skills or competencies matrix to act as a reference guide. These can also be used to help identify where existing employees have strengths and, where there is room to help support them to develop. It can also be used to identify their potential aptitude and suitability for other areas outside of their current position - or even department - that they might be interested in exploring.

When it comes to future-planning therefore, developing the skills and interests that your existing employees have can also achieve a greater ROI. There's no point wasting money on hiring costly new employees if you've already got the skills you need left unused, or underdeveloped in your current talent pool.

Understanding the skills you already have and how employees want to develop themselves helps you to better understand how and where your future skills investments should be made.

Our flexible and scalable PeopleXD software gives People managers the data and insights they need to make smarter decisions to support talent and succession planning using a 9-box matrix. Our integrated HR solution helps you to create a culture of continuous feedback for employee development and growth and align staff skills and competencies to future proof your business.



Find out how Access
Applause helped Arvato
Financial Solutions improve
employee engagement
through recognition



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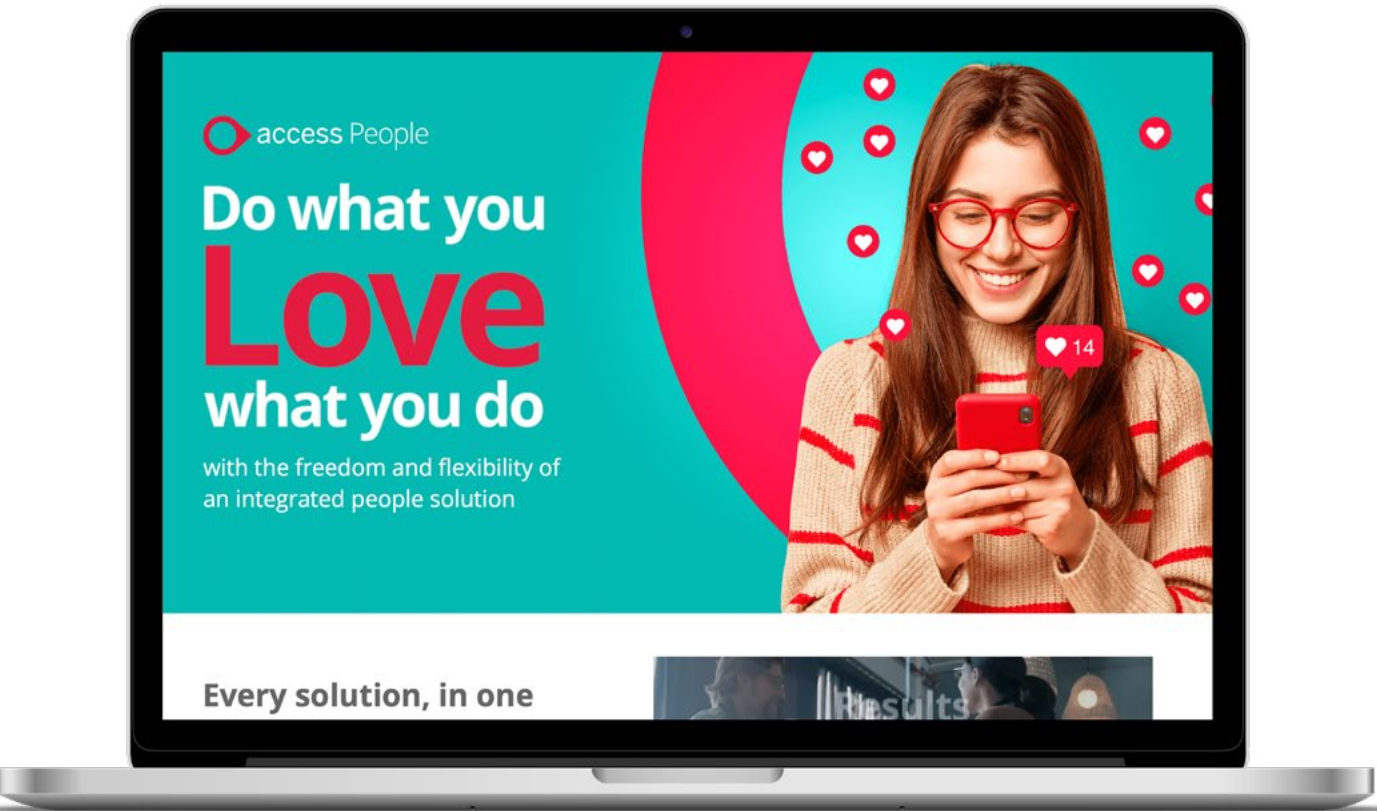
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The third stage is perhaps the most
important of all, focusing on helping
you not only attract and develop the
best new talent, but humanising the
employee experience, and providing
opportunities for all employees to
discover, explore and utilise their
individual potential.

Career mobility has likely been increasing alongside the need
for new digital skills, with people of all ages looking to learn new
things and explore new opportunities when it comes to job
roles and responsibilities. Finding ways to support your staff
as they grow and advance their own personal and professional
development also offers a big competitive advantage; in your
ability to attract new talent looking for a business that will truly
invest in them as people, and better engagement and retention
as a result.



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Personalised skills development

When it comes to this pillar, your skills investment should be focused around giving your employees the options to explore and expand their horizons beyond what might be immediately obvious or available in their existing role.

It may be that some people love what they do, and just want support in developing their expertise in a specific area to truly master their profession or to climb the management ladder. Others may be more interested in exploring new avenues that are better aligned to their personal interests - so finding ways to support skills development in new areas will be most important to them.

Investing in people at this level is more focused on helping your employees become the best version of themselves, unlocking their true and full potential by providing opportunities to explore their own interests, and making their work more meaningful to them within the context of your organisation

There is often a concern that helping your people to develop in these ways may leave you with recruitment gaps in other areas whilst you backfill roles, or even fears that employees could use your business as a jumping-off platform to learn new skills that they can take with them to their next role.

However, these are all becoming more outdated attitudes towards (successful) people management. In reality, people are far more likely to stay if they feel their own career plans and skills have been acknowledged and invested in. Organisations that see the relationship between business and employee as a two-way partnership are likely already well-prepared for whatever new skills emerge in future.



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Access use Employee Success Plans to help drive these kinds of conversations with managers, supporting employees to grow, thrive and succeed. Part of this is our 'Path to Great' which gives managers a visual framework to help drive high performance and look at how employees engage on a number of levels. All of these things can be used to consider existing talent in new or emerging roles within the business.

Only by putting your peoples' individual aspirations and ambitions first, and at the heart of your business, will you provide an employee experience that inspires, engages and motivates them to deliver their best performance... and not find reason to seek the opportunity to do so elsewhere.

Behind every great business you'll find a workforce of highly engaged people that are supported by the digital tools they need to succeed.

Our unrivalled comprehensive portfolio of HCM software applies over three decades of knowledge and innovation, supporting HR, learning and compliance professionals to deliver seamless people experiences.

Access People is an all-in-one fully integrated suite, serving you truly joined up People data, but with the modular capability to work alongside existing systems to suit your business size and need. Modules include workforce management, talent management and acquisition, learning and development, risk and compliance and payroll and designed to be flexible, to scale with your business as it grows.



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The investment your business makes in its people is probably one of, if not the largest expense you'll have each year. Ensuring that your plans are aligned to business success and with your people front of mind can be a tricky balance, but really is critical to long-term business success.

Speaking of balance; many of the skills your business needs now are (probably) not the skills you'll need in the future. Fail to plan for the future, and you'll lose out to the competition that has; but don't invest in the skills you need right now, there may not be a future!

Central to all of this, however, is your workforce themselves. If you don't put your people - and their potential - at the heart of it all, you're not only risking missing out on the true potential of your existing talent pool but losing them altogether. Putting you back at a recruitment square one and playing catch-up with the competition.

And as businesses look to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic, that's a risk that you can't afford to take right now.





Introducing Access People

Access People features an unrivalled portfolio of HCM software applying over three decades of knowledge and innovation supporting HR, learning and compliance professionals to deliver seamless people experiences.

Our all-in-one fully integrated suite also has the modular capability to work alongside existing systems to suit your business size and need. Modules include workforce management, talent management and acquisition, learning and development, risk and compliance and payroll and is designed to be flexible, to scale with your business as it grows.

Our integrated HR solution helps you to create a culture of continuous feedback for employee development and growth and align staff skills and competencies to future proof your business.

