

# Tactics for Higher Education IT Services Talent Management Plans

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Some popular higher education sector authors have posited that the great resignation is subsiding (Zahneis, April 5, 2022). Despite large layoffs in the tech sector, it is not (Zahneis, December 16, 2022). A survey conducted by EDUCAUSE in March of 2022 found that 38% of IT workers were considering leaving their institution soon (McCormack, 2022). According to other surveys, 84% of hiring managers continue to experience difficulties in filling positions, dwindling applicant pools, under qualified résumés, and a fast-paced “candidates’ market” where they’re forced to vie with private-sector employers and their peers for top talent.

Moreover, conversations with Information Technology (IT) leaders and recent workforce surveys suggest we may just be observing the top of the workforce iceberg as staff perspectives and expectations on work and life run much deeper (Smith, 2022). The changes in the workforce have disrupted the traditional relationship between employer and employee and IT leaders must adopt new workforce strategies.

Prior research on IT staff revealed that turnover intentions are primarily fueled by individuals' perceptions of job satisfaction, organizational rewards, procedural justice, work exhaustion, supervisor support, fairness of rewards, and affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Patrick & Sonia, 2012). Other factors that traditionally contribute to persistence in jobs include job responsibilities and demands, social support, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Carayon et al., 2000; Karasek, 1979; Richter & Hacker, 1998; Theorell & Karasek, 1996). Recent studies of workers who quit a job say low pay (63%), no opportunities for advancement (63%), and feeling disrespected at work (57%) were reasons why they quit (Parker & Horowitz, 2022). This is especially true in higher education.

In the post-pandemic world where the balance of power has shifted from employers to employees, we must rebalance job engagement and satisfaction equations with considerable emphasis on values alignment, organizational citizenship, worker mobility and flexibility, internal vision communication, job advancement opportunity, supervisor’s capability in leading digitally and with emotional intelligence, and opportunities for employees to explore social influence and innovativeness.

A colleague recently described the surge of resignations and turnover in higher education IT organizations as “the great reckoning” suggesting that many of our IT staff are reconsidering the life-work value proposition. The COVID-19 pandemic created conditions that caused many people to reassess their motivations and values in the search for a simpler, less stressful life (Baker, 2020). Concomitantly, the millennial-dominated workforce is seeking to align their values with their employer’s mission to elicit a sense of greater purpose and intrinsic rewards for their work (Beckett, 2020).

This great reckoning, the pervasive competition for technical skills, the widening acceptance of work-from-home arrangements, and the changing demographics in the workplace all signal both threats and opportunities to higher education leadership. As the workforce reconsiders the balance of work rewards, values alignment, and quality of living, IT leaders need to act intentionally to create and execute talent management strategies to have the IT talent essential to advancing transformation in higher education institutions.

This article presents actionable ideas on job roles, recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies that can be incorporated into strategic workforce plans for talent attraction, alignment, and retention. These tactics were collected through numerous formal and informal discussions at conferences, meetings, and staff development

events over the past year and from numerous research-based and popular readings. This paper suggests four major areas IT leaders can develop: Exercising their leadership; rethinking and restructuring, and aligning work and job roles; changing tactics on recruiting talent; and being more intentional about retaining the talent you already have.

## Exercising Good Leadership

### Leadership Engagement

The irony of IT work is that it is more about people than technology. As technology leaders, we must authentically engage our staff at all levels. It is important to regularly inquire about their work and how they are doing on a personal level. If they are talking about frustrations in their work or life or indicating they are considering leaving, use active listening to find out why. Also, explore the intrinsic motivations that connect people to the organization and work. When employees seem set on leaving to pursue other interests, offer to help them stay or go. Your authentic engagement means a lot to your staff and can be a key factor in their job satisfaction.

### Engage Institutional HR and Procurement Leaders

Things are changing fast in higher education HR practices. At many institutions, current policies and practices are giving way to more modern and flexible approaches driven by increased competition for talent and ambitious institutional agendas. IT leaders should use their position and platform to pontificate the need for change and work collaboratively with institutional leaders to reshape long-standing institutional HR practices. As some institutions shift to procuring talent via purchase orders (e.g., gig-workers) relationships with Procurement Officers are also critical to creating agility and flexibility in how we contract for workers and contributors. Lean into these conversations to influence thinking and offer to pilot new ideas that might prove beneficial to the institution.

### Be Mindful and Intentional

Be purposeful in your talent management approaches. Not everything will work as planned but doing nothing will produce nothing. As a leader, you need to be intentional to create engagement and then develop a strategy to create an environment that attracts, nurtures and retains diverse talent. Just spouting statements about diversity, equity, inclusion, and work-life balance without real follow-through, only serves to demoralize employees. Exercise your leadership in genuine, mindful, and authentic ways to develop and execute workforce strategies that create and sustain desired climate and culture.

### Practice Empathy

**Engage people with empathy.** Empathy is the ability to be sensitive to and appreciative of another person's feelings, thoughts, and dispositions. Workers in a post-pandemic environment increasingly expect leaders to be empathetic. An empathetic leader has a genuine interest in coworkers' lives, challenges, and feelings, and underscores the importance of creating a life-work balance. Leading with empathy builds relationships, promotes teamwork, encourages innovation, improves productivity, fosters teamwork, and can improve job satisfaction. While it may not be in everyone's nature to be "touchy-feely," clearly projecting that you care about people is a necessary attribute of a modern leadership style. Leaders with high emotional intelligence (EQ):

- Recognize and understand how to meet the emotional needs of team members.
- Promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging within the organization.
- Desire to understand what team members are experiencing.

- Use active listening to gain perspective and extend compassion.
- Actively and intentionally work on building trust with and among staff.
- Are comfortable with being vulnerable and share their interests, feelings, and lived experiences.
- Routinely and informally recognize staff for their accomplishments, reaching milestones, or meeting shared goals in meaningful ways.
- Engage others through sensitive questioning to understand others' experiences and feelings.

### **Develop Managers to Be Empathetic Coaches**

Exercising empathetic leadership is not just limited to the CIO. Today's managers need to be highly engaged, leaders and coaches too. It is well established in organizational research that supervisors have the most impact on employees' decisions to stay or go (Oakes, 2021). However, we must recognize that many managers rose to their management positions through their technical expertise. However, they sometimes lack the skills and emotional intelligence to be effective managers of people. Your managers may need more training around these humanistic factors. As you change your workforce strategies, it can take a lot of patience, energy, and focus among your management staff to bring recent graduates or "outsiders" into the IT fold. But taking personal responsibility for the newbie's success can be a rewarding experience. We must expect managers at all levels to be actively engaged and mutually accountable in our talent management strategies.

"Managers must provide employees and teams with agency. They can do this by providing clarity on the expected outcomes and at the same time providing flexibility in the journey to achieve them; practicing empathy-based leadership; and focusing on performance outcomes and expectation fulfillment while letting go of input-based performance, such as hours worked."

-- Jacob Lathrop

### **Recognize Good Work – Especially those Contributors Working Behind the Curtain**

Many of our staff perform critical operational tasks that are unseen and often go unnoticed when done well. This contrasts with those who are working on high-profile projects and are often celebrated for creating transformative new capabilities. Managers and leaders should routinely recognize and praise the contributions of these behind-the-scenes workers who ensure that our operations are secure and reliable. Also, recognize that some people have some anxiety about being publicly recognized. The most powerful form of recognition is the timely, personal, and relevant handwritten note of appreciation.

### **Define and Communicate Your Desired Culture and Ethos**

What is the current or desired culture and climate in your organization and how do you promote it to outsiders applying for or interested in working at your institution? Your organization's mission, vision, culture, and climate are increasingly important to job seekers who are not just looking for a paycheck but are looking for purposeful work aligned with their values, skills, and ambitions. Does your website include statements, videos, and testimonials that reflect your ethos and higher purposes in human terms? Tell your institution's story and make sure everyone understands the depth of impact they will have. Higher education has a profound impact on individuals, families, and community prosperity. We contribute to the discovery of new knowledge to solve difficult world problems. These are appealing to today's job seekers who are looking to align jobs with their

intrinsic motivation. In our IT organization, everyone is a contributor to the greater outcomes of our mission, and we should never underestimate the impact we can have on others' futures through our work today.

Staff often get heads down in their work so much that they can lose sight of the greater outcomes and good they and the organization are contributing to and the value of their work. To reinforce these outcomes and the desired culture that produced them, share inspirational stories that exemplify outcomes and make sure everyone understands the depth of potential impact they have on these outcomes. Never underestimate the impact you can have on someone's future by doing the simple things well with a smile.

**Key Questions:**

- What is the current vs desired climate or culture state?
- How can you shape it?
- How do you promote your culture to outsiders interested in working at your institution?

### **Provide Cover for Those Taking Risks**

Give people permission to fail and celebrate them. Failure is part of the process of learning and growing. Thomas Edison is often quoted as saying, "I discovered 1,000 ways not to make a light bulb." An important aspect of leadership's role today is to provide a safe harbor for staff to experiment, test, fail, and make mistakes along their path. Managing failures well can lead to professional growth, higher job satisfaction, increased resiliency, and better long-term outcomes. Not all cultures and climates are tolerant of failure. If people feel there is a difference between what we say and do, they will only hunker down to do the minimum and will be risk-avoidant. Leadership can provide the cool shade of cover to staff while managing the expectations of stakeholders and fostering a culture of innovation that lies at the center of most higher education institutions' ethos.

### **Be a JEDI Leader**

Creating a climate and culture where people are respected and appreciated requires leaders to act intentionally to create an environment where all employees experience diversity and equity but also feel included and experience a sense of belonging and organizational justice (JEDI). Studies have shown that teams in robust JEDI environments are more effective at addressing today's complex business problems by incorporating diverse points of view, lived experiences, and lenses of emotional intelligence. Leaders who can embrace, build, and leverage and ethos of JEDI stand a much better chance of attracting and retaining talent and providing outstanding services to their institutions.

# Rethinking and Rearchitecting Work and Job Roles

## Restructure and Tier Job Descriptions

Managers want to hire the deepest and most experienced talent they can. When experts are not in your applicant pools or are otherwise unaffordable, you can attract applicants and diversity into pools by removing the “senior” level hiring criteria. Also, removing formal education requirements and asking for combinations of experience, training, and formal education can bring more candidates to your search. Most people in IT are not formally trained in computer science or information systems. You can find excellent talent among the liberal arts graduates who bring interpersonal, critical thinking, and creative skills to IT work. So, consider searches that seek applicants from all talent tiers – entry, intermediate, and senior and from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. Managers may exercise more patience and coaching to move entry-level staff through progressive promotions, but you may be surprised how quickly people with the right attitudes can pick up the knowledge and skills needed for the job.

## Remove Bias Language from Job Descriptions

Review job descriptions for biased language that might alienate candidates from the job. For example, “the ability to lift 40 lbs.” was a common requirement for roles that involved racking or moving equipment. It is well established that many women job seekers feel they need to “check all the boxes” on a job description before applying. Whereas men might be comfortable applying for a role meeting only a few of the criteria. Today, there are online tools for checking job ads and descriptions for bias. Adjust your job descriptions, requirements, and advertisements to be gender-neutral to attract diverse pools of job applicants.

## Create Modern Working Titles on Top of Old Classification Titles

Many of our job classifications are based on traditional HR-defined roles. These base job descriptions are boring, dated, and fail to reflect the modern “excitement” of today’s technology ecosystem. If your HR officer is wedded to their classification system and not as flexible as needed, check to see if you can use working titles to get more creative. Either way, job titles are the first impression your organization makes on potential talent. Rethinking titles can reflect evolving work roles and project a more modern approach that appeals to IT talent. Some new titles like Cloud Architect, IoT engineer, Machine Learning Engineer, Virtual Reality Experience Designer, Digital Conversation Designer, Social Media Coordinator, SEO Sensei, and Quantum Programmer reflect advances in applied areas of technology. It might just be putting lipstick on a bulldog, but older traditional titles can get a fresh facelift to bring modern twists on jobs such as Digital Equity Specialist (Accessibility Officer), Full Stack Developer (Software Programmer), DevOps manager (Production Specialist), Digital Dexterity Designer (Trainer), Transformational Change Manager (Project Manager), or Cyber Risk & Resilience Manager (Security Specialist). Updating titles can attract applicants to jobs and project a fun, exciting, and modern work experience.

## Offer Adequate Salaries

Higher education IT staff ranked monetary compensation seventh behind factors such as benefits, quality of life, work hours, and opportunity to build training skills (Bichsel, 2014). However, staff must also feel that they are compensated fairly. Despite the downplaying of salary and benefits, compensation is a key factor in IT staff's decisions to stay or go. Everyone needs to earn a livable wage. If employees are concerned about salary, do not let a few dollars get in the way of retaining your talent. This is particularly true in a market where IT talent is scarce, and workers can simply click a different icon to go to work. As such, leaders should be cognizant of intra-institutional pay discrepancies, cost-of-living factors, and market compensation to establish competitive salaries and benefits that attract and retain IT talent. “Commensurate with experience” is not going to appeal to talented professionals looking to advance their careers, make ends meet at home, and find a longer-term professional home (Hawes & Reynolds, 2022).

## Create Opportunities for Innovation in Every Job Role

Gartner's research recently found that in our post-pandemic world, people increasingly desire to work for organizations that are innovative and desire to contribute to meaningful work that drives change for good purposes. We often hear charismatic leaders who proclaim grand strategic transformation and innovation initiatives. But these top-down strategies rarely result in the outcomes they envision. The truth is that the spark of real innovation happens in much smaller ways and every big innovation starts with a small idea shared by a small group of motivated people. That is good news. It means even the smallest, most resource-challenged organizations can be successful at innovating. But leaders must be intentional in creating opportunities and an environment for people to come together to work towards meaningful innovation. That means:

- Carving out time and space amidst the backlog of dev-ops work.
- Explicitly give permission to innovate.
- Start with small ideas and actions.
- Form a small coalition of the willing for ideation and change.
- Build and nurture high-quality collaborative relationships.
- Keep it simple. Iterate. Celebrate.

When there is a pile of work to be done, it seems impossible to foster innovation. But leaders who provide such opportunities and structure will contribute to employees' sense of value and strengthen their intrinsic commitment to their job and the institution.

## Recruiting and Hiring Talent

### Hire a Specialist to Hire Specialists

Hire a recruiter for IT who understands your situation, technology stack, ethos, talent needs, and job candidates' motivations. They can keep candidates "warm" while the hiring bureaucracy plays out and help you negotiate when offers are made. Your recruiting specialist will also exercise alternative and non-traditional sources to find talent. Many job seekers have registered with various recruiting firms to relieve the stress of job hunting and interviewing. Some of these agencies provide background checks and verify skill levels and aptitudes to effectively pre-screen applicants. Your hiring specialist can evaluate, drive contracts, and effectively explore new sources of talent.

### Realize that You are Surrounded by Student Talent

Higher education institutions are magnets for talented, curious, and smart people. Our students bring great enthusiasm to learning and doing. Internship programs and other work-study-learn programs can create opportunities for hiring the best students for jobs. Some managers have rejected the idea of using students to do important work in the IT organization, citing the time investment needed to oversee them and develop their technical skills. I find this attitude highly ironic in an institution dedicated to advancing personal learning, growth, and development. It is accurate to say that it takes extra energy to mentor young professionals, but the long-term rewards are outstanding. This past year, we hired ten students into full-time jobs as they completed their undergraduate programs. All of them developed their abilities over years of student-employment work and were well-prepared for entry-level jobs. Many early-career employees have ambitions to utilize their employee benefits of attending graduate school.



## **Engage IT Staff in the Recruitment of IT Staff**

Some institutions have recruited their own IT staff to be part of the recruitment processes because many IT hires are made based on pre-existing relationships. For example, by having all staff create a LinkedIn account, leadership can involve IT staff in the active recruitment of talent by leveraging everyone's relationships. In addition, providing staff with templates or fliers of open jobs for promoting employment opportunities through social outlets and email makes it easy for sharing and ensures consistency of communications around key marketing messages about the culture, climate and benefits of working in the IT department at your institution.

## **Look to Faculty as a Source of Expertise**

In addition, we have been successful in recruiting faculty into full-time IT roles with the ongoing ability to stay involved in academic activities of research and classroom teaching. Faculty can bring a depth of understanding of technical topics and perspectives in service to the academy that is valuable to informing IT services practice. Getting faculty involved in governance, active roles in projects, or even switching to full-time roles is a great source of leveraging expert talent in every institution. We too often look to outside consultants and pay higher costs for insights that are readily held by our faculty and researchers.

## **Look Beyond Traditional STEM Education Pipelines for Talent**

There simply are not enough computer science and management Information systems graduates in the pipeline to fill open jobs. Leaders must look to all disciplines of graduates and make the requisite investment in their development to create high-valued contributors to our IT teams. The truth is this is not a new idea. Most of us in IT positions do not have degrees in computer science, management information systems, or informatics. We intrinsically know that liberal arts graduates possess a broad range of knowledge, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills that are directly applicable to IT services. For example, I have worked with formally trained musicians who naturally understand systems, teamwork, innovation, and performance which translate well into software design and development, tech support problem-solving, and systems analysis among other job roles. Remove STEM degree requirements from technical jobs and broaden your perspectives to include other avenues of education and training for rockstar IT employees.

## **Target Talent at Other Higher Education Institutions**

There is an elephant in the room – some institutions are actively targeting other institutions' talent in their recruitment strategies. This can be a sensitive topic among CIOs, but the truth is we have all been doing it for a long time. Out of desperation or opportunity, IT leaders have more recently escalated efforts to identify exceptional individual contributors at other institutions who may be disenfranchised by inflexible HR policies, low compensation, high workloads, or ineffective leadership. Some institutions are even offering signing bonuses to job candidates reminiscent of private business practices. Poaching talent is inevitable when talent is scarce and demands for IT skills are high. If you are hiring someone from another higher education institution, I have collegially reached out to let the CIO know. I expect the same.

## **Give People a Good Job to Do**

The old saying is true, "If you want people to do a good job, give them a good job to do!" People want to feel that their work is valued and that they are doing valuable work. When they lack this sense of value, they will often seek opportunities, even at less pay, to know that they are making meaningful contributions to work. Boring and monotonous jobs are often viewed as dead-ends. Restructure jobs and work to ensure that people are both challenged and able to make significant contributions. Our work in higher education often aligns with someone's interest such as contributing to climate preservation, public health, or social justice. Weave impact statements about the work into job descriptions and advertisements that speak to candidates' intrinsic motivations and attract them to good and impactful jobs.

## Create a Pipeline to your Organization

Organizational leaders can take active roles in developing pipelines to jobs and career opportunities. By participating on community boards such as the Chamber of Commerce or school committees, joining community organizations such as Rotary or Kiwanis, or international organizations we are extending our opportunity to recruit talented individuals to our institutions. These relationships can elicit pipelines of interest and opportunity flowing to the institution, and participating managers can understand the issues and opportunities for collaboration and mutual interests within our communities.

## Consider Cluster Hires

Cluster hiring is recruiting a group of people at the same time. This tactic has been used by academic departments to build expertise around a new program or research lab. Several CIOs have described their ability to recruit a very senior leader in a targeted IT field and then hire foundational talent around that leader who will develop them into a high-functioning team. This practice has been widely successful as it allows CIOs to consider emerging technology trends, fill skills gaps causing inertia, create new energy and momentum, and diversify a department's expertise all at once. Such approaches could bolster elements of transformational plans such as moving to cloud computing, cyber security initiatives, and LMS or ERP implementation.

## Re-engage Retirees and Catch a Boomerang

Some former employees who may have retired during the pandemic only to face stock losses, high inflation, or boredom are looking to re-engage in meaningful work. Early and natural-age retirees who still have many productive years left represent the largest segment of the latent workforce (McKenzie, 2022). Retirees have completed their traditional careers and so if they are contemplating work, they will seek opportunities they perceive to be meaningful. Have former colleagues reach out to retirees to see if they are interested in returning to work, remotely or part-time.

People who left their jobs for "greener grass" may also be experiencing some remorse. Former colleagues may have remained in touch with them and could reach out to see if they have an interest in returning to their previous or a new job role, or even doing a little "gig work" on the side. Reaching out to potential "boomerangs" as a source of "new" talent can provide immediate relief to depleted and stressed staff. Even if they are not interested, it is always good to maintain a collegial relationship with former high-performing employees for many reasons.

## Hire for Fit

Hiring people is the hardest and most critical work leaders do. When we get it right, it is awesome. But when hires fail, it is usually attributed to something involving employee attitude (poor motivation, lack of coachability, or a bad temperament), interpersonal issues, or poor organizational fit (Leadership IQ, 2022). I coach my managers to consider three attributes when choosing job candidates— attitude, skills, and knowledge. They can choose any two of these attributes to decide on a final candidate selection, but one of the applied attributes must be the person's attitude. It is important to realize that we can give people knowledge and experiences and provide training for new skills to grow them into a job. However, we cannot always instill in them a great attitude, or the right "fit" for the team. Too many managers emphasize the need for hiring deep technical skills and knowledge or experiences. They do not pay enough attention to whether candidates bring compatible intrinsic motivations and attitudes with them to the job. Further, it may be tempting to simply fill a position given the pressures staff are feeling from vacancies. However, we must not "settle" for the best candidate in a shallow and weak pool of applicants. Choosing a candidate that you know does not bring the right fit for the job may do more harm than good to your organization and it can take years to remove that splinter.



**There are three essential attributes for assessing a job candidate: attitude, skills, and experiences. Focus on any two, but one must be attitude.**

### **Develop an Onboarding Program**

Your first days in a new job can be confusing and stressful. There are typically many tasks to complete from completing forms to required training and compliance tasks. Helping new employees manage this maze of tasks while making valuable connections to services and people signals empathy and appreciation for their choice to work at our institution. Hence, a well-planned onboarding program is an essential element of a great retention management strategy and improves job turnover rate, speed to competency, and employee engagement. Onboarding remote employees may take extra planning and work but is even more critical to connect them to the institution and colleagues and provides opportunities for leadership and managers to emphasize the desired culture and climate, set mutual expectations, and build trust from the outset. Never miss that opportunity to make a first great impression on new employees.

### **Consider ‘Quiet Hiring’ to Acquire Short-term Critical Talent Needs**

Gartner has predicted that “Quiet Hiring” will be an important strategy in the coming years. Quiet hiring is when an organization acquires new skills without hiring new full-time employees to address acute immediate needs for talent. Quiet hiring could take the form of temporary reassignment of staff responsibilities, hiring temporary staff, or contracting with talent as ‘gig workers’ to address immediate and short-term needs for effort or new skills needed to complete projects (Piñon, 2023). Leaders should be cautioned that staff who are “temporarily reassigned” might interpret that their regular job isn’t important anymore. Particularly if nobody’s getting hired to backfill their old responsibilities. Other staff who might have to pick up the slack might feel burdened with the additional work. till other employees may feel devalued by the investment in ‘outsiders’ versus getting the training for needed skills. When carefully managed these alternative sources of talent can help bring strategic initiatives to completion and help institutions move forward on their transformational journeys.

## Retaining the Talent You Have

### Focus on Retaining managers who retain staff. Focus on Retaining Managers who Retain Staff

A study involving Higher Education supervisors conducted by CUPA suggests that it is exceptionally difficult when managers turnover in our organizations. Managers are closest to workforce issues and the effects of staff turnover and are very influential in retaining staff and maintaining good morale in their teams. Hence, managers are perhaps the most important staff when exercising any workforce strategy. Turnover rates among managers is relatively high and often triggered by the extra work they take on when members of their team leave, and expectations to maintain the productivity of their team. CUPA suggests that Higher ed supervisors are less likely to look for other employment if they have more support and power to make decisions in their supervisory roles. The CUPA researchers offered the following tactics to help retain managers:

- Provide supervisors with resources and support in their capacity as supervisors — focus on helping supervisors fill empty positions and manage staff morale first.
- Ensure supervisors have the power to advocate for their staff.
- Give supervisors more autonomy to determine their staff's working arrangements.
- Commit to reducing supervisor workload.
- If possible, raise salaries, but not at the expense of raises for non-supervisors (Fuesting & Schneider, 2023).

### Develop Manager's Skills

Many senior IT staff are highly valued for their technical skills and promoted into management positions with some expectations of having the skills to manage people as well as technology. The irony here is that as IT professionals, we are primarily in the people business, and some of these managers failed miserably to engage in the people side of the equation. Moreover, organizational leadership theory suggests managers have the most influence over their staff's job satisfaction. Hence, leadership must recognize that there is a difference between the technical lead position and the human manager position. While some individuals are expected to do both, few have such innate skills to effectively execute the combined role. If feasible, leadership should differentiate these two roles.

**We must ensure that managers have the requisite skills to support their efforts to engage with, support, and develop their staff. It is perhaps the single most important aspect of an effective talent management plan.**

### Assess Staff and Identify Top Performers

There are those individual contributors who we feel we just can't afford to lose. These high performers are highly motivated, engaged, influential, proactive, eager to take on challenges, and are constantly striving to learn and apply new skills and knowledge. These top performers are also constantly seeking feedback and require coaching and feedback to continue to develop and grow. Organizational leaders should work closely with managers to identify these top performers. Tools such as the [GE-McKinsey Matrix](#) can help you identify your superstar/high-performing employees based on their effort and performance. Managers are naturally drawn into spending a lot of their time motivating and coaching underperformers. However, Buckingham and Coffman (2014) found that intentionally spending more time with your top performers is an essential practice for retaining your best talent and building top-performing organizations.

## **Embrace Creative Job Sharing**

Job swapping and shadowing can be powerful in developing higher education acumen and the affective commitment of staff. Programs that allow staff to work in different departments or even at different institutions can reinvigorate employees and offer experiences that serve to develop new skills, build new relationships, and strengthen their appreciation for others (Oakes, 2021). Sharing employees may not be in our nature but doing so leads to creating a deeper staff bench, improves staff resiliency, and incorporates diversity and fresh perspectives into organizations. For example, my IT organization shares a network engineer with our regional education and research network provider (REN). We have also shared a user interface designer with Marketing and a data reporting programmer with Institutional Research. We have also assigned staff to work under the direct auspices of other divisions to facilitate large projects or help them build their digital literacy and dexterity. Participating employees have consistently commented on the value of these programs, the opportunity to learn new things, and the lasting relationships they build with others across the institution. As such, their job satisfaction increases, the turnover risk is reduced, and a shared sense of their value to the institution leads to greater work engagement.

## **Invest in Training and Developing Individuals**

Providing training to expand skills seems like such an obvious way of retaining employees. Research around the Gallup Q12 instrument established that ensuring employees have the knowledge and tools to do a job well is a strong predictor of job engagement. Still, some managers resist training their staff fearing that “they will just get more skills so they can apply for another job.” This is a disturbing disposition given the missions of our institutions. While it is true that some people may leverage training to gain a job elsewhere, a strategy to keep staff ignorant, unhappy, and struggling in their job because we want to retain (trap) them is unethical and serves to only undermine the long-term success of an IT organization.

Investment in effective and relevant training programs and opportunities for personal development are essential to bolstering job satisfaction and productivity. Management needs to guide and target training based on individual needs and interests that are aligned with strategic initiatives or improving operational outcomes. Moreover, training programs that simply allocate a fixed dollar amount to every individual are ineffective in guiding the development of individuals and the evolution of our IT organizations. Avoid the temptation to uniformly but ineffectively allocate training resources based on a false sense of fairness or equity. For example, providing all staff with an \$800 per year allocation for training only dilutes the funds that are needed to develop key skills and retain top talent. Instead, set aside a pool of training funds and allocate based on qualifying individual development plans that align needed skills and organizational abilities with strategic goals or operational imperatives. Periodically evaluate training effectiveness to avoid inappropriate biases and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.

## **Recognize the Positive and Negative Impacts of Job Modifications**

Increases in responsibility and changes in tasks are inevitable given the dynamic nature of technology and the prevailing work environments surrounding IT workers. CIOs must be cognizant that such job modifications can have negative impacts on job satisfaction. CIOs should keep in mind that responsibility increases, and task replacements assigned to IT workers elicit heightened expectations and perceptions regarding organizational justice and support. Research supports the idea that CIOs should consider providing essential training in combination with monetary recognition, in the form of reclassification or promotion of IT workers to new jobs that formally recognize the additional responsibilities.

## Heroics is Not a Sustainable Model

Leadership must be cognizant of the many factors impacting work fatigue and job burnout. IT organizations are at the center of complex institutional transformational change initiatives and are under increased pressure to deliver IT solutions. These pressures often translate into extended periods of intense effort. In some cases, employees work extra hours to cover essential operational tasks for their colleagues engaged in high-profile strategic projects or for those who have left their position or who are taking personal leave. These prolonged extra efforts and increased pressures to “keep the trains on time” while concomitantly driving strategic change can result in work fatigue and burnout leading to turnover or quiet quitting. In surveys I have conducted of IT staff, many cited having work fatigue from not having enough staff to do the work, and not having enough time to do quality work. The following are some ideas leaders can take to help staff avoid burnout:

- Do not allocate 100% of staff time to project work. Employees need time to complete the routine work of timecards, collegial interactions, skills, and compliance training, and to rejuvenate every week.
- Avoid back-to-back-to-back meeting scenarios. Build in “recovery time” between meetings.
- Support alternative work schedules such as 4-day work weeks or work hours that accommodate important life tasks such as family care and participation in children’s activities.
- Support “Work from anywhere” capabilities to create extreme flexibility so people can participate in grandchildren’s events, care for an elderly parent, or other life reasons that take them away to other places.
- Rotate people onto committees, job searches, and task forces. We too often rely on the same individuals to take on “other duties as assigned.” Be mindful of the extra work and stress we are putting on people and extend the opportunity for others to grow by participating in these assignments.
- Plan for maternity leaves or planned hiatus’ by adjusting project schedules, training others to cover responsibilities, or otherwise setting expectations among partners and stakeholders.

## Adapt to Generational Changes in the Workforce

Boomers are retiring and Gen Xers are moving into leadership roles. Millennials now make up more of the workforce than any other generation (Miller & Lu, 2018). And “Generation Z” is beginning to enter the workforce. It is a complicated mix of generations with vastly different lived experiences and expectations. Even before the pandemic, the impact of Millennials in the workforce was changing the employee-employer relationship. These digital natives came of age during the social media boom and are quick to share their experiences and speak up about their dissatisfaction, they will readily opt out of jobs when problems are not resolved. They also expect to leverage technology to create flexibility in work-life balance and expect regular feedback and recognition for their efforts and reject the artificial optics of face time as a measure of effort. They are used to constant, iterative improvement, and expect career advancement and promotions with regular frequency.

73% of Generation Z — people born between 1995 and 2012 — indicate they feel lonely or forgotten, and 72% say they want to communicate with managers in person, while most managers think they prefer instant message.

— Ryan Jenkins, Psychology Today

## **Remove Bureaucracy and Streamline Processes**

Every organization requires structure and procedure, but some organizations create so much red tape you can't do anything without getting someone's signature of approval. In a bureaucracy-laden organization, there's a policy for everything but no one is empowered to use their brains and experiences to solve a problem in context. Hence, staff can be frustrated by bureaucratic processes that impede their ability to do their job effectively and contribute to discontent in their job. Moreover, prospective job candidates can bail from your candidate pools because the hiring process is too long or cumbersome. Managers should engage recent hires to evaluate the applicant's experience and identify ways of enhancing the application, hiring, and onboarding process. Similarly, leaders should engage current employees to identify bureaucracy and processes that cause frustration and work to change entrenched policies, and procedures or employ technologies that enhance work experiences.

## **Make Intrinsic Connections to Higher Education Work**

Developing staff's intrinsic motivations surrounding their work addresses their sense of purpose, meaning, and belonging. Many of our IT staff do not get to see the terrific value of their work and are distant from the impact technology has on students, staff, and faculty. Leadership needs to strive to connect their vision and IT organization work with the actions of individual contributors. Student, faculty, and staff testimonials, kudos boards, success stories, and other tangible feedback helps IT staff connect even the most mundane work to institutional outcomes. This connection drives a powerful sense of contribution among individuals and teams and those intangible rewards of knowing our work is making a difference in people's lives. Building Intrinsic motivation is a strong antecedent of job satisfaction and retention.

## **You Cannot Manage What You Do Not Measure**

Peter Drucker is quoted as saying, "you can't manage what you don't measure." This saying is especially relevant today. It is important to measure key performance indicators associated with your talent management strategies. Demographics, diversity, turnover and retention, training, candidate pool attributes, and the number of top candidates hired among other measures are important trailing indicators of strategy performance. Leading indicators such as burnout, job satisfaction levels, and perceptions of engagement provide insights into the current climate and offer opportunities to pre-empt job shocks and turnover. Create a dashboard and track both leading and trailing indicators to inform your talent management strategies.

## **Realize that Work and Home are Inexplicably Connected**

News flash: it is not work-life balance, it is all about life and living. Traditional thinking about work-life balance was to keep home and work life separated. The reality of life and work separation is that they impact each other. If life at home is difficult, the employee is likely to be less happy and productive at work. If it was a bad week at the office, home life is being negatively impacted somehow. This reality suggests that the goal is to provide opportunities for employees to create meaningful balance in their life. I have routinely seen dedicated IT staff put aside their lives towards spending countless nights and weekends completing projects, fixing problems, or doing the routine work of maintaining systems. While necessary from time-to-time, we address the demands of the job but fail to set aside requisite periods of recovery. The simple wisdom I share with my staff is that routinely putting family and life first ensures we can handle unexpected or planned periods of intense work. Leadership must recognize that in achieving life-work balance we create a climate and culture that not only recognizes the linkages but celebrates the goodness in our life work, and our value as individuals to our families, our colleagues, and our stakeholders.

## **Engage Work-at-Home/Remote Employees**

Institutions may be hiring remote workers in other states and countries to gain the talent they need. Where allowed, many employees are choosing to work-from-home or hybrid options over traditional in-office

arrangements. These new work arrangements may also lead to employees feeling disconnected from the benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion and without a sense of belonging to the organization. And according to Gallup, organizations with a highly engaged workforce experience a 17% increase in productivity, and 59% less turnover. So, it's important to find ways of fostering connections and engagement with these staff. The internet is full of ideas about how to create meaningful engagement with remote employees. Among the key ideas are:

- Set clear expectations for remote participation such as “cameras on.”
- Structure meeting agendas and conferencing equipment to ensure the inclusion of remote employees.
- Organize online group training opportunities for all employees.
- Organize virtual coffee breaks to bring people together. Seed conversations by taking or asking questions.
- Take remote employees to department face-to-face social events with your laptop or smart phone.

The most important thing organizational leaders can do is to act intentionally to reach out to remote employees for “check in” conversations. Through these conversations you can express your empathy and appreciation for remote workers, learn if your engagement initiatives are having an impact, and gather alternative ideas for improving engagement.

### **Create Mobility, Flexibility, and Autonomy**

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many institutions were embracing work from anywhere. Certainly, the experiences of the pandemic underscored that for many IT jobs, we could be at least as productive working remotely as we were on campus. Yet, some institutions’ policies prevent non-traditional arrangements such as working remotely from other states and will be at a disadvantage when seeking IT talent. Those institutions that allow people to have greater flexibility in choosing their working location, days, and hours can more easily recruit and retain workers in today’s competitive talent marketplace. These institutions are offering better alignment with staff needs while establishing prudent guardrails around management’s expectations of productivity, team engagement, and stakeholder obligations. Creating flexibility and autonomy in how employees choose to work adds to the life-work balance and overall job satisfaction and staff retention. Concomitantly, leaders must be prepared to coach managers to effectively manage in this environment, or reign in workers who are not productive, engaged, or struggle with basic Internet connectivity issues.

### **Create a Social Fabric of Engagement**

It is okay to socialize at work. In fact, we should encourage it. Our ability to relate to others and share experiences beyond the work at hand are critical to fostering inclusion, belonging, and trust. A best friend at work is a strong antecedent to persisting in an organization, enhancing engagement, and increasing job satisfaction. What may appear to be periods of unproductive socialization are in fact building bonds among workers and affective commitment to each other in the context of their work. A recent survey found that 32% of full-time employees say what they most like about their current job is their relationship with coworkers. As the top answer, this response received nearly double the responses than benefits (17%) and their daily work (17%) (Smith, 2022). This is harder to do in a Zoom world, but we need to try new things and ways of connecting people in ways that go beyond the work at hand. If we are only meeting with each other to resolve today’s crisis, there’s little time to build bonds of trust and share experiences. Leaders should create spaces and opportunities that encourage socialization and shared exchanges among staff knowing that these lead to greater intrinsic commitments, job satisfaction, and productivity overall.

### **Create Opportunities for Staff Community Service**

Employers giving their workers paid time off to volunteer their services for charitable nonprofits and socially responsible causes, and otherwise offering to facilitate and support employees' volunteering activities, was one



of the few employee benefits that have increased in recent years. Volunteerism among workplace colleagues can help employees build new and strong relationships with co-workers and can build strong intrinsic attachments to both communities and institutions. This intersection of life-work balance elicits greater affective commitment and persistence in jobs where individuals' community interests can overlap with their work. Thus, leaders can use volunteering programs to raise employee engagement and promote retention if they think strategically about how this benefit is offered, monitored, and celebrated (Grensing-Pophal, 2022).

### **Use Retention Bonus**

Do not let a few dollars get in the way of retaining someone, because the cost of not retaining them is even greater! Everyone needs to earn a livable wage (extrinsic need)— look for intrinsic things that connect people to the organization and work. Some institutions in high-competition markets are offering up to 10% of their salary for one-time retention bonuses. These types of bonus programs typically require staff to stay for a period or pay the bonus back.

### **Improve Communication**

One of the common complaints I hear among colleagues is the lack of communication in their organization. Certainly, leadership should encourage and foster open communication and the free flow of information within organizations. But it should also be clear that 90% of communication is listening, and that if individuals are not getting the information needed, they should simply ask for it. One way of improving communication is to standardize on a single communication and collaboration platform. Workgroups that gravitate to their preferred communication tools (e. g., Slack vs Microsoft Teams) create artificial barriers to actionable knowledge and collaboration across the organization.

### **Expand Inclusivity to Improve Decision Making**

Micromanagement is still a widely discussed issue, because it still happens despite countless studies, books, and teachings pontificating just how bad of a management style it is. Micromanagement is such a job satisfaction downer to staff who endure it. Employees want to contribute more than just their time to their jobs, and many bring exceptional ideas, talents, and lived experiences to their work. Leadership must be intentional about avoiding micromanagement and fostering inclusion and diversity in decision-making so that all members of the organization feel that their opinions and ideas count. Doing so will result in better decisions and greater job satisfaction and engagement by employees.

### **Leverage the Platinum Rule**

Many of us learned the Golden Rule in our youth which says that you must treat others as you would like to be treated. However, this is among the most common pitfalls of management, acting as if your employees share your approach to things, and it is setting people up for failure. Instead, leaders and managers should use the Platinum Rule, a more thoughtful approach when dealing with others, and treat each person as they would like to be treated. The Platinum Rule can play out in our communication style, recognition methods, providing feedback, and supervision style. Leadership can use the Platinum Rule to foster diversity, equity, and inclusivity by recognizing that everyone has different struggles, backgrounds, preferences, and blind spots.

### **Fix Bad Systems and Fire-fighting Mentality**

"Our terrible technology is causing our best employees to leave." When there are no systems or poor systems to handle workflow, people often revert to firefighting to fix inevitable breakdowns. Technical firefighting can be exhausting, and staff can feel blamed for frequent outages, bugs, and aged unreliable technology. Moreover, when symptoms are the focus of problem-solving the issues usually persist. Taking the time to look at underlying

issues and take steps to correct, update, or replace failing technology leads to lasting solutions, more productive work, and less stress on IT staff.

### **Remove the Thorns**

From time-to-time staff leave because of other individuals in the organization. It can be a thorny matter to unpack the issues leading to co-worker relationship failures. But if there are whispers or trends of complaints about others, pay attention to them. People may be subject to the poor behaviors and biases of others that undermine job satisfaction factors and the climate among workers and teams. As managers and leaders, we must recognize that others may not be a good fit, and “encourage others to apply their talents elsewhere” to make way for new ways of thinking, doing, and belonging. It is never easy or pleasurable to let people go, particularly when that individual is very technically skilled but not a good organizational fit. We must use our emotional intelligence to realize the damage being done and have the courage to deal with disruptors. Do not underestimate the ability of a single person to undermine the life-work experience of others and be a factor in your ability to recruit and retain talent for the team.

### **Conduct Exit Interviews**

Conducting interviews with resigning employees can be illuminating for identifying gaps and issues associated with employee experiences. Consider partnering with Human Resources, or a trusted partner division to conduct exit interviews to elicit honest feedback. Be careful not to dismiss claims of bias or disgruntlement to an employee's innate attitudes. Take the input you get from exit interviews seriously and follow up to ensure that any systemic problems are solved. A trickle of turnover can turn into a torrent of departures if not dealt with and necessary changes initiated.

## Building a Workforce Plan

There is nothing strategic about simply hiring the best talent you can find. CIOs must explore new ideas in creating modern workforce strategies ranging from fundamentally rethinking jobs to adopting new and innovative tactics for recruiting and retaining talent. Moreover, the process of developing **a strategic workforce plan** is an opportunity to have critical conversations with IT managers, institutional leaders, and key stakeholders about the intersections of strategic intent and what IT can and cannot deliver based on the current IT organization's capabilities. The resulting plan is an essential element of an IT strategic plan that articulates opportunities to drive transformation initiatives while serving to mitigate risks associated with higher costs, poor reputation, and high turnover. Every workforce plan is unique to the institution but there are some common steps to developing plans.

### Environment Scanning

Workforce planning begins with measuring current conditions, recognizing the institution's strategic roadmap, and brainstorming around the impact of internal and external trends on your workforce.

#### Determine the technical skills needed in support of changing technology ecosystems.

Developing a workforce plan begins by performing an assessment of how technology is advancing, and the skills needed to operate in this changing ecosystem. New technologies command new skills and shifts in capabilities may mean rethinking the talent you need. Adopting new technologies can be a workforce multiplier, relieving staff of routine work and paving the way for assigning FTEs to higher-order and more meaningful work. For example, coding skills may be less needed if the institution adopts new low/no code technologies or moves to cloud-based technologies that are more configuration than customization.

#### Consider the institutions strategic plans and compliance issues impacting IT.

Our institutions strategic plans are driving the adoption of new technologies while IT is under increased scrutiny to meet evolving compliance standards and operational imperatives. Workforce plans must be carefully articulated to initiatives and regulatory requirements. What do these initiatives and requirements indicate with respect to needed skills and knowledge?

#### Determine how many people are needed to deliver service level expectations.

The irony of a technology services organization is that they are fundamentally in the people business. There are plenty of job tasks that cannot be automated, and the quality of the service desk depends less on the quality of your chatbot, and more on the interpersonal and technical skills of your staff. Identify workforce goals, performance metrics, and current state vs future state needs can lead to adjusting service-levels to match stakeholder expectations (or budget limitations) and inform plans about how many staff, and what skills are needed to adequately deliver a service.

#### Assess current roles and staff competencies.

An important element of an environmental scan is to assess the current staff's job competencies. How does the inventory of these competencies compare to the skills identified above? Are people in the right roles?

#### Organizational effectiveness

Is the IT organization effectively organized to deliver the service needs and respond to new challenges and capabilities? You might need to consider a reorganization if:

- ✓ The current IT structure does not align to the strategic objectives of the organization.

- ✓ There are inefficiencies in how the IT function is currently operating.
- ✓ IT employees are unclear about their role and responsibilities, leading to inconsistencies.
- ✓ People in different parts of the organization are doing the same/similar work
- ✓ New capabilities or a change in how the capabilities are organized is required to support the transformation.
- ✓ Budget cuts require management consolidation.

## Building and Executing the Plan

With the completion of environmental scanning and assessment of current versus future state you can begin to identify the specific goals, tactics, and metrics of a workforce strategy.

### Build broad participation in creating the plan

Involving staff in the development of the plan is critical. Also consider representation from Human Resource and stakeholder groups. Working through new ideas, challenging current policies and processes, and articulating shared outcomes are important steps to planning. By fostering broad and diverse input into the plan will ultimately make the plan better and you can develop ownership and buy-in that is critical to implementation.

### Adopt a change management framework

The plan should be built around familiar mechanisms that staff have experience with at your institution. An articulated planning framework provides familiar scaffolding for people to understand and participate in change. If you don't have a method, consider Proci's ADKAR model. ADKAR is an acronym for the five needed to achieve a successful change initiative: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement. Another popular model is RACI: Responsibility, Accountability, Consultive, and Involvement.

### Identify your future IT workforce characteristics.

With the various aspects of workforce planning assessment documented, you can begin identifying the workforce characteristics and key skills needed. Knowing current gaps and needed talent in support of reorganization, strategic planning, and anticipated transformational change. ***Linking workforce planning with strategic planning ensures that you have the right people in the right positions, in the right places, at the right time, with the knowledge, skills, and attributes to deliver on institutional strategic goals.***

### Build out the plan elements

1. Identify core cultural values and describe the desired climate necessary for your organization to be successful. Then identify tactics for reinforcing existing or shaping your organizational culture.
2. Identify and prioritize the key knowledge, skills and attitudes you must have in your organization.
3. Identify metrics and targets that inform the organization as to current state and desired future-state of the organization. Tools like Gallup's Q12 instrument can help you quantitatively identify elements of employee engagement.
4. Identify skills gaps and activities for developing current staff's knowledge, skills, and attitudes to move staff along desired pathways and enhance their readiness for promotion.

5. Identify potential career paths (or blockages) within your organization. The [EDUCAUSE career pathway tools](#) can help you identify or define your own custom pathways.
6. Identify training and development roadmaps to close the talent gaps and propel staff down their pathway.
7. Identify sources of new talent and identify how you can recruit, acquire and integrate diverse sources of talent into your organization.
8. Review the alignment of work and talent with key strategic initiatives. Do you have the right people doing the right things? Consider reorganizing staff where increases in efficiencies, effectiveness, communication, or collaboration are needed.
9. Identify the budget resources needed. Let's be honest, pay is important and allocating enough funds to offer competitive market salaries is essential to attracting and competing for talented people who can execute your operational and transformational strategies. Also consider budgeting for training and adequate equipment and software which are essential to ensuring people have the knowledge and tools needed to do a good job and grow their capabilities. This may mean you have to make some hard choices about spending in other areas, but we must remember, people are our most valuable asset.
10. Plan for turnover and anticipated retirements. Despite your good efforts and strategies, you will have unplanned turnover and retirements. By identifying future staffing gaps early, leaders can build workforce plans that anticipate these events and identify the tactics to quickly recover lost knowledge and skills that minimize impacts on others such as proactive cross training, documentation, and orchestrated off-boarding tactics.

Be mindful of the opportunities and risks for organizations of your size as you execute the project. How you build your workforce plan will not change drastically based on the size of your organization; however, the scope of your initiative, the size of your team, and the tactics you employ may vary greatly from others.

### **Publish and promote the plan**

Publish and promote the plan to all staff and internal stakeholders. This is an important step in building consensus and buy-in from staff and stakeholders. Be sure to also publish the metrics you are using to track your plan. By sharing the plan and information we can further enlist our staff and stakeholders as “managing partners” in our workforce plans and planning.

### **Executing the plan**

It is one thing to make plans, and another to execute them. Executing workforce plans requires daily effort and there are lots of distractions that take us away to the issue of the day. There will be inevitable disruptors and setbacks as well as great wins. The one thing that is constant is change and it can be very unpredictable. Have discipline to stick to the plan, but also remain flexible and adjust your strategies and tactics to reflect the evolving conditions and new realities you might face along the way.

## Conclusion

Recent studies acknowledge the difficulties in retaining employees who seek caring leaders, reasonable work expectations, career development and advancement, and meaningful work (De Smet et al, March 9, 2022) Moreover, the post-pandemic era has led to fundamental changes in the employee-employer relationship. Many IT workers are no longer place-bound and can pursue careers from anywhere in a job market hungry for their talents. They expect competitive salaries but, more importantly, are increasingly looking to find employers that respect work-life balance and align with their values that give meaning to their work and seek a relationship that is less “work for me” and more “work with me.”

Despite salary and other concerns, people persist in their jobs foremost because of the relationship they have with their teammates, managers, and leadership. Their job satisfaction and persistence are also derived from the joy of doing the work itself, a positive work culture, equity and organizational justice, and a strong sense of belonging. But when employees’ needs are not met, they can be quick to seek better opportunities and leave their institutions – or worse, become “quiet quitters” or “rage appliers” (Thier, 2023).

These conditions can be a double whammy for some higher education IT organizations that need technology workers to execute their institution’s strategic agendas but are unable to pivot policies and tactics in response to these new conditions. These are challenging times for IT leaders caught between old inflexible HR policies and increasing expectations for IT to deliver transformative change.

But doing nothing and hoping that things will get better soon is not exercising our responsibility as leaders. IT leaders need to leverage their post-pandemic seat at the executive table to influence their colleagues to adopt new policies, develop effective talent management strategies to attract job candidates, implement effective onboarding programs, and be intentional and engaged in retaining talent. Leaders must rebalance their approach with an emphasis based on the idea that IT success is more about people than technology.

As such, leaders must act intentionally to shape workplace culture and have the courage to be vulnerable and flexible as they execute workforce strategies. They must also adapt new IT leadership and management approaches, broadly leverage communication and coaching skills, and boost their emotional intelligence in executing those strategies to position their institution to not just survive but thrive during these challenging times.



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