

DON'T JUST DREAM IT, BUILD IT:

HR'S GUIDE TO CREATING TALENT PIPELINES

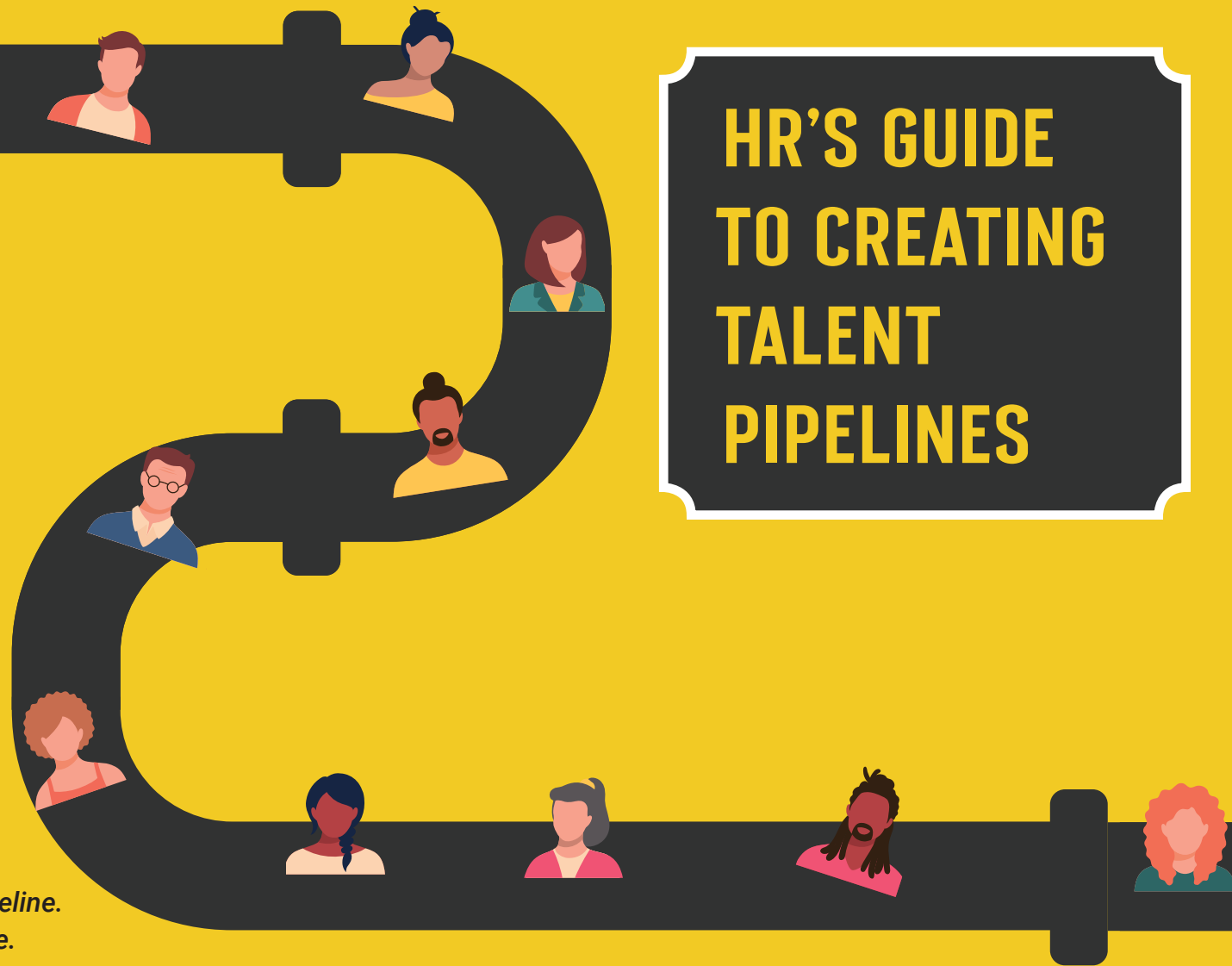
In today's challenging employment market, it's harder than ever to find the qualified people you're looking for. And it's even harder to bring them on board quickly and efficiently. If you're merely hiring reactively – i.e., starting from scratch every time a job opens at your company – you're wasting valuable time and resources every single time.

But having great talent at the ready for every job opening is impossible... right?

Wrong. You just need an effective talent pipeline.

READ ON TO LEARN:

- *What a talent pipeline is.*
- *Why you should implement a talent pipeline.*
- *How to build an effective talent pipeline.*



WHAT IS A TALENT PIPELINE?

A talent pipeline is just what it sounds like – a pool of talent, or qualified job candidates, that you may want to hire into existing or future positions. But here's what sets a successful talent pipeline apart from merely being aware of a few job candidates that might fit the bill: A talent pipeline means you've already vetted and engaged with those candidates.

Applicants in a talent pipeline might include:

- Applicants you've already interviewed in the past. Finalists who didn't get the final offer, for example, or applicants you met with for informational interviews when you didn't have an opening.
- Candidates whose resumes you've vetted and approved but didn't move forward with into the interview stage.

The key is that you've already engaged with these individuals and know their credentials and skill sets.

When a job opens at your company, talent pipelines immediately offer a pool of qualified candidates to choose from for targeted interviews. Rather than starting your candidate search from scratch, half of the work has already been done.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CREATE A TALENT PIPELINE?

Having a talent pipeline structure in place isn't meant to replace the traditional hiring process. It's meant to supplement and streamline it, making finding the right people for open roles easier and faster.

Here are three of the major benefits of creating a talent pipeline:



1. It reduces time to hire.

Starting from scratch – coming up with a job description, distributing it, collecting and screening resumes, interviewing – takes a lot of time. Most companies will take weeks or months to fill a vacant role. But using a talent pipeline streamlines the process and drastically reduces time-to-hire, keeping your operations running smoothly and avoiding lengthy gaps in your workforce.

2. It gets you better candidates.

Mistakes are more likely when your team is scrambling to find qualified candidates quickly. The added pressure may lead someone to consider a candidate who doesn't fully fit the requirements or someone who isn't a good cultural fit, for example. Selecting from your talent pipeline, however, means you're choosing from vetted candidates who match the requirements.

3. It improves the candidate experience.

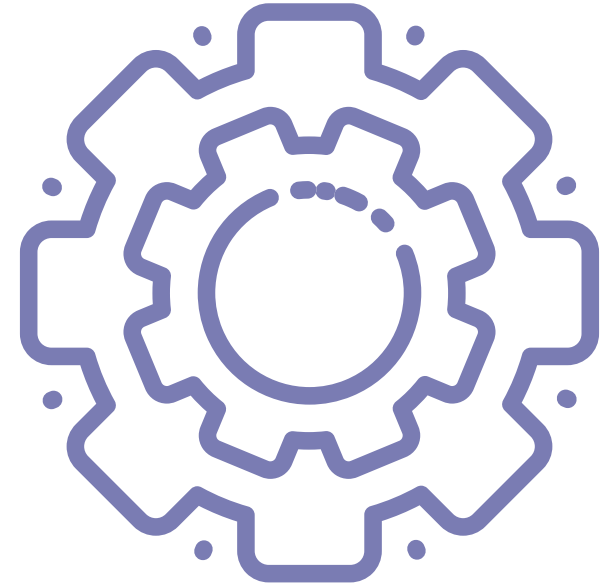
By design, talent pipelines allow you to develop and nurture talent throughout their experience with your company. This connects you and the candidate intrinsically, much more so than the traditional method of waiting for applications from a job posting.

HOW DO YOU BUILD A TALENT PIPELINE?

We've learned what a talent pipeline is and how it can benefit your company and your hiring process. The question is, how do you build one?

Here are the six key steps to building your talent pipeline:

- 1. Polish your employer brand.**
- 2. Identify your company's hiring needs.**
- 3. Develop a sourcing strategy.**
- 4. Contact candidates to build your talent pipeline.**
- 5. Nurture the candidates in your pipeline.**
- 6. Measure success and focus on candidate development.**



#1: Polish Your Employer Brand

Your talent pipeline won't do much good if your reputation as an employer is in the toilet. That's why refining your employer brand before building your talent pipeline is so important.

Here are a few practical ideas to make sure your brand and reputation support talent pipeline development:

- Update your career portal to ensure it's user-friendly, responsive, and optimized for mobile.
- Create social media posts that reflect your company's mission, vision, and values (people want to work for brands that are trustworthy, transparent and socially responsible).
- Review your applicant experience by running through it yourself.
- Develop company standards for interviewing etiquette and other aspects of candidate communication.

Think of it this way: It will be much harder to engage with candidates – and keep them engaged over time – if you're known as a difficult or unresponsive employer. Making sure your brand and reputation are in order is the first step toward building a successful talent pipeline.



#2: Identify Your Hiring Needs

It's hard to build a talent pipeline without a comprehensive understanding of your company's hiring needs and goals. Some questions to ask during brainstorming sessions include:

- What positions need to be filled soon?
How about in the future?
- What kind of people are your ideal candidates?
Where can they be found?
- How competitive is the candidate market for the types of people you need?
- Does your company have any plans to restructure or expand a department?
- What will your company's hiring needs look like in a year?
Three? Five?
- Do you anticipate major company changes, like mergers or acquisitions?



Once you have a good idea of what your hiring needs look like in terms of numbers, candidate make-up, and future strategizing, you can get started sourcing people for your talent pipeline.

#3: Develop a Sourcing Strategy

Sourcing candidates means actively searching for candidates, rather than waiting for them to apply to your job listings. And you should have a strategy for doing this as you build your talent pipeline.

There are many effective tactics to source candidates, and your strategy can include any number of them. The possibilities include:

- Reaching out to past applicants to see if their circumstances have changed and if they're still interested in your company.
- Conducting informational interviews to meet candidates even if you don't have active openings.
- Searching social platforms like LinkedIn to find user profiles that contain the job-specific keywords you're looking for.
- Developing a referral program that allows existing employees to refer others to your company and receive a reward.
- Attending networking events and career fairs to engage with job candidates face to face.
- Forging relationships with college recruitment offices in your area, as well as professional organizations.



#4: Contact Candidates and Build Your Pipeline

Now that you have a strategy to build your talent pipeline, the next step is simple: Start building it.

It's time to start reaching out and engaging with candidates. Remember: You're not reaching out to candidates and asking them to apply for a specific job. You're reaching out to establish a connection, a relationship, that you'll continue to build upon as time goes on.

The first conversations should involve getting to know the candidates in your pipeline. Ask them about their goals for their careers and futures; what their background and experience are like; where they see themselves in three years; if they've ever considered learning a new skill or exploring a new field.

The goal is to establish trust with candidates so that the relationship gets off on the right foot – even if the candidate isn't looking to pursue a new job right now.



#5: Nurture Your Candidates

Building a talent pipeline is only half the battle. Nurturing the candidates in your pipeline is the real trick. Do it right, and you have a pool of qualified candidates who already have a relationship with your company to fill future openings.

What does nurturing your candidates look like, exactly? Inundating them with job listings isn't the right approach, especially since many of these individuals may be passive candidates who aren't necessarily looking to switch jobs. Instead, stay top-of-mind by:

- Sending them articles relevant to their interests and field.
- Inviting them to opt into communications from your organization.
- Sharing content that relates to previous conversations you've had with the candidate.
- Congratulating them on work anniversaries or other milestones.
- Sharing LinkedIn or Twitter updates about your company.



#6: Measure Success and Focus on Candidate Development

Once your pipeline is up and running, it's essential to take a look at the analytics in order to measure success. That way, you'll find out what channels produce the most hires over time – face-to-face sourcing, social networking, or employee referrals, for example.

When it comes to the candidates themselves, remember that your work doesn't end once you've hired them for a particular job. You'll want to invest in ongoing development efforts to retain top talent and keep your best people happy. Talent development increases retention rates, improves employee satisfaction levels, and helps to create future leaders at your company.

Whether it's training programs, mentorship arrangements, job shadowing, or some other form of professional development, putting these



A STAFFING FIRM CAN HELP YOU BUILD YOUR TALENT PIPELINE

We know what you're probably thinking:

How can I find time to build a talent pipeline full of qualified job candidates when I can barely find time to source and hire candidates in the first place?

It's a daunting task – we get it. And that's why partnering with a staffing firm to help build your talent pipeline is a good idea.

Your staffing partner can use a multitude of proactive recruiting strategies to build a pool of qualified, vetted talent. That ensures you have fast access to the great people you need, when you need them. And because the staffing firm does the work of building, nurturing, and maintaining the talent pipeline, you're freed up to focus on core business objectives without having to worry about your staffing needs day in and day out.

Contact us today to get started on your talent pipeline and gain access to great candidates at your fingertips.





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