

**Volume 24****What I'm hearing**

"I can't find the right talent."

**What it means**

At Gov. Snyder's recent economic summit, I heard the statistic that more than 90% of companies reported that they can find talent with the right education requirements, but only 50% said that they can find talent with the right skills.

[Peter Capelli makes the case](#) that there are several things employers are doing to get in their own way, including failing to offer training for key roles and trying to hire for *all* the skills that a role requires. His directive is to compare the cost to your organization of that role being unfilled versus the cost of training someone to get a good candidate up to speed to fill that role.

**What you should do**

First, identify whether your talent searches are *reactive* or *proactive*.

**Reactive:** The search starts with a need. You post a job description, have someone else do the screening interviews, and when you connect with the candidates for the final interview you are unimpressed or you get word that nobody came through the screening successfully. When you're reactive, you're left with fighting over leftover talent or depending solely on your reputation in the marketplace to attract a great pool of candidates.

**Proactive:** You have a list of key roles in your organization for which it is critical to have great talent. Each quarter, you review the list with your leadership team and ask each member for one name of someone s/he has met, had lunch with, or was referred to who would be a great hire if there were space. You personally meet a couple of candidates each quarter to learn more about them. When a role opens, you pull out the list and conduct interviews with these candidates.

There's a small Michigan company that maintains a close relationship with the local school district to identify and build relationships with students wanting to learn a trade. The company provides hands-on internships and hires the students right out of high school into an apprentice program. This is proactive.

To execute a more effective approach to talent searching, take the following steps:

1. Get involved and make it a priority. Asking HR or your managers to lead the effort will not create the momentum you need.
2. Take a hard look at each role description. Are the requirements prioritized, are you asking for the right things, and are you asking for too much?
3. Get proactive. I know you have a need today, but winning the talent war means doing things differently. The good news is that most of your competitors for the available talent are being reactive.



*Strategic People  
Reminders for the Busy  
Executive*

Are you having difficulty filling key roles in your organization? Does your organization need to shift to more proactive habits around key talent? Are you struggling with how to adjust your own time and focus to spend more time leading this effort? Contact me. [Scott@thetrugroup.com](mailto:Scott@thetrugroup.com)

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