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2018 trends to watch

5 Trends That Will Impact Employers

1 Agile and flexible workforce models will expand.

Sixty-one percent of workers expect to choose agile work opportunities by 2019

Research shows that candidates don't just want, but expect the option to work from home, work part-time, or have access to flexible scheduling. Flexible work arrangements will remain key to employee attraction and retention, and companies will expand their use of agile talent by filling one-time temporary resources and seasonal staffing needs or bringing in highly-specialized consultants to tackle critical initiatives.

2 Employers will hire for culture and soft skills, train on hard skills.

With a depleted candidate pool, employers are struggling more than ever to identify right-fit candidates with the depth of necessary skills. While hard skills reign in sectors like technology and health care, less-teachable soft skills will continue to be critically important—even in a more technology-driven work environment. Employers should increase focus on training existing or future hires, especially when they find the culture fit they are looking for or superb soft skills.

3 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skill needs will continue to increase.

Although much of the industry discourse around the STEM skills gap focuses on jobs that require advanced degrees, midlevel STEM jobs like computer support specialists, web developers, and engineering technicians are actually in the highest demand. These vacancies present a real opportunity for employers to upskill workers with high potential and the ambition to grow.

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4 Artificial intelligence and automation will advance.

Many organizations have already begun incorporating automation into their workflows to make their employees and processes more effective and efficient. But, despite fears that automation will eliminate jobs, the need for skilled humans to operate, use, and advance technologies will remain significant for the foreseeable future.

5 Talent analytics will become more sophisticated.

Data is evolving beyond metrics like employee engagement and retention rates. In 2018, more organizations will place data at the forefront of strategic workforce planning, with metrics that help them understand how to build better teams, make more processes agile or lean, analyze the utilization of resources across the company, and truly understand the output of cross-functional teams.

Increased focus on diversity hiring

Lack of diversity in industries including tech, entertainment and government has been a hot topic over the last few years. More leading organizations are making diversity hiring a priority, and this will become increasingly important in 2018 and beyond.

Expansion of the gig economy

A survey by Manpower found that 87% of people in the U.S. are interested in gig or "NextGen" work. That means recruiters will be able to tap a growing talent pool for short- and long-term contracts. Companies can differentiate themselves via their ability to build and maintain relationships with gig workers or contractors. This includes providing clear job descriptions, proper onboarding, leveraging technology so all team members can connect and work together, and ensuring contractors are paid in a timely manner.

Greater use of AI technology during the hiring process

AI is expected to play a key role in finding, and hiring, talent in 2018. An obvious reason is that AI can help reduce **unconscious bias** during the hiring process by anonymizing the candidate and focusing on skills, not age, gender or race. Automating the search process is fairly commonplace, but with AI, high-quality candidates can be found, screened and engaged with in an efficient manner. This can narrow the time it takes to fill a job position.

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How recruitment and hiring trends will evolve in 2018

Future-proofing employees with continuous learning

Ceridian's **2017 Pulse of Talent** found that high performers listed learning opportunities as extremely or somewhat important to staying in their jobs. The business benefits of providing learning opportunities are well-documented, as is the fact that learning increases employee engagement. Going forward, competitive organizations will prioritize creating a learning culture, and embedding education and development opportunities tied to career growth at every step of the employee lifecycle. Learning opportunities will increasingly be a differentiator for employers. Not only do these opportunities attract top talent, but they ensure employees are adaptable to changes within their role, organization or industry.

Using a marketing approach in the hiring process

Recruiters need to **market and sell the position** to the candidate by understanding what's important to them. With more data available, recruiters are able to know more about their target talent, and therefore rely less on traditional and impersonal outreach methods. Organizations are increasingly using marketing principles in their hiring strategies, such as the utilization of social media and storytelling. Technology will enable organizations to look deeper into the talent pool and make smarter decisions during their recruitment processes. However, relationship-building is still key. Technology can help to source the right candidate, but only an authentic culture and personal touch can close the deal.