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The Definitive Guide to Talent Mapping for Recruiters

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Often, HR departments hire reactively— meaning they only seek to fill positions as they open up. Talent mapping, on the other hand, is a proactive approach used to forecast long-term hiring needs and subsequently cultivate organizational support for new roles over time. Essentially, talent mapping bridges the gap between a company's goals and the personnel they must hire to reach them.

On the surface, talent mapping might seem simple, but as a company grows and evolves it can be difficult to predict future hiring needs. To execute talent mapping successfully, HR professionals must have a firm grasp on many different moving parts within a multitude of departments.

Yet, despite the hard work it requires, talent mapping pays off in the long run. Keep reading to learn more!

The Benefits of Talent Mapping

In the modern recruiting landscape, talent mapping has three primary advantages:

Fill talent gaps faster. Talent mapping helps businesses plan and secure the necessary resources for a role before the vacancy even exists.

Utilize top talent within your ranks. Talent mapping helps businesses identify star performers and high-potential employees. You can then develop their skillsets for future leadership positions that are pivotal to your business goals.

Preserve hiring resources: Talent mapping helps companies grow strategically. Rather than wasting time and money on unnecessary hires, talent mapping allows you to prioritize open positions that will have the biggest impact on company growth.

If you're ready to start your own talent mapping initiatives, the rest of this blog post outlines the information you'll need, how to collect it, and how you can use it to inform your future hiring decisions.

1.   Identify staffing objectives for the future.

First, you must align with your leadership team to get a feel for the broader company vision. Before you can start the talent mapping process, you must have definitive answers to the following questions:

- Ideally, where will the company be in five years, ten years, or even twenty years?

- Are there any major changes planned in the next five years?

- Where does the company need more support?

- What departments are lacking the most direction, organization, or skills?

- What major goals do you have for the future?

Next, it's time to meet with the leaders of each department to get their feedback on how the current staffing situation aligns with the company's future. The goal of these conversations is to uncover the following:

- What skill sets do you need on your team to reach the business goals put forth by executives?

- Will you need more staff to meet the demands of this initiative?

- How do you see the department structure changing in order to meet this need?

Once you collect this crucial information, we recommend putting together a set of preliminary organizational charts—one that depicts your current structure, one that shows where you want to be in a year, and one that shows where you'd like to be in five years. Of course, these will likely change, but putting these plans down on paper, so to speak, will provide you with the structure you need to move forward with the talent mapping process.

2.   Assess current employee performance.

Now that you have an overall view of future staffing needs, identify high-potential staff who align with your company's strategic priorities. To do this, work with team managers to assess their direct reports.

We recommend using something called the performance-potential matrix—a nine-box chart that measures the strengths and weaknesses of current employees and assesses their potential to grow into leadership roles. Check out the example below:

Doing this exercise will provide you with the insights you need to promote from within more often. For this reason, employee assessments

should be clearly documented, kept on hand, and regularly updated as new members join your staff.

3.   Use competitors as a guide.

Next, take a look at your biggest competitors. See what positions, skills, certifications, and even departments you lack in comparison. You can use free, publicly available resources like online job boards. Or, you can work with a paid market intelligence for more detailed information regarding your competitors and the overall industry you work in.

The purpose of this exercise is to strategically analyze how your competitors are growing, their plans for the future, and potentially highlight a role, department, or skillset you're missing. Here are a few examples:

Example One:

Your CEO tells you he is primarily focused on generating brand awareness in the next five years. So, you take a look at a competitor who has a much larger audience and higher engagement rates. You see how their marketing department is structured, where they source their top talent, and what skills their team has that yours lacks. In your research, you discover one company has a dedicated Brand Manager, a role you can potentially work into your own marketing department.

Example Two:

Consider how a competitor's job titles differ from yours. For example, let's say a competitor does not have Customer Support Representatives but instead uses a different title for a similar role—Customer Success Specialists. This subtle difference indicates the position is focused on proactively helping customers get the most

out of products—as opposed to handling issues as they come in. Using this insight, you can draw conclusions about the other company's business model and plans for the future.

Example Three:

You study your competitors' recent hires and see that many of them have hired blog writers that also have extensive SEO experience–which many of your writers lack. This observation reflects a larger trend within your industry. Content marketing and SEO have become intrinsically linked and content writers must be comfortable with SEO best practices. Moving forward, you use this information to develop a marketing team with a more diversified skill set.

4. Identify key industry players and create a database of passive candidates:

Although HR personnel typically prefer to promote and hire from within, not every gap can be filled by an existing employee. Therefore, we recommend you work to identify key players and passive candidates in your industry.

This process gives you a way to compare key players in the market. Plus, it gets candidate information in your hands early on in the hiring process. This allows you to contact candidates proactively, build a relationship, and gauge their interest in future positions.

Final Thoughts about Talent Mapping

How you choose to organize your talent mapping process is up to you. Whether you use an excel sheet or invest in a high-tech platform—it's important to regularly revisit and revise your plans.

HR professionals play a critical role in the growth of an organization.

They must ensure hiring managers make decisions that mirror a company's overall vision. But, by following the steps we've outlined above, you'll be making more informed hiring decisions in no time.

For more information about recruiting top talent, check out the following resources:

- The Beginner's Guide to Inbound Recruiting

- 10 Recruiting Blogs to Bookmark Today

- Recruiting Top Talent with Artificial Intelligence

- 8 Important Recruiting Metrics for the Modern Staffer

- Source of Hire: The Key to Successful Recruiting

Or, if you're ready to see how ZoomInfo's B2B contact database can simplify your hiring efforts, contact our sales team today!

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