

Issue Brief

# The Right Employee May Already Be on Campus

Matching workforce talents with new institutional needs in higher education

Faculty and students may hold center stage in society's image of higher education institutions, but a whole variety of influential behind-the-scenes personnel are also essential to running institutions successfully. Faculty and staff alike bring knowledge and skills that often go beyond their current job descriptions. However, the wealth of talent on campus has traditionally been difficult to identify, track and integrate with the institution's present needs and long-term strategic plans.

Although education institutions are focused on learning outcomes, they are also businesses. Typically, only about half of the staff are instructors. The rest are administrators, business professionals, support staff and operational titles. A well-run entity must have a way to track and manage relevant personnel data and competencies across all of these job types. To meet this need, colleges and universities are implementing an integrated system for performance and talent management.

"Don't think of talent management as an isolated topic," says Dave Jones, organizational effectiveness specialist in the Housing and Food Services Division at Purdue University in Indiana. "It has to be part of the organization's bigger picture in order to be successful."

## What is a Talent Management System?

A talent management system integrates the multiple tools needed to address today's human resources (HR) challenges in higher education. It gives HR and line managers an automated and comprehensive way to recognize, reward and develop the talents of all employees.

Typical components of a talent management system include tools for:

- **Improving processes for performance management and 360-degree reviews.** Automated reminders and tracking of appraisals, customizable online forms, and integration with employee goals and development plans help managers and employees use performance evaluations more effectively. HR benefits from automated tracking of performance management activities and improved compliance capabilities to meet accreditation and other regulatory requirements. Academic and staff leaders gain insight into how employee performance aligns with the institution's needs and strategic plan.
- **Tracking employee learning and development activities.** Employees, line managers and training managers can schedule and track participation in training classes and other development programs. This capability is particularly valuable in jobs that require continuing education courses, licensing and certification, competency tests and similar credentials.



Purdue University, Ind.

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DAVE JONES, ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SPECIALIST, HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES DIVISION, PURDUE UNIVERSITY



Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, Pa.

THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS

- **Analyzing compensation and criteria for raises and promotions.** For organizations that have pay-for-performance programs, an online system simplifies the process of monitoring and allocating merit-based pay increases and other employee compensation.
- **Creating consistent and accurate job descriptions.** Automated processes for creating, managing and updating job descriptions help to improve recruiting efforts and the accuracy of employee evaluations against job expectations.
- **Assessing the current talent pool for succession planning.** Managers and HR can better prepare employees for promotions and new job roles by creating talent pools for skills development and consideration in future recruiting efforts.
- **Managing the recruitment process.** Automation of common recruiting and hiring processes simplifies tasks and makes it easier to identify suitable candidates for each job opening.

"An integrated system really helps you develop a robust talent planning and career planning path for all of your employees," says Teri Manning, director of talent acquisition at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals in Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

## Finding the Talent Within

Large or small, public or private, colleges and universities need a systematic way to match employees and their training to the institution's needs. And in a time of tight budgets, academic and business departments need the ability to quickly and properly assess an employee's performance and eligibility for merit pay increases, as well as lateral job moves or promotions.

Talent management systems help HR staff, managers and (occasionally) employees themselves automate the processes that help to address several core personnel challenges.

## Developing and Tracking Employee Performance, Skills and Knowledge

Changing strategies for higher education will mean new roles and new skills are needed for both faculty and staff. Paper-based processes make it very difficult to create better ways to identify and improve workforce capabilities. Inaccurate or incomplete paper records can also impact timely consideration of salary increases and promotions for individual employees.

A talent management system automates the processes for creating, tracking and reporting on employee performance. With complete and up-to-date information on each employee's performance and goals, managers and training staff can create targeted training and skills development programs.

"Our talent management system is changing the manager's mentality from just performance evaluation to true performance management, because he or she has better access to employees' goals and development plans, as well as the data that is automatically tracked about employee progress,"

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TERI MANNING, DIRECTOR OF TALENT ACQUISITION, THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS

says Jones, whose department is comprised of 800 full-time employees and approximately 3,000 part-time student workers.

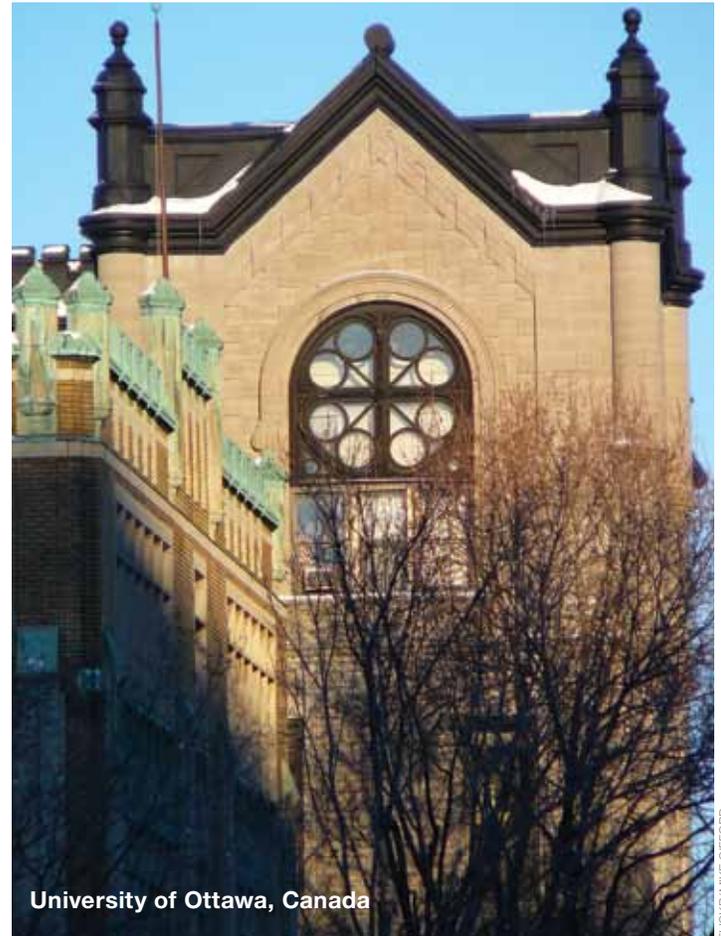
"It can be difficult for managers to talk to employees about how to improve their work," says Manon Dugal, director of HR Advisory Services at the University of Ottawa. "But if you give them specific information to use as well as coaching, these conversations become much easier for both the manager and the employee."<sup>3</sup>

### Planning Succession for Faculty and Staff Leaders

Many higher education institutions aren't prepared to take advantage of the talent they already have because they are unaware of the capabilities their current employees possess. HR departments and hiring managers need tools to help identify and guide internal candidates through diverse promotion levels and career paths. For example, academic dean appointments are typically made from current faculty, so a talent pool of interested and eligible professors helps the selection process.

"We need to think about succession planning in a well-considered way," says Dugal. "With our talent management system, we hope to be able to follow employees and develop their potential through a single, integrated system instead of many different tools."

As baby boomers retire and Gen Y employees begin their careers, HR professionals and department managers need to identify the right career paths that will engage and retain employees of all ages. "By not tapping into where your employees really want to go with their careers, you're at risk of losing them," says Manning. "You need to start developing them early. As one example, we know that many of our nurses want to become nurse practitioners, so our nursing managers talk to them about how we can help meet that career goal."



University of Ottawa, Canada

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### Matching Jobs to the Institution's Strategic Plan

Employees can't fully help an institution move in new directions unless they understand how their individual job goals relate to and impact the overall strategic plan. College and university administrators also want information on how jobs and employee talents align with the current strategic plan.

A talent management system delivers this understanding via comprehensive data on workforce capabilities for HR and administrators, as well as prompts for including goals in each employee's performance evaluation.

"Using a talent management system for entering goals as part of performance appraisals really helped us to achieve our vision of a culture-driven model for our staff performance," says Manning, whose system at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals covers 8,100 employees.

### Finding the Right Employees

An additional benefit of using a talent management system for meeting hiring challenges is improved information and processes to help recruit top talent both within and outside the institution. For example, the University of Ottawa, with approximately 4,000 employees, is officially bilingual, so "finding bilingual staff who also have a real focus on customer service can be a challenge," says Dugal.

Consistent, up-to-date and easy-to-maintain job descriptions across departments allow for better hiring and compensation decisions. Better HR decision-making for recruiting strategies is possible based on automatically collected data about current workforce status and needs within a single department or across the institution.

### Bringing a Talent Management System to Your Campus

Your institution may already use stand-alone software tools for individual tasks such as tracking employee performance reviews and training. However, independent tools cannot provide the integration of functions, or the insight into the full spectrum of employee information, that's needed for true talent management. The right talent management system serves the needs of HR professionals, training specialists, front-line managers and senior administrators.

If you are ready to consider a talent management system, these activities will help you explore available solutions and plan a successful rollout.

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MANON DUGAL, DIRECTOR OF HR ADVISORY SERVICES, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

First, define a vision for what you want in terms of talent management capabilities. Establish the rationale and goals for talent management that are specific to the needs and culture of your institution or department.

When you're ready to choose a specific solution, talk with peers at other institutions. They can provide insightful feedback on their chosen talent management system and their recommended criteria for evaluating vendors.

During implementation, consider starting with just an online performance management tool, which will provide the foundation for all talent management strategies. If this rollout is successful, expand to other tools for automated talent management, such as succession planning, learning management and 360-degree reviews.

With any of these tools, first look at how to automate current processes, especially those that are still paper based. Then look for ways to improve the functionality of those automated processes for the benefit of HR, line managers and employees.



## The More You Know, the More Your Employees Can Grow

Whether campus wide or just in a single department, talent management systems enable colleges and universities to discover new capabilities in their employees and offer them new opportunities. "If we're doing things correctly, then we're helping our employees get ready to move into new positions based on an evaluation that truly focuses on the year's accomplishments, not just on what the employee did lately," says Jones.

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Halogen's talent management suite supports higher employee performance across all talent programs — including recruiting, performance management, learning, succession and compensation. A recognized market leader by business analysts, with the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the industry, Halogen also delivers vertical expertise and offerings for higher education.

## Endnotes

1. All quotes from Dave Jones from CDE interview on March 7, 2013
2. All quotes from Teri Manning from CDE interview on March 14, 2013
3. All quotes from Manon Dugal from CDE interview on March 4, 2013