LOGICMELON

The Talent Pool
Management Handbook

Build it, Manage it, Nail it

Talent, talent everywhere. Whether you're searching for it, developing it or maintaining it, there ain't no other term more synonymous with modern recruitment than 'talent'.

Contents

Once simply labelled 'the applicants' or 'employees', this shift in term to 'talent' is pretty important actually. Traditionally candidate care was a matter of keep 'em sweet until we get them through the door, and these new employees were all but forgotten about once they were bagged and onboarded.

It has only been in fairly recent times that the term 'talent' has come to represent every individual that wants to/does work with you. It's a welcome shift indeed as this new definition brings with it new connotations of constant contact, development and maintenance - all the things talent needs to stay strong. So, as a recruiter or employer how does this affect you? The short answer is that you have to get fluent in talent management.

Luckily for you, we've put together a guide on exactly that. This handbook is all about how to get your talent affairs in order both internally and externally. The Talent Pool is the superstar of this show. We'll help you build and maintain one, touching on the key principles, tools and beyond.

Right, let's get cracking!

The Talent Management Rundown - The What & Why

Before we jump head first into that pool, let's get some definitions down and context nailed. This section will run you through some talent management terms and set the scene for your Talent Pool adventure.

Let's kick things off with some relevant talent-focused stats from 'We Love 9am' employer branding specialists. Knowledge is power folks.

- 53% of employees leave to fulfill their career development needs somewhere else.

- Only 49% of employees are fully engaged at work.

- Less than two thirds of employees have any loyalty to their employer.

- And shockingly just under 50% of organisations have no talent strategy in play.

That's some pretty crazy stats right there and each emphasises the gap between best talent practice and the strategy that most companies adopt today. What's even nuttier is that it's actually very simple to get talent management right.

Defining Talent Management

This guide is focused on Talent Pools - just one aspect of talent management. As you'd expect this management involves a number of techniques and methods. We've pulled together a dictionary of the most common terms.

Talent pool - This is the star of our show. A Talent Pool is a database of internal and external people who could fill the boots of current employees should they decide to move on. It's essentially a collection of candidates and connections who have been/are interested in working for your organisation. This pool can consist of specific lists of suitable talent arranged by anything and everything from industry to skill.

Talent Community - A Talent Community is a living, breathing collection of people and networks that are adventurers in the job seeking process. Community members take the form of job seekers, recruitment pros, career professionals, advice givers and takers. This isn't a list of candidates nestled away on a doc somewhere. It's a thriving, engaged community where both employers and candidates share ideas and network. Commonly associated with social recruitment, it's a hub for all things recruitment from sharing job opps to cherry picking talent matches and referral digging.

Talent Pipeline - This is a collection of candidates who are qualified to jump into open positions. Whether these roles are newly created or left void by departing talent, this pipeline keeps talent moving through your organisation so roles aren't left unfilled for long. This pipeline is always in a state of development, buzzing with engaged relationships with old and new prospects.

That's the definitions in the bag, so let's get down to business. Ready to build a Talent Pool?
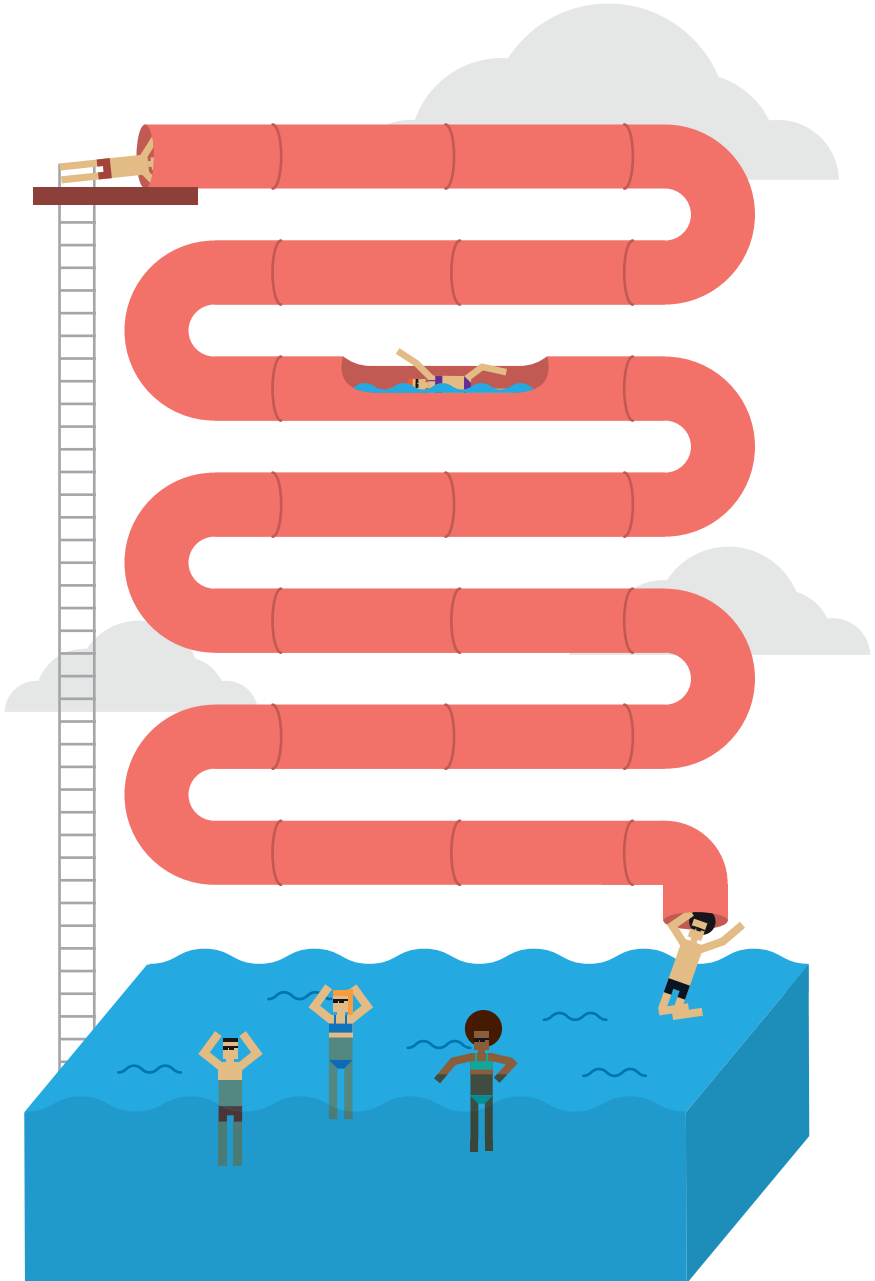
How to Build a Talent Pool

There's a reason why we 'build' rather than 'create' a Talent Pool. A Talent Pool is a rock solid collection of pre-qualified folks, there's no guess work involved. And that's what makes your Talent Pool such a valuable resource. Chances are you have everything you need to build this Talent Pool at your fingertips already, it just takes some savvy and time.

Talent pools can mean different things to different people, so before you get things rolling, decide on what you want it to be to you. Some see this pool as a snazzy mailing list, others go a little more pro and commit to creating a buzzing community. Know what you want from your pool or you'll confuse your team, your talent and your target group.

Oh and remember that this a pool, not a reservoir of talent! Reserve this pool for your top talent, the people than can really make an impact on your business. If you build a massive database up only to discover you don't have the time or resources to keep it dapper and delivering, you're goosed.

If you're still wobbling on whether a Talent Pool is for you, our collection of benefits to the boss and employees will swing you round for sure.

Benefits to the Boss & Employees

What are the golden benefits of building a Talent Pool? The quick answer is loads and loads. This Talent Pool is a thing of wonder for both employers and talent, just consider:

Boss Benefits

- A plan at your fingertips - A Talent Pool is the makings of a business contingency plan - it's an ever relevant snapshot of the talent you have right now and their suitability for your next open role. It also provides an updated understanding of the resources and methods you have to hand. Not bad, eh?

- You can fill positions faster - A Talent Pool is there for that exact reason. When one bows out, you have a replacement already waiting in the wings.

- You save time and money - This quick switch reduces the cost and length of the recruitment process. Also, you can save cash on unnecessary job ads and boards.

- Keep a good grip on what the 'right' talent/jobs are - A Talent Pool encourages you to keep asking the important questions. What shape is your industry in? Are you creating the right jobs? Is your current talent continuing to tick the boxes? A Talent Pool ensures you stay close to what makes you, well, you.

- You have engaged, high quality talent on tap - Getting employees geared up and ready to roll can be a tough process. Your pool should be fluent in who you are, your values and offering. You can skip the big sell and screening and get straight down to work.

- It turns passive searchers into active candidates - If you can create a community around/ inside your pool, you can transform those curious, on-the-fencers into actively searching candidates. If you can get these talented pros on side and interested they'll be yours for the picking when the right position comes up. It's amazing what a little engagement can do.

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Talent Benefits

- It makes talent development a key feature - Retention is the be all and end all of successful recruitment. One of the reasons why talent leave is their development needs aren't being met. By its design, a Talent Pool demands you stay clued up on skill sets and plug any gaps. Good news for ambitious employees.

- It encourages promotion from within - A Talent Pool considers the suitability of both internal and external possibilities. More often than not, a current employee is the better fit for an upcoming position and your Talent Pool is key in making that decision. Career progression in-house is always a welcome sign.

- It elevates the candidate experience - A great Talent Pool can be a candidate experience winner. If you can deliver a high level of contact, quality communication and consistent feedback to your pool-ees then you're ticking all the candidate experience boxes. Not to mention providing them with some valuable search tips and guidance. Win-win.

- It saves employees opting for a troublesome application process - Ineffective job boards and tricky online forms don't just complicate the lives of recruiters, candidates would also welcome the opportunity to avoid the pitfalls of ill-designed processes. The Talent Pool route to employment is a lot smoother.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg! So, that's you sold on the why, let's get started on the how.

How to Build a Talent Pool.

Think Community - Engagement First

A Talent Pool and Talent Community aren't exclusive. Ideally your pool efforts will lead to the beginnings of a community that you can grow and develop. Always have engagement in mind. It's more than just a best practice principle and winning relationship builder; it's a tool for really connecting with people and other organisations.

Engagement forces you to assess, tighten up and leverage your methods and reach out to both individuals and businesses. From these engagements, you can root and adapt your Talent Pool into a community template. This is your first step to gathering together the info you need to start building your very own pool.

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Engage with Internal and External Talent

It all starts with some good old fashioned questions. When you know what talent look for engagement-wise you can create a pool structure that facilitates just that.

Remember, your Talent Pool is more than just a list of current and potential employees. It's a blueprint for how you intend to approach recruitment in general.

- What are your current employees level of engagement with your company?

- Are they involved in showcasing company culture?

- Do they play an active role in your business' overall goals?

- What tools and techniques can you create to open up and connect to your internal and external talent?

- How can you involve external talent in your company today?

- What engagement portals do you offer?

- What thought leaders are active in your pool?

These internal questions can help you create a pool and community that's built with relevant tools and systems. Simultaneously, the answers to these questions will also uncover and redefine existing company values that enhance your Employer Brand.

Engage with your wider recruitment strategy

Your Talent Pool plays a very important role in your overall recruitment strategy. In many ways, this pool is the starting point for your hiring plan. Everything you use to hire and engage needs to sit nicely under your brand umbrella. The approach you take to finding and securing talent is about more

than employees. It begins and ends with your business needs.

- What roles are you hiring for?

- What talent do you need in place today and tomorrow?

- What are your bigger business goals?

- What is the shape of the industry?

- How do your competitors address recruitment?

- What resources do you have in place - software, hardware, skillsets etc?

Your Talent Pool can't take the place of a full recruitment strategy, but it can sit at its core. Aligning your pool with your bigger recruitment strategy serves to keep both on track and flourishing.

Engage with your Employer Brand

Your Employer Brand should be communicating everything that makes you unique to your talent in the most 'you' way possible. It's integral to have the best talent

in the right jobs within your company and your Employer Brand can help you get that right.

• What type of candidate experience do you want talent to enjoy?

• What tools, networks and channels can you use to advertise to and engage with talent?

• How do you talk about your UVP (Unique Value Proposition)?

• How are your processes designed - search, application, onboarding, retention?

Your Employer Brand can dictate how you communicate with your talent. That's just as important as what you communicate, especially in a community.

All of these mini-engagement sessions can give you the leads you need to create a unique Talent Pool structure that goes beyond a database list of names and skills.

Now you have the info to get started, you can pull your team together to get building.

How to Build a Talent Pool

The Starring Roles - Who Builds a Talent Pool?

As with all things recruitment, team collaboration is what it's all about. Gone are the days when the HR department had the weight of all search and hiring on their shoulders. Recruitment has moved beyond the traditional process of post a job - get applications - interview shortlist - hire. There are more principles and platforms at play now. On top of that, the processes have been streamlined and socialised to become an everyday pattern of engagement and hands-on investment.

Collaboration may be more of an organic method of recruiting but it still needs organisation and deliverables. We've outlined who can be involved in the Talent Pool building process and what role they can play.

HR

Role - Info Gatherer / Recruitment Insider

Traditionally labelled as the hiring hub, HR can often get burdened with all your recruitment needs. Well, not when it comes to Talent Pools.

Yes, they may well be responsible for the actual data entry and doc creation, but they don't need to do all the legwork too. Chances are they'll know what system is best to use to create this doc, and they may well have their own method for keeping on top of talent flows, but this should be a collaborative process.

If you're a team leader, active CEO or anyone not on the HR team, set the specifications you're looking for and communicate them to the whole team, as well as the HR department.

A Talent Pool should never just be a list of names and roles. For a rundown of what these info boxes and extras are, take a gander at the Structure & Look of Your Talent Pool Doc section.

Don't forget to tap into their unique insight. What application hiccups do they see everyday?
What feedback do they receive from candidates and companies? What changes have they seen recruitment take over the years?

Managers

Role - Employee Insight Collector / Industry Researcher

Managers are on the talent frontline. They communicate with current employees every single day and are your best insight into their career aspirations and motivations.
Also, most managers should have a pretty good grasp of the industry and what your larger business goals are. And don't forget they're still on their own career ladder so they can empathise with what it takes to keep employees happy.

Managers should already have a foolproof assessment routine and development plan. When building a Talent Pool, kick-start a series of employee one-to-ones.

• Are they on path with their career aspirations? What are their goals?

• What positions would satisfy their progression?

• What skills do they have, need and want to develop?

• What extra training or development can you offer?

• What are their performance stats like? How do these compare to others in the office?

• What incentives could improve retention?

It should be the manager's responsibility to create and maintain a relationship flow in the workforce. If current employees are leaving or future potential is uninterested, your manager should be the one to uncover the reasons.

Current Employees

Role - Career Informant / Standard Setter

Today's talent can play their own part in your Talent Pool building. After all, they're the ones who are in that doc! You don't need to keep them in the dark here; actively involve them in the process and they can dictate their own career success.

Sit your employees down and ask them to list their skill strengths, career goals, culture pluses and company dislikes. Why second guess suitability when you can pose some simple questions and get the answer from the horse's mouth. Look at our Structure & Look of Your Talent Pool Doc section for a list of the details to request.

Building a Talent Pool is both a practical and emotional task. Its form may well be a collection of talent details but what underpins that document is much more than good organisation. Each department and professional can bring something to the building of this pool, so utilise them.

When it comes to the community aspect, every single member of your company is responsible for its management. Get into good habits by involving them in the creation of this pool, that way they'll understand what you're trying to achieve as much as you do.

# The Structure & Look of Your Talent Pool Doc - The Category Checklist

There's no uniform format for a Talent Pool doc. It all depends on what your talent environment consists of and the software you opt to use. Now you have all the info you need to get going, we can move into putting it all together in one nifty doc.

Here's your category rundown of what fields and details to feature in your Talent Pool doc. Remember, you don't need to use them all so feel free to pick and choose the ones that suit your organisation.

A solid way forward is to create a candidate profile-based pool. This format features both an overview of company positions to be filled as well as some basic profile notes on your current top potential talent.

Your Talent Pool Doc
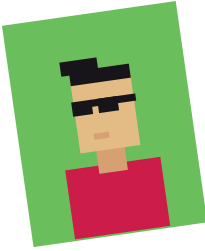
BASIC DETAILS:

Name:

Location:

Contact info:

Salary:

Years at present company:

Current position:

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

Desired career path:

Skillsets:

Training to date:

Current favourable incentives:

Cultural fit:

Experience past and present:

RATINGS:

Influence:

Performance:

Behaviour/attitude:

Leadership:

Collaboration:

Creativity:

Decision making:

Accuracy:

Strategic flair:

Ambition:

WEIGH UP:

Talent Pool readiness:

Impact of loss in current role:

Risk of leaving percentage:

Referral options:

Succession planning:

This is purely the basics. Oh, and remember to add a recent photo.

This is a rundown of the candidate's career value and history. Both prompters and reference points, these are key details and can be crazy useful later down the line.

This ratings overview is a great way to easily rate the key factors, qualities and strengths of your top talent. Be critical here and really take time to think about what's important to each position you advertise.

When you consider promoting or moving current talent into an empty position there can be risk. This weigh up section is designed to easily assess your hiring risks and pit them against your other recruitment options.

How to Manage Your Talent Pool

Congratulations! You've reached the how to manage your Talent Pool section. Once your Talent Pool is up and running it's on its merry way to becoming a community. But they don't live on fresh air, they need to be maintained, managed and monitored.

This part of the guide is designed to help you care for your freshly built pool and encourage you to maintain the community that's beginning to thrive within it. Let's get started.

The Talent Management Lifecycle

The Talent Management lifecycle needs to continuously progress and improve to keep both employers and employees (present and future) happy. This talent management cycle applies to the entire journey a candidate can take, and takes into account what transforms a pool into a community.

To know what comes next in talent care post-pooling, you need to know the order of things. That's what our nifty cycle circle is all about. Check off the spokes on the cycle and keep focused on what comes next.

1. Talent teasing

Otherwise known as good old fashioned recruitment, this is the first step; connecting with and attracting top talent. Whether the result of social recruitment or pipelining, this is simply the act of finding and securing employees.

2. Employee critique

Assessment is massively important. Selecting and assessing talent for fit is what quality recruitment is all about. The success of a business rests on this stage. A crazy amount of time and resources go into this stage, after all it's key to retention happiness.

3. Welcome in

Onboarding is crucial to setting a great standard of employee experience. More than just about running through fire procedures, this onboarding process is all about easing new employees into a new environment and preparing them for their career ahead.

4. Train & develop

Keeping talent trained up and progressing through their career and your business should be the responsibility of the employer. Having a training and development plan is a necessary company staple for retention and candidate experience success.

5. Performance management

It's not enough to pat yourself on the back and say well done on some successful hiring and development. You need to stay on top of the details of candidate performance and watch these closely and keenly. Without this monitoring, you can't measure what your talent assets really are.

6. Succession plotting

Preparation is everything. Your Talent Pool can make a real difference when it comes to planning for the future and succession. The best, most effective employers, always have one eye on the future industry and alignment with business needs. Succession plotting is your commitment to just this.
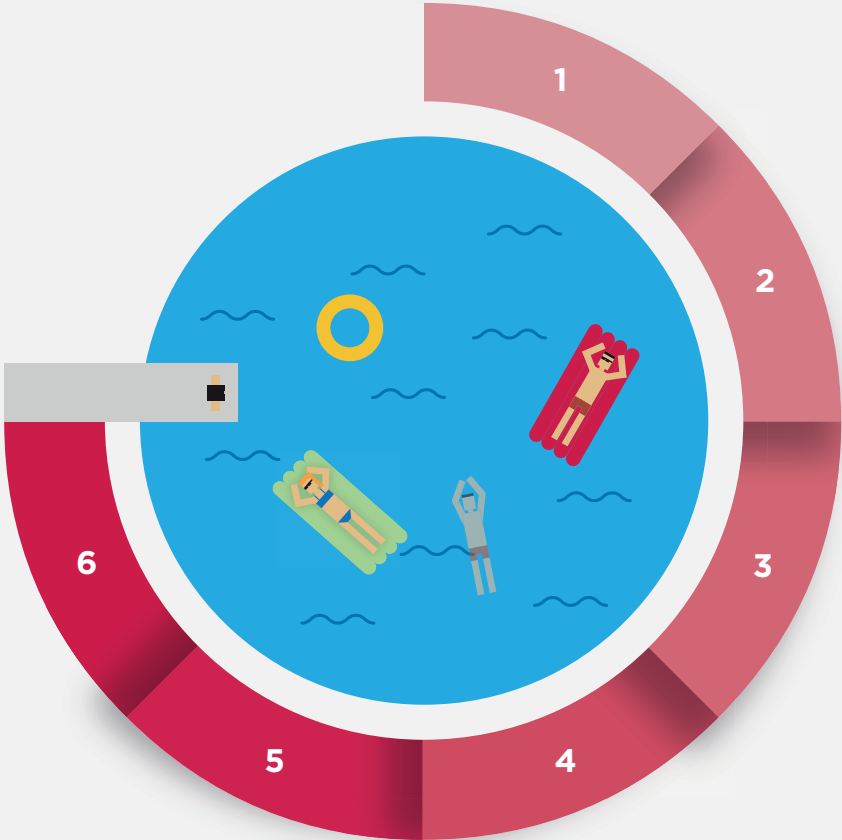
How to Manage Your Talent Pool

Assessing the ATS - Quality Candidate Experiences in Action

If you're championing and supporting a Talent Community, you'll know all about the wonders of the candidate experience. It reflects your company's underlying approach and is your greatest tool. Embedding your candidate experience in good practice and eager engagement is a recipe for talent success.

Implementing a great ATS (Applicant Tracking System) and creating a wonderful Talent Community go hand in hand. You've most likely got an ATS on the go to keep your other recruitment boxes in check, but you can leverage this system even more to benefit your talent management efforts. Here's a few tips for you to feast on.

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Don't base cultural fit decisions around ATS data

It might seem a little odd that our first ATS-related tip is an unofficial criticism, but nothing's perfect. Your ATS can make sure that feedback is constant and application processes run smoothly, but it can rarely hint at a real company fit. Learn to use the data your ATS offers in different ways. If the keywords in CVs don't seem to match up, don't take that as an instant no. What skills lay under the surface of the CV? What tone and style is their communication in? Are they positive and open? Always keep culture in mind and remember to use your ATS wisely, not religiously.

Find gaps and fill them

Your ATS can partner up as a hub of employee activity and become more than a practical tracking system. Keeping engagement flowing can be a tricky task, so be sure to keep a steady stream of content and correspondence going. No positions to fill this week? Fine, send out a newsletter about an exciting new client or company culture blast. Don't sit idly by as your engagement dwindles, use your ATS as a means of monitoring and problem solving.

Target, target, target

Create specific groups for your talent (sales, accounting, IT etc) and make sure you're satisfying their individual needs. When you're busy and fatigued it's easy to get sloppy with your one-to-one interactions. Rotate your list's needs and vow to target from time to time. That's what your Talent Pool can help with.

Humanise reports

Yes, skills and experience stats are always important, but it can be all too easy to rely on the figures and forget the person behind it all. Invest in the bigger picture, focus and implement other tools to flesh out your candidate report findings. What's on paper isn't always representative of talent value.

Go above and beyond auto

Automation is a massive bonus of every ATS and aids in awesome candidate experiences. Don't get too complacent and allow your auto response feature to take care of your personalisation and feedback aims. Look at your Talent Pools and make it a habit to identify a new means of connecting personally with your top talent. Have they won an award or nailed a big client? Did they complete a marathon or publish a particularly fab blog post? Add a category to your Talent Pool doc for Social Sign and add some unique points from that week to remember and comment on during your next encounter. Gestures like that make a massive difference to both your Employer Brand and candidates.

ATS MARY III
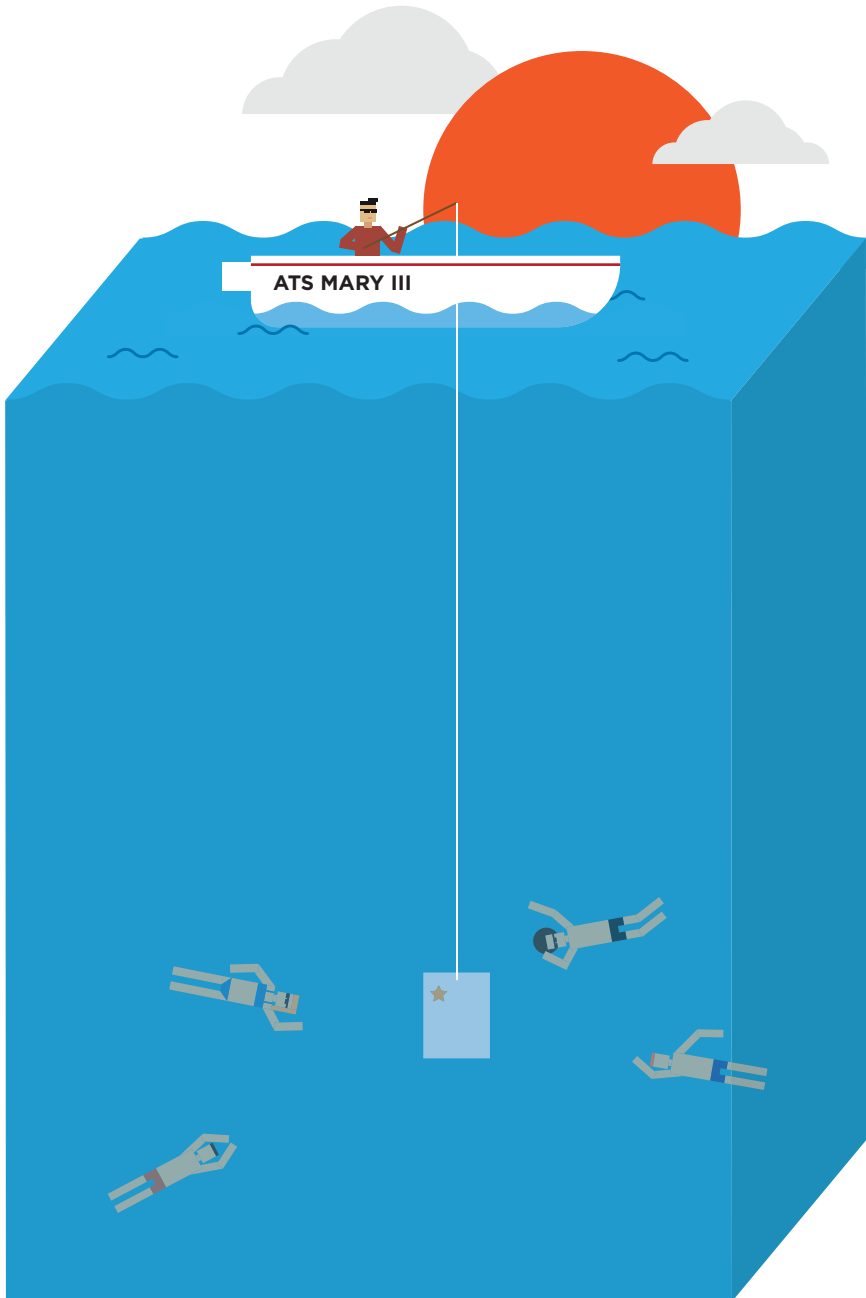
How to Manage Your Talent Pool

Talent Management Tools & Resources - Systems, Programs & Beyond

There's a flurry of tools and systems out there to keep Talent Management in full flow and evergreen. You don't need to fall back on a series of costly, complex resources to keep track of talent and engage with candidates. Why not adopt a varied, hand-picked collection of paid platforms, savvy systems and free tools?

Here's some inspiration.
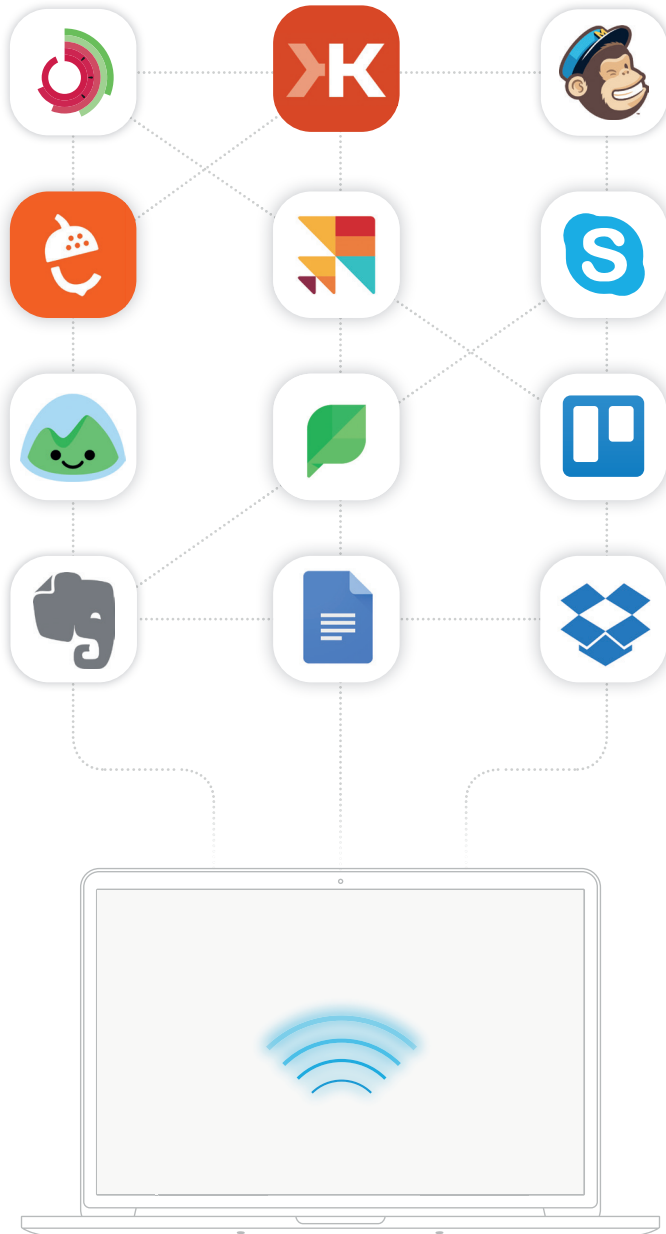
ATS / Task Management

LogicMelon (logicmelon.com)
That's us and boy can we do some pretty nifty ATS wonders for you. Have a peek for yourself!

Nutshell (nutshell.com)
Great for managing your sales tasks, Nutshell is the CRM you need for automanaging workflow and getting those leads in and worked.

Basecamp (basecamp.com) - If you have a team buzzing with tasks, you need Basecamp. Keep your projects managed and team in order, all from one platform. Nice.

Engagement / Monitoring

Engagement is just as much about planning and monitoring actions as it is about promoting them. We're not just talking social engagement here, we're all about the in-house, workforce wide audience too. There's a tonne of tools that are ideal for collaborative, team chats and beyond.

Klout (klout.com)
Klout attempts to "score" social media performance by tracking your engagement on various networks, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube, Google+ and more.

Cloze (cloze.com)
A great tool for relationship management, Cloze allows you to see all your contact info and action in one platform. It pulls data from your emails, social, meeting notes and calls, helping you prioritise engagement.

SproutSocial (sproutsocial.com)
This platform pulls your engagement metrics from your social platforms and gives you an overview of your online brand engagement and helps you to manage relationships.

Content Management / Collaboration

Content is king, especially in a Talent Community. You need to commit to producing excellent content in a variety of forms if you're hoping to keep them primed for connection and engagement.

MailChimp (mailchimp.com)
If you produce a newsletter or email campaign, you need MailChimp. It's super easy to write, schedule, publish and send your designed campaigns all from one platform. And the support team are fab.

Gather Content (gathercontent.com)
A wonderful tool for gathering content for blog posts, website content, social campaigns and everything in between. If you're dedicated to keeping your content goals alive and kicking, you need this.

Skype (skype.com)
No selling needed here, it speaks for itself.

Trello (trello.com)
It's now a company staple for collaboration and can be used for an array of team needs. Share and create open boards to compile notes and important docs. Organisation has never been so easy.

Docs

Whether we're talking spreadsheets or word docs, your options don't need to be costly and complicated. A simple word doc is more than sufficient. Here's a few other great apps and tools for simple pool prep.

Evernote (evernote.com)
This app takes both mobile and desktop form and is fast becoming a workplace staple. It's amazing for keeping notes and files together and organised, and is the perfect collaboration tool as you can share with your team.

Google Docs (google.co.uk/docs)
Google Docs is great for fluid spreadsheets and basic word docs, perfect for an array of content/talent needs. If you have a Google ID you can link these docs up with your emails and Google+ too. You can also add live comments to any doc and even do an in-doc chat. Not bad.

Dropbox (dropbox.com)
Dropbox is great for giving those important docs and strategies a dedicated space, and for making accessibility easy. Oh, and you never have to lose anything again as it's all Cloud-friendly. The benefits are endless!

Conclusion / About LogicMelon

A lot of the groundwork of building a Talent Pool is organisational, but let's not shortchange the process. There's a flurry of disciplines, principles and techniques that are also at play from delivering a grade A candidate experience to being a pillar of exceptional engagement.

Yep, there's more to building a Talent Pool than a nifty database tool and a foraged list of names. By now, you've surely grasped that your little pool is constantly evolving into an active, thriving community before your very eyes. Don't let it down by coming this far and not supporting the talent developing within. Your future business success awaits!

LogicMelon offers the most sophisticated option for multiple job posting and application response management in the market today. Based on a stable Microsoft platform, users can access the site from anywhere at any time. LogicMelon is a global solution for recruiters.

About the author:

Mark Bevans
Marketing Director & Director of LogicMelon Media

Mark's worked in recruitment for the best part of 30 years. Before venturing into social media marketing and digital candidate attractions he ran his own recruitment company. He's since worked with stacks of FTSE 500 businesses; Previously a Business Director at Hays Plc, he leads the way in digital innovation and e-recruitment solutions.

Connect with Mark:
linkedin.com/in/markbevans

Connect with Mark:
twitter.com/markbevans