

The following is an article written by Marilyn Sinclair for the London Free Press based on an interview with Liza Scurr, President of Spectrum Human Capital Inc.

## WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY

---

Searching for the right employees to fill key positions in your business is like shopping for the perfect gift. When you're not in the market there's plenty of good choices. But, when you need to make the purchase, it seems like there's nothing available.

Liza Scurr, President, Spectrum Human Capital Inc., a full HR consulting practice, says workforce sustainability is an ongoing process. Companies need to focus on retaining key employees and always be on the lookout for new employees. Here are her top ten ideas for workforce sustainability.

### **1. Plan ahead and have a plan.**

Don't leave workforce planning to the end. Determine if and where you can find employees and what kind of skill sets you are looking for right from the start. "I've talked to many CEOs who have put a business plan together and sought out investors, got the money to invest and then all of a sudden said 'I haven't got the people and I have no idea where to find them.' Plan ahead."

### **2. Understand your competitive marketplace.**

Invest time and resources in data gathering through networking and talking to job search firms. Find out: Who's your competition? What strategies do they employ to find people? What is their compensation structure?

### **3. Leverage your consumer branding to compliment your employment brand.**

Your marketing strategy for your product or service should also be your employment marketing strategy. If it comes down to choosing between two jobs with similar compensation and responsibilities, the candidate's first choice will be the company that most clearly articulates their brand. The company that has a good reputation, a cohesive brand and can tie this in with recruitment advertising will be that candidate's first choice.

### **4. Network.**

Employers network for business development, but don't always recognize the value of networking when it comes to hiring people. Your key employee may be employed already. Networking at association meetings, for example, may help you link to that key employee to fill a position in your company.

### **5. Build your funnel.**

Use a multi-pronged approach to building a pool of talent, combining tools like electronic recruiting, advertising, head hunters and networking.. Replenish your database of potential employees by advertising employment opportunities on a regular basis.

### **6. Open your mind to all the possibilities.**

Many companies ignore candidates because they don't fit a specific job profile. The best candidates often don't look like the job profile you've created, but they're smart, creative, capable and have transferable skills.

### **7. Grow your own.**

Build the capacity for employees to grow and move within your company so they won't leave to get a better job somewhere else. Make education, job sharing and other opportunities available to help them move up the ladder.

**8. Put time and effort into your selection process.**

Spend as much time during the hiring process as you would on orienting a new employee because, if you get it right, your chances of retaining them are much higher. Turnover is costly. Recruiting and training one person costs between \$10,000 and \$20,000 of company time, not including the new hire's salary.

**9. Watch your turnover stats and conduct exit interviews.**

Make sure that your recruiting issue isn't masking a more fundamental issue such as poor leadership, outdated pay practices or inadequate training.

**10. Focus more time on retention than on recruiting.** You want people knocking at your door for a job. Create a culture that is attractive to current and future employees. The time and money you invest on recruitment should match or exceed what you invest on retention strategies. The result will be lower turnover and, if you're in growth mode, you will be able to stabilize your workforce to handle the growth.

