



COLUMN Global Viewpoint

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The Future of Talent Management in 2025

Management gurus make a good living trying to postulate what is “the future of management.” My answer? Managers must get used to managing “talents,” instead of “employees.” In the coming decade, this approach going to change from the exception to the norm. In the future, “management” will mean getting things done by managing people with specialized talents working together with various resources. The manager will evolve to become like a conductor leading an orchestra in a symphony. The definition of staff will also change, from full-time employees spending years at one company, to a spectrum of staff, including short-term, temporary, contract, freelance, and part-time employees.

A new category is the super specialist. What is a “super specialist”? Someone who excels in one specialization. And let’s not forget robots, automation and intelligent systems, which are increasingly playing a role to supplement the work of human staff. How people get hired is changing too. Multiple Internet sites such as oDesk, eLance and Freelancer can provide talent on demand. Getting staff this way has become common in Silicon Valley and is spreading across America. Thus, a large project can be completed in a shorter time because so many are working on it.

Temporary employee agencies such as Adecco, Kelly Services and AppleOne have become staff “vendors” in large corporations. Welocalize, for instance, is an agency that supplies linguists and translators to Apple, while AppleOne at supplies data analysts to Google. These type of agencies are continually hiring fresh talent with unique specializations.

Businesses are getting more automated, specialized and outsourcable. By “outsourcable,” I don’t mean moving manufacturing jobs offshore, but the trend of hiring super specialists, like technical writers for software documentation, programmers with Ruby expertise, and app developers for the iPhone. Fueling this trend are online mini-courses that teach everything under the sun. And you only need to be really good at a few of them.

Managers will also become super-specialized. For instances, chief executives can be hired part-time if a full-time one is not required. These professional CEOs usually have years of experience, so they don’t need to adjust to the corner office, unlike an internal candidate.

Loyalty to one company will decline. Likely, six months will be considered “long enough.” Thus companies must replenish themselves with a steady stream of fresh talent, hence the term “talent management.” Only the founders and a few top executives will be working long-term and full-time—and even they can work from home.

The notion of a physical office is becoming obsolete. Co-working spaces are becoming popular, and meetings can be done online via Skype and Webex. Performance will be measured automatically by software applications. Technical project management becomes more important to ensure deadlines and budgets are met. With more freelancers and virtual employees, the project manager must “conduct” his project making sure everyone plays his

part at the right time, follows the plan, at the right tempo. In short, prepare for the age of super specialization, flexible work and workers, and intelligent systems. Entrepreneurs are likely to super specialize as well. Just as Elon Musk has specialized in paradigm-shifting technologies, we’d all be wise to also find our own super specialization.

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