



Tapping Into Hidden Talent Pools

How Blue Ivy helped Sun Print Solutions with their talent pipeline.

There is no shortage of difficulty facing employers. One of these is the highly competitive marketplace for talent. Job candidates who can step into a position already possessing the skills and understanding necessary for success are few and far between.

This situation often leads employers into a false no-win decision:

Do I let production suffer while I continue looking for a qualified candidate, or do I hire an unqualified candidate who will slow down production for months, or maybe years?



Don't get drawn into this dead-end decision. There are many organizational solutions that can overcome this challenge, if thoughtfully designed.

One such solution has been implemented by Sun Print Solutions, a leading commercial print shop in the Salt Lake City area, where the link between stellar production efforts and talent development has been embraced. Since operating a commercial printing press is a highly specialized and technical process that requires significant expertise and years of training, finding a skilled operator is a challenge.

"It can be very time-consuming and expensive to bring an employee into the company, acclimate them to our way of doing things, and coach them to develop the skills to do what we do," says Sara Deneau, President of Sun Print Solutions. "It is great when we can find someone who can step right into the role and ramp up quickly, but that happens very rarely. There are no schools that teach these processes, so the pool of potential employees who can skillfully run a particular piece of equipment is very limited."

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-Shawn Nelson, Department lead at Sun Print Solutions

To overcome this challenge, Sun has implemented a very customized process to develop talent internally while at the same time keeping production levels consistent with demand.

This process begins with a "farm team", a group of entry-level employees who have little to no experience in commercial printing. Starting with the most fundamental skills of quality monitoring and paper handling (i. e. minimizing paper

cuts), this team receives the on-the-job training necessary to impart basic understanding and skills to these employees.

As those employees gain experience in those basic skills, they are also exposed to other procedures in the company. As they become more





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ENTRY LEVEL TEAM

New employees with little to no experience in commercial printing gain experiences.



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

While performing basic tasks, this internal talent pool also gains exposure to other processes through cross-training.



SKILLED TALENT POOL

This internal talent pool becomes a source of talent from which other groups in the organization draw skilled employees.

familiar with related systems, they understand better how each system interacts, and how one process can be “tweaked” to make a downstream process more efficient.

All of this time is productive for Sun’s employees, since they are learning while doing. As they make those incremental skill gains, the employee and the company can collaboratively identify areas of overlap between employee interests and business using effective performance management techniques. Then employees can move into a more skilled position, where the company continues to benefit from their contribution, and where the employee continues to broaden their skillset through job enrichment, cross training, and career path planning within the company.

Shawn Nelson is a department lead for one of Sun’s more skilled groups, which sometimes draws talent from the internal talent pool. After reviewing several recent hires, Nelson observed that “sometimes experience doesn’t really matter when hiring externally. Experienced candidates sometimes bring bad habits and become poor performers, while candidates that are new to the industry can be very eager to learn and grow with the company because of the work environment we have created.” While external candidates are still considered, Sun deliberately reduces uncertainty in the hiring process and increases employee engagement and loyalty by providing a clearly defined path for career growth.

An additional offset for training costs at Sun Print Solutions is the company’s partnership with the State of Utah to fill their talent pipeline. As part of this partnership, the State has agreed to subsidize a new employee’s wages, and Sun has committed to making the new employee part of their talent development program. This all but eliminates the risk associated with training costs for entry-level employees.

Intentional programs like the one implemented at Sun Print Solutions produce incremental increases in productivity and reductions in the cost of recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and training new employees.

Reach out today to talk about new ways to tackle your human capital challenges.

While there is no silver bullet for developing an amazing workplace, intentional programs like the one implemented at Sun Print Solutions produce incremental increases in productivity and reductions in the cost of recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and training new employees.

This program was developed in partnership with Blue Ivy Professional Services, a full-service human capital management firm offering people and organization support to companies seeking a better way to ensure regulatory compliance while increasing productivity by engaging with their workforce.