

PROJECT CONNECT BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

In its *Bridging the skills gap* white paper, recruiting expert Hays focuses on the epidemic of absent skills that has been developing in recent years, and which will peak in this boom cycle. Supported by a survey of 462 organisations across Australia, the paper presents a six-point strategy with a view to bridging the skills gap.

In summary, the points are:

- **Step 1. Be flexible** in order to adapt to the changing market. This includes considering existing employees, who are not only a rich source of information but who have also already demonstrated their commitment and 'fit' with the organisation. Other 'flexible' strategies include considering transferable skills and recruiting based on candidate potential.
- **Step 2. Have a plan** to identify the key roles and likely requirement patterns in your organisation. Recruitment planning, the development of a succinct process, a tailored offer, the effective use of temporary assignments and mobile technology should also be part of the planning process.
- **Step 3. Create an employment brand** to attract like-minded candidates aligned to your values. If in doubt of this strategy, consider BRW's Great Place to Work list; organisations on this list have strong employment brands, and despite widespread skills shortages they receive unsolicited applications from people who want to work for them.
- **Step 4. Source far and wide** and include the under-utilised talent pools of overseas skills, mature age candidates, female candidates and former employees. In addition to these under-utilised talent pools, new technology is also a factor in a comprehensive search.
- **Step 5. Training and development** involves open communication with staff and up-skilling existing employees to build a more talented workforce capable of handling the required workflow. But remember, training doesn't always have to be in the classroom.
- **Step 6. Focus on retention** and start with the benchmarking of great performers, then recruit to these criteria. Also critical is assessing managers; people join companies and leave people.

The paper stresses, however, that adopting one or two of these points in isolation is not enough to overcome the severity of the skills shortage that Australia will face. Rather they should be combined and used in tandem to forge a robust and effective strategy.

Click [here](#) to view Hays' *Bridging the Skills Gap* white paper, or contact David Irvine at Hays on 08 9486 9553 or david.irvine@hays.com.au

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