



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## Is There a War for Talent?

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Amylyn Kyler is vice president of people management with Newton Consulting in Claysville, Pennsylvania. Ms. Kyler is charged with leading the mission for Newton Consulting's most important asset – its people – and supports the recruiting process, employee professional development, and overall management of Newton Consulting's unique company culture.

Ms. Kyler's 20 years of recruiting experience includes leading, managing and executing the recruiting function of companies such as Deloitte & Touche, KPMG, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Perot Systems.

During her six years at Newton Consulting, she served as director of recruiting and placement, director of client relations and resourcing and director of talent acquisition services before assuming her current position.

Ms. Kyler serves on the boards of the Pittsburgh Human Resources Association and the American Liver Foundation, and volunteers for Dress for Success, Pennsylvania Women Work, and as a LinkedIn instructor for Priority Two.

Newton Consulting has been selected to the Inc. 5000, Pittsburgh 100, Best Places to Work in Western Pennsylvania, Best Places to Work in Washington County, and as Best Service Provider by the Pittsburgh Technology Council.

Have you had a difficult time finding top talent? Do you anticipate a shift in your workforce due to a high population of upcoming retirees? With all the press about high unemployment rates, how can there possibly be a war for talent?

Today's war for talent is driven by:

- The quickly declining number of people in the workforce;
- The lack of desired skills of those in the workforce; and
- Generational differences and ways of working.

Forecasts indicate that this trend will continue, and with increasing challenges.

**Like it or not, there is a war for talent. It is already at ferocious levels in the Silicon Valley and other high-growth areas around the world – including the Pittsburgh region.**

There are 75 million Baby Boomers (those currently ages 49 to 67) who are on the verge of retirement. For the next 20 years, an average of 10,000 people each day will reach age 65. Furthermore, 13 percent of Americans today are age 65 or older, and that proportion will jump to 18 percent by 2030.

Generation X, currently those ages 30 to 50, has a population of only 68 million, setting up the challenge to fill a significant gap of talent left by the retiring Baby Boomers.

Generation Y, currently in their late teens and 20s, has a population of approximately 79 million



and will help close the numbers gap a bit. However, the differences will shift again to being more about skillsets and ways of working.

While the pace of Boomers exiting the workforce increases, the new graduates entering the workforce are often not as well trained in the soft skills such as teamwork, communication and critical thinking that employers deem critical to being successful.

Cultural differences in the generations compound the gap even further. The Boomers, who grew accustomed to 70- to 80-hour work weeks climbing the corporate ladder, will be replaced by Gen X-ers who want work-life balance and are more interested in moving across a lattice to learn and try new things.

Job trend reporting tells us that 95 percent of those in their 20s found a job in their preferred field, yet an astounding 82 percent left their first job in two years or less because of a bad relationship with their boss or direct supervisor.

Additionally, the Department of Labor projects that by age 32, today's young adults will have had approximately eight jobs, an average of only 18 months at each.

Companies successful at winning the war for talent will find ways to engage the new generation(s) by:

- Providing new, interesting, and varied opportunities for them (working across the lattice);

- Recognizing that technology is integrated into their lives and relationships and adjusting how the company reaches out to them; and
- Focusing on the relationship and cultural aspects of working to create a sense of ownership and purpose for them.

Additionally, in order to be successful at recruiting and retaining top performers, after identifying individuals with the critical skills that your company needs, employers must look beyond a candidate's education and experience and consider if the person is a good fit to the company culture, and vice versa. Invest the time to get to know your candidate and employees. Understand who they are, what is and isn't important to them, and how they might bring value to your company.

The lower number of employees in the workforce creates opportunities for employees to carefully choose their options. Most people looking for new employment or considering a job change won't be looking for just a pay check. This employee-driven market will require employers to put more effort into marketing their company and its culture, and courting employees.

Successful companies will recognize that it is not a matter of if, but when,

they will need to add top talent to their team. Successful recruitment starts with networking and developing a rapport with people you want on your team long before there's an opening.

As well, the shift in demographics will require employers to question everything they have used in the past to attract and retain best-fit resources. Ample consideration will need to be given to how employees are paid and incented, career development programs, the company culture, and the types of working relationships and responsibilities that are attractive to high-quality talent.

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