

Talent Strategies:

FROM RECRUITMENT TO RETENTION

Executive Summary

Explore the strategies firms are using to source talent, the challenges they face in attracting talent, and how they are working to retain and develop that top talent once they've been hired.

In the wealth management landscape, sourcing the right talent has become increasingly challenging. As the dynamics of the workforce evolve, firms are not only tasked with finding highly skilled professionals but also with retaining them in a market where opportunities abound.

Finding the Right Talent

The first step in attaining talent is identifying where and how to find it. Firms today are caught between the need for experienced professionals and the desire to attract next-generation candidates that can bring fresh perspectives.

Experienced Talent vs. Fresh Hires

As firms grow, they often face a dilemma: should they focus on attracting seasoned professionals who bring a wealth of experience or invest in younger talent who can be molded into future leaders? Some, including Tim French, Chief Client Officer at Altair Advisors, see the value in both. "At Altair, we do a mix of both campus hiring and experience hiring," French states. "Though, the experienced hiring is much more challenging."

Emily Barbour, Head of Client Experience at Balentine, agrees with this sentiment, but also believes firms should consider the value of existing talent. "It can be difficult to hire experienced candidates externally, so we've focused on creating steps in each role that help us hire internally," she says. "We've had great success in trying to grow from within."

Key Highlights

1. Finding the Right Talent

Discover how firms balance the need for experienced professionals with the desire for fresh hires, plus find out how and where they source top talent.

2. Making Your Firm a Destination for Great Talent

Attracting talent is an essential part of a successful hiring strategy. Learn how firms can sell themselves and ensure their culture resonates with potential employees.

3. Retaining Top Talent

From compensation to career development, see the ways in which firms must continually invest in their employees to keep them engaged and committed.

Where to Locate Talent

Sourcing talent requires a strategic approach, and firms are leveraging both internal and external resources to build their teams. Barbour mentions that Balentine incentivizes employees to refer talent from their networks, which has proven more cost-effective than traditional recruitment methods. “Hiring can be a tough process, and referrals from employees who can vouch for candidates go a long way,” she adds.

Many find value in using recruitment firms, particularly for specialized roles. French points out that the right search partner can significantly reduce the time spent on hiring by providing candidates who closely align with the firm’s needs. “For us, it’s about finding the right partner who understands our culture and can bring in candidates that fit.”

Making Your Firm a Destination for Great Talent

Locating talent is only half the battle. Making your firm a place where people want to work is an essential part of a successful hiring strategy. Firms must work to sell themselves and ensure their culture resonates with potential employees.

Create a Strong Employer Brand

Beverly Flaxington, Co-Founder and Principal of The Collaborative, stresses the importance of standing out in a crowded market. “Attracting talent is a lot like marketing: you need to elevate your brand,” she says. This involves showcasing what makes the firm a great place to work, such as culture, opportunities for growth and the overall work environment.

Another marketing-inspired tip, Flaxington reveals, is to have current staff serve as “brand ambassadors” for the firm. “Maybe some of your own employees are posting things about what the culture is like, what it’s like to work there and what opportunities there are.”

Build Trust and Transparency

Many candidates, especially within the younger generation, are looking at a firm’s mission and values first. At Balentine, Barbour ensures that candidates understand the firm’s values from the outset. During interviews, potential hires are asked to discuss how the company’s core values resonate with them. “We establish from the first point of contact what’s important to us as a company.”

Lucas Engelhardt, an entrepreneur transitioning into wealth management, highlights the need for firms to take this transparency even further. “In this industry, trust is paramount. Employees want to know that the firm’s values are more than just words on a wall,” he emphasizes. “They want to know it’s something that’s lived day in and day out.”

Retaining Your Firm’s Talent

Retaining top talent can prove more challenging than attracting it. Firms must continually invest in their employees to keep them engaged and committed.

Compensation Structure

Compensation is a significant factor in retention, and today’s employees are more informed than ever about what they should be earning. French acknowledges the increased transparency around compensation. “I assume that all of our younger staff know what everyone is making, so we’re trying to share that information proactively,” he says. This involves creating compensation bands tied to performance reviews and allowing employees to see a clear correlation between their contributions and their pay.

Career Trajectory and Development

Career development is another critical component of retention. Employees, particularly younger ones, are eager to understand their career paths from the moment they join a firm. Flaxington points out that firms need to have these conversations early. “It’s important to talk about career paths philosophically during the interview process to avoid disappointment later on,” she says.

Culture and Flexibility

Finally, culture and flexibility are key drivers of retention. Many firms are embracing flexible work arrangements post-pandemic to accommodate the evolving needs of their teams. French shares that Altair has adopted a hybrid model where teams work in the office three days a week and remotely for two. “Our younger talent wanted to return to the office for the collaboration and mentorship opportunities,” he says. Similarly, Barbour emphasizes that flexibility is essential for retaining employees, especially those balancing work with personal commitments. “We’ve had to evolve our policies to support work-life balance, which has been crucial in retaining talent,” she says.

Firms that are strategic in their approach to sourcing, retaining, and developing their teams will find themselves at a significant advantage when searching for talent. By focusing on creating a strong employer brand, building trust, offering competitive compensation, and fostering a culture of growth and flexibility, firms can not only attract top talent but also keep them engaged and committed.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Contact your relationship manager for more strategies to help find and retain talent for your business.