Talent Management

Powering Strategic Initiatives in the PMO
Executive Summary

Projects and programs are the core of any organization’s strategic initiatives—they are how change happens. Having the talent to implement those initiatives successfully is the critical capability that gives organizations a competitive advantage to navigate through necessary change. Excellence in managing the talent is a key to unlocking that capability.

PMI research shows that 88% of executive leaders consider strategy implementation important, yet 61% percent also acknowledge that their organizations are struggling to bridge the gap between strategy formulation and its day-to-day implementation. On top of that, only 17% see implementation efforts as strategic. This gap demonstrates a lack of understanding among executives that all strategic change happens through projects and programs.

The separation between what organizations say they should do—and what they actually do—further demonstrates a very real lack of understanding that strategy is implemented through strategic initiatives. Those initiatives are comprised of projects and programs whose successful execution is at the core of an organization’s success. This, in turn, elevates the role of project and program managers as key talent with the critical capability to drive an organization’s most important initiatives to success. The results are competitive advantage, growth, and customer satisfaction. So, as organizations evaluate their talent management strategies for project and program professionals, and pursue new hires and retain existing ones, they will benefit from recognizing which skills and competencies set these professionals apart from other operational employees so they are best prepared to do their jobs.

This report identifies and explores the characteristics of organizations that excel at talent management: strong alignment between human resources (HR) and an organization’s strategic initiatives and objectives; and high maturity in recruiting, retaining, and developing the best talent to manage strategic initiatives successfully.

Despite the importance of strategic talent, few organizations are adept at managing it, starting at the top. By its own admission, the C-suite and other senior leadership don’t give managing talent appropriate attention. In addition, many organizations have a suboptimal approach at the more tactical level, as evidenced by the absence of widespread collaboration and partnership between the two forces that drive talent—HR and business leaders.

While approaches to talent management vary across organizations, one half of HR professionals report their organizations develop talent management strategies in response to rather than through alignment with the business strategy. Such a disconnect between HR and business leaders robs both sides of the opportunity for deeper and more beneficial engagement. Through a more collaborative relationship, HR would gain greater insight and knowledge around project management, and its critical connection to organizational objectives, enabling more efficient and effective recruiting, retention, and development of employees with the essential skill sets.

With the increasing complexity of projects and the ever increasing pace of change, organizations recognize that it is no longer enough to focus their talent hiring and development on only technical project management skills. Organizations need project management talent that has the ability to deal with ambiguity and can lead strategic initiatives that drive change in an organization.
Organizations need to lead and direct projects and programs—not just manage them. The well-rounded project manager not only has the technical project management skills, but also the strategic and business management skills, and leadership skills.

That, in turn, improves an organization’s performance. When organizations focus on developing and managing strategic talent, they assure the business has the necessary skill sets. And the more mature an organization is in managing strategic talent, the better its performance compared with peers in executing projects that meet business goals, implementing strategic initiatives, increasing revenue, and improving financial performance.

Analysis shows that by focusing on the following six areas—proven predictors of highly mature organizations in managing talent—will boost talent management capability:

- Moving resources from current assignments to next opportunities effectively
- Identifying replacement candidates due to turnover or churn
- Creating broad succession plans across organizational boundaries
- Linking advancement and succession processes
- Stimulating adoption and analytics use among business leaders
- Making required investments in HR technology and proactively improving platforms

Both HR and business leaders acknowledge the need for and the potential benefits of strong alignment. Our research shows that by fostering a culture of collaboration within the supply and demand sides of talent management, organizations will ensure they are poised to reap the rewards of a highly skilled workforce.

While some organizations have already recognized and acted on the talent management trend, we believe other organizations—both large and small—will see the bottom-line benefits of formalizing their talent management practices: An engaged and experienced staff leads to project success.

About This Report

The Project Management Institute (PMI) is issuing a series of reports aimed at elevating the discussion of talent management in enabling successful implementation of strategic initiatives. This collection, PMI’s Thought Leadership Series on Talent Management: Powering Strategic Initiatives in the PMO, identifies opportunities for organizations to improve their talent management to impact business success. The series includes three volumes that highlight challenges, practices, processes, and improvements for organizations.
This report is the capstone, focused on people who work on projects and programs to implement strategic initiatives. In last year’s capstone report, *Strategic Initiative Management: The PMO Imperative*, PMI called for leaders to recognize the role project management offices (PMOs) play in executing successful strategic initiatives. It is fitting, then, that this year’s report looks at how organizations are managing their “strategic talent,” the talent used to successfully implement the organizational strategy. The report defines “talent management” as the processes by which strategic talent is sourced, developed, and retained by employers.

The report’s findings are based on research undertaken by PMI in collaboration with PwC. The research surveyed 726 respondents representing: 318 HR professionals and 408 professionals with roles in programs and projects that support strategic initiatives. The latter group is referred to as “business leaders” in this report. Respondents came from diverse industries, departments, and geographies: 39% from North America, 25% from Asia-Pacific, 23% from EMEA, and 13% from Latin America.

They answered a series of questions around organizational maturity in various aspects of project and program talent management related to implementing strategic initiatives, such as talent acquisition, development, and use of technology. An aggregate metric was developed to classify organizations into high-, medium-, and low-maturity levels (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Overall Level of Project and Program Talent Management Maturity**

![Circle chart showing the distribution of organizational maturity levels.](image-url)}
PMI also gathered perspectives from other sources in the 2014 Thought Leadership Series, including:

- **Rally the Talent to Win: Transforming Strategy into Reality**—Based on a global survey of more than 550 C-suite executives and senior management, this Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report, sponsored by PMI, examines how well companies are managing strategic talent and what they can do to improve.

- **Spotlight on Success: Developing Talent for Strategic Impact**—In this report, Human Systems International (HSI) and PMI explore the talent management practices of 12 high-performing organizations to uncover examples of excellence.

### Establishing Excellence in Managing Project Talent

Simply put, projects and programs are how strategic initiatives are accomplished. Organizations that have the right talent for executing these initiatives have a critical capability that gives them a competitive advantage. Excellence in managing talent is the key to unlocking that capability.

Study results confirm that strategic talent management can help or hinder an organization—as can its alignment with strategy. Talent deficiencies hamper strategy implementation efforts 40% of the time, according to the recent EIU and PMI study *Rally the Talent to Win*. Organizations in which talent management is aligned to organizational strategy have an average project success rate of 72%, whereas organizations in which talent management is not effectively aligned to strategy have an average project success rate of 58%. Alignment of project talent and corporate strategies also affects the bottom line: Organizations that excel at aligning talent and corporate strategies waste 33% fewer dollars on their projects (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Project Dollars Wasted in Organizations by Level of Alignment of Talent Management to Organizational Strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALIGNMENT OF TALENT MANAGEMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY</th>
<th>DOLLARS WASTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant/Good Alignment</td>
<td>US$100 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate/Weak Alignment</td>
<td>US$150 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Size Alignment</td>
<td>US$1 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizational leaders are cognizant of the impact of insufficient talent. One third of senior executives surveyed in *Rally the Talent to Win* indicate that talent deficiencies have significantly hindered their efforts at introducing and implementing strategic plans and initiatives over the last three years.
Awareness and Action

Despite the acknowledged importance of strategic talent, many companies are still not managing it well. Almost one half of respondents in the Rally the Talent to Win survey say merely determining their talent needs for implementing and executing strategic plans is a difficult long-term challenge. The figures are even greater for acquiring (57%), developing (58%), and retaining (57%) that talent. The reasons for and awareness of the gap between talent’s importance and the ability to manage it well are numerous.

• **Shortage of Skilled Talent.** A primary challenge is the shortage of appropriately skilled strategic project management talent. To deliver results, today’s project professionals need skills beyond the traditional “triple constraint” of bringing projects in on time, in scope, and on budget—commonly known as technical project management skills. In addition to technical capabilities, skills and competencies in leadership and strategic and business management are required, as noted in PMI’s Pulse of the Profession® In-Depth Report: The Competitive Advantage of Effective Talent Management. It’s not surprising then, that four out of five organizations from that research report they have struggled over the past year to find qualified candidates to fill open positions. And the talent shortage is expected to worsen: PMI has projected that between 2010 and 2020, 15.7 million new project management roles will be created globally across seven project-intensive industries—with no one available to fill them.

• **Support from Above.** Another challenge is the lack of attention afforded talent management from the C-suite. Only 23% of respondents in the Rally the Talent to Win survey believe senior leadership gives project and program talent management the priority it deserves. This lack of attention is cited as a significant barrier to achieving organizational objectives.

• **Partnership.** And yet another challenge is a general misunderstanding of HR’s role in securing strategic talent. As noted in Forrester’s An Effective HR Organization Aligns With Business And IT Strategies: In many organizations the HR department follows the lead of the executives and the business units. They see themselves as a support for business, when, in fact, HR serves an operational function to ensure talent is available for strategic initiatives and other business operations. One half of HR professionals recognized their role in aligning with, and being responsive to, the business. And awareness of the importance of the function is growing. Although a small majority, more organizations now view talent management as an opportunity to distinguish themselves in the marketplace to achieve competitive advantage.
A variety of factors affect the complex equation of project talent, talent management, and executing strategy through projects and programs. And these factors—external or internal, universal or unique—require attention and action from all stakeholders. As organizations continue to make complex, higher-stakes initiatives their top priority and place a greater premium on those who can execute, the need for effective management of project talent will become more apparent and more acute.

Approaches to Talent Management

Ideally, an organization’s approach to talent management is designed and executed to meet broader strategic needs. Organizations reap maximum benefit with consistent, nimble talent management practices, marked by collaboration between HR and business leaders throughout every stage of the process.

While approaches to talent management vary across organizations, one half of HR professionals report the talent management strategy is developed in response to business strategy. Partnership with business leaders comes afterward in the management and execution stage. In just 33% of organizations, business leaders and HR work together to set a talent strategy that is closely aligned with and enables business strategy.

It is little surprise then that only one third of HR professionals and less than one fifth of business leaders say talent management policies and practices consistently support strategic programs and projects, and are key contributors to achieving strategic initiatives.

Other aspects of talent management that are less than optimal include:

- Three out of five respondents say their organizations should reappraise their talent management approaches to stay aligned with business requirements every six months or on an ongoing basis, but only one in five say their organizations actually do this.12

- Talent is often assigned based on availability rather than specific skills and experience.13
HR, High Maturity, and Outcomes

As reported in Spotlight on Success, the more mature the talent management process is for project management, the more likely it is that HR plays a part in developing project professionals. It is far more probable that this measure of high maturity is a matter of cause and effect rather than coincidence.

The research demonstrates that organizations with high talent maturity perform well in all key areas of talent management explored, including those predictors of high maturity, as outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Key Predictors to High Overall Project and Program Talent Management Maturity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talent Management Practices</th>
<th>Overall Talent Management Maturity</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and recruiting the right people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent Acquisition:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying replacement candidates due to turnover or churn</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Retaining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Management and Deployment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective mobility of resources from current assignments to next opportunities</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking advancement and succession processes</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development and Succession Planning:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create broad succession plans across organizational boundaries</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capture and Transferring Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Analytics:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulate adoption and usage of analytics among business leaders</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make required investments in HR technology/ proactively improve platforms</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, no one area of talent management stands alone as the key enabler in implementing strategic initiatives (see Figure 4). The benefits are realized when carried out together.

**Figure 4: Talent Management Processes – Key Enablers of Strategic Initiatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talent Management Processes – Key Enablers of Strategic Initiatives</th>
<th>HR Professionals (% who say process is a key enabler)</th>
<th>Business Leaders (% who say process is a key enabler)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning and skill development</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting and sourcing talent</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce management, skills management, and deployment</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development, high potential identification, and succession planning</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee performance management and progression</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the data shows that the following six areas are key predictors of high-talent management maturity. Organizations seeking to boost their talent management capability should focus on the following:

1. Effectively moving resources from current assignments to next opportunities
2. Identifying replacement candidates due to turnover or churn
3. Creating broad succession plans across organizational boundaries
4. Linking advancement and succession processes
5. Stimulating adoption and use of analytics among business leaders
6. Making required investments in HR technology and proactively improving platforms

Increasing talent management maturity is an opportunity for organizations to gain competitive advantage. A higher level of maturity translates into better outcomes, which underscores the relationship between PMOs, strategic initiatives, and success. Business leaders report that organizations with highly mature talent management practices average significantly more projects meeting goals and business intent than those with low talent management maturity.

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A logistic regression analysis studied the level of performance in 28 talent management practice areas and examined the relationship to overall talent management maturity. The analysis identified 6 practice areas that, when an organization performs well, predict a high level of overall talent management maturity.
Additionally, organizations that indicate strong alignment between HR and business leaders outperform their peers in financial performance, revenue growth, strategy implementation, talent management, and alignment of talent management with strategic needs (see Figure 5). Fostering an organizational culture of collaboration around talent management will reap true rewards for the company.

**Figure 5: Business Success by Talent Management Maturity and Alignment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% With Above Average Performance on the Following Criteria</th>
<th>Overall Talent Management Performance</th>
<th>Alignment Between HR and Business Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Maturity</td>
<td>Low Maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial performance</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue growth</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy implementation</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent management</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment of talent management with strategic needs</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategy Disconnect**

The lack of alignment between HR and business leaders shows up in practice and in perception. The two groups have differing views in the six key areas of talent management, as highlighted in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Perception of Talent Management Maturity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talent Management Practices</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>Business Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Reporting a High Level of Maturity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent Acquisition</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Management and Deployment</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Management, Progression, and Promotion</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development and Succession Planning</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Analytics</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across all areas of talent management, HR respondents are roughly twice as likely as business leaders to think their organizations are highly mature. Additionally, more than twice as many say that their organizations’ talent management policies and practices consistently support programs and projects and are key contributors to achieving strategic initiatives.

HR’s inherent familiarity with talent management programs and processes and/or a more positive outlook on their own areas of operation could explain the gaps. An understanding of why the gaps exist will be beneficial as organizations aspire to eliminate them. In addition, both HR and business leaders want to see shifts in how they work together. They agree that increased alignment would have a significant impact on the success of implementing strategic initiatives. Nearly one half of business leaders indicate less-than-adequate support from their HR function. But HR contends that business leaders need to communicate and collaborate better with them.

In fact, HR’s top three answers to how business leaders could work more effectively with HR to increase success on strategic initiatives indicate that better communication and collaboration are essential:

- More involvement in strategic planning and defining goals and objectives
- Improve communication with HR/other employees
- Work together more/increase collaboration

By contrast, business leaders’ top responses to how HR could better work with management to support strategic initiatives indicate a desire for closer alignment as well as improved HR practices:

- More alignment between HR and strategic initiatives
- Streamline hiring processes
- Improve skills management, planning, and resourcing

A closer working relationship between HR and business leaders, which both groups want, would give HR insight and knowledge around project management, organizational strategy, and business needs. A likely result would be the improvements sought by business leaders in specific processes.
THE THREE STAGES OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

While approaches to talent management vary, common to all organizations are three stages. Outlined below are the critical actions that need to be taken to drive success in each stage. Gaps in maturity in all areas of talent management practices are so wide they offer clear direction for organizations working to improve. It’s important to note that throughout the research, HR and business leaders provided their input specifically about individuals who are responsible for managing projects and programs in support of the organizations’ strategic initiatives. It’s difficult to discern if such practices would be applicable in the same manner for other employees. Equipping project talent with the hard and soft skills needed, as discussed below by the Talent Triangle, assures better success with strategic initiatives, whereas other employees may not be as closely connected to the sustenance of the organization.

Identifying and Acquiring Talent

It is increasingly difficult for organizations to find those with the right combination of technical, leadership, and strategic and business management skills (see Figure 7). Yet, without that talent, organizations risk not being able to ensure successful implementation of projects that are central to achieving their goals. Currently, just over one in four HR managers considers his or her organization to be highly mature in the following early stages of managing project talent:

- Identifying needed competencies
- Recruiting outside talent
- Assessing and sourcing internal candidates

Figure 7: The Talent Triangle

- 66% of organizations say that technical project management skills are the most difficult to find
- But over 90% of organizations say that technical project management skills and strategic and business management skills are teachable
- Only 66% of organizations say that leadership skills are teachable
- And 66% of organizations say that leadership skills are most important for success in project management

Key to this stage of the process is identifying replacement candidates in the event of turnover or churn. But few organizations excel in this practice. Just 17% of HR managers say their organizations reduce delays in strategic execution by maintaining a pipeline of candidates. And one in five business leaders say waiting for resources delays implementation of the projects and programs that will drive strategy.

Project talent—or potential talent—doesn’t always self-identify as such, and HR’s data are not always comprehensive or readily available to business leaders. The Spotlight on Success research finds that when organizations successfully communicate the importance and prestige of working on the projects and programs that drive strategy, recruiting internal talent is easier.
Ironically, the ability to attract outside talent and generate interest among internal candidates sometimes rests on factors over which HR and hiring managers have little or no influence. As Spotlight on Success points out, being perceived as an “employer of choice” and the ability to offer a variety of interesting projects make an organization attractive to desirable project and program management talent.\textsuperscript{15} It’s incumbent then on business leaders and senior executives to foster those organizational characteristics. Doing so will aid the acquisition of project and program managers, ultimately improving the organization’s ability to execute strategic initiatives.

Development and Retention

Once the right talent is in place, ensuring skill sets are relevant to business needs and that the associated employees remain engaged are ongoing challenges. With only an estimated one in four HR managers considering his or her organization to be highly mature in overall development and retention, there is clear opportunity for improvement.

Key areas to focus on to develop and retain project talent include:

- Supporting effective mobility of resources from current assignments to next opportunities
- Linking advancement and succession processes
- Creating broad succession plans across organizational boundaries

In addition to focusing on the areas cited above, efforts to develop project management talent must keep pace with changes in the nature and scope of strategic projects. As noted previously, project managers need skills that go beyond the technical, so organizations will benefit from offering them the opportunities and programs needed to develop strategic business and leadership skills and competencies as well.

PMI’s 2014 Pulse of the Profession\textsuperscript{®} survey reveals that most organizations need to pay attention to the training and development of project management talent. Less than one half of organizations report having a formal process for developing project managers. And organizations that have a defined career path, develop project management competency, and have ongoing training for staff on the use of project management tools and techniques are significantly more successful with their strategic initiatives than organizations that do not (see Figure 8).\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Figure 8: Talent Management Leads to Success}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Average</th>
<th>56%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Project Manager Training</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Process to Develop Project Managers Competence</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined Career Path</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Successful Strategic Initiatives with Each in Place</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Successful Strategic Initiatives without Each in Place</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High-performing organizations (those that deliver 80% or more of their projects on time/budget and having met business results) are significantly more likely to have a defined project management career path, a process that develops project manager competency and ongoing project manager training (see Figure 9). If organizations don’t have these consistently throughout, implementing them may be a relatively simple way to show benefit right away.17

Figure 9: Talent Management

It’s also essential that organizations focus on a more informal, but equally critical aspect of development: encouraging and enabling workers in different geographies, different but related disciplines, and different cohorts to learn from each other. The increasing mobility of the workforce makes this both easier and more challenging. Talent that moves from one location to another can either be a bridge between parts of an organization and its talent pools, or it can be a reason why institutional knowledge gets lost and its culture diluted. Many channels exist to support informal development or knowledge sharing, so organizations can experiment to find the ones best-suited to their unique culture, technology enablers, and geography.

Capturing and Transferring Knowledge

Business leaders and HR will also benefit from capturing and sharing knowledge. In addition, they will benefit from making better use of available analytics, data, and technology, and ensuring the right data are being collected. Currently, organizations are weakest in these areas of talent management, as compared to other areas of the discipline.

Key predictors of high maturity are:

• Stimulating adoption and use of analytics among business leaders
• Making required investments in HR technology or proactively improving platforms
Figure 10 shows the increased success rates for strategic initiatives when a project and program organization has a practice in place. Having a process in place to transfer knowledge throughout the organization has a big impact on the success of strategic initiatives. In addition to cultivating the talent they have, organizations need to provide the support their people need to adapt to an ever-changing landscape.

**Figure 10: Focus on Talent Management**

Significantly More Strategic Initiatives are Successful with These in Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Study Average</th>
<th>PULSE OF THE PROFESSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Project Management Training</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Process to Develop PMs</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Process to Mature PMs</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Knowledge Transfer Process</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined Career Path</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Knowledge Transfer Process</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leadership Support**

HR and business leaders are at odds regarding role perceptions in setting a talent strategy that is aligned with and enables business strategy. Organizational success is strongly correlated to both high maturity in talent management and high alignment between HR and business leaders. Organizations will benefit by ensuring they have both. A starting point: HR and business leaders should work together to address the needs for managing project talent.

But such a shift can only occur with C-suite involvement and support. Organizations where the C-suite is involved in key areas of talent management are more than twice as likely as others to report that talent deficiencies rarely impede strategy implementation.

C-suite support means attention and time. It also means being transparent about business objectives and communicating to the entire organization the importance of strategic initiatives. Such behaviors are hallmarks of effective leadership in general; with regard to managing project and program management talent, they send a strong message that is echoed in lasting, enterprise-wide changes in attitude and action.
CONCLUSION

Executive leadership recognizes the importance of strategy implementation, but, as stated earlier, a majority admit that their companies fall short. This gap demonstrates a lack of understanding among executives that all strategic change happens through projects and programs. While some projects improve an organization’s ability to “run the business” and don’t rise to the level of a “strategic initiative,” all of an organization’s strategic initiatives are projects or programs, which inevitably “change the business.”

Executive leadership must empower HR to be a genuine partner and demand it act as such. HR should embrace the opportunity. For their part, business leaders—those who oversee project and program management—must communicate their talent needs with one eye cast on the present and the other toward the future and be open to seeing HR as a business partner in ensuring the best skill sets are in place. Making the case to executive leadership for stronger collaboration between HR and business leaders could very well be an opportune starting point toward building that stronger partnership.

Managing project management talent is a matter of having the skill sets to succeed—aligning talent and strategy demonstrates the will to succeed. By focusing on skill and will, organizations ensure they are positioned to execute, grow, and meet the challenges of the future, confident and prepared.
Project Management, Gen X, and Millennials: A Perfect Match?

Between 2010 and 2020, 15.7 million new project management roles will be created around the world, across seven project-intensive industries, according to PMI research.¹⁹

Who will fill these jobs? Millennials, also known as Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000) and Generation X (born between 1966 and 1979) might not only be age-appropriate, but ideally suited.

According to research conducted by HSI, having exciting, challenging, engaging programs and projects is key to an organization’s ability to attract project talent. The most common reason for high retention is a culture that has won the hearts and minds of the project community, as reported in Spotlight on Success: Developing Talent for Strategic Impact. An organization with high retention rates has clearly articulated to the project community its core values and how its project portfolios fit into the global good.²⁰

Millennials place a premium on doing work that they consider meaningful, interesting, and challenging, according to Tammy Erickson, a noted expert on generational differences in the workplace,²¹ the fact that growth in project management jobs will occur on a global nature will also likely appeal to Millennials. PwC’s NextGen: A Global Generational Study found that more Millennials (37%) view the opportunity to work overseas as part of their desired career path than their non-Millennial counterparts (28%).²² Providing these opportunities not only adds to the development of the individual working abroad, but also helps to create a cadre of future leaders with a global mindset.

And what of Gen X? Gen X workers are adept at thinking about options, according to Erickson. “They’re very thoughtful about keeping multiple balls in the air at the same time...I think Xs are going to be fantastic leaders [bringing] the mindset that we need to lead our organizations in new directions over the next several decades,” she said in a “Thinkers 50” interview.²³
References:

14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.