



The talent niche: Meeting TMT talent needs with nontraditional talent

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The news is out. The technology, media, and telecom (TMT) industry is evolving rapidly. And workers across a variety of other sectors are reskilling and leaving their jobs to enter the TMT field.

And it's a job-hunters' market. The demand for skill sets in TMT is at a global premium. But TMT organizations may be struggling to fill these positions: past strategies to attract, retain, and develop talent have become less effective in the wake of workplace changes brought by COVID-19.

Getting a handle on hiring will require a shift in thinking. Consider: As more intensive training programs and "bootcamps" become available to address this demand, a traditional four-year degree may no longer be required to obtain specific positions in this industry. For example, Stack Overflow surveyed professional developers and 22 percent didn't have a college degree.¹

New talent flocking to an industry in desperate need of workers doesn't sound like a problem—unless your organization fails to expand its talent pools to include nontraditional candidates and retain this highly sought-after talent once hired.

This white paper explores:



Why the TMT industry is uniquely positioned to tap into nontraditional talent



The skills needed to enter this space



How to increase retention of TMT employees

¹ Developer Survey Results, Stack Overflow, 2018.



Business value-adds

Can nontraditional talent bring value to your organization?



1. Expanded talent pools

KPMG research found that CEOs ranked talent risk as the largest threat to long-term growth, rising 11 places in just one year (KPMG 2020 U.S. CEO Outlook).² **The need to find more suitable global talent is increasing** due to the “Great Resignation.” Meanwhile, non-TMT industries have begun to also invest in TMT talent. Consequently, expanded talent pools have become a business imperative in all industries.

TMT organizations should continue to partner with universities but also engage with tech bootcamps to expand talent pools by **removing the barriers to entry** that traditional credentials (e.g., degrees, majors, experiences) create.

2. Increased retention

While organizations continue to fight to attract talent, it's equally imperative to **retain the talent they already have**. Data shows nontraditional talent may yield a greater return on investment as they are more likely to stay out of loyalty to their firms.

A Catalyst survey³ noted, “Fortune 500 companies found those that hired candidates from **nontraditional pools experience a 45 percent reduction in unwanted attrition compared to those that use traditional hiring methods,**” which helps quantify the value of this untapped population.

3. DEI advancement

Lastly, as TMT organizations **respond to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) requirements** and learn how to specifically navigate their social and corporate responsibility, the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within an organization has become a key business imperative. CEOs listed DEI as a top-five success factor, impacting employee engagement, motivation, and productivity (KPMG 2021 U.S. CEO Outlook).⁴

By removing barriers of entry and recruiting and retaining nontraditional talent, organizations can **diversify their teams by race and ethnicity, gender, age, as well as other identity elements**.

² KPMG 2020 U.S. CEO Outlook, KPMG, 2020.

³ “Talent Matters: The Case for Reaching out to Nontraditional IT Talent,” Washington Post, March 30, 2016.

⁴ KPMG 2021 U.S. CEO Outlook, KPMG, 2021.



Case study

Why the Australian Defense Organization is recruiting cyber analysts on the autism spectrum⁵

In the digital era, cyberwarfare is at an all-time high, making cyber-defense analysts a critical role for the Australian Defense Organization (ADO). To meet its talent needs, the ADO expanded its talent pools to tap people on the autism spectrum through partnership programs with DXC Technology. Thorkil Sonne, the Danish advocate for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), notes that people with ASD can encounter unique workplace challenges when we try to fit them into organizations in standard and traditional ways. But by using a different managerial approach, these individuals can display superior talent.

This innovative talent strategy wasn't about filling roles in an overly competitive labor market but rather being intentional about meeting people where they are and leaning into their strengths. Though people with ASD experience different challenges than traditional talent, they are gifted with the ability to analyze, interpret, and understand satellite images and maps. Although many on the spectrum don't fare well with traditional interviews, evaluating people with ASD through project work tryouts gives the organization a more accurate gauge on their analyst abilities than a standard interview would. Currently, evidence suggests that the analysts with ASD have been successful as they spot patterns many don't recognize and display an advanced work ethic. Lastly, because these individuals prefer to avoid changes in routines, they've showed very high retention rates.

⁵ "Why the Australian Defence Organization Is Recruiting Cyber Analysts on the Autism Spectrum," *Harvard Business Review* (HBS), 2017.

Taking TMT forward: skills needed for the future

What are the capabilities and skills to consider pursuing and how do you identify if they already exist within your organization?



Understanding capabilities needed for the future

Before an organization can define the micro skills and competencies needed to drive the work of the future, it must first define the capabilities needed. A guiding principle when identifying skills is understanding the nature of the work a function or entire enterprise needs to execute. A current trend triggering many of our TMT clients to reevaluate their talent capability frameworks is the impact of automation on their business. In a KPMG Future of HR study,⁶ **56 percent** of HR respondents stated that their largest challenge will be preparing their workforce for the impacts of artificial intelligence and other related technologies. Automation benefits businesses by reducing a role's transactional tasks, freeing up more time for strategic work. However, many organizations struggle with defining what new strategic capabilities should be added to their workforce as the nature of work evolves.

Skills to consider

The technical skills required for TMT vary greatly by role; three that are currently high in demand are artificial intelligence, machine learning, and internet of things.⁷ Technical skills aren't the only ones to consider, since 25 percent of current jobs are threatened by automation.⁸ As some tasks become automated, having strong professional skills will become increasingly important for the TMT worker. Top professional skills to develop and recruit for include communication, business analysis, emotional competence, coaching, networking, and ethical decision-making.⁹ Considering the evolution of remote working, other skills to look for include adaptability, self-motivation, and collaboration.¹⁰

⁶ KPMG Future of HR 2020 Insights. KPMG, 2020.

⁷ 15 In-Demand Skills Tech Professionals Should Focus On. Forbes, 2020.

⁸ Automation and Artificial Intelligence: How Machines are Affecting People and Places. Brookings, 2019.

⁹ 7 Skills That Aren't About to Be Automated. HBR, 2019.

¹⁰ 4 Essential Soft Skills for Successful Remote Work. SHRM, 2020.

Starting to identify skills internally

While knowing the skills needed is a starting point, how can your organization identify if and where these skills already exist internally? Many organizations have turned to advanced skill-tracking mechanisms, such as requiring workers to frequently update a skill profile, noting criteria such as the years of experience with a specific skill and self-perceived level of expertise on that skill. These tracking mechanisms may be cumbersome for employees but should be at the forefront of a TMT organization's priorities. By investing in better skill-tracking programs, your organization can begin to build a more strategic build-buy-borrow talent strategy, which will help avoid future skill gaps in the workforce. Once an organization begins to track skills, a plethora of data and insights becomes available.

Top technical skills:



Data Science & Analytics



Programming & Development



Data Visualization



Artificial Intelligence



Machine Learning

Case study

Google is a proponent of “inclusive growth” and has invested in equipping talent with the digital skills of the future. In February 2022, Google, in partnership with Ford, founded **Michigan Central**, a “digital skills-training program” to provide nontraditional talent with access to trainings and certificates in emerging technology areas.¹¹

Outside of the formal workplace, talent is participating in programs such as **Data Science for All** by Correlation One to boost their data science skills.

¹¹ Google and Ford Launch Digital Skills Training Program for ‘Inclusive Growth’ in Tech, Yahoo, 2022.



Retaining talent

How can your organization work to better meet modern employee expectations and increase employee retention?



Learning culture

Develop a strong learning culture so employees know they can continually reskill at your organization, and therefore never become obsolete to the marketplace. In a KPMG Future of HR study,¹² 77 percent of organizations stated that over the next two to three years, they plan to upskill up to 30 percent of their workforce in technical capabilities. Example strategies include investing in your learning offerings, hosting internal conferences, developing tech mentorship programs, and assigning yearly learning hours/goals, etc. On a larger scale, consider investing in a tech-apprenticeship program to upskill potential new hires with high school diplomas, as well as current employees.



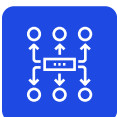
Compensation

Examine the market-competitive compensation for employees with these retrained skills and develop a compensation strategy so employees feel seen and adequately appreciated. Participating in compensation studies with outside vendors can be an easy way to pulse check your current strategy and determine next steps.



Employee experience

Learn more about the employee experience at your organization. Are there small changes that could go a long way in enhancing your employees' experience, for example, investing in health and well-being resources, such as discounted gym memberships or subscriptions to mindfulness and meditation apps? Another example is ensuring that you're providing adequate flexibility. Employees have different needs and preferences, whether that means working from home or working flexible hours to accommodate personal needs. In a postpandemic environment, many organizations will continue to offer this flexibility, so avoid reimposing rigid working rules if they aren't necessary to effectively complete the job.



Lateral movement

Provide clear career paths for lateral career movement or rotation within your organization. No employee wants to devote time to learning a new skill only to be unable to apply that learning to their current assignment. A lateral move may also help an employee pursue a long-term career path that interests them more, thus promoting longevity at your organization.

¹² KPMG Future of HR 2020 insights, KPMG, 2020.

Getting started

Discover what workforce insights are already available

While your organization might have far to go to create actionable and insightful workforce data, some information is likely already available to help you jump-start your journey. Connect with your Workforce Analytics colleagues to better understand what's accessible and use this data to begin to map out your TMT nontraditional workforce strategy.

Better understand your 5- to 10-year business strategy

Your strategic workforce plan should complement your organization's long-term strategy and goals. Meet with your organization's key strategic stakeholders to better understand their thinking and dig deep into the resources they provide. Begin to discern how a nontraditional workforce can fit into this strategy and accelerate growth toward specific organization-wide goals.

Evaluate your skill assessment resources

Evaluate what resources your organization uses to measure employees' skills and competencies. Are these resources able to adequately measure employee proficiencies with the rapidly changing skills that the TMT industry requires? Begin to map out what changes would be needed in your organization's skill assessment process to sufficiently inform your strategic workforce plan. Remember: bad data in = bad data out.

Why invest in nontraditional talent?

- **Expanded talent pools** to recruit and hire from in a highly competitive market
- **Increased retention** of employees, leading to lower cost of turnover
- **Advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion** at your organization

Why act now?

Ten years from now, the TMT organizations that are thriving will be the ones that invested in their ESG strategy and ultimately **their people**. We are in a decade of the talent market where talent has more negotiation power than ever before. Concurrently, organizations need to retain their talent more than ever before. Incorporating nontraditional global talent into your talent strategy will help meet your current needs and needs of the future!

How can KPMG help you with your future workforce strategy?

Backed by deep experience across all industries, KPMG helps organizations develop a talent strategy that embraces new technologies and new ways of working to build a better employee experience. We know how to leverage people analytics and the latest digital technology to develop a culture of innovation that supports effective leadership, upskilling, inclusion, high performance, career mobility, and talent acquisition.

Let us help you

Organizational Strategies

Organization Design | Organization Architecture

Talent Strategies

Leadership Development | Talent Assessment | People Analytics

Learning Services

Learning Strategy and Transformation | Learning Enablement and Analytics Platform



Contact us



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For the past 20 years, Brock has consulted in the area of human capital dynamics supporting executives to scale their companies rapidly. His mission is to advise leaders on future trends that are changing the world of work, challenging the traditional employment model, and transforming how work gets done within and across all functional areas of an organization.

He has led and managed numerous workforce transformations in several industries and functional areas and across all sizes of companies and government agencies. Brock works with leaders to reshape their workforce to align with their company's culture and strategic objectives by identifying the appropriate digital tools, workforce models, and HR processes to focus on hiring and managing, retaining, and developing top talent.

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