Business leaders around the world understand that having the right talent is critical to executing their business strategies. And yet, rapid external changes - including globalization, technological innovation, outsourcing, and demographics - now make the traditional long-term staffing plan irrelevant before it can be printed. Leaders need flexible action plans for recruiting, hiring, and developing the key players they need to implement their business strategies in the near term (1 year) and long term (3-5 years). Such an approach demands collaboration between leaders and their HR business partners – a partnership that establishes the common language and targeted workforce projections that a company needs to align its talent strategy across divisions and functions.

Once limited to calculating the gap between talent supply and demand, workforce planning is now a far more sophisticated process, akin to risk management or supply chain management. Today, workforce planning generates multiple, data-driven forecasts based on a variety of scenarios, enabling an organization to adjust and respond quickly to immediate and future changes to its business requirements.

The Conference Board’s research shows that strategic workforce planning is emerging as a critical need for business leaders as they confront the challenges of the talent marketplace. The Conference Board’s new Working Group on Strategic Workforce Planning will explore best practices in this area through discussions, presentations, and member-guided research. This year-long project will culminate in a published report of the group’s findings to help others raise the quality of their own workforce planning efforts.
Issues

On the Table

A vital part of this working group is the opportunity to participate in candid and confidential discussions about your workforce planning issues. Potential questions to be addressed:

What are the best approaches to workforce planning?

What are key elements of the process to identify talent gaps in your organization? What are the significant barriers to success?

How can you maximize both the efficiency and effectiveness of your company’s strategic workforce planning process?

How do you mine existing data - even when they are incomplete - to get the results you need now?

In addition to headcount and positions, what other variables do you need to track and analyze, and how accessible are these data?

What staffing metrics are most important, and how can they be applied to establish company-wide performance standards?

Workforce planning can align divisions and functions across the enterprise, but only if the right structures and processes are in place:

- At what organizational level should workforce planning be conducted?
- Should it be mandated or optional at the unit or division level?
- How frequently should workforce plans be updated?
- What tools are most effective?
- What kinds of support or training do managers need to enable them to become comfortable with the process?

How should workforce planning be integrated into your HR and business practices to ensure that you:

- Attract and retain the right mix of talent?
- Develop a higher number of “right fit” candidates with the skills and competencies you need for the future?
- Identify critical knowledge gaps and manage knowledge transfer?
- Make the right decision about buying or growing your own talent?
- Balance your near-term and long-term business needs?

Why should you join?

Each company is invited to send two participants to the working group. One should be the senior executive responsible for workforce planning, workforce preparation, staffing, or learning and development. Group size is limited to facilitate the exchange of ideas among participants.

Benefits of participation

Work with Conference Board researchers to design and develop studies and guidelines that will produce useful research for improving workforce planning in your organization.

Learn from outside experts, new research findings, and case studies from leading companies in three face-to-face and two virtual meetings.

Take part in confidential sessions with peers to resolve common challenges.

Exchange experiences, ideas, and insights with other leading corporations.

Contribute, through the working group’s ongoing discussions, to The Conference Board’s highly respected program of research reports, surveys, conferences, and Executive Action online briefs.
Working Group Schedule

The Working Group on Strategic Workforce Planning will meet three times in person and twice via Web conferences over the course of twelve months. In between these meetings, The Conference Board staff will execute research requested by the working group and prepare summaries of the outcomes of each meeting. This schedule will limit your time and travel commitments, and enable us to share information rapidly to achieve your research goals.

Inaugural meeting

**Agenda**

**When**
March 29-31, 2005

**Where**
The Conference Board
845 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

**Participation fee**
$9,000 for Conference Board Associates

Additional Conference Board Resources

**The Conference Board Council Program**

Councils are peer membership groups that provide intimate forums for executives with common responsibilities and interests to share solutions to business challenges with colleagues in other companies, industries, and countries. They are designed to keep executives abreast of the latest developments in their fields and fully informed about new management strategies and tactics. Each council has its own specific membership requirements.

- **Council of Talent Management Executives**
- **Council on Learning Development and Organizational Performance**
- **Council on Development, Education and Training**

For more information on councils, please visit [www.conference-board.org/memberservices/councils.cfm](http://www.conference-board.org/memberservices/councils.cfm)

**Conference Board Conferences**

As a sponsor of a Conference Board Working Group, you receive a 50% discount on all conferences, including:

- **The 2005 Enterprise Learning Strategies Conference**
  The Waldorf-Astoria, New York City
  February 8-9, 2005

- **The 2005 Talent Management Strategies Conference**
  The Grand Hyatt, New York City
  March 14-16, 2005

- **The 2005 Leadership Development Conference-East Coast**
  The Grand Hyatt, New York City
  May 25-26, 2005

- **The 2005 Leadership Development Conference – West Coast**
  Coronado Island Marriott Resort, San Diego
  June 22-23, 2005

For a full listing of our conference program and to register online, please visit [www.conference-board.org/conferences](http://www.conference-board.org/conferences)

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For the latest information on The Conference Board’s Working Group Program, visit [www.conference-board.org/workinggroups.htm](http://www.conference-board.org/workinggroups.htm)