

How identifying emerging leaders can benefit your business

When I graduated from college six years ago, I was about to start my first real job and I was ready to take on the world.

What I did not know was what the world had in store for me. A few months into the start of my first career job, I was soon being asked to help with other projects and then other departments were asking if I could help on their teams. I found myself with such a variety of work and learning so much about all different aspects of the organization. I loved the variety and exposure I was gaining.

A wise mentor once told me to always say, "Yes." And that is what I did. With my drive and desire to succeed I enjoyed the opportunities. I was soon meeting with and presenting to leadership and enjoying the recognition I received. I started hearing



Courtney Lamers

my superiors talking about emerging leaders and that I had been identified as one.

They mentioned attributes like self-starter, independent worker, team player, good communicator and solid work ethic, and I realize that there was a reason I was being asked to assist with these projects — whether it was a test or not, I knew there was a purpose behind it. I had been identified as an emerging leader and I was on a path toward bigger things.

While my leaders told me about my status as an emerging leader, according to a recent MRA Hot Topic Survey on Emerging Leaders,

only 62% identify emerging leaders. I would question why more organizations do not identify their emerging leaders, as this contributes to retention, succession planning, professional development and more.

The survey also revealed the top five criteria often used to identify emerging leaders:

1. High performer (91 percent)
2. High potential (90 percent)
3. Demonstrates motivation and desire to grow in their career (88 percent)
4. Behavior aligns with organizational values (80 percent)
5. Team player (80 percent)

Developing an emerging leader program is highly recommended, and organizations have seen many positives such as an increase in employee retention, better

morale, and better succession planning since identifying emerging leaders. Despite that, respondents did indicate reasons why they have not implemented a program as yet: 47% due to a lack of resources, 38% due to other priorities, and 38% are unsure of their organization's emerging leader's strategy.

Defining what your organization finds critical in leadership is important to help the organization succeed. These leadership competencies may include communication skills, strategic thinking, adaptability, team building and decision-making abilities. At the same time, these traits should align with the organization's values, culture and strategic goals. Other factors to consider may include high performers, those with the potential for growth, employees who are willing

to take on new challenges, the ability to influence others, and the demonstration of leadership behaviors.

MRA recommends that the criteria should be objective and measurable to ensure fairness and consistency in the identification process.

I am proud to be an emerging leader and I know that an emerging leader program can be a valuable investment for organizations that want to cultivate a strong leadership pipeline and ensure long-term success. That is why MRA is helping companies develop strong emerging leader programs, and I am excited to be heading this initiative. It provides opportunities for identifying, developing and retaining talented employees who have the potential to become future leaders within the organization.

By offering targeted training, mentoring and growth opportunities, an emerging leader program can help employees enhance their leadership skills, build relationships and foster a sense of commitment to the organization. This, in turn, can lead to improved employee retention, increased employee engagement and morale, enhanced organizational performance, and a competitive advantage in the talent market.

To learn more about how your company can start an emerging leader program, or improve on an existing program, contact Courtney Lamers at Courtney.Lamers@mranet.org.

• Courtney Lamers is Senior Manager, Member Engagement with MRA — The Management Association.

Why small businesses deserve big benefits

In today's competitive job market, employees are looking for a wide range of benefits — many of which can be the deciding factor when choosing an employer.

According to SHRM's 2022 Employee Benefits Survey, employees' priorities have shifted when it comes to the benefits they are seeking. Wellness benefits now topping the list include mental health and overall well-being, such as flexible work arrangements, paid mental health time off and four-day work weeks.

While priorities continue to evolve, one thing has stayed the same: current and prospective employees still expect a robust health benefits package, including strong dental benefits options.

Employees still care (a lot) about dental coverage.



Karyn Glogowski

Not only can a competitive health benefits package boost the reputations of small businesses and help them stand out against larger companies, but it also has a big impact on the overall wellness and satisfaction of employees.

Increased employee satisfaction:

Providing a comprehensive benefits package — one that includes robust dental benefits — can help increase overall employee satisfaction by demonstrating a commitment to employee well-being. The right benefits package is no small thing, as

80% of employees who rank their benefits satisfaction as extremely high or very high also rank their job satisfaction as extremely high or very high.

Improved productivity: Dental benefits with preventive care, such as checkups and exams, help keep employees from missing work to receive emergency dental care and avoid unnecessary stress and time-management issues. In fact, one report revealed that an average of 252 million work or school hours were lost annually due to dental issues in the U.S., of which 92 million were for urgent or unplanned visits.

Employee well-being: Oral health is connected to overall health and well-being — and over 80% of adults believe dental coverage is an important part of overall wellness. People with dental

coverage are nearly 50% more likely to visit the dentist at least once a year compared to those without coverage, according to the 2023 Delta Dental State of America's Oral Health and Wellness Report. By providing dental benefits, small businesses can help their employees maintain good oral and overall health and prevent future issues.

Attracting and retaining top talent:

A comprehensive benefits package can help small businesses compete with larger companies when it comes to attracting and retaining top talent.

Prospective employees and jobseekers will factor in a benefits package offered by a company when evaluating job opportunities.

Cost savings: If left untreated, dental problems

can become more extensive. By offering dental benefits, small businesses can help their employees access preventive dental care and catch any issues early, which can reduce the cost of more complex and expensive dental care in the future.

Overall, a strong dental benefits package can be a valuable investment for small businesses. It can help attract and retain talented employees, promote employee wellness, and improve overall employee satisfaction and productivity. There are several ways to make dental benefits affordable — for your business and employees.

Employers can fully fund the plan. Voluntary plans give businesses access to dental coverage to offer to employees while individual and

family plans are purchased directly by employees.

To ensure the benefits offered are maximized, it's important to make sure employees understand the full value of a health benefits package. Educating employees on the benefits made available is a critical part of ensuring they understand benefits contribute to their overall compensation and are able to make informed decisions about getting the most out of their benefits.

To stay competitive in today's labor market, consider exploring a dental benefits package that will support your employees' oral and overall health.

• Karyn Glogowski is Senior Vice President, Enterprise Sales and Business Development at Delta Dental of Illinois.

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Creative Recruiting Strategies for Today



Kathy Seidel

Recruiting has become a significant challenge for many employers, and recruiters must be more creative to find top talent. MRA — The Management Association helps hundreds of organizations across the Midwest find quality

talent for their open roles, and has some ideas that are working for organizations, both large and small, to bring in the best talent.

External Recruiting Ideas

- Host in-house career fairs. Let people take a tour and learn about your company openings and benefits in a more relaxed environment.
- Purchase booth space at local festivals and county fairs. While this may produce less traffic than the larger events, the rental costs are much lower.
- Check local business news, trade, and professional publications to see what companies are doing. If a company is laying off, contact the HR person at that company and offer to conduct interviews on the spot.

Online Recruiting Ideas

- Include a careers page on your website that features open positions, your culture, and gives an opportunity to apply online. Many low-cost Applicant Tracking Systems offer career page extensions at no additional cost.
- Elevate your job postings or careers page with a 1 to 2-minute video showing a "day in the life." With just a smartphone, you can create a video worth more than a thousand words.
- Encourage your team to use LinkedIn to ask other people in your "network" and "groups" whom they know to expand your reach.
- Make job postings marketing-focused and sell candidates on your company. What's in it for them?
- Utilize free job boards and sites such as the workforce development center (some counties have their own, in addition to state boards), and university/tech school career service department sites.

- Use university alumni associations — they may offer a website or email service specifically for postings.
- Contact industry experts for paid postings on major sites like LinkedIn and Indeed, sponsorship can get expensive if not monitored correctly.

College Campus/Tech School Recruiting

- Attend career fairs at colleges and technical schools. Often alumni or community members will also attend.
- Contact college instructors who teach courses for specifically needed skills. They are always looking for guest speakers and want to know they're teaching relevant information. Information can be found easily on most school websites.
- Present to universities and technical schools to increase your brand awareness on campus and improve the number of resumes you receive. Typically, these discussions are industry-focused on a particular course of study — not on your company.

Ongoing Recruiting

- Start an employee referral bonus program. That can include a bonus for the referral and referee!
- Keep track of how your interviewees and hires found your posting. Not only will this help you know where good postings are, but it will help you reduce expenses by cutting out the sources that don't work.
- Develop and utilize an ongoing internship program for high school, technical school, and university students. This could cut your expenses and groom a loyal workforce.
- Work with Hiring Managers to determine transferrable skills for ongoing openings. With the changing labor market, you never know where your next hire could come from.

It's time to make recruiting creative and fun to attract the right talent! MRA can help. Contact our dedicated Recruiting team at Recruiting.Services@mranet.org

SOURCE: Kathy Seidel, PHR, CDR, Manager, Recruiting Services for MRA — The Management Association.

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