



Pinpoint Hidden Talent



Organisations work hard to recruit the best talent. They put out compelling recruitment ads and hiring managers scrutinise applicants' resumes for indicators of the right skills and experience. Once people are hired, however, the details of their backgrounds are easily forgotten.

This phenomenon is referred to as "resumenesia", a malady causing massive cases of forgetfulness about past experiences that may be the key to unlocking extra value in your organisation's existing talent pool, according to Eric J. McNulty, Director, Research and Professional Programmes at the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative.

In a *strategy+business* blog post, McNulty provides a personal example to help explain this phenomenon. He was working as creative director at a publishing company that decided to try its hand at holding a conference. Before the company could sign a six-figure contract with an outside consultant to produce the event, McNulty came up with an alternative proposal. While McNulty had never produced a conference, he had helped put on retail store openings, product launches, and other large-scale events prior to joining this company.

"When I started asking around, I was quickly able to put together an internal team with sufficient experience and expertise to handle the conference, and because the members of this ad hoc team knew the internal processes and culture, we were able to ramp up our plans for the conference rapidly and efficiently," McNulty writes. The conference went so well that conferences became an independent line of the company's business, which he led for several years.

Companies with long-tenure cultures have an advantage in preventing resumenesia because internal experience will be remembered. But even at such companies, McNulty says getting the full benefit from an employee's experiences is left to chance if the information isn't captured in a systematic and easily accessible way. Organisations can prevent resumenesia by doing the following steps:

Build and propagate internal talent profiles. McNulty says one global firm he has worked with has a robust, searchable internal social network where employees can post their experience, skills, and interests. LinkedIn has recently launched its Lookup feature, which lets companies use the popular professional network in much the same way.

Make it easy for ad hoc teams to pilot new ideas. For example, a manufacturing company regularly gives employees time and seed funding for trial initiatives. They were able to build a profitable customer base made up of small businesses in one ethnic community because a group of their employees with that same background thought that these businesses held unrealised potential for the company's products. The company

didn't hire a consultant — interested employees stepped forward to assemble a team that put together a trade show booth and went out to meet the small-business owners face to face.

Create intentional bump-and-connect opportunities. When people are seen in only one role or confined to a functional silo, knowledge about them is naturally limited. Companies should promote activities where senior managers can spend time with employees and supervisors in a non-hierarchical setting for them to really get to know each other. At one company, for example, business units are required to hold their meetings on a floor other than the one where they have their offices. This forced movement results in spontaneous stairway conversations that enhance cross-unit information flow.

Source: [strategy+business](#)

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