

Is there a lack of talent or a surplus of managers?

Tips for getting the most from the people you lead, from taking advantage of older employees' knowledge, to polishing your company's image as an employer.



May 9, 2024

Management consulting powerhouse Peter Drucker once asked a meeting of presidents and CEOs of major U.S. companies who among them had a problem with employees [lacking in](#)

[motivation](#). Nearly everyone raised a hand. Drucker's follow-up question then was: Were they like that when you hired them or did they lose their motivation along the way?

In a [new book](#), IESE's [Guido Stein](#) brings together a range of thoughtful opinion pieces, gathered from his years as a professor in the Managing People in Organizations Department and his wide reading of management texts. He identifies a few key inflection points in the current workplace environment and the challenges facing businesspeople.

In speaking with managers and other professionals who participate in his classes, he says: "So many of them could be much more satisfied with how things are going, and they're eager to keep learning and improving."

You may also be interested in: [Drucker: Classic advice for turbulent times](#)

Stein has noticed that businesspeople frequently bemoan a lack of available talent. "But they don't do enough to diagnose why it feels that way. They have talented people already working for them, but often they have failed to [motivate those people](#)."

One cohort that aren't lacking in enthusiasm are the "yolds," the young old demographic, which is gaining ground as the population ages. Stein observes that employees' desire to grow and develop is not inversely correlated with age — the most mature employees are often the most enthusiastic.

Despite this, there are fewer opportunities for this cohort to thrive in companies, even as the number of young people entering the labor market is falling. Businesses should aim to attract young talent, of course, but also try to tap the latent talent they already have.

Still no talent? Polish your image as an employer

More than ever, Stein suggests, companies should keep an eye on their personal brands. Nowadays, everyone has a platform to discuss what they like or don't like about a company, from LinkedIn to job portals like Glassdoor.

If you find some less-than-stellar ratings, it pays to devise strategies to address them. Consider posting positive comments or clarifications to negative ones transparently and quickly, and analyze the real impact they make.

These are complex times for doing business, but we can all take small steps to forge a stronger company with a more motivated workforce.

www.iese.edu/insight