

Redeployment: Connecting Talent to Organizational Workforce Needs

By Melvin Scales



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In order to keep pace with changing business demands, organizations may need to realign their workforce, eliminating roles and functions in areas that are no longer viable, while growing other areas of the business.

How an organization approaches this strategic initiative has a powerful impact on those who are transitioning out of the company and those who remain. Successfully navigating organizational change can mean the difference between an engaged, committed and productive workforce, and a company unable to meet the business goals intended as a result of the change in business strategy.

Our experience at Right Management shows us that more organizations are employing an innovative strategic approach to workforce management — seeing an opportunity to re-evaluate workforce needs in growing sectors of the organization by redeploying talented employees impacted by organizational change to new roles within the company. With better alignment of business and talent needs, organizations can meet the challenges presented by the growing shortage of highly skilled workers by holding on to talented and high-potential employees through organizational change.

Offering a redeployment solution can play a valuable role in the effectiveness of your workforce strategy. Tools and resources in a redeployment solution assist individuals in effectively managing their own careers, or identifying potential new roles that align their competencies with organizational needs, or assisting them in transitioning to new opportunities outside the company. This commitment to your employees' continued success will help them to effectively navigate change, ensure high levels of engagement, and position the organization to achieve strategic goals, while creating a powerful brand image.

Understanding the Business Challenges

Workforce reductions are a strategic imperative employed to realign talent needs with the business strategy.

Prevalence of Redeployment.

Redeployment is an increasingly important workforce management strategy.

Do you redeploy employees within the organization before making layoffs?

22% - Yes, we always offer redeployment first

29% - Yes, we sometimes offer redeployment first

49% - No, we do not offer redeployment before making layoffs

The need to manage costs is an important driver, and organizations need to balance traditional costs incurred in a downsizing—hard costs like severance and outplacement benefits, soft costs like the loss of institutional knowledge—against the cost benefits. And if not managed well, organizational restructurings can result in additional costs as a result of decreased engagement and productivity of remaining employees who often face a great deal of change and uncertainty, lower morale, shifting responsibilities and increased workloads. It may also damage the company's brand and undermine its hard-earned reputation for corporate social responsibility.

Then there is the risk posed by diminished loyalty and commitment of those who remain resulting in potentially high turnover, and additional recruiting and training costs for new employees.

Another challenge organizations face is the very real talent crunch. Economic conditions may be volatile but an overwhelming demographic fact persists: as the baby boomer generation retires, follow-on generations are simply too small to fully replace the numbers lost. And it isn't just about numbers. There is a skills gap. Where will organizations find the talent to help them thrive in the future? Do they not risk losing hard, or even impossible, to replace talent during a restructuring? What happens when the business cycle turns and conditions improve?

Talent: A Key Priority

While restructuring usually entails downsizing in some units of an organization, it often also requires new hiring in other units. This presents opportunities for aligning an organization's workforce management strategy with its evolving business strategy. Redeployment can be a valuable strategic option to ensure you don't lose valuable, talented employees to your competition. With assistance they can be redeployed to new, more viable segments of the organization. Why fill new positions externally when existing employees with proven talent, experience and a greater understanding of the organization's culture are available?

Redeployment, the systematic migration of talent from a redundant role and business area to a productive role and business area, successfully addresses challenges organizations face when navigating organizational change. Organizations that include a meaningful redeployment program as part of their restructuring efforts signal a firm commitment to the security and welfare of their workforces and the communities in which they live.

Redeployment creates a culture of engagement that recognizes and rewards high-performers and keeps them performing at their best. It helps identify and develop high-potential talent capable of filling future, as well as present, roles. It has clear, positive implications for employee morale and productivity, business performance, brand image, corporate responsibility, the conservation of institutional knowledge and the retention of increasingly scarce talent. With redeployment, employees are no longer passive objects of workforce restructuring but active partners in the organization's drive to meet new market opportunities while effectively managing the inherent strategic change.

Leadership at the highest levels must recognize the strategic benefits of redeployment and ensure the commitment of managers at every business unit to meeting redeployment objectives. Leadership must also ensure that the organization provides employees with opportunities for re-training. In many cases, skills will need to be transferred and, indeed, in some cases new skills will need to be acquired, which may take time and require resources.

For their part, employees must be made aware of career options and opportunities for redeployment; be motivated to accept change and adapt to new roles; be willing to accept accountability for managing their careers within the organization; be able to assess accurately their talent, skill and potential; be adept at marketing their strengths effectively; and be equipped to evaluate offers and make the transition to a new role.

Successful redeployment requires organizations to adopt a structured, systematic approach which encourages and supports the retention of talented and high-performing employees. Right

Management has developed a flexible and strategic solution to help organizations effectively manage the redeployment process, from self-discovery to onboarding that can be executed on a global, regional or local scale. Employees develop self-marketing skills and hone these to identify and apply for new positions. Right Redeployment consists of a series of six linked modules delivered in three distinct phases by means of individual and group learning opportunities, one-to-one coaching and a powerful, interactive web portal.

Raising the Bar for Excellence

Right Management's redeployment model sets a new benchmark for excellence. Our proven methodology, skilled people, state-of-the-art technology and innovative approach creates a highly-customized and personalized solution that ensures your organization has the right people in the right roles to successfully meet business objectives and continue to grow.

An important feature of Right Redeployment is its compatibility with outplacement initiatives, and a key Right Management strength is our ability to deliver both redeployment and outplacement services—in concert or as separate initiatives.

CASE STUDY: Linking Redeployment With Outplacement

Redeployment can be an effective strategic tool when linked with your outplacement solution. Consider the case of a national telecommunications firm for which Right Management provided both a redeployment and outplacement solution. We found that employees who participated in redeployment activities emerged better prepared not only for redeployment but for the pursuit of external positions. The redeployment skills they acquired primed them for the external job market so that those employees who ultimately choose external over internal jobs often found those jobs long before requiring outplacement services. Among the benefits to the client was the positive impression of the organization that outgoing employees took with them. Having provided such comprehensive and effective job-search support, the organization is well positioned to bring back any of these individuals as contractors, consultants or even employees should future conditions warrant.

Achieving Great Results

The beneficial outcomes of actual Right Redeployment engagements are well documented.

- ◆ A national telecommunications firm saved \$2.5 million in separation costs that the company would otherwise have had to bear had it relied on outplacement alone.
- ◆ A national bank, estimates that it saves 2.5 times the salary of each of the 300 to 400 employees our program helps redeploy every year.
- ◆ When a global financial services provider introduced our program, redeployment rates increased from 10% to 70%, and the client estimated a four-to-one return on its annual investment.

- ◆ When a government agency decided to consolidate two departments and reduce its headcount by 25,000 people, it approached Right Management for help devising a long-term redeployment process. A team of 70 Right Management consultants, thoroughly briefed on the client's unique culture and processes, delivered redeployment support services to thousands of employees across the United States. Our redeployment workshops were so beneficial that nearly 100% of participants indicated a willingness to recommend them to others.
- ◆ Right Management recently worked with a civil service organization that chose to outsource services previously provided by one of its units. We were asked to help redeploy 30 employees and provide career transition services for thousands of others. At the end of a one-year contract, we successfully redeployed all 30 employees and found positions outside of the organization for over 400 others.

In the changing world of work, the one constant is the need for an exceptional workforce. Even in a period of hiring freezes, restructurings and downsizings, finding ways to retain valuable talent remains an imperative. Redeployment offers an effective means of meeting this imperative while delivering cost savings and improved performance. It engages employees in the change process, identifies options and opportunities available to them within the organization, and provides training and resources to help them secure a new role that both meets their career objectives and contributes to organizational goals.

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Linkage is a global organizational development company that specializes in leadership development. We provide clients around the globe with integrated solutions that include strategic consulting services, customized leadership development and training experiences, tailored assessment services, and benchmark research. Linkage's mission is to connect high-performing leaders and organizations to the futures they want to create.

With a relentless commitment to learning, Linkage also offers conferences, institutes, summits, open-enrollment workshops, and distance learning programs on leading-edge topics in leadership, management, human resources, and organizational development. More than 200,000 leaders and managers have attended Linkage programs since 1988.

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