

## **ITPMG Insights**

# **Resource Management Tools**

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**Subject:** A frequently asked resource management question by our clients is: “What tools are companies using to assess their needs for people resources to get them *just in time*? An example would be that there is a need for two developers for a particular project and as needs are entered into a system, an HR function allocates the two resources. Is anyone using any application such as this? How are people filling these needs?”

### **About Resource Management**

Resource Management is the efficient and effective deployment of an organization's resources when they are needed. Such resources may include financial resources, inventory, human skills, production resources, or information technology. For our purposes, the Resource Management Tools included in this list focus on allocating human resources among various projects or business units, maximizing the utilization of available personnel resources to achieve business goals; and performing the activities that are necessary in the maintenance of that workforce through identification of staffing requirements and professional development.

What is required for any human resource management system are search criteria to identify and qualify the employees that are needed. Among the criteria are skills and competencies, education and certifications, professional experiences and history, and completed assignments. It is the source of this information that is the biggest test. Whether it is resumes, job descriptions, skills databases, performance reviews, or assignment experiences, *it is imperative that this type of information is available in a form usable by the selected tool, and the information is credible and verifiable.*

Regardless of the criteria and quantity of employee data, the most challenging part of this process is the collection of this information. Many companies, especially those that take a skills-based approach, establish a process of (1) setting skills or assignment standards, (2) assessing those skills and assignments through employee and manager assessment, (3) reviewing the employee data by the supervisor, manager, mentor or coach, and (4) storing the results in a talent management database used by the appropriate tool.

Most HR Talent Management systems provide a myriad of functions that overlap with each other. It is best to first identify the functions that are desired before being exposed to all of the systems available in the marketplace. There are literally hundreds of tools that go from simple, single function solutions to extremely comprehensive offerings such as those provided in Enterprise Resource Planning systems.

## **Skills-Based Tools**

A Skills-Based Tool is the technology used as part of a Skills/Competency Management program. They are usually defined in terms of a skills framework, also known as a competency framework or skills matrix. This consists of a list of skills, and a grading system, with a definition of what it means to be at particular level for a given skill. Skills Management needs to be conducted as an ongoing process, with individuals assessing and updating their recorded skill sets regularly. These updates should occur at least as frequently as employees' regular line manager reviews, and certainly when their skill sets have changed.

### Advantages

1. Skills standards established by position within job family.
2. Accurate, verifiable, measurable skills add to integrity of search criteria.
3. Identifies gaps for training and career development.
4. Prepares skills-based curriculum.
5. Identifies recruitment needs.
6. Provides a focus for employee/manager career development dialogue.
7. Establishes a basis for succession planning.

### Disadvantages

1. Requires significant front end work to establish skills structure.
2. Requires periodic skills updates and employee assessments.

### Sample Skills-Based Tools

SkillQuest – People Sciences, Inc.  
InfoBasis  
SkillAbility

### Sample Skills Libraries

SkillsPlex Library – People Sciences, Inc.  
Avilar

## **Human Resource Systems with Employee History**

Human Resource Systems are comprehensive systems that provide a large amount of information about employees. They often contain employee history, skills, education, certifications, and more. The system may have the ability to search this information to find candidates for open positions, succession planning and other purposes.

### Advantages

1. Normally contains significant information about each employee including job history, performance reviews, skills and competencies, and other relevant information.

2. Is part of an overall human resource system.

#### Disadvantages

1. Requires a significant investment in time, resources and money to set up and maintain.
2. Can be unwieldy and administratively challenging in terms of getting employee information specifically for talent management.

#### Sample Human Resource Systems

1. HRnet Software Systems
2. iVantage – Spectrum
3. Oracle Human Capital Management
4. Plateau Talent Management

### **Resume-Based and Applicant Tracking Tools**

Resume-Based and Applicant Tracking Tools can form the basis for employee information that originate in a resume. Companies have built on this information to form an employee database that can be searched.

#### Advantages

1. Often related to recruitment activities.
2. Provides a database of applicants and employees.

#### Disadvantages

1. Credibility and integrity of information can be in question based on the preparer's honesty.
2. Often does not contain sufficient information to form a basis for talent management.
3. Difficult to maintain.

#### Sample Resume-Based and Applicant Tracking Tools

1. SilkRoad Technology

### **Talent Management Tools**

Talent management is a professional term that gained popularity in the late 1990s. It refers to the process of developing and fostering new workers through onboarding, developing and keeping current workers and attracting highly skilled workers to work for your company. Companies that are engaged in talent management (human capital management) are strategic and deliberate in how they source, attract, select, train, develop, promote, and move employees through the organization.

#### Advantages

1. Incorporates skills, performance, succession planning and other relevant functions.
2. Comprehensive functionality.

#### Disadvantages

1. Relatively new in the marketplace.
2. Requires a strong commitment both tactically and strategically.
3. Can require customer to modify their existing human resource processes and methodologies to the package.

#### Sample Talent Management Tools

1. SuccessFactors
2. SumTotal Systems
3. Cognos

### **Learning Management Systems**

A Learning Management System is a high-level, strategic solution for planning, delivering, and managing most learning events within an organization, including online, virtual classroom, and instructor-led courses. Some have incorporated talent management functionality to provide a more robust tool. These functions can include skills and competencies, career development and other capabilities.

#### Advantages

1. Ties in to existing training and development activities.
2. Comprehensive course offerings.
3. Sometimes can link skills to training courses.

#### Disadvantages

1. Requires a commitment to learning management solutions.
2. Skills component is typically weak.

#### Sample Learning Management Systems

1. Saba Software
2. Apex Learning
3. ANGEL Learning
4. Desire2Learn
5. SAP Enterprise Learning

### **Conclusions**

Criteria for selecting a specific approach and a specific tool to support that approach include number of employees, culture, readiness, history and more. Before an approach is selected, a short review of these criteria should be conducted for the company.

Generally, the most effective and efficient solution is one which is simple to implement and deploy, easy to use, and flexible. Complicated as well as comprehensive solutions often run into problems due to their complexity. For any program to be successful, the company must:

1. Secure and maintain senior management commitment
2. Put supporting human resource policies in place
3. Identify major constituencies and assure value to each
4. Plan for effective change management
5. Institutionalize the management process
6. Allow for employee empowerment
7. Set manager and supervisor accountabilities and roles

### **Recommendation**

To find the right employees with the right capabilities at the right time requires a skills-based solution. A good skills system will have a built-in skills library that will allow the company to select its skills requirements rather than build them from scratch. The system will have a *candidate search* capability along with a *skills gap analysis* function to identify organizational, unit and project strengths and weaknesses.

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