



# FUTURE OF WORK

OIGP Global Research Study 2019

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## OIGP GLOBAL RESEARCH STUDY 2019

Talent managers from over 1,000 organizations in 25 countries where OI Global Partners does business participated in our fourth annual survey, conducted from July through September 2019 with an online questionnaire delivered via email.

As in previous surveys, OI Global Partners set out to understand

- Which skills employees must have to be competitive today
- The most significant people challenges currently facing organizations
- The most effective ways to develop talent in 2019

We expanded the question set to include, for the first time

- The impact new technology is expected to have on jobs
- The use of structured talent management systems by organizations
- The prevalence of employer brand strategies and reasons for implementing them

Organizations of all sizes are represented, with half reporting more than 500 employees. Likewise, answers come from every one of 16 major industry groups, with heaviest response from Financial Services; Business Support & Logistics; Technology, Telecom, Internet & Electronics; and Manufacturing. Three quarters of respondents are from Human Resources or General Management functions and geographically, survey participants are skewed towards Europe.

# MOST VALUED SKILLS

We asked survey participants to identify up to six skills that are most valued in their organizations in 2019.

“  
**The most valuable employees are excellent collaborators.  
They embrace change by possessing the ability to adapt to uncertainty.  
They exhibit leadership agility in rapidly changing conditions.  
They communicate clearly, and they’re creative, critical thinkers.**  
”

Collaborating with others is emphatically the most valued skill today, with 73% of respondents indicating it is the skill most appreciated in their employees. This is the first time collaboration reached the top spot; last year it was ranked second, eclipsed by leadership agility.



Embracing change; that is, having the agility and resilience to adapt to uncertainty, is ranked second in this year’s survey, at 63%, a full ten percentage points behind collaboration, but barely ahead of leadership agility (62%), which is the ability to take effective action in complex, rapidly changing conditions. In the next tier of importance, communicating clearly (51%) takes the fourth-ranked spot followed by critical thinking (42%) and creativity (42%) along with eagerness to learn (40%).



Intuitively we recognize the size of an organization determines the value it places on particular skills. Our data reinforces this. Organizations with more than 10,000 employees emphasize leadership agility and the ability to embrace change even more than collaboration. Small organizations with fewer than 500 employees value collaboration most highly, but they put more emphasis on critical thinking, eagerness to learn, emotional intelligence, and commercial acumen than do their colleagues in larger settings.

Comparing the skill profiles by country, collaboration is consistently ranked first regardless of geographic region, but other skills are ranked differently depending on the country. The Netherlands puts great stock in an employee’s eagerness to learn; France in embracing change; the Nordics in leadership agility. The U.S. profile is most different from other countries, with five skills valued very similarly: collaboration (65%), leadership agility (63%), embracing change (62%), communicating clearly (62%), and critical thinking (62%). Small wonder recruitment is the number one challenge of talent managers in the U.S., with five very highly valued skills they are seeking to find in employees.

Rank	2019	2018	2017
1	Collaboration	Leadership agility	Communicating clearly
2	Embracing change	Collaboration	Leadership agility
3	Leadership agility	Creativity	Eagerness to learn
4	Communicating clearly	Communicating clearly	Emotional intelligence
5 (tie)	Creativity Critical thinking	Eagerness to learn	Understanding analytics

## MOST SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE CHALLENGES

The same five people challenges have occupied the top spots each year we have conducted this survey; they've just traded places.

Adapting to change is the single most challenging issue faced by talent managers in 2019. It's the most troubling people challenge identified by those in France (67%), Switzerland (61%), Ireland (60%) and the Nordics (67%), as well as those in the smallest (57%) and largest (60%) settings. Across the board, 6 in 10 talent managers say adapting to change is their overarching issue.

In the U.S., however, recruitment (53%) and retention (54%) are much more problematic, with adapting to change ranked fourth on the U.S. list of challenges (46%).

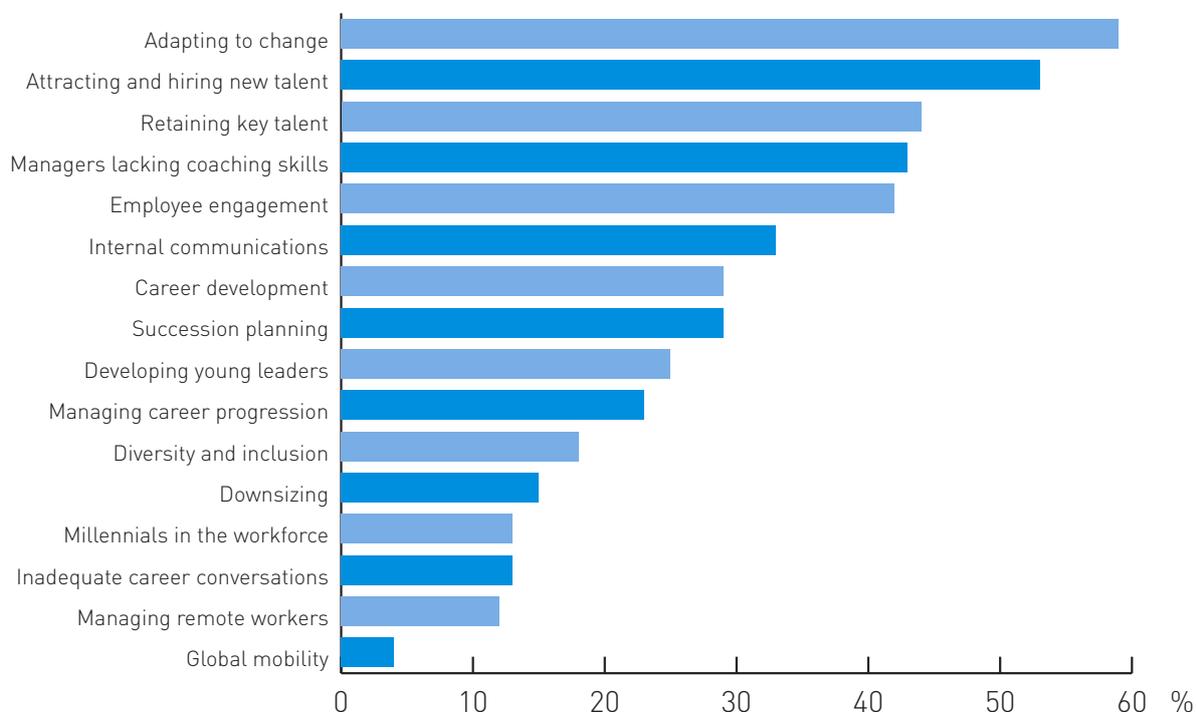
Recruiting new employees (53%), engaging them in the work (42%), and retaining them (44%) are consistently among the most reported people challenges this past year. Recruitment is particularly acute in the Netherlands (63%), the U.S. (53%), and the Nordics (64%); retention is particularly acute in the U.S. (54%). Employee engagement captures significant attention in Ireland (55%), France (48%), and the Netherlands (47%).

Overall, our population of respondents recognizes a lack of managers' coaching skills in the top five biggest challenges they face (43%). In Ireland, Switzerland, and the U.S., this issue is reported by more than half of talent managers. It appears that lack of coaching skills coupled with inadequate career conversations impedes much of the human resources agenda in organizations.



“The same five people challenges have occupied the top spots each year.”

## THE BIGGEST PEOPLE CHALLENGES



Rank	2019	2018	2017	2016
1	Adapting to change	Attracting and hiring talent	Adapting to change	Attracting and hiring talent
2	Attracting and hiring talent	Adapting to change	Employee engagement	Adapting to change
3	Retaining key talent	Managers lack coaching skills	Attracting and hiring talent	Retaining key talent
4	Managers lack coaching skills	Retaining key talent	Managers lack coaching skills	Managers lack coaching skills
5	Employee engagement	Employee engagement	Retaining key talent	Employee engagement

# MOST EFFECTIVE TALENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

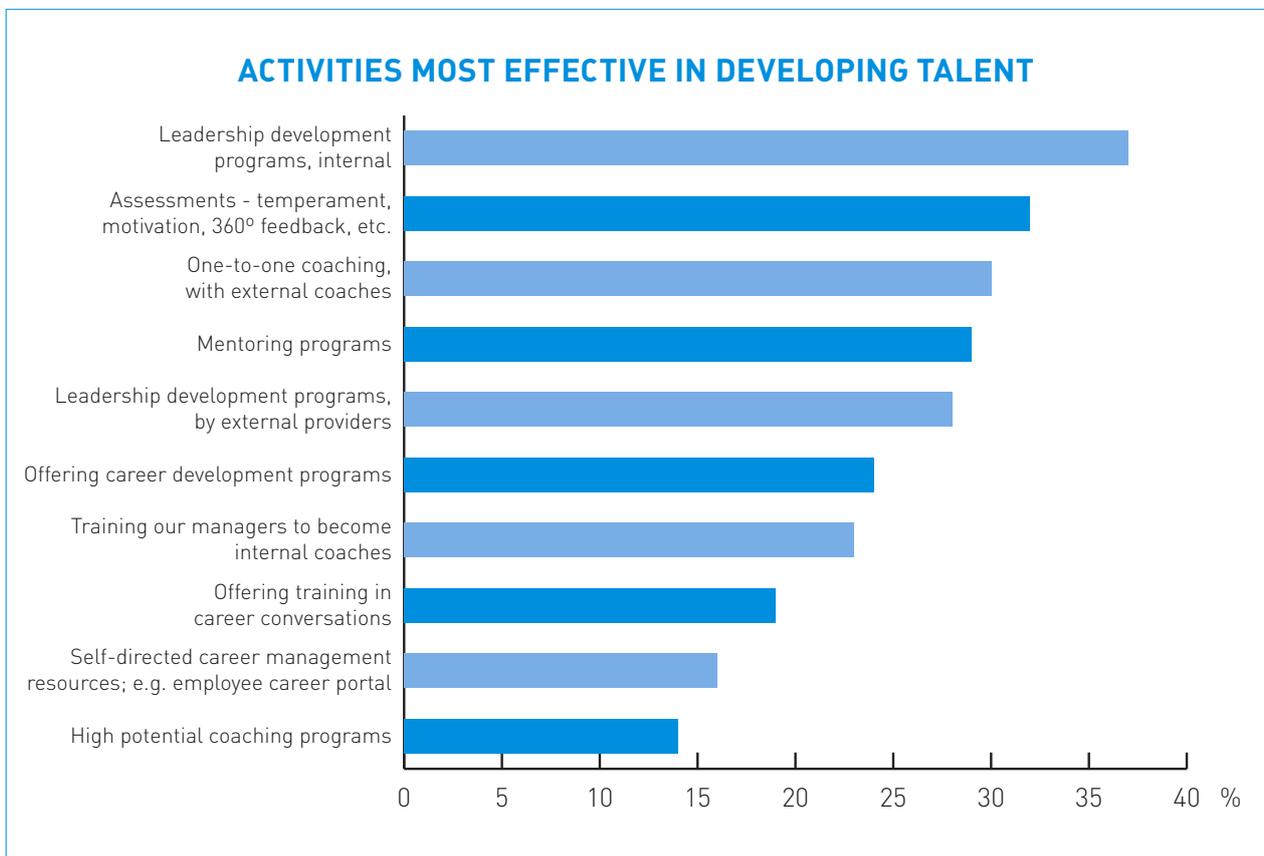
The conclusion to be drawn from the data is that a variety of talent development activities are utilized and found to be effective, according to our respondents.

Internal leadership development programs, the traditional means of developing employees, are favored (37%) over external providers' programs (28%). This is a consistent differential in every survey we have conducted. Assessments are reported to be very effective in development (32%), followed by one-to-one coaching with external coaches (30%) and mentoring programs (29%).

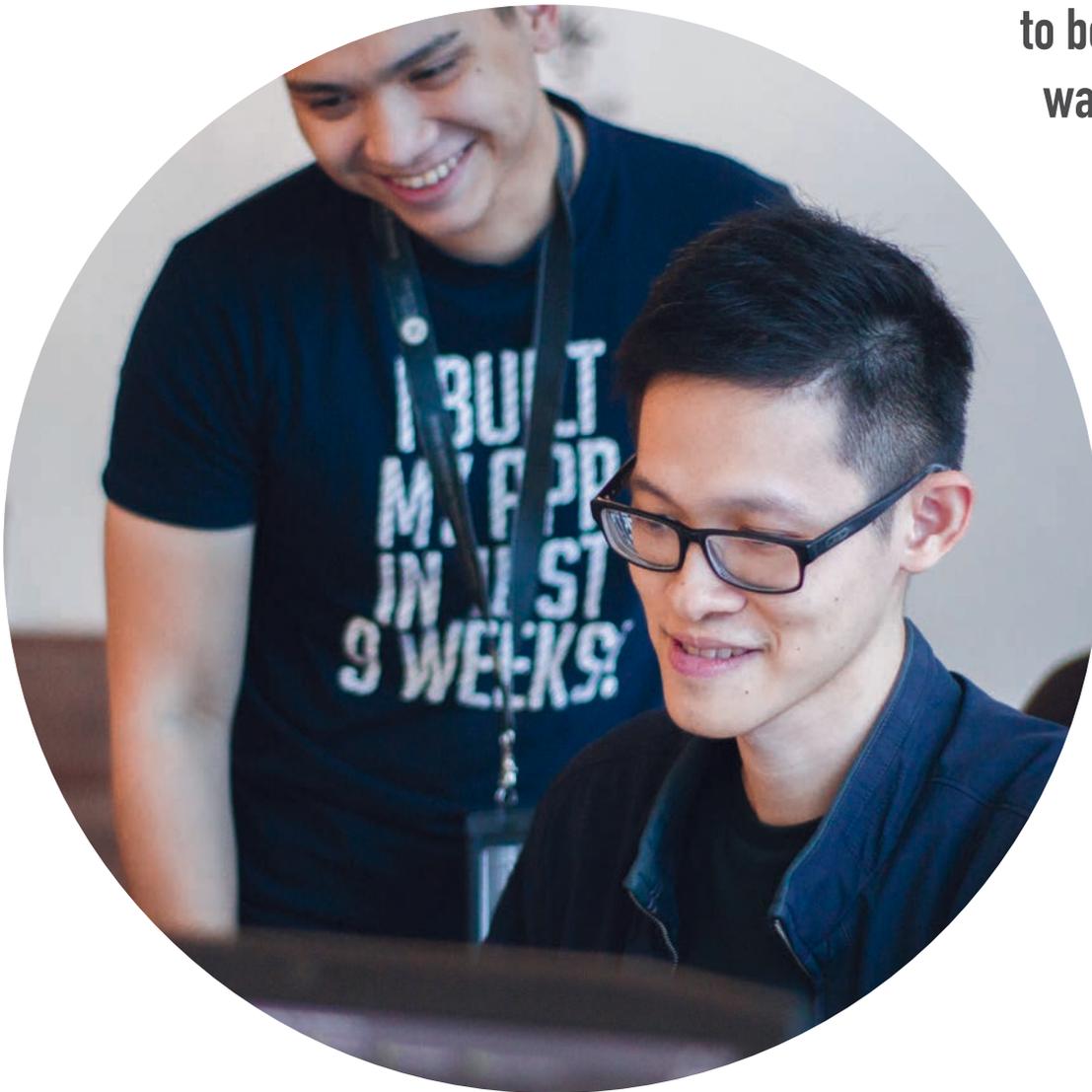
Coaching continues to be an effective way to develop employees, judging by the prominence of three coaching activities on the list of most effective activities: training managers to become internal coaches, one-to-one coaching by external coaches, and coaching programs for high-potentials.

Offering career development programs (24%) and training employees to have productive career conversations (19%) are still seen by many to be effective means of developing talent, but career conversations have lost their first-ranked position of two years ago.

Self-directed career management resources have taken hold as viable and effective development activities. They have garnered at least 10% of responses each year we have conducted the survey, growing in importance to 16% in 2019. These employee career portals are typically web-based e-learning offerings that are customized to meet the objectives of each employer organization.



“Coaching continues to be an effective way to develop employees.”



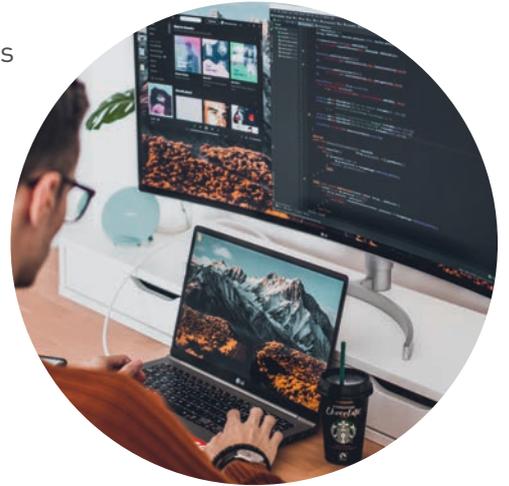
Rank	2019	2018	2017
1	Internal LD programs	Internal LD programs	Career conversations
2	Assessments	Annual personal development reviews	Internal LD programs
3	One-to-one coaching with external providers	Assessments	Assessments
4	Mentoring programs	Mentoring programs	Mentoring programs
5	External LD programs	Training managers as internal coaches	One-to-one coaching with external coaches

# IMPACT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY ON JOBS

About three quarters of talent managers think new technology is either positive or neutral; that is, technology will either create jobs (35%) or have no impact on jobs (38%) in their organizations.

In Europe overall, our survey population believes (37%) jobs will be added as a result of AI, Big Data, and Machine Learning. This sentiment is also clearly held by the largest organizations (41%). A somewhat startling statistic is that nearly three times as many French talent managers (57%) expect technology will create job growth rather than cause a loss of jobs (20%).

By contrast, in the U.S. (52%) and the Nordics (44%), respondents believe new technology will be neutral in its impact on jobs.



## HOW WILL NEW TECHNOLOGY IMPACT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

(e.g., Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Machine Learning)

	More jobs added	No impact on jobs	Loss of jobs
Europe	37%	34%	29%
Netherlands	28%	38%	33%
Nordics	24%	44%	32%
USA	29%	52%	19%
France	57%	22%	20%
< 500 employees	34%	46%	20%
10,000+ employees	41%	26%	32%
All Respondents	35%	38%	27%

“In France, nearly three times as many talent managers expect technology will create jobs rather than eliminate them.”

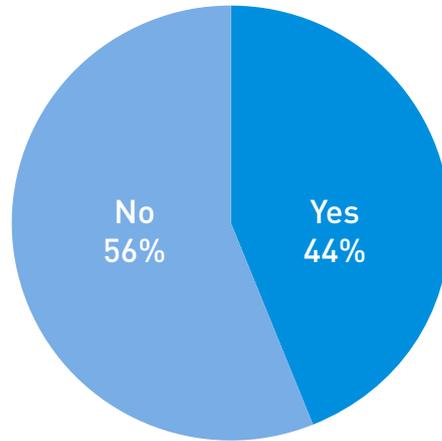
# USE OF STRUCTURED TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Just under half of organizations (44%) have a structured talent management system or process.

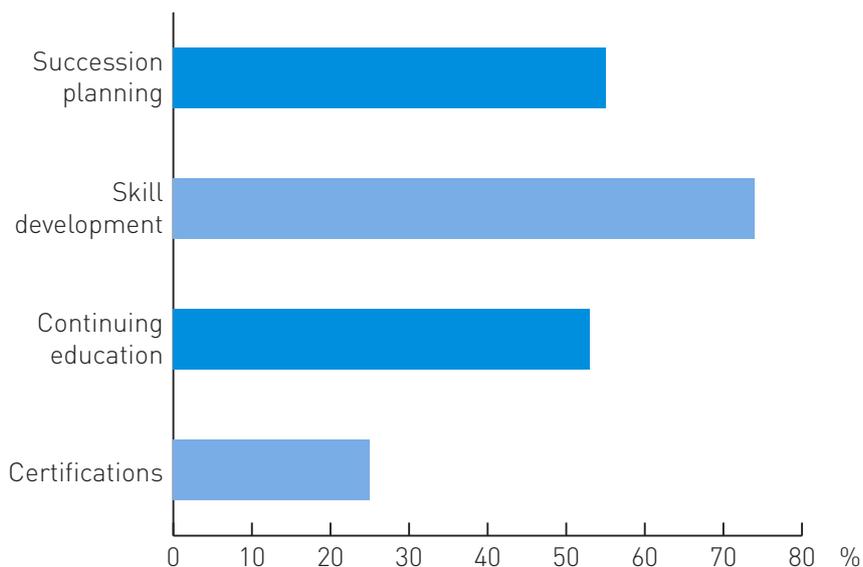
Our respondents tell us that the more employees the organization has, the more likely it is to have one. Over three quarters of organizations with 10,000+ employees do, and they are primarily skill development processes (76%) and succession planning programs (67%).

While France (36%) and Norway (29%) are least likely to have talent management systems, the organizations in those countries that do have them emphasize skill development (88% in France and 93% in Norway). France is distinctive for having the fewest succession planning programs (34%) among those reporting them.

## DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A STRUCTURED TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OR PROCESS?



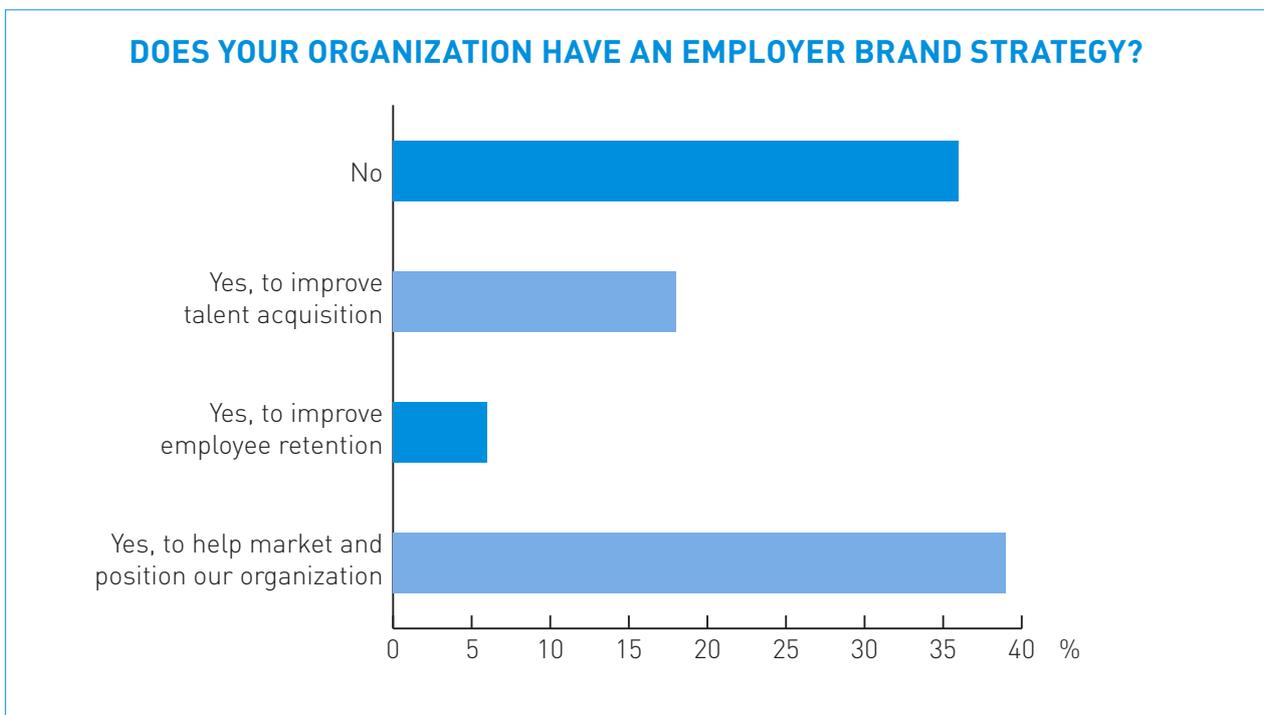
## TYPE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OR PROCESS



# EMPLOYER BRAND STRATEGY

Two thirds of respondents report they have an employer brand strategy. Its purpose is much more likely to be to help market and position the organization (39%) than it is to improve recruitment (18%) or retention (6%), although the larger employers do target talent acquisition with their branding (25%).

In the U.S. where recruitment is a huge problem, fewer talent managers than anywhere else in the world say brand strategy is targeted to improve talent acquisition (7%). This finding suggests an obvious action item for many U.S. companies to address their recruitment challenges by adjusting their employer brand strategy.



## TALENT MANAGEMENT

The survey tool offered respondents one last chance to express their hopes and plans. Half elected to put a stake in the ground, ranging from big picture changes ... to specific implementations ... to “more of the same.”

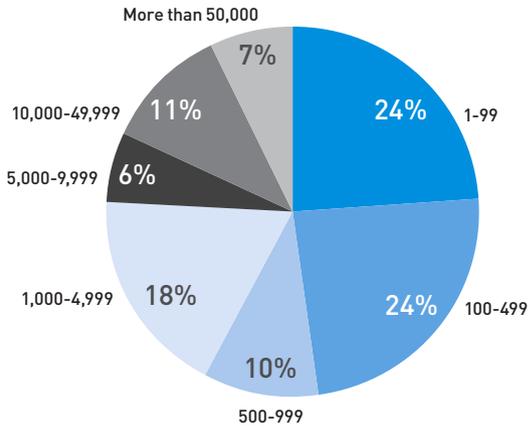
Some respondents intend to make strategic and policy changes in an effort to better connect their organization’s mission and goals with talent management. Others point to structural changes that will simplify processes, use technology better, integrate what currently exists, and sometimes formalize it. For a significant number of responders, communicating better is the key to solving talent challenges. For others, management incentives hold the key to improvement. Some expect to engage consultants to help solve the problems. But globally, training, development, and coaching — more of it and better executed — are seen as solutions to the talent management challenges that are plaguing organizations.

“  
**Training, development, and coaching  
— more of it and better executed —  
are seen as solutions ...**”

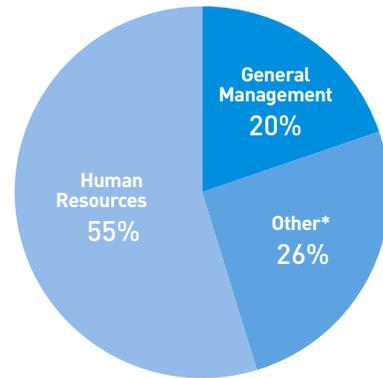


# DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

## SIZE OF ORGANIZATION - NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN ALL LOCATIONS

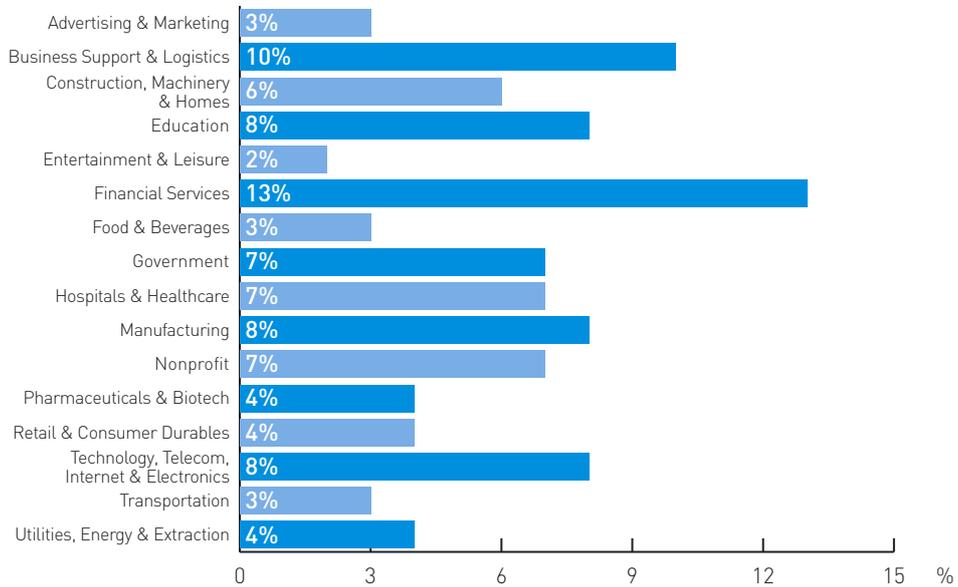


## JOB TITLE OR FUNCTION



\* Sales & Marketing, Operations, Finance, Administration, R&D, Information Technology, Engineering, Legal, Other

## INDUSTRY AFFILIATION



## A BETTER HUMAN EXPERIENCE... FOR A BETTER BUSINESS OUTCOME

OI Global Partners understands your Talent Management challenges: the pressure to meet business goals, the demands of dealing with constant change, recruiting, retaining, and engaging effective leaders, the pain of job separation and the costs of turnover. We also appreciate the integrity of your company's brand and your obligation to advance it.

As Talent Management experts, we walk closely with you to develop strength in your executives and managers, and sometimes to compassionately transition employees out of your organization to land on their feet elsewhere.

Our objective is to help you exceed your business goals through effective career transition, executive coaching, leadership consulting, recruitment and other talent development initiatives.

OI Global Partners is a human resources consulting firm that helps organizations manage their talent and individuals manage their careers. More than 1,000 consultants strong with offices in 28 countries, our reach assures customers a broad suite of talent management services and a deep base of experienced consultants. **Local experts. Global perspective.**

**Please contact your local OIGP partner,  
email [contactus@oiglobalpartners.com](mailto:contactus@oiglobalpartners.com),  
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