



*An Executive Summary*

# FORGING AHEAD:

Workplace Strategies for a New Time

*More than 12 years ago, the first findings of the groundbreaking Emerging Workforce Study® were released and forever altered the way employers study and perceive American workers.*

# Emerging Workforce 2009

*The Study uncovered different breeds of workers and began a revolutionary way of tracking and understanding the changing attitudes of the American workforce and the resulting implications for those who employ them. Backed by renowned international polling firm Harris Interactive, the Emerging Workforce Study has produced findings in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009 in the context of ongoing social and economic events. Each release has unearthed significant trends and mindset changes in both U.S. workers and employers.*

## FORGING AHEAD: Workplace Strategies for a New Time

The economic meltdown of 2008 was undeniably a game-changer. It is an event that will have lasting influences on our financial, housing and yes, our labor markets. Workers' opinions about their career and the workplace have continued to evolve, perhaps now at a more rapid pace. How employers attract, cultivate and retain talent in an era where social media, e-recruiting and employer branding are gaining in popularity, while the supply of qualified workers will once again dwindle, becomes ever more difficult to ascertain. The 2009 Emerging Workforce Study has revealed one fact with clarity—alongside broad adjustments in government regulation, lending, borrowing, taxes and even our nation's global standing—key workplace strategies are being rebuilt for a new time.

# WORKPLACE STRATEGY ONE

## *More Narrowly Define the Talent You Need*

Yes, unemployment remains high and a wave of available workers has hit the market... for now. But, the short-term relief in the supply of workers will have no lasting impact on the long-term gaps in the sheer number of workers—never mind the skilled workforce we'll need to adjust from work done with hands to work done with minds. Thus, the need to vie for top talent not only continues, but grows more vital every day.

As the talent pool becomes more diverse, it becomes increasingly important for companies to more narrowly define who they are trying to attract to their organization. Few companies have truly identified their talent needs beyond basic skill sets and education requirements for key roles. Many have neglected the fact that the labor market includes many different employee groups who not only value different workplace characteristics, but whose workplace preferences and attitudes may be best suited to specific positions, departments and even companies.

While HR executives are struggling to manage expenses, high turnover rates can undermine the best of cost containment efforts and can wreak havoc on a company's bottom line. The Study found that 52% of HR executives say maintaining costs is their top priority. Organizations simply can't afford to invest in the recruitment and hiring of talent, only to see them walk out the door or fall short of job requirements. Current market demands present even more reason to truly understand all aspects of your talent needs—inclusive of hard skills, education and behavioral and cultural requirements.

The 2009 Emerging Workforce Study, building on 12 years of data, has identified all segments of the workforce, including an *emerging*, *migrating* and *traditional* set of workers who vary in their attitudes toward their job, the work environment they prefer and general beliefs when it comes to the employer-employee contract. Each of these types of workers can be highly effective, productive and loyal to their organization when placed in roles and environments best-suited to their inherent beliefs and preferences towards the workplace.



<i>Traditional</i> workers believe ...		
Employer is responsible for developing their career	Their level of commitment is based on long-term job security	Employees should always follow the rules and regulations
<i>Traditional</i> workers prefer a job/employer that ...		
Sets their goals and gives them specific assignments	Offers a predictable work schedule	Provides clear directions on what they need to do each day
<i>Traditional</i> workers are best suited to ...		
Positions/functions with consistent boundaries, job parameters	Positions with high structure, such as accounts payable, reception, call centers or warehouse	Supervisor who is very hands-on and provides very clear direction and feedback

<i>Emergent</i> workers believe ...		
They should be required to grow and help the company succeed in order to keep job	Loyalty based on contribution, not tenure	Their job means more than just a way to earn a living
<i>Emergent</i> workers prefer a job/employer that ...		
Expects them to think of new and better ways to do things	Provides opportunities for growth, even if it is stressful	Allows them to think creatively
<i>Emergent</i> workers are best suited to ...		
Positions of high responsibility management	Positions requiring high creativity, energy (i.e., marketing, sales, IT)	Manager/leader who is hands-off, allows autonomous execution, supports growth opportunities

## WORKPLACE STRATEGY TWO

### *Utilize Tailored Recruitment Strategies*

Attracting workers for many companies remains a sterile, one-size-fits-all approach—despite their need to lure a diverse array of talent to the organization. In fact, only half of employers today utilize tailored recruitment strategies based on different generational groups or professions. Yet, a company’s aptitude at understanding different worker groups will determine how well it can source and attract from those segments.

Although 69% of employers say they consider recruiting a core competency of their organization, finding and recruiting qualified workers still remains a top HR concern for 60% of companies. Innovative companies have accepted that greater specialization is required today to adequately source and attract talent. Businesses that know their applicant market, what they are looking for out of their career and employer, and where to find them will see far greater success in building their workforce.

Among the many ways to tailor the sourcing of talent, doing so by skill set may be one of the most effective. For example, the Emerging Workforce Study has examined the unique characteristics of workers within several key industries, which ultimately can help businesses better tailor their sourcing and recruiting efforts to each segment.



## WORKPLACE STRATEGY *THREE*

### *Cultivate Today's Employees into Tomorrow's Talent Engine*

An overwhelming majority of workers today prefer a job that allows them to think creatively (95%) and to think of new and better ways to do things (88%). Employers seeking profitability levers ought to harness workers' inherent desire towards efficiency and innovation. However, most companies overlook their existing talent base as an answer to the impending labor shortages and knowledge gaps—a missed opportunity to unleash a powerful talent engine to propel them well into the future.

If that isn't reason enough to provide tangible, accessible growth opportunities to employees, consider the fact that a company's ability to offer and "sell" pathways to career growth within the organization will directly influence whether a worker will stay or leave to find it elsewhere. Virtually all workers (94%) strongly agree that employees should seek their own career development opportunities, wherever they might be.

Companies have a long way to go, with only 24% of workers being satisfied with their current growth and earnings potential—yet it is the top reason workers stay beyond pay and benefits. Employers looking to build a base of star talent, and keep their existing talent in place, must dedicate greater effort towards career management resources and opportunities for growth within the company—not outside it.



## WORKPLACE STRATEGY *FOUR*

### *Believe in the Power of Work/Life Balance Programs*

We now have more than 12 years of research and feedback from U.S. workers and their employers supporting the same conclusion – workers want and need work/life balance options, and providing such programs directly increases job satisfaction, worker productivity and retention. It is spoken loud and clear. Yet, the disconnect between employers and employees with regard to work/life balance programs has widened even further this year.

Eighty-six percent of workers say work/life balance and fulfillment are top career priorities, while only 12% of employers believe these to be crucial to hiring and retention. A greater percentage of employers say they offer a variety of formal and informal work/life balance programs than the percentage of employees who say their employers offer such programs.

There is one area of vehement agreement between workers and employers – the positive impact work/life balance can have on recruitment, satisfaction and loyalty. For those companies utilizing work/life balance programs, the payoff has been big. Ninety percent of organizations say their work/life balance programs have improved worker satisfaction, and nearly three-fourths (74%) say they have improved retention of workers. Employees at organizations where work/life balance programs are offered are much more likely to stay with their employer for at least the next five years and report higher job satisfaction.

Alarming, few employers plan to add work/life balance programs that they are not currently offering over the next few years. Despite the belief of many organizations that a down economy is not the time to invest resources (financial or otherwise) in these programs, it is believed that now is perhaps the best time to do so in order to remain well-positioned after an economic recovery.



### *Emergent Workers Are Today's "Top Athletes"*

	EMERGENT	MIGRATING	TRADITIONAL
Education	Highly educated: 45% have college/grad degree	Educated: 29% have college/grad degree	Less Educated: 21% have college/grad degree
Gender	M: 57% vs F: 43%	M: 57% vs F: 43%	M: 54% vs F: 46%
Average Age	44.0	40.5	42.4
Income	33% make above \$100K annually	45% make between \$35K & \$99.8K annually	36% make less than \$49K annually
Managers	44%	39%	25%
Career Goals	52% are working toward a career goal	40% are working toward a career goal	30% are working toward a career goal
Professional Certifications/ Additional Education	44% have or are pursuing	35% have or are pursuing	25% have or are pursuing
Satisfaction with Career Progress	66% are highly satisfied	56% are highly satisfied	50% are highly satisfied
Defines Loyalty as Levels of Contribution	81% agree	66% agree	39% agree

## WORKPLACE STRATEGY *FIVE*

### *Know What It Takes to Keep Your Top Performers*

While the retention of all workers is clearly important, there is an even more pertinent need to retain today's educated workers. Jobs requiring only a GED or high school degree are disappearing. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in 1991, fewer than 50% of U.S. jobs required highly skilled workers. By 2015, the BLS estimates that 76% of U.S. jobs will demand highly skilled employees.

When it comes time for rebounding, and it will, employers will need to have their star talent in place to drive renewal and growth. *Emerging* workers, it turns out, are some of the most educated, most driven and successful workers (both in income and career advancement) the labor market has to offer. The Study has been tracking these *emerging* workers for 12 years and, as a result, offers clear visibility into what they need to remain loyal.

The boon for organizations is that it appears this highly *emergent* group of workers is a bellwether for the remainder of the workforce. What they require to drive job satisfaction and retention rings true for the majority of workers. Make them happy and the side effect is greater retention of all. Here lies the kicker—this highly skilled, sought-after group of workers is also the most difficult to retain, given their no-fear perspective on job change. The same tenacity that makes these workers successful is also why they demand a work environment supportive and instrumental to achieving their professional and personal goals. If that support doesn't exist at their current employer today, they'll be searching for it elsewhere tomorrow.

This top echelon of workers has clearly conveyed what they require to keep their contributions high, their job satisfaction intact and their skin in the game. What's the reward for anteing up? A talented group of workers that doesn't just drive productivity, they demand it; that not only fosters innovation but delivers it in spades; and that not only supports the company's mission, but makes it their own.

*“One-third of today’s workers say their employer is doing less to retain them now than compared to previous years.”*

## WORKPLACE STRATEGY SIX

### *Close the Gap and Achieve Retention for All*

The truth is employers and employees vehemently disagree on what drives retention. Differences in opinion can be good, except when they result in financial and competitive losses. Aligning employee priorities with employer-driven initiatives continues to be a struggle for many companies. In fact, the Study has tracked this same level of disconnect when it comes to retention over the past five years. The latest findings illustrate little movement in the top drivers of retention for employers or employees—leaving the vast disconnect unresolved.

EMPLOYERS' VIEW	EMPLOYEES' VIEW	% SATISFIED
1. Management Climate	1. Benefits	37%
2. Supervisor Relationship	2. Financial Compensation	27%
3. Culture/Work Environment	3. Growth & Earnings Potential	24%
4. Benefits	4. Management Climate	36%
5. Financial Compensation	5. Time & Flexibility	36%
6. Growth & Earnings Potential	6. Culture/Work Environment	34%
7. Time & Flexibility	7. Supervisor Relationship	43%
8. Training	8. Training	26%

Few would argue the role that job satisfaction plays in keeping employees on the payroll. For the second consecutive study, the survey has found that workers’ satisfaction remains alarmingly low as it pertains to many of their retention drivers.

For all factors, with the exception of supervisor relationship, less than 40% of workers are satisfied with what they are currently receiving from their employers. Less than 25% of workers are satisfied with their training and growth and earnings opportunities.

This year’s Emerging Workforce Study has once again honed in on what can best be described as a moving target—changing attitudes of workers. Employees have spoken loud and clear when it comes to key workplace initiatives that will directly impact their retention and satisfaction—opportunities for growth, connection to and belief in their company’s mission and time and flexibility.

# CULTURAL SHIFTS IMPACTING BUSINESS TODAY

Organizations must begin to ask themselves, “How am I addressing attraction, satisfaction and retention now to ensure little vulnerability to turnover two, five or 10 years from now?” The findings of the 2009 Emerging Workforce Study reveal two broad cultural shifts that can have great impact on a company’s success or failure in meeting those objectives.

## | CULTURAL SHIFT ONE |

### *Adoption of Social Media*

For most companies, successful adoption and utilization of social media require a radical mindset change about how they approach their business and their workforce planning efforts. Changes in the process by which workers find jobs—and in their expectations of the job search experience—are fueling the need for companies to build effective and relevant social media strategies into their workforce planning efforts.

The old model of attracting talent focused primarily on active job seekers showed scant concern for the job seeker experience and rarely required the business to market itself as a place to work. However, things have certainly changed. Suddenly, the supply of talent, on which companies based their traditional recruiting efforts has diversified to include not only active job seekers, but passive candidates, retired workers, overseas talent and even free agents.

Social media efforts can be highly influential in conveying a company’s brand and mission, attracting and recruiting talent, as well as engaging its current workforce. However, many organizations are not leveraging these outlets productively or strategically. In fact, less than one-fourth of companies have a formal social media strategy in place, and of those, only one-third say they’ve been successful or very successful, according to this year’s Emerging Workforce Study. For those companies that have created a social media strategy, only 22% engage in social networking to recruit new talent.

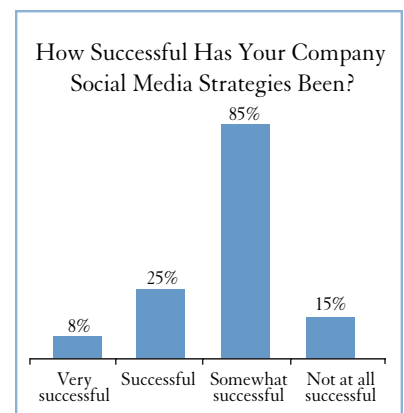
Nearly half of companies (44%) today are using social networking outlets, but these efforts are largely limited to LinkedIn (23%), followed by:

- Corporate Blog (16%)
- Company Facebook Profile (14%)
- Viral Video Marketing/Recruitment (7%)
- Corporate MySpace Profile (6%)
- Second Life Presence (1%)

The combination of increased transparency into an organization’s culture via chat rooms, blogs and mini-blogs, as well as the growing expectations of the job search experience among candidates means companies must take control of their online reputation—or it will control the company. Even beyond the necessity to simply manage the message prospective candidates hear is the opportunity to turn social media into a powerful driver of top talent to the organization.

## Components of a Successful Social Media Strategy

- Take into account key audiences. To do this, begin by determining what types of people you want to talk to, where they can be found online and what topics they are generally interested in.
- Define your organization's voice. In other words, if you're a young, innovative company, your communications should be informal, utilize industry lingo and perhaps involve humor. For others, a more formal, mature voice is more reflective of your culture.
- Be transparent. The fastest way to derail your social media efforts is to appear untrustworthy or inconsistent in what you say internally versus externally. Just be real, be honest.
- Leverage entertainment value. Social media has skyrocketed in popularity because it provides a departure from the stodgy, traditional "corporate messaging" of the past. Online audiences can be highly approachable when communicating via entertaining venues, such as cartoons, spoofs, viral videos, etc.
- Be diversified. Many organizations believe a page on Facebook means they've accomplished their social media goals. Remember, cyberspace is a big place and your social media strategy should take this into account. Be sure to incorporate a variety of initiatives, including blogs, podcasts, social networking, YouTube and more.
- Engage your audience. Determine the most appropriate time and way to inject the organization into online communities. Ensure that efforts provide value in some way to the audience, drive action and help to establish an ongoing relationship.



# | CULTURAL SHIFT TWO |

## *A Desire to Feel Connected to Employer*

Employees are seeking a greater connection to their organization’s mission and alignment of their personal values with those of their employer. As a result, a company’s clarity and commitment to its mission directly impacts its ability to attract, satisfy and retain workers.

The true nature of an organization’s management style, leadership and company culture used to be safely concealed behind plaster and mortar, only to be shared among workers at the water cooler. Before accepting a job offer, candidates could only make veiled attempts to determine, “Are you what you say you are?”

Today, technology-savvy candidates have clear visibility into a company’s culture, values and mission, and whether or not it has a reputation for following through on them. Via chat rooms, social networking sites and other online communities, a company’s reputation is out there for all to see. In fact, the 2009 Emerging Workforce Study found that employees within an organization that has a clear and followed-through-upon mission are much more likely (51%) to refer a friend to work at their current employer than those who work for an organization with no clear mission (31%).

Further, a company’s core values and mission have a dramatic influence on employees sitting inside its walls.

Employees today yearn to be connected to their employer and to something broader and bigger than what may be found in their job description. In fact, 75% of workers agree that their job means more to them than just a way to earn a living. Yet, many companies are falling short in translating company information and vision into something meaningful and relevant to their workers. The workforce may be going through the motions, showing up for work and earning a paycheck—but are they truly engaged?

Clarity and commitment to a company mission, it turns out, have the power to change the role of employees from spectators to active participants. When an organization clarifies, communicates and commits to a mission, the result is a highly engaged, highly productive workforce that adopts that mission as their own.

Impact of Clear Mission and Follow-through on All Aspects of Job Satisfaction		
Satisfied with ...	Employer has clear mission AND follow-through	Employer has clear mission but NO follow-through
Supervisor Relationship	60%	24%
Management Climate	55%	16%
Benefits	51%	15%
Culture & Work Environment	52%	14%
Growth & Earnings Potential	39%	7%
Financial Compensation	41%	12%
Training & Development	42%	7%
Time & Flexibility	52%	16%



## CONCLUSION:

Several historic events during the last decade have left a lasting effect on how companies view and utilize talent, as well as the motivations and attitudes of workers. The new rules of attracting, cultivating and retaining talent will center on intangibles, such as the treatment of employees with respect, clarity and communicating the organization's mission, showing a genuine interest in workers' growth and exuding the values of the employer brand and reputation whenever possible.

To survive such an unprecedented decade, companies will need to rely on a solid talent base. To thrive will require the pursuit of new, innovative and uncharted workplace strategies that produce a powerful talent engine.

## *About the 2009 Emerging Workforce Study*

More than 12 years ago, we consulted with international polling firm Harris Interactive to launch the Emerging Workforce® Study, a research initiative designed to provide a comprehensive portrait of changes in the American workforce in the context of ongoing social and economic events. The Company has continued to track and study the changing attitudes of the American workforce and the resulting implications for U.S. employers through subsequent studies conducted in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

## *Emerging Workforce Study Methodology*

The Spherion Emerging Workforce Employer Survey was conducted by phone and online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of Spherion between February 18, 2009 and March 6, 2009 among 306 human resources managers. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

The Spherion Emerging Workforce Employee Survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of Spherion between February 4, 2009 and March 16, 2009 among 2,519 employed adults aged 18 and older. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

### About Spherion Staffing Services

Spherion Staffing Services is a leading recruiting and staffing provider that specializes in placing administrative, clerical, customer service and light industrial candidates in temporary and full-time opportunities. As an industry pioneer for more than 60 years, Spherion Staffing Services has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in a multitude of industries throughout our network of offices across the United States and Canada.

Spherion Staffing Services is a division of Spherion Corporation (NYSE:SFN), which operates a family of specialty brands providing strategic workplace solutions in professional recruiting, outsourcing, managed services and contractor compliance programs, technology services and general staffing. For more information, please visit [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com).

