



Results
through **people**



WHITEPAPER – EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS



The 5 Most Important Leadership Hiring Trends

How Companies Can Score in
the Competition for Managers

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Executive Summary

If a management position is to be successfully filled, it is not only the company that has to decide on the most suitable candidate – the candidates themselves also have to find out whether the company meets their expectations.

Responding to these expectations (talent trends) with the right measures (hiring trends) is essential in a strong candidate market, as this is the only way to convince the most talented managers to join your company.

Below we present the five trends that, in our experience, are currently having the greatest impact on the career decisions of managers.

We have drawn on hundreds of interviews that we have conducted in companies in all sectors

and numerous countries, as well as on contacts with managers from all over the world, who are at various stages of their career development – from young newcomers of the millennial generation to the “old hands” on the verge of retirement – and not least on the honest feedback that we repeatedly request from our clients and candidates.

These experiences are supplemented by references to many relevant sources, resulting in a detailed overall picture in line with the current state of research.

With so much theory, however, the practical side should not be neglected: At the end of each section you will find a checklist that you can use to review your own organisation.



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01 Introduction

The 5 Most Important Leadership Hiring Trends

When a management position needs to be filled, companies carefully consider which candidate is most likely to fulfil their expectations – of course, because the entire company's success may depend on a suitable management appointment. But the same is true the other way round:

for candidates, too, the next step in their career is a landmark decision with far-reaching consequences and should be taken with care.

Not only the company, but also the candidate must actively say “yes” before the employment contract can be finalised.

Have you ever asked yourself:

?

...

If your enthusiasm after an interview is mutual?

?

...

If your company is at the top of your dream candidate's wish list?

?

...

Or if perhaps you didn't even get to know the best candidate because they didn't apply to your company, but only to your competition?



Successfully filling a management position is one of the **biggest challenges companies face**

No company can be successful without effective managers. At the same time, however, companies are facing more and more restrictions when deciding on the right person, as the number of applicants is shrinking. The extremely strong candidate market is currently making it even more difficult to find the best candidate for a management position and convince them.

Good managers know how sought-after they are and do not commit themselves to a company lightly. To attract a truly excellent manager, it is not enough to entice them with money and benefits – the company as a whole must fulfil managers' expectations of their workplace. This is difficult to achieve and is always a challenge, as managers' expectations change over time.

As in other areas, everything has its price, and appointing managers is no exception: if you want to attract the best managers, you have

to be prepared to invest time and effort in an attractive company structure. Those who are not prepared to make this effort have to accept poorer executive search results and, therefore poorer results in the development of the company as a whole.

In our work as executive search consultants, we repeatedly see what is advantageous when filling management positions and which aspects candidates pay the most attention to.

In this whitepaper, we would like to share the lessons we have learnt with you in the form of the 5 currently most important trends in executive recruitment.

Usually, there are no routines to fall back on when appointing managers in companies, as this process is usually not an everyday situation for any company.

This is exactly where we can help:



We want to share our experience from over 20 years and hundreds of executive search interviews with you and show you concrete starting points on how your company can become – and remain – attractive to the talents of the future.

02 Leadership Skills, Talent Trends, Hirings Trends: What's the Difference?

If you want to attract the best managers to your company, **you must respond to what these managers expect**

These expectations and the corresponding reactions are in a continuous interplay: on the one hand, companies try to respond to the expectations of managers.

On the other hand, managers' expectations also depend on positive examples in the industry, the general industry standard and their own past experiences – aspects to which every company contributes to a certain extent through its decisions.

There is a separate term for each of these aspects – the expectations as well as the corresponding reactions. The expectations of managers fall into the area of talent trends; the way in which companies can optimally respond

to them can be described by the term hiring trends. There is often an overlap in meaning, or the terms **talent trends** and **hiring trends** are even used as synonyms.

For this reason, a precise definition and differentiation of the two terms is essential to deal with the topic in-depth and from different perspectives. Perhaps the easiest way to describe the meaning of the term talent trends is to see it as a reflection of the concept of leadership skills.

Leadership skills are the special abilities that managers need for their work and that hiring companies specifically look for to attract the best talent. In other words:



Leadership skills are what companies expect from candidates. From the company's perspective, an ideal candidate is one who exhibits as many relevant leadership skills as possible.¹

While the term Leadership Skills describes the perspective of companies, **the term talent trends focuses on the perspective of candidates**



Talent Trends are the characteristics and skills that applicants and candidates look for in companies to choose the best future employer for themselves.

Talent Trends are what candidates expect from companies. An ideal company, from a candidate's perspective is one that exhibits as many relevant talent trends as possible.

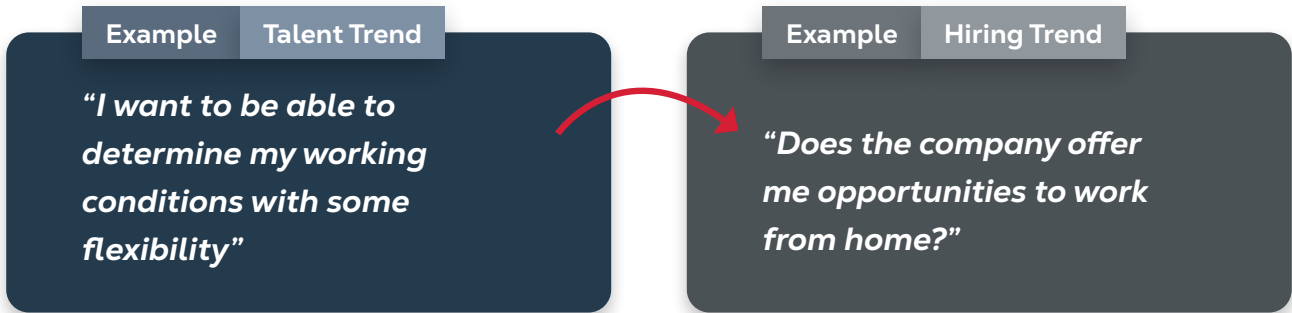
Hiring trends are more practically orientated. As talent trends concern the inner world of candidates, they are difficult to analyse and can only indirectly answer the question of how

companies can attract the most promising talent. Hiring trends, on the other hand, concern clear developments in the labour market and give companies clear recommendations for actions that are based on the rather vague talent trends – for example, the creation of hybrid work opportunities in the company to respond to the talent trend for more flexibility.



Hiring Trends are the concrete translation of talent trends into reality. Based on hiring trends, candidates assess whether a company meets the talent trends relevant to them personally, i. e. their individual expectations.

Hiring Trends vs Talent Trends



The Special Dual Position of Managers

In the context of talent trends and hiring trends, managers occupy a special dual position: they are the people in the company who consciously respond to changes in the (labour) market through their decisions – and thus create a certain overall picture for applicants.

At the same time, they also potentially participate in the labour market as applicants themselves and as such, have their own expectations of their company. Managers, therefore, usually know both sides of the

recruitment process from their own experience, which makes them a kind of **early indicator** of upcoming trends. Although they are also influenced by the same trends as other employees, they usually react particularly quickly, sensitively and comprehensively to any changes. This makes it all the more important for companies to constantly monitor current talent trends and implement the corresponding hiring trends with confidence – because this is the only way to bring the best managers on board.

03 Digitisation

A Common Denominator?



Talent Trends and Hiring Trends **do not arise by chance**

Rather, they are an expression of general developments in our society. The trends presented in this whitepaper are all closely linked to a “common denominator”: digitisation.

The digitisation of how we live and work has been taking place steadily for around 30 years, with technological innovations and political influences repeatedly leading to sudden changes. They have given rise to completely new industries and professions – and even in older and more traditional industries, companies increasingly have to think digitally if they want to be competitive in the market today.

In addition, digitisation has brought about significant changes in the way we organise our leisure time. Hardly anyone can imagine their everyday life without computers or

smartphones. Digitisation has fundamentally changed all aspects of our lives and work and will continue to do so. Filling management positions is no exception. Digital is no longer just a new type of media, as it was in the days of Web 1.0, but a parallel reality in which the younger generation of managers has grown up.

The digitally networked world is fast, confusing and characterised by a high level of pressure to adapt; the people who live in it are significantly influenced by it. Therefore, each of the following chapters examines how the respective trend is related to digitisation – and what opportunities the digital transformation offers in each case to better meet the current expectations of managers.

04 Five Trends for Recruiting Managers

How do companies succeed in **convincing candidates**?

It is not just the company that has to say yes to the candidate – conversely, the candidate must also decide in favour of the company. The better a company matches the hiring trends and thus the underlying talent trends, the more motivated managers will be to work for precisely this company.

However, it is important not to simply react mechanically to the wishes of candidates. Rather, companies need to find out what motives drive potential future managers to decide in favour of or against a company when changing jobs.

It is not just about taking measures at the pragmatic level that make your company more attractive than the competition in the short term, because such measures will only have short-term effects.

Instead, it is about developing the company profile at the strategic level in such a way that it appeals to precisely those managers who will drive the company forward.³

In the following, we present the five trends that, in our experience, are currently having the greatest impact on executives' career decisions.

For this, we draw on hundreds of interviews we have conducted in companies across all industries and numerous countries, contacts with executives from all over the world who are at various stages of their career development – from young millennials to the “old hands” on the verge of retirement and, last but not least, the honest feedback we repeatedly solicit from our clients and candidates.

These experiences are supplemented by references to many relevant sources, resulting in a detailed overall picture in line with the current state of research. With so much theory, however, the practical side should not be neglected:

At the end of each section, you will find a checklist that you can use to review your own organisation.

Hiring Trend #1

Daring More Plurality During the Appointment Process

Digitisation has made our world **increasingly interconnected**

Digitisation has made our world increasingly interconnected. Whereas in previous decades there was only a manageable number of channels to keep an eye on in the recruitment process, there are now countless channels vying for our attention, making information accessible in a matter of seconds and enabling global communication in real-time.

Those who still cling to the old model and limit themselves to just a few channels are not doing justice to the framework conditions of executive search in the digital age. Technological progress not only makes it possible for us to expand our horizons in an unprecedented way – it also demands it. When it comes to the buzzword “plurality”, most people jump straight to the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion.

There is no doubt that this is currently a strong (if not the strongest) trend when it comes to making a company fit for the future.

However, plurality in the recruitment process means more than that: now more than ever, companies need to explore in all directions and include unconventional approaches – be it in decisions about contracts, locations, marketing or even people.

To do justice to the many facets of the first trend, we have decided on a thematic division: “Using Different Channels for the Search”, “Thinking and Searching Globally” and “Diversity, Equity & Inclusion” (with a special focus on the generational differences between “Baby Boomers” and generations Y and Z).



Using Different Channels for the Search Process

Digitisation has created new ways for candidates and companies to make initial contact. The options for searches and job advertisements have become faster, more efficient, and more targeted, but often also more complicated and competitive.

At the same time, data from LinkedIn shows that the trend of high fluctuation in the labour market is unbroken and that it is now considered normal to continuously search

for a new and better job. Many managers are taking the reins into their own hands and are independently looking for a more attractive management role.

In the current situation, companies are more than ever called upon to play an active role in the process, to be visible to these managers by activating the right channels and to leave a lasting positive impression.

However, every possible search channel **has its limits**

It is a great advantage for the searching company to recognise these limits and to overcome them by skilfully combining different channels.

Unfortunately, a job advertisement or direct approach via LinkedIn is often the only channel used – channels such as activating your own network remain unused because a suitable network does not usually exist.

This is due to the nature of the job: As filling a management position is not part of many companies' day-to-day business, they do not have any special databases or contacts that would allow them to approach suitable managers directly.

In addition, companies are not permitted to approach suitable top candidates in competitor companies directly, and the option of asking industry colleagues for help in identifying and approaching candidates is also often ruled out.

Instead, job portals can act as a supplement to LinkedIn. In some cases they even make good recruitment possible in the first place, and they can strengthen the employer brand through their external impact – but the use of job portals also has clear disadvantages: they are relatively expensive, do not reach many potential candidates and often attract applicants who are not suitable for the advertised management position.



This does not mean that recruiters have to forego channels beyond LinkedIn and job platforms when searching for executives.

Recruitment consultancies and executive search companies specialise in connecting their clients with the most promising talent time and time again.

Not only do they have a strong network, which they have often built up over decades – they also have extensive and up-to-date experience of which channels are recognised by the right people in the specific situation.

Executive search consultants bring a special set of soft skills to the table, which are becoming increasingly important for successful recruitment.⁵ Coupled with their tried-and-tested assessment methods, designed to maximize the fit between candidate and company,⁶ working with these external service providers results in significant gains for those who incorporate them into their recruitment process.

Think and Search Globally

One of the clearest effects of digitisation is the elimination of the physical distance factor. It is now possible to work together across national borders – in real-time, on the same project and without an infrastructure specifically designed

for this task. This potentially expands the catchment area for suitable managers to the whole world, and it offers new opportunities for companies, that are worth utilising.



Of course, **international recruitment** is not an option for every position

Certain industries and functional areas require the manager to be on-site regularly. However, before advertising the position, it is worth taking a critical look at whether a cross-regional or international appointment is out of the question.

Technological advances in recent decades and especially in recent years have created more and more opportunities to successfully fulfil management tasks remotely. Mainly, this means remote management, a topic which is discussed in detail in the corresponding chapter.

And even if the restriction to local candidates turns out to be unavoidable, more convincing arguments for the decision can usually be given after a critical examination, for example, when applicants make enquiries. Especially in a strong candidate market, it is important

that companies effectively increase the pool of potential candidates through a nationwide or even transnational search approach – and thus increase the probability that the search for a new manager will be crowned with success.

The correlation between corporate success and diversity is clearly demonstrable⁷ and a good reason for a company's long-term orientation towards more diverse staff. A wide range of regional, national and cultural perspectives in the team brings companies decisive advantages, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

There is one thing the current talent trends make unmistakably clear: young management talents, in particular, want their future employer to make more efforts to achieve diversity, and also be flexible in terms of where they work.⁸



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

DE&I is one of the key terms that keeps cropping up when it comes to talent trends & hiring trends. It refers to the endeavour to promote diversity at various levels within the company, to minimise differences in opportunities between people through targeted measures (equity) and to create a working environment in which no person is excluded (inclusion). It is undisputed that these goals are highly ethically relevant.

Honest efforts towards diversity, equity & inclusion are related to tangible economic benefits. This undoubtedly includes being

able to consider every qualified candidate in the recruitment process without arbitrary limits. The diversification of perspectives and experiences within the company is also a clear advantage – be it in decision-making, in recognising risks, in the distribution of skills within the team or in expansion possibilities.

However, the most important gain comes from the feeling of belonging, which creates the basis for being able to contribute without reservations or fear and perform to the maximum.⁹

But beware:

Not all diversity is the same

Many people associate the term with sexual orientation, but this falls short. The differences between individual people can be on many different levels and affect all aspects of their own identity.

And, of course, opinions on diversity, equity & inclusion are also highly diverse: not everyone welcomes DE&I initiatives in their own company – traditionally privileged groups, in particular, may even feel threatened by them. It takes special sensitivity, expertise and foresight to

create an environment where everyone feels comfortable despite such resistance. As with many other trends, managers find themselves in a dual role when it comes to DE&I, as they not only experience diversity, equity & inclusion, they also create them.

Faced with this complex task, managers need to be **specifically trained and supported** to ensure that they can contribute effectively and achieve a working environment that is shaped by DE&I.



The Generational Gap

There is a demographic group that is becoming increasingly important to win over when filling management positions:
Generation Y (also known as Millennials, born 1981-1996).

In a few years, **generation Z (born 1997-2012)** will also be of interest to companies searching for new leaders.

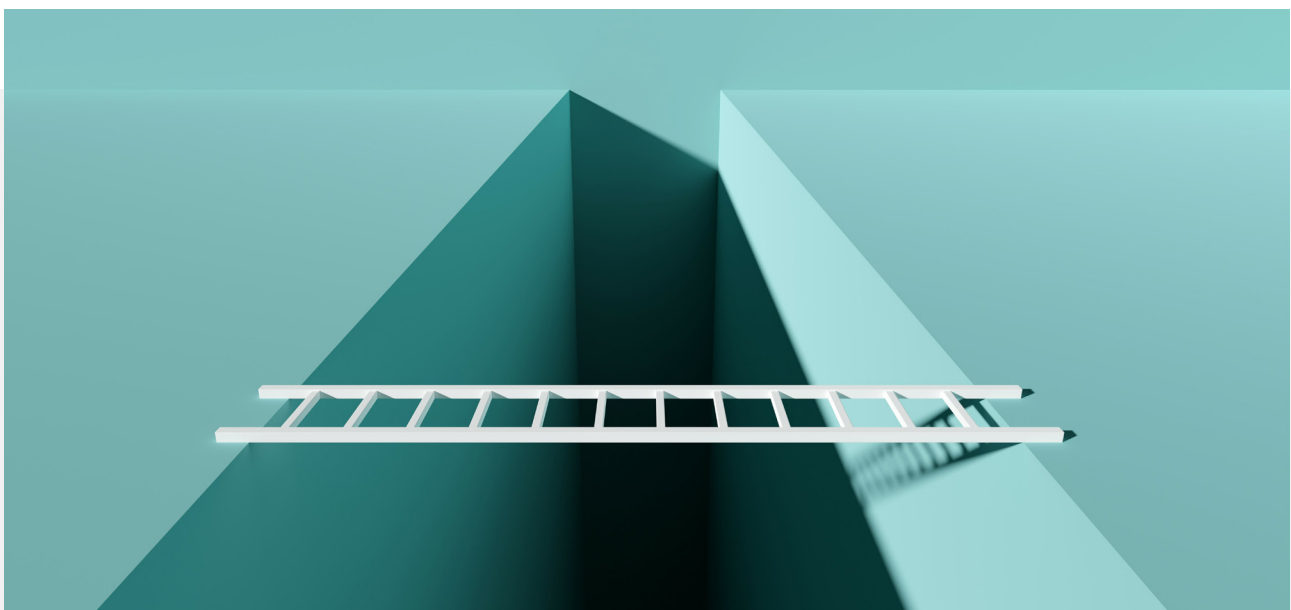
These young people, who are at the beginning of their management careers, have clearly defined values – and a general desire to improve the world bit by bit with their decisions. 77% of them, for example, find it important to work for a company that is genuinely committed to DE&I.¹¹

And more than a third have already decided against an employer in the past because their company was not in line with their personal values.¹² Of course, it should not be forgotten that the generations Y and Z are not a homogeneous mass. While the older

millennials may have already gained experience as managers, the younger representatives of generation Z are yet to start their careers. In other words: **generation Y is the generation of young managers today – generation Z will provide the managers of tomorrow.**

The latter point, in particular, is of crucial importance for long-term planning in companies, to avoid problems such as those occurring during the current generational change.

Although there have always been generational changes in the labour market, the retirement of the so-called “Baby Boomers” (born 1946-1964) and the resulting change is currently catching many companies unprepared and having unusually drastic consequences.



There are also differences between millennials and generation Z **regarding their values**

Additional challenges arise here, albeit less between the two young generations and more in their relationship with the “Baby Boomers”. In recent years and decades, a clear divide has emerged between the generations in many

companies, which is not just to do with age, but also and especially with individual convictions. The general goals of the three generations may be summarised as follows:

The “Baby Boomers” want to raise the standard of living for themselves and their families through their work.

Millennials strive to make a career under fair conditions without sacrificing themselves.

Generation Z sets idealistic goals for itself and strives for nothing less than to make the world a better place.¹³

Companies are under pressure if they want **to impress young talent through DE&I**

As a result of digitisation and the visibility of marginalised groups on social media, but also due to the high level of general education, the awareness of inequalities between people has increased massively among the younger generations. At the same time, continuous technological advances offer previously

unimagined opportunities for participation and inclusion, the realisation of which is being demanded to an ever greater extent. Mere lip service is no longer enough – instead, concrete measures should be implemented to show that the company has addressed the issue.



The following checklist can give you an idea of whether **your company has a genuine interest in plurality:**



Diversity strategy

Does the company pursue an active diversity strategy to utilise diversity in the management team, but also manage it? Are metrics used, and is it clearly defined how the diversity targets set contribute to the organisation’s overall development?



Diversity in the recruiting team

Is the recruiting team itself diverse, and does it represent different backgrounds?



Diverse approaches

Does the company use alternative ways of approaching managers in addition to the traditional channels?



Supra-regional search approach

Does the company have a clear strategy for approaching and involving managers whose place of residence is not at the company’s headquarters?



Generational awareness

Does the company recognise generational differences and adapt its own leadership model to the new generation of leaders and their expectations?

Hiring Trend #2

Remote Work: Finding the Right Balance

The option to work from anywhere via digital channels, usually from a home office, **is currently one of the most prominent trends**

However, it is not new: back in 2018/2019, well before the spread of Covid-19, LinkedIn, for example, noted that more and more companies were trying to convince employees with flexible working conditions. Also, the challenges that come with remote working and that managers have to overcome – challenges in dealing with each other, in collaboration and in the organisation of work – were already being recognised and addressed before 2020.¹⁴

However, the necessities of the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the emergence of digital tools and ever-growing experience, making remote management more practicable.

Digitisation brought instant messaging, video calls, screen sharing, etc. into homes as well as offices and has made effective collaboration in real time possible, even over long distances.

Remote management is nothing new; instead, it is something that has been tried again and again in recent decades with varying degrees of success. Nevertheless, there is currently a

trend for almost all large companies to ask their managers to return to their offices on-site. This trend runs counter to expectations of greater flexibility and should be critically scrutinised. In contrast, the underlying talent trend is clear: thanks to the new technological possibilities, managers today hope for better **work-life integration**, more efficiency and a better quality of life.

And since hiring trends are directly derived from talent trends, there is only one logical direction for companies to head to, namely, towards more remote options for managers. The aids developed in recent years – software solutions, coaching, services and tools – make the complex task of successful remote management easier, but they do not change the fact that remote management is and remains challenging for managers.

Managers must first acquire these qualities, which are essential for leading a distributed team, before they can realise their full potential in remote management.



Compared to on-site managers, remote managers need a special skillset that includes creating trust, high level of self-organisation, special task organisation within the team, a special gift for dealing with people and the ability to create a sense of belonging even at a distance.

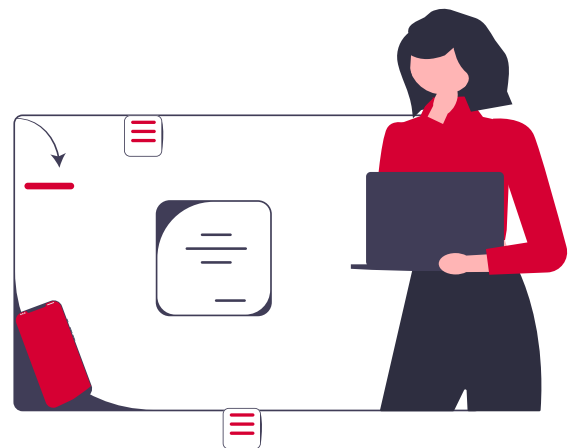
Companies should consider this special skillset and offer their remote managers appropriate training and support

But it's worth the effort. Remote work is extremely attractive for a large proportion of employees at all levels of the organisation: 91% of those who worked from home during the Covid-19 pandemic no longer want to miss out on this option.

They particularly appreciate eliminating the daily commute and the additional free time this gives them.

Remote work appears to have an unmistakably positive effect on work-life integration and emotional balance.¹⁵ Another advantage of flexible working models is the opportunity for more diversity in the company, especially at an international level.¹⁶

The major difficulties of working from home are interpersonal. Around half of generation Z say they sometimes feel lonely and isolated when working remotely.¹⁷ Consciously setting boundaries is also more important than ever



when working off-site: with the average daily working hours tending to increase,¹⁸ health and performance will quickly suffer otherwise.

There is also a risk that remote work will mask problems with equal opportunities, especially to the detriment of women and people from economically disadvantaged social classes.¹⁹

The managers in the team have the essential task of compensating for these disadvantages.

Managers find themselves in a particular area of tension when it comes to remote work

On the one hand, they naturally also benefit from more flexible working conditions that are better suited to their lifestyles; on the other hand, they are confronted with particular management challenges as a result of the new flexibility. Managers have always played a key role as the connector between the requirements of company management and the interests of employees. Remote work reinforces this effect: for the majority of employees working from home, their direct line manager is the most important and immediate link to the company and its culture.²⁰ This makes it all the more

important that this manager knows how to handle the situation appropriately. One way to mitigate the disadvantages and still benefit from the positive effects of working from home is the hybrid work model (i. e. a mixture of remote work and presence in the office). However, there is a wide range about how much time individuals want to spend working from home and how much in the traditional office – it seems impossible to find a one-size-fits-all solution that satisfies everyone equally. Companies should therefore focus on individual flexibility.²¹

Remote work will not lose the importance it has gained in recent years

Due to the necessities of the global pandemic, there have been significant developments in technology that make remote management possible even in cases where it was previously unthinkable. Expectations in the labour market have adapted to this – remote work is a clear talent trend. Companies must adapt to the fact that more and more of their employees at all levels want to work from home. Managers have a key role to play in this context, as in many

respects the success of remote models depends on them and their skills. The HR department has the task of supporting them in this: on the one hand by creating a corporate culture in which successful remote management is possible in the first place – on the other hand, by ensuring that the managers in the company are adequately trained for the special challenges awaiting them.



Is your company up to the expectations regarding remote work?

The following checklist can help you find out:



Flexibility regarding the workplace

Does the company prioritise the individual needs of managers when determining the place of work? Does the company already have managers who spend over 50% of their time working remotely?



Adaption to remote models

Are the processes and procedures in the company adapted with regard to remote management and regularly checked for their effectiveness?



Trainings and courses

Are there special training courses for the management team itself as well as for managers and their employees to organise remote management efficiently?



Binding standards and compliances

Does the company have clear regulations in place for remote management with regard to privacy, data security, labour law and work-life integration?



Performance evaluation

Are there fair and objective criteria for evaluating the performance of managers who work remotely?

Hiring Trend #3

Human Touch: Preserving the Humanity in Business

What do we mean by **Human Touch**?

In the context of remote work, it is repeatedly noted that one of the biggest risks is isolation due to the lack of interpersonal contact in the workplace. To counteract this from the outset and strengthen human interaction, one characteristic in the company is especially important, but difficult to capture using metrics and KPIs.

The Human Touch

In the midst of rapid digital progress (especially in the field of artificial intelligence or AI), data-based decisions, decentralised communication and ever-increasing automation in almost all areas of life, it is becoming more important to consciously preserve the human humanity between people.

This special “human touch” includes empathetic and understanding **interaction with one another**, and also a certain **idea of humanity** that values people precisely because of their human traits. After all, only people can truly understand, interpret, inspire and adapt intelligently. At the end of all computing processes, people are still needed to critically examine quality and strategy. Of course, companies do not hire managers for personal reasons, but so that they can achieve clearly

defined results in the company. However, all people have the need to be recognised and respected on a human level – managers are no exception.

If this need is ignored, it is at the expense of the results achieved. Under the current conditions (generation gap, decentralised work, more diversity in the team, etc.), this “human touch” between the top executive level of the company and its other managers is becoming increasingly difficult to convey.

One possibility for expressing it is the option of remote management. Companies that allow managers to choose their own place of work show that they value their individual quality of life. And it is precisely this individual quality of life that is becoming increasingly important: while the “Baby Boomer” generation tends to prioritise their work, the young managers of the millennial generation expect good work-life integration and sufficient space for personal development as a person.

As with so many trends, managers are in a dual position when it comes to points of “human touch”. As human beings, they have complex needs that must be met.

At the same time, however, managers are also responsible themselves for meeting the needs of their team – and this task has become more challenging as a result of recent events.

The years of the Covid-19 pandemic have taken their toll on most people; many have experienced extreme stress and trauma, which may still be affecting them. Generation Z, in particular, suffers from the fact that they have not been able to train important social skills

sufficiently.²² Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that young employees long, above all, for jobs in which they have regular contact with a helpful and friendly team.

When it comes to points of “human touch”, managers have the extremely important task of creating a connection between the physically increasingly isolated team members and the company, as well as reacting with empathy and providing support.²³

Digitisation has led to a perceived dehumanisation of the work process, which will be exacerbated by future technological advances

This makes it all the more important to consciously treat candidates as human beings right from the start of the recruitment process and make them feel that they are valued as human beings as a whole. There is probably no other talent trend that expresses the

ambivalent role of managers as clearly as the “human touch”. But it is worth tackling this challenge. **To the same extent that digital change is revolutionising our working lives, the “human touch” is also gaining importance as a counterbalance.**



How pronounced is the “human touch” in your company? The following checklist will give you an idea:



Feedback culture

Is there an honest, constructive and respectful feedback culture based on the 360° model (i. e. feedback is not only given “from the top down“, but also from other perspectives)?



Interpersonal relationships

Is there deliberate room for small talk and friendly dialogue in the day-to-day work of the management team? Are personal challenges taken into consideration?



Teambuilding

Are there special formats in the management team to strengthen teamwork and recognise the individuality of each team member?



Strengthening the team spirit

Are targeted measures being taken to promote team spirit, especially in remote management?



Support and soft skills

Do managers receive the support they need to fulfil their tasks?
Is the development of soft skills explicitly supported?

Hiring Trend #4

Pursuing a Clear Vision

Social change is leading to a **changed work mentality**

The generational gap between the “Baby Boomer” generation and generations Y and Z is particularly expressed in a change in work mentality. While work for the older generations is an opportunity to improve their own standard of living through hard work, the younger generations see their work as a chance to change their role in the world. As we have

already seen, millennials are more concerned with how their role affects their own lives, while Generation Z is focussed on remedying societal ills. However, the two younger generations have one thing in common: they are confidently looking for employers whose corporate vision is compatible with their ideals.²⁴

This self-confidence **is no coincidence**

Digitisation has not only awakened people’s awareness of their own opportunities to exert influence, it has also changed these opportunities.

Influencers and content creators have shown that individuals can make a big impact with relatively little effort under the right circumstances – and misinformation on the internet (trolling) has trained the ability to critically scrutinise beyond what is taught in

school and university. The majority of talented young people live in the knowledge that they have a say in their lives and the world around them, at least in theory – and they do not allow themselves to be fooled into believing otherwise. It is not lip service, but **tangible measures and demonstrable results** that interest the managers of tomorrow.²⁵

They want to work for companies that not only propagate their vision, but live it.

A great motivational potential, but also a certain **demotivation potential**

Many generations Y and Z representatives feel powerless and disillusioned, an impression that can arise from the experience that although they theoretically have opportunities to participate, they cannot translate these into the reality they expect.

The unifying goal of the “Baby Boomer” generation – to achieve greater prosperity through hard work – seems to have receded into an unattainable distance or is simply irrelevant for the majority of millennials and generation Z.

They, therefore, have little interest in working at all. They do not show interest in working towards life goals such as owning their own home, and are turning their attention to

other goals instead.²⁶ For this part of the younger generations, fighting for their own vision is of great importance in order to defend themselves against the feeling of powerlessness.

Although young leaders are unlikely to feel the same lack of power and hope due to their economic status and career prospects, they have a certain generational awareness and understanding of the pressing problem of social inequality.

Accordingly, it can be assumed that the values and expectations of millennial managers will, at least to some extent, be modelled on the basis of those of their peers.

Which concrete vision a manager follows, **is highly individual**

Although general tendencies can be identified in every generation, the specific vision a manager follows is highly individual, as is the strategy they see as suitable for realising their goals.

This is best illustrated by an example: One person may see the key to their overarching goal, the preservation of international peace, in the permanent existence of national military units, while another person sees the opposite,

namely general disarmament, as essential for the same goal. Considering this, it is neither sensible nor realistic for companies to try to please everyone.

It is better to define a clear goal that may not appeal to everybody, but that is all the more appealing to those managers whose own goals align with it.

For a successful talent search, it is more important than ever that companies **sharpen their company profile**

If this endeavour is successful, it will make the company more attractive to management candidates. The general sense of well-being in the company is also positively influenced by a common goal, which in turn helps managers to lead their team to success – and also results in a better retention rate.²⁷

Perhaps most importantly, however, is the motivational influence of a shared vision: people who are working on something that is also close to their hearts naturally work harder and have greater resilience than someone who has to realise a goal that is alien to them.²⁸



The global environmental and climate crisis is a key issue that unites the younger generations in particular

Many are acutely aware of the ever more tangible threat to human livelihoods and want to do what they can to prevent the worst from happening.²⁹

Sustainability is an issue for society as a whole and affects all sectors of the economy as well as all professional functions – much like digitisation (which in turn is both an

opportunity and a threat to sustainability efforts: an opportunity due to the increase in efficiency it promises, and a threat due to the large amount of electricity it requires).

Preserving a future worth living is a goal with an extremely high level of consensus. The success of sustainability efforts can be measured, calculated and presented relatively

easily; but it is just as easy to identify the infamous greenwashing, which is intended to convey a commitment to the environment that does not actually exist.

Especially when it comes to sustainability and environmental protection, companies today are called upon to consciously set goals and take on real responsibility. Those who succeed in doing this authentically and honestly can hope to be accompanied on this path by committed and motivated young talent:

- 25% of generation Z and 23% of generation Y intend to leave their current employer due to environmental concerns
- 55% of generation Z and 54% of generation Y state that they obtain information on how a potential employer acts on environmental issues before signing an employment contract with them.³⁰





The following checklist will help you to determine whether **your company is consistently working towards its vision, both internally and externally:**



Definition of the vision

Does a clearly defined and credible corporate vision, and measurable targets for achieving it exist?



Adaption to future generations

Does the corporate vision reflect the expectations and needs of future generations of leaders?



Representatives of the vision

Are the company's managers credible representatives of the vision?



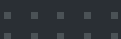
Accepting responsibility

Does the company assume long-term social and ecological responsibility?



Contribution of each individual:

Is it clear to everyone in the organisation how their work contributes to the vision?



Hiring Trend #5

Creating Flexible Job Requirements

Managers often find themselves caught in a **crossfire of expectations**

They are expected to provide empathetic leadership, increase sales in a target-orientated manner and without compromise, while also fuelling innovation with their own technological expertise. This combination of requirements is almost impossible to fulfil today, especially for a single person. What trends should companies be aware of when recruiting to still gain real leadership strength?

Firstly, let's look at why it is so difficult to find perfectly qualified managers today.

Why is it difficult to find well-qualified managers? Candidates for management positions are not just a portfolio of references, experiences, qualifications and certified skillsets. On the contrary, more and more managers are choosing unconventional ways to acquire important expertise and keep their skills up to date.

Today's managers no longer want to be stuck in rigid roles. In the currently very strong candidate market, companies can hardly expect to find the perfect candidate who fits the job profile 100%. Instead, they must become more flexible in their requirements for their new managers.

What could effective solutions look like?

Creative new solutions need to be found in order to separate the manager as a person from their tasks in the company, at least to some extent.

What could these solutions look like? Thanks to our many years of multifaceted experience filling management positions, we can point to a promising model that is also repeatedly mentioned in the current literature on hiring trends: a strong focus on external service providers and a gig economy.³¹

At management level, this type of solution can be implemented in the form of interim management. Instead of hiring a manager permanently, interim management involves bringing them into the company exclusively for a specific goal.

Once this goal has been achieved, the interim manager leaves the company. This approach – not covering entire positions, but only individual tasks and objectives – is certainly one way of tackling the problem. However, this approach is often not ideal.

Long-term collaboration within the framework of a permanent employment relationship offers a level of familiarity and trust that cannot be achieved in any other way. But what can companies do if they can't find a candidate who

fits the job profile 100%? At this point, we would like to present a different and, in many cases, better solution: dividing a complex management position into different “**job packages**”.

First Who, Then What

The last hiring trend to be presented in this whitepaper is the approach of defining various “job packages” in a company and confidently handing over these tasks to the most suitable available manager – or, in the case of a vacancy that cannot be closed, to divide the work packages between a new manager and the existing managers.

If you can specify exactly which skills are required in a specific case, for example with the help of a profile analysis by an executive search consultant, you can accurately identify the candidate whose skillset has the greatest overlap.

The “job packages” that this candidate is not (yet) able to handle can then be performed relatively easily by other means: suitably qualified colleagues who are already in the company can support or take over; reskilling measures and coaching can provide missing skills;³² and, of course, there is the option of

outsourcing individual work packages in this scenario, too. A well-thought-out remote management approach within the company offers additional flexibility. The division into “job packages” can and will lead to these packages moving flexibly between managers and being assigned to the best fit.

In general, the current talent trends are calling on companies to reorganise competencies, deploy managers and other employees in a more strength-oriented way and create opportunities for relevant skill updates.

True to the motto “**first who, then what**”, the focus should be on people – it can make sense to “tailor” positions for the most promising candidates or to train them specifically for a particular position through coaching. Digitisation has created valuable aids and tools for this approach, whether in the search for candidates, skills assessment or intelligent task assignment.



How flexible is your company in its job requirements? The following checklist provides a rough assessment:



Opportunities for dissenting candidates

Are candidates who do not meet 100% of the company's expectations given a fair chance? Are alternative qualification paths considered?



Courage to admit shortcomings

Is a culture of openly dealing with gaps in knowledge and mistakes fostered? Does the company offer mentoring and coaching to close these gaps?



Coaching in the management team

Do the members of the management team use individual or team coaching programmes?



„First Who, Then What“ approach

Are candidates for management positions primarily measured against the job requirements of the position – or are job profiles aligned with the strengths and potential of managers?



Part-time leadership

Is the company open to part-time managers? Are opportunities for leadership on demand utilised, for example, in the context of interim management?

05 Conclusion

Hiring the right managers is **crucial to a company's success**

The currently highly developed candidate market and the resulting competition for the best managers make strategic considerations on how to make your own company more attractive to management talent increasingly important.

Results are created by the right people – attracting them to the company is fundamental to any economic success. The expectations that qualified managers have of their new company are referred to as **talent trends**; the reactions of companies to fulfil these expectations are referred to as **hiring trends**.

In this whitepaper, we have presented the five most important current hiring trends: **more**

plurality in the recruitment process, remote work, the “human touch”, a clear vision and flexible job requirements. Our selection is based on more than 20 years of experience supporting our clients in their search for the best executives. Through hundreds of interviews with both clients and candidates, our global executive network, obtaining timely feedback from both sides on every placement and, last but not least, numerous research sources, we have built up a detailed overall picture that we would like to share with you.

We believe that our experience can help you to convince your dream candidate to join your organisation right from the start of your next recruitment process.

Hiring trends are about **more than just reacting**

In July 2021, *Deloitte Insights* published the groundbreaking article “**The worker-employer relationship disrupted: If we’re not a family, what are we?**”, which discusses how the relationship between employers and employees is entering a new era. According

to the article, how this new era may look and to what extent it will build on the corporate cultures of the past will be determined by the participants in the labour market themselves in the coming years.

The **Deloitte Insights** article shows four possible scenarios for the future:

Work as fashion 01

In this possible scenario, companies endeavour to constantly meet the wishes and expectations of talented candidates. Trends are served in the best possible way and in a timely manner, without pursuing a long-term strategy or concept – similar to the fashion industry.

War between talent 02

This scenario is shaped by competition between candidates for attractive positions. Companies see individual candidates as easily replaceable.

Work is work 03

This scenario is characterised by strict professionalism. Work and private life are consistently separated, both by employers and employees.

Purpose unleashed 04

In this scenario, the employer and employee are united by their common focus on a specific purpose and combine their strengths to achieve this goal.³³

Several years after the publication of the Deloitte Insights article, the question arises as to which of these four directions the real situation is trending.

The strong candidate market contradicts the *war between talent* scenario; *work is work* can be seen as the dominant mindset in recent decades, but generation Z is resetting this benchmark. While these two scenarios seem less relevant, the increasing emphasis on talent trends in the recruitment process points to the *work as fashion* scenario.

However, many talents explicitly want their organisation to follow the same values and vision as they do – something that goes beyond the simple reactivity of *work as fashion* and points more towards purpose unleashed.

It is this last scenario, *purpose unleashed*, that we are currently seeing innovative and exciting approaches in the companies we advise, which makes us curious about the coming years.

Nevertheless, the direction **is not yet decided**

Even if the purpose *unleashed scenario* appears to be the logical consequence of current trends, developments can change quickly.

In the coming years, companies and managers will together determine through their behaviour and decisions in which of the four directions presented by Deloitte Insights the development will continue – or whether it will go in a completely different direction.

EO Executives looks forward to accompanying companies and managers on this journey with our expertise and counsel.



Best Leadership Team Ever

How EO Helps You Build the Best Leadership Team You've Ever Had

Putting together a first-class management team is crucial to the success of any organisation. EO Executives has specialised in matching companies with the right talent for over 20 years. Formally, our work falls into the areas of executive search, interim management and assessment – but we do more than that:

Guided by our motto, “Results through people”, we provide comprehensive and personalised support for your recruitment process until we have achieved your goal together. Our service is always customised to your individual needs.

EO can help with external searches, internal selection processes, analysing team dynamics, effective onboarding, and much more. Candidate experience is particularly important to us.

We use tried and tested assessment tools at every stage of the recruitment process to supplement our expertise and knowledge of human nature with data points. This way, we can ensure that the company and the executive fit together and are working towards the same vision. This special fit, which we call the “perfect match”, is the reason for our 96% success rate.³⁴



Results
through people

About EO Executives

Results through people



Our mission is to help our clients build the **best leadership team** they have ever had

Success in companies is achieved by people (“Results through people”). Leaders play an important role in this.

To this end, we bring together consultants with highly individualised and specific knowledge and our clients. Our consultants are experts in their respective industries and functional areas. Thanks to our consultants’ high level of expertise, we ensure that management positions critical to success are filled quickly, permanently and successfully.

In addition to competent consultants, our team consists of dedicated researchers and employees – and everyone contributes their extensive knowledge to the search for the perfect executive.

Our unique methodical approach, executive intro®, ensures that our candidates are not only convincing from a professional point of view, but also represent a long-term enrichment for the management team and the company on an interpersonal level.

We call this the “perfect match”.

EO Executives was founded in 1997 and is now present in seven countries worldwide with more than 30 locations.

We fill positions with permanent executives and experts as well as quickly available interim managers for temporary assignments and projects. In addition, we support our clients with further consulting services relating to executive search, interim management and leadership development.



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Further valuable content and insights for executives can be found on our website at www.eoexecutives.com



EO International GmbH: www.eoexecutives.com

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The text was written in detail by [Leonie Ranly](#) on behalf of EO International GmbH.

For the sole purpose of better readability, gender-specific spelling has been omitted. All personal designations are therefore to be understood as gender-neutral.

