



## Event Summary for HR Leaders

### A Successful 'Return to Each Other'

Our inaugural "Let's Talk" event on September 29, 2022 at International Market Square brought together top HR professionals in the Twin Cities to learn from our guest speaker—and from each other—through intimate and provocative discussions. It was wonderful to have so many talented leaders together again! Thank you to everyone who made time to participate.

One of our favorite insights came from pre-dinner networking, where as expected, the new normal for work was a frequent topic. We loved this recommendation from one of the CHROs in attendance: Instead of calling it "return to office," why not embrace the positive with "return to each other"? We are thrilled to have returned to each other with such great energy, ideas, and community spirit.

After a memorable evening of reconnecting, productive conversation, and delicious dinner, we continued our commitment to giving back with two Charity of Choice donations to deserving non-profits. To thank our speaker RJ Heckman, we donated \$250.00 on his behalf to Vocal Essence. From a random drawing of attendees, HR leader Jeff Krautkramer recommended the Alzheimer's Association, who will receive a second \$250.00 donation from Navigate Forward.

We look forward to connecting soon with all of you and seeing you at a future event!

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Jeff Krautkramer" and the second is "Julie A. Forre".



*Author RJ Heckman discussing *The Talent Manifesto* with Twin Cities HR leaders in the International Market Square atrium over dinner on September 29, 2022.*

## **Key Takeaways on Talent Management**

In *[The Talent Manifesto](#)*, author and thought leader [RJ Heckman](#) incorporates best practices, research and lessons-learned from thousands of global companies to illustrate how organizations can achieve optimum performance through talent. Now more than ever, he stresses, businesses need a proactive and strategic approach to their people—one that requires clear differentiation, high-quality data, and agility.

After a brief presentation, each table tackled a topic from Heckman’s “talent waltz,” which represents the three core steps that organizations must employ for optimal talent management:

1. Aligning business and HR strategy
2. Understanding and employing the right talent analytics
3. Moving quickly and decisively in the market

Our key learnings follow.

## Topic 1: Aligning Business and HR Strategy

- What are the most pivotal roles in your organization? The ones where a change in the performance of those individuals leads to clear business impact?
- How did you define and identify these roles?
- What are you doing to ensure quality and retain the individuals in these roles?

Heckman challenged HR leaders to clarify the roles that truly drive value in their own organizations. He noted that exceptional leaders, while critical to business success, should be the norm rather than the exception; he encouraged organizations to think more broadly when defining their own company's pivotal roles.

### Defining Pivotal Roles

- Our attendees agreed that pivotal roles in their organizations are likely lower in the company than many senior leaders imagine; raising awareness is important.
- One way of defining pivotal roles is by changing the lens used. Instead of concentrating on “high potential” talent, assessing “high value creator” roles.
- Some examples of pivotal roles included those that lead to greater profits or expanded operational capacity, and roles with direct impact on the supply chain, customer experience or product alignment.
- Across all industries, digital roles have become more important. This has led to hiring difficulties because so many companies need to draw on the same pool of talent.
- HR leaders noted that pivotal roles shift over time, typically due to external factors. Presently, procurement is a pivotal role with some organizations due to supply chain issues.
- Similarly, labor shortages have made non-critical jobs critical because there simply are not enough people available to do the work. The changing work environment, with more complexity because of hybrid work, is also a factor in hiring and managing pivotal talent.

### Recruiting and Retaining Pivotal Roles

Attendees identified several ways to recruit and retain talent in pivotal roles, including:

- Increasing pay and reviewing compensation more frequently. One company proved the value of a large salary increase by tracking attrition before and after the move, then comparing salary increases to the cost of turnover.
- Developing pipelines for young talent such as internship and apprenticeship programs.
- Providing more flex time or work-from-home opportunities when applicable.
- Offering more opportunities to learn and grow job-related skills, which is especially important for technical roles.
- Communicating business strategy as part of the employment brand.
- Improving the selection and training of people managers.

One of the biggest takeaways in the discussion of pivotal roles was a willingness by HR leaders to make bold decisions, even if they upset the status quo, and avoid decisions driven by fear. These hesitations often hold back companies from better compensation and benefit choices.

## Topic 2: Using Data to Understand the Baseline Capabilities of Your People

- What data are you collecting and monitoring today to understand which people strategies are truly delivering business outcomes?
- Can you link this data to business outcomes, and can you use it to predict business outcomes?
- Does your team have access to this data, and do they know what to do with it?

Our HR leaders agreed that data needs are changing rapidly, especially with the many workplace dynamics in play post-pandemic. Across their organizations, which varied in size, business model and industry, they recognized similar obstacles that hamper strong analytics. Many HR teams don't own the data, requiring resources and partnerships with analytics, IT, or other parts of the business. They also focus almost exclusively on historical or backward-looking data rather than harnessing forward-thinking, predictive capabilities.

### Typical People Data Collected

- Employee engagement and satisfaction levels, via surveys
- Talent review data on the workforce
- Compensation data on employees as well as external benchmarks for certain roles or industries
- Certain organizations collected data specific to their operations, such as time to fill orders, billable hours, sales data by individual, number of nurses/patients in healthcare, and staff utilization

### Business Outcomes From Data

This data can support business outcomes such as:

- Gaps in employee satisfaction or leadership that can impact culture or lead to attrition
- Leadership succession planning
- Aligning compensation with talent by ensuring the right people receive the biggest share of compensation

A key takeaway from the discussion of data is that ultimately, HR may need to spend less time measuring some things, in order to collect data that really matters and can be used for predictive efforts. As one leader noted, “stop counting people—and make people count.”

### Topic 3: Speed to Value

- What examples do you have of an action you have taken to improve speed or to make your organization more agile?
- How do you measure value?
- Moving fast to close gaps can be a challenge. What could you do to move five times faster and deliver ten times the value?

Attendees acknowledged that speed is important for credibility within the business. Many times, HR becomes too focused on getting stakeholder alignment, which comes at the expense of speed and agility. HR may need more willingness to take the risk to act quickly, or as one HR leader noted, “make the bet and stand behind it.” One good example was to take the annual cost of turnover (estimated at \$5,000 for this business) and make a bold and fast decision to do something that would really impact turnover.

### Defining Value in the Organization

Our HR leaders quickly realized that every company will define value differently, based on their core competencies and unique business strategy. Some examples included:

- Patient satisfaction for healthcare organizations
- Repeat business and major contracts
- Community involvement
- Employee engagement

### Obstacles to Speed and Agility

A number of elements can hamper speed and agility for HR. Some of these obstacles include:

- Truly defining the organization’s critical roles
- Collecting people data on what is really meaningful and will impact the business
- Difficulty finding talent to fill a large number of open positions
- Aligning the priorities of franchisees with corporate goals, due to franchisee autonomy
- Maintaining high-quality customer relationships when not all staff have the same level of soft skills and account management capabilities
- The tension of competing high priorities in the organization that makes capturing mindshare very difficult
- Misaligned metrics
- Stringent credentialing requirements in healthcare

### Opportunities to Move Faster

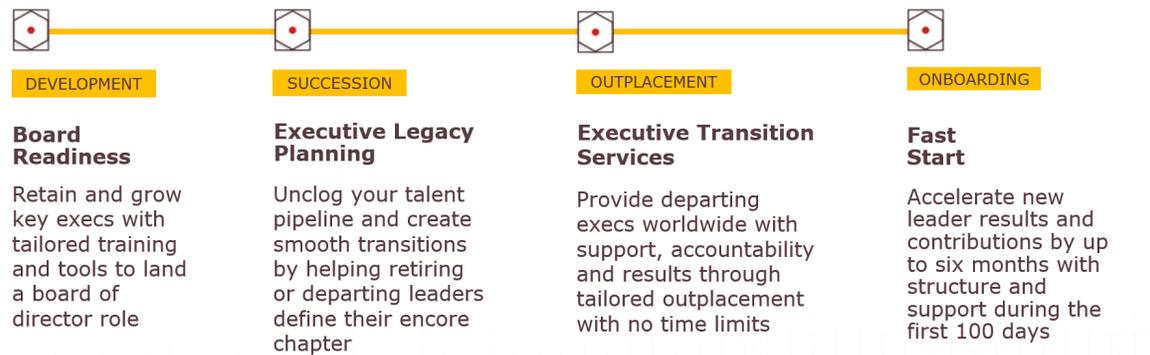
Attendees brainstormed several ideas to move faster and deliver greater value, including:

- Determining true ROI opportunities, focusing solely on them, and de-prioritizing other initiatives
- Doubling wages for pivotal positions (primarily nonexempt roles)
- Finding a key sponsor and ally for critical initiatives, then running with it
- Where group decision or input is required, finding ways to force fast agreement

## About Navigate Forward

Navigate Forward provides highly customized support to senior executives who are currently in career transition, planning change in the future or seeking board service, helping them find their passion, their path and their place in the business community. Since our inception in 2008, we've worked with more than 1,800 clients and 425 companies across the country and around the world. We are proud to be a certified women-owned business.

### Four Opportunities for Key Leaders



### Connect With Us to Support Your Talent Strategy



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