



War for Talent, Competing for Contracting Professionals

Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal

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Abstract

The Army recognizes there is a War for Talent and is focused on the Total Army recruitment and retention efforts. The purpose of the research is to explore the Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, (ACC-RSA), War for Talent, in the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals. The ACC-RSA is committed to building a highly qualified and diverse workforce by maximizing competitive recruitment procedures and retention strategies to compete and win the War for Talent.

In July 2022, the ACC-RSA established a multi-functional integrated product team, (MIPT), Contracting for Victory, FY22 ACC-RSA Strategic Initiatives Recruitment and Retention. The purpose of the MIPT was to develop a recruitment and retention playbook for the organization. The MIPT charter identified the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges and described the impacts of the challenges, as losing the War for Talent (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022).

The scope of this research is to define War for Talent. The research explores the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges. The research also identifies the best practices of talent management processes and hybrid workplace, a quality-of-life-enhancement, to recruit and retain an optimal workforce. The research offers talent management and hybrid workplace as strategies to help the ACC-RSA compete and win in the War for Talent.

Introduction

“The Army is at war. It is a war for our greatest strength and most important weapon system, and the outcome will determine our ability to win all future wars. It is a War for Talent,” (Daly, 2021, p. 2). In 1997, Steven Hankin coined the phrase War for Talent. Hankin was able to foresee companies were about to engage in a War for Talent that will remain a defining characteristic of their competitive landscape for decades to come (*At 21 years Old the War for Talent is as Relevant as Ever, 2019, p. 1*).

Background

The ACC-RSA is a major contracting center of the U.S. Headquarters, ACC. The ACC-RSA is the largest U.S. ACC, with over 900 civilian and military contracting and acquisition professionals. The ACC-RSA supports warfighters worldwide by contracting for research and development, major weapon systems production, sub-systems, and complex services vital to soldier readiness.

The ACC-RSA is comprised of five remote site locations. The five remote sites are located at Fort Rucker, Alabama; Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado; Letterkenny Army Depot, Pennsylvania; Corpus Christi Army Depot, Texas; and Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Hampton, Virginia. The ACC-RSA supports Army Material Command; Army Futures Command; Aviation and Missile Command; Program Executive Office (PEO) Missile and Space; PEO Aviation; U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation and Missile Center; Redstone Arsenal Garrison; U.S. Army Test, Measurement, and Diagnostic Equipment Activity; and Space and Missile Defense Command. (“ACC-RSA Fact Sheet”, 2022, p 1)

The ACC-RSA faces recruitment and retention challenges for contracting professionals. The ACC-RSA's struggle for contracting professionals has become a widely known systemic enterprise-level problem (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022). The Contract Specialists, 1102 career field, comprises mission-critical occupational and military equivalent personnel. The contracting career field is the second largest of the defense acquisition career fields, with 30,230 military and civilian professionals (*Human Capital Initiatives Contract Specialist*. (n.d.), p. 76).

“The War for Talent refers to an increasingly competitive landscape for the recruitment and retention of talented employees” (Fallow, 2021, para 8). As the War for Talent intensifies with organizations competing to attract, recruit, develop, and retain the most skilled and capable workforce, the ACC-RSA focuses on attracting and retaining the top contracting talent. The ACC-RSA is committed to building a highly qualified and diverse workforce, through maximizing competitive recruitment procedures and retention strategies.

Twenty-six years later, the phrase War for Talent is still relevant. Three fundamental forces fueling the war have been identified as follows: “The irreversible shift from the industrial age to the information age; the intensifying demand for high-caliber managerial talent; and the growing propensity for people to switch from one company to another” (*At 21 years Old the War for Talent is as Relevant as Ever, 2019 p. 1*). The ACC-RSA's approach to winning the War for Talent is about developing strategies to improve its recruitment and retention efforts.

To win the War for Talent and ensure we maintain and extend overmatch capabilities, we must employ a 21st-century talent management system and quality-of-life enhancements. Innovative workplace arrangements like telework and remote work are the fundamental quality-of-life enhancements critical to our ability to acquire, employ, and retain the people necessary for success. (“Department of the Army”, 2022)

“Talent management is an effective methodology intended to attract, develop, motivate, and retain industrious, committed personnel” (“DoD Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY-2016 – FY2021” (n.d.) p. 11). “Quality-of-life programs promote the health and well-being of the Army's people, increasing recruiting and retention and reducing overall stress and uncertainty. Increased quality of life for Soldiers, Army civilians, and families directly ties to increased Army readiness” (“Department of the Army”, 2021).

Problem Statement

The War for Talent has increased as the battle for skilled employees in private industry and Government agencies intensifies. The ACC-RSA faces recruitment and retention challenges for contracting professionals. The ACC-RSA's fight for contracting professionals has become a widely known systemic enterprise-level problem (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the ACC-RSA's War for Talent, and the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals.

Research Questions

1. What is the War for Talent?
2. What are the ACC-RSA's recruitment and retention challenges?
3. How can talent management and hybrid workplace best practices help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent?

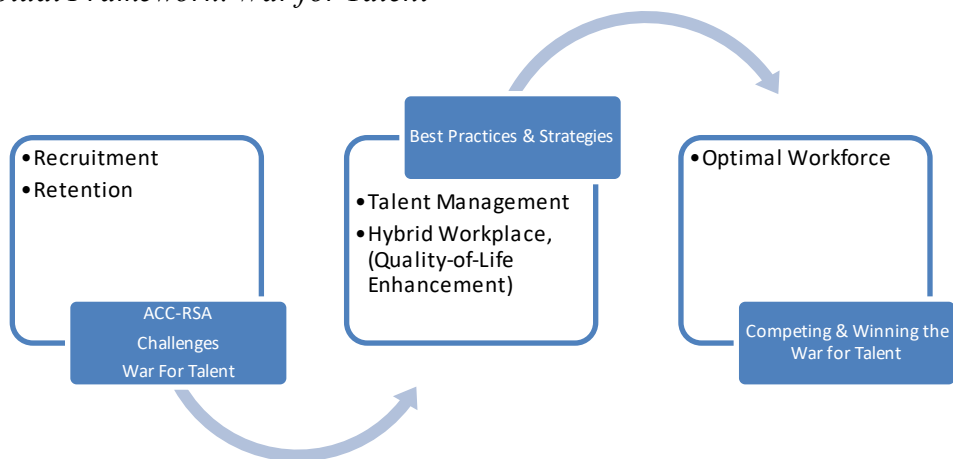
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework for this research. The ACC-RSA is in a War for Talent and faces recruitment and retention challenges. This research identifies talent management and hybrid workplace best practices and strategies to obtain an optimal workforce to compete and

win in the War for Talent. Figure 1 is a pictorial illustration of how the research framework had three focus areas; the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges; the best practices and strategies for talent management, and hybrid workplace, a quality-of-life enhancement; and finally, competing and winning the War for Talent.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: War for Talent



Significance of This Research

Recruitment and retention of contracting professionals are critical in the ACC-RSA's ability to support the Army's complex mission. The focus on acquiring the right people through better screening and investing valued resources to help reduce attrition will help the ACC-RSA compete and win in the War for Talent. "Creating a robust pipeline of new talent for the Total Army will ensure that the Army has the breadth and depth of talent needed for the multi-domain operations, (MDO), a capable force of 2035 envisioned by the Army Strategy" ("Army People's Strategy", 2019, p. 6).

Overview of the Research Methodology

The qualitative research method will be the research methodology for developing this research topic. Qualitative research is a process that involves gathering and examining data,

which does not involve numbers. Surveys and best practices will be analyzed for this research. “Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 627).

The intent of this research is to explore talent management and hybrid workplace best practices to help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent. The conceptual framework identified in Figure 1 provides the qualitative approach for this research.

The literature review is a collection of existing government documents, existing surveys, policies, published reports, journal articles, websites, online libraries, and books. Additionally, the research centers on the analysis of the ACC-RSA MIPT results. The objective of reviewing the literature is to gain insight into the ACC-RSA’s recruitment and retention challenge. The literature review also identifies talent management and hybrid workplace best practices.

The researcher studied the talent management processes and hybrid workplace best practices. This research employs a qualitative research approach using content analysis, meaning a review of existing data already recorded in books, articles, websites, and journals. Once the data is analyzed and findings presented, then recommendations and conclusions can be drawn. The Methodology further documents the approach.

Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to information from existing government documents, online libraries, books, articles, and past surveys. This research does not contain interviews with Human Resources (HR) subject matter experts or the ACC-RSA leadership or staff. The research is limited and concentrates on one quality-of-life enhancement, the hybrid workplace best practices. This research is not an analysis or comparison of recruitment or retention data from other government agencies or private industry. This research is limited to the best practices of talent management

processes, models, and systems, and is not a comparison of models, systems, or processes. The research is limited to best practices available in the public domain and is not data from a particular organization or occupation. Another limitation of the study is the availability of recruitment and retention data from the ACC-RSA. In addition, scheduling constraints limited the extent of this research.

Summary

The ACC-RSA faces recruitment and retention challenges for contracting professionals that have become a widely known systemic enterprise-level problem. The ACC-RSA's approach to winning the War for Talent is about developing strategies and approaches to improve its recruitment and retention efforts. The War for Talent is about the development of strategies and the approaches taken that will lead people who are willing to learn and contribute to the organization. (William, 2000 p. 5)

The ACC-RSA established a MIPT to address the recruitment and retention challenges in the organization. The MIPT charter identified the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention impact, as losing the War for Talent (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022). This research defines War for Talent. This research will study talent management best practices as an effective strategy to help the ACC-RSA with its recruitment and retention process. This research will also focus on hybrid workplace as the quality-of-life enhancement strategy for recruitment and retention of an optimal workforce.

Literature Review

Introduction

Creswell and Guetterman define a literature review as, "a written summary of journals, articles, books, and other documents that describes the past and current state of information on the topic of your research study. It also organizes the literature into subtopics and documents the need for a proposed study" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 79).

The literature review is comprised of existing government documents, online libraries, books, articles, journals, and existing surveys. The literature review also included the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention documents, surveys, policies, and other organization documents. The literature review has four topics: War for Talent; Recruitment; Retention; and Best Practices and Strategies. The War for Talent has a subtopic, Winning the War for Talent. The Best Practices and Strategies has two subtopics: Talent Management; and Hybrid Workplace, Quality-of-Life Enhancement.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the ACC-RSA's War for Talent, the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals.

Research Questions

1. What is the War for Talent?
2. What are the ACC-RSA's recruitment and retention challenges?
3. How can talent management and hybrid workplace best practices help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent?

War for Talent

The ACC-RSA MIPT identified the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenge impact as losing the War for Talent. The War for Talent literature review will define War for Talent. War for Talent is about the difficulties faced by organizations in recruiting and retaining employees. The article, *How to Win the War for Talent*, identifies four areas of the War for Talent as follows: (1) The need for skilled workers (along with recognition of how important soft skills are); (2) the post-pandemic lack of employees; (3) the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation; and (4) the entry and influence of Millennials and Gen Z. This article also highlights the two key strategies for dealing with the challenge of filling open positions, retention, and talent recruitment. Recruitment and retention each have separate elements to sustain employees (Mahapatra, 2022).

The ACC-RSA's Turnover spreadsheet identifies 103 contracting professionals who are eligible to retire through December 2022. An article titled *U.S. Government Faces War for Talent* states:

In the next two years, the U.S. government will need to hire up to 193,000 employees to avoid competing with the private sector for qualified employees. The government needs to step up recruitment to fill entry-level positions. It will also need to increasingly look outside its ranks and turn to current retirees to fill more senior posts. (Child, 2002, p. 1)

In workforce management, there are challenges in hiring, development, and retention. The contracting workforce has similar recruitment and retention challenges as those experienced in the overall acquisition workforce. The Army civilian contracting personnel eligible for retirement within 10 years is 11,499, or 45.7 percent. The high percentage of contracting professionals

eligible for retirement presents challenges to maintaining a skilled, well-rounded workforce to execute the complex mission. (“Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan, FY2016 - FY2021” (n.d.)).

Federal Government employees are expected to retire in droves over the next few years. The Office of Personnel Management, (OPM), estimates 45 percent of current federal employees are age 50 or older and are considering retirement. In preparation for the new face of the government talent pool, the public sector will need to competitively recruit, and retain talent for the government to operate in the 21st century. (Tagrobicki, 2018, p. 1)

“The War for Talent refers to an increasingly competitive landscape for the recruitment and retention of talented employees” (Fallow, 2021, para 8). The War for Talent impacts the Federal Government’s ability to compete, attract, develop, and retain the most skilled and capable workforce. As identified in the Acquisition Strategic Plan FY2016-FY2021, the civilian contracting profession faces challenges to recruit and retain a skilled workforce.

Winning the War

Winning the War literature review is an analysis of strategies an organization can employ to retain an optimal workforce. The author of the article titled *How to Win the Government Talent War* presents the challenges the “government is facing as a perfect storm of retiring personnel, fierce competition for skilled talent, and difficulty getting recruits interested in public service” (Tagrobicki, 2018, p. 1). This article also highlights ways the government could win the War for Talent, such as: “marketing efforts that emphasize the benefits of working for the government, hiring non-traditional workers that are reentering the workforce, or getting back on the right track in the work environment” (Tagrobicki, 2018, p. 1).

The article, *How to Win the War for Talent*, Mahapatra (2022) reveals the

War for Talent can be won in multiple strategic ways, with a focus on attracting and retaining employees. The government can attack the war with a highly satisfying job, freedom to work and experiment, and scope for creativity and innovation. The government can attack the war through competitive compensation benefits, good healthcare facilities, and work-life balance. In addition, the government can promote appreciation and recognition for excellence, learning and development opportunities, and great work culture. (para. 13)

In an article titled, *Winning the War for Talent is a Battle, but it Doesn't Have to Be*, it states,

The battle for talent at every level can be a costly one. The constant churn of hiring, onboarding, and resigning is resource draining and expensive. According to Gallup, an organization of 100 employees can expect replacement costs to be between \$660,000 to \$2.6 million annually. Winning the War for Talent will require organizations to be creative about recruiting, retaining, and reskilling people—with an imperative to unite employees behind a reinvigorated, reinvented purpose. Case in point, Korn Ferry surveyed nearly 700 professionals and found that almost one-third (31%) said they were thinking of leaving their job even though they did not have another one lined up. This fuels the battle for talent. (Primus, 2022, para. 11-12)

An article titled, *Winning the War for Talent; The Changing Fields and Tools*, reveals an organization's ability to attract and retain talent is fundamental in the talent war. "For more than 30 years, the fight has shown no sign of getting less intense. The war will continue, businesses and organizations will change, talent will advance, and skills will come and go" (Pleaner, 2021, para 11).

Table 1 highlights six tools to win the War for Talent. These tools will help determine if the organization is equipped to compete and win the War for Talent. The six tools are: (1) Set the right mindset; (2) Battle at the right field; (3) Use valid, and scientifically proven tools; (4) Build a seamless and engaging experience; (5) Continuous integration of your people data; and (6) Use information wisely (2021, para. 5-11).

Table 1

Changing Fields and Tools (Pleaner, 2021, para 5-11)

Winning the War for Talent	The Changing Fields and tools
1. Set the Right Mindset	First thing first, a change of mindset is required. I accept that the war will continue and that I may not always win, but what I can change is where I choose to fight the war and the tools I use. The talent war is getting increasingly intense and will continue this way. This is something that we cannot change and have no control over. Therefore, focusing on what we can change instead will help us move forward to the next step in the strategy. (para. 5)
2. Battle at the Right Field	Change battlefield is one option. Online networks, referrals, campus recruitment, talent boards, coffee shops, the possibilities are endless. In other words, do not limit how to attract talent. The challenge with where you fight for talent is that you will always be competing in the same spaces as your competitors. At the same time, you are no longer the owner of the battlefield, and candidates dictate where you seek their services. Moving along with them will also get you targeted pools of talent. (para. 6)
3. Use Valid and Scientifically Proven Tools	If the battlefield is out of your control, then the tools you use become your differentiator. Make no mistake, valid and reliable tools are an essential starting point. Deploying science-based psychometric assessments and assessing a range of job-relevant competencies, skills, and behaviors is the foundation to maximize your efficiency and effectiveness. (para.7)
4. Build a Seamless and Engaging Experience	Speed and scalability are essential while ensuring candidates have the best possible experience. With talent becoming or remaining mobile and seeking flexibility, the organization tools need to replicate this expectation. Assessments should be delivered on any device and be available on demand. How the organization deploys these tools is key to success, and that also means providing candidates with a rich and engaging

	experience in a seamless and clear workflow, as well as delivering speed and differentiation. Speed and differentiation matter a lot. Candidates must understand who is competing for their skills, and your brand must be central to the organization's War for Talent. (para. 8)
5. Ensure a Continuous Integration of the People's Data	War is not a moment in time. No matter how effective the organization's recruitment and selection process is, it is the integration of the data and the ongoing application that delivers sustainable success. Insight begins with bringing together data, be it personality assessment, experience, skills, motivation, or values. No battle ever allows for perfect information, but having more data certainly provides a better view, and that view is important. Data visualization, real-time data visualization, with the flexibility to apply different lenses, is key to insights. (para. 9)
6. Use Information Wisely	Information is currency, and currency has applications across a variety of use cases. Too often, we discard the information we have after we have used it to win a battle, forgetting that it contributes to success in the war. The insights the organization needs to change as the battlefield evolves successfully. Data flows from one point to another, from talent acquisition to talent management. These two strategic imperatives were the basis for the War for Talent: recruitment and retention. The war continues. The integrated data you have at hand must provide real-time insights to provide your people with the correct answers. (para. 10-11)

In Primus (2022) article titled *Winning the War for Talent Is a Battle, but it Doesn't Have to Be*, he states,

For organizations to ensure they are on the right path toward a more inclusive company culture, Human Resource (HR) practitioners must first change the mindset of the leadership, who could be unknowingly undermining their diversity, equity, and inclusive (DEI) efforts. It is important to understand the necessity of active involvement by leadership. (para. 7)

The article titled *The War for Talent*, states:

You can win the War for Talent, but first, you must elevate talent management to a burning corporate priority. Then, to attract and retain the people you need, you must create and perpetually refine an employee value proposition: senior management's answer to why a smart, energetic, ambitious individual would want to come and work with you rather than with the team next door. That done, you must turn your attention to how you are going to recruit great talent, and finally develop, develop, develop.

(Chambers, 1998, p. 45)

Recruitment

The recruitment literature review explores the ACC-RSA recruitment challenges. The ACC-RSA, Contracting for Victory, FY22 ACC-RSA, Strategic Initiatives, Recruitment, and Retention MIPT discussed the ACC-RSA strategies to address its recruitment. The literature discussed ACC-RSA becoming the provider of choice by developing recruitment and retention strategies to improve ACC-RSA fill rate and attrition rate ("ACC-RSA, Contracting for Victory", 2022). The ACC-RSA Civilian Hiring Business Instructions (BI) establishes requirements and provides guidance for effectively filling vacant positions within the organization. The BI focuses on improved timeliness and quality hiring processes. ("ACC-RSA Civilian Hiring BI", 2020)

The ACC-RSA's strategic recruitment goal focuses on four recruitment initiatives: Internal Hiring Process; Contractor Support; Retiring Military Recruitment; and Local Fellows Recruitment. The recruitment subtopics are Cradle to Grave Hiring Recruitment; Establish Internal Database of Qualified Candidates; Virtual Hiring Events, and a Mobile Recruitment Team; Contracting Out Support; Establishing the ACC-RSA Military Recruitment and Hiring Process; Strategic Marketing Plan; and Increase DEI Efforts ("ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory", 2022).

The book, *For Your Improvement (FYI)* suggests looking beyond the resume during the recruitment process. It discusses acquiring a quality pool of candidates and looking for attributes beyond a resume. Look for what motivates and drives the person, and their values. Pay attention to patterns and themes in their responses.

The resume identifies the skills, experience, work history, education, and can-do qualities. You will be most effective when you know how to assess and select talent. When you can build a quality pipeline of talent that strengthens the resilience of the organization and its ability to innovate, adapt and survive. (Ferry, 2014, p. 37)

The article titled, *Recruitment Process; The Ultimate Guide to Hiring Top Talent*, identifies recruitment as a core function of the Human Resources department. It states:

Recruitment is a process that involves everything from identifying, attracting, screening, shortlisting, interviewing, selecting, hiring, and onboarding employees. An effective recruitment process is an organization-specific sourcing model that aims to find the right fit for the right job at the right time. A step-by-step approach to bringing in talented people who can help the organization grow. (Jobsoid, 2021, p. 1)

Any foolproof recruitment process is typically targeted toward attracting qualified candidates and encouraging the maximum number of possible job seekers to apply. This makes it possible to build an immense pool of talented players in a tight job market and minimizes the time involved in finding candidates and filling roles for the present and future requirements of the organization. A well-planned and thoughtfully crafted recruitment process helps the hiring team filter the right candidates faster while staying focused on engaging the eligible candidates for maximum conversions. The recruitment process reflects the organization's professionalism and helps attract the right candidates

while saving time and money spent on identifying, attracting, engaging, recruiting, and retaining talent. (p. 2)

The recruitment process consists of seven (7) interrelated steps as follows:

Identifying and Hiring needs; Preparing the Job Description; Talent Search; Screening and Shortlisting; Interviewing; Evaluation and Offer of Employment; and Introduction and Induction of the New Employees. When identifying an organization's hiring needs, the recruitment strategy should start with identifying the vacancies that exist followed by analyzing the job specifications including the knowledge, skills, and experience needed for the role. (p. 5)

Table 2 provides three factors on how an organization can identify its hiring needs and provides a description of each element. “The recruitment process begins with recruitment planning that involves analyzing and describing job specifications qualifications, experience, and skills required to fill the vacant positions. If the recruitment plan is not well-structured it could fail to attract potential employees” (Joboid, 2021, p. 6).

Table 2*Identifying the Hiring Needs* (Jobsoid, 2021, p. 5-6)

Identifying The Hiring Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure out where the gaps are in your current team. • Check for new needs in terms of ability, performance, or personality • Ask yourself if you need someone to take care of something that is not being addressed currently; this will allow the organization to see if there is a hiring need. • Keep track of input versus output when it comes to the team. See if there is an increase in workload that needs to be addressed by hiring. • Regularly analyze performance and make a list of missing qualities, qualifications, skills, and proficiencies that you need to add to your organization. • Be mindful of existing employees leaving. This is a hiring need. • Identify the hiring needs before they become a pressing matter. (p. 5-6)
Factors that Influence Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the organization • Salary Structure • Work culture and working conditions within the organization • The growth rate of the organization • The current state of employment in the economy. (p. 6).
Setting up the Best Recruitment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong recruitment team ensures a strong recruitment process. • The team's role in recruitment is crucial because one wrong decision can affect the productivity of the entire workforce. • Identify the job vacancy and define the qualities of an ideal candidate • Write a clear job description to enable candidates to understand the job and to assess whether they are the right fit. • Create an outline detailing the qualities needed in an ideal candidate, which will also help later during the selection process. (p. 6)

The article, *The War for Talent* identifies the following best practices of talent management within recruitment, staffing, and succession planning;

(1) talent pool strategy (instead of hiring for specific positions); (2) close relationship with the best business schools and universities; (3) highly selective recruitment; (4) “employee value proposition” and strong importance of global branding; (5) focus on values and cultural fit, not just job-related skills and experience; (6) continuous assessment of performance and potential, by using multiple inputs; (7) grading against competency profile and succession purposes; (8) use of talent inventories for selection and succession purposes; and (9) different talent pools (executive, specialist, etc.) with different career paths. (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 9)

The article further states,

Successful organizations use a talent pool strategy for recruitment of talent. An organization recruits the best people and then sets them in appropriate positions, which is more common than trying to hire specific people for the specific position. Talent can be recruited through different channels, such as direct applications via the internet, summer internship programs, on-campus recruitment fairs, and connections with the best universities and business schools. (p. 9-10)

Retention

The Retention literature review will focus on the ACC-RSA retention challenges. The ACC-RSA has a strategic initiative for retention. The Retention Initiative's subtopics focus areas are Employee Voluntary Reassignments, Telework Expansion, Award Distribution, Increased Recognition, Small-Unit Metrics Reporting, and Technology Refresh. (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022)

The ACC-RSA MIPT addressed two questions, Why do they stay? Vs. Why do they leave? In addition, the ACC-RSA MIPT's mission is to identify strategies to aid in the center's retention challenges. As identified in the MIPT charter, the ACC-RSA FY21 attrition rate was 12.12%. The ACC-RSA FY22 Turnover report captures quarterly turnover rate data. The ACC-RSA FY22 attrition rate increased to 12.28%. Finally, the ACC-RSA projects 103 contracting professionals are eligible to retire through December 2022 ("ACC-RSA Attrition Rates Turnover Report", 2022, p. 8).

ACC-RSA Exit Survey identifies 93.75% of the workforce that departs are acquisition employees. The survey revealed that 54.84% of the employees have been with ACC-RSA for five years or more. The survey documented the reason employees depart based on a provided list of options. The survey captured the departing employee's next career move; it revealed that 32.26% of the departing employees accepted a position with a different Army organization ("ACC-RSA Exit Survey", 2022, p. 3-10).

The survey also revealed that 32.26% accepted a position with a different Federal, State, or Local organization. This survey further reveals that 16.13% said other; 9.68% are not working; 6.45% accepted positions outside with private sector, and 3.23% accepted positions with a different organization within ACC-RSA. The survey asked about job satisfaction with pre-populated responses. The survey provided pre-populated responses for employee satisfaction with the workload, supervisor, DEI, and communication ("ACC-RSA Exit Survey", 2022, p. 10).

Figure 2 The ACC-RSA Exit Survey also revealed why the employees decided to leave ACC-RSA.

Figure 2

ACC Exit Survey (“ACC-RSA Exit Survey”, 2022, p. 12)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Promotion in new job	29.03%
Other (please specify)	29.03%
Retirement	22.58%
Increased pay or benefits at new organization	19.35%
Unproductive leadership or team working relationship	16.13%
Dissatisfaction with current position	16.13%
Lack of advancement opportunities	16.13%
Changing career path	9.68%
Perceived unfair treatment or discrimination	9.68%
Perceived better work-life balance at new organization	6.45%
Workload distribution imbalance within team or organization	6.45%
Prefer not to answer	6.45%
To care for a family member	3.23%
To further my (or partner's) education	3.23%
New job pays the same without supervisory responsibilities	3.23%

The article, *Recruiting and Retaining Employees Remains a Challenge* states recruiting and retaining talent in a dynamic and highly competitive labor market remains one of the most pressing human resource issues companies are dealing with now (Delore, 2022). The article further states the bottom line is that employers need to make sure their organization is an attractive place to work for job candidates and current employees.

Retaining employees is an ongoing process. Retention starts the moment the employee is hired. An article titled, *7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention* states, “Retaining employees is the greatest challenge Human Resources departments face, but it is more necessary now than ever in the remote work era. Retention is an indicator that shows the workforce’s

degree of commitment to their company” (“7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention states”, 2021, p. 2).

Talent retention improves team efficiency and interactions. Table 3 describes the benefits of retaining employees. Employee retention is important to the overall growth of the organization. Companies that invest time and resources into keeping qualified talent in their ranks can see many benefits, including increased competitiveness; reduced cost; enhanced team collaboration; increased productivity; and improved employee experience. (p. 2)

Table 3

Benefits Retention (“7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention states”, 2021, p. 3)

Increased competitiveness	Employee retention can lead to gains in competitiveness, as companies with loyal team members have a clear advantage over companies with high levels of employee turnover. Retaining the top-performing employees means, their knowledge and expertise stay within the organization. (p. 3)
Reduced costs	By implementing a good retention strategy, companies can save time and money. According to Gallup, replacing an employee cost 150 percent of that employee’s annual salary. This means that a high employee turnover represents an excessive cost for companies — not only because of the loss of talent, but also because it means companies must put finances toward attracting, hiring, training, and retaining new employees. (p. 3)
Enhanced team collaboration	Having a good organizational climate is essential for the success of any organization. Talent retention not only helps to keep talented employees, but it also improves team efficiency and interactions — unified, enthusiastic teams are better able to achieve the company’s objectives. (p. 3)
Increased productivity	Companies that value and appreciate their professionals see a direct impact on commitment and productivity. Eighty-five percent of companies that spend one percent of their budget on employee recognition see a positive impact on engagement, making it grow by almost 60 percent. In addition, retaining employees through perks like attractive benefits programs leads to stronger loyalty and effort on behalf of the employees who feel a greater responsibility to ensure they do not let their team and the organization down. (p. 3)

Improved employee experience	Employee retention has a direct impact on employee experience. Based on a survey of more than 23,000 employees in 45 countries, people who have a feeling of belonging, purpose, and happiness are 53 percent less likely to intend to leave their organizations. When companies focus efforts and resources on ensuring their employees' well-being, they improve the overall employee experience. (p. 3)
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The article *Talent Management Takes On New Urgency* states, “It is assumed before the research that organizations are using less practices of talent management for retention, in comparison with the other two talent management areas (recruitment & staffing, and training & development)” (Leisy and Pyron, 2009, p. 41). The main reason is that most organizations are not separating retention between talents and non-talents. Organizations start with selecting talent, followed by training, and the last step is retention. Since retention is last in the process, not a lot of focus is put on the retention of talent. This research concentrates on the retention practices of talent management. “Organizations are frequently ignoring the importance of effective use of retention practices, which can improve talent engagement that can lead to improvements in employee and customer satisfaction, as well as growth in revenues and profitability” (Leisy and Pyron, 2009, p. 41).

In the article, *The War for Talent*, the talent retention best practices are stated as:

- (1) constant screening of attrition rates by performance level;
- (2) competitive compensation, particularly long-term wealth accumulation;
- (3) tailored career plans and broadening assignments;
- (4) senior management attention;
- (5) flexible working arrangements and other work-life balance practices;
- and (6) diversity programs designed to develop, retain, and promote diverse talent. (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 11)

Best Practices & Strategies

Strategy is important because of the need to organize goals, make decisions, attract potential employees, and better understand the culture and environment. Strategy aids in creating policies, market research, talent management, and defining roles and responsibilities. The article *Why is Strategy Important?* highlights the importance of strategy. “A flexible strategy is vital in this ever-changing environment. Organizations must understand that what made them successful yesterday cannot bring success tomorrow. Therefore, with a flexible strategy, organizations can adapt quickly to changes within their environment and plan accordingly” (“Why is Strategy Important”, 2022, p. 1).

Talent Management

The Talent Management literature review will reveal the best practices for recruitment and retention in the talent management process.

To compete in this high-demand, high-skill labor market, American employers have reinvented their people practices. Today’s highly successful businesses abandoned industrial-era labor management practices long ago. They moved to talent management, which, rather than treating people as interchangeable parts, leverages the unique productive capacities of each person. The Army is doing the same to remain competitive in the domestic labor market. (“The Army People Strategy”, 2019, p. 3-4)

“In 1998, talent management was introduced in a paper written by Elizabeth Chambers, Mark Foulon, Helen Handfield-Jones, Steven Hankin, and Eduard Michaels III. However, the connection between human resource development and organizational effectiveness has been established since the 1970s” (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 3).

The profession that supports talent management became increasingly formalized in the early 2000s. While some authors defined the field as including nearly everything associated with human resources, the new talent management network defined the boundaries of the field through surveys or those in corporate talent management departments. The surveys showed the actions within talent management included succession planning, assessment, development, and high potential management. The surveys also indicated activities such as performance management and talent acquisition (recruiting) were less often included in the responsibilities of corporate talent management practitioners. (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 3)

There are several definitions for talent management. The end goal is to hire the right people through marketing and developing their skills. In an article titled, *What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models* states:

Talent management practices have evolved over the years to cater to people with specific trends much like all other aspects of work and have changed in fast stride over the last few years. Strategic talent management is a necessity in today's hyper-change environment. Global trends in talent and human capital management have led to a renaissance of work-worker-workplace equation. (*What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models*", 2018, p. 1)

Talent management is the overall strategy for winning the War for Talent; all the elements should align and work together.

Under the umbrella of talent management, there are strings of elements and sub-processes that need to work in unison to ensure the success of the organization. For example, analyzing the right talent gaps for the present and the future, identifying the right talent pools and best-fit candidates, getting them to join, and then optimizing their existing skills

and strengths while helping them grow are touchpoints that are all equally important. They support each other and the whole structure would crumble even if one sub-process fell out of sync. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 2)

The article titled, *Talent Management*, discussed the importance of a talent management strategy when designing the overall spectrum of talent management to gain optimal results. When an organization focuses on the overall benefits of talent management, it aids in capitalizing on employees and maximizing the value of employees.

Talent management is a constant process that involves attracting and retaining high-quality employees, developing their skills, and continuously motivating them to improve their performance. The primary purpose of talent management is to create a motivated workforce who will stay with your company in the long run. (Andreev, 2021, p. 2)

In the article *Core HR Systems/Performance Management/Sourcing and Recruiting/Succession Management/Talent Management/Talent Strategy/Workforce Planning* discussed the importance of an integrated business process.

Organizations are made up of people: people creating value through proven business processes, innovation, customer service, sales, and many other important activities. As an organization strives to meet its business goals, it must make sure that it has a continuous and integrated process for recruiting, training, managing, supporting, and compensating people. (Bersin, 2020) The articles also discussed the importance of talent management and the function of human resources. When implemented correctly, talent management enables the organization to look to the future to properly identify the competencies of

their employees needed to continue building and developing the growth of the organization (Bersin, 2020).

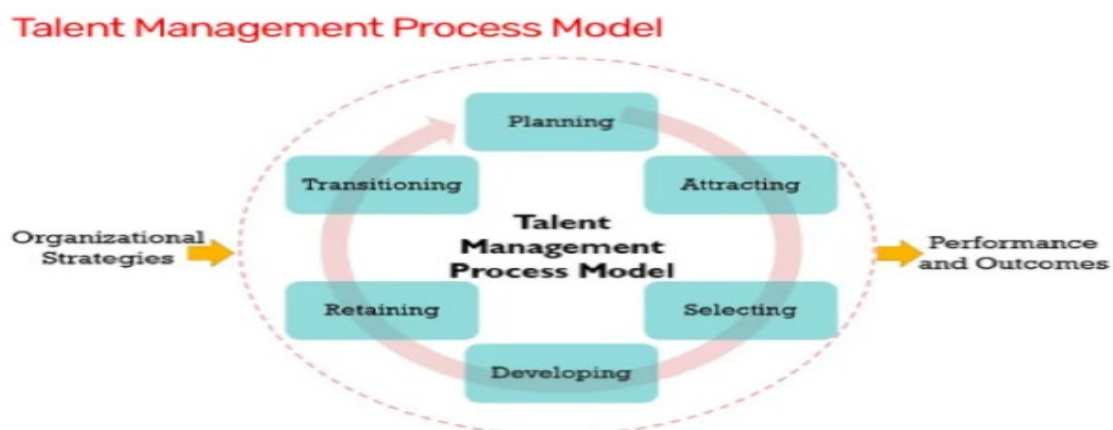
An article, *The Role of a Manager in Talent Management* states,

It should be emphasized that talent management is an important area of human resource management, where managers bear a lot of responsibility. It is necessary of in-depth knowledge of the employees' capabilities, ambitions, and motivations, delegate employees to perform new tasks, and above all, make the right decisions related to the development of talents. Acquiring and retaining talents in the organizations and long-term involvement in achieving goals are important challenges faced by managers and HR departments. (Wegrzynowicz, 2022, p. 1)

In the article, *What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process, and Models*, definitions of the six steps to the Talent Management Process Model are provided. Figure 3 identifies the continuous talent management process model. The talent management process model outlines organizational recruitment and retention strategies to produce performance and outcomes.

Figure 3

Talent Management Process Model (“*What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models*”, 2018, p. 3)



Planning is the first step in the talent management process model. It is the process of identifying where the gaps lie in the human capital requirement, formulating job descriptions for the necessary key roles to help guide sourcing and selection, and developing a workforce plan for recruitment initiatives. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 3)

Attracting is the process of deciding “whether the talent requirements should be filled in from within the organization or from external sources. The talent pools that need to be tapped into must be identified in advance to keep the process as smooth and efficient as possible. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 4)

Selecting is the process of using a string of tests and checks to find the right match for the job, the ideal person-organization fit. Written tests, interviews, group discussions, psychometric testing, and in-depth analysis of all available information on the candidate on public access platforms help in gauging an all-rounded picture of the person. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 4)

Developing is the process of “developing employees to help them grow with the organization and training them for the expertise needed to contribute to the organization; it also builds loyalty and improves employee engagement. This is the beginning of an effective onboarding program to help the employee settle into the new role while providing ample opportunities for enhancing the skills, aptitude, and proficiency while enabling growth through counseling, coaching, mentoring, and job-rotation schemes. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 5)

Retaining is an organization's ability to successfully sustain talent. To retain their best talent through promotions and increments, offering growth opportunities, encouraging involvement in special projects and decision-making, training for more evolved roles, and rewards and recognition programs. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 5)

Transitioning is the process of making each employee feel that they are a part of a bigger whole. Providing retirement benefits, conducting exit interviews and effective succession planning might seem like unrelated career points but they are all transition tools. (*“What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models”*, 2018, p. 5).

The article, *Talent Management*, lists seven steps an organization needs to take to develop a continuous talent management process. Table 4 lists the process and how it is utilized to market, hire, and retain employees. The seven steps are: (1) Specify what skills are needed; (2) Attract the right people; (3) Onboard and organize work; (4) Organize learning and development; (5) Hold performance appraisals; (6) Strategize to retain the best talent; and (7) Plans for succession (Andreev, 2021, p. 12-13).

Table 4

Seven Steps of a Great Talent Management Process (Andreev, 2021, p. 12-15)

STEPS	PROCESS	ACTION
1	Specify what skills are needed	What is the first step in the talent management process? Determine what kind of hires are needed and what requirements they should fill. Consider if it would be possible to teach existing employees to avoid the need to hire anyone new” (Andreev, 2021, p. 12).
2	Attract the Right People	Create targeted advertisements and post them on top job sites – HR branding is helpful here.

		<p>Plan interviews and other means to identify the best person for the job. In addition to regular questions, consider using personality assessments, references, and tests that require candidates to perform in real-life situations.</p> <p>Hire your top choices. (Andreev, 2021, p. 12)</p>
3	Onboard and Organize Work	<p>Help new employees feel oriented by being ready for them as soon as they enter the organization</p> <p>Know the task the new hire will work on, have training sessions scheduled, and assign current employees to support new workers settling in. (Andreev, 2021, p. 12-13)</p>
4	Organize Learning and Development	<p>Remember, it is often easier to develop the skills of your current employees than to hire new talent.</p> <p>Plans ways for your workers to learn and grow, such as through conferences, courses, and a learning management system to create a learning environment. (Andreev, 2021, p. 14)</p>
5	Hold Performance Appraisals	<p>Checking employee performance regularly allows you to see if workers can manage additional responsibilities.</p> <p>This could save you from hiring new talent, and it may help an employee prepare for a promotion. (Andreev, 2021, p. 14)</p>
6	Strategize to Retain your Best Talent	<p>Keep employees satisfied through promotions, benefits, motivating tactics, ensuring job satisfaction, and improving the organization's culture. (Andreev, 2021, p. 14)</p>
7	Plans for Successions	<p>Nurture employees for succession, such as when a senior staff member retires.</p> <p>Enable employees to perform their best through continuous learning opportunities, including knowledge management.</p> <p>If an employee decides to leave the organization, an exit interview should be conducted to find out what went wrong; this will help the organization prevent the same issue from occurring again. (Andreev, 2021, p. 15)</p>

The review of *Talent Management: A Conceptual Framework with Practical Approach*, states, "Talent management has become a mainstream people management strategy because of its ability to help organizations more effectively acquire, align, develop, engage, and retain their

high performing and potential talent” (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 4). Table 5 describes the talent management benefits of the organization and the employees.

Talent management strengthens the organizational structure by building strong human capital and helps the organization to succeed over its competitors and establish a strong presence in the market. Talent management builds up a good reputation for the company among job seekers and leads to improved participative decision-making by the management. In addition, talent management directs continuous improvement in organizational performance making it more efficient and effective. (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 4).

The benefits of talent management for employees will allow the organization to focus on individuals’ growth and betterment; hence, employees develop a feeling of belongingness to the organization. Recognition and reward uplift employees’ confidence and employees remain loyal and associated with the organizations for a longer timeframe. The rigorous learning adds to the experience of the employee’s overall job performance. (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 5).

Table 5*Benefits of Talent Management* (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 4-5)

Organization	Employees
Accomplishment of vision	Achieve job satisfaction
Retaining finest talent	Employee motivation
Strengthens the company's human capital structure	Enhances personal skills
Succeed over competitors	Feeling of belongingness
Builds up the company's reputation	Long-term existence
Better decision making	Boost up confidence
Efficient and effective performance	Quality add-ons to employee experience

The article, *Talent Management*, highlights the interconnection of Human Resources (HR) with talent management.

Talent management naturally encompasses many of the responsibilities of HR. It is not enough to expect that because you have an HR department that talent is being managed. The HR department shares the responsibilities to help develop a talent management strategy and implementation for the organization to gain optimal results. (Andreev, 2021, p. 2)

The Talent Management Model, Table 6, provides a description of and guidance for each element of the talent management process. “The Talent management model is useful to help the organization recruit and retain employees. The model provides an overview of the five functions

of talent management: planning, attracting, developing, retaining, and transitioning” (Andreev, 2021, p. 6-8).

Table 6

Talent Management Model (Andreev, 2021, p 6-8)

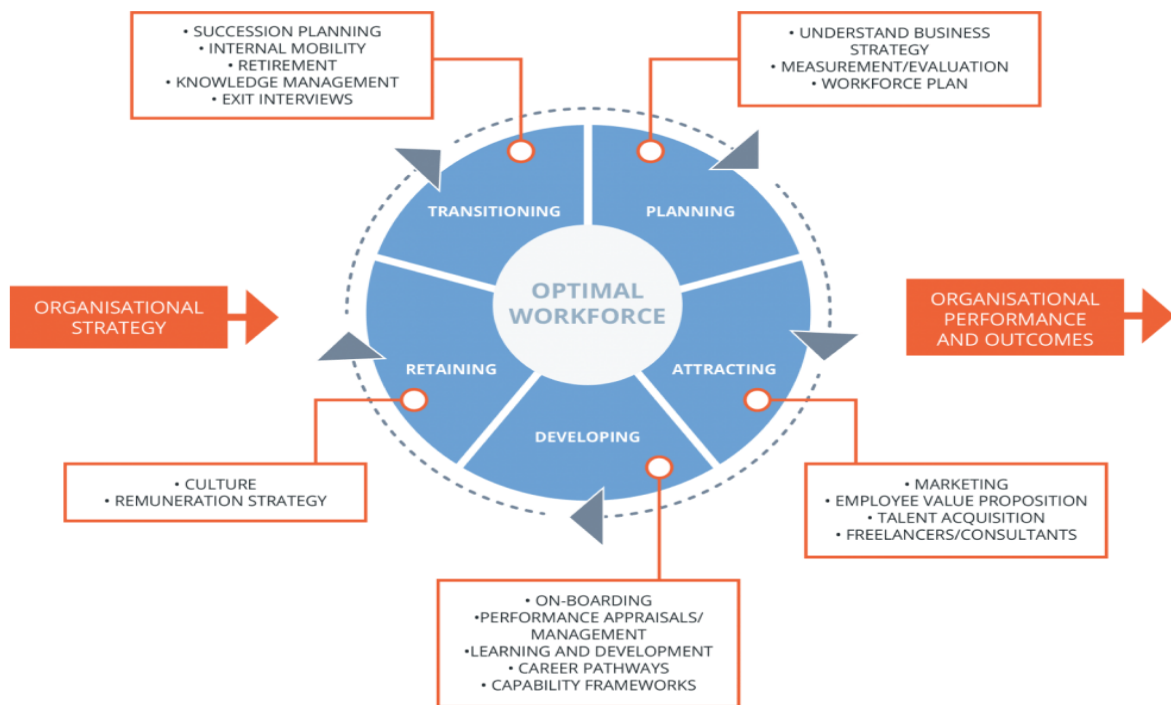
Planning	Align the organization's talent model in line with the overall goals. With correct planning, you can ensure that you seek talent with the right skills and experience. In addition, it assesses current employees to see what is working well for the organization. (Andreev, 2021, p. 6).
Attracting	Attracting talent is all about branding your company as an employer. The organization will need to find ways to increase visibility in ways that allow the manager to present the organization's best place to work. The primary consideration here is to make your business more approachable. The right strategy will attract just the kind of workers you want at your organization. Such hires will be driven, skilled, and seeking to advance within the organization. (Andreev, 2021, p. 7)
Developing	The development part of the model involves taking steps to help talent grow within the organization. Should be aligned with the employee development plan and includes identifying roles where particular employees could move to in the future, as well as considering how to expand workers' skills and knowledge to fulfill new challenges facing your organization. Talent management also looks at what will keep employees at your company enthusiastic and willing to go the extra mile. It is necessary to provide employees with value. (Andreev, 2021, p. 7)
Retaining	Another purpose of talent management is to keep people in your organization longer. Employees must continue feeling that the organization is an enjoyable, meaningful workplace. Through training and other types of engagement, employees can create a career without leaving the company. The organization may achieve this by focusing on compensation (monetary and otherwise) as well as organizational culture. (Andreev, 2021, p. 8)
Transitioning	After hiring and developing their skills, the organization will need to plan for employees' transitions. This stage aims to keep their knowledge within the organization; this is known as knowledge management. The organization will need to have a plan in place to promote employees or move them to another role, department, or office. If a worker does decide to leave, you need to know why. (Andreev, 2021, p. 8)

The Talent Management Model, Figure 4 depicts the steps and outlines the talent management process to obtain an optimal workforce. The model starts with the workforce business strategy, and follows through with succession planning and exit interviews. “It drives innovation,

helps form productive teams, decreases turnover, leads to stronger employer branding, motivates others to grow, and helps promote a healthy work-life balance” (Andreev, 2021, p. 6).

Figure 4

Talent Management Model (Andreev, 2021, p 6)



In the article titled, *The Talent Management*, a survey was conducted by McKinsey and Company, “on the importance of talent management and the capitalization of employees, and the asset of the organization's overall performance best practices. The abilities to attract and retain talent, in addition to having an effective talent-management program, support organizational outperformance” (Andreev, 2021, p. 3).

The article, *The Talent Management*, discussed the three key practices for effective talent management: rapid talent allocation; positive employee experience; and strategic HR team.

Figure 5 outlines the connection for effective talent management.

Rapid talent allocation is when the employer quickly moves talent across strategic priorities to meet mission requirements. The HR team plays a crucial role in facilitating a positive employee experience. The Strategic HR team understands the organization's strategy and business priorities to assist with the recruitment and retention process.

(Andreev, 2021, p. 4)

Figure 5

Three Key Practices for Effective Talent Management

The three key practices for effective talent management also support organizational outperformance relative to peers.

Relationship between talent-management practices and outcomes, standardized regression coefficient¹



¹When coefficients were calculated, regression analysis only included 3 practices shown to have strongest statistical relationships with talent-management effectiveness.

McKinsey&Company

“Talent management is most effective when it combines the three key components.

Effective talent management helps businesses improve performance; allows companies to stay competitive; drives innovation; helps form productive teams; and decreases turnover” (Andreev, 2021, p. 4).

Quality of Life Enhancement, Hybrid Workplace

Hybrid workplace is a quality-of-life enhancement tool that can assist in recruiting and retaining talent. In the article *Recruiting and Retaining Employees Remain a Challenge*, “a hybrid work model is often an opportunity for companies to strengthen the workplace culture” (Delore, 2022, p. 2). The article recommends that employers look for new and creative ways to connect with and attract talent. Organizations should focus on positive workplace culture, support HR in research, and lead evolution where applicable within the company. It also suggests that companies and organizations may want to embrace flexible work models (Delore, 2022).

An article titled, *Designing a Hybrid Workplace to Recruit, Retain and Engage IT Talent*, lists tactics that help keep employees engaged and ways to retain their employees:

- Scheduling one-on-one strategy sessions, highlighting how employees' work contributed to the overall purpose and vision of the company.
- Focusing on employees' professional, personal, and financial goals
- Offering room for growth in the company (and encouraging it)
- Providing teams with resources and removing obstacles (as much as possible)
- Helping team members achieve their vision goals in the short and long term
- Encourage employees to attend specific career training opportunities
- Place a strong emphasis on professional development and certifications.

(Piper, 2021, p. 4-5)

The book titled, *Leading from Anywhere: The Essential Guide to Managing Remote Teams* states: "Having a remote division of the company has allowed Innovative Fitness to find clients anywhere at any time, but it's also allowed them to hire and retain talent from all over the world" (Burkus, 2021, p. 16). The book titled, *Success from Anywhere: Create Your Future of*

Work from the Inside Out discusses the importance of working from any place, just as long as work is productive. “Developing a culture within the company where both employer and employee strive. Creating a quality-of-life environment that allows employees to work from anywhere to foster a work-life balance” (Mangia, 2022, p. 5). In addition, the author states, “The premise of Success from Anywhere is simple: it is time to change the game. Innovation is the path from the pandemic. The future belongs to those who create it” (Mangia, 2022, p. 5).

An article titled, *Designing A Hybrid Workplace to Recruit, Retain and Engage IT Talent*, states, "The past year has transformed how and where we work, and many of those changes are here to stay. We're not going back to the old way of doing business, in the office from 9 to 5, Monday to Friday” (Piper, 2021, p. 2). Data from 2021 PwC and Microsoft surveys showed:

- Over 70% of employees want flexible remote work options to continue
- 65% of employees want more in-person time with their teams
- 68% of executives think people should be in the office at least three days a week for company culture, and 65% believe the office is essential for employee productivity
- 55% of employees want to work remotely at least three days a week, but 87% say the office is vital for collaboration and relationship building. (Piper, 2021, p. 3)

The article, *The Best Benefits for 2023; A hybrid work schedule* states,

As seen in 2022, employers are experiencing a greater return on investment from offering hybrid work options. A survey of over 1000 human resource professionals, reported that over 90% of respondents said a hybrid workplace is used to recruit and retain talent. The survey also found hybrid work helps address the top three factors contributing to

turnover: childcare, work-life balance, and mental well-being concerns. (Hafner, 2023, p. 1)

The article, *Why Invest in a Hybrid Workplace? Two Words, Employee Retention* states, “Hybrid work and flexibility (or lack thereof) is proving to be a game-changer in retaining talent”(Rohaut, 2021, p. 1). The article further states, “Leaders must become aware of employee needs and offer more enhanced workplace experiences to win and keep talent. Offering flexible work options offers a way for companies to retain their competitive edge while attracting and retaining talent” (Rohaut, 2021, p. 1).

The article, *Hybrid work may be HR’s key to retention* states “according to an International Workplace Group HR Leaders and Hybrid Working Reports show nearly 95% of HR leaders believe a hybrid model can be used as an effective recruitment tool. The reports show 60% of HR leaders believe hybrid work increases retention” (Roller, 2022, p. 3).

The article titled, *The Ultimate Guide to Hybrid Work* shows the benefits for the company and the employee. The article describes the various options for a hybrid work environment. Table 7 outlines the options for a hybrid workplace for a fully remote model, a fully on-site model, and a hybrid work model that will enhance the quality-of-life for employees (Ferdinand, 2022).

Table 7*Hybrid Workplace* (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 14-15)

	Fully remote model	Fully on-site model	Hybrid work model
Collaboration	Heavily depends on employees and the collaboration tools they have.	In most cases, smooth, efficient, and straightforward.	Team leaders can think of different collaboration solutions depending on the preferences and characteristics of their teams. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 14)
Productivity	Depends on the employee.	Depends on the employee.	Allows employees to work in the environment where they feel the most productive. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 14)
Commuting	Definitely a win!	Definitely a loss (unless you enjoy long morning commutes).	Brings flexibility to everyone. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 14)
Talent Pool	Global.	Geographical restrictions exist.	Both local and global. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 14)
Real Estate Costs	None (unless you provide employees with financial support to set up their home offices).	High to remarkably high, depending on the city.	Moderate and, most importantly - flexible. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 14)
Health Concerns	Safer for everyone.	Not so safe, especially during COVID-19 surge seasons.	Flexible enough to allow everyone to easily switch to full-remote in case the sickness rate rises (we all hope it will not). (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 15)
The “Human Element”	It works, but there is much room for improvement.	Too much coffee maker banter, although fun, can be unproductive and clique-generating	It offers everyone flexibility to be as social as possible regarding work. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 15)

Summary

The literature review identified existing Government documents, surveys, published reports, journal articles, and books that are available to define the War for Talent; provided insight into the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges; and outlined the ACC-RSA mitigation strategy to reduce its attrition rate. This literature review identified talent management and hybrid workplace best practices. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology used for this research.

Research Methodology

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the ACC-RSA's War for Talent, the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals.

Research Questions

1. What is the War for Talent?
2. What are the ACC-RSA's recruitment and retention challenges?
3. How can talent management and hybrid workplace best practices help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent?

Research Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative research method to conduct a content analysis of the literature review on War for Talent, the ACC-RSA Competing for Contracting Professionals. The literature review was an in-depth range of data collected from various sources. The literature review explores the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges. The researcher examines talent management processes and hybrid workplace best practices. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) define literature review as follows: "a written summary of journals, articles, books, and other documents that describes the past and current state of information on the topic of your research study. It also organizes the literature into subtopics and documents the need for a proposed study" (p. 79).

Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the inquirer asks participants broad, general questions, collects the detailed views of participants in the form of words or images, and analyzes the information for description and themes. From the data, the

researcher interprets the meaning of the information, drawing on personal reflections and past research. The final structure of the final report is flexible, and it displays the researcher's biases and thoughts. (Creswell, 2019, p 627)

The researcher conducted a qualitative review of existing Government documents, surveys, published reports, journal articles, websites, online libraries, and books. Literature sources obtained through websites, as well as books, are as follows: Defense Acquisition University Virtual Library; U.S. Government Office of Personnel Management Office; Google Scholar; Lawrence Technical Library; Liberty University; Business Insights; and Global. The books for the literature review are as follows: For Your Improvement (FYI) by Korn Ferry; Educational Research by John W. Creswell and Timothy C. Guetterman; Leading from Anywhere by David Burkus; and Success from Anywhere by Karen Mangia.

The researcher studied the phrase War for Talent and defined the phrase. Subsequently, the researcher reviewed the ACC-RSA MIPT charter, policies, surveys, and existing documents to gain insight into the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges. The researcher focused explicitly on talent management processes, and hybrid workplace best practices to expand to new potential sources of talent from anywhere. Lastly, the researcher identified best practices to obtain an optimal workforce to help the ACC-RSA recruit and retain top talent, and compete and win the War for Talent.

The findings will define the War for Talent. The findings will explore the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges. In addition, the findings will provide talent management and hybrid workplace best practices, and strategies to help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent. Finally, the researcher responds to the three research questions.

Summary

The research is a qualitative review of existing Government documents, surveys, published reports, journal articles, websites, online libraries, and books. The documents were explored to define War for Talent; explore the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention challenges for contracting professionals; reveal talent management and hybrid workplace best practices and strategies. Finally, this researcher explored the benefits of talent management and a hybrid workplace to help obtain an optimal workforce. The next chapter will present the findings of this research, and the last chapter will provide conclusions and recommendations.

Findings

The Army People Strategy is the roadmap the U.S. Army will use to build a twenty-first-century talent-based personnel management system, reform essential quality-of-life programs, and build cohesive teams that are ready, professional, diverse, and integrated for the Joint Force. The Total Army will acquire, develop, employ, and retain the diversity of soldier and civilian talent needed to achieve Total Army readiness. (*The Army's Vision and Strategy, Managing Our Most Important Asset*, (n.d.)).

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings based on the qualitative analysis of the research gathered in the Literature Review chapter. The researcher organizes the findings by the research questions. This qualitative research focuses on the War for Talent, talent management, and hybrid workplace best practices to compete and win the War for Talent. The talent management process involves the attributes to assist the ACC-RSA recruit and retain an optimal workforce. A hybrid workplace is a quality-of-life-enhancement to assist the ACC-RSA with its recruitment and retention challenges. This chapter will identify the best practices for talent management and hybrid workplace. In conclusion, the best practices will help the ACC-RSA obtain an optimal workforce to compete and win the War for talent.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the ACC-RSA's War for Talent, and the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals.

Research Questions

1. What is the War for Talent?
2. What are the ACC-RSA's recruitment and retention challenges?

3. How can talent management and hybrid workplace best practices help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent?

War for Talent

This research defines the War for Talent as the difficulties faced by organizations in recruiting and retaining employees. War for Talent is the competition between organizations to attract, develop, and retain their workforce. “War for Talent is an increasingly competitive landscape for the recruitment and retention of talented employees” (Fallow, 2021, p. 8).

The contracting workforce faces similar recruitment and retention challenges to those experienced by the overall acquisition workforce. The high percentage of senior contracting professionals eligible for retirement in the next 10 years presents challenges to maintaining a well-rounded and technically skilled workforce. The OPM estimated 45 percent of the current federal workforce is aged 50 or older and has considered retirement. In preparation for the new face of the government talent pool, the public sector will need to competitively recruit, and retain talent for the government to operate in the 21st century (Tagrobicki, 2018).

In conclusion, according to the Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY16-FY21 the civilian contracting personnel eligible for retirement in 10 years or less is 11,499, or 45.7 percent. The ACC-RSA, Attrition Rate Turnover Report identifies 103 contracting professionals who are eligible to retire through December 2022. The government will need to step up recruitment to fill entry-level positions and will need to look outside its ranks to fill senior positions (Child, 2002).

The ACC-RSA competing and winning the War for Talent

Competing and winning the War for Talent can be achieved strategically by focusing on attracting and retaining employees. With a flexible strategy, organizations can adapt quickly to changes within their environment and plan accordingly (“Why is Strategy Important”, 2022).

The government can attack the war with a highly satisfying job, freedom to work and experiment, and scope for creativity and innovation. The government can wage the talent war through competitive compensation benefits, good healthcare facilities, and work-life balance. In addition, the government can promote appreciation and recognition for excellence, learning and development opportunities, and great work culture. Embracing the change and looking at these attributes will allow the opportunities to compete with the private sector and other government agencies (Mahapatra, 2022).

Table 1, The Changing Fields and Tools, illustrates the six tools to win the War for Talent: (1) Set the right mindset; (2) Battle at the right field; (3) Use valid, and scientifically proven tools; (4) Build a seamless and engaging experience; (5) Continuous integration of the employees' data; and (6) Use information wisely. These tools will help determine if the organization is equipped to compete and win the war for talent. (Pleaner, 2021, para 5-10)

In closing, the ACC-RSA recognizes the War for Talent, and to compete and win the War for Talent, talent management must be elevated as an organization's priority. To help ensure organizations "are on the right path to a more inclusive company culture, it is important to understand the active involvement of leadership" (Primus, 2022, para. 7). To attract and retain talent, the organization must refine the employee value proposition and finally, determine how the organization will recruit and retain great talent.

The ACC-RSA Recruitment Challenges

"Recruitment is a process that involves everything from identifying, attracting, screening, shortlisting, interviewing, selecting, hiring, and onboarding employees" (Joboid, 2021, p. 1). The ACC-RSA, Contracting for Victory, FY22 ACC-RSA, Strategic Initiatives, Recruitment, and Retention MIPT discusses strategies to address ACC-RSA's recruitment challenges. The ACC-

RSA Strategic Initiative identified internal hiring process challenges as the selection plans are too generic, panel members are needed from inside and outside the organization, leadership training is needed on different hiring authorities, more marketing efforts, and workforce bias in the hiring process.

The ACC-RSA goal is to become the provider of choice by developing recruitment and retention strategies to improve ACC-RSA fill and attrition rate. The ACC-RSA is competing with other agencies in a high demand work environment to recruit and retain contracting professionals. The hiring procedures are not negotiable and the ACC-RSA must use Civilian Human Resource Agency for HR support and follow Title 5 Code Federal Regulations.

The ACC-RSA MIPT recruitment strategic initiative goals are to provide recommended improvements in attracting talent across DoD, to focus on establishing a talent pool of qualified candidates, to improve the candidate pool, and to reduce the ACC-RSA total lead-time for the hiring process. The ACC-RSA's strategic recruitment goal focused on four recruitment initiatives: Internal Hiring Process; Contractor Support; Retiring Military Recruitment; and Local Fellows Recruitment. The ACC-RSA recruitment initiative also included innovative recruitment and process improvements: Cradle to Grave Hiring Recruitment; Establish Internal Database of Qualified Candidates; Virtual Hiring Events, and a Mobile Recruitment Team; and Contracting Out Support. The ACC-RSA is working to; Establish the ACC-RSA Military Recruitment and Hiring Process; Strategic Marketing Plan; and Increase DEI Efforts. (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022)

“Successful organizations use a talent pool strategy, for recruitment of talent. Talent can be recruited through different channels, such as direct applications, internship programs, on-campus recruitment fairs, and connections with the best universities and business schools” (Stahl

et al., 2007, p. 9). Stahl et al., (2007) identified best practices of talent management within recruitment, staffing, and succession planning as:

(1) talent pool strategy (instead of hiring for specific positions); (2) close relationship with the best business schools and universities; (3) highly selective recruitment; (4) “employee value proposition” and strong importance of global branding; (5) focus on values and cultural fit, not just job-related skills and experience; (6) continuous assessment of performance and potential, by using multiple inputs; (7) grading against competency profile and succession purposes; (8) use of talent inventories for selection and succession purposes; and (9) different talent pools (executive, specialist, etc.) with different career paths. (p. 9)

The ACC-RSA Retention Challenges

Retention is an indicator that shows the workforce's degree of commitment to its company. Retention starts the moment a person is hired and is an ongoing process. Retaining employees is one of the greatest challenges HR departments face, but it is more necessary now than ever in the remote work era. (“7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention states”, 2021, p. 2)

The ACC-RSA’s strategy to win the War for Talent is through retention. The ACC-RSA MIPT's retention mission was to identify strategies contributing to employee retention for implementation (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022). The MIPT goals and objectives were to provide recommended improvements that would retain skilled employees who wanted to contribute to the ACC-RSA vision and mission. The ACC-RSA’s goal is to reduce the attrition rate by 2% in the 1st year and 2% each year until the organization reaches the goal of a 5% attrition rate (2022). The ACC-RSA turnover rate for FY21 was 12.12%. The turnover rate for FY22 was

12.28%. Although a slight increase from FY21 to FY22, the continuous increase in attrition illustrates the retention challenges.

The ACC-RSA conducts exit interviews. The exit interviews provide insight into why departing employees decide to leave the organization. The survey revealed 29% of the ACC-RSA employees left for promotion. The survey also revealed 29% selected “other” as their reason for leaving the organization. The next highest number on the survey is 22.58%, those individuals retired. (“ACC-RSA Exit Survey”, 2022, p. 12) Nonetheless, this survey revealed the retention challenges the ACC-RSA faces in this competitive environment for contracting professionals.

The Benefits Retention Table 3 previously described the benefits of retaining employees. Employee retention is important to the overall growth of the organization. “Companies that invest time and resources into keeping qualified talent in their ranks can see many benefits, including increased competitiveness; reduced cost; enhanced team collaboration; increased productivity; and improved employee experience” (“7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention states”, 2021, p. 2). Retaining employees will allow the company to expand and aid in winning the War for Talent.

In comparison, organizations do not use retention talent management as much as the other two talent management areas (recruitment & staffing, and training & development). Organizations start with selecting talents, followed by training and development, and the last step in the process is retention. Since retention is last in the process, not a lot of focus is put on the retention of talents. “Organizations frequently ignore the importance of effective use of retention practices, which can improve talent engagement, which can lead to improvements in employee and customer satisfaction, as well as growth in revenues and profitability” (Leisy and Pyron, 2009, p. 41).

Employers need to make sure their organization is an attractive place to work for job candidates and current employees. The best practices for talent retention are:

(1) constant screening of attrition rates by performance level; (2) competitive compensation, particularly long-term wealth accumulation; (3) tailored career plans and broadening assignments; (4) senior management attention; (5) flexible working arrangements and other work-life balance practices; and (6) diversity programs designed to develop, retain, and promote diverse talent. (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 7)

In closing, the ACC-RSA does not have a recruitment success and failure repository. The ACC-RSA is developing a recruitment strategy for implementation.

Best Practices and Strategies

The ACC-RSA identified four strategies to compete and win the War for Talent. The four strategies are: Recruit, Develop, Retain, and Relationships. The Recruit Strategy focuses on establishing a talent pool of qualified candidates and conducting a robust and timely evaluation process, reference checks, and timely job offers. The ACC-RSA Develop Strategy concentrates on effective and efficient onboarding, employee professional and personal growth potential, organizational culture (DEI), training, and succession planning. The Retain Strategy focuses on retaining talented employees, higher salaries, fast growth opportunities, better performance-based bonuses, and award recognitions. (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022)

In addition, the ACC-RSA Relationship Strategic Initiative places attention on the psychological relationship between leaders and employees. (“ACC-RSA Contracting for Victory”, 2022)

Talent Management

This section of the research will focus on the analysis of talent management best practices, and the effectiveness of talent management process models. "Talent management has

become a mainstream people management strategy because of its ability to help organizations more effectively acquire, align, develop, engage, and retain their high performing and potential talent” (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 4). The researcher was unable to obtain a talent management model or process from the ACC-RSA. As the ACC-RSA works to overcome the contracting profession recruitment and retention challenges, the implementation of a talent management process is beneficial in the War for Talent.

It is important to have a talent management strategy in place when designing the overall spectrum of talent management to gain optimal results. When an organization focuses on the overall benefits of talent management, it aids in capitalizing on employees and maximizing the value of employees. The Talent Management Model, Table 6, describes each element of the talent management process. “The talent management model is useful to help the organization recruit and retain employees” (Andreev, 2021, p.6). The model provides an overview of the five functions of talent management: planning, attracting, developing, retaining, and transitioning.

The talent management elements and processes work in unison. The Seven Steps of a Great Talent Management Process, Table 4 explains the process an organization needs to develop a continuous talent management process. The seven steps are: “(1) Specify what skills are needed; (2) Attract the right people; (3) Onboard and organize work; (4) Organize learning and development; (5) Hold performance appraisals; (6) Strategize to retain the best talent; and (7) Plans for succession” (Andreev, 2021, p.12-13).

A talent management process is the overall tool for winning the war on talent; all the elements should align and work together.

The primary purpose of talent management is to create a motivated workforce who will stay with your company in the long run. Talent management is a constant process that

involves attracting and retaining high-quality employees, developing their skills, and continuously motivating them to improve their performance. (Andreev, 2021, p. 2)

Table 8 describes the advantages of the talent management process for the organization and the employees. “Talent management enhances the overall performance of the organization. It helps businesses improve performance; allows companies to stay competitive; drives innovation; and decreases turnover. Talent management leads to strong employer branding and motivates others to grow within the organization” (Andreev, 2021, p. 4-5).

Table 8

Talent Management Model Process Results (Andreev, 2021, p. 4-5)

It helps businesses improve performance	With top specialists in your organization, you can reach any goal. (Andreev, 2021, p. 4)
It allows companies to stay competitive	By hiring and developing talented employees, an organization will become stronger and better prepared to face changes and risks. (Andreev, 2021, p. 5)
It Drives Innovation	New technologies are always hitting the scene, whatever your industry. Talented employees can find ways to harness the capabilities of new tools and solve problems or come up with original ideas. (Andreev, 2021, p. 5)
It helps form productive teams.	The appropriate talent management strategy will allow you to form a more productive team. This is far more useful than just having a bunch of creative and talented people in your organization. (Andreev, 2021, p. 5)
It decreases turnover	When employees feel valued at a company, when they know they will have plenty of opportunities to grow in the business, they are less likely to seek work elsewhere. (Andreev, 2021, p. 5)
It leads to strong employer branding.	Talent management brands organization, which will help attract the best candidates for future hires. (Andreev, 2021, p. 5)
It motivates others to grow.	Having inspiring talent on your team will motivate other employees and help them grow. (Andreev, 2021, p. 5)

The ACC-RSA MIPT charter strategic goal focuses on hiring, developing, training, and retaining a professional and motivated workforce. Talent management best practices in Table 9 describe how to obtain an optimal workforce. The ACC-RSA can benefit from the list in the quest to obtain an optimal workforce. Table 9 “divides talent management activities into three areas: (1) recruitment, staffing, and succession planning; (2) training and development; and (3) retention management” (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 9).

Table 9

Best Practices of Talent Management (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 21)

Recruitment, Staffing, and Succession Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent pool strategy rather than hiring for specific positions • Close relationships with leading business schools and universities • Highly selective hiring • Compelling employee value proposition and a strong emphasis on global branding • Focus on values and cultural fit, not just job-related skills and experience • Continuous assessment of both performance and potential using multiple inputs • Grading against competency profile and succession purposes • Use of talent inventories for selection and succession purposes • Different talent pools (executive, specialist, etc.) with different career paths
Training and Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development is a top priority and is deeply ingrained in the culture • Promotion-from-within policy • Continuous assessment of training needs and feedback (360-degree reviews) • Individual development plans linked to the succession planning process • Job rotations and international transfers as career development tools • Line manager involvement (coaching, mentoring, job shadowing) • Use of an open job posting system and internal talent marketplaces
Retention Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous monitoring of attrition rates by performances level • Highly competitive compensation, particularly long-term wealth accumulation • Personalized career plans and broadening assignments • Senior management attention • Flexible working arrangements and other work-life balance practices • Diversity programs are designed to develop, retain, and promote diverse talent

In conclusion, there are several talent management process models. The common goal and theme amongst the models are: to hire the right people for the right job; develop their skills; provide opportunities for advance; and create a thriving work environment where the employee and employer can excel. The benefits of talent management for the organization result in accomplishing the organization's vision and helping to retain the best employees. The research corroborates the usefulness a talent management process has on an organization's recruitment and retention efforts. In addition to the findings, talent management provides value to an organization's overall infrastructure. "The research demonstrates the benefits of talent management in the recruitment and retention of an optimal workforce" (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 21). As the ACC-RSA works to overcome the contracting profession recruitment and retention challenges, the implementation of a talent management process is beneficial in the War for Talent.

Talent management strengthens the organizational structure by building strong human capital and helps the organization to succeed over its competitors and establish a strong presence in the market. Talent management builds up a good reputation for the company among job seekers and leads to improved participative decision-making by the management. In addition, talent management directs continuous improvement in organizational performance making it more efficient and effective. (Nwanisobi, 2020, p. 4-5)

Hybrid Workplace, Quality of Life Enhancement

Hybrid workplace is a quality-of-life enhancement that is endorsed by the Department of the Army. Telework and remote work are innovative workplace arrangements that are the fundamental quality-of-life enhancements critical to the Army's ability to recruit and retain people

(“Department of the Army”, 2022). Although telework expansion is one of the ACC-RSA retention strategic initiatives, the ACC-RSA does not have a permanent hybrid workplace policy. The research revealed the advantages an organization has that offers a hybrid workplace.

The hybrid work model is recognized for its flexibility, which enables employees to work across multiple environments. Employees prefer flexibility, and businesses are seeing positive impacts on employee engagement, collaboration, and productivity (“*What is Hybrid work and How Does it Impact your Business*”, 2022). Table 10 lists three ways an organization can benefit from a hybrid work schedule.

Table 10

Benefits of a Hybrid Work Model (“*What is Hybrid Work and How Does it Impact your Business*”, 2022, p. 3-5)

<p>1. Build More Sustainable Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid presents the opportunity to be strategic about costs, time, and energy. • Cisco reported that between 2015-2020 hybrid work saved the company around \$500 million • It makes an organization less vulnerable to stoppages and disruptions that can happen in an office environment. • The average employee loses 2.7 work hours per week due to travel disruptions and delays when commuting for work. • Win-win to give more flexibility • The right approach to hybrid work will benefit the organization as well as the environment. • A recent study found that our emissions can be reduced by up to 80% when working from home versus commuting daily. • If an organization is looking to impact ESG (environment, social, and governance) initiatives, the move to a hybrid work model is a great place to start.
<p>2. Improve Employee Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more time passes, the clearer it becomes that employees want flexibility. • An effective hybrid work model can give employees better balance and support while creating an environment that is trusting, autonomous, and collaborative. • Hybrid is a no-brainer for employees wanting flexibility in their workplace and when they work.

- For workers who are raising children, taking care of sick families, or balancing other obligations, hybrid work allows them to structure their time more strategically.
- Employees can take advantage of what helps them to be productive, including things that are difficult or impossible to accomplish in an office.
- Shift the focus from where employees work more on how they work; this could encourage strategic alignment and place more value on their creativity, which in turn amplifies innovation and adaptability.

3. Propel Diversity

- The ability to hire remotely opens new possibilities for diversity in the organization
- Enable organizations to have people working together across languages, countries, and time zones.
- It can help remove certain obstacles presented by the conventional in-office model to groups like mothers with their children, the elderly, the disabled, and the neurodiversity, as well as those who are unable to afford commuting right away
- Organizations will have the ability to hire talent from under-presented groups that may not have the means or desire to move to a big city.
- The ability to recruit without borders also allows organizations to maintain 24/7 operations and can be a game-changer for organizations recruiting for scarce or highly in-demand skill sets, allowing organizations to tap global job markets and remote regions” (2022).

The article, *The Best Benefits for 2023; A hybrid work schedule* shows, employers are experiencing a greater return on investment from offering hybrid work options. A survey of over 1000 human resource professionals, reported that “over 90% of respondents said they use hybrid workplace to recruit and retain talent” (Hafner, 2023, p. 1).

The article, *Why Invest in a Hybrid Workplace? Two Words, Employee Retention* states, Hybrid work and flexibility are proving to be a game-changer in retaining talent. Leaders must become more aware of employee needs and offer more enhanced workplace experiences to win and keep talent. Offering flexible work options offers a way for companies to retain their competitive edge while attracting and retaining talent in the long run. (Rohaut, 2021, p. 1)

In the article, *Hybrid work may be HR's key to retention*, according to an International Workplace Group HR Leaders and Hybrid Working Reports “nearly 95% of HR leaders believe a hybrid model can be used as an effective recruitment tool. Also, 60% of HR leaders believe hybrid work increases retention” (Roller, 2022, p. 3). A hybrid workplace maximizes recruitment and retention. The research revealed that hybrid work is the next phase of workplace station evolution (“*Updating Talent Strategy for Hybrid Work*”, 2021). Implementation of a hybrid workplace policy can benefit the ACC-RSA recruitment and retention initiative. “The hybrid workplace can help develop a culture within the organization where both employer and employee thrive, by creating a quality-of-life environment that allows employees to work from anywhere to foster a work-life balance” (Mangia, 2022, p- 5).

Finally, utilizing a hybrid work model to maximize recruitment and retention is beneficial. The switch from a traditional workforce to a hybrid workforce is a powerful change for an organization to consider (Mangia, 2022). Although the ACC-RSA does not have a permanent hybrid work policy, the literature shows hybrid work is the future. A hybrid workplace model benefits organizations by “providing the right resources; empowering management; encouraging intentional connections; building trust by creating team agreements; and fostering alignment, initiative-taking, and a sense of purpose” (Mangia, 2022, p. 5). Forward-looking organizations that establish hybrid work models are likely to attract and retain top talent (Mangia, 2022). These benefits will be discussed further in the Conclusion and Recommendations.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided the definition of War for Talent. The researcher examined the ACC-RSA contract profession recruitment and retention challenges. The ACC-RSA MIPT charter, policies, surveys, and existing documents provided distinct insight into the ACC-

RSA recruitment and retention challenges, and the organization's mitigation strategy. The published literature proposes talent management as a tool to strengthen an organization's recruitment and retention attractiveness. The literature also provided the benefits of a hybrid workplace to aid in recruitment and retention. The next chapter will summarize the conclusion and provide recommendations based on the findings and will propose areas for additional research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Army's priority and main effort are Line of Effort, (LOE), 1, Acquire Talent. The Army People Strategy states, Implementation Priority – We will proceed along all four LOEs simultaneously. However, our implementation priority and main effort through 2028 are LOE 1, Acquire Talent, with an emphasis on innovative new marketing, recruiting, and onboarding of our multiple cohorts. (“The Army People Strategy”, 2019, p. 8-9)

Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations based on the research. It also provides areas for future research.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the ACC-RSA’s War for Talent, the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals.

Research Questions

1. What is the War for Talent?
2. What are the ACC-RSA’s recruitment and retention challenges?
3. How can talent management and hybrid workplace best practices help the ACC-RSA compete and win the War for Talent?

In addition to the conclusion, this chapter proposes recommendations for future researchers to explore.

Conclusions

The researcher organized the conclusion and recommendations using the three research questions as the framework. The conclusions will follow the literature review topics and subtopics: War for Talent; Recruitment; Retention; and Best Practices and Strategies. The War for Talent has

a subtopic, *Winning the War for Talent*. The *Best Practices and Strategies* has two subtopics: Talent Management; and Hybrid Workplace, a quality-of-life enhancement.

War for Talent

The research question was to define the War for Talent. The War for Talent is the competition amongst organizations to attract, retain, and develop their workforce. The research further described “the War for Talent as an increasingly competitive landscape for the recruitment and retention of talented employees” (Fallow, 2021, p. 8). The research identified four areas of War for Talent: (1) The need for skilled workers; (2) the post-pandemic lack of employees; (3) the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation; and (4) the entry and influence of Millennials and Gen Z.

Winning the War for Talent

The ACC-RSA recognized the War for Talent for the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals. The ACC-RSA described its attrition impact, as losing the War for Talent. The research revealed the ACC-RSA has initiated a strategic plan to help mitigate its recruitment and retention challenges.

The research revealed that competing and winning the War for Talent is achievable by strategically focusing on attracting and retaining employees. The research illustrated six tools to utilize in the War for Talent (1) Set the right mindset; (2) Battle at the right field; (3) Use valid, and scientifically proven tools; (4) Build a seamless and engaging experience; (5) Continuous integration of the employees’ data; and (6) Use information wisely.

Recruitment and Retention

As indicated by Stahl et al., (2007), the ACC-RSA needs to ensure it is an attractive place to work for job candidates and current employees. The research revealed successful

organizations use a talent pool strategy for the recruitment of talent. The ACC-RSA conducted a strategic initiative to identify its recruitment and retention challenges. The research suggests recruitment and retention innovation is necessary for the competitive hiring market. The ACC-RSA strategic initiative identified the organization awareness of the need to expand its recruiting initiatives. The research identified recruitment channels, such as

direct applications, internship programs, on-campus recruitment fairs, and connections with the best universities and business schools. The research outlined best practices of recruitment, staffing, and succession planning talent management as (1) develop a talent pool strategy; (2) maintain a close relationship with the best business schools and universities; (3) establish a highly selective recruitment criteria; (4) have awareness of organization branding; (5) focus on values and cultural fit; (6) continuous assessment of performance and potential, by using multiple inputs; (7) grading against competency profile and succession purposes; (8) use of talent inventories for selection and succession purposes; and (9) different talent pools (executive, specialist, etc.) with different career paths. (p. 5)

Research revealed, “Retaining employees is one of the greatest challenges HR departments face. Retention is an indicator that shows the workforce's degree of commitment to its company” (“7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention states”, 2021, p. 2). Research revealed organizations’ retention talent management was utilized the least when compared to the other two talent management areas (recruitment & staffing, and training & development). Therefore, since retention is last in the process, it does not receive a lot of attention. “The effective use of retention practices can improve talent engagement, which can

lead to improvements in employee and customer satisfaction, as well as growth in revenues and profitability” (Leisy and Pyron, 2009, p. 41).

Research revealed that ACC-RSA’s strategy to win the War for Talent is through retention. The ACC-RSA’s goal is to reduce the attrition rate by 2% in the 1st year and 2% each year until the organization reaches the goal of a 5% attrition rate. The best practices for talent retention are:

(1) constant screening of attrition rates by performance level; (2) competitive compensation, particularly long-term wealth accumulation; (3) tailored career plans and broadening assignments; (4) senior management attention; (5) flexible working arrangements and other work-life balance practices; and (6) diversity programs designed to develop, retain, and promote diverse talent. (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 7)

The ACC-RSA goal to become the provider of choice and win the War for Talent is clear in its focused attention on recruitment and retention strategies. The ACC-RSA initiated the Strategic Initiatives, Recruitment, and Retention MIPT to target specifically recruitment and retention process improvements, recruitment innovation, and benefits to create an attractive workplace.

Best Practices

Talent Management

Talent management is a continuous process to attract and retain employees. Talent management aids in capitalizing on the value of employees. Research revealed a talent management process is instrumental to compete and win the War for Talent. The research revealed the value of an organization implementing a talent management process to help acquire, employ, and retain a diverse talent pool of candidates. In addition, the research revealed the

significance of quality-of-life enhancements to an organization's recruitment and retention strategy.

The Army People Strategy represents a commitment to innovation and thoughtful leadership in the realm of people management. It articulates what we must do to win-Winning Matters! Army readiness, modernization, and reform efforts must be supported by a 21st-century talent management system and essential quality-of-life enhancements, fundamentally improving the way we manage our center of gravity – people. (“The Army People Strategy”, 2019, p. 15).

Research revealed the value of a talent management model or process. “The talent management process is useful to help the organization recruit and retain employees” (Andreev, 2021, p. 2). Talent management enhances the overall performance of the organization. “It helps businesses improve performance; allows companies to stay competitive; drives innovation; helps form productive teams; and decreases turnover” (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 9). Talent management best practices to obtain an optimal workforce “are divided into three areas: (1) recruitment, staffing, and succession planning; (2) training and development; and (3) retention management” (p. 9). The researcher analyzed several talent management models and processes in the literature review. Research reveals the benefits of a talent management process. Implementation of a talent management process can help the ACC-RSA with the recruitment and retention of contracting professionals.

Hybrid Workplace

Hybrid workplace is a quality-of-life enhancement that is endorsed by the Department of the Army. Although telework expansion is one of the ACC-RSA retention strategic initiatives, the ACC-RSA does not have a permanent hybrid workplace policy. The hybrid work model is

recognized for its flexibility, which enables employees to work across multiple environments while allowing for in-office collaboration opportunities (*“What is Hybrid Work and How Does it Impact your Business”*, 2022).

The research revealed the advantages an organization has that offers a hybrid workplace. The research outlined the benefits of a hybrid workplace for the organization and the employee. Research also indicated incorporating both talent management and hybrid workplace help organizations recruit and retain an optimal workforce. Obtaining an optimal workforce is competing and winning the War for Talent.

Recommendations

Recruitment and Retention

The researcher recommends the ACC-RSA establish a recruitment and retention database for traceability to help identify hiring needs and trends. The researcher recommends the ACC-RSA develop a repository to track recruitment successes and failures with rationale. The repository data will help with future recruitment and retention initiatives, and the development of processes that are proven to yield results. The recruitment repository should capture each step in the recruiting process and the timeliness of each step. The researcher recommends the ACC-RSA repository be managed by the talent management office. The repository data can be used in the recruitment continuous process improvement system.

Research supports an innovative recruitment and retention approach. Marketing will help the ACC-RSA with branding, which can facilitate the recruitment of top talent. The ACC-RSA can collaborate with colleges, universities, and technical schools; use job fairs, community outreach events, and social media to aid in its recruitment efforts.

To assist with employee retention, research reveals the retention essentials such as learning about culture, coaching, monitoring performance management, and ensuring the employee knows opportunities for advancement are valuable in retaining employees. These retention essentials can help the ACC-RSA reduce its attrition rate. Employee retention is important to the overall growth of the organization. Organizations that “invest time and resources into keeping qualified talent gain many benefits, including increased competitiveness; reduced cost; enhanced team collaboration; increased productivity; and improved employee experience” (“7 Strategies That Improves Remote Employee Retention states”, 2021, p. 3). The ACC-RSA implementation of a retention strategic plan, and investing time, and resources will help the ACC-RSA compete in the War for Talent.

Best Practices

The research recommends a flexible recruitment and retention strategy. Research recommends the ACC-RSA organize a talent management framework that supports all aspects of talent management. The talent management blueprint should consist of a Talent Management Office with designated responsibilities for recruitment, development, and retention.

Finally, research supports the institutionalization of a talent management model or process. It is important to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage by hiring and retaining the right talent with the use of the right structures, systems, processes, and practices. Research supports the implementation of talent management and a hybrid workplace. Talent management and quality-of-life enhancements are essential in recruitment and retention in this highly competitive contracting profession job market. The ACC-RSA implementation of a talent management process and a hybrid workplace policy will make it a more attractive organization for its employees and future candidates.

Hybrid workplace is a tool the ACC-RSA can implement to help recruit and retain its employees, developing a culture within the organization where both employer and employee thrive. The ACC-RSA can create a quality-of-life environment that allows employees to work from anywhere to foster a work-life balance. The research revealed that hybrid work is the next phase of workplace station evolution.

Areas for Future Research

Based on the findings in this research and the recommendations, the following are areas for future research. Future research can study the recruitment and hiring process best practices for other services and industry. Another area for future research is the benefits of a continuous process improvement system for the Human Resource Department recruitment and retention process. Future research can also explore the operational differences between a traditional workplace and a fully remote workplace.

Summary

This chapter provides the conclusion, recommendations, and areas for future research. The research revealed the definition and meaning behind War for Talent. This research revealed that the ACC-RSA is aware of the contracting profession War for Talent. Research revealed the ACC-RSA is working diligently to become the provider of choice. To help the ACC-RSA in the War for Talent, particular elements of the hiring process must be standardized to 1) ensure the workforce is comprised of the right people with the appropriate skills and experience – in the right positions – doing the right work, 2) foster a merit system principle and 3) minimize hiring timelines. Overall, research revealed the best practices and benefits for the ACC-RSA to implement talent management and a hybrid workplace to help with its recruitment and retention challenges.

This chapter provides the researcher's conclusions and recommendations with implementation plans for various audiences and areas for future research. The Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal has a lot to offer current and potential workers. By implementing a talent management process, adjusting current practices, and establishing continuous process improvement methods, the ACC-RSA can be well positioned to recruit and retain top talent and win the contracting profession War for Talent.

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Appendix A - Definitions

The purpose of this section is to define keywords used throughout the research process.

Employee Retention (ER) – “An organization’s ability to keep its employees under contract, making for a more stable, productive workforce” (Pratt & Florentine, 2022, p. 2).

Hybrid Workplace – “A workplace that incorporates a mix of employees who are working in the office and those who are working from other locations” (OPM 2022b, para 1).

Hybrid Workforce Model –

A hybrid workforce model comprises employees who work from home or any other remote location and employees who work in the office. In most cases, a hybrid workforce can choose a preferred working arrangement, whether completely remote, completely in-office, or even half-time remote and half-time in-office. (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 3)

Hybrid Work Schedule – “A hybrid work schedule is a hybrid of a traditional nine-to-five work schedule and a more flexible one—a non-traditional structure” (Ferdinand, 2022, p. 6).

Official “Traditional” Work (Onsite) – “The official worksite is generally the location of an employee's duty station as documented on an employee's Standard Form 50” (OPM, 2021, p. 11).

Remote work –

This is an arrangement in which an employee, under a written remote work agreement, is scheduled to perform at an alternative worksite and is not expected to perform work at an agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. A remote worker's official worksite may be within or outside the local commuting area of an agency worksite. (OPM, 2021 p. 11)

Talent Management – “A system that promotes a high-performing workforce, identifies and closes skills gaps, and implements and maintains programs to attract, acquire, develop, promote, and retain quality and diverse talent” (OPM, 2022, p. 9).

Telework (Offsite)

The official definition of "telework" in the Act, and now codified at 5 United States Code 6501(3), is: The term 'telework' or 'teleworking' refers to a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position. They also perform authorized activities from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work. (“2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government” (2021), p.10)

Total Army – Active, Guard, Reserve Soldiers, and Civilians (“Department of the Army”, 2022).

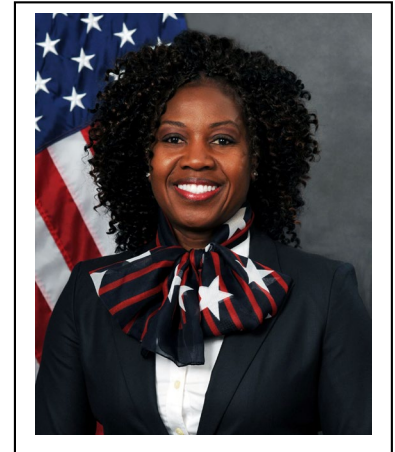
Appendix B – Glossary of Acronyms

ACC-RSA	Army Contracting Command Redstone Arsenal
AWF.....	Acquisition Workforce
CPAC	Civilian Personnel Advisor Center
COVID19	Corona Virus Disease 19
DEI	diversity, equity, inclusive
DoD	Department of Defense
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ER	Employee Retention
FW	Flexible Work
HWP	Hybrid Work Policy
HWS	Hybrid Work Schedule
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
LOE	Line of Effort
MDO	Multi-Domain Operations
O.P.M.	Office of Personnel Management
TA	Talent Acquisition
TM	Talent Management

Appendix C – Author Biography**SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA****VICKY SPIVEY**

Ms. Vicky Spivey assumed her position as Chief of Air and Missile Defense Systems, Army Contracting Command, Redstone, in October 2014. She provided leadership to 38 contracting professionals and was responsible for a contract portfolio valued at over \$10B. She executed and managed major defense contracts, such as Iron Dome, Stinger, M-SHORAD, Counter-UAS, IBCS, and Sentinel. She served as the Army Contracting Command, Redstone senior contracts lead on the Air and Missile Defense Cross-Functional Team in support of the Army Futures Command.

Ms. Spivey prior assignments, 2011- 2014, she served as Chief of the Business & Analytical, Logistics and Programmatic Division in the EXPRESS and Strategic Services Directorate. Her contract portfolio consisted of 174 requirements, valued at over \$3.1B. She also served as Contracting Officer in the Secure Environment Contracting Cell from 2006 – 2010.



Ms. Spivey has 20 years of experience in procurement and contract management and a wealth of knowledge in executing and managing major defense, services, and construction contracts. She spent a number of years as a Contract Specialist at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, leading personnel, executing and managing highly critical contracts.

Ms. Spivey is a veteran with 15 years of dedicated and honorable service in the Army and Army Reserves. She is an Army Acquisition Corps member with 11 years of supervisory and personnel management experience.

Ms. Spivey certifications are Acquisition Professional Contracting Level III, Purchasing Level II, Program Manager Level I, and Facility Engineering Level I.

She is a graduate of The Excellence In Government Fellows Program and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Leadership Development Program Level III.

Education: Ms. Spivey holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Columbia College and a Master's Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Acquisition and Contract Management from the Florida Institute of Technology.

Ms. Spivey's career accomplishments are vast and to name a few: Honorable and Ancient Orders of Saint Barbara 2021, Superior Civilian Medal 2014 and 2018, Civilian Service Commendation Medal 2021. She is also a recipient of AMC Commander's Coin 4-Star 2021, PEO Missiles and Space SES Coin 2021, and PEO Missiles and Space Commander's Coin 2019.

Ms. Spivey is very active in her community supporting Habitat for Humanity, Relay for Life, American Heart Association, and Autism. She currently resides in Madison, AL with her husband, Calvin, CW3(R) Army.