

# Tending your 'talent garden'

By [Maritsa Wessels](#)

1 Oct 2021

Identifying and developing talent is a bit like gardening. Looking for growth and nurturing growth are two very different things, and each requires a specific approach to get the best results. But, as with gardening, you will need to get your hands dirty, especially as the media landscape and consumer behaviour is going through an era of rapid change.



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## Identifying and attracting talent

Businesses are often clear about their inbound marketing strategy to connect with and secure new clients, but few are equally clear about an inbound marketing strategy designed to connect with and secure new talent.

Identifying talent requires a balanced view of the company you keep: the organisation itself, the networks outside of your organisation and employees within your organisation. Introspection will provide key insights. You need to ask the hard questions: why would great people want to work at our company? What is it about our company culture that makes the best in the business say: I want to work there?

Leaders who want to attract the best talent also understand that great people almost always have great jobs, which means

they are not looking for you at all. I firmly believe that waiting until you have a vacancy before knocking on the door of the ideal candidate not only wastes time but adds pressure a situation that is already placing strain on the business. Companies who are serious about attracting the best talent understand that talent is identified before it is required.



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### Looking within

Right now, you are surrounded by people who already know your business, products, customers, and the dynamics that make your company unique. In the search for finding “new” talent, promoting from within is often overlooked. You can proactively seek out internal candidates by assessing where within your organisation talent is dormant or misaligned. Is every person in a role that brings out the best in them? Is their role aligned to their talent and skill set and to where they see themselves doing their best work?

Personally, I’ve seen multiple examples where people have excelled in different roles, not because of a significant change in the business itself, but simply because the new role is a better fit for their natural talent and skillset. In addition to the time and money saved by retention, rather than recruitment, a better result often follows when you energise experience.

Another most promising source of ‘new’ employees are the people who know what it takes to work within your organisation: current employees. One of the ways we have created a referral culture within Mediamark is by rewarding existing team members who refer a successful candidate for a role.

### Nurturing talent

Talent does not grow on its own - we need to nurture the aspirations of our staff. Well designed, outcome-based skills development plans are crucial to keeping employees engaged, effective and relevant in the market.

Mediamark believes so strongly in life-long learning that in 2017, we created ‘In the Know Now’, an initiative aimed at keeping marketers and media professionals up to date about the latest industry trends, while up-skilling young media practitioners.

Through this initiative, by partnering with respected industry experts, we have up-skilled over 600 people from various businesses. Our aim is to equip them to navigate a shifting terrain so that they can help their clients get the best possible ROI from their multi-channel media investments.

Internally, we also invest in our own sales team through the Mediamark Sales Academy. This program is one way in which we are creating an environment that fosters the performance of our people, while delivering an outstanding experience for our clients.

### Raising the bar

Beyond formalised programs and plans however, lies a challenge to leaders that is as personal as it is universal: as you raise the quality of talent, you must raise the quality of management. The better you become at attracting great people, the more you must do to design the ideal environment in which they can do great work.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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