



THE WILKINS GROUP

# Tool Kit

Providing Tools for  
Productive Workplaces

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*"If you want  
one year of  
prosperity,  
grow grain;  
if you want  
10 years of  
prosperity,  
grow trees;  
if you want  
100 years of  
prosperity,  
grow  
people."*

*Chinese proverb*

## Make the best of a slow economy by hiring out of the box

By **Michele Langstaff**

**H**ave you recently listed a job on the Internet or run an ad in the newspaper? Or have you tried to "network" an open job opportunity among a small group of professionals? If you have, you were probably inundated with hundreds of resumes.

How can you possibly sift through all the responses to find the best candidate?

It is tempting to interview only those candidates who seem like the "closest fit" — probably a candidate from your industry; after all, they know your business. And, oh yes, the ideal candidate has probably done exactly what you will expect in the role in your company.

Overwhelmingly, most companies will hire those candidates who fit a very narrow profile. Those that do are missing an important opportunity.

The 1990s brought "The War For Talent." The 21st century has brought us "The War For Employment."

According to one recent study, demand for senior-level talent was down double-digits in 2001 and dropped another 17% in 2002. As a result of the number of highly qualified individuals out of work, employers have a unique opportunity to cherry-pick the best candidates.

But the best candidates aren't necessarily the ones with the bio-data that is closest to your situation. Human Resources professionals are increasingly looking for candidates with the talents that are the best fit with the position.

Paul Pressler, an executive running a theme park in California, was recently hired as CEO of the The Gap in San Francisco. What does this entertainment executive know about either the clothing business or retail world?

When Home Depot hired Bob Nardelli as its CEO, it hired an individual without experience in either retail or construction/home improvement experience. When Priceline hired Rick Braddock as its CEO it hired someone with a pharmaceutical distribution, banking and consumer packaged goods background.

This kind of out-of-the-box hiring can help a company break industry compro-

mises and chart a new path. Human Resources professionals can be instrumental in changing their companies by changing the mix of candidates that make it to the final stages of the interview process.

Of course, candidates with bio-data closest to the role will be the easiest to

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### We lead through our words and actions

**I** recently attended the International Society for Performance Improvement's (ISPI) 41st annual conference, where I presented a paper on leadership.

We are all leaders, formally or informally, and we lead not only through our words, but more importantly, through our actions.

Leaders go first and they define reality for their follow-

ers. They realize change is not an option and they influence their followers to embrace change. They unlock the potential in their followers, giving them opportunities to step into leadership roles.

Leaders communicate their messages clearly and continually so their followers understand the big picture and what their specific role is in contributing to that big picture.

This issue's main article is written by a former client and now a colleague, Michele Langstaff, of The Organizational Strategy Group, LLC. Michele writes about making the best of a slow economy. She offers strategies on hiring practices that will benefit companies long-term.

In the second article I explain what the designation "Certified Performance Technologist" means and what value it can add to my clients.

— *Sheila Wilkins*



# Make the best of a slow economy

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present to the hiring manager. HR executives or a good executive search firm can add tremendous value to the process by challenging the hiring manager to think outside the box and hire from a broad group of candidates.

Let's face it — when individuals are in the same industry for too long they become stuck in the mental model of that industry. Additionally, if a candidate steps into a role that closely resembles one they have played in another organization, they may not be motivated to try new approaches to the issues at hand.

One of the most important things for the HR function to do during times of excess available talent is to search even harder for the best candidate. The easiest and most apparent solution is not always the best one.



**MICHELE LANGSTAFF**

The Human Resources group can add a significant contribution in times like these by challenging line and staff function managers to hire out of the box.

— Michele Langstaff is the founder of the Organizational Strategy Group, LLC, a consulting firm that specializes in creating Human Resources solutions for business challenges.

The Organizational Strategy Group has a number of selection tools available to assist clients in hiring the best candidates. Diagnostic assessments include tests for selling skills, customer service skills, first line management competencies and leadership assessments.

Michele is also on the faculty of San Francisco State University. Contact her at [MLangstaff@OrganizationalStrategyGroup.com](mailto:MLangstaff@OrganizationalStrategyGroup.com), or call (415) 850-4753.

## CPT certification promises proficient practices

By Sheila Wilkins

**W**hen you are choosing a consultant to work with you on a project, do you ever wonder if the person really is qualified to do what you are asking?

I have recently been designated a "Certified Performance Technologist" (CPT) by The International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI). A CPT systematically and systematically identifies and removes barriers to individual and organizational performance.

CPTs may specialize in one or more families of solutions used to improve workplace performance, such as training, job design, process reengineering, performance support tools or feedback systems. I received this designation after more than 15 years of improving workplace performance focusing on organizational alignment, leadership and team development.

The certification was developed in response to a request from public and private organizations for criteria to better distinguish proficient practitioners of human performance technology.

Unlike many certifications, ISPI does not require applicants to take a test or participate in training. Instead, individuals must prove that their work accomplishments satisfy ISPI's performance improvement standards.

The assessment process is a combination of attestations by internal and external clients and a review of work products by qualified peers. The standards are:

- Focus on worthy results (address problems clients care about).
- Consider the larger context (like the client's constraints and marketplace realities).
- Add value (the outcomes are worthwhile).

- Collaborate (work as part of a team and bring in appropriate specialists).
- Follow a proven systematic approach in all aspects of the work (assessment, analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation).

Founded in 1962, ISPI is the leading international association dedicated to improving productivity and performance in the workplace. ISPI represents more than 10,000 international and chapter members throughout the United States, Canada, and 40 other countries.

ISPI's mission is to develop and recognize the proficiency of its members and

advocate the use of human performance technology — a systematic and research-driven approach to improving organizational and individual performance.

Clients want a way to distinguish those of us who have chosen a career of improving human performance from the wannabes, transients and dabblers.

"What certification promises and delivers," says Judith Hale, past president of ISPI, "is the recognition and confirmation that a person is a proficient practitioner, has committed to a code of ethics, and engages in efforts to improve his or her own performance."



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