

## **Telecommunications companies need an effective talent strategy to remain sustainable and relevant**



The telecommunications industry is rapidly evolving, and the skills gap this has created poses a significant challenge to businesses. The demand for highly skilled professionals continues to outpace the available talent pool, and yet without these skills, businesses will increasingly struggle to remain relevant and sustainable. Addressing this challenge is not only about hiring the right talent, which is in short supply but also about mapping out plans for training and upskilling future generations as well. Partnering with a specialist recruiter that has a deep understanding of the telecommunications market can be a crucial differentiator when it comes to navigating the skills gap and positioning for long-term growth in the rapidly evolving telecommunications industry.

### **The breakneck pace of change**

One of the biggest challenges faced by the telecommunications industry is how fast technology has evolved and continues to evolve. To remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable, it is essential to be able to support traditional technologies while at the same time gearing up for future solutions. It has become imperative to have a talent strategy in place to not only address the current gap in skills but also to ensure that the right talent is in place to handle the future telecommunications landscape and enable South Africa to compete on a global scale.

The crux of this is the ability to understand where you are today, where you want to be tomorrow, and what skills are needed to bridge this gap. This in turn requires a broad and deep understanding of the business and the industry landscape to craft a map of skills and understand what exists in the market and

what will need to be trained and upskilled internally. The reality, however, is that most businesses simply do not have the time or expertise in talent to achieve this, which is why the right talent partner is essential.

### **Retention is vital**

One element of an effective talent strategy is the ability to attract the right skills, but that is only part of the picture, especially in a skills-scarce environment. It is equally important, once you have found the talent you need, to be able to retain it. The competition in the skills arena is massive; not only are companies competing for skills, but the skilled individuals themselves are vying for the best jobs.

The best candidates are looking for the best employers, which requires employers to have visibility and effectively market themselves to the talent pool. It also means that employers need to offer the best market-related salaries and have an environment that is robust and centred on retention and loyalty. This in turn requires the ability to provide talent with an environment that not only meets their financial expectations but also supports career growth and offers effective succession planning.

### **Specialist skills need specialist recruitment**

Telecommunication companies need the right talent to enable them to perform today and, in the future, but talent attraction and retention are not typically core skills. This is why it pays to partner with a specialist recruiter with the expertise to identify and attract top talent, who can help them find and keep the skills they need to succeed. With their market knowledge and extensive networks, as well as their insight into trends and technology evolution, specialist recruiters are an invaluable ally.

In addition to being continuously on the pulse of this fast-changing industry, your recruitment partner should have a sustainable, tried-and-tested methodology for sourcing skills to meet supply and demand and ensuring candidates stay in the jobs in which they are placed. They can also assist in developing training and development programmes as part of a talent roadmap to upskill and cross-skill existing employees.

### **Taking a long-term view**

When it comes to bridging the talent gap and ensuring you have a pipeline of skills for future relevance and growth, it is essential to take a long-term view. While it is true that training costs money, the reality is that it is also the most sustainable way to ensure the right skills are available. Training is an investment that should be part of strategic planning, incorporating talent transition and internal growth to expose people to new and evolving technologies and ensure their skillsets are up to date. Having this on top of a solid retention strategy is the key.

Understanding the market, understanding your skills gap, and embedding talent transition, upskilling, and growth into business are the keys to success. Engaging with talent agencies can help telecommunications businesses in all of these areas and can be hugely beneficial in ensuring organisations do not become obsolete without the ability to meet the pace of technological change. The

cost of not having the right skills is a lot higher than the cost of partnering with the right people to help you find the talent you need.