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How Resource Planning can Check The Great Attrition

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How do you react when you are in the throes of the Great Attrition? Time-honoured HR wisdom says sweeten the offers and get the best hires. It's a tested recipe. But how far will it sustain? If the war for talent rages on, you dread losing your best talent to the competition. And when you lose your talented folks in droves, you worry about recruiting. This is a perpetual cycle of onboarding and exiting of employees. Talent management can be tricky for any organization if you haven't mapped it right on acquiring and retaining them. If not handled right, it devours your man-hours, can steal your productivity and hijack focus from strategic goals.

This isn't a case of a prescription not matching the diagnosis. It's like understating the crisis and soft-pedalling the consequences. The crisis, to my mind, is rooted in the lack of ingenuity in HR forecasting. **When you can't predict and align resource requirements to your projects in the pipeline and the future, it can have a telling impact on your business and your workplace culture**. Many organizations may claim resource planning is already ingrained in their practices. Yet, the same practices have a lot more ground to cover.

I'll begin with the basics. What do we know about resource capacity planning?

It is the practice of comparing future resource utilization of project resources to available work capacity. Utilization is the time and effort spent on a project within a defined timeframe.

Delve deeper, and some questions pop up.

- How many projects are there with your organization?
- What is the forecast on utilization for a specific role for each project for a given timeframe?
- What are the available working hours for that role?
- What is the amount of non-project work time for that role for a given timeframe?

This practice will meet two different mindsets in any technology company, i.e. portfolio and project.

The portfolio mindset drives the portfolio governance team to understand when and how new project work can be undertaken using the organization's resources. This mindset faces

challenges when a project is launched without adequate resources. As a result, tagged resources will work beyond their available capacity or less than forecasts. Carefully considering three parameters - time, scope, and budget - helps determine if new projects can be completed successfully.

Those with a project mindset are focused on that specific project. Capacity management units support them to determine if any new resource shortages would impede the delivery of the project and result in the budget, schedule, and scope deviations.

The portfolio governance team's resource data can also be used to determine individual resource utilization views and ease the decision-making process for project managers. Additionally, it can help identify resource gaps and potential constraints.

There is a consistent overlap between project and portfolio mindsets, and the best resource capacity management is achieved by keeping an eye on all moving parts.

At the portfolio governance level, aligning the following areas to the process would be the key:

- Precision data on resources
- In-depth analysis of resources by a dedicated tea,
- Regular review of the governance

At the project management level, the following processes would be critical.

- Efficient project planning for setting up defined scope, tasks, delivery deadlines and quantum of efforts
- Skilled management of resources inside the organization, based on skills, abilities and interests
- Strategic communications framework to ensure information is timely exchanged between projects teams and resource management divisions

The maturity will ultimately determine resource and capacity management in project management and granularity of data, but interventions such as resource capacity planning tools, improving forecasts and improving the management of critical resources will greatly help.

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