The benefits of treating employees **like customers**

By modernizing their HR systems, agencies can hire and retain tech-savvy employees

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As the government faces unprecedented challenges that continue to grow more complex, technology is a major tool that can be used to tackle these problems. As a result, agencies can improve the way they recruit and retain tech-savvy workers, in order to remove the bottlenecks in the traditional recruiting process.

To achieve high-touch and modern experiences, agencies can assess their current recruiting processes and technological tools and reconcile both. They can streamline workflows and processes.

To provide more flexibility, agencies can replace in-person with video interviews and allow candidates to apply for multiple jobs at once. However, the work doesn't stop there. Once candidates become employees, agencies should provide continuous opportunities for them to gain technical skills and implement policies to create a welcoming environment for diverse representation.

Lastly, agencies can leverage artificial intelligence to understand employees' wants and needs, for smarter policymaking, reimagined service delivery and more efficient processes.

Creating pathways for learning

Agencies can foster an eagerness for learning by encouraging employees to gain new skills and expertise that enable them to expand their career horizons, further the agency mission and benefit the end user. Employees can be provided with resources that enable them to understand different technologies and how they can be used to address business needs. Agencies can also provide time during the work week for employees to learn new software or get certified on new technologies and with the flexibility to attend conferences.

Fellowship programs are another great way for employees to gain practical experience. Programs can be created where they don't exist to enable staff to become familiar with

technical solutions they could use in the future. As employees advance in their careers, leadership development programs are also vital. However, it is best that they have a technical focus because bridging the gap between IT and human resources is paramount.

A leader who can create an understanding between both departments and break down technical language to a stakeholder in HR (or any business function) has a cherished skill.

Agencies can also provide a similar offering to our free online learning platform Trailhead, by introducing online lecture series or gamifying the education process.

Keeping women in government STEM positions

There are obstacles that slow or prevent women from entering the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field, and it's essential to address those biases wherever they occur. Implicit bias occurs during the educational process and then

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again during the job interview process and in workplace environments.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019 women made up 48% of all U.S. workers and only 27% of STEM workers, whereas men made up 52% of all U.S. workers but 73% of all STEM workers. To keep women in government, agencies should provide mentoring opportunities for women to connect with other successful women in government and in partner industries. Male support in tackling this inequality is also key. I've been pushing the HeForShe hashtag to continuously encourage male colleagues to play a vital role in supporting and guiding women.

In the end, it all comes down to people, process and technology. Once we streamline our processes and use the best technology to put the right talent in the right place quickly, the magic will begin. ◼

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