

SOURCE STUDY TITLE AND AUTHOR

The Hidden Workers: Untapped Talent - How leaders can improve hiring practices to uncover missed talent pools, close skills gaps, and improve diversity. Joseph B. Fuller Manjari Raman Eva Sage-Gavin Kristen Hines. Accenture and Harvard Business School.

SUMMARY

The Research: Intentionally Hiring “Hidden” Workers Yields a Significant ROI for Employers

DESCRIPTION

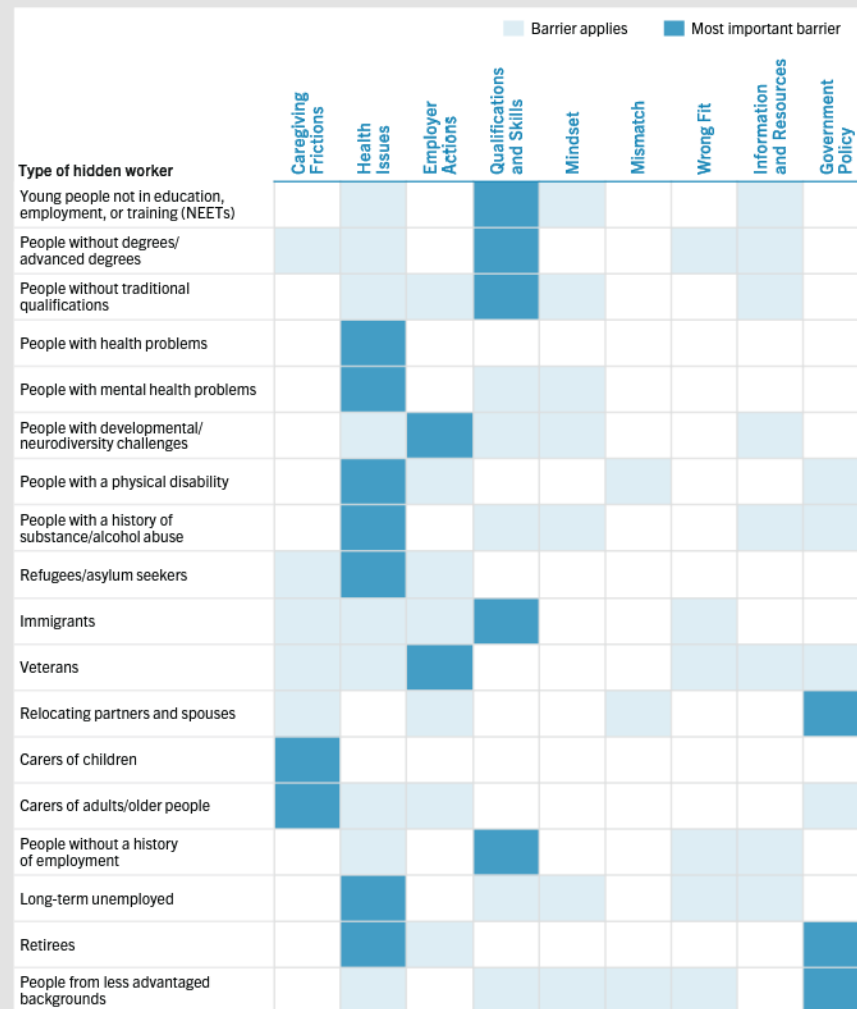
Companies are facing an increasingly competitive hiring environment. At the same time, a sizeable group of workers are unemployed, underemployed, or out of the labor force all together. This breakdown of demand and supply was the focus of a 2021 large scale survey of 8,000 of these “hidden” workers and 2,250 executives conducted by the Harvard Business School and Accenture. What they found was that widespread management practices contribute to the screening out of a diverse population of aspiring workers. They also affirmed that companies that intentionally hire these often-overlooked workers realize a significantly positive return on investment. These companies were less likely to report a talent shortage and reported that “hidden” workers outperform their peers.

KEY FINDINGS

- In the US, there are more than 27 million hidden workers: those missing hours, those missing from work and those missing from the workforce. They include such groups as caregivers, veteran, immigrants, people with disabilities, previously incarcerated individuals, people from less advantaged backgrounds and those without traditional qualifications (college degree).
- Three main barriers contribute to companies not considering hidden workers as candidates: (1) widening training gaps, (2) inflexibly configured automated recruiting systems and (3) a failure to recognize and elevate the business case of hiring these workers.
- Changing key management practices will help companies tap into this significant asset of potential talent. These include:
 - Refresh job descriptions to emphasize skills
 - Shift to affirmative filters that screen people in on applicant tracking systems
 - Establish metrics for talent acquisition that emphasize meaningful indicators such as on-boarding, retention rates, and rates of advancement.
 - Shift hiring hidden workers away from corporate social responsibility

- Target segments of hidden workers best suited for the company
- Adopt a more customer-centric recruitment and on-boarding process that is tailored for the targeted segments
- Lay the groundwork for a sustained commitment with the incumbent workforce
- Enlist senior management to champion, direct and monitor the practices of hiring and onboarding hidden workers.

Figure 5B: Barriers that impact each type of hidden worker



Note: The above is based on a likelihood model that each type of hidden worker would cite each barrier as being relevant. Background controls include age, gender, educational attainment, country, ethnicity, and household income. The light blue bars indicate that each type of hidden worker is likely to cite each barrier group as relevant, and the findings are statistically significant at the 5% level. The dark blue bars indicate the strongest relationship of barrier groupings for each hidden worker type.

Source: "Hidden Worker – Worker Survey," Accenture and Harvard Business School's Project on Managing the Future of Work, May-June 2020.

SOURCE STUDY LINK

<https://www.hbs.edu/managing-the-future-of-work/Documents/research/hiddenworkers09032021.pdf>