Change and Challenge in the Public Sector Workplace
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INTRODUCTION

The world of work is changing. In the public sector as in the private, inescapable demographic facts are raising questions about how organizations will meet their talent needs in the years to come. New directions in government, born of economic disruption and a change of administration, are requiring the public sector to assume new roles and responsibilities even as a talent and employment crisis looms. Technological innovation continues to impact the public sector workplace as much as it does the private. A new imperative to address the unique needs and aspirations of the individual is gradually gaining recognition in workplaces of all kinds. These workforce trends are even now presenting the public sector with a broad range of significant employment challenges, which will only heighten with time. In the face of remarkable change, the public sector must find new ways of managing its workforce to enhance engagement, productivity and high performance.

MAJOR WORKFORCE TRENDS

The Demographic Maelstrom

Our research and extensive workforce management experience show that the public sector and the private sector share many of the same workplace issues. Along with shortages in leadership talent and in technical skills needed in the workforce, the chief issues stem from a simple demographic fact: as the baby boomer generation retires, younger generations are too small to replace the numbers lost. By 2012, some 24 government departments could potentially lose anywhere from 20% to nearly 50% of their current workforces to retirement. Even as the Department of Treasury, for example, assumes an increasingly active role in overseeing credit markets and regulating the financial system, 35% of its employees will become eligible for retirement within the next three years.

For the moment, economic volatility is ensuring that most public agencies have adequate pools of candidates to choose from when filling open positions. Many candidates are currently seeking public sector employment especially at entry- and mid-level positions. This situation, however, is unlikely to persist.

When the business cycle improves, the private sector’s vigorous pursuit of talent will resume, as will its competition with the public sector—but with greater intensity. As the demand for talent returns to normal, underlying demographic forces are likely to assert themselves as never before. Public agencies will encounter increasing difficulty filling job openings and will need to do more to differentiate their career offerings from those of the private sector.

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Designed to provide innovative approaches to recruiting, developing and increasing our diverse supplier base, Manpower’s Supplier Diversity Program includes women, minorities, veterans, disadvantaged, and small business owners who share our mission of providing quality services to their customers. Working collaboratively with diversity suppliers, we create innovative workforce solutions to offer to our customers worldwide that strengthen the economic wealth of our diverse business communities and contribute to the overall growth and expansion of our markets.

It is important to note that the talent requirements of the public sector are particularly acute. Management roles account for 33% of the federal government workforce as compared to 10% for all other industries. One-third of the federal government workforce consists of professional employees whereas professional employees account for only one-fifth of the private sector workforce. Given its unique needs, the public sector may face even stiffer challenges filling its leadership talent gaps than may be faced by the private sector.
New Directions in Government

Even as its talent base threatens to shrink, government is pursuing new workforce directions to fulfill its commitment to do more. In part, a more interventionist approach has been thrust upon government by economic circumstances. As the example of the Department of Treasury demonstrates, the need to stabilize the economy has forced government to assume roles and responsibilities that few would have predicted it would ever have needed to assume.

Although it is not uncommon for new missions to arise unexpectedly in the public service, government’s moving into a variety of spaces previously occupied by the private sector alone marks a clear break with past practice. This development is requiring the public sector workforce to develop new skills, capacity and expertise.

At the same time, the President has also proposed an ambitious new agenda. Such major initiatives as doubling the production of alternative energy within the next three years, digitizing all medical records within the next five years and improving the energy efficiency of two million homes and 75% of all federal buildings will require the allocation of substantial public sector resources. In other words, the government will need to invest significant human capital in pursuing a wide range of very ambitious goals. Although many of the government’s initiatives have yet to get fully underway, the public sector is already showing significant growth: in April of 2009 alone, the sector added 72,000 new jobs.

In addition to proposing a menu of major new policies, the government is also reconsidering how policy is formulated and delivered. The trend is towards a more open, transparent and inclusive approach that seeks to bypass conventional modes of communication with the public (through lobbyists and special interest groups, for example) and involve citizens directly. Citizens are being invited to participate in government as never before. When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was released, for example, the government sought to encourage participation and build consensus by convening an online national dialogue. Over one million individuals and organizations took part, submitting questions and voting on the best questions in a week-long Q&A session intended to improve data collection and reporting on stimulus spending. As such initiatives proliferate—healthcare, the environment and transportation are among the many topical issues around which government might wish to develop national dialogues—public agencies may need to reconsider how to serve a more active and engaged citizenry. Greater transparency and participation will inevitably present new human capital challenges.

In recent years, government has often looked to outsourcing and contracting out as means of addressing talent shortfalls and driving efficiencies. Such measures have encountered resistance from unions, which represent over half of all public sector workers, and have delivered only mixed results, especially on the cost containment front. As a result, another new direction in government involves the adoption of insourcing. Agencies are now focused on defining which functions are better performed by government and which are better performed by insourced contracted talent. But insourcing is no better equipped than outsourcing to respond to the impending employment crisis. While insourcing relies on a management model more directly involving government, it depends on recruitment of for-hire external expertise much as outsourcing does. As talent grows short, where will this for-hire expertise be found? However important the future role of insourcing (or outsourcing), attracting, retaining and developing talent to deliver government services will continue to present the public sector with its most pressing human capital strategy challenge.

The Entry of New Technology

The introduction of new technology into the workplace has been a key driver of workforce productivity for at least three decades. As talent becomes increasingly scarce, organizations across all sectors and all geographies are likely to rely even more heavily on technological innovation to drive productivity and compensate for shortfalls in talent and personnel.

Innovation, however, will have an impact on more than productivity alone. It will also change the nature of the work that gets done. For example, new social media and the mobile hand-held devices encouraging their use are even now presenting government with exciting new possibilities for enhancing transparency and engaging citizens. The government has already demonstrated a willingness to use the new media to canvass public opinion. The public sector workforce of
the future will increasingly need to show itself adept at using the new networking tools and managing the results. It will need to support greater information sharing and manage the inevitable diffusion of control that stems from increased transparency and collaboration.

New technology is also presenting exciting opportunities for transforming the nature of the workplace itself. Now as never before, the technology exists to support virtual workplaces, work at a distance, work from home and flexible work hours. To get work done, workers today no longer have to occupy the same physical space at the same point in time. As groups or as individuals, they can work remotely, but stay connected by internet technology and tools. Among the benefits of encouraging such a borderless workforce is the expansion of the talent pool. Geography is less likely to place limits on employment opportunities and recruitment.

The Individual Rules

As the boomer generation retires, as workforces become more culturally and generationally diverse and as skilled talent becomes scarcer, both the particular needs of workers and the options available to them will multiply. Increasingly, that is, the balance of power will begin to shift from employer to employee. The how, where and what of work will become key determinants of recruitment and retention. As will the ability of leadership to create a workplace culture that aligns with the values of the workforce and workplace conditions that align with diverse workforce needs and expectations. Other keys to effective workforce management will include providing individuals with greater flexibility in workplace arrangements such as working virtually or flexible schedules. They may also include providing individuals with enhanced opportunities for career development, for controlling the path of their careers and for moving into new jobs and new departments. Providing such opportunities may require introducing greater flexibility in cross-agency organizational initiatives with multi-functional project teams.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The U.S. Army serves as a good example of a public agency that has successfully marketed its mission. It famously switched its recruiting messages to focus on individual achievement, beginning with the “Army of One” campaign to emphasize the unique abilities of each soldier. That campaign has now moved toward an “Army Strong” message, emphasize that the Army can make each young person smarter, physically and emotionally stronger, and more focused and highly skilled. The tag line is: “You made them strong: we’ll make them Army strong.” This new message succeeds by translating a family value, strength of character, into a national value.

OPPORTUNITIES IN A NEW LANDSCAPE

Each of these changing conditions in the public sector workplace offers opportunity for savvy agency leaders and managers. If the rules of the game are changing from the workforce’s perspective, it may be just the right time to change the game in the agency. For example, almost every agency can take advantage of a new perspective regarding workforce flexibility. The steady rise of high-speed/broadband access gives agency leaders the opportunity to employ more workers from home, or from alternate work locations that do not have to be in the agency building. Telework is highly successful in many agencies, including some agencies that might not have been expected to offer this option. The Pentagon, for example, has been a leader in the Washington DC area at providing flexible workplace policies that advocate working from home or telework centers. Increasingly, the expectation in many government operations is not to be physically present, but electronically connected and aware. Whether working from a mobile handheld device or a laptop, or from a telework center outside of the metropolitan area,
there’s a constant state of awareness of action items, knowledge contribution and supporting messaging.

The leadership examples from the White House give permission to agency leaders to try new approaches as well. In the campaign, the President’s team was very active across nearly every social networking platform available. These continue to be rallying instruments for constituents. Perhaps agency leaders are ready to consider their constituents—not as voters—but as joint owners in the success of government’s business. Using social media tools may offer a new conversational approach to taxpayers, community partners, advocacy peers, and industry partners.

These technologies go further than simply making government operations more efficient: they make people more effective. There are few remaining government programs that aren’t powered by knowledge assets—extraordinary effort has been made across government agencies to build knowledge management cultures. The tools are now more readily available than ever to power that knowledge asset network. Individual contribution, feedback, and knowledge networking are driving programs at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, for example. But this trend isn’t limited to scientists: Homeland Security Department agencies are deploying extensive knowledge sharing tools to support operational efficiency and to protect national assets. But knowledge comes from people. Its creation depends on individuals, groups, communities, and the knowledge asset repositories that they create.

Preparing for the opportunities that workplace flexibility, networking and individual knowledge contributions can make is the task we all share.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Recruitment and Training for Specialized Needs

The Federal Government (excluding the Postal Service) is the nation’s largest single employer. Facing the possibility of experiencing workforce change in the order of 20% to nearly 50% even as government assumes a wider range of responsibilities, public agencies will need to attract, recruit and train huge numbers of permanent, contract and temporary staff to meet their mission requirements. Large pools of talent will need to be identified. A mass of applicants will need to be screened and certified. The right skills will need to be matched with the right jobs. Successful candidates will need to be trained before entering their new roles. And all these tasks will have to be performed in the context of increasing competition with the private sector, which faces its own talent crunch.

An aspect of this recruitment challenge deserving special mention is the need to attract and recruit individuals with highly specialized skills to fill niche positions. Not only will many individuals currently occupying such positions retire within the next three years but many additional high-skill employees will need to be found to fill the new niche positions likely to be created as government increases its range of responsibilities. With the new responsibilities government is assuming by taking a 60% ownership share in General Motors, for example, the public sector will inevitably be called upon to exercise new kinds of skills and expertise. Recruiting people with such skills and expertise will require special effort.

Clearly, given the scope of the challenge, the public sector will need to adopt exceptional measures if its recruitment programs are to succeed. The imperatives facing it do not suggest choosing between hiring directly or contracting out or between insourcing and outsourcing. They involve, rather, employing all these options and more. Recruiting in the evolving version of the new economy and in the context of shifting generational dynamics means workforce solutions must be increasingly more inventive and more interesting.

Agency leaders may need to consider targeting ‘commercially-savvy’ recruits. These may include ‘loaned executive’ programs as well as joint agreements within different industries to develop mid-level management internships in public sector operations. These mid-level managers can present contrasting points of view on operational functions at an agency. Commercial operations focus on economy of effort, and return on investment. These are driven largely by recognizing unproductive processes, or inefficient resource management.

One key imperative must involve burnishing the public sector's employment brand or image. Public service holds a natural appeal for people with a strong sense of social responsibility and a desire to contribute to
social responsibility and a desire to contribute to objectives larger than themselves. The opportunity to perform meaningful work in the public interest has always been a strong recruitment driver for the public sector. Not only must government communicate that opportunity more powerfully than ever before but it must also associate it with all of its agencies across the board. While many agencies deliver mission critical services, others deliver more traditional services that help to support our nation’s infrastructure. To meet its recruitment goals, the public sector must communicate the value of all of its services by demonstrating the importance of every agency’s mission.

The public sector must also address changes in how it operates by integrating talent mobility and social networking models that will attract today’s younger workforce. It may also need to consider changing the workplace to make it more attractive to a new generation of employees and communicating such changes as part of its brand. The workforce of the near future will increasingly be looking for employment flexibility. Working from home, working at a distance, working flexible hours are among the technology-enabled options that may play an important role in attracting a new generation to a new public sector.

The public sector’s recruitment challenges by no means end with attracting candidates of suitable talent in suitable numbers. Once applications are received, they need to be dealt with expeditiously. If the screening, selection and deployment process proves to be slow and inefficient, the positions vacated by personnel lost to retirement and attrition may not be filled quickly enough to ensure continuity of service. The public sector also risks losing talented candidates to its private sector competition. People simply will not wait. They will go elsewhere. The extent of this challenge should not be underestimated. Within the next three years, the public sector will need to process countless hiring applications, and relying on existing methods is unlikely to prove effective.

In a recent poll by Right Management, a Manpower Company, two-thirds of more than 1,200 respondents indicated that they were “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to “consider career opportunities in the public sector.” These results confirm a growing interest in public sector employment. Government agencies have a unique opportunity to recruit from a deeper pool of talent, but may lose out if recruiting processes move too slowly. The best talent is recruited quickly. The ability to identify, assess and onboard new talent efficiently and effectively creates a significant competitive workforce advantage.

Would you consider career opportunities in the public sector?

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<td>Very Likely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Likely</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Likely</td>
<td>21%</td>
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</tbody>
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Online poll of 1213 respondents conducted by Right Management in May 2009.

Taking the Lead

Change impacts not just the organization but your people. Leadership is perhaps never more significant to an organization than when it must plan for and execute wrenching change. Even as the public sector addresses wide-scale workforce change, new directions in government, the entry of new technology and evolving employee expectations, it will have to replace leadership lost to retirement and attrition. Succession plans will need to be formulated to ensure the creation of a pool of leaders prepared to move quickly into new roles and become enablers of change. New leaders will have to be developed from within or recruited from without. Many leaders will need to acquire new or sharper skills, competencies and behaviors to meet the full range of leadership challenges ahead.

Among these skills is the ability to lead through change itself. In a recent survey of 10,000 senior public managers, 57% of respondents indicated that they expected notable changes in the way that government
works under an Obama administration. Leaders of the future public sector will need to prepare employees for change and overcome the natural resistance that change engenders. They will need to create an agile workforce capable of adapting to change quickly and positively.

Leaders in some agencies, the Department of Treasury, for example, may also find themselves needing to acquire new skills and expertise concomitant with the government’s expanding roles and responsibilities. Many leaders, moreover, will need to hone their management styles to adapt to the government’s new emphasis on transparency and public participation. This democratically enhanced form of government presents leaders with significant new challenges. Agencies and agency employees will need to be more open to accepting public idea contributions. How do leaders manage employees tasked with adopting a more responsive policy towards citizens? How do leaders use public input appropriately? How do they respond to them, respect them and leverage them?

Many public sector agencies may find themselves being asked to take on expanded responsibilities with fewer human resources. Leaders, consequently, will also need to develop skills and behaviors that drive employee engagement and productivity. Our research shows that engagement is not a simple product of material reward or of job promotion. It stems from leaders who communicate a compelling vision of the organization’s strategy or mission and show themselves capable of realizing that vision; who inspire employee commitment to the organization’s core values; who welcome employee opinions and encourage ownership of work; who provide employees with the resources to do the job well and recognize employee achievement; and who set clear performance expectations and communicate the tie between specific tasks and the organization’s broader mission.

We see more and more frequently the impact and adoption of social media and networking tools to foster engagement. Jack Welch and other commercial industry leaders made famous the concept of “leadership by walking around.” This meant really walking the floors of the factory or the cube farm to hear what’s going on. To see what’s working and what isn’t. That 2-footed approach is still meaningful. But social media offerings can extend the reach of where one can walk and talk. Twitter, for example, is extraordinarily popular using the concept of “following” a person or alias. Imagine as an agency leader, allowing your staff to ‘follow’ you, and you tweet (in 140 characters or less) what you’re seeing and what you’re hearing. Suddenly, not only are you managing by walking around, you’re tweeting what you learn to others. This isn’t suitable to all government situations, but in many, it could extend the connectedness of the organization to a new level of organizational awareness.

As public sector recruitment intensifies, the composition of the workforce is likely to become more culturally and generationally diverse. Here again leaders will have to develop their capabilities. Different age groups and different cultures have different needs and expectations. Leaders will need to learn how to manage while navigating these differences.

With the introduction of new communication technologies into the workplace, leaders will not only have to become more tech savvy but also have to reconsider the very basis of workplace management. How do you lead a virtual office or employees who work from remote locations or who work flexible hours? How do you manage the new, more transparent and collaborative workplace inaugurated by tweeting, blogging and other online networking and social media? The past provides few roadmaps for the leadership challenges of the future.

Creating a Culture of Engagement

A highly engaged workforce is 50% more productive than a disengaged workforce and shows retention rates that are 44% higher.¹ A key driver of organizational effectiveness, engagement is a critical measure of alignment between employee and organization and reflects an employee’s involvement with, and contribution to, organizational success.

Engagement has traditionally presented the public sector with significant challenges. Employees sometimes feel unappreciated and disconnected from the organization’s larger mission. They see few measures of success beyond meeting budgets and giving service. As recruiting talent begins to present greater challenges to the public sector, maximizing the engagement and productivity of existing employees will assume increasing urgency.

As already discussed, engagement is in large part a product of strong leadership. Leaders who communicate effectively, provide constructive feedback, and recognize and reward employee achievements can go a far way towards creating a culture of engagement. Leader development and coaching, therefore, is often a crucial first step in fostering such a culture: the motivators of engagement must be understood and leveraged. Other important measures can include creating conditions in which employee contributions are recognized by peers and professional organizations and in which employees find it easier to move into more fulfilling jobs. Comprehensively assessing and tracking employee engagement at the beginning of any engagement program and at important points along the way is central to success.

Identifying, Assessing and Developing Talent

With demographic trends threatening major workplace disruption and the broadening responsibilities of government requiring higher workforce performance, identifying, assessing and developing talent becomes more important than ever. Leaders and staff face a wake-up call for re-thinking their capabilities when delivering on their missions. Whether with new skills or new technologies, their scope of responsibilities will likely expand. They must be empowered to manage their development. Such empowerment helps ensure that the right talent aligns with right jobs, and it responds to the emerging workplace imperative to address the specific needs and expectations of the individual, aligned with the needs of the agency. Not the least benefit of a good development program is its impact on employee engagement and its impact on the ability to meet a mission’s strategic objectives.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR ADVANTAGE
Compelling missions provide public agencies with an unbeatable recruitment advantage. People respond to important public needs with unparalleled commitment. For example, during the H1N1 virus outbreak, the leader of the Centers for Disease Control’s Emergency Co-ordination Team lost her home to a fire caused by a lightning strike. She nevertheless remained on the job, helping the team isolate the virus strain and communicate its structure to health agencies across the U.S. and around the world, all within five days of the initial incident reports. Private sector hiring managers cannot compete with public recruiters when public sector jobs inspire such devotion.

TECHREACH
Established in 2001, TechReach works to identify individuals who face barriers to employment, and then prepares them for jobs in high-growth industries. Candidates receive training in the skill sets that employers most need. Employers, in turn, get trained, motivated workers who can step in and immediately contribute to their business. Partnerships are important to the success of TechReach. Working with the Department of Labor since 2003, TechReach established a link between all of Manpower’s U.S. offices and nearly all of the Department of Labor’s 1,900 One Stop Career Centers.
Creating and Sustaining a Dynamic Workforce: Four Practical Measures

To meet its future challenges, government will have to change perceptions of what the opportunity is for people entering public service and shift the job supply-and-demand equation. Here are four practical measures for creating a new public sector workforce dynamic:

1. **Innovate new career development opportunities.** Help high-potential employees acquire specialized skills and perspectives by rotating them through a variety of temporary positions in the private sector. As government assumes new responsibilities, it will need to develop new niche capabilities. Partnering with the private sector can help public agencies fill the skills gap.

2. **Don't forget that the skilled talent you want to attract have families.** Help attract highly trained and educated candidates by ensuring that their spouses, themselves often highly skilled with significant careers, are provided with attractive career opportunities in their own field. The “trailing spouse” issue can be a major impediment to filling job openings that require candidates to move. By partnering with a third-party employment services firm with extensive national and global resources, public agencies can offer trailing spouses compelling career choices.

3. **Leverage new technologies to attract a younger generation of workers.** Encourage younger candidates to choose public sector careers by offering a more dynamic work environment. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Second Life and other new social media have the potential not only to transform the workplace into an innovative, cutting edge environment (with enhanced collaboration and idea sharing), but also to change the way the government reaches and recruits a new generation.

4. **Support dynamic workforce structure through effective leadership development.** Select and develop leaders who can manage the virtual workplace. The technology-enabled virtual workplace offers employees an attractive range of flexible work options. It also presents leaders with new and unique leadership challenges. To ensure that the virtual workplace succeeds, leaders must be taught specialized skills and strategies to compensate for the inherent communication and interpersonal limitations of virtual teaming.

...
In either a partnership or mentoring role, Manpower has long experience working on public sector projects with small business. In fact, Manpower has developed an extensive network of small businesses that cross many, if not all, of the government’s socio-economic business categories whom we can call on as appropriate to help us deliver employment services to government. Our role, often, is to assist with strategic planning, ensure a consistency of service across multiple geographies and fill any gaps in capabilities a small business may present. We have also assisted in an advisory capacity helping the disadvantaged small businesses to develop and enhance the capabilities necessary to provide government with service excellence.

CONCLUSION: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE AND A NEW APPROACH

To date, public agencies have largely relied on their own internal resources to plan for and execute their workforce strategy. But the scope of the employment challenges now facing the public sector argues the case for considering workforce solutions with fresh thinking and a new perspective. Staffing, workforce development and strategic workforce planning are needs faced by the public and private sectors alike. An organization with deep employment expertise and a long record of success helping businesses manage their workforce is well positioned to help public agencies meet their own workforce management requirements. Indeed, with the prospect of business and government increasingly competing for scarce skilled talent from the same pool, enlisting the aid of a private sector provider may offer public agencies their best opportunity of winning their share of the talent pool. Leveraging decades of workforce management experience in the private sector, Manpower Public Sector can help the Federal agencies achieve their missions and deliver on the exciting promises of a new era in government. We can bring fresh perspectives and approaches to meeting the changes and challenges ahead.

ARMY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Manpower is a founding member of the Army Spouse Employment Partnership which helps military spouses with mobile lifestyles stay on track and maintain career momentum by offering flexible options to transition smoothly to new destinations. In 2008, Military Spouse magazine named Manpower one of the top 10 “Most Military Spouse Friendly Employers,” recognized for the greatest effort and having had the greatest success in hiring the spouses of military troops.
## The Manpower group of companies

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<th>Company</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| Manpower                 | Creates ideal employment matches across skill, industry and business need and provides workforce solutions to improve operational efficiency and performance.                                                | - Staff Augmentation
- Permanent Placement
- Client Site Management |
| Manpower Professional    | Provides full recruitment services and workforce solutions, specializing in the engineering, IT, financial, business professional and scientific fields.                                                          | - Staff Augmentation
- Permanent Placement
- Client Site Management
- Project Solutions
- Risk Assessment |
| Manpower Public Sector   | Provides the federal government and its key suppliers with end-to-end employment lifecycle solutions.                                                                                                       | - Complex Consulting Services
- Outsourced Offerings
- Career Transition
- High-level Talent and Clerical Staffing |
| Manpower Business Solutions | Offers innovative workforce solutions designed to improve hiring quality, raise productivity, increase efficiency, mitigate risk and reduce costs.                                                                 | - Recruitment Process Outsourcing
- Managed Service Programs
- Functional Outsourcing |
| Right Management         | Is the talent and career management expert within Manpower, designing and executing workforce solutions that align talent strategy with business strategy.                                                           | - Talent Assessment
- Leadership Development
- Organizational Effectiveness
- Employee Engagement
- Workforce Transition and Outplacement |
| Jefferson Wells          | Delivers professional services in the areas of risk advisory, tax, and finance and accounting.                                                                                                               | - Professional Resourcing
- Project Solutions
- Thought Leadership |
| Elan                     | Is based in Europe and serves as the world’s leading information technology recruitment company.                                                                                                         | - Staff Augmentation
- Outsourcing Solutions |

The collective offerings from our group of companies enable you to respond smartly and decisively to your talent challenges.