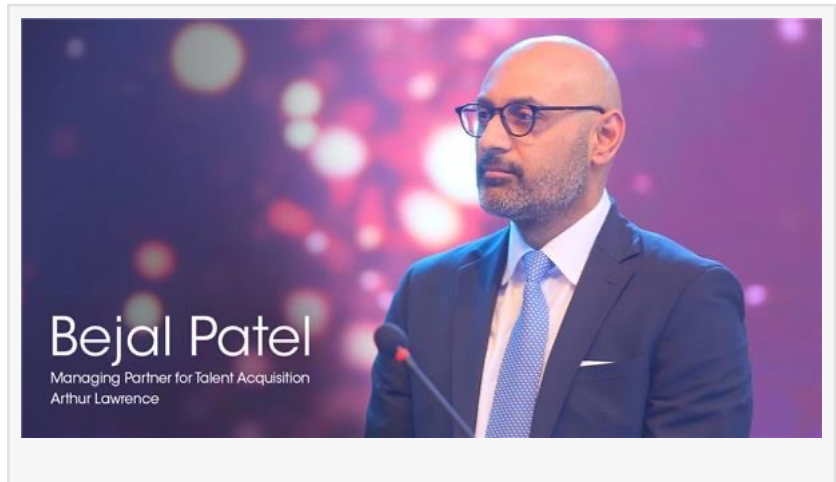


Arthur Lawrence's Bejal Patel talks about acquiring and retaining talent in today's ever-fluid tech industry

Bejal Patel, Arthur Lawrence's Managing Partner for Talent Acquisition, sheds light on Wiley Edge's Diversity in Tech: A Focus on Gen Z in 2023 report.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES,
September 29, 2023 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- The US tech sector is a major driver of the global economy but faces a significant challenge in terms of workforce diversity. Despite a widely recognized digital skills shortage, efforts to introduce more Gen Z professionals, especially women, and historically underrepresented groups, into the workforce are crucial.



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A recent study by [Wiley Edge](#) talks about diversity in tech, and the challenges faced by Gen Z candidates as the upcoming talent pool as well as employers across countries, industries, and cultures.

[Arthur Lawrence's](#) Managing Partner for Talent Acquisition, [Bejal Patel](#), shares his thoughts and takes on the research findings and how he approaches the nuances of the ever-fluid tech market based on his two decades of experience in tech talent consulting.

Q. Why are companies finding it challenging, now more than ever, to attract and retain talent?

Bejal Patel: Today's economy is fluid and fast-adjusting. On top of it, companies need a whole new set of strategies to prepare for and hire Generation Z that is entering today's workforce.

I believe one of the things organizations need to do today is take it back to the grassroots level. This means injecting themselves into the educational level and targeting the starting point of where this fresh talent is coming from. This would help them understand the anatomy of this new workforce better.

Several Fortune 500 companies are known for having scholarships and endowment funds as well as internship programs that help them attract the right talent. But retaining the right talent requires more than simply grooming and bringing the masses in - what it requires more, is being able to cultivate that talent according to the organizational needs, while ensuring that that talent feels intrinsically motivated and has a sense of self-worth. This doesn't just mean offering a strong remuneration package. The workforce of today and tomorrow is looking for a healthy work-life balance and a work culture that aligns with their goals and aspirations.

Q. The Wiley Edge survey reports that 64% of Gen Z said that securing their first role was harder than they had expected. Why do you believe that is, and what can be done to make it easier for people to get started with their tech careers?

Bejal: Having been in the industry for several years now, and having seen it evolve up front on the daily, I do believe what the survey reports about this figure. To get a foot in the door today is not the same as how it was 10 or 15 or even 5 years ago.

In the previous decade, you could send your resume to Human Resources and would have a high chance of landing a job. That's not the case today, where talent needs to approach a hiring organization in a non-linear fashion, and try to stand out on several more fronts than would suffice at the turn of the century. The onus of landing a job today, especially in the tech industry, is more on the candidates due to the simple fact that there is high competition.

I would take what's mentioned in the report with a pinch of salt about Gen Z finding it hard to land their first role: in my experience and opinion, it should not take true top talent 12-18 months to find a job or their first role. However, I would also highlight that there indeed is a gap between what students are taught at colleges and universities and what the organizations require in their candidates, a gap which is often huge, something which is also reported in this survey. One thing they can definitely do is, like I mentioned earlier, touch base and circle back to the grassroots level. The institutes, too, should reach out for collaboration with industry players to narrow down this gap.

Q. According to the report, 58% of businesses are considering dropping the degree requirements for certain roles over the next year to open doors to more candidates:

- a) What could be the benefits of this?
- b) How could this backfire, if at all?
- c) What can organizations do to mitigate any resentment from employees who pursued degrees before joining?

Bejal: I believe the biggest benefit is that you open up your candidate pool tremendously. A degree doesn't necessarily mean the degree holder is talented - some very talented individuals get denied a job just because they don't hold a degree. Secondly, it is heartening to see that businesses are realizing that not every skill and field requires a degree, and tech is one of those

fields. 70-80% of people hired in the tech field in recent years have held degrees in something other than IT, and in fact in some cases, something as diverse and disconnected as music, accounting, and finance!

I am a political sciences and economics major, I have no degree in tech to begin with, but today I'm running a staffing company.

I can also, however, shed light on the reason why companies value degrees - having a degree reflects positively on the candidate, portraying them as someone who has perseverance, grit, consistency, and the will and discipline to see things through.

The second greatest benefit is that this would bring a huge inflow of diverse workforce, especially women and those who have been historically under-represented. I do not believe that this can backfire in any major way.

Q. Why must tech companies, or any organization for that matter, ensure that they have a diverse workforce?

Bejal: Apart from what the report has mentioned, the one thing that comes to mind, is the ideas perspective: candidates from diverse backgrounds bring in a diverse way of thinking and doing things, and hiring a diverse workforce brings in the kind of people who tend to be more collaborative. Both of these are benefits that are extremely valuable to any organization that wants to stay in the running for long and perform amazingly well year on year.

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