How can federal agencies win the war for talent in the digital era?

Salesforce as a solution

August 2016
This white paper includes data and information that shall not be disclosed outside of the government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed—in whole or in part—for any purpose other than consideration of this white paper. The government may not rely upon its contents for accuracy or completeness nor to use it to formulate official policy or official decisions. The government may consider its contents “as-is” without any warranty of quality. In no event shall any part of this white paper be used in connection with the development of specifications or work statements with respect to any solicitation subject to full and open competition requirements. This restriction does not limit the government’s right to use information contained in these data if they are obtained from another source without restriction.
The war for talent

In today’s resource-constrained environment, public and private organizations alike rely on their human resources (HR) departments to attract and retain qualified, mission-critical talent. A traditional view of HR would dictate that a combination of aggressive recruitment tactics and competitive compensation packages should win the day—and the candidate. A more evolved view, however, tells a different story—one that could provide government agencies with a competitive edge in the “war for talent.”

Today employees are benefitting from a growing economy and facing more choices in their employment than ever. On average, 200,000 jobs have been added per month for the last two years, and over a third of U.S. employers plan to hire additional employees in 2016. As jobseekers gain more opportunities and greater transparency into the job market through digital recruitment platforms, it has become increasingly important for federal agencies to find new ways to attract, hire, and retain employees to remain competitive with the private sector. Exacerbating this challenge, earnings for new federal employees have decreased more than 10 percentage points relative to the private sector between 2009 and 2015. Without compensation as a tool to bring employees in the door and prevent compensation-based attrition, federal agencies should adapt their tactics, and they should do so quickly. According to the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), 25 percent of federal employee respondents expressed intent to retire during the next five years, with four percent intending to retire in the next year. This massive workforce shift not only necessitates more robust recruitment efforts to backfill the government’s aging workforce, but also the expansion of employee development programs to groom future leaders, ensure knowledge transfer, and promote employee satisfaction.

The importance of employee experience

Leading employers are focusing on the “employee experience” to differentiate themselves in the talent market. To remain competitive and achieve mission objectives, an understanding of employee experience, the tools necessary to enact it, and its importance to potential and existing employees, is essential for government agencies.

In principle, employee experience is about designing and delivering employee services—from sourcing and onboarding to performance management—in a manner that puts the employees’ needs first. Many organizations view these services in silos, as a set of discrete tasks without consideration of the entire employee lifecycle or the desires of the employee. Despite the simplicity of the concept, the importance of experience should not be underestimated. Companies like Uber that effectively harness the nexus of customer experience and the ease of digital have changed the landscape of the automotive transportation industry. Today’s consumer values tools that similarly emphasize ease and efficiency—and agencies should take note. Well-executed and employee experience-centric human resource programs can be powerful tools for attracting, empowering, and retaining employees.

Millennials, who are quickly becoming the largest generational percentage of the workforce, are chief among the users of platforms like Uber and other digital, experience-driven providers. With just seven percent of full-time federal workers under the age of 30 (compared with 25 percent in the private sector) it is unsurprising that federal agencies are amongst the lowest ranking employers of millennials. This is despite millennials’ documented preferences to work in mission-oriented environments and receive telework benefits that are common in government. Many agencies can do more to appeal to this employee demographic and others who place value in ease, efficiency, and empowerment in their employment.

The cost of disengagement

The number of taxpayer dollars of “lost employee productivity” is $65B for the Federal Government annually.
The current state federal employee journey
Today’s workforce is demanding more of its employers, placing a premium on creativity, flexibility, purpose, and engagement at work. But federal employee engagement generally remains stagnant, with overall satisfaction and engagement lagging the private sector by nearly 19 percent in 2015. To move the needle on employee engagement, federal agencies should examine the employee experience from end-to-end. From sourcing and recruitment to onboarding and retirement, HR, and particularly digitized HR, has the potential to positively impact and promote engagement amongst the federal employees it serves. That process begins by acknowledging the interconnectivity of employee’s HR needs and designing tools that put employees’ needs first.

Sourcing and recruitment
Relying heavily on traditional recruiting methods, some federal agencies are falling behind innovations in the private sector, with time to hire nearly double that of private organizations. Only 39.2 percent of federal survey respondents are confident their teams can attract the right talent. Lengthy time to hire can be attributed in large part to complexities in federal hiring that simply don’t exist in the private sector, and yet, the Navy is demonstrating that complex can still be creative. To meet the increasing demand for cryptology recruits, the Navy developed a social media-based alternative reality game to identify and engage candidates with an aptitude for cryptology, reaching more than 100,000 individuals and successfully meeting their recruitment needs. Targeted recruitment efforts, leveraging digital channels and open communication are critical for driving improved recruitment processes.

Onboarding
The nature of the traditional career is changing to include more transition and shorter tenure, with millennials leading the charge. Sixty-six percent of millennials see themselves transitioning employers by 2020, and only 16 percent expect to be with their current employer a year from now. Shorter employee tenure heightens the importance of enabling employees to contribute on Day 1 of employment, demanding participatory and effective onboarding processes. Some federal agencies are challenged with timely supply of basic resources for new employees (e.g. laptops, telephones), and struggle with clear, consistent communication throughout the onboarding process. More effective early-career experiences have also been linked to longer-term career success. Getting the first 90-days right is essential to both employee productivity and retention –both of which promote effective use of taxpayer dollars.

Performance management
In some cases, federal agencies implement performance management as a process and not a tool, sometimes leveraging annual evaluations as a check-the-box function, missing opportunities to provide meaningful developmental feedback and set clear performance expectations. Ninety percent of government employees say they receive constructive feedback through their annual performance evaluations. However, only 44 percent feel they are recognized for high quality work, 22.6 points less than the private sector. By effectively capturing and disseminating feedback through standardized performance management, agencies can increase transparency, make pathways to career advancement more tangible for employees, and promote a high performance culture.

Digital may serve as a tool to entice federal workers to stay. According to a recent survey conducted by Deloitte and MIT joint survey

Learning and development
Learning and development is an essential tool for enriching the employee experience, attracting top talent, and developing a long-term leadership pipeline. For today’s workforce, self-directed learning environments, mobile solutions, and tailored programming are in-demand, and federal agencies are beginning to capitalize on the trend. Between 2014 and 2015, federal Best Places to Work rankings for learning and development saw the greatest increase of ten workplace categories, at 1.8 points. The State Department has built an online platform to help employees match interests to projects outside of their regular jobs, helping Foreign Service officers use their skills in new ways and facilitating the opportunity for experiential development. More consistent innovation in training and development is needed to help close workforce skills gaps and enable effective succession planning.

Retirement and offboarding
With nearly one third of the Federal workforce reaching retirement eligibility by the end of 2016, combined with the increase in millennial “job hoppers,” federal agencies are facing a knowledge management and talent crisis. Without tools and support to effectively transfer knowledge, federal agencies may lose needed knowledge, experience, and leadership. To help keep pace across the board with the private sector and win the war for talent, federal leaders need tools to address challenges at each of these critical points. Designing a more personalized employee experience that provides tools and resources tailored to the needs of employees at different phases of their tenure can help agencies meet the expectations of a changing workforce and increase employee engagement.
Figure 1. The future state federal employee journey

The future state federal employee journey

Phases in the federal employee journey

**Sourcing and hiring**
- Tania sees a targeted federal job advertisement and seamlessly applies, tracks her application status, and communicates with her recruiter online.

**Onboarding**
- Following her offer, Tania receives her Onboarding Toolkit and pre-boarding paperwork through an online portal, preparing her for her EOD.

**Performance management**
- Tania receives push notifications to create a development plan, schedule performance reviews, track her trajectory through the agency, and review formal feedback.

**Training and development**
- Through her employee portal, Tania is able to access training and learning resources to help her achieve her development goals and advance through the organization.

**Retirement and offboarding**
- Tania receives push notifications for retirement eligibility. As retirement nears, she receives a toolkit covering effective knowledge transfer and benefits management.

Tania: Job seeker/employee

Manuel: Federal HR manager

1. Manuel and his team use a simple, streamlined portal to view and screen candidates, allowing them to easily identify the right candidate for each position.

2. Manuel sends an Onboarding Toolkit to Tania including security and IT forms. He can also send automatic push reminders to her as her EOD approaches.

3. Manuel uses performance check-in data to keep a pulse on Tania’s performance. He can also identify where and how to focus HR programming efforts.

4. Manuel uses agency competency models to push job-specific trainings and views agency-wide data on skills/bench strength to inform succession planning.

5. Manuel performs attrition reviews to assess workforce needs. He also pushes tools to Tania and other employees to provide a simple offboarding experience.

How federal employers can improve the employee experience

- **Greater communication and transparency.** Engaging employees and incentivizing them to act as active partners in key HR actions increases engagement and trust.

- **Centralized, streamlined resources.** Creating a one-stop electronic shop for employees and HR managers to access information and resources improves efficiency.

- **User-focused tools and solutions.** Creating toolkits, guidelines, and other tailored resources increases adoption and impact of solutions.

- **Data-driven decision making.** Built-in metrics and analytic tools allow HR teams to easily capture data to help inform priorities and measure effectiveness.
Case for change

Organizations that treat HR as a differentiating part of their brand—and treat their employees as they would the citizens/customers they serve—tend to have the most success in improving employee experience. In today’s world of digital mobility and social media, for many employees this means use of digital engagement when interacting with their potential or current employer. Agencies can enhance their talent brand by using social media and digital technologies that mirror other life experiences. And, those that do will become more competitive in the war for talent as they harness and incorporate digital mobility trends.

HR technology as an enabler
Consolidation of HR data that is easily accessible and transferrable can contribute to an agency’s brand by appealing to high-performing millennials, while also strengthening business processes. Using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms like Salesforce can help streamline processes across the talent lifecycle, as transferring data across systems helps to prevent employee and HR re-work. This consolidation of HR information also provides the foundation for additional digital and behavioral analytics for data-driven decision-making. For example, by collecting data at the beginning of the application process, HR is able to match potential employees to the best position in order to achieve employee retention through both engagement and mission success. Additionally, HR is better able to capture, analyze and predict employee behaviors with a digitally consolidated HR solution in an effort to improve retention rates and to reduce costs associated with turnover and onboarding.

New CRM solutions
CRM technology solutions provide HR teams with a platform that can positively impact employee experience. These solutions, in contrast to legacy systems, reduce back-end maintenance, allowing agencies to spend more time focused on effective solution development and deployment. Automated process flows and centralized documentation create an efficient experience for HR administrators and employees alike, with capabilities such as easy-to-access repositories of knowledge management articles and self-help tools. Due to the simplicity and user-friendly nature of these systems direct access by HR customers, such as hiring managers in different lines of business, is possible without the intervention of HR staff. This helps provide employees, managers, and candidates with a greater sense of autonomy while also relieving workload burdens from HR personnel, allowing them to focus more attention on serving the strategic business needs of their customers. Multiple channels of interaction, including desktop, mobile, and live chat often supported by these CRM platforms, offer users the type of effective digital experience to which they’ve become accustomed through other highly used digital services.

Salesforce and the employee experience
Deloitte began working with Salesforce, the world’s #1 CRM system, as a go-to-market partner in 2006, forming a Global Alliance in 2010. Salesforce offers many of the technical functionalities needed to drive a positive employee experience. The following descriptions of some of the common phases in the employee journey show how Salesforce can be used as the underlying platform to empower employees’ use of HR services.

The digital landscape in recruiting
Nearly 45% of job candidates search for positions on mobile devices.
Digitizing the Federal Employee Journey

**Sourcing and hiring**

**Design consideration**
- Candidate applies to job online
- Candidate tracks application status
- Candidate uses online chat to ask questions
- Manager views candidate applications through interactive interface

**Salesforce functionality**
- Interfaces with USA Staffing
- Dynamic status tracker populating of data fields
- Service Cloud Live Chat Software
- Employee and manager access

**Impact:**
Highly qualified candidates are engaged throughout the process and thus remain in the talent pipeline. Managers have streamlined access to well-organized applicant information, helping them to make well-informed hiring decisions. HR staff can spend less time moving the hiring process forward, helping to realize cost savings to the organization.

**Onboarding**

**Design consideration**
- Employee’s application information is automatically imported into core HR systems
- Employee receives and completes digital onboarding tasks before Day One
- System drives onboarding tasks from various lines of business, tracking all information in one place
- Manager can send welcome materials to candidate and track conversations in one place

**Salesforce functionality**
- Provides user-friendly presentation layer while seamlessly integrating disparate databases
- Auto-notifications and tracking of key information in connected databases
- Chatter communication platform and email templates auto-driven by workflows

**Impact:**
The new employee efficiently completes all onboarding tasks and is prepared with a laptop, badge, and key information on Day One—improving both business efficiency and the employee experience. Managers can confidently prepare for new employees via a central hub of auto-driven tasks that also offer options for personal touches, such as welcome messages. Employees’ loyalty to the organization is likely won in the first 90 days as a result of such a positive experience.
Performance management

Design consideration

- Employee receives auto-notifications to complete development tasks
- Development information, such as performance ratings, are housed in one location
- Employees and managers have 24-7 access to real-time performance metrics
- Managers can easily implement key HR programming efforts when needed

Salesforce functionality

- Email templates and tasks triggered by logic-driven workflows
- Provides user-friendly presentation layer while seamlessly integrating disparate databases
- Employee and manager access portal via customized Visualforce pages
- Centrally located options to initiate development tasks offered through online portals, connected to relevant lines of business

Impact:
Employees and managers efficiently complete performance management processes as a result of auto-reminders and a user-friendly process and interface. Transparency of information, both historical and trajectory, helps create a greater sense of autonomy for the employee. Performance management tasks involving external lines of businesses can occur more easily due to the use of a common platform, relieving frustrations that might have occurred if breakdowns between HR and its stakeholders had occurred.

Learning and development

Design consideration

- Employees can easily access and use a repository of relevant training information
- Employee training history is auto-recorded and mapped against a development plan
- Managers can track employee skills, training and qualifications for succession planning purposes
- Managers can measure training across many employees, including return-on-investment metrics

Salesforce functionality

- Customized Visualforce pages present course offerings and initiate online training sessions
- Provides user-friendly presentation layer while seamlessly integrating disparate databases
- Reports and dashboards presenting auto-calculated metrics against target metrics

Impact:
Employees use a one-stop location for all online training needs, which also automatically tracks learning history, increasing the likelihood of meeting compliance requirements for the agency and offering employees a suite of learning options for professional development. Managers can track learning histories, which positions them to have engaging conversations about career development with their employees.
Retirement and offboarding

Design consideration

- Employees receive auto-notifications of timely retirement information
- Employees access comprehensive online toolkits for retirement planning and make decisions
- Managers track projected attrition to inform decisions regarding staffing and hiring
- Employees easily transition badge, laptop, and other items back to organization upon exit

Salesforce functionality

- Email templates and tasks triggered by logic-driven workflows
- Customized Visualforce pages present retirement options and track choices
- Reports and dashboards aggregate projected retirement information for managers
- Auto-tasks across multiple lines of business are triggered and tracked by logic-driven workflows

Impact:

Employees feel confident that they have access to all of the information they need for retirement and are not distracted at work by an unknown future, helping to reduce the risk of decreased efficiencies in their last years with the organization. Managers are equipped to make the right hiring decisions at the right time based on forecasted attrition figures. Employees can have a positive exit experience via an efficient set of processes that guide them through their last day.

One method of quickly implementing a Salesforce solution is by creating an independent application (a.k.a. “app”) within the Salesforce environment.
Salesforce as a solution

Salesforce use considerations

Small-scale solutions
One method of quickly implementing a Salesforce solution is by creating an independent application (a.k.a. “app”) within the Salesforce environment. Salesforce offers declarative coding, in which users can perform “point and click” functionality. This functionality is used to design an application to facilitate business activities such as collecting data, reinforcing efficient business processes, and enabling 24–7 access to that data and those processes. Such apps usually rely heavily on “out of the box” functionality, lacking the need for costly custom coding. Given the absence of customization, however, these apps tend to operate independently of other applications and external data sources.

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently piloted a small-scale proof of concept that provided hiring managers functionality to manage steps in the hiring process that current HR systems did not cover. The app was designed to resolve issues with tracking hiring actions and keeping a common source of records across a new branch of the agency that was experiencing a hiring sprint of 100+ employees in less than one year. After eliciting user requirements, the timeline for app development and go-live was less than 2 months, a speed that is rare among information management systems today. This flexible application also accommodates several approaches to a single job function, such as a hiring manager’s many methods to evaluate candidates. Perhaps the most beneficial aspects, though, are the real-time dashboards showing current hiring statuses and the automatic audit trail for every action during candidate selection.

Large-scale, integrated solutions
While stand-alone solutions may provide organizations with helpful business functionality for independent business activities, some business solutions require an approach that aims to integrate disparate business processes and contact centric data sources. Salesforce offers the ability to do just that, serving as the core contact centric platform to integrate and interface with previously disparate systems. It not only provides the tailored customization to appropriately integrate those systems, but also provides the end-user with an intuitive interface. When done effectively, this type of Salesforce solution can be a powerful business enabler that not only provides key functionality to those internally who are performing business processes but also to the external customers of those business services: organization employees who consume HR services.

Deloitte recently developed ConnectMe using Salesforce to serve as an interface to integrate multiple preexisting HR Information Systems (HRIS) so that HR, hiring managers, and employees can access a “one-stop-shop” of all things personnel-related, ultimately redefining the employee experience as it relates to interacting with HR. ConnectMe provides key functionality including process management, in which multiple core systems are integrated, as well as employee inquiry case management. Its Employee Self-Service portal provides 24–7 real-time access to those HR elements that are most important to employees, ensuring that major phases in the employee lifecycle are appropriately accommodated. For example, employees who get married can access a personalized account page to update benefits information. If they have questions, they can use the chat feature to ask a question to an HR employee. Because this Tier 0 access allows employees to handle these type of transactional activities mostly independently, HR staff’s time is freed up so that they can focus more attention on serving the business needs of their customers. Successful implementation of ConnectMe in the private sector has accommodated a wide variety of HRISs, including Workday, PeopleSoft, SAP, and Success Factors. Deloitte even uses ConnectMe as a solution for its own HR operations.
Putting it all together

Salesforce offers several solutions to help Federal agencies overcome changing HR requirements and enhance the employee experience. Streamlining HR technology by leveraging a platform to integrate HR systems can alleviate administrative burden from both HR staff, employees, and applicants, allowing more time to focus on mission duties. It also offers a consolidated and centralized solution, which not only helps minimize the amount of administrative obligation for HR activities across the talent lifecycle, but also contributes to an effective employer brand.

In order to begin the process of implementing an improved HR technology system, agencies should consider the costs and benefits of various technology solutions to determine what path best suits its needs, inclusive of operations and maintenance costs for existing systems. Look at your organizations’ business case—do you have the assets you need to meet your strategic objectives? If attracting, hiring, and retaining the right employees is the key to mission success, Salesforce is a tool that can help you achieve those goals.
Contact information

For additional information regarding Deloitte’s capabilities implementing Salesforce as a federal HR technology solution, please contact:

Dave Witkowski
Managing Director
Deloitte Consulting LLP
Phone: +1 703 727 9063
Email: dwitkowski@deloitte.com

Scott Bassett
Principal
Deloitte Consulting LLP
Phone: +1 571 858 1155
Email: sbassett@deloitte.com

Bob Capuano
Managing Director
Deloitte Digital, Deloitte Consulting LLP
Phone: +1 410 262 4409
Email: rcapuano@deloitte.com

For information regarding GSA’s Salesforce Implementation, Integration, and Support Services Blanket Purchase Agreement, please contact:

Deborah Aubert
BPA Contracting Officer
Phone: +1 703 306 6634
Email: Deborah.Aubert@gsa.gov

Darwin Roberts
BPA Contracting Officer’s Representative
Phone: +1 703 306 7575
Email: Darwin.Roberts@gsa.gov
References

20. Salesforce: www.salesforce.com
22. Deloitte Consulting LLP, 2016