

## The War for Talent is Back -- Will Leaders Use The Evidence This Time?

Contributed by Bob Sutton  
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My latest post on The Working Life at Harvard Business Online just came-out. It is called The War for Talent is Back and starts out:

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"Last week I did a workshop with a group of about 20 CIOs from large companies. Our discussion focused on what they could do to build a more civilized workplace. In the course of our conversation, each of these executives emphasized--as I have read recently in The Economist, The New York Times, and BusinessWeek--that building a workplace that attracts and keeps great people is especially important now because the job market for skilled people is so hot. I also have heard similar messages at other companies I have visited recently, including eBay, Microsoft, Google, SuccessFactors, and Yahoo!, as well as from managers at companies including Procter & Gamble and Fidelity Investments." ?•

I develop five suggestions for winning the so-called war for talent in some detail (see the post for my arguments); note the first four clash with advice given by many so-called experts, but are supported by much peer-reviewed research.

1. Superstars are overrated.

2. Great systems are more important than great people.

3. Create smaller rather than larger pay differences between "??star" employees and everyone else.

4. The law of crappy people is probably a myth.

5. The no asshole rule helps.

The fifth suggestion won't surprise anyone who reads this blog; but I was surprised by how vehement these CIOs were about the importance of creating places that were free of contempt and anger because, when such asshole positioning strikes, it makes it so much harder to attract and keep good people.

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