



OUR FRESH THINKING

How to attract New Energy Talent to the Renewable Energy Sector



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The renewable energy sector is enjoying astronomic growth. In 2021, the International Energy Agency (IEA) revealed global renewable capacity hit an unprecedented 295 gigawatts.

This feat was recorded despite the extensive damage the COVID-19 pandemic meted to global supply chains.

With the transition to clean energy becoming more imperative, the renewable energy sector is adding jobs exponentially.

Specifically, the industry is projected to add 10.3 million jobs by 2030.

While this growth is melodious to the ears of green energy enthusiasts, it could be better music for employers in this renewable industry.

Competition for top talent in the renewable space is frightfully high.

Let us bring the discussion home, shall we?

As of 2020, the American solar energy industry employed an estimated 230,000 people. However, projections reveal that by 2035, the industry will need 900,000 more skilled employees.

Unfortunately, the supply of these critical labor skills is deficient compared to demand. Studies by the U.S. Interstate Renewable Energy Council revealed that 89% of solar companies struggled to hire qualified candidates in 2021.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHT

The transition to clean energy has been in progress for a long time and is creating jobs at an exponential rate. An expected 10.3 million jobs are expected by 2030, and competition is very high. Employers must separate themselves from the competition.

Employer branding is essential in all business sectors, perhaps more so in renewable energy. This is because the jobs are already outpacing the number of qualified candidates, making competition fierce. Branding is important to 75% of job seekers.

The speed of communication is vital when hiring top talents. The best candidates have many offers available and won't hang around too long after an interview. Statistics show that 25% of candidates lose interest if they haven't received an answer within a week of the interview.

Top talents want to grow and want to see the path employers have for them. Top talents are not impressed with the buzz of what's being offered now – they want to see a sustainable future.

Use referral programs to attract the best candidates, as referred ones will stay longer. But, you must get them involved quickly and then reward them with pay that is proportionate to your competition – the gas and oil industries.



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It goes without saying that recruiters in the renewable energy sectors are fighting tooth and nail for talent, with 85% of hiring managers in clean energy wailing loudly about talent shortage.

Why is it so difficult to attract top talent to renewable energy?

It is even more worrisome that top talents are skeptical of migrating to the renewable energy space.

First, given that the clean energy industry is yet in its early developmental stages, it doesn't provide the "security" seen in more traditional industries with an established track record.

With technology rapidly renovating the renewable energy space, there is volatility regarding what skills you need and the span for which they would remain relevant.

Considering 27% of Americans worry about job security, hiring managers in the renewable energy space have their work cut out trying to pull in coveted talents.

Another not-so-attractive feature of budding sectors like the renewable energy space is that people tend to "stroll" through their careers while their colleagues in other industries are advancing their careers at supersonic speeds.

Career growth prospects in the renewable industry space are not the most scintillating. Alarming statistics from the sixth annual Global Energy Talent Index (GETI) reveal that over 70% of renewable energy professionals are eyeing an exit from the industry within the next three years due to a comparative lack of career progression.

Does this mountain of challenges make it impossible to attract top talent to the renewable space?

Definitely not!

As always, there are systems that enable you to pull in top-tier high-performing talent and retain them sustainably when carefully executed seamlessly and consistently.

6.5 Solutions for hiring the best hands and heads for renewable employers

In this section, I will share my tested-and-proven 6.5-step fresh steps to renew and energize your talent magnet to attract world-class talent as a renewable energy employer.

1. Enhance your employer branding

When sourcing top talents to work for you, few things are as consequential as your branding. According to Glassdoor, 75% of active job seekers are unlikely to apply for a role if the employer's branding is not appealing.

Does that hit you too hard?

There is no doubt the light in which you present your renewable energy company will determine if you can pull in the cream of the crop.

Being top talents in a labor market ailing from the malnourishment of premium employees, A-grade candidates know they hold the aces.

Consequently, they are only likely to commit to renewable companies whose branding oozes excellence and growth.

Your employer branding must tell the right stories about your brand and the monumental impact you are making in your community.

Also, keenly monitor your reputation and ensure it only speaks of an enjoyable employee experience for people looking to come on board.

Watch out for reviews from previous employees on job boards. As many as 82% of candidates investigate your online reviews when evaluating your offer.

2. Prioritize a robust company culture and diversity

Particularly, with the enormous shortage of skilled labor in the renewable space, you would be further challenged if you prioritized inclusiveness and minority representation in your hiring.

Please don't let this challenge deter your noble pursuit.

The winners in the renewable space will be those who can innovate and execute in the fastest and most profitable way.

To achieve innovation, you must harness the power of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce. That diversity of thought, behavior, passion, and leadership will fuel and energize your innovation and pay great dividends. Embrace the challenge.

Moreover, inclusiveness is a hallmark of progressive companies, which is what top talents want when moving into the renewable energy space.

They want an ethnically agnostic work environment deliberately engineered to give everyone a level playing ground for growth regardless of one's cultural leaning.

Little wonder that 76% of American employees keenly investigate the diversity of your workforce when evaluating your job offer.

Inclusive work environments are most achievable in companies with strong and consistent work cultures. To attract and retain top talents—especially for renewable startups—you must build a corporate identity that challenges every employee to aspire for their best versions while respecting their colleagues.



According to Glassdoor, 75% of active job seekers are unlikely to apply for a role if the employers branding sucks.

3. Eliminate unhelpful hiring bureaucracies

Let us have a role-play. Imagine you were fortunate enough to get a coffee hangout with Jeff Bezos. Would you keep him waiting?

Not if you check Forbes for his famous net worth and Amazon for his infamous impatience.

Top talents deserve proportionate reverence. The last thing you need is a hiring process laden with bureaucracies and frivolous protocols.

Passing candidates through excessively long hiring stages no longer helps you evaluate their commitment levels. Top talents only hang around for a short time, especially with hordes of employers chasing them.

Statistics show that an estimated 25% of candidates lose interest in the company if they get no answer within a week after the interview. Keep your shortlists as concise as possible and engage them as quickly as possible.

Leverage technologies like artificial intelligence tools to automate the repetitive and less cognitive part of the hiring process.

4. Be clear with the growth they stand to enjoy with you

I established earlier the relative lack of growth employees experience in the clean energy space. Top-grade talents want to avoid professional hibernation when they work with you.

Would you be shocked if I told you 34% of employees left their previous positions



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because of a lack of career development opportunities?

Top talents want to grow, and you must concretely show them the growth path you have laid out for them.

Only mediocre candidates will be totally inundated with what you offer them NOW. The smarter talents are looking out for their futures and if their ambitions align with your company's projection for them.

Vividly paint the vision you have for your ideal candidates and their place in it – not missing out on the details of the future the company and the candidate will grow into in your renewable company.

There must be opportunities (both internal and external) in the company for these hires to grow.

Learning and development (L&D) plans must be clearly laid out for hires to blossom technically and financially.

5. Leverage employee referral programs

Employee referral programs are super-effective, especially when hiring from a constricted talent pool, as in renewable energy.

A-grade players tend to have a fraternity built resolutely on trust, respect, and comradeship.

Therefore top talents are more inclined to trust you if a person whose excellence they share and respect recommends you to them. Have your best-performing employees bring in their genius kindred.

Research has even proven that referred hires tend to stay longer. A Zippia study revealed that referred

hires stay 70% longer than other employees.

And even more excitingly, pulling such top talents via employee referral programs is even cheaper. Zippia would state that the cost-per-hire of employee referrals is \$1,000 less when measured against other traditional employee sourcing platforms.

Your HR team must devise a performance-based incentive package that stimulates your best talents to bring in their clan of top performers.

This is an intelligent way to outsource candidate sourcing to people who have already demonstrated a practical understanding of excellence.

6. Build a strong onboarding system

When you manage to pull in premium talent, you want to avoid dilly-dallying with their integration. Essentially, you want your employees to hit the ground running.

Your onboarding infrastructure gives your employees a mental peep into what awaits them during their time with you.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that a Brandon Hall Group research found that companies with solid onboarding systems retain their talents 82% more and increase productivity by over 70%.

A consistent and top-class onboarding system is even more critical in the renewable energy industry, where personnel would come in with a significant skill gap.

Building a consistent process for acclimatization to the intricacies of your company's unique workflow is essential.

Get them reasonably grounded in your work policies and facilities.

Also, get them rapidly integrated into their respective hierarchies while providing actionable leadership (and mentorship) for new hires.



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6.5. Lastly, reward hires proportionately

Let us face the hard truth: a beautiful company vision alone will not always get you the best talents in the renewable energy space.

Remember that you are likely competing against moneybags in oil and gas for talent. Therefore, you must offer a commensurate remuneration package to get the best talent on board.

Luckily, with governments worldwide committing more energetically to clean energy transition, renewable energy startups are more advantaged in sourcing finance and enjoying taxation leeways.

You should maximize this to offer your hires industry-standard salaries that reflect their expertise.



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Final thoughts

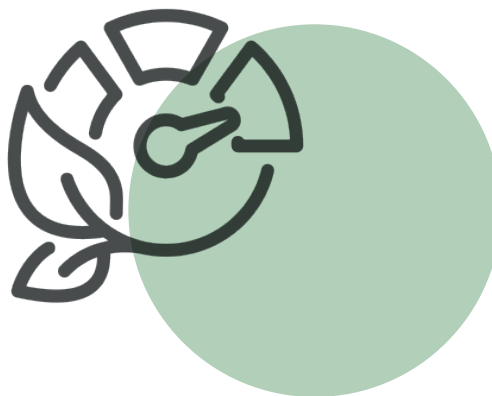
In the past, we have discussed how fierce competition is for top talents across most job sectors. There just aren't enough candidates for the opportunities available in corporations. When you consider the renewable energy sector, it is fiercer. As I have shown, the demand for employees will grow exponentially and outgrow the quantity of quality employee candidates available.

The need for employers to attract, hire, and retain top talents for the renewable energy sector is possibly more important than for any other field, as energy and climate continue to be buzzwords and topics of conversation. Although this sector is in its developmental stages, you must have the talent to meet the growing need the renewable energy sector is already creating. Perhaps more importantly, you must know how to retain the talent once you have it.

The fresh steps I've provided will work, but only if leaders and companies are willing to put

forth the effort. This effort requires personal, professional, and physical action to attract and retain the desired talent level. Where necessary, are you willing to change your company's culture and branding, and are you willing to change the way you manage and lead your team?

You must offer the best environment and opportunities to attract the best talent. In doing so, you realize you already have better talent onboard than you thought.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Michael D. Brown is a Global management expert, and award-winning author of *Fresh Passion: Get a Brand or Die a Generic*, *Fresh Customer Service®: Treat the Employee as #1 and the Customer as #2 and You Will Get Customers for Life*, and *Fresh Passion Leadership: Become a Distinct, Branded Leader or Extinct Generic*.

Michael is a sought-after speaker and thought leader on the topics of *Talent & Human Capital Strategies*, *Competitive Customer Experience*, *Laser Focus Personal Branding*, and *Profitable & Sustainable Business Growth*.

Leveraging his track record of delivering competitive commercial results, developing and executing competitive talent & human capital strategies, Michael continues to partner with organizations eager to leverage top-tier talent for transformative growth and results. Together, these partnerships lead to the Unlocking and Unleashing of World-Class Talent, enabling the achievement of ultimate potential for the individual and organization.



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