

**THE NEW
TALENT
PLAYBOOK**
Podcast

Action Kit

**The Talent Game
Has Changed: Who's
Winning and Why**

Featuring Rob Levin

Episode 10 - Season 5

By Rob Levin, Creator of [Thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com](https://thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com)

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You just listened to Rob Levin reveal why 15-25% of business owners are winning the talent war while 80-85% are stuck hoping the labor market improves.

Rob explains that while most business owners can't find qualified candidates, face ghosting, and struggle with disengaged teams, a small fraction are thriving in the exact same labor market. The difference isn't luck or budget, **it's treating talent as a strategic priority.**

1. Culture by Design, Not by Default

Rob emphasizes that while paying people was enough 35 years ago, those days are over. People want to be part of something special. The winners have stopped letting culture happen by accident and started building it intentionally through lived core values.

Your Culture Reality Check:

Which statement best describes your current culture approach?

- We don't really focus on culture—we pay people and expect performance.
- We have core values posted, but they're not really lived daily.
- We're intentional about culture, but it needs improvement.
- We've designed our culture and actively maintain it through hiring, firing, recognition, and promotion decisions.

Core Values Action Plan:

List your current core values (or the values you want to build). For each value, think: Are we hiring, firing, recognizing, and promoting according to this value?

Value	Hiring, firing, recognizing, and promoting
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Firing <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizing <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Firing <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizing <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Firing <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizing <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Firing <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizing <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting

2. Compete for Talent Like You Compete for Customers

Rob reveals that about 80% of candidates check you out online before applying, and 55% won't apply to companies with poor ratings.

Your Employer Brand Audit:

Check your Glassdoor score (Google: Glassdoor + your company name)

Our Glassdoor Score: _____ / 5.0

Which scenario applies to you?

- The reviews are accurate: we need to fix our culture (go back to exercise 1).
- The reviews are from disgruntled former employees: we need to ask our current team to share their honest experience.

Candidate Experience Scorecard:

Rate your hiring process from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent):

Element	Score (1-5)
Job descriptions sell the role and company (not just list requirements)	
The application process is simple and fast	
Interview process moves quickly (same day or next day for multiple interviews)	
Communication is prompt and professional	
We invest in internal mobility—promoting from within	

Reflect: What's your lowest score? That's your biggest opportunity to start competing better for talent.

3. Expand Your Talent Pool Beyond Traditional Boundaries

While most business owners fish in a shrinking pond, winners are widening their talent pool. Rob shows that remote teams are actually more productive (not less), and going remote gives you access to people you couldn't reach locally.

Talent Pool Expansion Check:

Which of these talent pool options are you currently using?

- Local only (traditional office-based hiring)
- Remote within the United States
- Offshore/nearshore talent (Latin America, Asia, etc.)
- Upskilling current employees instead of only hiring externally

Identify Your Next Hire or Capability Need:

What role or capability do you need to fill right now?

Now brainstorm: Could this role be filled by:

- A remote worker in the U.S.?
- An offshore/nearshore team member?
- Upskilling someone you already have on staff?

Challenge: If you checked only 'Local only' above, commit to exploring ONE remote or offshore option this month. Widening your talent pool is no longer optional—it's strategic.

4. Stop Waiting, Start Winning

Rob makes it clear: 80-85% of business owners are hoping the labor market improves. It won't. The winners (the 15-25% who are thriving) aren't waiting. They're treating talent as a strategic priority, not an afterthought. This isn't about luck or big budgets. It's about being deliberate with culture, competing intentionally for talent, and expanding your options.

The talent game has changed. The question is: are you going to keep playing the old game, or are you ready to win the new one?

Your 30-Day Talent Strategy Action Plan:

Based on this playbook, commit to ONE action in each area over the next 30 days:

Strategic Area	Your Committed Action (by when?)
Culture: (e.g., Define or refine core values with your top performers)	
Employer Brand: (e.g., Check Glassdoor, improve job descriptions)	
Talent Pool Expansion: (e.g., Post one role as remote, explore offshore options)	

"While 80 to 85% are hoping that the labor market gets better, which it won't, the winners are doing what they can... This is not about luck, or it's not even about budget, it's about treating talent like a strategic priority, not an afterthought."

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