

**THE NEW
TALENT
PLAYBOOK**
Podcast

Action Kit

**Why Talent is the
New Growth Lever**

Featuring Rob Levin

Episode 1 - Season 5

By Rob Levin, Creator of [Thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com](https://thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com)
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You just listened to Rob Levin, founder of Work Better Now and author of the New Talent Playbook, explain why the talent challenge your business faces isn't a temporary crisis, it's a permanent shift.

The old playbook of posting jobs and waiting for great candidates is dead. 85% of small and mid-sized businesses struggling with talent are still playing by 2006 rules. But the 15% who are crushing it? They understand that talent is their single biggest growth lever, and they treat it with the same strategic focus they give revenue. This workbook will help you join that top 15% by applying Rob's core principles today.

1. Audit Your Talent Strategy Mindset

Rob's most critical insight: *talent deserves the same strategic attention you give revenue.* Every year, you create a sales plan and marketing plan, but do you have a talent plan? The shift from seeing hiring as a reactive task to treating it as a proactive growth strategy is what separates thriving businesses from struggling ones.

The Strategic Priority Check:

- I have a written annual revenue/sales plan.
- I have a written annual marketing plan.
- I have a written annual talent/hiring plan.
- I spend dedicated time each quarter reviewing talent needs.
- I track talent metrics (time-to-hire, retention rate, quality of hire) like I track revenue.
- When planning a new initiative, my first question is 'Do we have the talent to execute this?'

How many boxes did you check? If fewer than 4, your talent strategy needs immediate attention.

What is one action you can take this month to make talent a strategic priority?

2. Build Your Culture Foundation: The Core Values Reality Check

Rob emphasizes that culture is the foundation for everything related to talent—hiring, retention, performance. And core values are your starting point. Without clear, compelling core values, everything downstream (hiring for fit, managing performance, recognizing great work) is guesswork. It's never too late to define or evolve them.

Core Values Audit:

Your Core Value	How It Shows Up in Daily Behavior	Do You Hire/Fire Based on This?
Example: Work with an ownership mentality	Team members propose solutions, not just problems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If you left blanks or answered 'No' in column 3, your core values need a revival. Which value needs to move from the wall into real practice?

3. Win the Retention Game: Recognition, Mobility & Upskilling

Companies that retain top talent don't rely on compensation alone. Rob highlights three critical retention drivers: regular recognition, internal mobility (the opportunity to grow inside your company), and upskilling (training your people for the future). When you offer upskilling, you get a 60% increase in retention—and you build new capabilities without adding headcount.

Your Retention Strategy Scorecard:

Rate your company on each retention driver (1 = We don't do this, 5 = We excel at this):

Retention Driver	Score (1-5)
Recognition: We have a consistent system for recognizing great work (not just annual bonuses).	
Internal Mobility: We have clear paths for employees to grow and get promoted internally.	
Upskilling: We invest in training/development so our team can learn new skills (AI, new tech, etc.).	

What's your lowest score? That's your biggest retention risk. What is one concrete step you can take this quarter to improve it by one point?

4. Prepare for the AI-Driven Future (It Makes Talent More Important, Not Less)

AI isn't replacing your need for great talent—it's amplifying it. Rob explains that as businesses become AI-first, you'll need people who can think critically, manage AI tools, apply them strategically, and use judgment to know when AI is right or wrong. The businesses that invest in upskilling their teams for AI today will dominate tomorrow.

Your AI Readiness & Talent Plan:

Is your team currently using AI tools in their daily work?

Yes No Some are

Have you provided any AI training or upskilling opportunities?

Yes No Planned

Do you have 'digital natives' on your team who can lead AI adoption?

Yes No Not sure

AI Upskilling Action: Identify one team member who is tech-savvy or eager to learn. Commit to sending them to one AI training course or conference in the next 90 days. Who will it be, and what will they learn?

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