# Talent Management: Easier Hires, Better Skills, More Compliance

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As *Manufacturing.net* has mentioned many times before, there is an epidemic of sorts within the high-tech manufacturing community, in that there are thousands of available jobs, but few candidates to fill them. And while manufacturers have taken off in dozens of directions on the best methods to fill those roles — some have stepped up apprenticeship programs or collaboration with local schools, while others have poached from competitors — Irma Long, Director of Global Talent Acquisition at ACCO Brands has one simpler solution: better talent management.

Long knows as well as anyone the difficulty of not only finding the skilled employees, but also tracking them as required by all government contractors. Leading up the global hiring efforts of ACCO Brands, which is the parent company to roughly two dozen other companies, including manufacturers of school and office supplies, Long has seen the coming and going of just about every trend in finding the right people for the work at hand.

The truth is that a large portion of this skilled labor shortage cannot be solved by any given manufacturer — in many cases, the people simply aren’t trained well enough, or aren’t willing to take on new skills. With that in mind, making the best of this situation is a matter of using whatever tools necessary to take advantage of the small portion that is under a manufacturer’s control.

Long says that comes in a good talent management system that not only actively seeks out qualified candidates, but also does much of the legwork involved in weeding out those not well-suited for the job. In addition, the system should make is incredibly easy to prove the path of hiring or turning down any candidate, as no one wants to be found non-compliant, or be subject to a discrimination lawsuit. When all of those components come together, Long says, a manufacturer is able to take

control of the situation as best they can.

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