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Factors that Influence Recruitment and Retention

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With a Focus on Sherwin-Williams

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Abstract

The project is to test and research the main factors that influence recruitment and retention with a focus on the company Sherwin-Williams. Specifically, this paper explores peer-reviewed articles that report on recruitment and retention findings from experts and everyday practitioners within human resources management and the retail industry. Major influences on turnover highlighted in this report include methods of pursuing talent, brand awareness and its effects on recruiting millennials and generation Z, compensation and benefits and their ability to attract and retain talent, and the integral component of job satisfaction and its role in employee and management retention. In addition, information regarding Sherwin-Williams has also been researched, including a deeper look into the firm's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to provide useful information on how the position of the firm also influences its ability to acquire and retain talent.

Sherwin-Williams Background

Sherwin-Williams is more than just a paint brand. Sherwin-Williams is a corporation that strives to serve all their customers from DIYers to contractors to manufacturers. As described in the employment promotional video on their website, Sherwin-Williams is headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, and further broken into four operating groups. The Americas Group covers 4,000 locations that serve customers with paints, stains, and supplies. The Consumers Brand Group consists of over 60 brands, giving it one of the industry's strongest portfolios in branded and private labeled products. The Performance Coatings Group develops and manufactures, and sells coatings and finishes for automobile, industrial, packaging, protective, and marine uses. The Global Supply Chain Group encompasses research and development, manufacturing, distribution, and logistics.

Sherwin-Williams focuses on the culture of the company, with their Company Values of Integrity, Service, Growth, Performance, People, Quality, and Innovation highlighted on their website. They outline these benefits offered to fit into the four categories of Wealth Building, Wealth Protection, Health Management, and Personal Well-Being. Included in their benefits overview are a long list and wide variety of benefits for employees of the company. The benefits are very detailed and offer assistance in various areas, not just for the employees but for their spouses and dependents as well.

Even with the extensive list of benefits Sherin offers, all employees are not eligible for all the benefits. While full-time employees are eligible for all 28 benefits, the other three types of employees are not eligible for nearly as many - regular part-time employees, regular part-time

ACA 30 Hours + Rule employees, and non-regular part-time (temp, co-op, intern) employees are each eligible for just 9, 14, and 8 of the benefits, respectively.

Starting with non-regular part-time (temp, co-op, intern) employees, these employees are eligible for the least amount of benefits. They are eligible for the following: Salaried Employees' Revised Pension Investment Plan, Employee Stock Purchase and Savings Plan, Alere Tobacco Cessation, Weight Watchers, Flu Shots, 529 College Savings, Credit Union, and WageWorks Commuter Benefits; regular part-time employees are eligible for these benefits with one additional benefit of ASK Work/Life Solutions; regular part-time ACA 30 Hours + Rule employees are eligible for the additional five benefits of S-W Health Savings Account, S-W Medical & HMO Plans, S-W Dental, and DMO Plans, S-W Vision Plans, and Flexible Spending Accounts; finally, full-time employees are eligible for the additional 14 benefits of Adoption Assistance, International Business Travel Medical Plan, Optional Employee Life Insurance, Optional Dependent Child(ren)/Domestic Partner Child(ren) Life Insurance, Optional Spouse/Domestic Partner Spouse Life Insurance, Basic Employee Life & AD&D, Voluntary AD&D, Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability, Supplemental Long Term Disability, Group Critical Illness Insurance, Group Accident Insurance, Hospital Indemnity, and Business Travel Benefits.

In addition to the variation of benefits offered to employees, Sherwin-Williams promotes its careers in a welcoming manner, addressing their “family of loyal employees,” and that their employees are their “most important asset.” On the career page of the Sherwin-Williams website, there is a video included to highlight the culture and community that the Sherwin-Williams workplace provides for its employees. This includes various divisions of work around the world and acknowledges the wide range of customers the company serves. Through these excerpts from Sherwin, it is clear that the company puts great effort into appealing to potential job candidates in a manner that will effectively recruit the best talen (Sherwin Williams, 2019).

Methods of Pursuing Talent

Recent developments in both the field of human resources as a whole and the retail industry specifically have provided insight into how to connect with job candidates strategically and minimize the effective rate of turnover within an organization. One such development is portrayed through the noted benefits of "recruitment marketing", or "selling the company as the job" (Hipps, 2017). Recruitment marketing works in tandem with the automation of the recruitment process. By using recruitment technology such as artificial intelligence to sort through online applications and mitigate recruiters' administrative responsibilities, Hipps (2017) posits that recruiters are able to interact more personally with prospective employees. Thus, the ability to effectively promote the culture and mission of the workplace is increased.

While the benefits inherent in strategic talent acquisition, namely talent analytics, have been well-documented, the number of employers who continue to shy away from investing more per hire is also well-documented. Gretczko and Cleary (2016) state that employers who invested twice as much per new hire in accordance with adopting strategic talent pursuit techniques saw decreases in turnover rates of 40 percent and were able to fill vacancies 20 percent faster. Likewise, Collins and Bennett (2015) report that companies that invest in people analytics have proven to excel in terms of quality of hire and retention. These companies are also generally higher ranked in their respective industries. However, Gale (2018) notes that while many employers have acknowledged the value of social networking in recruiting, only 28 percent rated their use of recruitment technology as “excellent.” Furthermore, only 16 percent of candidates who were pursuing jobs had experienced video interviewing in their search process. Colleges and universities account for 44.2 percent of the top methods of job recruitment with a focus on retention, while online job sites make up just 20.9 percent (Chief Investment Officer, 2017).

The disconnect between the number of companies acknowledging the benefits of technological advancements in recruiting and those investing more in strategic talent acquisition methods may stem from a number of sources. As Bischke (2018) notes, there is an aspect of sensationalization that accompanies the automation of recruiting processes. Many recruiters may be hesitant to pursue automation technology for recruiting in fear of eventually losing their jobs.

However, while some employers do not seem to be quite ready to truly embrace automation technology, Van Esch and Mente (2018) state that the number of recruiters using social media and specifically video-enabled social media such as Snapchat to attract potential job candidates is steadily increasing. Van Esch and Mente also note that the use of video-enabled social networking has been proven to pose benefits to employers as it reduces both the amount of time and costs invested in the recruiting process. Additionally, Sivertzen, Nilsen, and Olafsen (2013) find a positive correlation between social media use and employer brand and, subsequently, employer brand and candidate intention to submit job applications. The most significant risks of using social networking as an employee recruitment tool, as noted by both Van Esch and Mente (2018) and Davison, Maraist, and Bing (2011), are privacy concerns, attempts by an organization to be “trendy” that are generally seen negatively by applicants, generational differences in the ages of applicants who are avid users of social media, and the validity of the screening methods available from review of candidate profiles.

One unique use of social networking in recruitment can be seen in Zappos' Insider program. Zappos effectively managed to reduce its number of job candidates lost from 80 percent to 43 percent through the creation of an online platform for job seekers to connect with current Zappos employees (Cairns, 2015). While there is no "linking" between members like on other social media platforms, there is the opportunity for potential job seekers to attend Zappos-specific career events and receive top consideration when applying for a job within the company. In this way, it is clear that the fostering of a close-knit community and open doorway for communication during the recruiting process through the use of technology can have positive effects for both employers and potential employees. This fact also ties in with Bischke's (2018) observation that the use of technology allows for more time for recruiters to be creative in their engagements with potential employees.

With a turnover rate of 65 percent for hourly store employees (Wells, 2018), it is evident that the retail industry specifically needs special attention when addressing the issue of talent acquisition. The National Retail Federation attempts to do just that through its nonprofit subsidiary, the NRF Foundation. The NRF Foundation has made efforts to tackle the need for talented team members in the retail industry by facilitating training for individuals regardless of their backgrounds, and especially those who may have barriers to entry into the workforce (WWD Staff, 2018). This initiative has been aptly named the RISE (Retail Industry Skills & Education) Up program. RISE Up teaches the fundamentals of the retail industry and specialized skill sets, including customer service and sales, to its participants. The NRF Foundation reports that more than 45,000 people have completed its training programs since its launch in January 2017 (NRF Foundation, 2018).

Included in the NRF Foundation's efforts is a program for college students at its yearly conference, Retail's Big Show. Each year, the NRF Foundation hosts about 800 students at its conference in New York as a way of enticing younger generations, who may otherwise avoid working in retail, to pursue a career in the industry. Ellen Davis, the foundation's Executive Director, explains that while in New York, students are exposed to c-level executives in the industry who serve as mentors (WWD Staff, 2018). Students who attend Retail's Big Show gain solid career inspiration and advice while learning the benefits and inner workings of the retail industry. Furthermore, the conference provides time for retailers such as The Home Depot, Walmart, and Amazon, to recruit talent from a pool of eager to learn students who have already been exposed to the advantages of pursuing a career in retail.

Recruiting and Retaining the Next Generations

As the work of the NRF Foundation and popularity of recruiting through social media make clear, it is important for employers to focus on job applicants of the most recent generations. Generation Y, more commonly known as millennials, is an age group comprised of those born between 1980 and 1995. This generation was raised in a world of technology and feels comfortable in a technologically advanced environment. An important characteristic to note about Generation Y is that much of their social interaction is completed virtually: their circle of friends is virtual, they primarily nurture their relationships on social sites, and they enjoy working virtually. Additionally, they have shallow knowledge but know that they can look to the internet for information. Millennials are known for their ability to multitask and divide their attention amongst multiple projects. They are not motivated by a fixed long term workplace, rather they are motivated by pushing for success (Andrea, Gabriella, & Timea, 2016).

The millennial workforce has a series of requirements when looking into a firm and deciding if that firm is worth their attention and application. They have a vastly different work ethic from the baby boomer generation. Understanding how they react to a work environment is important in order for companies to hire and retain their talent. In addition, millennials react differently to superiors and require a different form of management in order to thrive in a firm (Andrea, Gabriella, & Timea, 2016). Work/life balance, pay and benefits, advancement opportunities, meaningful work, and a nurturing environment are top priorities for millennials when assessing companies for which they would like to work (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

Millennials grew up watching their boomer parents work hard and long hours, only to fall at the hands of corporate downsizing, layoffs, and high divorce rates. This has motivated millennials to have a different lifestyle and priorities. They focus on "making a life" rather than "making a living" (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Higher levels of education allow for millennials to have the confidence and ability to negotiate terms that allow them to achieve this work/life balance at every stage of their careers if they choose to do so. Keeping in mind that money is not the sole motivation for this age group is an important aspect to remember when formulating job requirements, hours, and salary.

Good pay and benefits are always one of the motivators people look to when deciding whether or not to apply for or accept, a position. Unsurprisingly, pay was found to be one of the most important motivational factors, for the millennial demographic. Those with a high need for achievement are interested in money rewards primarily due to the feedback it gives them as to how well they are doing, not the money itself. Therefore, money is not essentially the incentive for effort in millennials, but more the recognition and feedback that comes with money and profit. Millennials expect good pay and benefits for their work, which may reflect the sense of entitlement that is associated with their age group. For example, a recent study that was conducted of college students found that millennials demonstrated a sense of entitlement to certain grades regardless of whether they had the academic capability of achieving those grades (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

Patience is an attribute with which the millennial workforce is not highly associated, as seen in how rapid advancement within their careers is something for which they strive. The belief that they should be moving up within their company after a few months to a year is common amongst millennials, which is a reason why retention is difficult if they have not been offered advancement (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Millennials have high expectations in regards to promotions and raise as well, which can be difficult in companies that have programs that require a few years in a position before advancement. When millennials do not feel their talents are being rewarded, they will move on to an employer who will recognize those talents and offers greater opportunities.

Companies and employers these days are challenged with the task of making work more meaningful than just about money. Millennials are one of those groups looking for more than just a paycheck. They want growth, opportunity, and connections. During interviews, millennials have been found to ask firms what the firm can do to help them lead a more purposeful and meaningful life (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Approximately 88 percent of the millennials studied said they would seek employers whose values were matched or related to their own. In today's job market, a firm's corporate social responsibility reputation is related to its ability to attract younger job applicants. Millennials also put a high value on whether or not their potential or current employer offers professional growth opportunities and the ability to take on high-impact assignments. Millennials have a low tolerance for less-than-challenging work and are even known to perform poorly in assignments that are high-volume and non-stimulating (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Retention of millennials depends on multiple factors, but making sure the work they're doing is challenging, rewarding, and fulfilling is a good start to retaining that talent.

The impact millenial views have on the workforce has caused benefit programs to change. Millennials take a conservative approach towards benefits they demand, wanting comprehensive benefits that will support, guide, and protect them from risk. Fifty-six percent of millennials agree that benefits were an important reason they decided to work for their employe; 25 percent higher than the boomer generation. Services like financial planning, tax preparation assistance, and hands-on relocation assistance are some of the top services wanted by over 60 percent of millennials (Howe, 2014). Benefits are a huge attraction factor, and play a big role in retention as well.

Generation Z is the generation entering the workforce out of college now, born after 1996. Like their predecessors Generation Y, they are very dependent on technology, however, unlike Gen Y, Gen Z feels uncomfortable without technology. Gen Z has issues socializing outside of the virtual world, and are very dependent on their virtual community. With a series of nicknames, such as; "Facebook generation", "digital natives", or "iGeneration", it is understandable why this generation is so heavily associated with an online presence (Andrea, Gabriella, & Timea, 2016). Gen Zers are more impatient and agile than their predecessors and look for new challenges and impulses continuously. They look to the internet to help solve their problems, and actively look for solutions throughout their daily lives. When entering the workforce, they find socialization hard and do not adapt easily to work, being with older generations and responsibility. This generation dislikes commitment and formalities, they strive for a work-life balance and workplace stability, and is not afraid of change (Andrea, Gabriella, & Timea, 2016). With all this information in mind, there are some similarities between millennials and Generation Z, however, the management style and approach towards these age groups would need to be altered in order to create the most productive work environment.

How do you address these desires in an effective way to hire and retain the best talent? Effective retention requires an ongoing diagnosis of the problem and causes that are leading to the turnover. Retention management has become a major advantage when facing competition. Those who are better at retention management continually retain the best employees in the rapidly growing business world of today. There are a number of reasons for employee turnover, a few being the economy, job satisfaction, and pay and working conditions. Additionally, it is important to remember the two huge factors that define the millennial workforce. They place an increasing priority on work-life balance, and individual fulfillment is more important than success within the organization (Davis, 2016). Creating a work environment that allows for individual growth and fulfillment as well as a decent balance between work and personal life is a factor in successful retention.

What can companies implement to prevent turnover? A few retention strategies are reward and recognition programs, training and development opportunities, mentoring programs, career planning, flexible work time, employee suggestion plans, stock investment opportunities, annual performance appraisals, financial support, and on-site daycare facilities.

Given the information about millennials and the brief look into the growing generation entering our workforces, company culture and benefit programs are extremely influential. Effective retention programs are people-focused and embrace a multitude of policies and practices to create a comfortable work environment for all employees (Balbuena Aguenza & Som, 2018). The strategies a company chooses should be aligned with its mission, vision, culture, objectives, and values if it wishes to maintain a branded culture. A branded culture is one that maintains its values and vision throughout every aspect of the company. There should also be a number of retention strategies employed as there isn't one single cause for turnover (Balbuena Aguenza & Som, 2018).

Compensation and Benefits

While companies should use a variety of strategies when recruiting with a retention mindset, the effects of compensation specifically should be taken into account as well. With regard to recruitment, pay is often found to act as a barrier between a candidate and their potential employer (Quarin, 2016). This means that a job candidate will often pass over a job because they feel as though the job does would not sufficiently compensate them for the work they would be providing. However, as Rynes (2004) notes, this barrier can be overcome when an employer is willing to increase the amount of pay they are willing to give to meet a candidate's threshold for what they feel is acceptable By increasing the amount of compensation offered to potential candidates, employer attractiveness has been shown to rise. This creates a challenge for employers in offering a level of compensation that will appeal to the most talented potential employees more than competing employers.

Unfortunately, for many companies, it would be unsustainable to recruit employees only by raising the amount of compensation that is offered to job candidates. This is why many companies have turned to other forms of compensation such as flexible benefits (Bronson, 2017). These types of benefits can be things such as medical benefits, retirement account contributions, employee stock-option plans, and pensions, etc. Flexible benefits have been shown to increase job attractiveness because employees have been shown to have established pay preferences regarding types of alternative pay. Additionally, with effective benefit plans, employees are able to pick and choose benefits that suit their lifestyle as well as maximize “take-home” pay by reducing tax liability (Bronson, 2017).

While job pay is undoubtedly one of the most important factors considered by job-seekers, it is important to also consider the effect of compensation on job retention. In a 2016 U.S. Labor Market survey, the most cited reason to have stayed at a job was reported by 44 percent of employees surveyed as having been satisfied with their pay (Society for Human Resource Management, 2017). However, the survey also noted that 56 percent of the respondents would still leave their job even if they were satisfied with their pay, indicating that there are other factors that affect job retention aside from pay alone.

Finally, employee age and pay are directly correlated, with higher pay usually being given to older employees. When considering the relationship between age, pay, and retention, we observe that employees’ financial goals affect the importance of pay at their job. Thomas (2015) discusses “business relationships” and how these relationships affect the businesses themselves. One such relationship discussed is the employer-employee relationship. He categorizes relationships into three categories (of which the first and last are most relevant to strategies of recruitment and retention): “Transactional,” “Preferred,” and “Strategic.” Transactional employees are those concerned with only one thing, their pay. These are typically young, lower-level, front-line employees who will leave when given the chance to earn a higher salary. Consequently, these employees typically have a high turnover rate and must be frequently replaced by companies. Strategic employees, on the other hand, are typically older and paid a higher salary than Transactional employees. However, the discerning characteristic of Strategic employees is not their pay, but rather that there is more of an *equal* mutual benefit between them and the company. This type of employee has lower turnover because there are other factors that retain them aside from pay. The implication this has for job retention, age, and pay is that younger employees are often less important for an employer and therefore are paid less and will, therefore, leave as soon as they get a higher paying job. On the other hand, older, more strategic employees' retention is based less on pay and more on other factors such as mutualistic value between the employee and the firm.

With the emergence of the internet and numerous job recruiting and posting sites that are available for candidates to use, there has been an increase in the competition among employers due to employees being more informed about alternative positions that may be available. As a result, employees are now very sensitive to salary differences being offered and tend to think lesser of jobs that offer below the median pay . This puts employers who have tight budget constraints at a disadvantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining the best candidates.

In order to compete at this disadvantage, some companies have found that special attention should be given to providing a good job description that advertises the “whole job experience” (Bean-Mellinger, 2016). This is due to the fact that while salary may be the primary motivator that causes people to come to work, it is not the only motivator. Thus, if a certain job position lacks salary, it must make up for this in other areas. Examples may include pointing out opportunities available within the company for training and personal development, the availability of promotions, and the accessibility of key executives to lower level staff.

Once successfully recruited and hired, it is beneficial from a cost standpoint, among other things, to retain employees. Again, with prior research mentioned above has shown that compensation is a primary motivator for employees. This has been shown not only to be a primary motivator for working in general, but a positive correlation has been shown between higher paid employees and employee retention (Bean-Mellinger, 2016).

However, while there is plenty of research to support that higher levels of compensation generally correlate to higher retention, there is research that has also shown that high compensation has the potential to have the opposite effect (Thibault Landry, Schweyer, & Whillans, 2018). In cases where employees receive equal pay or lesser pay than their fellow employees, there tends to be a negative correlation with pay and retention. The fact that an employee who does not work as hard as another may still earn more money can make the lesser paid party feel unvalued, leading to feelings of resentment and disloyalty (Bean-Mellinger, 2016). Additionally, in many recent studies, while compensation has been shown to be an important consideration for many employees when deciding whether to take a job, or whether to stay at a job, it has been shown that cash rewards alone do not motivate employees and thus employers should consider other methods of reward for employees (Thibault Landry et al., 2018).

One idea that has proven some effectiveness in ensuring equitable compensation is having to have scheduled performance reviews and performance-related pay. Performance related pay has been shown to make employees feel more committed to "doing a good job" at work and therefore results in an increased effort, better performance, and higher engagement. These feelings have a direct correlation with employee job satisfaction and motivation, which lead to higher retention rates.

Scheduled performance reviews provide both a means of evaluation and an opportunity for motivation for most employees. During the performance evaluations, employees feel like to know exactly what they're doing well and not doing well because it makes it clearer to them how they can be better (Bean-Mellinger, 2016). This is beneficial to the employer as well because many employers who do not conduct performance reviews have lower quality work given by employees, often because employees do not know how to improve their performance. Additionally, performance reviews can motivate employees because they are incentivized to have good work to show during their performance review because there is the possibility of a pay increase (Bean-Mellinger, 2016). Lastly, employees who do receive pay raises during these reviews are more likely to feel appreciated afterward, leading to continued high-quality work and similar motivation for their next scheduled performance review.

Despite the benefits of performance-related pay, much lower level employees are not paid this way. This is the case for several reasons. First, many employers feel that young, low-level employees are too replaceable to invest time doing employee evaluations. Additionally, some employers feel it is harder to performance reviews on younger, non-key employees because it is harder to measure their performance (Ogbannaya, Daniels, & Nielsen, 2017). Performance reviews and performance-based compensation is often associated with managers and key employees because these people are more closely connected with a company's financial performance. For example, a sales manager's performance is more easily evaluated by how many sales the sales department makes. However, with lower-level employees, this type of data is not always available.

One way that lower-level employees can be included in performance-based pay and performance evaluations is through bonuses. Some employers choose to reward their most loyal employees with attendance-based bonuses (Bean-Mellinger, 2016). Although low-level employees do not have as much of an impact on a company financially as higher-level employees, they are important in carrying out day-to-day activities and helping with the operational efficiency of the company. One of the primary factors that affect operational efficiency is low employee turnover and high attendance (Bean-Mellinger, 2016). By rewarding these behaviors, companies may be able to better retain lower level employees, and since these employees tend to be lower paid, the bonuses do not have to be substantial.

Job Satisfaction

While compensation is a crucial recruitment and retention factor, perhaps the most pivotal factor is something more intangible. Perhaps, material rewards such as salary, benefits, bonuses, and exclusive discount programs are just in addition to what really matters. Research shows that job satisfaction is an integral component of recruitment and retention rates. This holds true, especially with younger generations who are not yet exposed to lofty financial obligations, and who might see higher compensation as a marginal benefit rather than a benefit of profound weight.

The effects of job satisfaction have many implications on job performance, including important traits such as productivity and efficiency, which in turn have a large impact on the profitability of the firm. Job satisfaction is more directly correlated to retention rates than compensation (Crowder, 2016). An underperforming employee can eventually lead to an employee that is not retained, whether voluntary or not. Not feeling or experiencing a sense of job satisfaction or a job well-done can have adverse effects on an employee's ability to perform the job, including unproductivity. This is especially critical in the retail sector, where managers are responsible for making a first-hand impression on the clientele and a broad range of responsibilities. A negative client experience can greatly alter the client's perception of the product, service, or brand. Because retail managers have direct contact with the employer's sources of income, it is essential that they represent the employer in a positive manner and are productive employees accordingly (Crowder, 2016).

In any industry, employee satisfaction is key to driving the business objective and fulfilling the firm agenda. If employee buy-in is lacking, especially with members of store management, issues eventually start to arise with the operation and management with the store (Crowder, 2016). When store operations become frictional, management garners a feeling of helplessness. Helplessness will eventually lead to further inefficiencies with store operations and upper management will begin to take notice. This slippery slope eventually results in management resigning or not meeting performance standards and being let go, thus fueling increasing turnover within the retail sector. Increasing turnover rates will eventually lead to the loss of skills and knowledge that an organization possesses. With employee turnover being a key competitive parameter across many firms, retail companies with high turnover will have difficulty recruiting high-quality candidates to fill the void left behind from departing, dissatisfied employees (Smith & Macko, 2014). Despite the large impact that retention issues have on firms across the globe, it is found that only 16 percent of human resource departments actually calculate the costs associated with labor turnover (Smith & Macko, 2014).

In addition to being concerned about their own sense of career fulfillment, every day, store managers are subject to the pressures of operating an efficient place of business while standards and expectations are constantly evolving in the global market. Maintaining a retail store requires a broad array of talents, including some responsibilities that can seem mundane or overwhelming to the average individual. The day-to-day responsibilities of retail managers encompass the entire spectrum of business acumen, from fielding customer satisfaction to maximizing profits to staff supervision and training or evaluations. Retail managers are also often called upon to handle store presentation, risk management, and a thorough review of all operational records and reports to project sales and determine profitability (Retail Manager, 2015). The manager is essentially acting as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, and other members of the c-suite for the store that they manage. As if the duties are not already broad enough, it is important to understand that retail is a very wide sector, including everything from clothing, cosmetics, electronics, books, furniture and gardening to paint and hardware stores like Sherwin-Williams (Retail Manager, 2015).

With such a wide breadth of responsibilities and product categories, it is often very difficult for individuals currently in or considering a management position in retail, who have specialized degrees in higher education to receive the satisfaction that is necessary to bring about true career fulfillment. In other words, helping stack paint cans and assisting customers with paint samples is not very appealing to the vast majority of degreed graduates. Also, in the vast majority of institutions of higher learning, there is not a degree offering for retail management. Most likely, general business management and administration degrees are offered, which can be unappealing to college students looking to hone in on a more specific career path like financial management, accounting, marketing, or information technology. However, one of the best things about the retail industry is that you do not necessarily need an extensive education to move into a management position (Lopaze, 2017). Many retail managers started as part-time sales associates in high school and remained with the company, eventually earning the store manager position. Individuals who have followed this path are more likely to be satisfied with their career choice, since they essentially chose to remain in the retail sector, with the strong possibility of landing the retail management role.

With this in mind, recruiting and retaining degreed candidates to a retail management location will prove to be difficult, and historical performance at Sherwin-Williams has shown this. Sherwin is having increasing difficulty in attracting college graduates to the Management Training Program. Since Sherwin-Williams' pay is fairly competitive in comparison to similar brands, research points to employee satisfaction as the primary determinant of employee turnover, especially at the retail management position. This feeling of dissatisfaction stems from a broad array of responsibilities that lie outside of the employees satisfying interests and the image of a retail management position being an unappealing career path for most college graduates.

Primary Research Implications

Going forward, there is much to be said for the implications of our primary research. With regard to methods of pursuing talent, we can apply what we have learned about efforts to recruit talent in the retail industry to our survey questions. The NRF Foundation's efforts to recruit students specifically can inform our survey questions in that we can inquire of our target age group's conceptions of the retail industry and what may stop them from or persuade them towards pursuing a career within retail. Our knowledge of benefits that Sherwin-Williams offers to its employees will help us to gauge our participants' feelings towards what the company has to offer and how much employee compensation factors into how long their potential employment with Sherwin-Williams would last. We will also be able to apply our knowledge of millennials' and subsequent generation's priorities when searching for career fields, such as rapid advancement possibilities and an adequate level of work-life balance, to our questions. In this way, our primary research efforts will be informed and attempt to answer questions that may not be clearly outlined by the secondary research we have found.

Specifically, our primary research will be comprised of a focus group, survey, and in-store interviews, with questions and topics, focused on employee compensation and benefits and its effects on recruitment, the concept of job satisfaction and its effects on turnover, current recruitment and retention methods, and recruiting and retaining millennials and generation Z. The focus group will give us insight as to which factor affecting recruitment and retention is most precedent among Sherwin-Williams' target age group of millennials and generation Z, by allowing us to receive personal feedback from individual's experiences. After conducting a focus group, we will look to broaden our sample population with a survey asking pointed questions as to the weight that compensation and benefits and feeling satisfied with a particular job affect recruitment and retention. In addition, we will inquire about the recruitment practices that survey participants have experienced, including which ones they thought were effective and which ones were not effective.

Following our sampling of both a specific, more intimate group and a broader base, our team plans to gather anonymous feedback from Sherwin-Williams' employees who live the everyday experiences. We will specifically delve into the challenges that current employees are facing and the factors of retention that are the pinnacle to their personal values. Through using a combination of our primary and secondary research, we will make recommendations of how Sherwin-Williams can improve their current work environment to mitigate the needs of perpetual recruitment.

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