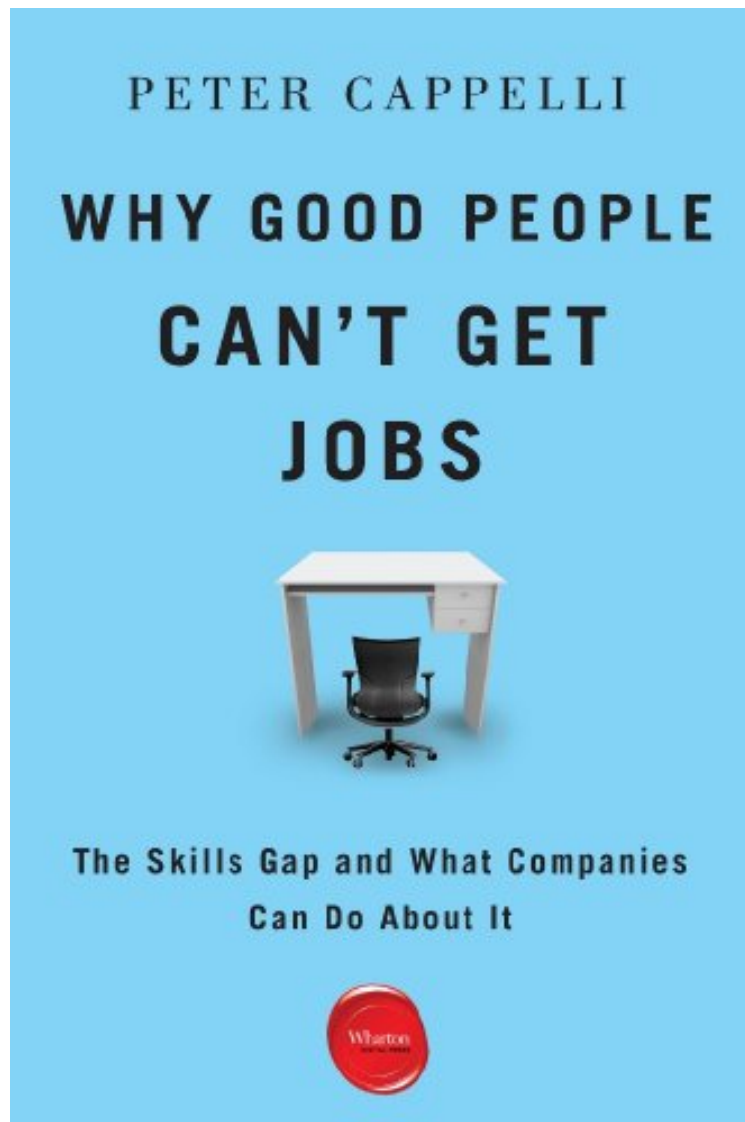


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Why Good People Can't Get Jobs: The Skills Gap and What Companies Can Do About It

Peter Cappelli

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Peter Cappelli : Why Good People Can't Get Jobs: The Skills Gap and What Companies Can Do About It before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why Good People Can't Get Jobs: The Skills Gap and What Companies Can Do About It:

132 of 133 people found the following review helpful. A Great Book that Tells the Truth By Steve T "Why Good People Can't Get Jobs" illustrates a simple truth that is obvious to anyone who looks at help-wanted ads: employers are

looking for incredibly specific skills. They don't want someone who CAN do the job; they want someone who has already done the exact job. As the author points out, this creates a catch-22 situation for anyone who has skills, but not the precise ones for a particular job. The author relates how CEOs constantly blame the educational system, but clearly it is ridiculous to ask schools to prepare students to fit immediately into exact jobs. Some level of on-the-job training has always been required. This is true for even the the highest levels of education. Imagine, for example, if we expected doctors to be able to jump directly into a job from medical school with no additional training. Yet, today, there is such a surplus of prospective workers that employers have the luxury of waiting for the ideal candidate (meaning someone who already has that job) to show up. The author also points out how technology, such as automated systems that match resumes, is driving this by rejecting anyone who is not a precise fit. Technology is also having a more general impact. As the author notes, many companies simply decide to wait and leave positions unfilled, letting other workers carry the load. They can do this partly because constantly advancing technology is automating more jobs and tasks and allowing fewer workers to do more. This is really the elephant in the room that no one talks about. Technology is getting better and better, and things are likely to become even more difficult for prospective workers. Just check the current news during any week, and you're sure to find articles about new software, robotics and artificial intelligence that is having an impact on the job market. The bottom line is that in a slack labor market, employers have no incentive to invest in training. They can wait for the perfect candidate or rely more on technology. Many people will be left behind and it will NOT be because they are unskilled. It will be because they are unlucky and do not have the exact skills at exactly the right time. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Very good book, lot of things that both employees employers should consider. By C. Good_Why Good People Can't Get Jobs_ by Peter Cappelli started out as a series of articles that grew into a book. The book itself is short very easy to read. For all that, it's not an intellectual lightweight. It details a lot of challenges for both employers and employees in getting hired. The biggest overall problems are an overreliance on technology and an unwillingness to spend time or money on training. So prospective employees find it very difficult to get hired because they likely up against a computer algorithm which prescans their resume and is looking for very specific terms, qualifications and experience. If their resume doesn't include those specific terms, their resume is kicked out. The search terms are only as good as the hiring manager (or possibly human resources manager) who selected the terms to search for in the first place. Which leads to rather ludicrous events such as 25 000 people applying for a position and yet the computer algorithm said not a single one of those 25 000 was even qualified for the job. Unwillingness to spend money on training is a separate problem and gets into a much more complicated issue of so many individual actors acting in exactly the same way they have all made the system as a whole less efficient. Because employers want someone who is a drop-in fit, they don't want someone straight from college who has knowledge of theory but no actual work experience. So most employers want someone who has "3-5 years" work experience in the field, often a narrowly defined field (maybe not just a profession but a particular specialist subset of that profession) so anyone who does meet those requirements is expensive to hire as everyone is looking for that same narrow range of experience, and while that perfect employee is being searched for the position remains open. Often, the position remains open for so long that actually hiring someone without prior experience and training them would have take less time than waiting for the perfect employee with prior experience. This gets into another larger organizational problem that Cappelli identifies for most employers -- they have no method of assigning a cost to leaving a position open. They can tell down to a cent how much it will cost to fill a position, and will have a detailed analysis of how much it costs to make a certain part in-house versus buying it premade from an outside vendor. But the cost of leaving a position unfilled by anybody because they want to find a "perfect" candidate? That cost is never looked at. At one point he even issues a challenge to any executives reading his book, to go to their HR department and ask for evidence that the last round of layoffs saved more money than they cost, what does it cost to leave a position vacant and have any positions been left open too long. Cappelli's point is not that executives might get a *wrong* answer, but that they will likely find they cannot get *any* answer. Most companies have no methodology for calculating those costs, so it is easy to see the immediate visible cost of filling a position but also easy to ignore the long-term hidden cost of leaving a position vacant. There is a long discussion about lack of training in companies today, and also in general a lack of apprenticeship programs and lack of collaboration between employers who want to fill positions that require college graduates and the colleges that produce those graduates. Cappelli likens it to outsourcing production of a key component and then neglecting to tell the outsourcing vendors the component had been outsourced to them. Cappelli takes a hard look at the claim that colleges are turning out graduates who don't know enough are therefore unemployable. He does a good job of convincing the reader this is likely not the case as much as it is made out to be: for multiple decades now when employers list the qualities in employees they are most concerned about, it is things like ability to work with others, punctuality, accountability, problem-solving skills work ethic that are at the tops of their lists. But none of these are things that are taught in college, nor are they things colleges are expected to teach. And again this comes back to close collaboration between employers and schools, or establishing apprenticeship or training programs, or more vocational schools. But to simply say "it is the colleges' fault" is more than a bit misleading in his opinion. Not all is doom gloom, Cappelli does have examples of companies that have found ways to make training and apprenticeship programs both

affordable and beneficial for all concerned. He says many companies are reluctant to offer training programs as no one else in their industry does so any money spent on training will likely walk out the door as employees are poached away by other companies. But he says one company accepted that and found that filling positions with trainees was better than leaving them completely unfilled. He also gave an example of a trucking firm that had a free training class for drivers; prospective drivers weren't charged for it, but also had to take it on their own time. And if after the end of three months they trainees for that driving program passed, they got hired, ensuring a steady supply of prospective new hires for the firm. There are also some tips at the end of one section about things that will cause problems or glitches for resume-scanning software. It was a very good book and I think it is one prospective employees should take a look at and prospective employers should read a couple of times. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Quick Read By Becki M. Since I have been looking for a job (half-heartedly) for over a year, I was interested in Cappelli's reasons. I am currently under-employed and had resigned myself to just waiting for the economy to improve before trying again. The basic argument in this book is that there is no skills gap -- the problem is that in an attempt to streamline the hiring process, companies are defining job duties too narrowly. The automation of resume checking leads to some companies complaining that no applicants are qualified despite receiving hundreds of applications for each opening. The necessity to have someone "up and running" on day one means that prior experience is imperative. Attempts to trim payrolls mean that workers who once would have been mentored and promoted, are often laid off instead. Unfortunately, there are no simple solutions for the problem. If you are a job seeker, you will not get advice on how to get a job (except to work on matching the job description as much as possible.) Employers would do well to take a closer look at "almost" matches to see if they could do the job, and to offer some training for job skills that are needed. It was interesting, well-researched, and easy to read. I can see this being useful for business classes or HR employees.

Peter Cappelli confronts the myth of the skills gap and provides an actionable path forward to put people back to work. Even in a time of perilously high unemployment, companies contend that they cannot find the employees they need. Pointing to a skills gap, employers argue applicants are simply not qualified; schools aren't preparing students for jobs; the government isn't letting in enough high-skill immigrants; and even when the match is right, prospective employees won't accept jobs at the wages offered. In this powerful and fast-reading book, Peter Cappelli, Wharton management professor and director of Wharton's Center for Human Resources, debunks the arguments and exposes the real reasons good people can't get hired. Drawing on jobs data, anecdotes from all sides of the employer-employee divide, and interviews with jobs professionals, he explores the paradoxical forces bearing down on the American workplace and lays out solutions that can help us break through what has become a crippling employer-employee stand-off. Among the questions he confronts: Is there really a skills gap? To what extent is the hiring process being held hostage by automated software that can crunch thousands of applications an hour? What kind of training could best bridge the gap between employer expectations and applicant realities, and who should foot the bill for it? Are schools really at fault? Named one of HR Magazine's Top 20 Most Influential Thinkers of 2011, Cappelli not only changes the way we think about hiring but points the way forward to rev America's job engine again.