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Top talent goes part time

With senior corporate talent in short supply, executive consulting and search firm Hattonneale has come up with a novel strategy to help companies that can't fill vacancies with suitably experienced staff. It advocates allowing senior executives to work on a more flexible basis with a range of companies and issues. "A research study we recently completed revealed a new phenomenon created by the global financial crisis – the restless executive," Hattonneale partner Jane Neale (right) says.

"They are people who don't want to work full time for one corporation. They want to use their skills in a variety of ways and have new challenges. "We now have hundreds and hundreds of people like that on our books, including former CEOs, marketing directors, human resources heads, all of whom are looking for project and consulting work. This offers great opportunities for firms to get around the skills shortage." Many of these restless executives have been created by job cuts, reduced remuneration, slashed bonuses and poor morale in the wake of the GFC, and they aren't keen to return to business as usual. But with 35 per cent of companies surveyed regarding lack of appropriate talent as

a barrier to business growth over the next 12 months, and 63 per cent saying it will be either "not easy" or "extremely difficult" to find appropriately skilled executives, matching the restless talent to job vacancies will become a high priority. "It can really work for the firms too," Neale says. "A senior executive can be brought in to mentor juniors or help with certain projects. So everyone benefits from their experience. This could be the way of the future for Australian business."

Sue Williams

