



## Talent Engagement and Attraction: Strategic Involvement of HEIs in Regional Innovation Ecosystems

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### Abstract

*With the aging population and a more mobile workforce, employers are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain talent. While many employers understand that they need to upgrade or change their approaches towards talent management, many do not know how to begin or take the first step. There is a pressing need to invest in human talent and skill development to create an innovation ecosystem that supports intelligent specialization strategies. Higher education institutions are a vital partner in the regions for designing, implementation and evaluating the impact of regional development strategies. The role of higher education institutions in supporting regional development is even more important in peripheral regions. In these regions, HEIs should play a "enabling" role for the regional innovation system. This paper highlights and debates the relevance of university-business cooperation in this process, bringing specific results of work-based learning experiences with companies and students. Higher education institutions play a key role in the development, attraction and retention of human talent in the regional innovation ecosystem. HEIs have a unique institutional profile that provides an essential link between education, research and innovation (the so-called "knowledge triangle"). One of its main activities is to educate the future "makers" of change and to enrich public and private the human resources of all shapes and sizes. In Alto Minho, Portugal, a higher education institution is involved with the Intermunicipal community and the Confederation of companies of the Region in the development of a strategy to ensure maximization of the establishment and retention of talents. This paper presents results of the strategy plan, that includes several initiatives with public and private partners, students and organizations, enhancing the need to work together towards the development of more attractive and sustainable regional ecosystems, framing specifically work-based learning as innovative learning and teaching methods that best fit this purpose.*

**Keywords:** Talent management; University-Business Cooperation; HEIs; Innovation;

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