



by Weelan Ho

Talent Management

Twenty years ago, the word “talent” conjured up an image of having special gifts or extraordinary abilities. In the current context, particularly in business management and organization terminology, talent essentially refers to the total of all experience, knowledge, skills and behaviours a person has and brings to their work.

Talent management is a systematic approach of defining, discovering, accessing, recruiting, orientating, developing, deploying, motivating and retaining talent.

Talent is critical in that it is people who drive company performance. Accounting firms are people-centred organizations and therefore should pay a lot of attention to talent

management to avoid talent becoming the bottleneck, stifling expansion.

The importance of selecting the right people

It takes all kinds of people to make the world and we have differing gifts. Selecting and putting the right people in the right job is crucial. Otherwise, we end up having incompetent and miserable people abhorring their jobs because of mismatches. Can you imagine a person who doesn't like figures and data analysis working as an accounting technician?

I conducted a customer service training workshop for the customer service staff of an organization. One of the participants told me

that she hated people. She said she would rather work with a computer than with people, and therefore she felt miserable and hated her job. It would be difficult to develop and motivate this person if she did not even like the job nature; the mismatch here is so obvious. A person who does not like people definitely cannot be a customer service provider. In the end, it is wasted effort and costly for both sides. So, first things first – find, select and put the right person in the right job.

Orientating and developing experienced hires (new comers)

We tend to think that people who have experience should know how to do the job. After all, they have been recruited because of their expertise. We fail to realize the new organizational culture and environment may affect their productivity and performance. Technical expertise alone is not sufficient for the new hires need to “know” the organization: who’s who, how to do things, how to make decisions, the management style of this new environment, etc. As such, HR staff and other team members should proactively and actively help the new hires make the transition smoothly and integrate into a new workplace and culture efficiently.

The truth is that for many organizations, orientation is seen as an HR activity dealing with security tags, mundane organization policy and procedures, and is perceived as having very little to do with company culture, expectations, possible barriers and anticipated problems. We are disappointed when new hires do not perform to expectations and wonder why, despite all the effort made in recruiting, the company is not able to retain talent.

At the same time, newly-hired talent owe themselves the duty to actively learn more about how to work with people in the new

organization and how to respond to cultural differences.

Talent development

Training and development is a very important aspect of building organizational capability. Every organization should have its distinctive capabilities, i.e. what makes it different and better. Strategic mapping is a strategy development methodology which provides the roadmap and defines the capabilities, competencies and skills needed by organizations. Talent development should be goal oriented and aligned with the organization’s business direction and strategy.

Competencies are behaviours or standards of performance thought necessary to achieve the desired outcome associated with job roles. The Competency Matrix (see figure 1) demonstrates the competencies and skills required for each job role and includes:

- Having a structured and systematic way of showing clearly the specific skills requirements
- Being able to evaluate and profile each talent’s strengths and deficiencies
- Allowing focused competency-based training, building on strengths and addressing other areas for improvement
- Being concrete and measurable

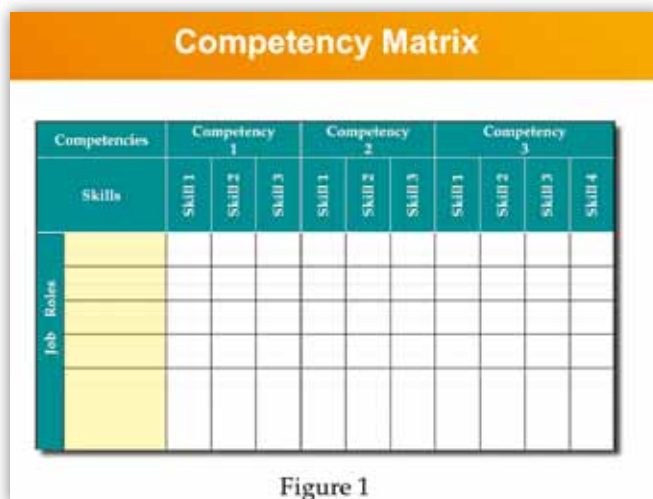


Figure 1

Talent deployment

Deployment is seen as a tool for development. It is a continuation of development. There is nothing better than putting what one learns into application, or alternatively, entering a new domain in on-the-job training.

Engagement

It is said that talent is the engine of the modern organization while engagement is the secret ingredient that can transform an organization's output. To engage is to get involved, to be part of the work process, to know your contribution and value, to be enthusiastic and committed, and to be open to sharing knowledge.

Retaining talent

Some simple, basic, yet powerful suggestions to help retain talent:

- Take responsibility – do not have a culture of blaming
- Show respect
- Energize the job
- Help the talent find the work they love
- Support development and growth and be supportive
- Listen
- Recognize and reward talent
- Have fun!!

T/D

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