



Managing "A" Players in the Workplace

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Talent Management, training and development, workforce diversity, Talent Fraternity, Talent War.

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ABSTRACT *Managing "A" players is very important, precisely among corporate HR and also in employee training and development. Organizations are aware of the fact that retention of the best talent is a must in order to succeed in hyper competitive and increasing complex global economy. Organizations along with the understanding of the need to hire, develop and retain talented people, also know that the talent must be managed as a critical resource to achieve the best competitive advantage. Talent is a scarce resource and must be managed to the fullest effect. Considering MNCs workforce diversity and issues related to HR, the researchers aim to review the concept "Management of A Players" followed by analyzing the importance of Talent Management and the challenges faced by organizations in managing and developing a talent. The study concludes describing the role of HR in Talent Management.*

Introduction:

Talent Management was first introduced as a combined concept in the 1990s, Collings & Mellahi (2009); Garrow & Hirsh (2008); Iles et al., (2010); Lewis & Heckman, (2006). There are three perspectives on Talent Management prevalent in organizations; Lewis &

Heckman, (2006). The first view is typical HR approaches to talent through recruiting, development, and retention as is done with employees not defined as talent. The second view securing and developing internal talent by building talent pools through organizational staffing and career planning. The third perspective is recognizing outstanding individual performance. Organizations evaluate employees according to their performance and try to retain the talent of the A grades and eject the C and D grades. In addition to these three perspectives, there are talent pipeline approaches, such as succession planning and leadership development; Iles et al. (2010).

Current Trends in Talent Management

The prime focus of talent management is enabling and developing people. After hiring and deploying, we may say that retaining and nurturing talent is quintessential.

Talent management includes recruitment, selection, learning, training and development, competency management, succession planning etc. These are all critical processes that enable an organization to compete and stand out in the market place when managed well. Some current trends in TM are given below:

Talent War: Finding and retaining the best talent is the most difficult aspect of HR management. HR surveys prove that organizations globally are facing want of talented employees and it is also more difficult to retain them.

Technology and Talent Management: Technology is increasingly getting introduced into talent development. Online employee portals offer easy access to employees to various benefits and schemes. Employees can also manage their careers through these portals and it helps organizations understand their employees better.

Internal Talent Promotion: Upon hiring an individual, the next step is employee retention such as training and devel-

opment. The organizations should identify their talent pool and then develop the right individual for succession planning internally.

Population Worries Globally: World populations are either young or aging. Country like India may boast of a young population in the coming and present times. Population demographics are thus a disturbing factor for talent managers. Also, researches have predicted that demographic changes in U.S will lead to shortage of 10 million workers in the near future.

Talent Management to rescue HR: Through talent management, more effort is now being laid on designing and maintaining employee scorecards and employee surveys for ensuring that talent is nurtured and grown perpetually. "Increase in employer of Choice Initiatives" helps the employer to improve its brand value in the eyes of its consumer and attract the right talent.

Challenges in Talent Management and solutions:

Based on the International Human Resource Management context, Tarique and Schuler divides the challenges that influences TM activities into "exogenous" and "endogenous". External challenges include globalization, workforce demographic changes, and shortages of talent, and internal ones incorporate regional specification, retaining talent, and competencies.

According to N.S. Rajan, an Ernst and Young partner, despite there being a labor surplus, there was a talent deficit. In response to this challenge, the last decade had seen organizations in India embracing more formal talent management practices.

P.V. Ramana Murthy, senior vice president HR, India and Bangladesh for Hindustan Coca-Cola said that while Indians possess strong intellect, they had not historically focused on developing leadership skills as much as some Western countries, however, changes have been taking place in talent development.

Gender diversity also represents a talent barrier. Traditionally, the Indian woman's role is as the primary caregiver, and there is some discrimination limiting the number of women in the workforce. This has inspired creative new solutions

to recruit and retain female managers. Google's Indian offices keep a taxi on call to allow women to get home easily in case of family emergencies. Pharmaceutical company, Boehringer Ingelheim allows young female employees to bring their mothers along on business trips to avoid the cultural disapproval young women sometimes face when traveling alone.

Fundamental talent management activities such as recruiting and retaining employees present another significant challenge given rapid company growth rates and rising compensation levels.

According to Coca-Cola's Murthy, Indian firms are focusing their attention on:

Establishing talent review and performance management processes that clearly differentiate levels of performance and potential to advance,

A concerted effort to ensure that the most capable talent is aligned with the most critical positions - a strategy enabled by differentiation activity and

Improved diversity management.

Five factors offering a tremendous advantage in building talent:

1. **A legacy of HR influence:** India's large public-sector undertakings such as Indian Oil Corporation and family-owned enterprises such as Tata Group, Reliance and Birla Group has invested heavily to develop human resources. According to the manager of Ernst & Young, Rajan, "Indian firms have shown a higher propensity to invest at the high end of the HR value chain as compared to MNCs. For many years, public sector undertakings have invested in leadership capability development and their head of HR has historically been a member of the board. Family-owned enterprises have made similar investments and recently transformed HR to support talent building."

2. **A well-trained and closely-knit talent fraternity:** India's graduate education system produces top HR leaders from its institutes of management. The XLRI School of Business and Human Resources, is a top Indian business school whose graduates include HR leaders for Procter & Gamble India, Hindustan Lever, Hindustan Coca-Cola, Bharti Airtel and Wipro. These top Indian talent leaders often form strong interpersonal networks with talent peers outside their companies. This increased interaction enables them to more easily share best practices and India-specific market information.

3. **Strong individual commitment to talent development:** It's not unusual for Indian corporations to hold internal leadership development trainings on Saturdays. Indian CEOs or HR managers are less likely to complain about being away from home to hold talent development trainings during weekends.

4. **A unique understanding of India:** Coca-Cola's Murthy offered an example, "Indian firms are experts at managing the emotional nature of Indian leaders. While Indian firms have flexibility to support employees' feelings and emotions; multinationals are often bound by rules and regulations that prevent the type of empathy and coaching that can support success."

5. **The ability to develop and pay:** Two key factors to engage and retain great talent — professional development and compensation — are easier to come by at many Indian firms. According to Murthy, "Indian companies can offer large wealth creation opportunities through stock options or shares. Growing firms also provide significantly more development opportunities, especially prized international postings".

The War for Talent in the Global Economy

Organizations world over have realized the importance of having talented people. McKinsey was the first to coin this term 'war for talent' in the year 1997. They named this for their research for talent management practices and beliefs. Not many organizations barring a few like IBM, PepsiCo and McKinsey knew the importance of talent management until recent years. It is not a big surprise that nearly two thirds of senior leaders quit an organization within three years of their hiring. Add to it there is also the problem of an aging population in the west and unemployable graduates in the east. This opened up the eyes of major corporations globally. A substantial amount of pressure has developed on corporations that are global or multinational in presence, hiring and nurturing the right talent globally is an area of major concern.

Strategies and plans for sales, production, expansion, and diversification are of no use unless we have the right people to execute them. In an economy that is knowledge driven the demand for highly skilled workers is on the rise. Though the demand may decline at times due to the changes in economic cycle but in the longer run the rising trend will remain the same more or less.

The Solution

The following is the five point solution suggested by McKinsey:

- Develop a talent mindset at all levels in the organization.
- Create a winning Employee Value Proposition.
- Recruit great talent continuously.
- Grow leaders
- Differentiate and affirm.

Role of Human Resources in managing talents:

HR roles are critical for organizations, to support talent in order to generate better performance and develop employees who have potential that will lead to a sustainable talent supply for the organization. Roles for HR in the areas of balancing centralized and decentralized strategies- when local HR practitioners adopt a TM system and interventions created by headquarters, the success of the system and interventions will depend on how well the system is localized, taking account of the local culture and business context; Boussebaa & Morgan (2008), developing competencies - the role of HR here is to identify the competencies and provide effective interventions to develop the abilities of the talent, creating structured talent development- leadership development, succession plans, and expatriate training can be included in a global development system; Odell & Spielman (2009), also, cross cultural training and providing challenging assignments-most effective way for employee development, and conducting global team building. Diversity training, coaching, and mentoring programs can help develop both knowledge and attitudes for working with diverse colleagues; McGuire (2011) has been suggested; Sehoon Kim and Gary N. McLean (2012).

Conclusion:

Talent Management involves sourcing, hiring, developing, retaining and promoting the talents while meeting the organization's requirements simultaneously. If an organization wants the best talent of its competitor to work with it, it needs to attract that person and offer him something that is far beyond his imagination to come and join and then stick to the organization. Only hiring him does not solve the purpose, but, getting the things done from him is important. Therefore, it can be said that talent management is a full-fledged process that not only controls the entry of an employee but also his or her exit. The new generation employees seem not to believe in the old philosophy of 'we will stick around till you need us'. They are more enterprising and will to take risks in their career; they accept failures easily and are prepared for them. Employees now prefer flat hierarchies, build careers around jobs and want a clear performance management system.

There are work-life balance concerns, issues of job flexibility all of which calls for renewing the social contract with the employees. The employees, their psyche, their beliefs and

most important their attitudes are changing and hence, talent management needs evolution.

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