



WHY AN INCLUSIVE TALENT STRATEGY LEADS TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

Talent management has evolved from being largely about recruitment to embrace the idea that the best way of overcoming labour shortages, especially the global shortage of leaders, is to grow your own and retain them longer. Retention is the new recruitment and this, more than anything, has made talent management such a hot issue. As it continues to evolve, there is still a divergence of opinion about who it is for. Everyone? High potentials? Future leaders?

In today's lean organisations everyone matters. Doing an acceptable job is not enough. An exclusive approach to talent causes resentment. It also misses the point. Organisations can be just as constrained by a failure of crucial skills at other key bottlenecks than at board level. The strategy must identify pivotal talent at all levels. It might be because they are future leaders, have scarce skills or because their specialist role is critical, or even because the long-term strategy will need the skills they can develop. Talent initiatives can then be focussed on different pools of talent and made relevant to each, including those who may not be pivotal but who still need to go the extra mile if the organisation is to achieve competitive advantage.

We have worked closely with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (“NDA”) on their talent programme which encompasses this concept of inclusiveness. To identify the strategic aims, David Reay, the NDA's Head of Learning and Development put the business's requirement to prove business continuity together with his Chief Executive's strong belief in development, what he calls 'the two dot philosophy'; one representing where someone is now and one being their dot on the horizon. We then consulted extensively to identify the capabilities the organisation will need to deliver its future strategy. This also put personal responsibility for development on the agenda.

At the heart of this talent strategy is a capability framework based on a model of behavioural effectiveness. The NDA's previous competency framework was used for recruitment but not much else. Reay was convinced a competency framework could achieve much more. We mapped the behaviours represented in the new framework with the future business challenges identified through consultation. We launched an online self-awareness tool that enabled people to identify their skills

against this framework. This created a process that emphasises the importance of behavioural, as well as technical skills. People can see where they are now and how to develop to meet future organisational success criteria.

Another key facet of our programme has been discussions with line managers to produce a plan identifying organisational strengths and vulnerabilities. These conversations helped managers have similar ones with their staff and helped them own talent management. As the process covered all managers and specialists, it naturally took care of the high potentials and pivotal talent by ensuring they had a plan that gives them the development, scope and responsibility they need. In these conversations and the accompanying documentation, we joined up this process with the capability framework and the performance management system. Reay has also put in place related learning and development activities.

An evaluation exercise has shown high buy-in to the talent programme. The link made to business strategy, the emphasis on behavioural skills, high consultation and involvement and the joining up of all HR processes has helped achieve this buy-in.

The NDA experience reinforces HR's crucial role in creating an organisational mindset that focuses on talent management; line managers must recognise it is their responsibility to manage talent effectively just as they are expected to manage other resources, whilst individuals must take responsibility for developing their own talents.

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Janice Caplan is a partner of The Scala Group. She will be chairing the session 'Developing Talent' on Tuesday, 15 April, at 11.00am. David Reay will be presenting the NDA case study at this session.

The Scala Group is exhibiting on stand 758. www.thescalagroup.co.uk

janice@thescalagroup.co.uk david.reay@nda.gov.uk This article appeared in the Soapbox column of the HRD Conference Edition of People Management on 17 April 2008. A related article on Sellafield and on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority appeared in the same edition.