

Talent Management

How far down your organization do you think talent goes?

If you accept that competitive advantage relies on the recruitment and development of a team that routinely performs at a high level then talent management is a key business skill.



Strategy execution is as we all know ‘the difficult bit’ and it goes without saying that unless you are a one man band it’s not you that executes the strategy it’s the people that work in your organization. Despite these – you would have thought- self evident truths it’s common to see businesses that seem to believe that talent lies only with senior management or not exceptionally business owners who believe and behave such that they are the only talent that matters or that the business possesses.

A study conducted by Cranfield University School of Management revealed some interesting facts. The study included businesses that ranged from less than 25 employees to those with over 1000 predominantly in the private sector. Within those surveyed the definition of Talent varied widely. Just over 50% thought that it applied to everyone in the organisation, 10% thought that it applied only to senior leadership with just under 5% believing talent only lay with technical experts or other key contributors.

If you look at this logically it doesn’t make any sense. Whatever way you look at the performance of a group of individuals whose interdependence determines a group outcome (OK a team!) you can’t say that only some count! Sure the activities of team members are different and specialised but talent must reside in each position. If you take the sport as business analogy (topical with recent events at Portsmouth football club and nearer to home the Daily Telegraph article on Brian Kennedy and Sale Rugby club) there is no point in having star performers up front and a totally hopeless goalkeeper or indeed a great team only on the field.

Developing talent throughout the business is another one of those non optional activities for top performers and an important part at MBA we’d probably say *the* most important part of a chief executives role within the organisation. There should be a direct link between the businesses strategy and it’s talent accusation and development processes. To go back to the sport analogy Manchester Utd would probably lose to the worst performing Premiership Rugby team because they have recruited trained and developed a team to do a specific job.... and that’s not playing rugby. Yet the Cranfield study showed that only 36% of manufacturing business and 41% of all the organizations included in the study had a talent management strategy even though 94% said that talent management was ‘somewhat or very important in terms of the bottom line.

What the study did not do was show the business performance of those who said that talent management was very important and that had a strategy to recruit retain and develop top performers within their organization. If we look through our client base we can tell you the ones that we speak to that do!

Talent management means recruiting retaining and developing top performing teams and that means from the receptionist to the MD from the FD to the cleaner.

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