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**A STUDY OF ESSENTIAL LEARNING, SKILLS TOWARDS LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT MANAGEMENT ARE NOT FOR RICH POSITION  
OR STATUS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The public sector, leadership development is largely seen as the domain of senior management. Often, little development is offered to middle or junior managers. In General, there is a much closer relationship between the public and private sectors and the trade unions. While it is difficult to draw upon empirical evidence, it is clear the economy has weathered the economic storms better than most.

We need to start with a core assessment of what it takes to be an effective public sector leader. In many ways, the attributes are no different to those in the private sector: a clear vision and strategy, a strong values-led operating culture, engagement with staff, plus demonstrating agility and flexibility to deliver services differently in the increasingly commercialized public sector.

There is one area of the public sector overcoming the leadership challenge. The armed forces have the best leaders in the UK when it comes to managing change, according to research by Orion Partners. The study reveals strong leadership has helped 49% of armed forces personnel understand why change is good for them - the highest proportion of any professional group in the UK, where the national average is just 35%. What is it that they are doing well? According to the research it is 'brain friendly' leadership. The best leaders at managing complex organisational reforms are those who understand how people react to change and help employees embrace it by showing them why it is good for them.

HR has a key role to play, as part of organisational development and talent management, to ensure every leader is supported. However, it remains to be seen if public sector HR has the capability to drive and support these initiatives - one of our biggest challenges. Hay concluded that "many organisations are overlooking the leadership and workforce development strategies crucial to success in a changed landscape. These need to be reviewed as a matter of urgency". Learning, succession planning, leadership development and talent management are not luxuries; they are essential. These factors will influence which public sector organizations will improve sustainably in these tough times, and which ones will lose talent, quality and ultimately, public confidence.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Management development, Succession planning

## INTRODUCTION

The leadership development initiatives or succession planning. It is the collective approach to recruiting, retaining and developing talent within the organisation for its future benefit, and extends beyond the domains listed above to include strategy, organisational culture, and change management.

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While much has been written in the form of 'how to do' and '10 steps to talent management', the picture emerging is more complex than that. Drawing on a series of in-depth case studies into the talent management processes of 7 complex, multinational organisations, this paper discusses the contribution that talent management can actually make to the development of future leaders in an organisation. Key developmental dimensions emerged from the case studies requiring decisions to be made as to an organisations development approach, assessment, and implementation plans. For example, will talent follow the same but accelerated approach to leadership development in the organisation, or will they have a specialist route? Where is the focus of the organisation's development plans – do they focus on strengths or address individual's weaknesses? While organisations may have clear ideas about where they lie on these dimensions they are not always aware of the consequences. For example, an unintended consequence of an accelerated talent development path could be the arrested moral development of the talented individuals that are developed. In the moral development literature, one study found that the amount of work experience an individual had, correlated with levels of

ethical behaviour, such that the more experienced an individual is, the more ethical their behaviour is likely to be. Another found that seniority within the company hierarchy seems to lower the levels of ethical decision making, such that the more senior within the organisation a person becomes, the less ethical their decisions become. Taking these two findings in parallel suggests that some talent management ideas might actually lead to the development of less ethical leaders in the future. If an organisation has an accelerated talent management system which results in people being fast-tracked through the ranks of promotions, they could actually be raising their seniority levels while reducing the amount of experience they have at each level, and thus contributing to a downward trend in ethical considerations and decision making. This paper draws on the literature and case studies of organisations talent management initiatives to offer a critical perspective of the role that talent management is really playing in developing the future leaders of organisations.

'Talent management' seems to be the key theme driving strategic HRM throughout organisations. IOMA's HR critical issues survey for 2006 identified talent management as the top issue for 75% of respondents (Sandler, 2006). Organisations are becoming more and more aware of the fact that they are about to suffer a significant knowledge loss due to the looming retirement of the baby boomers (Foster, 2005), as between 40 and 70% of all senior executives will become eligible for retirement in the next five years at most major corporations (Gandossy & Kao, 2004). Couple this with the dwindling numbers of the younger generations in the developed countries, and there is the potential for a 'talent' shortage in the not so distant future.

This demographic shift is changing the nature of the psychological contract, such that workers are more able to pick and choose between employers based on issues such as life balance, diversity policy, and the extent to which they will have a voice (Berger, 2004a). The highly educated professional employee is less a malleable resource for the company and more a mobile investor of his or her own intellectual, social and emotional capitals. As such employees are 'volunteers' for organisations, who view themselves not as assets, but as investors in their organisations (Gratton & Ghoshal, 2003).

This is quite a shift from the situation two decades ago when there was a massive downsizing of organisations, redundancies and the removal of layers of management as organisations endeavoured to increase their efficiency. Then we saw the psychological contract being renegotiated away from the idea of job security and a mutual employment relationship, to one where the individual had to maintain their employability and effectively manage their 'CV' in an effort to develop a career for themselves. Having shifted the nature of the relationship with employees in the direction of a looser bond, employers are now in a position where they may want to reverse the trend. Yet having tasted a different kind of 'relatedness', are employees willing to go back to stronger bonds? The labour market of the future is likely to favour the employee in the employment relationship. Understanding and effectively managing the psychological contract will help organisations thrive, but there needs to be clear agreement on the contributions that the workers will make to the organisation and vice versa (Rousseau, 2004). Prospects and promises about careers, development and how talent is managed will be more rather than less important in the future. Here talent

is king and talented people can thrive or falter on their own merit. The opportunities are greater for the entrepreneurial. There are not the rules and processes to be adhered to for promotions that occur in the process perspective. In organisations playing by these rules, talented individuals have all the rope they need to either hang themselves or prove their competence and worth. This is perhaps the least structured approach to talent management and suits the mavericks in the workplace.

There is the competitive perspective where talent management is concerned with identifying talented people, finding out what they want, and giving it to them – if not, your competitors will (Woodruffe, 2003). This is the perspective typically held by the large consultancy businesses or PR/advertising businesses. In industries such as PR, where intellectual property is everything and accounts move when people do, finding a way to keep the most talented is everything (Bannister, 2005). This approach would tend to appeal to perhaps the most ambitious, or those who have chosen to work within industries where rewards are considered the greatest measure of one's achievement.

Next is the developmental perspective, which proposes talent management is about accelerated development paths for the highest potential employees (Wilcox, 2005). Here the organisation wants to 'lock in' employees by targeting recruitment at entry level to the organisation and then developing and promoting from within to maximise opportunities for high potentials. This perspective is the closest to reverting to the 'old psychological contract' of a job for life where your employer looks after your career.

Finally there is the more general HR planning perspective which claims talent management is about having the right people

matched to the right jobs at the right time, and doing the right things (Mucha, 2004). This is generally supported by a very sophisticated IT system which maps out various different scenario options and future possibilities as people are moved round the company like a game of chess. Drawing on the results of 7 in-depth case studies into complex, multinational organisations, this paper will focus on the leadership development elements of talent management systems, taking a critical perspective on whether or not talent management is indeed contributing to the development of future leaders, or whether it is actually hindering the process.

Regardless of the perspective taken, the fundamental question of what is and what is not considered to be talent needs to be addressed. Tansley *et al* (2006) claim that 'talent management requires HR professionals and their clients to understand how they define talent, who they regard as 'the talented' and what their typical background might be. It also requires thinking about whether such recruits should be seen as particularly gifted.' If talents are considered to be 'gifted', then how many people are we talking about in an organisation? Berger (2004b) argues that only the top 3-5% are what he calls the 'superkeepers'. Chowdhury (2002) describes talented individuals as the spirits of an enterprise, being temperamental, creative, rule breakers and change initiators. Using that definition, I doubt any organisation would want more than 3-5% of their workforce to be 'talents'! The case study organisations ranged from one extreme to the other here. Two organizations considered everyone to be talent as part of their egalitarian culture that did not want to deny anyone opportunities afforded to others. This said, they did then recognise that some individuals had talent that was

recognised as more relevant to the organisation than the talent of others – but anyone could put themselves forward to be considered and developed, and everybody basically went through some of the same talent identification processes. This is one of the fundamental debates around talent management – the extent to which it is inclusive or exclusive. Take an exclusive approach and there is a danger that elitist tendencies will simply ensure that future leaders are in the mould of the current leaders. Another big question facing all organisations is whether or not to tell people that they are considered to be talented. It would seem that if the organisation takes the inclusive view and holds that everyone is talent, then it is safe to tell everyone, but if only a small group are recognised as talent, is it really beneficial to tell them? The 2005 What's Working Survey conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting found that 50% of employees who thought that their organisations could not meet their long term career objectives were thinking of leaving, while this number more than halved for employees who felt that their organizations could. Similarly, being given good opportunities for continuous learning reduced the number thinking of leaving from 57% to 32% (Mercer HR, 2005). This suggests telling your talented employees that they are considered talent could be advantageous. However, it does not all seem to be about opportunities and not having a transparent talent management system could also seem a little subversive. It means that an organisation is scheming a person's career and future without taking into consideration the response of the individual to their plans. implicit assumptions in talent management systems that start with the assumption that talented individuals actually want to be managed, and extend to include the assumption that talented individuals can

actually be managed. Tansley et al (2006) recognize that employees values and work preference can be of great importance. While talent may be defined as a complex amalgam of an employees' skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential, if the employee is not motivated to achieve, does not have ambition, or is happy simply to come to work and do a good job because they see their work as their work and nothing more, then it may not matter how much you treat them as talent, they will not change their behaviour, nor will they meet your expectations. With regard to whether or not talented individuals can actually be managed, Casse (1994) argues that the definition of human beings merely as resources is obsolete, demeaning and out of line with our sociological evolution. Many corporations fail to understand that the men and women who work for them need to be appreciated and valued for who they are, lest they lose their trust in their company's executives.

For some organisations it is not just a question of being able to manage talent per se, but of being able to manage different types of talent, for example talented women. In Fortune 500, female executives are leaving at twice the rate of men due to frustration with their work environment, i.e., they are out of sync with the corporate culture, and see little opportunity of advancement (Dickinson Shephard & Betof, 2004). In line with this, 77% of new businesses are being opened by women, and a 2002 Leaders Edge Research Study of 100 high-level women leavers revealed reasons for leaving were culture, communication (lack of) and career development. This gender differential could be more fundamental than simply being a communication issue. Gilligan's cognitive-developmental theory of morality proposes that in addition to the universal moral

principle of justice there is a second universal moral principle, the principle of caring. Caring is defined as a morality of responsibility and relationships, a sensitivity to the needs of persons.

Women and minorities face greater challenges in organisational entry and in moving up the organisational ranks because a mentality of white male managers continues to control the bulk of the power in organisations and largely determine a company's hiring, compensation and performance evaluation practices (Ng & Burke, 2005). In addition, gender and ethnic stereotyping contributes to the lack of acceptance of women and minorities as authoritative figures, and a lack of similar others makes it difficult for them to network effectively. Affirmative action programmes, however, only served to make women and minorities feel stigmatized (ibid).

## CONCLUSION

Talent management systems may be established with the best of intentions for both the organisation and the individual, the actual achievement of the benefits intended may be more difficult than anticipated to achieve. The history of the organisation, its culture and the sensitive nature of some work environments can lead organisations to include everyone in the talent pool, without any attempt to differentiate between them. While this may appeal to the more egalitarian amongst the workforce, the lack of segmentation results in the talent management system being little more than an enhanced performance management process. The culture of the organisation will impact on the perspective taken on talent management, and talented individuals are likely to choose, in the longer-term, to work for organizations whose culture is more closely aligned to their personal values. If an organisation does take a more exclusive

approach and does segment a talent pool, they then face the question of transparency. At its worst, high transparency might disenfranchise those who are excluded from the talent pool while over-boosting the egos of those who are included. The approach that an organisation uses needs to be congruent with the type of leadership the organization needs in its future. Whatever system is in place, if it is effective, a significant number of the future leaders of the organisation will be those individuals who thrived, were noticed or succeeded within the talent management system of choice.

### **REINFORCEMENT OF LEARNING**

Talent leaders who reported better business outcomes related to talent efforts were much more likely to have taken a holistic and well-integrated approach to strategic talent management. Specifically, successes almost always had the following levers working in concert. Performance management, while important, came in last. Interestingly, when we asked talent professionals where they spend most of their time, they identified performance management as the most time-consuming activity while noting they invest the least amount of time on cultural issues and initiatives.

Research further underscored that if you improved the culture of a company to support people development by one point, you would have a 10 percent gain in your business results. If you improved your performance management system by three points, you would get no improvement in business outcomes. Talent professionals who have broken away from time-draining activities surrounding performance management have found ways to create greater value. They have achieved this by investing in more strategic activities such as reinforcing a learning culture, building talent strategy and engaging leadership around

talent initiatives, as reported better business outcomes related to talent efforts were much more likely to have taken a holistic and well-integrated approach to strategic talent management. Specifically, successes almost always had the following levers working in concert.

- Culture: The organization has a culture that supports talent development and talent sharing.
- Strategic alignment: Talent management strategies and initiatives are aligned to the broader strategic plans and business objectives.
- Learning and development: The company's learning and development tools and processes effectively support post-assessment and post-feedback talent development and growth.
- Leadership: Most senior leaders visibly and actively engage in, and are supportive of, the organization's talent management activities.
- Talent assessment: The company has objective, standardized mechanisms to assess the most important skills and behaviors of incumbent leaders, managers and external candidates.
- Human resource capabilities: The HR function is viewed as a valued partner relative to talent acquisition, assessment, development, coaching and deployment.
- Talent data analytics: The company has data management tools and the capability to analyze the impact of talent management initiatives and efforts.
- Performance management: Performance management processes effectively measure and provide useful feedback on the right behaviors and skills in the workforce.

**FRAME WORK**

The concept of "Integrated Talent Management" became popular around five years ago - and since then organizations have used this phrase to describe an integrated approach to recruiting, development, performance management, compensation, development planning, and learning. The goal here is not only to make the Human Resources function operate more efficiently, but more importantly to create an "integrated system" for managing people which lets the organization rapidly and effectively respond to business needs

For example, suppose you are a manufacturer and are growing your business in China. With such an integrated model you would have processes and systems in place to identify key leaders ready for this assignment, move technical professionals into the new business unit, establish the culture and competencies of the sales and service people needed in China, and then set in place a local recruiting process which would be consistent with your global employment brand. Rather than just create a local HR organization which does its own thing, the integrated talent management program gives you and the organization itself a set of tools (platforms, models, cultural standards, forms, etc.) and experience (e.g. what are the best ways for us to attract the right people to our culture?) which can be rapidly leveraged for this new business opportunity. I like to think of talent management as "supply-chain management" for people - just as the purchasing function created an integrated process for acquisition and management of capital, so does talent management create an end-to-end set of processes and systems for all the management issues with people.

**“Out a few of the important new concepts”.**

The concept of "sourcing and recruiting" has been expanded to use the term "**Talent Acquisition**." This enormous area has become very complex and highly interconnected today: organizations must assess critical talent needs, determine performance profiles, source and screen candidates, and then hire and onboard people. This whole area (which we are dedicating a new research library to) now touches the entire people-management process: headcount and job requisitions must be included in the dynamic workforce plan; organizations must recruit internally as well as externally; job profiles and candidate information must be imported and stored in the talent systems.

And, we added "Career Management" to the core. Organizations now realize that the problems of performance management, development planning, succession management, talent mobility, and leadership development must include a formal and transparent process to help people build their own careers. The area of "Compensation" has been expanded to discuss "Total Rewards." All our discussions with clients show that ultimately the topic of "compensation" evolves into a "total rewards" strategy. Most larger organizations understand this, and the Director of Total Rewards often has a very complex job - sometimes also watching over the performance management process.

"Competency Management" can be renamed to "Capability and Competency Management." The word "capability" is one you should include in your vocabulary. In our recent IMPACT research conference, Don Vanthournout, the Chief Learning Officer of Accenture, talked about "Building Capability Champions" throughout the company. His message was one we all have to recognize: our job is not to build skills or competencies - it is to build total

capabilities. We consistently see that companies with 3 or 4 years of experience in integrated talent management then migrate their energy toward business-driven workforce planning. In Talent Strategy and Business Alignment. If there is one important message to consider, means it's this other than talent management is not only a process to integrate dozens of different HR and training practices, it is really a tool which helps your business leaders make better decisions and operate more effectively.

### **SIMULATION**

Management Challenge is a simulation-based management development program that lets managers practice communicating with employees, delegating projects, and managing employee engagement. Management Challenge uses a combination of team-based simulations, video-based workplace scenarios, and facilitated classroom discussions to build managers that are able to:

- Navigate difficult conversations with direct reports on potentially uncomfortable topics
- Facilitate effective coaching conversations based on identified needs and goals
- Develop and deepen relationships through coaching
- Engage and influence people with differing perspectives, preferences, and communication styles
- Create collaborative solutions within a competitive environment

### **DISCUSSIONS**

A development initiative called the “Aspire Program” helps prepare managers for their role. It consists of three levels:

- 1) understanding management as a concept and a role
- 2) management certification through a specific set of courses and

3) practicing management before becoming a manager.

This kind of development ensures that managers are equipped to conduct evaluations, feedback discussions, and other critical interactions with their employees. In the leading organization that has taken a proactive approach to workforce development. Through rigorous job analysis, the company identified key competencies for every position within the organization. If created a career development model for everyone from individual contributors to senior executives, with specific competencies for every level. Managers and employees are clear on what it takes to progress putting into significance of emphasis on rotating people into various roles throughout the organization to help them develop key skills for a better future & Present prospectus in company.

### **THEORY OF ESSENTIAL LEARNING, SKILLS TOWARDS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN TALENT MANAGEMENT**

Implement a leadership investment strategy based on a solid model of leadership success its causes and consequences. This model should reflect your organisation’s distinctive strategy, values, culture and operating outlook. Competency frameworks may be the predominant paradigm in leadership assessment and development, but too often are bland check-lists of generic managerial processes. There are alternatives that may prove more powerful in identifying unusual or overlooked talent or in challenging current perceptions of leadership effectiveness. the strategy that acquires talent in the external market-place with money as the key weapon. Acquisition and retention of the “star players” is the goal. But buying in external candidates at market premium and shovelling more money at

them when they get restless is an expensive and high risk resourcing strategy. This is not an investment game plan for long-term sustainable leadership returns or organisational success.

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High performing organizations recognize that successful talent management strategies include both big ticket and low-cost programs. Recognition programs are a tool that can often be implemented with minimal cost and in a short timeframe. During the dialogue HR leaders discussed several examples of successful, low-cost programs that employees say they value, including:

Public acknowledgement

- Recognition programs such
- As framed certificates Selection for an internal leadership
  - Development program Mentoring from or job
  - Shadowing a senior leader Attending an event or conference
  - On behalf of the organization Assignment to a special project or taskforce

Flexible work arrangements are another tool that can be used by an organization as a form of recognition for high performers. An employee who has written a proposal and secured a major grant, for example, could be permitted to work from home on Fridays for the next month as a reward. However, the forum participants recognized and discussed that flexibility is a tool that if used appropriately can be applied broadly.

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