

The business ABC of talent management – Align, Build and Connect

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To integrate HR fully with business priorities is a form of nirvana for most HR Directors. And knowing how to get, grow and keep talent in a fast-changing business environment is perhaps the most difficult HR challenge of all to get right.

Talent management sometime feels complex, but on closer inspection it can be as easy as ABC. The use of new technology to manage talent and harness employee potential at first seems paradoxical, with many seeing talent development as an art, rather than a science. However, many businesses clearly need to move more quickly to support leaders and managers to deliver meaningful performance conversations in an environment where resources are scarce and time is tight.

We believe that the key to aligning and accelerating the development of talent in the workplace is central to winning a competitive advantage. It must be based on putting the employee at the heart of driving their own career development. And to then be able to Align, Build and then Connect together many conversations around an organisation into a compelling career proposition is an area in which an innovative approach can make a massive and positive difference.



Align goals

In a challenging business environment, true HR leadership means empowering the organisation to meet goals, objectives and competencies through a smarter appeal to the motivations of employees. When it comes to selling products and services, everyone now accepts that using technology, including big data and predictive analytics, enables increased productivity, reduced cost, improved planning and great agility in the face of changing circumstances. So why shouldn't the same be true when using all the tools and technology available to improve human performance?

These latest innovations enable employee engagement and feedback by:

- Providing managers with an objective understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of team members
- Enabling performance management, KPI tracking and personal development
- Managing feedback and professional development
- Aligning employee goals with corporate strategy and mapping employee career pathways
- Tracking and managing talent management initiatives at all levels

Seen in this way, technology is the liberator of human potential. It enables managers to use their understanding of the values, strengths and skills of the team by recording and managing data to track and enhance workforce productivity, support critical business processes, manage compliance and drive organisational performance.

Build understanding

To build a pool of talent is complicated – and so at 10Eighty we believe that the best way to unlock potential is to every tool available to build a profile of the talent needs and desires across the organisation. We emphasise the training of managers to conduct those meaningful career conversations which enable alignment of individuals with corporate objectives. To efficiently exploit the strengths and skills of employees is like fitting together the pieces of a puzzle – you need every piece in the right place build a great team that works collaboratively and is committed to the aims and values of the organisation.

Effective organisations need people who share their key values and a work environment with a congruent culture. This is a another good reason to enable employees to draw on their strengths and build on them with a strategy for personal development, based on experiential on-the-job learning, coaching and mentoring to hone skills. So development becomes a primary means to motivate, drive performance and create competitive advantage.

Successful talent management prompts employees to think differently and take ownership of their careers. Using a system that analyses the aspirations, talents, values, skills, and interests of employees and matches them with career path opportunities enables an agile and engaged workforce. This focus on career pathways promotes talent agility.

“A joined-up approach to career development is directly connected to improved business performance.”



Make the connection

At 10Eighty, we favour an integrated approach based on in-depth understanding of the inter-connected nature of talent and strategic HR management processes. We use Fuel50 software to support managers and staff to hold connected conversations across the business, explore career pathways and facilitate mentor schemes to build a high-performance team. Our project with DS Smith used Fuel 50 in way which allows users to invest in their careers by helping them, their managers and the organisation to understand their values. As our client told us: “The insights have real depth. Reports are so valuable for realising people's potential and having more focused conversations.”

The integration of a sophisticated software system and professional HR management allows the organisation to craft an agile pool of internal recruits, ready for deployment to meet evolving business needs. This facilitates internal recruiting and enables managers to tap into a career-engagement positive gain spiral. We have found that internal career development and recruiting are directly connected to improved business performance, employee engagement and productivity.

This employee-centred approach, which deploys career-pathing, effectively increases employee engagement because it opens the way for quality discussion around broader career/life preferences, allowing the creation of an employment proposal uniquely tailored to individual needs.

In terms of performance management a system that is predicated on career development redefines the traditional performance review. The career management system we advocate allows team members to tailor their role to support development or explore alternative career directions that they may find motivating. Performance becomes a shared responsibility.

Employee-centred HR enables managers to map strategic objectives against current talent resources in their team, and delegate tasks accordingly. The use of career conversations to make real connections with staff allows meaningful career development aligned to the aspirations and motivations of the talent pool.

Knowing how to get, grow and keep talent in a fast-changing business environment may be the most difficult HR challenge of all to get right. But don't be fooled - the innovation and know-how is there to do so successfully. And, if you don't meet the ABC talent challenge in 2018, your competitors surely will.

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