

Talent Management Today

Why are HR professionals still talking about talent management?

The answer is simple, says Karen Cariss, co-founder and CEO of PageUp People, "companies globally are orientating toward a service-first focussed business and know that the best way to achieve this goal is through their people."

Recognition to do something about improving talent management practices, is one thing, says Cariss who co-founded the talent management solution provider over 10 years ago, but doing them in an integrated fashion, where you are pulling together all the elements of the people puzzle, is for many organisations still a massive challenge.

"Managing talent is about identifying, attracting, integrating, developing, motivating and retaining key people. Creating a robust approach within a technology framework which encompasses all these elements is the simple answer, but not simple to implement. Therefore, in my experience no one is delivering a fully integrated approach yet."

Cariss says that HR business practices are different depending on the country the company is operating within. What is considered 'business norm' in one country is different in another. These cultural inertias can blinker a company's vision to change. Some countries are very dependent on traditional practices. For example, the UK and Australia are still largely dependent on sourcing staff through recruitment agencies whereby a large number of US companies use proactive inhouse practices where they source candidates from their existing talent pool database first before they seek third-party assistance.

Another hurdle for many companies is that they are used to working with the four elements of talent management in isolation to each other and furthermore place more importance on one element over another. For example some focus on performance management and less on succession management, and others on retention over recruitment.

"These practices are stopping companies from delivering

'big picture'," says Cariss.

In terms of incorporating external technology in the mix to streamline and maximise processes, although the number is growing, still only a few companies are building it into their procedures. Some of the large multinationals who manage tens of thousands of staff have built their own systems while others are cobbling together the different pieces from a multitude of providers.

Irrespective of companies' decision making processes, Cariss says HR technology platforms are becoming more sophisticated by the day. So, there is the underlying concern that if organisations don't start delivering their global view of their HR practices soon it will greatly hinder their response turnaround time when dealing with organisational changes in the future. In order to achieve scale across a large global company, talent management practices need to be underpinned with a global technology platform that integrates all areas. Although this won't solve all problems, it is a necessity to deliver.

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"If a company knows that a critical operational staff member, for example a Plant Manager, plans to retire in two years, the most logical step is to incorporate a succession planning strategy. The question is, where do you start? A simple online review of the tracked performance of the chosen individuals can help you identify who would be appropriate while spotting the gaps in their profile that require development. Recognising this in advance, through a fully-integrated talent management system, allows the company to prepare their candidates for the role

six to even 12 months in advance, and like a race, the best performer wins. This approach allows the company to plan for the future proactively rather than wait for the role to just come up, and then panic!"

In a recent publication by PageUp People on integrating talent management and optimising the employee life cycle, it explains succinctly that a truly effective talent management system should be aligned with the four phases of the employee lifecycle: retention, recruitment, performance and development. When these are linked with the HR processes, and are measurable, and supported by smart technology, HR is perfectly positioned to be put in the 'driver seat', influencing the future decision making for the entire business.

In addition to future goal setting the benefits are numerous for HR managers. Administration is considerably reduced, the linkages between the different business units and HR are clearer which facilitates a fluid workflow and it allows HR to step away from the detail and take a helicopter view of their talent management. They can see, according to Cariss, various success indicators in one view, such as overall retention is up and performance is up, or there is a strong shift in internal job moves. Career development and training is clearly defined and employee competencies are easily identified.

Line managers also benefit. They have immediate access to current and relevant information, reduce time spent during the recruitment process, employees are more engaged which in turn creates the external perception of the organisation being a great place to work, which is also key to effortlessly attract new employees. If companies were to incorporate an integrated talent management system, as Cariss says, "this will fast forward them to a future where human capital will define business success."

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