Ten Steps to Effective Talent Management

The survival, profitability, and growth of a business depend to a large extent on talent management efforts. However, to be successful, talent management efforts need to have full commitment from all levels of existing management. Talent management is not an isolated task of the HR department, and without support and involvement from all levels of the managerial hierarchy, most talent management efforts end up as wasteful expenditure. This is why involvement of managers in other departments than HR is essential for any talent management drive. Each key group of stakeholders should have clear and defined roles in the talent management efforts, and in order to act effectively, their roles need to be clarified, prioritized, and communicated to them. Managers must agree to the talent management plan and their roles so that results can be achieved with greater transparency.

Step One: Clarifying common goals of talent management

- Creating appropriate replacements for key leaders
- Creating greater numbers of skilled workers to sustain business expansion and greater competition
- Recruiting, recognizing, and absorbing individuals with high-potential from outside the organization
- Developing the talent of employees within the organization
- Creating role-modeling for talent management efforts to help self-development and development of others

These are, of course, common needs addressed in talent management efforts. Other goals may be added in a measurable fashion according to business needs, and the senior management must agree to such goals before incorporating them.

Step Two: Identifying the nature of work and the people who are good at it

Effective talent management is impossible without identifying the different types of work needed by the organization and the kind of people needed to do such work. Hence, formulating competency models to describe people successful in particular types of work and updating job descriptions to match them with work needs is required.

Step Three: Finding the levels of present performance

Performance management is integral to successful talent management programs. Effective talent management programs need to take into account both results from key performance indicators and the behavior patterns linked with job success.

Step Four: Identifying and recruiting proper talent from both inside and outside
For talent management efforts, one of the key goals is to out-compete other organizations in recruiting talent. This is just as important in recruiting from within the organization as it is in recruiting from outside. Talent is always in short supply, and without proper internal recruitment processes in place, managers can suppress talented personnel for fear of losing them without replacement. One of the major tasks of talent management efforts is to unearth hidden talents from within the organization.

**Step Five: Formulating future talent requirements**

In dynamic businesses, the talent requirements are also dynamic and they keep changing while the company pursues the fulfillment of its strategic objectives. Talent management practices need to ensure that people are being promoted, taking into account both present and future requirements of the company. However, this approach has received criticism because neither retention nor future needs are guaranteed.

**Step Six: Assessing individual potentials for promotion**

Talent management efforts need to identify people who can perform at higher levels of responsibility. It is not guaranteed that people who perform exceptionally at one level of organizational hierarchy would continue excelling at other levels. When expectations are not matched, the organization may suffer loss by losing the productivity of a valuable employee. Due to such situations being common in organizations, HR now creates multiple paths of promotion, including promotions along with seniority in subject expertise.

**Step Seven: Creating an inventory of existing talent pool**

Informally asking managers to find talent suitable for organizational needs is an incorrect method, which is often ineffective. For proper talent management, organizational leaders need access to talent databases and competency inventories which are based on problems and issues faced by the organization. Being able to access the required talent within a time frame is essential for success in business.

**Step Eight: Creating plans for individual talent development**

Talent management efforts need to spell out how individuals should be prepared for coping with higher levels of responsibility. The common method used by businesses for this end is to prepare Individual Development Plans to close the gap between existing competencies and the competencies required by individuals to shoulder higher responsibilities.

**Step Nine: Actively retaining talent and creating processes to transfer knowledge**

Regrettably, most organizations do not have systematic retention programs to retain their best people. Ritualistic exit interviews end in added file loads that are never acted upon. Most retention that occurs is based on individual prominence that happens on a case-by-case basis. While such an approach has its merits, developing systematic retention programs are also necessary for successful talent management.

**Step Ten: Evaluating results of talent management efforts**

Though this is an issue dealt with in the last step of any talent management program, proper evaluation is possible only when the metrics are established at the time the initial goals are set. Evaluation of talent management efforts can then be properly done by finding out how many individuals have been prepared to meet the initial goals and how well they are doing. Usually, talent management evaluation is done annually.