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What are the Best Practices for Talent Planning?

Abstract

As part of business strategy planning, talent planning plays an essential role in positioning a company to maximize the effectiveness of talents and gain competitive advantages. Talent planning can be viewed much broader than succession planning. It encompasses a wide range of positions and numbers of employees across an organization. Aligning with the company's strategies and goals, talent planning is an ongoing process and its life cycle comprises planning, selecting, developing, promoting, and replacing. The core purpose of all the activities is to retain valuable employees. An analysis by Kenexa® disaggregates talent planning program into four dimensions: Career Planning, Talent Development, Leadership Development, and Succession Planning. These four dimensions ascertain the depth and width of talent planning programs.

Keywords

human resources, best practices, talent management, retention, female employees, Generation Y, millennials

Comments

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINAL QUESTION

What are the best practices for talent planning? More particularly focus on how to attract and retain young professionals (Generation Y) and female professionals.

INTRODUCTION

As part of business strategy planning, talent planning plays an essential role in positioning a company to maximize the effectiveness of talents and gain competitive advantages. Talent planning can be viewed much broader than succession planning. It encompasses a wide range of positions and numbers of employees across an organization. Aligning with the company's strategies and goals, talent planning is an ongoing process and its life cycle comprises planning, selecting, developing, promoting, and replacing. The core purpose of all the activities is to retain valuable employees. An analysis by Kenexa[®] disaggregates talent planning program into four dimensions: Career Planning, Talent Development, Leadership Development, and Succession Planning. These four dimensions ascertain the depth and width of talent planning programs.¹

GENERAL BEST PRACTICES ON TALENT PLANNING

There are various well designed and practiced solutions on talent planning issues. It is easy to adopt these trendy approaches. However, to ensure a most effective development on talent planning strategies and programs, a key question to understand is "what are the particular differences between staffing requirements and staffing availability (both required skills and staffing levels)." A best talent planning is the one that clearly focuses on addressing very specific staffing issues, not simply a generic solutions or "nice to have" programs that address macro-level concerns. To gain the focus needed, an organization should:

- ▶ Identify its most critical staffing issues.
- ▶ Develop longer-term talent management strategies that address those critical issues most effectively.
- ▶ Define specific short-term staffing and development plans within the context of those talent management strategies.
- ▶ Implement only those talent management practices that support most effectively the implementation of these staffing strategies and plans.²

According to a research conducted by a group of scholars in the INSEAD for a sample of 37 leading multinational corporations, companies who excel at talent management show a common characteristic in their practices - Three fits.

- (1) Internal fit: internal consistency and reinforcement of the practices employed to attract, select, develop, evaluate, and retain talent.
- (2) Cultural fit: practices align closely with the corporate culture
- (3) Strategic fit: practices link to the business strategy and long-term goals of the organization³

The research also suggests that a successful talent planning/management system comprises various practices (Figure 3). The research depicted the most recognized practices on Recruitment, staffing, and succession planning, Training and development, and Retention management. (Table 1)

SPECIFIC FOCUS ON GENERATION Y & FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

Generation Y

For Gen Y in the workplace, their expectations of a job go beyond just the salary. They view work from a more holistic way. They prefer a workplace that offers flexibility, diversified culture, training, variety in job opportunities and a management style they can connect with.⁴ Based on the characteristics inherent in Generation Y, Mark McCrindle, a social researcher at McCrindle research, suggested in his article *Generation Y at work* that there are five core elements to developing a retention strategy that targets Generation Y employees:

- (1) Work-life Balance: a career that allows them the opportunity to continue the other aspects of their life stage is highly attractive.
- (2) Workplace culture: an environment where they could interact socially and work collaboratively was highly regarded.
- (3) Varied job roles: A job description involving variety and the opportunity for advancement is critical for Generation Y.
- (4) Management Style: to retain Generation Y, it is clear that supervisors and the management hierarchy need to manage in an inclusive, participative way.
- (5) Training: ongoing training is the key to remaining relevant in changing times. This keeps them effective in their current job, but also employable for their future careers.

Also, in the article *Gen Y for hire*, the author Peter Schnorbach, a senior director for product management at Manhattan Associates, added other points from the following perspectives:

- Construct a strong incentive-reward system and enhance total compensation packages;
- Foster the social aspects of work and add fun activities to the workplace to make it a more relaxed and enjoyable environment;
- Increase the use of advanced technology to automate processes;
- Start a mentoring program that pairs new workers with company leaders and role models.⁵

Female Professionals

With more responsibilities on raising and taking care families, women in the professional workforce face special challenges on balancing work and life. At difference stage of lives, females' career development needs change accordingly. Elizabeth F. Cabrera from Arizona State University recommended five ways to help attract and retain professional women:

- (1) Flexibility: allowing flextime, telecommuting, part-time or reduced time position
- (2) Care-giving support: offering maternity leave, gradual reentry, and childcare support.
- (3) Maintaining contact: maintaining ties with women who have left in order to rehire them in the future.
- (4) Welcoming retries: recognizing the value of hiring reentry women
- (5) Supportive organizational culture: adopting family-friendly policies⁶

FIGURE 3. Talent Management: Principles, Practices, Processes

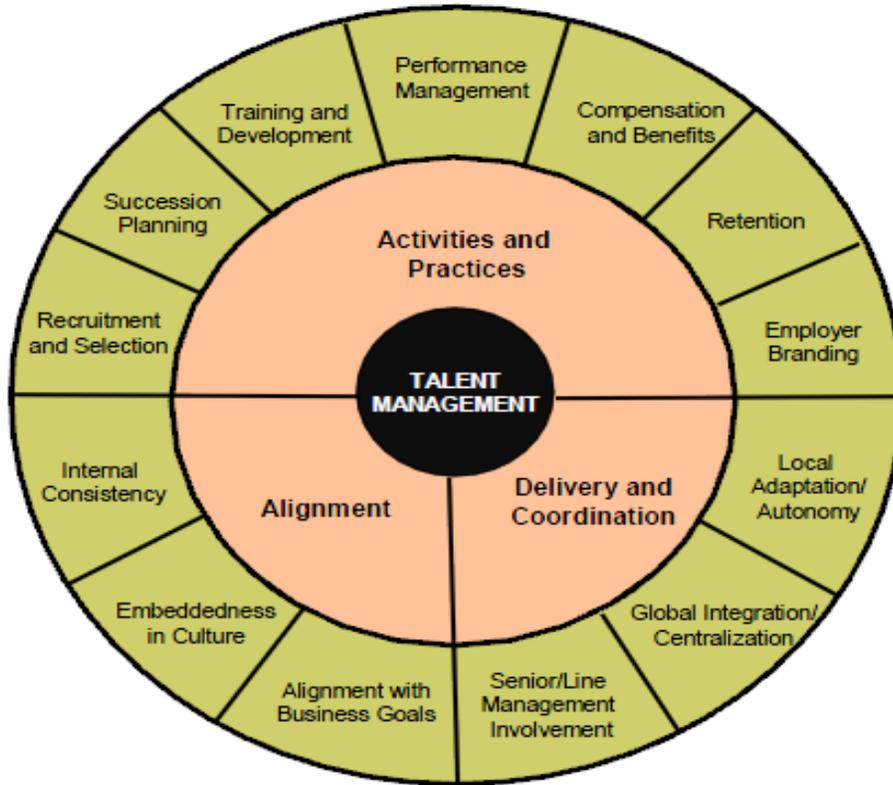


TABLE 1. Synopsis of Talent Management Best Practices

Recruitment and Staffing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Talent pool strategy rather than hiring for specific positions▪ Close relationships with leading business schools and universities▪ Highly selective hiring▪ Compelling “employee value proposition” and strong emphasis on global branding▪ Focus on values and cultural fit, not just job-related skills and experience▪ Continuous assessment of both performance and potential, using multiple inputs▪ Grading against competency profile of successful leaders▪ Use of talent inventories for selection and succession purposes▪ Different talent pools (executive, specialist, etc.) with different career paths
Training and Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Leadership development is top priority and deeply ingrained in culture▪ Promotion-from-within policy▪ Continuous assessment of training needs and feedback (360-degree reviews)▪ Individual development plans linked to succession planning process▪ Job rotations and international transfers as career development tools▪ Line manager involvement (coaching, mentoring, job shadowing, etc.)▪ Use of open job posting system and internal talent marketplaces
Retention Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continuous monitoring of attrition rates by performance level▪ Highly competitive compensation, particularly long-term wealth accumulation▪ Personalized career plans and broadening assignments▪ Senior management attention▪ Flexible working arrangements and other work-life balance practices▪ Diversity programs designed to develop, retain, and promote diverse talent

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