INSIGHTS

10 Days to Talent Management

In 10 days you can have the senior team support, talent management practices and HR capabilities you need to grow great talent.

Second place is good too, right?

We don't think so either.

Our clients want to win. They know that only the highest performing, most engaged talent can deliver what they've promised their customers and investors. They rely on The Talent Strategy Group to quickly elevate their company's talent quality and to radically simplify their talent building practices.

Our global team of consultants (all former human resource executives) can help you to transform your company's talent into a key competitive asset. We will work with you to create a talent strategy, identify high potential talent, accelerate talent development and elevate performance across your company.

We help the world's largest and most successful companies to build better talent faster. Let's talk about how we can get your talent into first place.

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10 Days to Talent Management

by Marc Effron, President, The Talent Strategy Group

Ten days from now your core talent management practices could be redesigned, your executive team aligned with your talent agenda and your HR generalists more capable of effectively managing talent. Doubt it?

We can assure you that what this article describes has been achieved with organizations that are just as global, complex and bureaucratic as yours. We describe below exactly how to accomplish in two weeks what it takes most organizations months or years to accomplish.

A small caveat is that we assume you're a senior talent manager or HR leader in your organization who is familiar with your company's strategy and HR practices, and is trusted by your company's executives. You know how to facilitate a meeting and manage a project. That's it. Here's how the 10 days flow and exactly what you will do each day.

Day 1
Conduct and analyze Talent Philosophy survey

Goal: Get the executive team's direction and guidance on how they want talent managed.

A talent philosophy is your executive team's "rules of the road" for how talent should be managed in your organization. It sets the boundaries within which the rest of your people practices operate, answering questions like "How important are behaviors?" and "How much do we differentiate our investment in our best talent?" For that reason, it's the first step in your 10-day process (for more details, read "What's Your Talent Philosophy?").

The first thing this morning you'll send a link to your executive team members to complete an on-line talent philosophy survey. You will have told them in advance to expect it and to complete it immediate-

ly so that you can prepare for the afternoon session. They'll answer 10 to 15 questions about the five elements of talent philosophy: performance, behaviors, differentiation, accountability and transparency (see the article referenced above for some sample questions).

As you wait for the data to come in, you'll prepare Power Point templates to present the survey findings, the "from/to" analysis and the draft talent philosophy. You should now be an hour into your day and it will be time to pull the survey data. Create a simple slide showing the results of each question.

Review the data and assess how the work experience of a high potential leader and an average performing leader would change if the philosophy suggested by the data were implemented. For example, if the data says that greater differentiation of rewards based on performance is desired, you might say that high potentials would see their bonus increase while average performers would see it decrease. Create a slide that highlights 4 or 5 of the most salient changes.

Based on your interpretation of the data, write one brief talent philosophy statement for each of the five talent philosophy areas. Again, read the article for suggestions about how to phrase those statements.

In the afternoon, you'll meet with executive team to discuss the talent philosophy survey results as well as the purpose of a talent philosophy and how it's used. You will present each slide briefly, explain the data and ask for questions. If there's any disagreement on the future direction indicated (and that's actually rare), you will facilitate the group to agreement on that item.

After discussing each of the data slides you will present the "To/from" slide that shows how the work experiences of leaders would change based on the philosophy the executives' data indicates. You will ask them if this is the future state that they intended to describe when they answered the talent philosophy questions the way they did. If they agree that it is

(and they typically do), move to the talent philosophy statement slide.

If they don't agree, ask them to describe where their talent philosophy survey answers either under or over state their intentions. Adjust the "To/from" slide to reflect the desired direction.

Show the executives the draft talent philosophy statements and ask them if the phrase generally captures their intent in each area. The goal is not to have a final, perfectly edited statement but something that is strongly, directionally correct. Discuss the statements, incorporate their suggestions for change and facilitate the team to agreement.

Ask how broadly they want the talent philosophy to be communicated. Should it be something that only the executive team knows about or shared with everyone? If they say shared with everyone (and they will), move to the next step. Either way, thank them for their participation and close the discussion.

If the team wants the talent philosophy to be broadly communicated, spend the next hour outlining the methods by which this can be done. Send an email to your head of corporate communications and the lead HR generalist(s) describing the outcome of today's meeting and saying that you'll follow up with them for input on talent philosophy communications and roll-out.

Day 1 is done and you have clear direction on how talent should be managed in your company.

Day 2 & 3 — Create Your Leadership Success Model

Goal: Identify the vital few outcomes that differentiate high performing leaders

A success model describes the outcomes that will be demonstrated by a high performing/high potential leader in your organization. By describing leader-

ship expectations in this way it instantly clarifies for leaders what success looks like and makes it easier to screen for and evaluate people for these capabilities.

In contrast, a typical leadership competency model describes inputs, i.e. strategic thinker, relationship builder, that may contribute to many different outcomes but provide no guidance towards any particular outcome. For more details on Success Models and how to implement them, read "Life After the Competency Model."

You will have scheduled 45 minute interviews with up to 10 executive team members and invited them to a 2-hour discussion the afternoon of Day 3.

In each executive interview you'll ask them which few outcomes will differentiate future high potential leaders. You should be able to complete eight interviews the first day and have time after each interview to identify the few key themes in each. Write down how they phrase the outcomes. Do not paraphrase. If they say, "They will come up with market-beating strategies in the toughest situations" don't write down "Strategic Thinker" – that's not what they said.

The next morning, read through your interview notes and identify the primary themes that are emerging across them. You can take up to two hours to do this but it will likely take you less time. Conduct the last two interviews. Update the themes if needed and prepare a deck showing the most popular themes and the statements that back them.

In your afternoon meeting with the executive team, present the themes. Allow the executives to debate the items and discuss wording changes. Continually refocus them on identifying differentiating outcomes. Be sure not to let the discussion slip into skills or behaviors.

Decide on five or fewer final items, phrased as outcomes and that sound like your business. You now have a leadership behavior model that your executives will actively support because it truly reflects their views and voice.

Day 4 & 5 — Design your Performance Management Process

Goal: Design how performance goals will be set, coaching done and reviews managed

You will hold a 2-day design session and will invite the key HR leaders in the business and select members of your talent management team, if you have one. You'll ask them to read Chapter 2 of *One Page Talent Management* in advance since it discusses the relevant science and the design implications from it.

You can ask one or two business leaders to attend but, perhaps surprising to you, we prefer you don't. The typical reason for inviting business leaders is to include the "voice of the business." We expect good HR leaders to know their business well enough to speak with that voice.

More importantly, it's often the suggestions of line leaders, when unchallenged by HR, that create complexity like goal weighting, calculations of final ratings, etc., in the performance management process.

For the actual design process we rely on a proprietary process we've developed call Rapid Cycle Design (RCD), so we provide less specificity about these actions in this article. RCD makes the design process incredibly efficient by identifying all of the individual decisions that need to be made about performance management (more than 50). Each of those decisions is posed as a question to the group and they discuss

the range of answers and the implications of each. Some questions are relatively straightforward (When should goals be set?) and some potentially more involved (Should behaviors be a part of performance management?).

Your new talent philosophy should strongly guide your performance management design. It will tell you the relative emphasis that you should place on performance, behaviors, differentiation and accountability.

Over the two days, the group will be facilitated through a discussion of each question and will finish with a completed draft performance management design. It may seem like a challenge to create a complete design in two days but we've done it many times. In fact, we often finish early on Day 2!

Day 6 & 7
Design your Talent Review & Succession Process

Goal: Design the talent reviews and succession planning processes including the definitions for potential and performance and the tools to be used.

This design process also uses the Rapid Cycle Design approach where a series of questions is answered to create the process design. The participants will likely be the same as those who participated in your performance management design if they were the senior-most HR leaders. Pre-reading should include Chapter 4 of *One Page Talent Management* on talent reviews

and the article "Creating a Talent Production Line."

The design process flows exactly as it was described for performance management. The heart of the talent review design discussion is often about the definition of potential. It's a definition that's often over or under-shot in the design process. We suggest it be defined by two components: 1) How far upward can an individual move in what period of time? 2) How closely do their outcomes match those described in the Success Model?

The talent philosophy should also provide strong design guidance in this discussion. The topic of transparency will likely arise and you will have clear direction on this from your executives.

Day 8 & 9
Build Talent Management Capability in HR Leaders

Goal: Improve the ability of HR leaders to assess, develop and take action on talent across the business.

The capabilities of your HR leaders will largely determine the success of your new talent management practices. Take this opportunity to teach them the core skills necessary to better manage talent. You can design your own two-day course but more practically we'd recommend a condensed version of the Talent Management Institute course at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School. This course is designed consistent with the OPTM approach and efficiently builds talent management capabilities.

Using that approach, over the two days your HR and talent leaders will learn how to identify and develop talent, manage talent processes and improve their ability to influence the talent agenda. They'll learn about your company's new talent philosophy and success model, and the design of your new performance management and talent review process.

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

They'll practice conducting talent reviews and get feedback on how they're approaching talent management in their business.

They'll also get development suggestions from the 4+2 360 on how to become a better talent leader.

Day 10
Plan Implementation and Communications

Goal: Create a draft plan for rolling out the talent management elements you've designed

You will have invited your corporate communications, any outside branding firms you use for HR and your senior HR leaders to this meeting. Your agenda will include:

Talent Philosophy: How will you ensure the talent philosophy is communicated thoroughly and that its content is well understood by all employees? How will you keep the talent philosophy "front and center" in every discussion or communication about how talent is managed at your company? When will you audit your HR practices to understand where gaps exist between current practice and the direction provided by the philosophy?

Success Model: How will you integrate this model into recruiting material, hiring processes, all development courses, your 360 tool and any other HR material or process that references behaviors? It should either take the place of any other leadership model or be shown as the primary leadership model for the company. (NOTE: You will have already integrated the model into performance management and talent reviews during your design process.)

Talent Reviews and Performance Management:

How will you communicate to the populations who participate in these processes the changes that you've made and the rationale for them?

And you're done. In ten days, you've:

- Aligned your executive team around the two most foundational elements of talent management – how talent should be managed and what differentiates great talent in your company

- Built the two core talent management practices – performance management and talent reviews

- Trained your HR leaders to be more effective at talent management and aware of the key drivers of talent management success

- Created a top-level communication and roll-out plan for everything that's been developed

There's plenty of hard work left, of course. Great design is the right starting point but actually implementing and executing these practices is what matters. That said, you're off to a great start by collapsing work that would have taken months or more into ten days.

It may sound impossible to do what's described in this article but we can assure you that it's not. You'll need to schedule the right people to be in the right places when they're needed. You'll need to aggressively facilitate meetings so that decisions are made without excessive debate. You'll need to influence key executives to make decisions on key topics. Most importantly, you'll need the sense of urgency that drives great HR and talent leaders to quickly complete the design process so they can get to the real business of growing better talent faster.