

Taking an Integrated Talent Management Approach

Ivo Delfgaauw, CEO of global training organisation Newfield Asia, remembers a unique talent management strategy that came up from a CEO he was coaching. Delfgaauw had asked the leader how he engaged with his talents and the response struck an immediate chord. “Every quarter, he invites new recruits to his house where he cooks them a meal,” says Delfgaauw. While this method is certainly unorthodox, it represents a growing trend of organisations turning to creative methods to engage their staff.

In today’s disruptive, complex, and ultra-competitive working world, organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain employees, in what is already a shrinking pool of global talent. The previously tried-and-tested methods of talent management in which recruitment, learning and development, and engagement each function as an individual block, are now far less likely to succeed. Rather, organisations are fusing all these components into one fluid and dynamic talent management blueprint, in the knowledge that the combination of all these efforts is potentially worth far more than the sum of the individual parts.

Hence, even something seemingly eccentric as a leader inviting new joiners for a cooked meal is now part of a carefully-calibrated talent management framework that also involves outputs such as onboarding and engagement.



An integrated approach

According to Delfgaauw, future-proof talent management strategies acknowledge three defining attributes that top talents are looking for in today’s workplace: being purpose-driven, and meeting the need for social responsibility; being relentlessly performance-oriented; and having strong principles so they feel part of a bigger family that shares common values.

One organisation that has engaged in such an approach is digital media and marketing solutions firm Adobe. Adobe famously did away with its annual performance review in 2012, replacing it with a new “Check-In” approach that encompassed a comprehensive talent management plan for each individual employee.

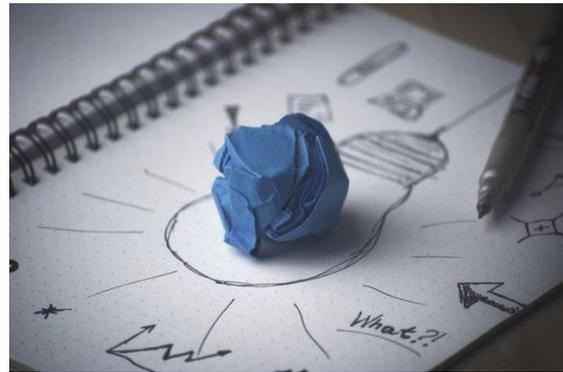
“We’ve eliminated this approach of doing an annual performance review, drawing up a typical bell curve, and ranking employees,” says V.R. Srivatsan, Managing Director, Adobe Southeast Asia. Instead, conversations are now undertaken between employees and managers at whatever frequency is appropriate for the two. Srivatsan shares that the Check In process has empowered staff to spearhead their own careers. Another organisation that has adopted a thorough and wide-ranging talent management blueprint is technology solutions provider JTH Group.

The organisation’s framework encompasses a wide range of aspects, and what it dubs as its “Three Cs” approach. Freddy Lee, Managing Director for Southeast Asia, says the company became “super-

aggressive” in hiring. For instance, it will deploy its most senior managers to recruit candidates, even for junior to mid-level positions.

Senior-ranked figures, including both Lee and his Head of HR for Southeast Asia Lynn Pua, would interview candidates and convince them of the company’s vision. They urge them to be part of “the bigger storyline” of building the firm’s enterprise security framework.

JTH Group’s “Three Cs” approach refers to compensation – paying employees fair and competitive wages – career progression, and culture.



Lee shares the rationale behind the focus on career progression. “There is not a lot of benefit when a person tenders (their resignation) and you then tell them you were actually planning to promote them next year. It doesn’t work that way because the moment the person tenders, the trust is lost,” says Lee.

Instead, the firm identifies high-potential employees and plots a three-to-five year career development plan for each of them. It maps out the necessary training programmes they need to undertake to further hone their skillsets.

The final “C” is about fostering a culture which enables employees to perform to the best of their abilities. Seng Hua Hng Foodstuff, producer of the globally-established Camel brand of peanuts, has also pressed on with an integrated talent management model, which includes recruitment, training, and crafting an inclusive culture to enhance employee engagement.

The firm has been undertaking a vigorous social recruitment drive through Facebook to source talent for predominantly blue-collared positions. In addition, Seng Hua Hng Foodstuff has been working with Workforce Singapore and the national Jobs Bank portal to build a “core” of specifically local talent, and partners with the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises to also hire ex-offenders.

After extensive consultation with a seasoned HR professional who assessed the company’s HR framework and mentored the organisation’s managers and supervisors, the firm has now drawn out specific on-the-job training plans for employees, particularly those who are involved in its production processes. “Employees know what they will be trained on every day and within a week, each will be ready for other roles, even though the roles do not differ drastically,” says Jan Goh, the company’s Group HR and Administration Manager,



“We also map out training goals for younger employees on a weekly basis.” The company has further partnered with national SME agency Spring Singapore to adopt machinery and technology into its daily production operations. With more than 40 of the organisation’s employees above the age of 50, Seng Hua Hng Foodstuff looks after the needs of its veteran workforce specifically.

For instance, the company conducts regular health talks, screenings, and coaching for relevant staff.

Health and wellness is a key aspect of its engagement initiatives, with employees – both young and

old – organising their own badminton, cycling, and jogging sessions with other staff. The company has further facilitated open engagement and dialogue with its older employees to discuss their performance and career goals.

With organisations such as Adobe, JTH Group and Seng Hua Hng Foodstuff already on board, Delfgaauw stresses that the need for a strategic and integrated approach to talent management is even more important in today’s context. “Organisations where management distances itself from HR strategy and execution are losing the war for talent,” he warns.

Accountability is vital

While integrated talent management models are crafted to help organisations hire, train and retain staff, it is imperative for line managers to be held accountable for the development of talents and the next generation of leaders in their respective companies.

“We all see the necessity to upgrade the coaching skills of our managers and leaders; but this is also where managers tend to be lazy,” says Delfgaauw. He says some organisations Newfield Asia works with have put an incentive on the number of talents they have coached during the year, both within and outside their respective departments. Delfgaauw also identifies several challenges HR departments face when overseeing an integrated talent management framework for staff.



“We see effective talent strategies balancing several ambiguities: a global strategy with local execution, a collective culture with individual rewards, and policies that are enduring yet constantly open to change,” he explains. “Perhaps the biggest challenge that this causes is the change in leadership mindset, attitude and competencies required by HR professional themselves within their organisation; from being in service to leading with flexibility.”

Source : <https://tinyurl.com/yc9gp43u>