



Managing a Changing Talent Landscape: Implications for Attracting, Engaging and Retaining Key Leadership and Technical Talent (April 07)

Clayton Glen – Director, HDA

The Talent Management Task

For organisations striving to manage their key *leadership* and *technical* talent, there is a tendency to split the talent management task into five key strategic components:

- talent *attraction*
- talent *performance*
- talent *engagement*
- talent *retention*
- talent *transition*

Splitting the talent management task into these components helps organisations to a) allocate appropriate management resources to each of the key talent constituencies; (including eg. candidates, the newly inducted who need to be engaged, longer-serving employees and managers who may need to be re-engaged, re-motivated, etc), and b) solve a broad range of situational talent attraction, engagement and retention 'pains'.

Key Talent Management Imperatives

Truly effective talent management stands or falls on two key imperatives:

a) organisational leadership having a *clear* understanding of the key business drivers impacting organisational talent requirements (very often an area articulated with difficulty by HR in isolation), and

b) organisational leadership largely opting to *selectively* focus its talent management efforts on:

- prioritising talent attraction (*buying in already-developed external talent*) – often linked to the increasingly common option to completely outsource talent needs in certain areas, to create efficiencies, and shift the burden of engagement and retention of existing staff, or
- prioritising talent performance, engagement and retention (*developing and nurturing internal talent*).

In practice, businesses obviously continue to both focus on external and internal talent markets, but very often short-term focus on one or the other is dependent on where the principal short-term pain may be.

What's Changed for Businesses?

The world of work is in flux, and the talent management rules are changing rapidly; eg. :

- what constitutes key organisational talent is changing ever faster as new technologies force organisations to re-assess their future talent needs to 'future proof' the emerging business;
- organisations are recognising that diversity management is an essential strategy for ensuring a strengthened internal talent pool, and no longer a 'nice-to-have' which fulfils a social responsibility
- traditional talent pools are shifting (eg. offshore, to outsourced pools, etc),
- other talent pools are flexing their new options, eg. shifting to portfolio careers in response to recent experiences in business where it has become clear that career continuity and development requires individual control vs reliance on the business to provide opportunity, opting out of the world of traditional work, taking their skills internationally, shifting sector, etc;
- and key talent pools, eg. senior leadership, are aging and nearing retirement.

What's Changed in the Talent Pool?

As organisations are increasingly opting for 'buy-in (and discard)' versus 'develop internally' in response to commercial and talent availability realities, it is not surprising that the concepts of organisational succession and organisational career development are increasingly anachronistic. This trend has obviously impacted at the 'psychological

contract' level, and survey results are increasingly indicative of a talent pool driven by personal objectives vs objectives driven by their organisations.

We are entering a much purer supply-demand situation in the world of work; possibly uncluttered by concepts such as shared values, mutually-beneficial career paths, and so on.

Implications for Successful Talent Attraction, Engagement and Retention

1. Well-led organisations are recognising that attracting and engaging external talent early on is enhanced by employing **employer branding** principles. '*Employer Brand*' is an old principle clothed in new labelling, and broadly touches on 'employer of choice', 'employee value proposition' (EVP) and 'unique talent experience' concepts. Those organisations recognising that the effective employer brand is the one underpinned by outstanding leadership behaviours rather than by hype and image, are the ones likely to generate greatest success in this area.
2. Well-led organisations are taking the time to regularly measure **team engagement** with the principles and objectives of the business (via surveys and focus groups), including permanent staff, contractors, and other customer facing constituencies), and those taking direct action on the outcomes of these measures are the ones who will ultimately convince their teams that there is value in the relationship.
3. Well-led organisations show evidence of expending effort (if not huge cost) on improving the marketability of their key talent via **coaching, project and stretch opportunities**, etc, whilst they are incumbent within the organisation, and are likely to hold on to key talent longer than those who do not recognise this opportunity-cost need in talented people.
4. Similarly, recognising that relationships will not always be truly permanent, well-led organisations put practical effort into providing career coaching and transitional support via **re-deployment and outplacement** when roles no longer fit, and in so doing very often build upon their employer brand, both in respect of the morale of staff remaining with the organisation, and in respect of the reputation with which new candidates associate the organisation.

For more information on any of the above please contact Sweta Patel, Campaign Manager – HDA, at:

+44(0) 207 820 9199 or alternatively sxp@hda.co.uk. Also see: <http://www.hda.co.uk/>

More on HDA:

HDA's range of consultancy services support organisations in all sectors (ranging from FTSE/Fortune 100 companies, to SME's, to public sector organisations), to manage the human aspects of business capability and organisational / career change.

Our work ranges from closely partnering with client organisations to manage large scale organisational change and restructuring processes, to facilitating behavioural change and development within teams and individuals; both in established and early-stage organisations.

HDA provides consultancy solutions in: organisational change consultancy, group facilitation, career management and outplacement, leadership development and executive coaching, employer branding and talent development, performance and productivity management, employee retention and motivation, stress management and employee counselling.

More on Clayton Glen:



Clayton Glen is Commercial Director with HDA (www.hda.co.uk), a privately-owned human capital consultancy, based in London, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Swindon and Bournemouth. He has accountability for all commercial activity across the company's business streams.

Clayton has held senior HR and commercial roles in the UK, the USA, continental Europe and in Southern Africa; in a range of industries, including chemicals/fmcg, automotive, e-commerce consulting and mobile technology. He has an MBA from the University of Wales. Prior to joining HDA, he was Head of HR & Finance with a venture capital funded mobile technology start-up (www.shazam.com), where he had accountability for building an international team and infrastructure in London and the USA.
