

Aligning Recruitment to Talent Management Efforts

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Introduction

The design and deployment of winning business strategy is done by people within organization. Over the past decade there has been a glut of management literature around the topic of talent management. The challenge of effective talent management to support business growth has been consistently identified as a top priority among global CEOs. While the phrase “Talent Management” is relatively new as a concept, however as a management focus it has always been at the core of strategic HRM.

Strategic HRM performs an enabling and investment management role for organizations. The HR leader as champion for organizational human resource management excellence is tasked with the primary responsibility of leading and strategizing comprehensive efforts to attract, develop, engage and retain a workforce that is competent to support strategy and strategic management efforts.

Talent management systems and processes need to be integrated into the total HRM system of the organization. Traditional roles of HRM such as recruitment, training, performance management and compensation need to be aligned to support the achievement of talent management goals such as talent turnover, employee engagement, succession pipeline ratios, etc. This article addresses how recruitment and selection, a traditional function of HRM needs to be managed in an organizational context that has a focus on talent management.

Recruitment’s position in talent management

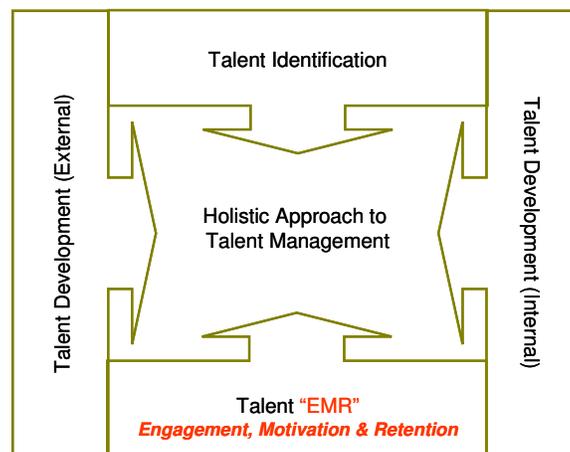
Expressed from a strategic business perspective, “*Talent management may be defined as a core sub-system of an organization’s strategic management system, to develop a human resource asset base that is capable to support current and future organizational growth directions and objectives*”. Talent management may be described as comprising three key components (Figure 1):

- Talent Identification
- Talent Development – Internal and external talent development
- Talent Engagement, motivation and retention

The first component talent identification is the process of identifying key positions and roles required to support the design and deployment of strategic and operational plans and initiatives. The second component, talent development is divided into internal and external development. Internal talent development relates to a variety of activities such

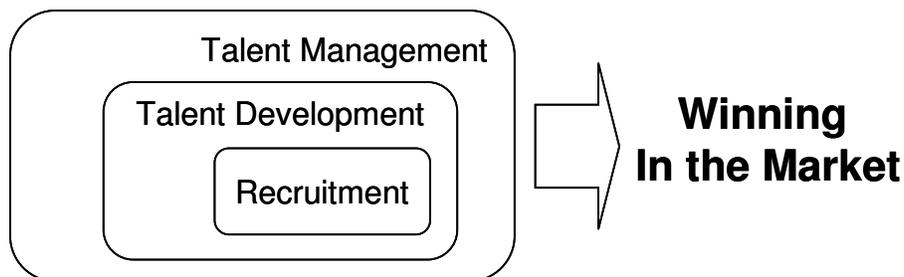
as training, performance management, coaching, special projects, job design, career development, etc. External talent development is essentially recruitment and selection, where the organization goes out into the labour market to identify, attract, select and motivate required talent to join the organization. The third component, defined as “Talent EMR” is an acronym for employee engagement, motivation and retention. Once the organization has the required talent, it needs to manage its investment, building required commitment and strategic alignment to support the organization’s strategy.

Figure 1 Three components of talent management



Recruitment in the total scheme of talent management efforts may be modeled as a component of talent development initiatives (Figure 2) directed to support strategic management efforts and to address the competitive dynamics of business enabling the organization to win in the market.

Figure 2 Recruitment’s position in the talent management model



Aligning recruitment to present & future needs

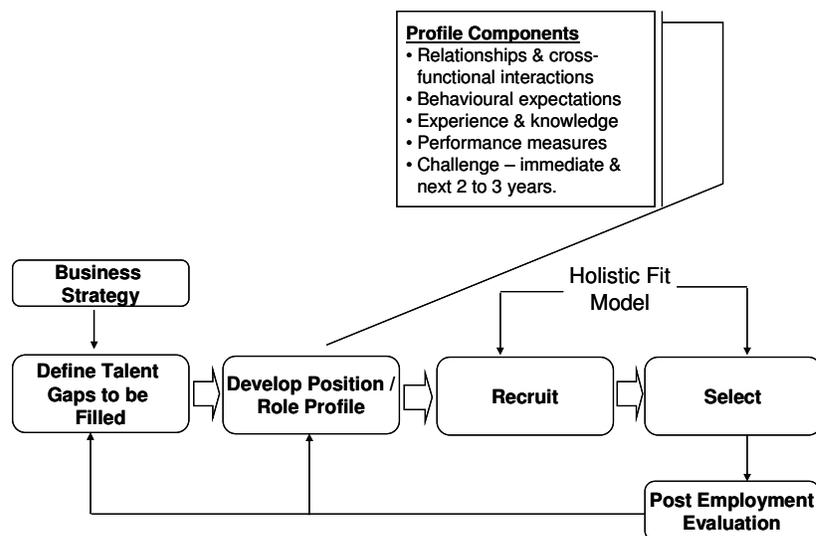
Talent management has to address both current and future needs. Similarly recruitment as part of talent development needs to be approached with a clear perspective of both current and future talent requirements. Recruitment request while often raised at an operational level (*Example: Production manager requesting for a Process Engineer*) need to be approached with a strategy driven operational perspective.

What does this mean?

It means that each time a request for a key position is raised, the HR leader, in partnership with the line manager would need to map out the (*Note: Key positions are positions that have a direct impact on the achievement of business strategy and objectives*):

- Strategic contribution this role will make;
- Current and future performance expectations and challenges;
- Behaviours expected when performing assigned task and interacting with various functions, levels and groups (internal and external);
- Knowledge and experience.

Figure 3 Aligning recruitment to current and future needs



Talent gaps to be filled through recruitment, need to be defined from a strategic perspective (Figure 3). Sourcing and selecting open positions based on narrow and outdated job descriptions hinder the alignment of recruitment to overall talent management efforts of the organization. Each key position filled needs to result in the organization having a better aligned talent pool in terms of current competencies and/or

access to high potentials with the capability to be developed to meet future strategic needs.

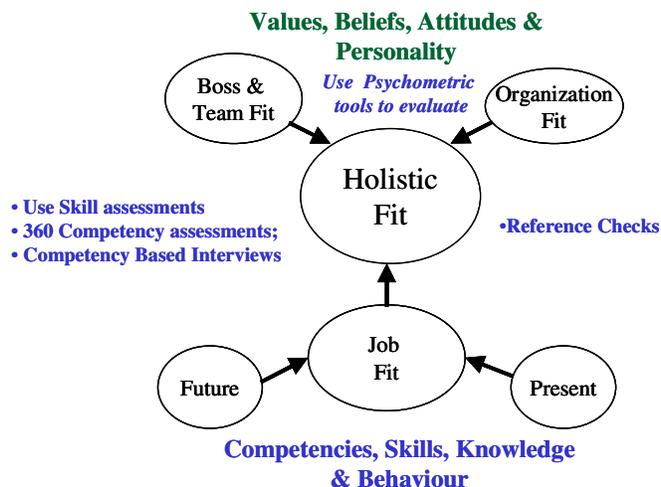
Holistic fit selection approach

Having defined the position profile for open talent positions, the next step would be to recruit and select. A key challenge related to recruitment is selecting the “right candidate”. The ideal situation would be to find candidates with the required knowledge, skills, experience, behaviour and attitude. However trying to find that perfect candidate is like chasing after the wind. A more appropriate objective would be to find candidates that achieve “Holistic Fit”.

The holistic fit approach differs from the ideal candidate approach in terms of its focus on finding a candidate that is able to fit into the organization and/or has the potential to be developed into the ideal candidate through structured internal talent development efforts. The holistic fit approach (Figure 4) aims to evaluate and select individuals that display a relatively stronger fit with:

- The organization – this refers to the degree the organizational culture and values align with those of the employee.
- The team – this refers to the similarity or diversity that the open position is expected to fill in relation to the rest of the team that the new employ will be working with.
- The superior / boss – this refers to the ability of the superior and the new employ to build up a mutually satisfactory and beneficial working relationship.
- The job requirements and expectations – this refers to knowledge, experience, contacts, skills and competencies required for the position. In the case of emerging industries knowledge or competencies that would provide a suitable base platform for development would be the criteria.

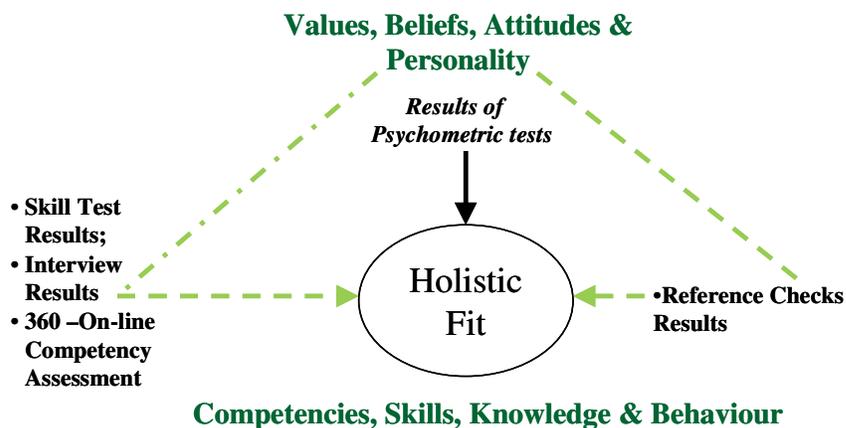
Figure 4 Holistic fit approach to selection



In order to assess holistic fit, competency based interviews form the platform tool, supplemented with other assessment methods, such as psychometric test to evaluate values, beliefs, attitudes and personality. Skill test and background checks may be used to gain insight on specific skills and past behaviour. The assessment process should not stop after the candidates is employed, but should be supplemented by assessments that provide feedback based on employee performance on the job (*Example: Multi-Rater feedback assessments, On-Job-Training assessments*) especially if there is a probationary period involved. No system is full-proof and organizations should be decisive in removing poor fit candidates.

A competency may be defined as a broad classification that describes a combination of abilities, skills, knowledge and behaviour. Organizations need to identify core and leadership competencies that are required from their talent pool. These competency requirements become the assessment criteria used during the competency based interview process. The interview aims to gain insight into past, proven knowledge, skills, experience and behaviour of potential new employ. Its approach generally involves asking open ended probing questions, eliciting detailed descriptions of how the candidate handled specific work projects, problems and situation. Information from interviews, provide insight into the candidates level of achievement with reference to the desired competencies. (*Note: For those that are not familiar with competency based interviewing, they are advised to do further reading. There are a number of texts on the topic*)

Figure 5 Triangulate findings from multiple sources to assess fit



The insight obtained from the competency based interview needs to be triangulated with information obtained from the other assessments done, such as the skill test, personality profiles, background checks, etc. Ultimately holistic fit assessment is reliable when

multiple sources prove to be consistent, because the accuracy of the findings from the competency based interviews depends very much on the skill of the interviewer.

The candidate assessment process needs to not only evaluate current performance capability but also future potential. Future performance potential is a result of a complex mix of factors however a reasonably accurate assessment may be made using the following equation:

$$\text{Future Potential (FP)} = \text{Future Role Performance potential} \times \text{Learning potential}$$

Future Role Performance potential (FRPP) - refers to the ability of the individual to perform at an acceptable level in a work context that is different from their current situation. Learning Potential (LP) – refers to the ability of the individual to gain and apply new knowledge and skills.

Based on the equation [$FP = FRPP \times LP$] the interviewer may seek to evaluate candidates future potential against competencies such as adaptability, flexibility, uncertainty tolerance, change receptivity, innovation and personal resilience. In order to evaluate these competencies, specific behaviours linked to these competencies (*Example: Flexible – Willing to take on additional tasks outside normal job scope*) need to be defined and used as a reference to identify similarities displayed by candidates in their previous employment history.

In summary the competency based interview together with other assessment tools focused on evaluating the holistic fit of potential employs in relation to the job, boss, team and organization will enable the organization to select that candidate which best aligns with the talent requirements of the organization.

Evaluating recruitments contribution to talent management

Just like any process in order to manage it, performance measures need to be put in place. Recruitment as mentioned is core to external talent development, thus performance measures with a talent development focus need to be identified. With reference to Figure 3, specific performance measures may be developed for critical points of the process, examples of such measures are presented in Table 1. The first column list the steps of the process outlined in Figure 3 while the second column indicates possible performance measures. Each organization should develop customized performance measures and this will:

- Make the recruitment monitoring and control process strategically relevant;
- Provide useful information for continuous improvement and internal benchmarking efforts;
- Direct decisions on resource deployment and
- Provide input to future talent management planning efforts.

Table 1 Recruitment performance measures with a talent development focus

Process Step	Performance Measures
Business Strategy → Define Talent Gaps to be filled	% of Talent Positions Filled Average Time to Fill Talent Positions
Define Talent Gaps to be Filled → Develop position role profiles	% of Talent Gaps with role profiles completed
Develop position role profiles → Recruit	% of Role profiles with recruitment competencies identified
Recruit → Select	% of Applicants that fit role profiles % of Extended Offers Accepted % of Selected candidates meeting above 75% holistic fit scores
Select → Post Employment Evaluation	% of Selected candidates retained over XX period Talent pipeline Ratio % of Selected candidates performed poorly during probation

Conclusion

The article started by introducing the strategic nature of talent management and its close relationship with strategic HRM. The three core components of talent management were identifying, developing and EMR (Engaging, Motivating and Retaining). Recruitment was positioned as a core component of external talent development efforts and supports talent management efforts when it is strategically driven. Open talent positions need to be profiled from a strategic perspective and using the holistic fit approach potential candidates evaluated and selected. The holistic fit approach is grounded on the competency based assessment approach. The $FP = FRPP \times LP$ model was introduced as a means to evaluate future potential. The article ends with a discussion on the development of recruitment performance measures that align with organizational talent management effort.

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