

HR: The Next Generation

Applying BI principles to the management of talent

by Sandy Asch, Alliance for Organizational Excellence

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For two decades metrics from human capital management have been conspicuous by their absence. Now, successful, forward-thinking companies are providing a framework for business intelligence dashboards to include the pulse of that most crucial element of any corporate initiative, the people.

This is a talent-driven, talent-scarce job market. In the May 2006 cover article of Business 2.0, editors suggested that an unusual convergence of economic factors make this the best time to look for a job since the most dizzying days of the dotcom boom. The Bureau of Labor Statistics quit rate suggests 2.6 million people are leaving their jobs each month. In the lead story of October 2006 edition of The Economist, editors note that, "talent has become the world's most sought-after commodity." "The shortage is causing serious problems."



With the projected labor shortfall estimated at 26 million over the next decade, unique demands of a multi-ethnic, four-generation workforce, and increased expectations of the employee experience, developing expert people managers is no longer just a good idea, it's critical to managers and their organization's success. This means that job number one for every manager is to become a talent expert - proficient at attracting, optimizing and retaining the top talent companies needs to meet and exceed its goals.

Whereas, in the past, companies might have focused on process, projects and numbers, now managers will need to add considerable people management skills to their repertoire in order to engage, inspire and maximize the potential of their direct reports.

Management in today's world is very different from what it used to be. Many managers learned how to manage from managers who weren't necessarily expert people managers, nor were they expected to be. Whereas in the past, the measure of a good manager was the bottom line, today's managers are measured not only by their results, but also by their ability to attract, optimize and retain talent. In the past managers might have asked questions like "How will I meet my numbers?" or "What do I need to get the project done?" Now managers are asking, "How I can attract the best talent, inspire them to contribute at the highest levels, and keep them?"

Today's manager has a new mindset. He or she approaches management from a different point of view, because of an inherent understanding that to be effective it is critical to balance the drive for results with expert people management. In the table below we distinguish between management as we have known it in the past, and the kind of thinking required to effectively manage in the new workplace.

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Then	Now
Think of their staff as employees	Think of their staff as talent
Believe people are important	Know people are everything
Think of training as a department	See training as a necessity
Are drivers	Are facilitators, mentors, and talent miners
Focus on bottom line results	Focus on results and people
Are good technicians	Are good technicians and brilliant talent managers
Are required to have some people skills	Must be expert people managers
Rely on human resources for recruitment, selection and on boarding	Partner with HR to recruit, select and onboard
Believe one-size management fits all	Are versatile and committed to meeting the unique needs and demands of a multi-ethnic, four-generation workforce
Feel turnover is expected	Actively manage retention
Are accountable for results	Are accountable for results and talent management
Tolerate people management responsibilities	Are dedicated people managers
Aware of employee satisfaction levels	Rigorously manage engagement
Hope top producers will stay	Actively manage retention through “stay interviews”
Conduct infrequent, tactical one-on-one meetings with direct reports	Conduct frequent, strategic one-on –one meetings to discuss direct reports goals, aspirations and future plans

Excellent Managers are accountable for talent management

In a conversation with a group of managers at a successful consumer products company, I asked managers how they measure their effectiveness. One manager responded by saying that a key indicator of her success is that she can go away for a few days and when she returns everything is still okay. Another manager suggested that a key measure of his success is that his direct reports are able to make decisions on their own. Both are good answers, but fail to objectively measure

management effectiveness. The true measure of an Excellent Manager is his or her results.

An Excellent Manager is measured by these criteria:

- Has a strong reputation which attracts top candidates to seek a position in your company
- Influences top candidates to accept a position in your company
- Inspires current employees to refer qualified job candidates
- Minimizes the number of bad hires who terminate or quit within the first 12 months of employment
- Maintains a high level of employee engagement
- Ensures employees participate in relevant, actionable training each year
- Architects internal promotions for top talent
- Actively mentors key talent
- Conducts a meaningful annual performance review for employees to inspire improved performance and deepen engagement
- Achieves a high level of performance of new hires within 6-12 months after hire
- Retains top talent
- Is not one of the top three reasons employees give for leaving in their exit interviews.

In my book: *Excellence at Work: The Six Keys to Inspire Passion in the Workplace*, I outline the importance of not only establishing a new mindset and communicating clear expectations to managers, but, most importantly, to engender a sense of accountability for expert talent management. The only way to ensure accountability is to measure and reward desired management behaviors. We all know that you get the behavior you reward. Up until now it has been rare to find companies that hold managers accountable for their people management competencies. Apart from one or two items on the annual performance review, measurement of talent management has been absent. No surprise then, that for many managers this is not considered a priority.

The most reliable pathway to modify behavior is regular measurement reinforcement and reward. Think *Weight Watchers!* The success of this weight loss company lies in its simple approach to monthly weigh in's in the company of one's peers.

Enter the management dashboard - an interactive, "cool" way for managers to monitor and track their talent management efforts, with visual symbols of their progress and comparison of their results with their peers. Couple this with visibility to senior management, and the change from traditional management to the new management reality becomes possible.

An effective talent management dashboard:

- Reinforces and rewards managers' talent management efforts on carefully considered key indicators showing monthly progress and comparison charts
- Measures employee engagement and offers real-time information to help managers create continuous action to maximize productivity
- Links talent management initiatives to bottom line business results

The bottom line: it helps drive increased retention, decreased recruitment costs and improved performance.

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Discussion:

Terrence Sheflin said:

I think the change in the way managers view employees is an excellent forward step, and having a management dashboard to track such a thing is an interesting concept. I can see this sort of thing becoming very popular for managers in the future.

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