Organizational Plan

Recruiting Plan

Development Plan

Retention Plan

Assessment Plan

Outplacement Plan

Feedback Loop

The Talent Management Life Cycle Process

Every organization struggles with the daunting task of attracting, developing and retaining top talent. With the rapid continuous changes organizations are facing, it is not uncommon for this activity to take a back seat to the more immediate nature of whatever transaction is dominating the organizational mindshare.

Talent Management Life Cycle is a continuous process that deals with human capital in a comprehensive, holistic way ensuring that both employee and employer gain the maximum benefit from their mutual association.

Historically, the human resource has not been seen as a strategic asset but rather as "headcount" that must be in the budget. Many, if not most, organizations comment that headcount is their largest expense budget line item. It seems odd that the thing that represents the largest expense gets the least amount of attention in terms of strategic integration and return on investment.

When executives and managers do their business planning, they plan for capital requirements, plant and facilities, technology and eventually get down to some extrapolation that results in a "headcount" number.

The Talent Management Life Cycle process integrates the human resource requirement into the strategy and business planning cycle and gives it the attention and priority it deserves.

When you think about the strategic application of people in organizations, there are a number of relatively simple metrics that can improve the ability to attract top talent and an equally obvious number that can aid in retention.

In most organizations, a hiring decision is made largely on whether (or when) the additional headcount is in the budget. In unplanned cases, a need may arise due to business circumstances that may or may not have been anticipated. In any event, when the need to hire someone is recognized, it is almost always too late. People, just like other assets, have lead-time to procure.

Different job categories require varying lengths of time to locate and employ the talent establishing a known time the recruiting activity should begin prior to the actual need.

Not only do people have lead-time but organizations also have favored sources for finding people based on experience. Traditional employment advertising best fills some job categories while others require the assistance of professional recruiters and still others depend on word of mouth.

Every company is different but the knowledge usually is resident in the organization but is seldom applied to the human resource sourcing activity or incorporated into the business planning process.

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In order to gain the full benefit, the Talent Management activity must be operated in the context of a strategic process that integrates all of the known metrics and offers management the benefit of an analytical process allowing them to track return on investment and make better-informed decisions.

The Talent Management Life Cycle also addresses the reality of employees not spending their entire work life with one or two employers but rather moving from situation to situation with some regularity. The process further allows employers to add value to each employee by actively participating in their development in ways that historically have been talked about but seldom realized.

There exists a typical "Bell shaped Curve" for each job function in any organization. This curve depicts the average tenure of an individual holding that position and offers valuable information regard when to invest in the employee's development and when to refrain from further development, as the return on investment will not occur.

With proper data collection and maintenance, the tenure curves can be established and maintained current for each job function.
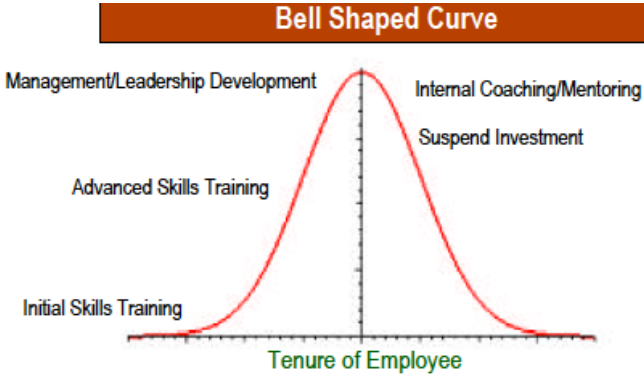
As with any data, managerial discretion is always prudent. Not every individual is the same however we can draw some meaningful parallels from the data available and the analysis and application of the learning can form the foundation of a vibrant, healthy learning environment for any organization.

As indicated in the graphic below, some individuals will not follow the "average" tenure curve and will either, on their own or with intentional coaching and development, move from one position to another within an organization. These individuals usually comprise the top performer group and are frequently being groomed for promotion.

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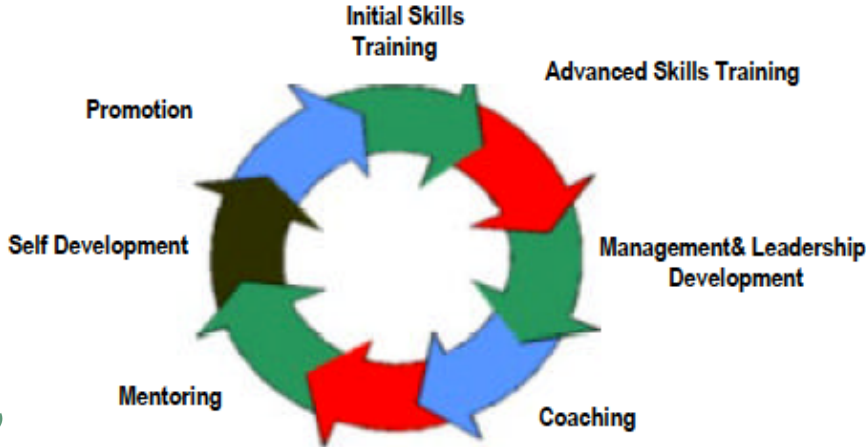
Additionally, employers gain a recruiting advantage over their competitors as well as benefiting from a better-trained, highly productive, more motivated work force for the period of time their employees are with their organization.

Examining actual implementation surfaces the various elements of the Life Cycle that must be considered.

Organizational Plan

The Organizational Plan:

*   Defines the categories of people you are going to need in the future to meet and/or exceed your business plans.
*   Defines the specific skills and skill levels required for each position.
*   Defines the job goals and standards for each position type.
*   Determines the average cost (salary & benefits) for each position type.
*   Quantifies how long individuals remains in each job type.

Recruiting Plan

The Recruiting Plan:

*   Based on the Organizational Plan, the recruiting plan determines when to begin the recruiting process for job types in the business plan.
*   Identifies sources where you have been most successful in finding each category of employee.
         * Formalizes the process for initiating, approving and commencing a recruiting program.
*   Determines why candidates decide to join or not to join your organization and documents this information.

The Development Plan

The Development Plan

*   Ensures each job type has objective standards of performance and that career directions for each position can be clearly identified.
*   Ensures each employee has an individual development plan and that managers and supervisors hold direct reports accountable for achieving each objective in their plan.
*   Ensures every employee has a formal career plan.
*   Structures regular coaching sessions between managers/supervisors and their direct reports.
*   Rewards managers/supervisors for achieving developmental success with their direct reports.

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The Retention Plan

*   Aligns rewards and recognition systems with individual performance and development plans.
*   Surveys employees regularly to benchmark employee satisfaction and determine changes in attitudes and motivators.
*   Ensures action on survey results.
*   Rates and rewards managers/supervisors for successfully retaining qualified, successful employees as well as for achieving the traditional business metrics of the position.
*   Ensures all key positions in your organization have a formal, active succession plan in place.

The Assessment Plan

*   Ensures each employee is formally assessed periodically throughout each year.
*   Compares each employee to established standards, behavioral and cultural norms, and rates each employee within a job type against their peers.
*   Ensures that development plans are in place for all employees and that corrective action plans exist for under performing employees.

The Outplacement Plan

*   Determines when a job type is no longer required by the organization and moves to eliminate it immediately.
*   Determines when a job type has changed sufficiently to warrant a reassessment of the employees currently filling those positions.
*   Determines when an employee is no longer meeting requirements in a given job type and move to improve performance, transfer the employee to another job type or out-place the employee.
*   Determine why people are leaving the organization on their own and take steps to improve negative situations.

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The Feedback Loop:

*   Design a feedback system that has input points throughout the employee life cycle and that captures relevant data, establishes trends and provides managers and supervisors with usable data.
*   Determine the most common reasons employees leave.
*   Build a database to identify and track trends.
*   Provide individual managers/supervisors with detailed feedback on employees who leave their areas of responsibility.

Some obvious questions arise when considering this intentional level of investment in the process and the people. A common question is: "Aren't we just developing people who will leave and take their skills with them?"

The answer is absolutely!! But what are the alternatives? The reality is that few employees are going to stay at any organization for their entire career.

So, we can continue to let people drift through our organizations picking up whatever skills they can along the way or we can engage with them in an entirely different manner.

Employers can actively partner with new and existing employees to guarantee maximum performance and return on investment.

Talent Management Life Cycle looks at the entire human resource cycle from the business planning phase to the recruiting and employment event, through the individual's development cycle to the last day of employment of that employee and beyond.

Talent Management Life Cycle causes employers to look far beyond just having enough bodies to do the work and changes them into learning and teaching organizations. People now become a strategic resource, incorporated into the business plan far more intimately than the traditional head count and cost figures represent.

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