

Talent Planning A Systematic and Integrated Approach

By Margaret Butteriss and Carol Salloway

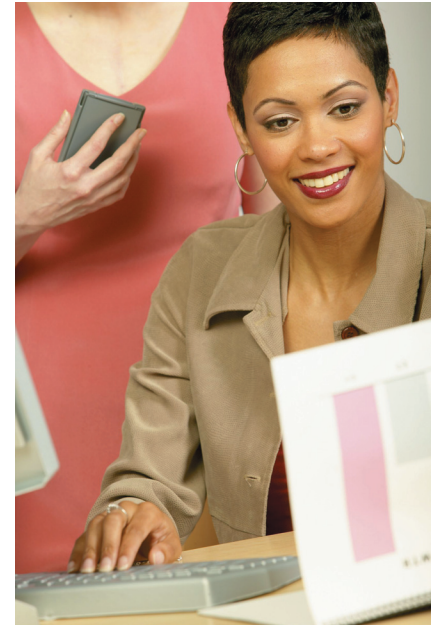
At long last, the old adage “our people are our most important asset” is gaining traction in corporate America. And none too soon, considering current business conditions.

Several factors are driving companies to realize the critical need for talent planning:

- The retirement of the Baby Boom generation has begun. As more Baby Boomers make plans to retire, companies are waking up and re-focusing on the development of the next generation of leaders.
- An increasingly complex business environment is also raising the bar. Companies are facing greater and more complex challenges today, including globalization, outsourcing, virtual teams, and consolidations, to name a few.
- Boards are taking greater responsibility for overseeing that their company is equipped to develop and execute on its business plans.
- Leadership development is a resource intensive venture. The company must be very selective in the distribution of any development dollars/time/other resources.
- Retention of key talent is critical to the business – the financial and operational cost for talent replacement is significant. Most retention research studies point to personal growth and challenges as key drivers for high performers.

THREE TYPES OF TALENT PLANNING

- 1) **Role-based:** designed to determine succession candidates for specific roles and critical positions
- 2) **Individual-based:** designed to develop the identified MVPs in the organization
- 3) **Pool-based:** designed to create a talent pool of emerging leaders who, over time, may advance into any number of leadership positions



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For all these reasons, companies can no longer hope that the right talent will fall into place. Talent planning must be a crucial part of any long- and short-range business planning. We outline below a step-by-step talent planning process that can be followed by companies of any size. The goal is to create

Talent Management Process Overview

I. Planning	II. Assessment	III. Implementation
<p>Identification of Business & Talent Management Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the business and talent needs with senior leaders • Determine talent assessment elements that are in place • Establish/refine/clarify vision and values of organization, as needed • Establish the competencies required to meet the business plans 	<p>Assessment of Talent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior team talent assessment sessions • Create succession plans for critical positions (as needed) • Create individual development plans 	<p>Implementation of Development Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement various development options: e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group coaching • Individual coaching • Strategic action teams/project teams • Task forces • Interim assignments • Job rotations • E-learning • Classroom learning-internal and external • Outside activities
<p>Outcomes of Phase I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent management project plan • Definition / re-clarification of vision, values, competencies 	<p>Outcomes of Phase II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of talent and development plans • Creation of succession plans (as needed) for “hi-po’s”, “keepers”, and critical positions 	<p>Outcomes of Phase III:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized development plans to meet business & individual needs

and implement a systematic approach to identify, retain and develop the company's top talent.

The following are questions that a talent planning process should address:

- What business goals and strategies are we pursuing (e.g., are we planning to grow, utilize new technologies, expand markets, etc.)?
- What will these changes mean for our talent requirements? In other words, what kinds of people (skills,

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- competencies, knowledge) will we need to execute these plans?
- Who do we currently have on board that fits this profile? Can we grow some of our talent to support our strategy? Do we need to recruit from the outside?

- What will the selected leaders, collectively and individually, need to support their growth and ongoing development?

These questions can be answered during the three phases of the talent planning process.

PHASE 1: THE IDENTIFICATION OF BUSINESS AND TALENT MANAGEMENT NEEDS

During this phase, an organization defines its strategy and business plans for the coming years and determines its talent requirements in relation to these business needs. It either confirms or defines its vision and values together with the leadership competencies required for current and future leadership success.

PHASE 2: THE ASSESSMENT OF TALENT

In this phase, the senior leaders assess the existing talent in the organization. Usually tools and processes are provided by HR to ensure that there is consistency of assessment. This often takes the form of assessing talent against performance results, conformity to values, and levels of competency.

There are typically three types of talent planning:

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Typically, in any of these cases, talent review sessions are conducted where the senior management team reviews the comparative profiles of high potential and high performing individuals across the organization.

The purposes of these sessions include providing an opportunity to:

- Share knowledge of the talent across the organization
- Identify high potential and high performing people and the required developmental opportunities
- Assess strengths and weaknesses and their contribution to the organization
- Determine next steps in their career progress and potential next moves

PHASE 3: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS

During this phase, the specific development needs of the high potential/high performance individuals are assessed. Development planning is considered at both the organizational and individual level. Typically, the organization will use 360 assessment and other tools to identify individual development needs and opportunities.

An important premise for the creation of development plans is that everyone learns differently and at different paces. A talent development program cannot be “one size fits all”; it must incorporate a variety of approaches to accommodate the unique learning needs of participants. Further, studies of how leaders develop indicate that it is the challenge within an experience that promotes learning and makes it developmental.

The following are some examples of the range of development vehicles that a company might want to consider, with the goal of looking for both variety and challenge:

- Group coaching
- Individual coaching
- Strategic action teams/project teams
- Task forces
- Interim assignments
- Job rotations
- E-learning
- Classroom learning – internal and external
- Self learning/individual stretch assignments
- Guided reading
- Outside activities (e.g., community board representation, etc.)

The specific development plans should be designed to align with the individual’s interests, learning needs and stage of development.

The benefits of a talent management planning program to an organization are tangible. To be sure, embarking on such a program is no simple task. Success demands hands-on senior management involvement, careful planning and a disciplined approach. Yet, it is not a question of whether to allocate the time and resources to talent management. Rather, it is a question of how and when to do so.

In today’s competitive business environment, companies can’t leave organizational leadership to chance. Side by side with business planning, they must build a program to nurture

and develop talent within the organization. They must put words into action and practice behaviors that announce definitively: “Our people are our most important asset.” ■

TALENT PLANNING: A CASE STUDY

The following case study profiles an organization that has begun to implement a formal approach to talent management that exemplifies many of the elements outlined above.

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) is a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School. It is renowned for excellence in patient care, biomedical research, teaching and community service.

Background

Similar to many other large medical systems, BIDMC went through a difficult financial period a number of years ago. A new Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and SVP of Human Resources were appointed. The new senior management team believes strongly that investment in key talent is a critical driver of business performance and success.

Over the last couple of years, the organization has created and implemented a comprehensive talent management process as described below:

Phase 1: The Identification of Business and Talent Management Needs

The senior management team created a five-year strategic plan and defined the leadership competencies required to support the plan. One key action item that came out of this plan was to implement an 18-month accelerated leadership development initiative at the Medical Center to ensure that the required talent pool is in place to implement the strategy over time. The initiative, called the Sloane Fellows Program, was named after the outgoing Board Chairman, Carl Sloane.

The Sloane Fellows program has been designed and implemented by the BIDMC Organizational Development team within Human Resources based on the guiding principles developed by the senior management team.

Phase 2: Talent Assessment

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center used a nomination process to select Fellows for the leadership development program. The following criteria were used in the Fellows selection: focus on results, interpersonal savvy, analytical thinking, values and learning agility.

The senior leaders were asked to nominate individuals in their area based on these criteria. Once the nominations were received, they were asked to discuss and narrow the candidate pool of nominees at a talent review meeting. Ultimately, 19 people were selected as Fellows. The selections were then confirmed by the CEO, the COO and the SVP of HR.

Phase 3: Implementation of Development Plans

The Sloane Fellows program incorporates a variety of developmental approaches, all of which are integrated to ensure both organizational and individual learning:

1. Individual development plans

Each of the Fellows participated in a 360-degree feedback process and took the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument (MBTI). External coaches provided some initial work with each individual to review their assessment results and to help them in beginning to craft their own development plan. Members of the HR/OD team were trained as coaches and continue to work actively with the Fellows to further refine and support their ongoing progress on their development plans.

2. Strategic action learning projects

The BIDMC senior team was asked to identify important potential action learning projects that would have organizational impact. The purpose of the projects was to broaden the experience of each Fellow and help them gain exposure to areas outside their own

department while addressing key business challenges.

Numerous projects were identified and each project was appointed a sponsor from among the senior leaders in the organization. The Fellows were assigned to projects based on their preferences, the requirements of the project, the individual's strengths and the specifics of their development plan. All of the projects have been designed to encourage the Fellows to go outside of their comfort zone and really stretch. For example, one leader, who oversees several ambulatory clinics, is currently working on a space planning effort while another leader, who manages research operations, is reviewing the feasibility of adding additional staff in the Operating Room.

3. Formal Learning Sessions

The formal program includes six, three-hour in-classroom sessions. These on-going sessions are run by Harvard Business School professors and include lectures and cases studies relating to leadership requirements.

Guest speakers are brought in to talk about specific topics as they emerge throughout the program. The Fellows also may attend relevant outside programs, as necessary.

4. Peer-to-Peer Sessions

Peer-to-peer sessions have been established to assemble the Fellows as a whole group or in sub-groups to learn together. Many of the Fellows share similar development opportunities and together they can coach each other and be an ongoing support system.

Key Learnings

According to Amy Wasserman, BIDMC's Program Manager for Leadership Development, who has shepherded much of the Sloane Fellows Program, says, "What will make this program impactful is that although all Fellows are participating in the same leadership development opportunities, each Fellow is focused exclusively on his/her own development goals ensuring that the leadership learning and growth is very intentional and personal." BIDMC's talent management planning program remains a

work in progress, yet the organization's accomplishments to date are strong indicators of its ultimate success. The senior team considers the Sloane Fellows Program to be a pilot initiative in which they will learn which aspects have served the individual and the organizational needs best. They plan to bring in a new slate of Fellow candidates at the conclusion of this 18-month initiative. There is no doubt that the second round will build on the learning of this initial venture.

As Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has demonstrated, it is important to start a process, learn as you go and refine and build for the next round. Organizations learn in the same way that individuals do – through experience, feedback and reinforcement.

Margaret Butteriss is vice president, organization consulting for Right Management. She can be reached at margaret.butteriss@right.com. Carol Salloway is the principal of The HR Consulting Group and can be reached at carolsalloway@cfohr.com.