

Rethinking Talent Management And Employee Development For Long-Term Business Success: A Practical Model For Direct Managers

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Abstract:

Numerous attempts to formalize the talent management model have been mostly focused on developing policies, guidelines, systems, and an overall organizational model to drive talent management and succession planning. Mostly talent management has been presented from an hr manager's perspective. A major issue with such approaches is that they do not provide a simple-to-use toolset to the direct manager to manage the talent, succession planning, and bench strength. The practical approach to talent management starts with the right pre-hiring process and onboarding of to-be-hired employees, developing the talent through the right feedback and performance evaluation, followed by continuous review of the long-term potential of the employees. This paper presents a practical model with a set of processes and activities a direct manager needs to deploy in order to effectively manage his key talent, develop a succession plan systematically, and develop bench strength within his team. This model under discussion becomes even more useful in an asia-pacific corporate context, where most of the responsibility to hire, develop, and retain the team lies with direct managers rather than with hr managers. This model equips busy supervisors with a practical hr toolset to align hiring, onboarding, performance review, and talent review processes with overall talent management goals.

Keywords: Talent management, succession planning, human resource development, talent profiling, pre-hiring, onboarding process

1. Introduction

The term "talent management" Gained prominence with mckinsey's (1997) study, which coined the phrase "war for talent." Over the years, the scope of talent management has expanded to encompass various dimensions of human capital, including staff retention, development, performance management, and succession planning (anonymous, 2006). Talent management for developing staff retention and creating bench strength is a critical area in human resources (lockwood, 2006). Today, talent management is not just a function of the hr department but a critical responsibility of every leader within an organization. While hr plays a pivotal role in designing talent strategies, the execution and day-to-day management of talent largely fall on the shoulders of direct managers (handfield-jones, michael & axelrod, 2007). if the direct manager fails to manage the talent reporting to him and make bench strength, the company faces the consequences. So, it is very important for direct managers to be able to use talent management tools and techniques to manage the talent at the company and also to be able to develop the best talent to the next level. Essentially, it requires direct

managers to have access to simplistic but effective tools that can be incorporated into their day-to-day management responsibilities.

Despite advancements in technology and the availability of sophisticated talent management systems, organizations continue to face challenges in retaining top talent and building a robust pipeline of future leaders. A significant gap exists in the availability of practical, easy-to-implement tools that direct managers can use to effectively manage and develop their teams (Luthans & Peterson, 2002). This gap is particularly pronounced in regions like Asia-Pacific, where HR's involvement in daily team management is limited, and direct managers are primarily responsible for talent retention and development (Chugh & Bhatnagar, 2006).

Moreover, contemporary talent management models often lack a focus on employee engagement, personalized development, and long-term career planning, which are critical for retaining high-potential employees in today's dynamic work environment (Gallup, 2020; Deloitte, 2021). Many organizations still rely on outdated practices that prioritize short-term performance over long-term growth, leading to disengagement and high turnover rates among top talent (Bersin, 2018). Recent research highlights that only 21% of employees feel their performance is managed in a way that motivates them to do outstanding work (Gallup, 2020), underscoring the need for more engaging and development-focused talent management practices.

This paper introduces a practical, systematic, and scientifically grounded model designed to address these gaps. This model provides direct managers with a set of easy-to-use tools and matrices that align talent management activities with standard HR processes such as hiring, onboarding, and performance reviews. By integrating talent management into the daily responsibilities of managers, this model aims to enhance staff retention, build bench strength, and foster long-term talent development.

There have been numerous attempts to generate a simplistic toolset for talent management. One major focus that needs to be incorporated in such a toolset is to map the talent management activities, processes, and actions around the normal employee hiring, development, and performance evaluation cycle, aligning well with the manager's mainstream responsibilities of managing the team. To enable direct managers to manage these processes, they need an integrated systems approach rather than a scattered set of tools and processes. Such a system approach would help them to identify talents from different business perspectives, prioritize the talents, and then identify the action plan they may need to develop to support the business through appropriate talent management.

In this paper, the author proposes a systems approach to integrated talent management and development, taking into view the roles and responsibilities of the corporate managers who are not full-time human resource managers but are directly managing the most important assets of the company—the human talent. The model proposed in this paper maps the talent management activities to the standard HR processes like hiring, onboarding, and performance review cycles.

2. Background

Talent management has been a subject of extensive research and practice over the past few decades. Early models focused primarily on recruitment and rewards, but the field has since expanded to include strategic dimensions such as succession planning, performance management, and employee development (Scheweyer, 2004; Tucker, Kao & Verma, 2005).

One of the earliest systematic approaches to talent management was proposed by berk (2004), who emphasized a data-driven methodology to quantify the value of human capital. This approach highlighted the importance of aligning talent management with organizational goals and using metrics to track the impact of talent initiatives. Similarly, the 9-box grid model, introduced by jackson leadership systems (2005), provided a simple yet effective tool for evaluating employee potential and performance. This 9-box grid plots potential and performance on different axes to spot out the talent that should be 'retained' or 'developed.' this 9-box grid for talent management and calibration was further advocated by morrison (2008) and lamoureux (2009c), according to which the 9-box matrix is an appropriatetool to evaluate performance, create development paths, and plan for succession in the roles. This is also deemed a good tool to evaluate retention risk as well. This is a simple tool for a direct manager in the context of talent management. This model has been widely adopted for succession planning and talent calibration (morrison, 2008; lamoureux, 2009b).

Traditionally, talent management in the past has been a typical hr approach of hiring and rewarding talent. However, over the years it has taken on a much more strategic role. Tucker, kao & verma (2005) added the context of staff retention to the talent management dimension and emphasized talent management as a process and a strategy. From a strategic perspective, chugh & bhatnagar (2006) argued that talent management should be viewed as a high-performance work practice that provides a competitive edge to organizations. They emphasized the need for integrating talent management into broader hr and corporate strategies. Bersin (2007) further reinforced this view by identifying the top 10 talent management challenges faced by organizations, including the need for better alignment between talent strategies and business objectives.

The evolution of talent management models has also been influenced by advancements in technology. An early work by scheweyer (2004) elaborated on best practices in talent management systems and emphasized the importance of technology solutions for the same. Oracle (2008) and taleo research (2009) introduced integrated talent management systems that leveraged databases and analytics to streamline processes such as recruitment, performance management, and succession planning. In its report, oracles inc. (2008) presented a comprehensive suite on integrated talent management for the forward-thinking organization expanding its talent management scope or for an organization exploring it for the first time. The emphasis has been given on a systematic, process-driven system for creating a database on talent management. This holistic view of talent management enables hr to address urgent problems in the context of a roadmap where all aspects of talent management fit together long term. With this, a database approach to an integrated talent management system broke down the traditional silos in hr. Taleo research (2009) looked at the infrastructure aspect of the talent management model whereby it related business performance as a function of the efficiency of the talent management infrastructure. Taleo introduced a model thatemphasizes the mandate of strategic talent management to respond to business goals and consequently be the driver of business performance. Taleo's model depicted talent management as a circular set of activities in 4 process areas: Acquire, develop, align, and assess. These systems aimed to break down silos within hr and create a holistic approach to talent management.

As a next milestone in an effort to standardize industry talent management practices and processes, the lore management institute (doherty, noah, rabinowitz, pilnick& hogan, 2006) presented a talent management maturity (tmm) model emphasizing a tool called 'talent management audit.' in line with cmm, this tmm model is based on nine attributes, and it introduced the concept of talent maturity audit (tma). This established a framework of

integrated processes on acquisition, integration, performance management, mobility, retention, and exit. This provides a system to assess the talent management practices and processes deployed in various companies to increase the focus on the integrated process of talent management. On similar lines, bersin & associates (lamoureux, 2009) presented a succession planning maturity model (spmm) that outlined various maturity levels seen in corporate succession planning practices.

Despite these advancements, many existing models remain excessively complex or focused on organizational-level processes, making them difficult for direct managers to implement effectively (powell & lubitsh, 2007). Powell & lubitsh (2007) recognized the issue with models referred to in the literature that they do not give a simplistic practical approach from a hiring manager's perspective of what could be a workable technique. Although hr and the hiring manager need to collaborate on talent development, succession planning, and building bench strength, the direct manager is ultimately responsible for execution (baumruk et al. 2006).

The biggest issue with most of these talent management models is that they are either focused on overall organizational processes or too focused on the organizational-level implementation. Recent studies have highlighted the need for models that prioritize employee engagement, personalized development, and long-term career planning (gallup, 2020; deloitte, 2021). For instance, gallup's (2020) research found that organizations with high employee engagement experience 21% higher productivity and 59% lower turnover rates. Similarly, deloitte (2021) emphasized the importance of creating personalized development plans to retain top talent in a competitive labor market.

There are practically no simplistic toolsets available for direct hiring managers that they can effectively use for talent. A direct manager looks for an easy-to-use, simplistic, system-based tool that can fit well within his overall responsibilities of tracking, monitoring, and managing. In response to these challenges, this paper proposes a practical model that addresses these needs of direct managers. The model integrates talent management into existing hr processes and provides managers with the tools they need to identify, develop, and retain high-potential employees. By focusing on engagement, development, and long-term planning, this model aims to bridge the gap between organizational talent strategies and on-the-ground execution.

3. Rethinking talent management and development model

We developed a model to address this long-unaddressed need of direct supervising managers. In the following sections, a tested and practical model on an integrated but systematic approach to talent management, succession planning, and building bench strength has been presented. We have highlighted how the practical approaches at a direct manager's level can be fit into mainstream hiring, onboarding, and performance evaluation processes already established in the company. The model starts with the right hiring approach and career progression management throughout in the form of a system of elements. Four essential elements of the proposed talent management model are:

- Talent identification
- Motivation profiling
- Performance appraisal
- Talent development

The new model depicted in fig. [1] shows a systems approach to talent management as a function of talent, motivation, performance, and development. The model is built around 4

core processes a direct supervisor or hiring manager handles: Hiring, onboarding, performance reviews, and talent reviews. The very essence of this model is to map the processes to the direct manager's management responsibilities and core functions.

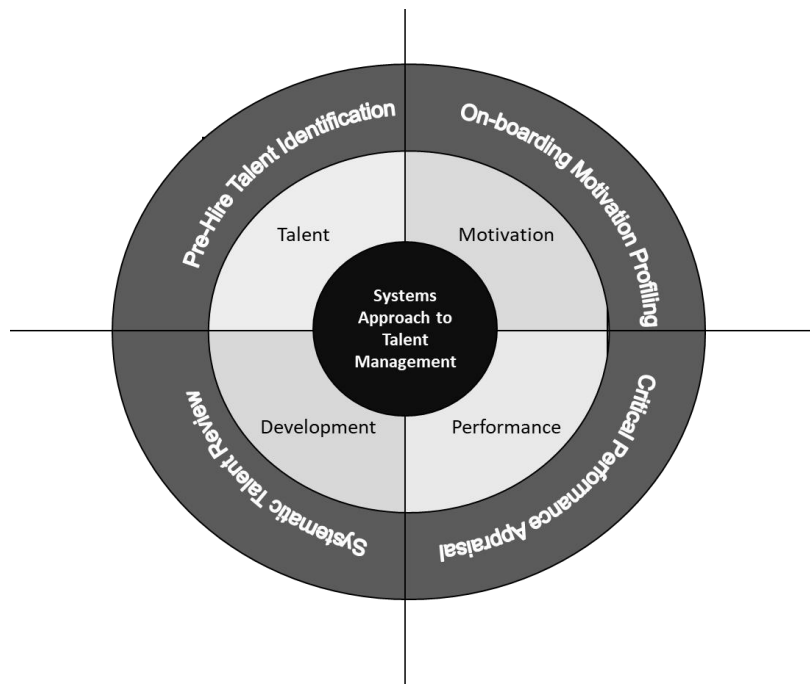


Fig. [1]: Systems talent management framework spread across talent, motivation, performance, and development domains. The model is built around 4 core processes a direct supervisor or hiring manager handles: Hiring, onboarding, performance review, and talent review.

3.1. Pre-hire talent identification

3.1.1 issues with traditional hiring approach

The very purpose of staff retention and long-term bench strength starts with the correct hiring model. One of the issues with current interview models is a basic question—“how does your experience or background relate to this position?” Or “how would you add value to this position?” The basic issue with most of the interviews is that an insight about the job, which is given to new candidates during the interview, is not enough for the correct mapping of the candidate with the job requirements. However, this description or insight is mostly too generic, and, in the first place, a high-level overview barely provides any useful operational information to the candidate unless they have performed the exact same job earlier.

On the other hand, the biggest issue of modern-day interviews is the “catch factor,” Where applicants tend to “zoom in” On the specific relevant experience related to the job, at times overshadowing the rest of their passions. In such “skewed” Profiles, the important aspects of a candidate's aspirations, achievements, drives, and experience get overlooked, which may not be in line with the current position (martin, saba & madden, 2009). as a result, the applicant is constantly motivated to pursue his natural passion and use the current position as the stepping stone to advance (hirsch, 2006). So, an all-round exploratory assessment about a candidate's personality and professional behavior, achievements, and aspirations is very crucial to do. instead of having the manager teach him new things right after his joining, it is important to understand what has motivated him in the past at various points (glen, 2006).

In the most traditional methods, pre-screening is used to assess the suitability of a candidate. The hiring managers and recruiters use a range of methods in shortlisting and systematic selection procedures, written tests, technical interviews, behavioral interviews, personal interviews, or otherwise as appropriate methods for the positions. These traditional methods are deeply rooted in corporate cultures, and in many cases, the various elements of the selection process become a trademark of a company in regard to acquiring new talents (martel, 2003).

3.1.2 proposed hiring model: Pre-hire talent identification

We propose a proven practical model that direct hiring managers can apply fairly well without having to become an hr manager. We propose to add a pre-offer round of discussions, called an “exploratory interview,” After the decision of hiring has been made based on a standard set of selection procedures. This is a powerful intervention and typically looks informal but is treated to understand the candidate as a “professional.” Many companies have been using this kind of interview to dig into the details and approaches of the person to understand how they have handled projects in the past and how they have tackled problems with the previous employers. However, this kind of interview suffers from a very obvious bias to dig into relevant details to “assess” The candidate’s background experience in relation to the current job.

Here is the important piece of this approach when implemented correctly. Using traditional approaches of selection, the decision of hiring has already been made. This exploratory interview essentially is a platform to prepare an inventory of talent profiles, which is the most essential element of long-term talent management. Table [1] shows a typical talent inventory used for the present study. This includes details on the candidate’s past achievements, failures, education, and other activities, which in total reflect his personality as a person and professional. A hiring manager may not be qualified in psychometric tests, but all they would want to know are the skills, interests, inclinations, drives, and potential of this person and also his goals. This talent inventory is a way to eliminate the skewed personality presented by the candidates to best suit the role at hand. The talent inventory as presented in table [1] focuses in detail on the candidate’s past experience, his drive behind taking specific courses, narrated past failures, past learning, any awards and participation in professional activities, relevant and non-relevant qualifications, and training.

Table [1]: A typical pre-hire talent profiling tool—talent inventory. Typically includes past achievements, roles, positions, achievements, failures, learning, awards, professional activities, relevant and non-relevant qualifications, and training.

Inventory items	Events/facts/feedback
Past experience/achievements	
All relevant and irrelevant experiences	
Inventory of past positions (short-term or long-term)	
Major responsibilities performed	
Past achievements/success stories	
Value addition on previous jobs	
Past failures and lessons learned	
Past failures	
Conclusions drawn from small or major mistakes	
Skills and learning	
Special personal or professional skills, if any	

Specific problem-solving approaches	
Personal and professional approaches	
Some best practices	
Honors/awards	
Honors and awards, whether directly linked with the job or not	
Special participation/publications/articles,etc.	
Special research	
Leadership & professional participation	
Professional activities/memberships	
Leadership positions in clubs, etc.	
Networking skills/groups/associations	
Qualifications/training	
Relevant or non-relevant qualifications	
Special courses and training attended	
Online learning	
Current education pursuing	

As per the author's observations, new hires start revealing "key marketable" Information toward the later part of their careers when they are on the edge of transitioning to a new role or company. Many of them expressed that they did mention their skills and qualifications and many other achievements on their resume, which got overlooked in the light of the manager's tendency to "look" For relevant experience only.

One point worth noting is "relevant" Or "irrelevant" Job experiences. This is a difficult paradigm shift. Most of the managers prefer to stick to the job requirement, assess the candidates against those standards, and if they meet them, then that's enough. However, there is a need to go one step further to spend additional energy on profiling the talent of this candidate. After all, they are what they are because of all his relevant and irrelevant experiences.

At no point should this interview be used to draw out "conclusions;" Rather this is a pre-employment database to be used for long-term talent management. Before a manager formally hires the candidate, they need to make sure what range of talent the candidate comes with. This approach is the answer.

It is very important to keep this kind of interview too informal to be conducted by a gentle and friendly person in a non-interview room environment. The findings are documented in a predefined format and usually keep scope for free-flowing information that may not fit into specified categories. Usually, no point systems or ranking or scoring is done. The emphasis is on the information supported with facts and events. At any point, the outcome of such an interview should not affect the hiring decision, if already made. One important element of this model is that this information documented in the system is made available to the hiring manager well before a candidate joins the company.

3.2. Onboarding motivation profiling

3.2.1 issues with traditional onboard process

Traditionally, all companies have some kind of orientation and induction training for new hires. After having gone through the rigorous interviews and selection process and finally

coming onboard, the applicants very much have the feel of what behavior and attitude are expected of them, and at times applicants do over-exhibit those, just ending up misleading the supervisors about how passionate and enthusiastic they are about the new positions. This actually may not be a long-term truth. An important piece that is missing here is the “alignment of personal goals of new hires with the professional goals as specified by the job” (Reese, 2005). The traditional approach is usually aligning the person to the company goals, and during the process, managers miss out on the inherent passions and intentions of the candidates.

In the end, if the job profile doesn't align with the candidate's personal passions and goals, and if they feel their potential is not fully being utilized in the job, it is likely that one day they will walk into the manager's cabin and hand over his resignation. Despite their best efforts to use traditional management techniques, these managers are taken aback when they discover that the new hire is highly engaged and compatible with the new job (Martin & Lombard, 2009). While the truth may be little otherwise, it is usually not understood till the end, and managers end up pondering upon the shocking revelation of “misaligned personal vs. Given career goals” During exit interviews (Falcone, 2006). The real issue here is that a systems approach to talent management, long-term alignment, developing the skills for career progression, and alignment in terms of personal and professional goals is missing (Cappelli, 2000).

3.2.2 proposed model: Motivation profiling

The proposed model essentially builds upon the talent profile database gathered during the pre-hire round. That data is made available to the hiring manager, through which they can get an overall perception of the past achievements, success stories, and some special attributes of the candidate's talents. This becomes an essential close-to-facts case file. Now it is critical to build a database of the candidate's motivators that made him perform or achieve those successes. This builds a motivator profile database that complements the talent profile database.

Essentially, it is a structured exploration to determine which aspects of his personality could be the most important. The second purpose is to dive into the passions, aspirations, and motivations of the applicants- this will pay off in the long run for talent management. In the proposed model, the stress is on developing a “live” Talent inventory for the new hire. The direct managers need to let the new hire through the usual orientation and induction program. But at this point, it's crucial to know when to start allocating assignments to the new hire. A key aspect is to sit with the new hire on a regular basis for the first few days and develop a database on his talent.

This does not necessarily mean a psychological interview. The ability to understand the drives of a person is essentially common sense. Special attention is to be paid to the applicant's career or professional transition. The achievements they are excited about are equally important as well. Figure [2] shows a typical framework for motivator profiling; here the focus is kept on the variables that could impact or support an employee's professional

success.

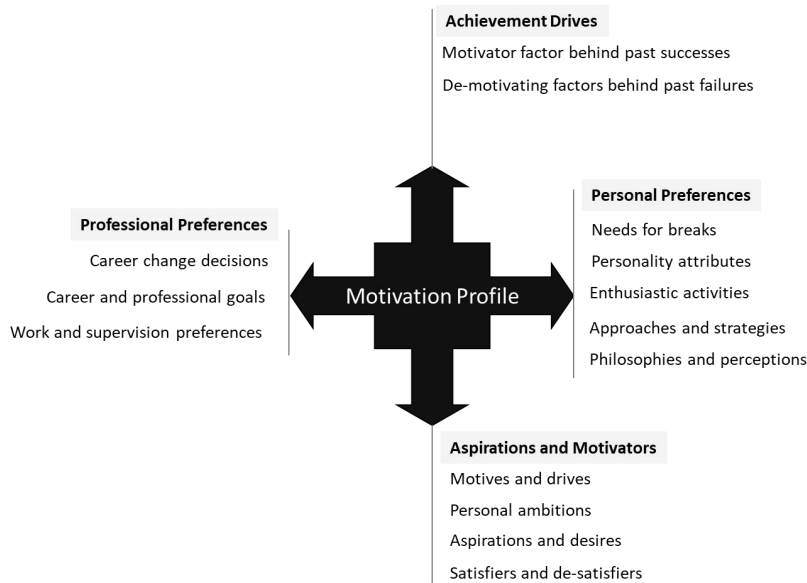


Fig. [2]: A typical framework for the motivator profile includes achievements, personal preferences, aspirations & motivators, and professional preferences.

The profile is categorized in four parts.

- i) **Achievements:** Explores the variables and factors behind an employee's past successes and demotivator factors behind his past failures. This mostly focuses on external variables, parameters, constraints, and challenges that would make an employee more successful at his job. This information can be used to design or adapt the assignment, projects, and roles of this employee.
- ii) **Personal preferences:** Explores the activities and interests that attract this employee and provides him a channel to express himself and get more relaxed or involved. This information is key to setting the right environment for the employee.
- iii) **Aspirations and motivators:** Explores the motives, drives, aspirations, and personal goals. These are generally all-time prevailing motivators for the employee. Personal aspirations are an important takeaway from this category. This information may be vital in terms of aligning work with the internal motives of the employee. This results in a long-term association of the employee with the company.
- iv) **Professional preferences:** Explores the kind of career preferred by the employee and his long-term career goals. This also includes information on his work style and preferred management style. Setting professional goals may be crucial while making the development and succession plans.

However, this profiler cannot be developed in a one-time sitting. This may be accomplished on a daily basis, touching on different aspects of candidate's professional career, achievements, and activities. Care should be taken not to note down anything explicitly; otherwise the candidate may think of it as some kind of interview. It should be a building stone to develop rapport between the manager and the employee.

The talent profiling and motivator profile database should be updated as a corollary to this model, since the regular 1-to-1 and other project interactions may reveal more about the personality, motives, and some additional pre-existing or recently acquired skills.

One point worth emphasizing here is that not only the performance but also talent and motivation need to be recorded. The latter two databases will help in long-term talent

management and succession planning, whereas performance recording is the base of selecting the candidates for succession planning.

3.3. Performance appraisal: Truly critical appraisal

3.3.1 issues with traditional performance appraisal practice

How many of the managers believe that performance appraisal, which is usually also termed as ‘critical appraisal,’ is truly done in a ‘mission-critical’ manner? It is most likely considered as part and parcel of the job rather than being a tool for motivation and career progression (Tansley, Turner & Foster, 2007). The ‘motivation and control’ by providing insights into the past year’s performance is not an important aspect of performance appraisal as viewed by management. The notion of “thorough insights of achievements and misses” is another aspect that is generally overlooked. A major limitation with traditional performance is the “documentary” approach followed by 1-to-1 review with the supervisor. Another version of performance appraisal that exists is the 360-degree feedback method, which takes inputs from peers, supervisors, and subordinates. The author’s survey indicates that most of the hires are particularly unhappy with the ‘documentary’ nature of critical appraisal and the missing ‘touch of thoroughness.’

3.3.2 proposed model: Truly critical appraisal

The model proposed here is to develop a session on verbal appraisal to complement the written performance appraisal by the supervisor, manager of the supervisor, and some senior stakeholders (like project managers, program managers, and divisional heads) under whom said employee performed some part of his duties. Care is taken to involve only those stakeholders who have a vertical relationship with the employee on some or all projects.

The stakeholders and participants meet in a congenial environment with the employee and his supervisor chairing the session. Without revealing his ranking, grading, and other data, discussions flow to keep the focus on activities performed by the employee. Various stakeholders give their realistic inputs on how they perceived the activities and achievements, bringing out some of the best actions taken by him, how they added value, and where they made the mark. This is a whole new experience for this employee as they get the most motivational input from various segments of the people as much as the supervisor permits, they are free to add his points and approaches while controlling the defensive approaches. Constructive criticism in front of stakeholders is another important advantage of this model, as it establishes the value of the contribution this employee has made.

On the flip side, this also gives the employee classified as “need improvement” a way to set the direction and expectations of stakeholders, which gets defined as his action plan of improvement. In general, various aspects of past years’ activities are brought out in the limelight for this particular employee with a focus on achievements, values, contributions, specific outcomes, out-of-the-way efforts, specific qualities, specific skills, results, approaches, lessons learned, mistakes, and misses. This way critical appraisal is used as introspection as well as a motivational tool.

One important aspect of the successful deployment of this model is that the stakeholders’ inputs and such discussions should not come as a surprise to the candidate; rather, they should be a regular affair in the management style.

The success of this model lies in long-term staff retention. Efforts must be made to document the proceeds of the discussions to capture the achievements, skills, learning, and other contributions of the individual to update the “live” Talent profiling database.

3.4. Systematic talent review framework

One thing to remember is that talent may not be inborn. At times in big or small corporate companies, it is learned and acquired and then used for other domains to produce results. This underlines the basis of the proposed model of long-term talent management and staff retention. In the proposed model, as shown in fig. [3], a quarterly talent review is conducted for all the employees. This model aims at developing engagement plans, cross-training plans, career and leadership development plans, and succession plans based on criticality rating, risk rating, spf rating, and potential ratings. below is a detailed explanation of this model.

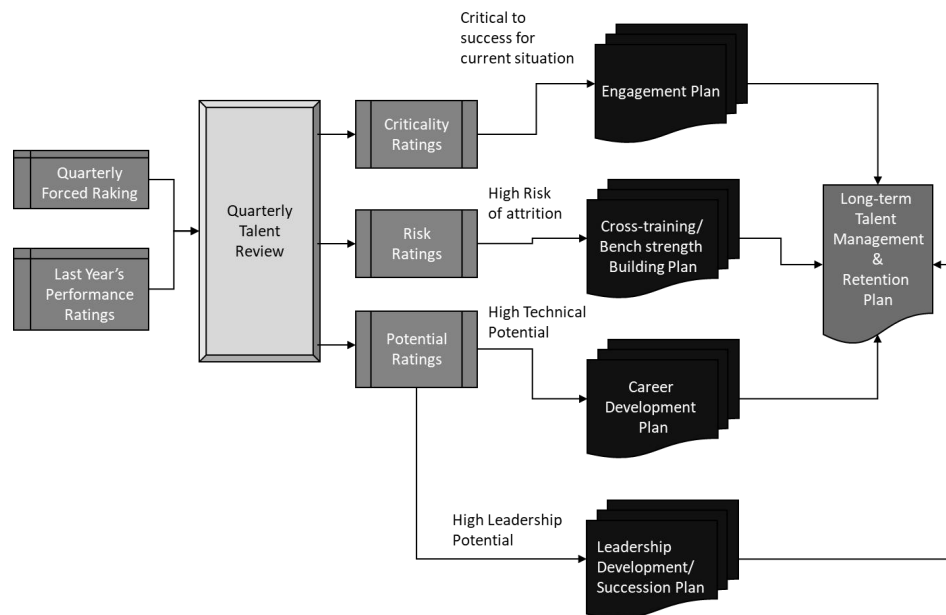


Fig. [3]: Proposed talent review approach in a complex corporate. It aims at developing engagement plans, cross-training plans, career and leadership development plans, and succession plans based on criticality rating, risk rating, spf rating, and potential ratings.

A quarterly talent review is conducted based on two inputs. One is quarterly forced ranking, and another is last year's performance rating. The quarterly talent review generates three ratings called criticality rating, risk or single point failure rating, and potential rating. Criticality rating, which is the rating of employees with respect to criticality to current operations, leads to the development of an engagement plan to ensure that employees do get sufficient work assignments and keep engaged at the highest level. Risk rating identifies the employees who are at high risk of attrition. This leads to cross-training and/or a backup plan. Potential rating filters out the employees with a high level of potential for growth. Technical and leadership potential is assessed separately. For employees with high leadership potential, a leadership development plan is generated along with a succession plan. For employees with high technical potential, a career development plan is generated. All of these plans together go into a long-term talent management and staff retention plan.

Details on these instruments, plans, and framework are discussed below.

3.4.1 inputs to quarterly talent review

There are two major inputs to the quarterly review.

A) quarterly forced ranking-middle managers prepare a quarterly forced ranking for the employees reporting to them. Essentially, all employees are rated based on a variety of job attributes, attitudes, and values in order to fit into a forced ranking. To a good

extent, this rating is objective; however, subjective information is occasionally employed to drive such forced ranking (Grote, 2005). The output of these sheets is a unique ranking position of each of the employees in the team relative to each other. Such ratings include job performance and attitude aspects affecting the on-the-job behavior and results. A typical forced ranking looks like Fig. [4], where the weighted parameter scores are used on the following to compute an overall forced ranking score: Customer feedback, last year's performance rating, attributes like indispensable learning aptitude, project execution, results, quality focus, meeting targets, technical competence, and current performance, etc. The discrete ranking is assigned to each employee, even if their scores may be identical, which is the essence of the forced ranking. The parameters and scoring vary from organization to organization.

Employee Name	Customer Feedback Scores	Last year Perf Rating	Indispensable	Development & Learning	Project Execution	Passion & Results	Quality Focus	Meeting Targets	Current Performance	Technical Competence	Total Current Points	Current Point Average	YTD Performance	Rank based on YTD Performance	Overall Forced rank
Employee B	4.62	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	43	4.78	4.70	1	1
Employee A	4.49	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	42	4.67	4.58	2	2
Employee V	4.54	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	36	4.00	4.27	3	3
Employee G	4.58	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	28	3.11	3.85	4	4
Employee D	4.5	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	27	3.00	3.75	5	5
Employee H	4.22	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	28	3.11	3.67	6	6
Employee E	4.11	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	29	3.22	3.67	6	7
Employee F	4.08	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	26	2.89	3.48	7	8

Fig. [4]: A typical forced ranking worksheet, where the employees are given discrete ranks even if their point score is the same.

B) last year's performance rating- this is an important objective information that forms many of the managerial decisions. In standard practice, the quarterly forced ranking includes the performance rating of last year as one of the parameters too. However, this rating in itself provides vital information on the consistency of performance.

These forced rankings are presented in quarterly talent review meetings. Essentially, these reviews are conducted by top management in association with senior and middle management. During the review, the downstream employees are rated on their criticality to the company and their future potential.

3.4.2 output rating from talent review

Both technical and leadership potential is rated. The talent review's outcome includes both flagged and non-flagged employees. The output to talent review meetings is as follows:

- Criticality rating-** a matrix where criticality on 1 to 3 scales is assigned based on how critical an employee is for the current and future success of the company. The critical employees must be engaged aptly and should be given suitable long-term benefits.
- High risk of attrition rating-** this rating is assigned to each employee to identify if a particular employee is a single-point failure or has a high chance of leaving the company based on his reactions and feedback. A backup plan and bench-strength plan are needed immediately to cover such employees.
- Potential ratings-** it deals with the identification of those employees who have long-term potential in the technical or leadership domain. Technical and leadership potential is assessed separately and is given separate ratings. A career development & progression plan is needed for the employees with high technical potential, whereas the employees with high leadership potential are the candidates as successors for next-level roles. The candidates with high technical as well as leadership potential are the business leaders and are slated for developing a succession plan for them.

A typical sample worksheet for assigning ratings and defining the appropriate talent management plan is given in fig. [5]. The right action plan is a function of criticality rating, potential rating, and risk rating. There could be cases when the same employee is at high risk and critical to operations as well as possesses a high level of leadership potential. Based on ratings in each category and based on collective ratings, a decision is made to alter his assignments, create a backup, or promote him to motivate him to take up a leadership role. This is a systematic way of creating much more informed decisions in talent management.

Employee Name	Criticality Rating	Potential Rating		Attrition Risk/ SPF Risk	Plan
		Technical Potential	Leadership Potential		
Employee #1	3	3	5	2	long-term leadership role (Succession plan)
Employee #2	2	5	3	3	Career Development in Technical Area
Employee #3	3	2	2	3	Engagement plan
Employee #4	1	1	4	5	Back-up bench-strength Plan
Employee #5	3	2	2	4	Engagement plan & Back-up bench strength Plan

Criticality
1- Low (Can live without)
2- Medium (Critical to current business)
3- High (indispensable to company)

Potential
1 - Average Performer
2- Shows potential
3- Steady Performer
4- Competent Performer
5- Future Leader

Risk
1- Very Low
2- Low
3- Moderate
4- High
5- very High

Fig. [5]: A typical rating worksheet to assign criticality rating, potential rating, and spf rating to develop a suitable plan.

3.4.3 talent management plans from review ratings

Based on the ratings, these output matrices are used to develop a set of development and engagement plans. Some of the talent management plans that have been developed are listed below:

- **Engagement plan for the employees marked as currently critical to company success:** It ensures the meaningful engagement of employees who are vital for current success. The correct engagement lies in the direct manager's hands. It is important to prevent such employees from seeking other opportunities due to lack of suitable engagement. As an example, in fig [5], the employee #3 scores high on the critical scale, even though he/she is rated low on other scales; since he/she is currently critical to the business, he/she should be engaged suitably to avoid any humping around the role from such an employee.
- **Career development plan for technical potentials:** As another example, employee #2 scores very high on technical competence, and a technology company would want to

manage such highly talented employee by making a suitable career progression/development plan for him.

- **Leadership development/succession plan for high leadership potentials:** As an example, the employee #1 scores high on criticality rating and leadership potential even though he/she has low technical potential. He/she is an ideal candidate for a long-term leadership plan and may be a successor to the next level promotion.
- **Cross-training/bench strength building for the employees marked as high risk for attrition or single point failure:** Employee #4 is an example of such a candidate who may pose substantial risk to operations even after he/she leaves, as shown in fig [5]. The engagement plan, though, helps a lot here to retain him for a longer time, but to prepare for eventualities, a back-up bench strength needs to be built for this role. On the other hand, the employee #5 scores high on criticality rating as well as risk to leave. Such kind of employee would need to have the right engagement so that the company keeps him engaged, and, at the same time, create a back-up bench strength plan for the same.

3.4.4 talent management and retention strategies

This structured approach to talent review leads to a very scientific base for the further development plan. The type and range of development plans and mechanisms can vary from organization to organization.

Based on the rating, various retention/talent management and career development strategies have been shown in fig.[6]. This is a talent management model developed as part of the existing research. The matrix plots criticality vs. Potential to define various talent management plans such as retention plans, career development, succession plans, and risk management plans. The advantage of this talent management matrix is that it also integrates usual operational plans like the deployment plan, leadership plan, and job enrichment/enlargement plan under the same umbrella.

This grid is used as a guiding tool by the direct manager to define long-term and short-term talent management strategies and the type of plans required for the employees falling on different ranges of the criticality and potential ratings. Similar to the 9-grid tool, this acts as a simple tool that direct supervisors can use without getting into HRM practices of talent

management.

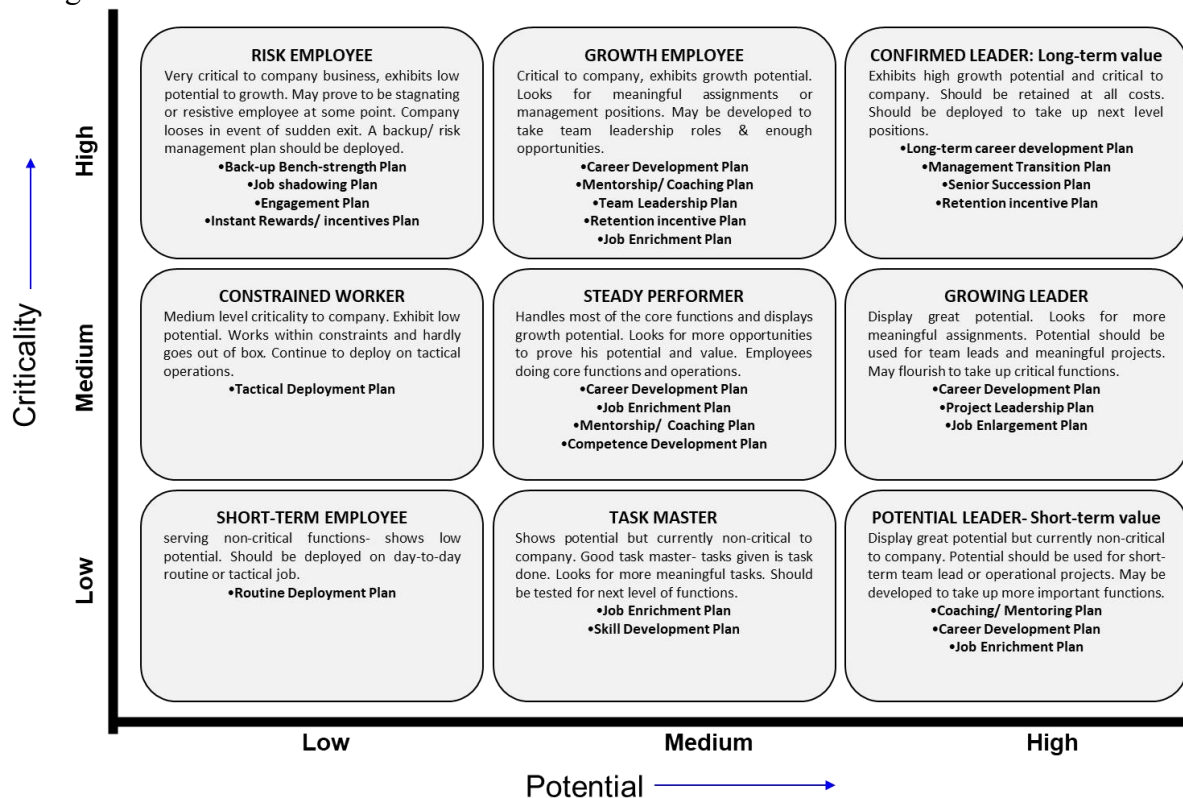


Fig. [6]: Criticality vs. Potential talent management matrix. A guiding tool to define long-term and short-term talent management strategies, types of plans required for the employees falling on different ranges of the criticality and potential ratings.

3.5 implementation

With the presented model, the whole success of talent management lies in aligning these three elements together during implementation.

a) **Long-term talent management strategy as defined from the talent review matrix:** The above plans, in an integrated manner, form the long-term talent management and retention plan for all levels of employees. Some of the talent management strategies are as follows:

- Critical employee: Engagement plan, project assignments
- Technical potential: Team leadership assignments, project leadership
- Leadership potential: People management, business development, strategic roles
- Single point failure: Tactical operations, mentorship for other employees,

b) **Reward, recognition, and monetary aspect of the compensation:** The above ratings govern the compensation elements to retain the talent for along time in the company, such as:

- Project involvement bonus
- Stocks and rsus
- Increments and annual bonus
- Promotion/job grade change
- Overseas assignments
- Spot bonus

- Awards and recognition

c) **Career aspiration of the employee as seen from the talent profile database:** Some companies do have a separate development plan system for developing a personal goals charter for the employee to help track and fulfill his personal and professional goals along with his job.

4. Conclusion

The talent management framework discussed in this paper and the talent management matrix (criticality vs. Potential) provide a simple yet effective tool for the direct manager. Without having applied corporate-wide, the direct managers can still practice the same within their groups to improve their talent management. This does not demand drastic infrastructure change, rather a process on the part of hr and the direct manager. thus, the approach aims to provide a systematic, data-driven scientific methodology to talent management. This model is applicable to small and large corporations with some adaptation. The most attractive feature of the approach is that the strategies are fairly simple yet effective and can be aligned with the companies' mainstream hr practices.

The model is more useful in an asia-pacific context, where hr managers generally do not have much involvement in the hiring managers' daily job responsibilities. It has been seen in the asia-pacific context that hr usually plays a very backseat role in the administration of employee-related data. Performance, review, and retention are majorly the direct line manager's responsibilities. It is up to him to best use the talent available to him, groom them, and develop them to retain the best brains in the company and, at the same time, address the operational business needs of the company. Such tools for direct managers carry much more crucial roles in asia-pacific, where the talent management concepts are just getting their mark.

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