



**“In the race for quality, there is no finish line!”**

David T. Kearns

Who does not like the feel of quality? Whether it comes from fine clothing, a well prepared meal or a project completed in time and within budget. When we talk about quality in the workplace, it has to be synonym with managing talent effectively. And what can feel better than good staff, trained to be excellent and then delivering extra-ordinary output? Not much!

However, quality also has it's price and managing talent does mean that you should have best practices in place within your organization - Tall order as many line managers responsible to work with HR on this, do not persist with the process or they procrastinate and miss the opportunity. These managers are usually easily satisfied with mediocrity – a far cry from greatness though!!

Vince Lombardi said that the quality of a man's life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence, regardless of his chosen field of endeavor. This works both for the manager / leader - who must lead his / her staff member to greatness - and the member of staff - who must allow him / herself to be guided and their talent managed by a trusted leader. For some this might sound like going into too much detail, however, this is exactly the kind of attention to details which is the sure mark of a leader.

OK –OK, I get this – now – how then do I manage the talent in my organization?

**Talent Management** starts with attracting and then **recruiting** the best skill available. You should clearly differentiate between recruiting for potential and / or for skill. Each person within your organization should have a clearly defined performance balanced scorecard stipulating the expected deliverables of that position. Individual competencies should be measured against the deliverables prior to any appointment being made. (This might seem obvious to most of you, however, how often do we test a person on competencies, not only ask them to talk about them?)

A clear **career development path** should be noted on the balanced scorecard and **coaching** should take place regularly to ensure growth. It is during these coaching sessions that additional talent will be discovered and which should then be explored. It is not unheard of, for example, for a Personal Assistant to have great insight when it comes to marketing and, if given the opportunity to explore, under guidance, or work on a marketing project with the marketing team, she / he can produce extraordinary deliverables and then end up in the marketing department as a permanent member of the team!

**Training** is pivotal to developing talent. It is only once you have developed the talent that you can manage it! In order to manage talent, the leader must be fully aware of the **strategic direction** of the organization and department. Developing people should then be aligned with this expected outcome. Should a member of staff be incapable of delivering the expected, it should be addressed immediately and if necessary, a transfer to a more appropriate department should be initiated. Having said this, should a member of staff be unwilling to deliver the required output, a disciplinary process may be an option – remember this is also part of managing talent!

Building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with Recruitment Agencies and outsourced HR companies, will add definite value to your internal processes. By accepting them as a business partner, and sharing with them the focus areas for your organization for the next 1 – 2 years, they can do a lot of spade work for you when it comes to creating company awareness and attracting the correct caliber of staff.

It is said that the body of each and every organization out there, is structured from four kinds of bones: There are the wishbones that spend all their time wishing someone would do the work. You also have the jawbones that do all the talking, but deliver little else. The knucklebones knock everything and anyone else. Fortunately, in every organization there are also the backbones: those who get under the load and do most of the work. May I say that managing the talent of your organization can be a wishbone and certainly the jawbones do their fair share in advocating the good thereof, however, as a leader, be the backbone and demand every leader under your guidance to endure the labor pains in this process of managing talent? Nothing great and durable has ever been produced with ease!

**Remember: Extraordinary output is delivered by ordinary people who work smarter than the average man!**