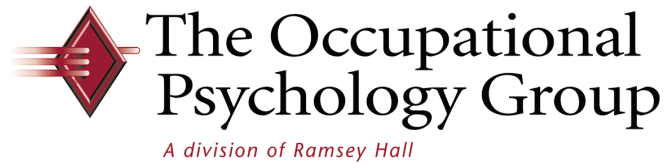


Thinking People...Thinking Business



WHY TALENT MANAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT IN CHALLENGING TIMES

At a time of unprecedented economic pressure you may feel that investing money in talent management programmes is too much of a luxury. Well, there is strong evidence to suggest that companies which do invest are better placed to succeed when recovery gathers pace. In this paper, we look at some false assumptions people have when considering their talent management strategy.

FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

With unemployment going up finding people is easy

Good talent is always difficult to find and the fact is that there are always opportunities for those we class as 'key talent'. Our career transition team has been working with senior managers who have left their employment but have, without exception, found alternative employment within a reasonable timeframe which is typically three to six months. In one case the participant secured employment during his notice period!

Indeed having more candidates on the market in itself causes problems because of the fact that somebody needs to separate the high performers from those who are less suitable for your vacancies. Research shows that objective and selective recruitment is critical to building high performance. The use of sophisticated selection techniques is also an example of high commitment HR, a key part of high performance working.

Moreover, many good potential candidates are afraid to move companies as they sometimes think "better the devil you know", so employing the services of a professional recruiter is important if the right talent is to be attracted and the right hire chosen. That is why we always meet each and every candidate face to face and why we assess the candidates using psychometrics, aptitude and attainment tests as a matter of course. We can then benchmark them against other external candidates and organisations we know. Indeed, if you are using other recruiters or managing the process 'in-house', we can still carry out this assessment process for you as a 'stand alone' service. This provides great value for money when you consider the risks of a failed hire.

Retention is not a problem when people fear redundancy

Even in the worst times good and excellent people can find new positions if they wish. That is not all. Recent research from the CIPD shows that over a third of employees plan to leave their current employment when the economy recovers. Employee engagement is going to be a real problem in the near future and this will add to the burden of costs your business faces before considering the opportunity cost of losing key skills and experience from the organisation.

Treating employees well is always a high priority for successful businesses and offering L&D opportunities can be a key part of an employee's total reward at a time when low pay rises, zero bonuses and job uncertainty damages moral, damages employee engagement and ultimately discourages valuable discretionary behaviours amongst your people.

Development doesn't help us to improve performance

The 'bottom line' effect of leadership and management development is now proven with a well established link between performance and strong leadership. In good times it is easy to mask managerial shortcomings, but with pressure on margins and profits comes the need for the right people to be on top of their game and to have the leadership skills which are proven to benefit business performance.

Our experience of working with underperforming management and executive teams is that once an organisation and the individuals understand their strengths and development needs, we are able to work with the client to facilitate self development activities. These need not cost a great deal of money and we can also design L&D interventions which are focused on achieving cost effective but rapid step change in performance.

Outplacement & career counselling isn't a priority

Keeping the survivors of redundancy programmes motivated and engaged is critical and, with retention likely to become a big issue going forward, it is important you treat departing employees well in order to maintain your employer brand. Outplacement and career counselling for senior employees helps departing staff and has a positive effect in mitigating the so called 'survivor syndrome' associated with remaining employees. This in turn helps maintain ongoing employee engagement.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Even during these turbulent times it is important to look to the future and remain focused on long term strategic plans.

Successful organisations conduct annual talent reviews and look to ensure they know who can step up to the next level when the need arises. They also look to ensure that those people gain the necessary experience and development they need to succeed in the next role. The real trick is to ensure the organisation has the talent to meet future needs and then to try and predict future job requirements. These then determine whether your existing talent can meet these needs and, if not, what needs to be done to meet the requirements.

Sadly, many organisations we know have just not got their succession planning right and consequently fail to get the most out of their people and thus have yawning skills gaps in their organisation. More worryingly still is that they may not realise this.

Hard times are not an excuse to avoid managing your talent and budget constraints don't have to be the end of strategic thinking.

Matthew Davis is a CIPD qualified Talent Management Consultant who manages The OPG, a practice within Ramsey Hall

About The Occupational Psychology Group.

The Occupational Psychology Group is the business psychology and Talent Management practice within Ramsey Hall. Since 1991 Ramsey Hall has provided a seamless service from attraction through to development. In 2008 these services were complimented by admission as an SHL Premium Solutions Partner and the launch of our Career Counselling and Outplacement Services.

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