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TALENT MANAGEMENT - WAR FOR TALENTS

Abstract:

Talent management (TM) is the response of enterprises to the challenges of the contemporary economy as the identification and retention of the appropriate talent is becoming essential in the appropriate time and at the appropriate place.

The aim of the herein analysis was the identification of TM programs in chosen global enterprises. In the methodology of research a systematic review of literature was applied, as well as multiple case studies. The selection of cases was undertaken on the basis of a subjective evaluation of the programs of talent management and the assumptions of the search for a variety of solutions. Adopting such a methodology of research shall in the future facilitate the construction of a proposition of good practices for talent management.

The research conducted indicated that a multitude of business models and accepted activities by enterprises fail to keep up with the existing needs of talent management. There are no standardized role models for the notion of talent and the process of talent management. Multiple entities implement TM procedures on an intuitive basis.

Keywords:

Talent, Talent management, War for talent, Human resource management

JEL Classification: M52, M53, J24

Introduction

At the end of the 1990s, numerous publications appeared with the following titles: “War for talent”, “Gaining talents”, “The Talent Edge”, “How to compete in the war for talents” (Brown, Heskolh, Williams, 2004, pp.65-90) determined by the more widespread thinking of the economy based on knowledge, global economic competition and organizational change. This was the first stage of the war for talent in the processes of human resources management. At present in the 21st century talent management (TM) differs from talent management in the 20th century (Talent and Talent Management Insights, 2014, p.3). Researchers and practitioners accept that employee talents are a collective category encompassing the features of the members of the organization that guarantee the achievement of exceptional results in the work positions, particularly in areas of innovative and breakthrough discoveries that are the derivative of the following: initiative, intuition, creative thought, engagement, curiosity and diligence (Jabłoński, 2015, pp.31-48).

The significance of employee talents in the management practice of enterprises is growing, which is certified by the increasingly standardized emergence of programs of talent management. Specialists of talent spotting currently work in dynamic and constantly changing environments of great variability, uncertainty, intricacy and ambiguity, which in turn requires the skilful creation of the strategies of talents. The processes of globalization and mobility of employees, multi-generational organizations and a more differentiated workforce have altered the way of perceiving talents.

Thus, it is necessary to ask the question of how programs of talent management are conducted in today’s practice of the processes of human resources management. The aim of the research conducted was the identification of the TM programs in the chosen global enterprises. The definition of their specification and scope of subject matter shall in the future facilitate the preparation of good practices of talent management and shall perhaps provide opportunities for winning the war for talents¹.

In executing the aim of research, the following research questions were put forward:

- What is the level of significance of possessing programs of talent management in enterprises?
- What aims underlie the implementation of such programs?
- What methods and techniques are applied in TM programs?
- What are the effects of implementing the process of talent management over a long-term perspective?

1. Research methodology

In the first stage of research with the aim of determining the basic literature relating to the research aims set out, the following sources of publications were utilized which contain full text sources: ProQuest, Emerald, SCOPUS. As a result, access was gained to current and significant magazines and publications of an international scope. Subsequently, a selection was carried out on the basis of the following key words: talent and talent management. A further stage was to

¹ The herein paper presents a fragment of the research conducted. It shall be presented in its entirety in the scientific monograph under preparation.

expand analysis of an auxiliary nature – the war for talent. The accumulated source material was narrowed down by means of excluding papers such as communiques, conference presentations, while also book reviews. Finally, analysis was conducted of the contents based on abstracts narrowing down the references to the area of the science of management. In the subsequent stage, the literary material was expanded to include Polish scientific publications, while also monographs and papers reviewed in the leading Polish magazines collected in the Library of the Jagiellonian University¹.

The references acquired was subsequently subject to profound analysis of the content in the systemization of the literature – the quality of the publications acquired was established (while rejecting those unnecessary from the viewpoint of research aims), while also a systematization and order on the basis of the assumed key words, which in turn ultimately facilitated the confirmation of the primary cognitive gaps. There is a lack of broad empirical works on the scope of the current war for talents waged in enterprises.

The methodology adopted facilitated the collection of source materials that are significant for further analysis.

There was a subsequent progression to empirical analysis. During the course of research, case studies of the programs of talent management were collected. The Forbes list of the largest enterprises was utilized as a starting point for the search for case studies (see: Forbes.pl). Each example of the TM program was carefully chosen in order to match both the literal replication – similar results, as well as theoretical replication – varying results, yet with predictable causes. The accumulated data came from documents, such as reports from enterprises, reports for the Board, opinions from employee organizations, internal and external publications, while also articles from trade press. The adopted assumptions facilitated the collection of well thought-out and complete as it comes from a multitude of sources and provides the possibility of triangulation involving the comparison of information from various sources.

Case screening was undertaken on the basis of a subjective assessment of the programs of talent management in the sphere of similarity and competitiveness. Induction analysis of data provided the opportunity to illustrate the correctness and creation of the categories of the TM processes, ranging from the general characteristics to the increasingly detailed analysis, as well as facilitating the multiple returns to the accumulated material with the aim of expanding the research process.

Validation of the accuracy information² was conducted in stages. At the beginning, the data was prepared for analysis by ordering the data into the chosen case studies, while subsequently dividing this depending on the sources of information. The second stage was to browse all the results in order to acquire general information and consider the common significance of the particular information. Further actions involved the commencement of detailed analysis which

¹ The Jagiellonian Library has the obligation of collecting the published works of Polish scientists in its statutory aims, thus it is one of the largest and most valid sources for the purposes of reviewing Polish references.

² The approach proposed by J. Creswell was applied here (see: Creswell, 2013, pp.199-205).

precedes the clarification of the acquired information in the context of the previously prepared research questions, while also presentation of the particular case studies.

The convergence of the various data sources in the reports and analysis collected facilitates the acknowledgement that the process of triangulation contributed to the accuracy of the research. The acquired results are of a flexible nature with emphasis placed on the individual interpretation of data and express the intricacy of the situation which enterprises find themselves in while fighting for talents.

The final stage of data analysis was the interpretation of results, namely the clarification of their significance. They were compared with the information acquired during the course of the literary review by applying the logic of matching patterns, which involved the comparison of the patterns with the case studies with theoretical solutions. The acceptance of the aforesaid research methodology shall in the future facilitate the creation of the proposition of good practices in terms of talent management.

2. Talent

In scientific literature there is a multitude of opinions on the issue of what talent is. The most frequently repeated viewpoint correlates talent with abilities (see: research of among others: K. Heller(1932); McKinsey & Company (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, Michaels, 1998); E. Michaels (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, Axelrod, 2001); S. Chełpa (2005); A. Sękowski (2005, p.35); C. Tansley, L. Harris, J. Stewart, P. Turner, C. Foster, H. Williams (2006); M. Juchnowicz (2007, pp. 248-258); A. Rylewska, A. Springer (2014, p.147); E. Gallardo-Gallardo, S. Nijs, N. Dries, P. Gallo (2015, pp.264 - 279).

According to J. Yarnall, the definition of talent is very differentiated (Yarnall, 2011, pp.510-526), ranging from the focus on specified people in the organizations that possess a certain number of features which describe talent (see: research of among others: M. Castells (2000); M. Williams(2000); T. Listwana (2005, pp. 21-26.); L. Barlow (2006, pp.6 - 9); F. Hansen (2007, pp.12-13); G. Cayton (2007, p. 23); R. Stuart-Koetze, C. Dunn (2013, pp. 24-25); D. Ulrich (2008); P. Cheese (2008, pp. 18-19); T. Davis (Davis, Cutt, Flynn, Mowl, Orme, 2010, p. 15); Y. Downs, S. Swailes (2013, pp. 267–281); J. Tabor (2013); M. Meyers, van M. Woerkom, N. Dries (2013, pp. 305-321) to the definitions of talent that refer to the claims of the need for talent in the organization (see: research of among others: A. R. Thurik, M.A. Carree (2003, p.14); K. Catlin, J. Matthews (2002, p. 14-31); L. Berger, D. Berger (2003); S. Borkowska (2005); K. Kwiecień (2005, p.163), C. Tansley, L. Harris, J. Stewart, P. Turner, C. Foster, H. Williams (2006); A. Miś, A. Pocztowski (Pocztowski, 2008, pp. 36-62); C. Zheng, C. Soosay, E Hyland (2008, p. 16); M. Morawski, B. Mikuła (2009, pp. 47-59), M. Meyers, van M. Woerkom, N. Dries (2013, pp. 305-321); K. Głowacka-Stewart, M. Majcherczyk (2006). Such a subjective and objective approach has its advantages and disadvantages. The former facilitates the identification of talent, while the latter facilitates the establishment of its role in the organization (Wójcik, 2017, pp.123-135).

The researchers also have varied opinions as to whether talent is static (see: research of among others: H. Emmerson (1927); K. Adamiecki (1932, pp. 4-12); M. Williams (2000); D. Ulrich

(2008); P. Cheese (2008 pp. 18-19); T. Davis (Davis, Cutt, Flynn, Mowl, Orme, 2010, p. 15); Y. Downs, S. Swailes (2013, pp. 267–281); J. Tabor (2013), which may be expanded by the following (see: research of among others: M. Castells (2000); E. Michaels (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, Axelrod, 2001); L. Barlow (2006, pp.6-9); R. Stuart-Koetze, C. Dunn (2013, pp. 24-25); M. Meyers, van M. Woerkom, N. Dries (2013, pp. 305-321); K. Głowacka-Stewart, M. Majcherczyk (2006), A. Rylewska, A. Springer (2014, p.147); E. Gallardo-Gallardo, S. Nijs, N. Dries, P. Gallo (2015, pp. 264-279).

A universal division of the employees and the definition of talents with the aim of ensuring a wide scope of their development was proposed by D. Ulrich and N. Smallwood (2012, pp. 55-6):

- Management – would require non-standard educational experiences, including participation in external groups, coaching the managerial staff and targeted training would also be of particular importance in terms of planning succession.
- Managerial staff – this is another generation of managerial staff whose developmental activities concentrated on the theme areas, such as shaping the future, creating new challenges, engaging today's talents and building a new generation of talents.
- High potential – constitute talents that occupy the key positions at all levels of the organization, who may be proficient technically speaking, or fulfill the key managerial functions, while also having the ability for future growth. For these groups of employees activities in task teams or special projects would be the target; mentoring by the managerial staff and specific target training of skills.
- All employees have talent, thus in order for the culture of talents to penetrate the whole organization, the possibility of further development was accessible to all employees.

3. War for talents

Contemporary approaches to the concept of talents were initiated at the end of the 1990s by an organization called McKinsey & Company. In the publication entitled "War for talents" it was reported that with regard to the development of advanced technologies, demand for employee talents is higher than supply, which by way of consequence, the market of employee talents became the most competitive of markets of the past decade (Peny, 2012, pp. 16-19).

In 2016, the British Cordant Recruitment announced that the Battle for Talent is Global. Talent is the decisive factor in the success of an enterprise, hence it is important that both human resources, as well as business leaders recruit and retain their best employees. If the fight to attract talents to some enterprises seems to be difficult, retaining the special talents constitutes war on a great scale, as winning the war for talents shall have a great impact on the general success of the organization as a whole. On a global scale, today we are at the point whereby employees are more educated than ever, yet continue to lack the key skills. The lack of technical skills and lack of experience are enumerated as two of the three main reasons for which employers can not fill vacancies due to the insufficient number of talents (Cordant Recruitment, 2016).

However, at the end of 2018 Fortune Magazine indicated that the war for talents is currently more acute than ever and even the economic slowdown which is envisaged within several years will not

provide the employers with the strength to win this war if there shall be an economic correction or recession in terms of the general changes in the balance of power between the employees and employers. The needs of enterprises change faster than the skills and experience of employees, or in other words, there shall be an evolution in terms of the meaning of talent (Hinchliffe, 2018).

One of the principal challenges associated with the war for talents is the possession of the appropriate employees with the appropriate qualifications at the right time. At the strategic level, the war for talents as a business reality requires identification of the gaps in the strategies and methods of the organization of human capital. At a tactical level, the war for talents entails the identification of the talents of an employee, while also specific development of the skills of an employee. Hence, it is necessary to adjust management, skills and efficiency with the aim of defining the long-term goals of the development, both for the enterprise, as well as for the employees. As a consequence, such enterprises which are committed to managing talents, while also deciding to follow, identify and process the competences and skills may achieve a range of business benefits, as well as transparency in terms of the expectations of employees and managers, while also implementing cohesive standards of development in the entire organization. At an operational level, the war for talents encompasses the transition from management of data and information to the management of people, attitudes and knowledge in the sphere of human capital and talent, which particularly requires the appropriate application of the conventional and new technologies, while also the traditional and novel approaches to the technologies of learning, evaluation and efficiency, as well as quality management in order to appropriately configure development plans during which employees follow the career paths that are possible to attain. Unfortunately, using technology for the purposes of recruitment, the management of talents and competences, while also the development of skills was slowed down, or in actual fact not undertaken (Klett, 2010, pp. 278-291).

In contemporary times, the war for talents in enterprises attract, employ and manage talents. The appropriate management of talents has become a key source of competitive advantage. The enterprises that are more successful at attracting, developing and retaining talents gain more than their participation in this key and rare resource and significantly increase their results.

4. Talent Management

Similarly to the lack of a standardized definition of talent, there is also a worrying lack of clarity with regard to the definition, scope and general aims of talent management (Mäkelä, Björkman, Ehrnrooth, 2010, pp.134-142). The notion of talent management has developed and signified a multitude of activities of HR, which evoked an academic dispute on the subject of what it really is.

R.E. Lewis and R. J. Heckman indicated that the analysis of talent management in scientific research was in its infancy up to 2000, as there was a lack of a clear and cohesive definition, while also identification of the areas of application and conceptual framework which were to be the basis of empirical research (Lewis, Heckman, 2006, pp.139–154).

In looking back at the precursors of talent management, R.E. Lewis and R. J. Heckman feel that the best analogy to talent management is that of architecture. Architecture offers a strategic perspective at the level of the system and may open up new research opportunities.

Nevertheless, they claim that other authors failed to describe in what manner talent management may transform into architecture (Lewis, Heckman, 2006, pp.139–154). Such a definition of talent management was also confirmed by D.G. Collings and K. Mellahi in 2009 (2009, pp. 304–313).

However, several years later, D.G. Collings, together with H. Scullion and V. Vaiman this time, presented research results which indicated that talent management had moved from infancy to adolescence (Collings, Scullion, Vaiman, 2011, pp. 453–462), particularly from the viewpoint of the contribution of American researchers of the problematic issue of TM. Furthermore, in 2012 M. Powell and G. Lubitsh presented their diagnosis of the processes of talent management in the private sector and international enterprises based on the approach of Collings et al. (Powell, Lubitsh, 2012, pp. 24–27).

The research conducted by P. Bethke-Langenegger, P. Mahler and B. Staffelbach confirmed the theory that the practices of talent management conducted on the basis of a statistical approach had a much more significant impact on the attractiveness of enterprises, the achievement of goals, customer satisfaction and corporate profits. Moreover, the research illustrated that enterprises that apply the strategies of talent management concentrate on the planning of succession, enjoy greater corporate profits, as well as higher level of trust and motivation to attain results (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler, Staffelbach, 2011, pp. 524-539).

Similarly to his predecessors, talent management is defined by P. Cappelli via the prism of the notion of human capital. Talent management is a tool for enterprises to achieve their general goals, namely earning money. Organizations must understand the costs and benefits accruing from the decision to implement procedures of talent management in the practice of their functioning (Cappelli, 2008, pp. 74-81).

In defining talent management, E. Blass indicates the dependency of the so-called “capturing”, between strategy, planning succession and management of human resources first and foremost based on the strategies of development, strategies of recruitment and retention, while also strategies of remuneration, supported by the database, monitoring and measurements (Blass, 2009, p.22).

In analysing talent management solely in the context of an organization, some scientists claim that the aim of talent management is to attract, develop, motivate and retain talents (see: research of among others: C. McCauley, M. Wakefield (2006, 4–7); D.A Ready, J.A. Conger (2007, pp. 8–77); H.J. Christensen, E. Rog (2008, pp. 743–757); I.C. Beechler, Woodward (pp. 273–285); B. Davies, B.J. Davies (2010, pp. 418–426); M.C. Meyers, M. van Woerkom (2014, pp. 92–203), while also being part of the policies of human resources management. However, their opponents (see: research of among others: D.F. Frank and C.R. Taylor (2004, pp. 33- 41) indicate that the process of talent management is incomplete without the strategies of development and retention of talents.

G.K. Stahl, I. Björkman, E. Farndale, S.S. Morris, J. Paauwe, P. Stiles, J. Trevor and P. Wright propose a talent management group which separates the elements of talent management into two sub-groups (2012, p.27):

- practices of talent management (placed on the outer ring):
 - recruitment and selection,
 - development and training,
 - efficiency management,
 - retention of employees,
 - bonuses and rewards as motivators,
 - review of talents,
- leading principles of talent management, the so-called main principles (inner ring):
 - adjustment to strategies,
 - internal cohesion
 - engagement in management,
 - employer branding,
 - balance of global and local needs,
 - organizational culture.

The six main principles relate to, in varying degrees, each individual practice of applying talent management. This is the approach which is accepted as adequate for empirical research.

5. Research results

In the analysis conducted, triangulation was applied by means of the combination of comparative methods in the evaluation of the indicated categories of talent management which facilitated the initial explanation of the analysed problematic issues and interpretation of TM from various perspectives, while subsequently the validation of conclusions and answers to the research questions set out.

Twenty enterprises were subject to analysis, which are global concerns and corporations that operate on various markets and in various sectors. They are connected by expansion in terms of their HR strategies for on the one hand their significant number of employees, while on the other hand the search for new human capital. All these companies possess formalized and expanded processes of human resources management.

In Table 1, the chosen three cases¹ of programs of talent management have been presented (as previously mentioned the entire research shall be included in the prepared monograph).

As an initial response to the research questions put forward:

- Out of the 20 enterprises analysed, in five cases there were no formalized programs of talent management despite the widely built and multi-aspect processes of human resources management. These five enterprises were rejected from further analysis in the research process. In the remaining companies over the past three years intensive work has been conducted on specifying and expanding the TM programs.
- The process of implementing talent management was caused by the limitation of the access to specialists on the open markets, as well as the necessity of training and

¹ The choice of these three case studies was dictated by the limitation of the content of the herein publication. It was acknowledged that it is essential to show different approaches to TM.

retaining their own staff as a result. In one case, TM was implemented due to fears of employees being captured by competitors in the same sector.

- A significant impact on discussions in enterprises on the need for and efficiency of TM programs was exerted by the processes of globalization of human resources, the so-called labour migration.
- There is no standardized definition of talent among enterprises, while simultaneously there are no standardized methods and techniques within the framework of the process of talent management. In two cases no attempts to define what talent means for enterprises were found in internal documents.
- Units that are responsible for preparing and executing TM programs are the HR departments located at the headquarters of the enterprises. However, the evaluation of efficiency is carried out by the management boards.
- The analysed enterprises apply the same concept of talent management in all of their locations worldwide.
- TM programs are mainly determined by the strategies of the enterprises and the prevalent organizational culture.
- In over half of the cases, the programs of talent management are geared towards all employees. Only in three cases did the addressees solely indicate the managerial staff.
- Different approaches also certify to the constant search for solutions in the area of TM. The majority of the analysed enterprises declared changes in their programs in the future.
- The problematic issue of talent management requires essential changes in the enterprise and adjustment of TM to its magnitude, sector and first and foremost to

Table 1. Chosen sample research results

PRACTICES OF TALENT MANAGEMENT	LEADING PRINCIPLES OF TALENT MANAGEMENT	EFFECTS OF P
Case study 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase of talents (taking talents from competitors) • employees were encouraged to achieve results at all costs • communication strategies geared towards motivation • innovative ways of recognising and adding people to talent pool • creation of sales academy with aim of training and improvement of skills of employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • culture and values became ingrained among employees by means of information campaigns • strongly concentrating on implementation of vision and mission of HR • quarterly meeting on “issue of current and future business strategies, while also recognising the best talents” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 employees a • career perspec from external er • innovative and of products prep • marketing team best marketing t • sales team wa best business conference of sa
Case study 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • model of talent management has systemic approach, in which all the processes are co-dependent; which facilitates the standardization of training, professional development and knowledge management, while also striving towards improvement in its processes, • plan of training and development combines planning and implementation of development programs and training activities which shall advocate the achievement of the aims of the organization, while also employees, • plan particularly concentrates on stimulating innovations in the field of talent management, while also supporting the role of the leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management strategies that are adjusted to the business challenges that facilitate the development of potential, • investing in the talent of employees enables the development of new projects in the future • model of talent management is adjusted to the strategic plan of the group and its principal plan relating to human resources • talent management is the common responsibility in the entire organization, which is why the model is based on the principle of the common responsibility of the firm and its employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of workfo philosophy of the • adjustment of pro to the new model input (by means management) and means of culture a • implementation which is an initiat needs of talent environment of tr

<p>and physical, psychological and social self-being, as part of model of a healthy workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the leader and employee play a key role in the process of learning and professional development of the workplace • the employee takes responsibility for his/her own-learning and professional development, while also being obliged to adopt and indicate a positive approach to self-development. • talent management encompasses a set of processes that are to remain with all the employees during the entire course of their work in the firm 		
<p>Case study 3</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my career – one place in which employees may update data relating to their careers thanks to the intuitive user interface: skills, result reviews and professional preferences • career according to project – the main webpage of HR department for talent management and planning succession with integrated data of employees, managers and HR • workforce by design – automation of planning of employment and comparisons with actual data in real time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close cooperation with highest level of management with the aim of defining data, processes and systems necessary in order to facilitate the planning of the workforce and the processes of talent management • culture of efficiency and accountability, ensuring the HR department of higher quality and more complete information for employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplified career management of employees • guaranteed better management of potential problems • consolidated source of normalized measures and data facilitating better decision making and more cohesive development • this led to the improvement of planning workforce

Source: Self-analysis

- the assets and expected assets of human resources according to the managers of HR.
- A limitation of the research conducted was the lack of verification of the efficiency of the TM programs applied from the viewpoint of the employees themselves as to whether the presented effects were actually achieved.

Conclusion

Nowadays, the war for talents and talent management must be based on new premises that have an impact on quantity, quality and the features of talent such as the following: global demographic and economic trends, increase in the mobility of people and organization, transformatory changes in the business environments, skills and cultures, while also the growing level of the variety of the workforce (Beechler, Woodward, 2009, pp. 273–285).

The identification and retention of the appropriate talent, in the appropriate time, at the appropriate place remain a constant challenge for enterprises, particularly during the beginning of an economic slowdown. Even when economic growth returns, the development of the same technologies shall have a significant impact on the level of complexity of organizations and specific workplaces. Work is also becoming relational and not transactional, while the abilities of units to build and maintain relations, while also the ability of an organization to create systems and processes with the aim of maximizing these relations for the business efficiency shall be of key significance for building the competitive advantage thanks to attracting, developing and effective management of talents. In current times, employers cannot afford to continue to attempt to resolve problems with the lack of, or fluctuation of talents. The war for talents is on.

Discussions

The hitherto research conducted however indicated that a multitude of business models and accepted activities by enterprises shall not keep up with the existing models of talent management. The war for talents must be based on new assumptions. Hence, it is becoming necessary to define the notion of talent in contemporary challenges of an organization and its environs, while also building new guidelines for the process of talent management.

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