



Talent Management and Human Insight

NEW APPROACHES TO TALENT MANAGEMENT

Background

No-one denies the importance of talent management. In the UK alone, 85% of large corporates run leadership development programmes and over £1billion is spent annually on management and leadership development.

The performance of an organisation clearly depends on the talent of the people who work there, how that talent is nurtured and developed, how it is deployed in its most productive way and how it is brought into succession plans at the leadership level. Equally poor management of talent - through disempowerment, lack of motivation, ineffective deployment or inaccurate analysis of what to retain when the direction changes or downsizing is needed - can have unintended consequences.

Talent management

Many organisations recognise this and deploy various mechanisms to deal with the issue – talent development programmes, leadership programmes, competency frameworks etc.

The issues which persist relate to the pace of change, the uncertainty of the future, the complexity of working globally, as well as the scope of sourcing services externally. This latter creates a dependency on working productively with the skills and talents of external suppliers.

These issues raise critical questions. What data is available and useful in assessing, developing and retaining talent in the context of dynamic business change, future strategy and how individuals think, make decisions and react to change? How will the talent being developed internally integrate with the skills of external suppliers to meet customer needs and adapt to change?

I'll examine these issues in more detail and suggest approaches to answering them.

How well integrated is the talent development programme with the changing business context, the strategy and its execution?

In other words is the programme part of the business cycle, reflecting the changing needs for talent, or does it sit alongside it? Many processes are well thought out and executed and are based on a highly developed view of the competencies and potential required to progress successfully in a company. But if they are too static you can lose something of enormous value when the strategy develops in new ways or moves to the next stage of growth. It is important to integrate individual growth with organisational performance in pursuit of strategy and how it develops over time.

What is the balance between, on the one hand, identifying and developing what is often described as high potential and, on the other, identifying the talent in everyone and helping them to exploit it to improve their contribution to organisational performance?

There is a trap here of trying to fix what an individual may not be so good at – spending time and money on trying to change what may be difficult or time consuming to change – rather than helping the individual get better at what they are already good at and using that to good effect.



How does the leadership programme recognise and reflect the growing complexity of the business world and the randomness of events?

I cannot stress too much the importance of developing leaders who can be best described as 'comfortably out of control'. This a dimension of talent which is probably missed in many leadership programmes.

A new approach

Human Insight provide tools which collect data quickly and help to visualise:

- the business context and how future strategies will develop over time;
- the talent needed to propel the company forward in terms of innovation, transformation, technical leadership, commercial leadership, control and support;
- the talent in the organisation, how it should develop, impact performance and integrate with the execution of strategy.

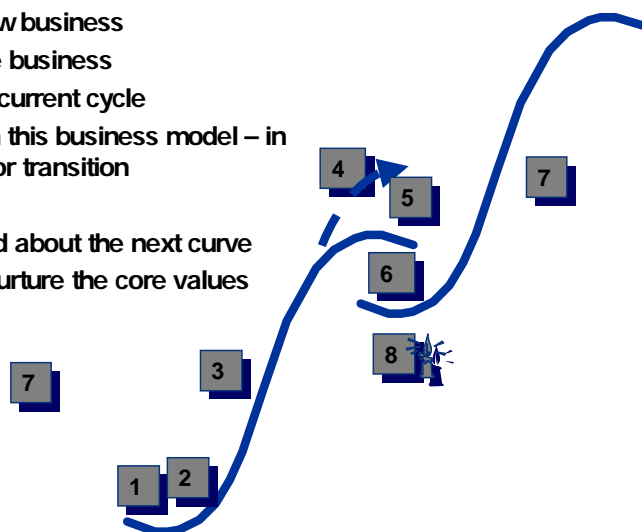
The business context

The S-curve can be used to analyse the business context and evaluate the characteristics of the strategic challenge and how it will change over time.

The S-curve evaluates eight stages in a change and development process life cycle. At the heart of the model is the notion that organisations and teams need to prepare themselves to make appropriate and well timed steps on the curve and leap from one S-curve to the next.

S-curve Stages

1. Design the future
2. Upscale new business
3. Operate the business
4. Stretch the current cycle
5. Close down this business model – in readiness for transition
6. Transform
7. Think ahead about the next curve
8. Save and nurture the core values





This analysis informs individuals, teams and organisations, where they are on their growth curve and what is needed to move to the next stage of growth. Each stage places differing demands on the organisation's talents in terms of:

- Building business through forming new relationships or through technical leadership
- Transforming the business through leadership and innovation
- Growing and up-scaling the business through operational and commercial excellence.

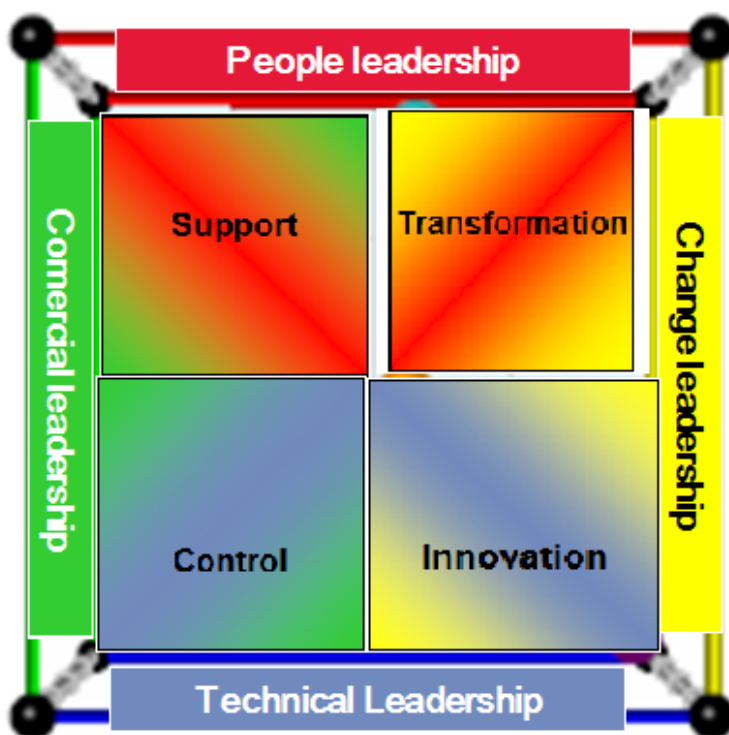
The question then is how the individual, the team or the organisation can:

- Understand and predict where they can be most productive.
- Uncover hidden or unknown areas of risk or poor performance in execution.
- Integrate individual growth, team development and organisational performance in pursuit of the strategy as it develops over time.

The Human Insight model measures how organisations, teams and individuals think, make decisions and react to change Through a 360 process they can understand where their talent lies, where it should be best developed and where it should be avoided in the pursuit of high motivation and performance.

In this way they can compare their profile to the likely most productive profile for certain points on the S-curve and to identify hidden risks in terms of performance.

The model below shows how talent can be measured and described in such a way that it can be mapped on to the business cycle. Individuals, teams and organisations can be mapped onto this grid.



Key outcomes

The outcomes of the analysis enable the talent management process to achieve:

- An increase in leadership effectiveness
- A sustainable improvement in the performance of the organisation
- Clarity around the growth of an individual and how to develop their talent.