

# SCRIPT – STRATEGIC THINKING AND TALENT MANAGEMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

## Cover Page – Slide 1

I welcome you all to this exciting session on Strategic Thinking in Talent Management and Succession Planning.

Come along with me.

## Learning Outcomes – Slide 2

At the end of this session, it is my belief that we would have achieved the following Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the concept of Strategic Thinking.
- Describe how to integrate Strategic Thinking in Talent Management and Succession Planning, and,
- Discuss the challenges of integrating Strategic Thinking in Talent Management and Succession Planning.

## Introduction to Strategic Thinking in Talent Management – Slide 3

***Every organization is unique in numerous ways, hence the disparity in their performance. One factor that is responsible for this is the soundness or weakness of the strategy adopted in pursuing their set goals.***

A talent management strategy (TMS) is the magic ingredient behind managing an organisation's talent – both current and potential. Talent management is an important business goal for any organisation and talent management strategy can give the competitive edge to any organisation.

Talent management strategy can move an organisation's talent management beyond essential talent management activities like talent acquisition and performance management, to levels of critical talent growth, managed talent relationships and an inclusive talent system.

A well-designed Talent management strategy within an organisation facilitates the HR function and management to plan toward recruiting and retaining top performers, employing them against specific business goals at a better rate than their competition.

The best talent management strategy is the marriage of the organisation's goals and objectives and the personal developmental aspirations of its present and future talent.

For an organisation, talent management strategy starts by understanding personal aspirations of its talent, rather than adjusting to templates that are not current, and aligning these to the overall business strategy.

## Overview of Business Strategy – Slide 4

Every business strategy arises to achieve company's mission and vision, which explains why it is in business. Therefore, the activity in the company should seek to fill this purpose, thus guiding all strategic decisions.

Strategic concern is the formal consideration of an organization's future course. All strategic planning deals with at least one of three key questions:

- "What do we do?"
- "For whom, do we, do it?"
- "How do we excel?"

## Elements of Strategic Thinking – Slide 5

The five core elements needed to build your strategic thinking capabilities:

- Outward Orientation.
- Long-Range Criteria for Decision Making.
- Realistic and Aggressive Story,
- Pragmatic, Structured and Disciplined Management System, and,
- High Comfort Level with a Dual Focus.

We would now look at them in details.

### 1. An Outward Orientation.

An outward orientation means taking an 'outside in' approach to evaluating what you are doing. It means looking at your activities in relationship to things outside of your department or organization. It is the opposite of operating in isolation. An outward orientation affords you the opportunity to look beyond what you can currently see, and even beyond the needs of your customers, to seek the influences at work in your environment. With an outward orientation, you will be better prepared to understand what you are a part of and how to make proactive steps to act more effectively now and in the future.

### 2. A Long-Range Criteria for Decision Making.

Having a long-range criterion for decision making provides the context necessary to evaluate your insights and performance against your ultimate goals. It gives you the confidence to make necessary changes when you might be spinning your wheels or moving away from your ideal destination. Let me be clear, today's wish list does not establish your long-range criteria. It is derived from a clearly defined vision of success. In other words, it is part of your overall strategic direction. You must know what success looks like before you can define the criteria, but then you must use it regularly in decision-making.

### **3. A Realistic and Aggressive Story.**

A realistic and aggressive story is one that pulls together the elements of what you are doing now with how you will evolve over time to get to where you ultimately want to go as an organization. For honoring great performance, shifting priorities and inspiring future commitment, there is nothing like a compelling story that people believe in. To have great thinking, you must capture the imagination to unleash their creativity. Think about the master corporate storyteller, Steve Jobs. Although your story doesn't have to set out to change the world the way Apple's did, it should inspire, excite and motivate you and your team. It should define a pathway forward that is both relevant to today's challenges, and aggressive enough to inspire others to act in ways that take you to the next level.

### **4. A Pragmatic, Structured and Disciplined Management System.**

Another key element is having a way for new ideas to be received, evaluated and either discarded or integrated into current priorities. This sort of deliberation is accomplished through a pragmatic, structured and disciplined management process. Pragmatic, in that you start with your current focus and incorporate new thinking into it rather than letting a new idea derail your current focus. Structured, in that people understand how decisions are made, what roles are in this process and how to participate effectively in it. And disciplined, meaning that it is part of the company's regular management process. It is as core to how you manage as hiring practices or budgeting. It does not go away when a new manager is hired, or when new priorities are established.

### **5. A High Comfort Level with a Dual Focus.**

A high comfort level with a dual focus means having the ability to be laser-focused on executing your current priorities (the deliberate set of objectives and strategies that make up your plan) and openness and flexibility to the exploration of emerging ideas. This is probably the most challenging element for leadership teams. The dual focus often creates tension between executing a plan perfectly (for which you might be rewarded) and the possibility that, at any stage, as new ideas emerge, the plan might shift. Having a pragmatic, structured, and disciplined management system can significantly increase the comfort level with a dual focus, but in my experience, it is not enough. The leadership team must be comfortable with the sometimes-awkward nature of a dual focus: perfect execution of deliberate strategies and flexibility to integrate emerging strategies when necessary.

## Repositioning Talent Management – Slide 6

We can reposition Talent Management that has not delivered the required results in the following way:

1. Making talent a pillar of business strategy, not an afterthought.
2. Converting business goals into talent goals.
3. Anticipating future hurdles and nipping them in the bud.
4. Develop Culture leading the talent management strategy.
5. Talent management initiatives.
6. Strengthening employer brand with content marketing.
7. Making use of employee referrals.
8. Talent management strategy for the future, and,
9. Diversity in Employment.

## Repositioning Succession Planning – Slide 7

Succession is often viewed as simply picking a successor for the top leader (the CEO or president); this focus is usually superficial and emphasizes mostly replacement. However, good succession goes beyond putting a new leader in place.

Filling critical vacancies can be expensive, time consuming and challenging, so you need to prepare for this by implementing a succession planning process that will allow you to minimise the impact of losing key staff. Effective succession planning will ensure the business runs smoothly until critical vacancies are filled.

It is crucial that you proactively identify and develop high potential employees now, so that you have people with the right skills and experience once a key role becomes vacant. This will enable you to respond to change more effectively and ensure leadership continuity. It is also an effective process for recognising, developing, and retaining leadership talent.

**1 – Identify Key Positions:** Analyse business plans to identify the positions most critical for business growth.

**2 – Identify Potential Successors:** Establish the key competencies required to undertake these roles and the high potential employees that could step up and assume these positions.

**3 – Determine When Will the Potential Successors Be Ready:** Recognise the timeframe of your successor's readiness to take on the role. Are they ready to commence development now? In the short term? Or, in the long term?

**4 – Determine What Development Needs Do They Have:** Determine the training and development required to fill skill gaps and prepare them for advancement. This can include mentoring, secondments, on the job training as well as external courses.

**5 – Ensure an Ongoing Commitment:** Managers in all parts of the organisation should be continually identifying gaps in talent and focusing on the development of high performers.

## Developing Strategy for Talent Management and Succession – Slide 8

For an organization, talent management strategy starts by understanding personal aspirations of its talent, rather than adjusting to templates that are not current, and aligning these to the overall business strategy.

We can develop an effective strategy for talent management and succession using the following themes:

- **Talent attraction and recruitment.**

To attract top talent, you need to tell a vivid story about your unique employer value proposition, or EVP. This proposition should clearly communicate the compelling elements of your employment offer, as well as the behaviors and values you expect of candidates in return.

This narrative allows candidates to make an informed decision about whether your organization is somewhere they aspire to work and somewhere they can have an influence. But it also ensures that the people who do go on to apply are in tune with your company values; are motivated to be a part of your team's mission; and are ready to take on the particular challenges associated with their role.

- **Building and employing talent.**

Great managers are typically experts in their fields with a strong performance history and an interest in being in charge. But to lead effectively they need to develop another skill, one that is often overlooked: talent management.

The ability to see talent before others see it (internally and externally), unlock human potential, and find not just the best employee for each role, but also the best role for each employee, is crucial to running a topnotch team. In short, great managers are also great talent agents.

- **Talent retention.**

Managing for employee retention involves strategic actions to keep employees motivated and focused so they elect to remain employed and fully productive for the benefit of the organization.

A comprehensive employee retention program can play a vital role in both attracting and retaining key employees, as well as in reducing turnover and its related costs. All of these contribute to an organization's productivity and overall business performance. It is more efficient to retain a quality employee than to recruit, train and orient a replacement employee of the same quality.

Fairness and transparency are fundamental yet powerful concepts that can make a lasting impression on employees

## Challenges of Integrating Strategic Thinking in Talent Management and Succession Planning – Slide 9

The following are challenges that organizations can encounter in their attempt to integrate Strategic Thinking into their Talent Management and Succession Planning programmes:

- Human Capital is Not Sufficiently Aligned with Business Strategy.
- Lack of Accountability and Capability for Talent Development.
- Inconsistent Execution and Integration of Talent Programs with business strategy.
- Limited Use of Meaningful Talent Analytics, and,
- Generational Expectations.

## Conclusion – Slide 14

***Organizational choices are as good as the quality of its business strategy. An excellent choice that mismatches the grand strategy is bound to set the organization in a reverse gear, hence undermine the progress made so far.***

***Therefore, ensuring success in talent management and succession planning require that human resource managers pay attention to the corporate strategy to ensure coherency in corporate and functional strategy implementation.***

Thank you and Stay Safe. Bye

