

6 Steps to Making the Case for Talent Management



“Capital is being superseded by creativity and the ability to innovate—and therefore by human talents—as the most important factors of production.”¹

- Dr. Klaus Schwab, Founder of The World Economic Forum

Despite people being your most profoundly competitive advantage, making the case for talent management programs is difficult. Many business leaders still think of HR as compliance-driven cost center, instead of a powerful ally in increasing revenue and ensuring organizational longevity.

So how can you show that a talent management initiative can and should drive positive business outcomes?



1 Think like an executive.

Address C-level priorities when making your case. Your CEO is already juggling numerous concerns: customers, company performance, strategy, changing regulations, compliance –ultimately, business outcomes. Think about what results would make your talent management initiatives worth the risk to implement. What would they need to see to convince them of the value of your program? More revenue? Reduced costs? Increased productivity?



2 Translate HR talk into numbers.

A 25-page proposal explaining, in HR lingo, every facet of your great new talent program isn't going to cut it. Any proposal must be compelling but also streamlined enough to keep your CEO's attention. Lead with business value. Go beyond anecdotal data and communicate the concrete business benefits of your program. For example, clearly show how your engagement initiatives will result in higher retention, or however else they'll improve the bottom line.

¹ Gary Beach. "Talentism Is the New Capitalism." Wall Street Journal. July 17, 2014. Accessed March 31, 2015, at <http://blogs.wsj.com/cio/2014/07/17/talentism-is-the-new-capitalism>

² Deshpande, Anissa. "Building The Case For Talent Management." ERE Media. Webinar date: March 19, 2015. <https://vimeo.com/122802916>



3 Define the talent you'll need to make the business strategy successful.

What are the key goals for your organization over the next three to five years? Growing revenue, increasing margins, entering new markets, creating new services? Map out what positions—and how many and at what cost—will be needed to execute your organization's goals successfully.



5 Quantify how you'll meet those challenges.

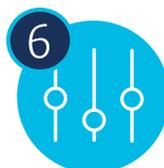
As in the above example, perhaps you don't have access to a large candidate pool to scale for a new product launch. How are you going to ensure you have a skilled, available workforce? Are you recruiting? Moving internal talent? Will you need development programs to train employees moving to the new area? Be specific and tangible in how you'll conquer these challenges.

Don't be afraid to be bold in your definition of success. It's tempting to shy away from revenue-driven metrics, but mature talent management strategies have been shown time and time again to influence higher shareholder returns. While you'll never have control over all the factors that play into revenue growth—sales, marketing, the economy—getting a seat at the table means allowing HR to play a pivotal role in driving profits. (For proof on how advanced talent management drives higher revenue, download the eBook *Why Your Nonexistent Talent Strategy Is Costing You Money—and How to Fix It.*)



4 Identify the challenges you expect in finding the talent.

You know what talent you're going to need. What's going to stand in the way of finding it? Is your company launching a new product that requires training for your employees? Use your deep talent management expertise to identify all potential stumbling blocks.



6 Assign metrics to ensure accountability.

You may get CEO buy-in at the outset, but your program will be short-lived if you can't show with hard, quantifiable numbers how your program improves the business.

Key Takeaways: Building Your Business Case

Getting the green light from your leadership team means tying your talent management vision to tangible outcomes. As you're building your case, remember the following:

- **Align your case with your company's strategic plan, goals, etc.**
- **Always focus on business outcomes** and how talent management can drive measurable results.
- **Be open to feedback** - your assumptions may be challenged. This is OK! It will only make your program better.
- **Arm your case with data.** Leverage talent trends & industry trends and the current state of your workforce to make your proposal compelling.
- **Communicate simply.** Less is more: don't use more than five metrics to make your case. Consider starting with a simple infographic that highlights your proposal's benefits.

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