

ers

Executive Summary

The Seven Deadly Sins of Talent Management

Patrick R. Dailey, Ph.D., and Charles H. Bishop Jr., Ph.D. Published by The Human Capital Institute, July 2020-reprinted

Link to full article:

http://www.humancapitalinstitute.org/hci/external.guid?_articleID=90375&_sponsorID=164&_forwarder=tacks_talent_management_execution

Target Audience. Senior Leadership

Overview. This article is about the personal role and discipline necessary from senior leadership to manage a company's talent pipeline.

Dailey and Bishop discuss the “personal stamp” that senior leadership must place on a company's talent management process in order to signal the process as a business imperative as well as implement “best practices” processes. The authors provide pragmatic guidance for diagnosing the obstacles; they offer suggestions for building a deep and ready talent pipeline; and define the standards by which talent management process must be executed.

The authors put a spotlight on faulty processes and inadequate accountability that render talent management processes ineffective in delivering a robust pipeline of exceptional leadership talent. These are called “Sins.” For each Sin, diagnostic clues or symptoms are provided which allow leaders to assess whether the sin operates within their organization. Most importantly, practical solutions are offered for each Sin. A Diagnostic Guide is included in the full article as well as provided in this summary.

Dailey and Bishop argue that leadership-rich organizations never believe their talent management process and activities are discretionary duties for senior leadership. Leadership-rich companies understand that the talent management process is an essential core competency that can't be duplicated, that largely can't be delegated and must not be neglected.

They assert that there is nothing altruistic about

these values and practices. It is about building the *sustainable* capacity to perform and win. Great leadership is the foundation for sustained performance through both evolutionary and revolutionary phases of any company's life span. Without a leader putting a personal stamp on this process and investing personal time to know one's pipeline, the process is doomed.

The Sins are *briefly* described below. Detailed discussion of the Sins, the Symptoms and Solutions is provided in the full article.

Inept Assessment

Do your hiring managers differentiate 'great' talent from 'good'?

Each day, leaders throughout your organization make judgments, or “calls,” to select talent for more challenging and complex jobs. When these decision-makers fail to make astute talent assessments and predictions, a little bit of your company's future is chipped away.

Loose Accountability

Would you bet your bonus on the quality and readiness of your leadership pipeline?

One of the most unforgivable sins a senior executive can commit is underestimating the future leadership needs for the business—either in terms of quantity or quality. These oversights traditionally go unmentioned in annual reports and during analyst meetings. Yet these oversights compromise your organization's competitive future.

Tolerating Protectionism

Are you personally willing to break down the barriers between operating units for sharing and developing top talent?

Protectionism exists when organizational walls and cultural norms limit the movement or development of emerging leaders across organizational boundaries. This sin narrows your degrees of freedom regarding development for emerging leaders and ultimately limits choices in appointing “ready now” leaders, compromising the quality and readiness of your talent pipeline.

Playing It Too Safe

Are you willing to take short-term risks and

“financial hits” to place emerging leaders into real challenges as they learn their lessons of experience?

Developing leaders with the keen instincts and well-honed skills to lead organizations into their futures does not come without risk. This risk involves placing talent into real and challenging situations where they must perform *and* learn from their experience. It is a truism that the greater the challenge, the greater the learning opportunity—and, unfortunately, the greater the risk of failure to the individual and the organization. So-called 100-percent “safe-fills” provide little growth opportunity for the individual. The outcome can result in low motivation or overconfidence by the leadership team. The ideal situation is a job that demands performance and provides a challenge for the individual.

Settling For “Just Good Enough”

Can your team outwit and outmaneuver your competition?

Organizations can lose their fitness edge when not challenging to attain market share or functional excellence. In the early stages of decline, signs of “organizational dry rot” can be detected in the middle-managerial appointments. In those cases, “good enough” leaders are appointed to key roles and steer their operating units toward incremental improvements and even deliver strong results. These organizations have worked harder and managed to win—for a period of time. Soon these organizations are in over their heads—overworked and out of gas. Their reputations slip, and great talent becomes difficult to attract and retain. Predictably, the competition begins to outwit, outflank, and outmaneuver them.

Failure to Reinvent Your Wheel

Are you borrowing or buying a succession-management process, then force fitting it into your culture?

Many of our best known brands—IBM, Dell, FedEx— have their own “secret sauce,” something that makes them distinctive. If you probe into the genesis of what makes such great brands, one of the key factors is their approach to talent—their selection, development, and retention. The authors assert that leaders need to “invent their own wheel” for their talent management process. While there are some

essential building blocks to an effective process, the phrase “reinvent the wheel” is used to encourage leaders to build an identity for their talent management process that solidifies involvement and commitment among other senior leaders.

Creating Credenzaware

Is your talent-planning process an annual “event” or an ongoing, ingrained process that drives results?

Credenza-ware is the unrealized output of talent review meetings. This output finds its way to the shelves, disk drives, and credenzas of senior executives and presenters. Nice work that goes nowhere. The authors believe the culprit is the once-per-year process of conducting talent review meetings in which forms and formal presentations overwhelm the process of candidly assessing your organization’s talent strengths and deficiencies and setting plans in motion to close gaps. When talent meetings feel more like reviews than action-planning sessions, leaders should be on guard that their time and effort may be squandered.

Author contact:

Patrick R. Dailey, Ph.D.
pdailey1@yahoo.com P 310.400.9992

Charles H. Bishop, Jr., Ph.D.
Charlie@theprofitabilityformula.com
 P 312-267-2924

Diagnostic Guide

SIN	SYMPTOMS	SOLUTIONS
<p>Inept Assessment</p> <p><i>Do your hiring managers differentiate 'great' talent from 'good'?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p>Selection standards and assessment skills are off target and lead to mediocrity. Time to apply rigor to pinpoint competencies that differentiate performance; train hiring managers; operate a disciplined selection system that delivers top tier talent.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior leaders don't agree on what "success" looks like <input type="checkbox"/> Appointments are not made from your promotability list <input type="checkbox"/> Performance is used as a proxy for potential <input type="checkbox"/> A "conspiracy of politeness" exists during talent review sessions <input type="checkbox"/>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Bolt competency model to strategy 2- Train manager to assess competencies and learning agility 3- Foster an environment of "open dialogue" during talent review session
<p>Loose Accountability</p> <p><i>Would you bet your bonus on the quality and readiness of your leadership pipeline?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p>Process excellence and selection accuracy are deemed as low in importance. There is no "spot light" on this essential managerial accountability. Time to ensure senior leaders put some "skin in the game."</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Managing (only) from the heart <input type="checkbox"/> "One horse races" are run for key appointments <input type="checkbox"/> Senior leaders are not held accountable for "bad calls" <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Play a strong role in selection decisions at least two levels down. 2- Scorecard your process and reward success 3- Challenge calls to sharpen standards
<p>Tolerating Protectionism</p> <p><i>Are you personally willing to reach down and across the organization to knock down the barriers to sharing and developing top talent?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p>Walls and barriers exist between organizational units around many issues; most likely talent is one of these. Time to knock down cross unit barriers and appropriately manage talent as a collective corporate resource.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Inability to move talent across organizational boundaries <input type="checkbox"/> States rights mentality and practices <input type="checkbox"/> Cronyism <input type="checkbox"/> Talented outsiders have difficulty breaking into the culture <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Create an "air traffic control" capability to facilitate appointments and development 2- Know your pipeline
<p>Playing It Too Safe</p> <p><i>Are you willing to take short term risks with business results as emerging leaders learn their lessons of experience?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p>Talent development programs fail to stretch and build the necessary range and depth of skills, coalitions and temperament necessary for promotability and success at the next level. Time to fix your talent development agenda---make development more challenging, inject a "pass/fail" mentality and tailored to the needs of high potentials.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Low risk learning and development opportunities are utilized <input type="checkbox"/> Promotions are delayed until talent is "over ripe" <input type="checkbox"/> Holding steadfastly to a promote from within practice <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving high-potential talent out of the equation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Ensure real business risk and personal challenge are used 2- Prepare transformation Coaching Guidance 3- Promote the best people into key jobs early and often 4- Break some compensation rules 5- Wake up to the real problem that might involve 25% of your leadership and <u>act</u>

SIN	SYMPTOMS	SOLUTIONS
<p>Settling For Good Enough</p> <p><i>Can your team outwit and out-maneuver the competition?</i></p> <p>****</p> <p>Your operating leadership and management cadre do not deliver market leadership. Your bench has failed to offer ready now talent that senior leadership believes can step up into pivotal roles and win in the marketplace. Your “bar” is too low. Time to upgrade. Time to build your bench from rigorous internal development as well as recruit “take your breath away” talent from the outside that can step in and step up.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Compromise candidates are appointed to key roles <input type="checkbox"/> Operating units rarely stick their necks out <input type="checkbox"/> Operating units are unable to renew their performance capability <input type="checkbox"/> Belief in Management Alchemy via team building and training <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Build talent ahead of demand 2- Recruit and develop more you’re your fair share of “game changers” 3- Supplement your pipeline with “great” external talent 4- Make it someone’s job that great talent sticks
<p>Failure to Reinvent The Wheel</p> <p><i>Are you borrowing or buying a talent management process and force fitting it into your culture?</i></p> <p>****</p> <p>Talent management has not been treated as a core competency. Modest investment and inattention has produced an undistinguished process. Time to create your brand of talent management processes and a distinctive leadership profile; put your personal stamp on the process; build out both the assessment and development sides of your unique process. Invent your “secret sauce.” Connect talent management with the business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Seduced by fads and technology <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy programs and solutions are no longer aligned to the business needs <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of the “special task force” <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Put your personal stamp on the process 2- Get the basics right 3- Sell your vision – get management leaders involved
<p>Creating “Credenza –Ware”</p> <p><i>Is your talent review process a once a year ‘event’ vs. an on-going, ingrained process that drives results?</i></p> <p>*****</p> <p>Process planning, review/planning meetings and follow-through are haphazard. Time to elevate talent management to the same level as your strategic planning and annual budget planning process and repeatedly follow up to compare plan v. actual through the fiscal year. Time to work your talent management plan <i>everyday</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dominance of a “once a year” mindset <input type="checkbox"/> Talent review meetings are a “Road to Nowhere” <input type="checkbox"/> Talent plans are not tracked for on time, on target results <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Tee-up the issues you want addressed 2- Have Discussions; not Presentations 3- Put Plans and Commitments in writing 4- Replace Succession Planning with a focus on a Pipeline of Talent 5- Measure your pipeline