THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING THE TALENTS PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract- This study aims to determine the impact of Knowledge Management factors on Talent Performance. This paper discusses the possibility of a growing tension between talent progression and capability development which emerges as a result of Knowledge Management and Talent Management strategies. It is argued that the inter-relationship between the increasing trend to develop Knowledge Management strategies leads to developing Talent Management in the organization. Merging of the two concepts, KM&TM , has so far been considered only by human resource scholars who have tended to examine how learning from the field of KM can achieve TM goals. Talent management involves the practice of continuously discovering, developing, using and retaining those people in an organization who are especially valuable in terms of having a great potential for the future of the organization. The knowledge management system includes all of the interacting and interdependent elements that pertain to monitoring and controlling knowledge like: creating knowledge, evaluating knowledge, using knowledge and sharing knowledge. This paper clarifies the knowledge management and reviews various techniques for knowledge representation and examines how the principles of knowledge management (KM) can be used to enhance an organization's talent management (TM).

Keywords- KM (knowledge knowledge), TM (talent management), HRM (human resource management), talent management effectiveness assessment, talent development, supporting knowledge exchange, creating knowledge, evaluating knowledge, using knowledge.

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is now regarded as the most strategically significant organizational asset with companies emphasizing capabilities and intangible resources as competitive tools (Kiessling, T. and Harvey, M. (2006).). However, knowledge may also be the organizational asset managed least effectively (Schutz, P.F. and Carpenter, A. (2008)). Much of the knowledge that serves as a source of advantage is tacit in nature, which is difficult to formalize and share due to its highly personal nature and its reaction on people's actions and experiences.

Talent management involves the practice of continuously discovering, developing, using and retaining those people in an organization, which are especially valuable either in terms of having a great potential for the future of the organization, or because they are capable of resolving business and operational issues which are critical for the company. The knowledge management system includes all of the interacting and interdependent elements that pertain to monitoring and controlling knowledge (including processes, databases, supporting software, organizational structures, etc.) and that participate in allowing the company achieves its goals. In this paper, we will examine the emerging field of talent management (TM) in order to identify what TM practices can contribute to knowledge management (KM). Both the TM and KM fields have growing bodies of literature, however only HR academics have begun writing about a fusion of the two concepts. The HR literature generally considers what KM can contribute to TM. Our paper considers the issue in reverse – how can the principles of TM benefit KM?

II. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The field of KM first emerged in the mid 1980‟s in response to the growing strategic importance of the firms‟ knowledge assets.

A review of KM‟s evolution to date reveals that the concept has been used as a vehicle for change in other fields such as IT, strategic management, and HR. Initially, The KM field was synonymous with IT. While it was generally recognized that KM had something new to offer, it seemed to be in danger of being used by the IT community and turned into a vehicle for marketing new IT systems (Coakes et al., 2002).

Firms with a genuine interest in KM in the 1980‟s were advised to adopt IT-centric solutions which usually involved investing in systems such as Lotus Notes to capture, codify, and store every imaginable variety of knowledge, including best practices, competitive intelligence, observations about customers, learnings from previous projects, and so forth (Davenport, 2005). While the KM field has come to learn the value of informal and community based approaches (Cross, R. and Baird, L. (2000)), the influence of the IT community is still prevalent today. Organizations are now being advised that online applications such as blogs, wikis, and user tagging systems facilitate knowledge work in ways that were not possible before.

The field of strategic management has also adopted a knowledge perspective in order to progress models of how competitive advantage is achieved. Scholars

have criticized the dominant equilibrium-based paradigms, such as Porter's Five Forces (Porter, 1985) and the resource-based view (Barney, 1991), for failing to explain sustained competitive advantage in dynamic industries.

Emergence of the knowledge-based view of the firm, An influential stream of literature within strategic management.

Evidence of the processes and practices associated with KM being utilized for change initiatives can also be found in the field of human resource management (HRM). One of the key challenges faced by HRM professionals is the effective transfer of knowledge among employees, teams, departments, and divisions. HRM professionals have adopted the people centric approaches advocated by KM in order to improve employee performance (Tapscott, D. and Williams, A.D. (2007)). In recent years, the concept of TM has received much attention from HR academics and practitioners. It has also emerged as the latest concept to leverage KM with HRM scholars asking the question "how can TM be advanced through KM?.

In order to mature into an academic discipline in its own right, KM needs to be seen as more than a tool of change for other fields. The purpose of this paper is to make a contribution to this task by assessing how the principles of TM can contribute to KM.

III. TALENT MANAGEMENT

Although the scope and definition of TM differ among researchers, TM includes the HR/OD functions of identifying, developing, and retaining high potential employees for future leader-manager positions in the organization According to Abduljlil AL Damoe, Yazam, Ahmid (2012), "Employee retention has emerged as one of the major focus in the recent years in HRM studies, particularly as a part of talent management programs", state that TM goes beyond retention and incorporates more elements of the talent management process by including training, career planning, HR development, succession planning, performance management, and qualified workforce supply/demand match; however, the overall strategic objective of TM is to develop and sustain leaders so that organizations can be successful (Mathis & Mathis, R. L. & Jackson, J. H. (2008)).

IV. TALENT MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Talent management includes the identification and development of all talent, especially high potential talent for future assignments, positions, or projects. An integrated talent management approach includes workforce planning, talent acquisition, professional development, performance management, retention strategies, and succession planning (Fitz-enz and Davison, 2002). It is important to global organizations because it assists the organization with the development of its employees. "Supply chain is the central nervous system of a global corporation, and the more companies globalize, the more they are going to need people who can really understand all the different sides of the business" (Reese, A.K.(May 2007)). By developing their employees, organizations can produce optimal results.

According to the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp), in a report called Critical Human Capital Issues of 2011, the top issues identified by organizations as " most critical" included: coping with change, knowledge retention, talent management/coaching, leadership development, performance management, innovation/creativity engagement, succession planning, measuring human capital and managing a global workforce ,"Companies around the world have made talent management a top priority, and therefore, such activities are marked by a relatively high degree of sophistication" , (Sharma, D., Borna, S. &Stearns, J. M. 2009)

According to Reinecke, N., Spiller, P. & Ungerman, D. (2007) , the McKinsey global survey of purchasing executives at more than 200 companies found that organizations that utilized "best practices in talent management with purchasing [procurement] employees differ from ordinary companies along three talent dimensions. The dimensions include capabilities of the purchasing units themselves, talent dimension involved the way purchasers view their roles and the aspirations they associate with those roles and high performers were more likely than the other companies to involve purchasing executives more broadly in business planning".

V. KEYS OF KM AND ITS CONTRIBUTE TO TM ACTIVITIES

5.1 Identifying The Knowledge

Organizations need to strategically manage talent flows so that individuals with the needed competencies are available, when needed and are aligned with the right jobs based on the organizations strategic objectives (Tarique, I. and Schuler, R.S. (2010)). The difficulty with identifying organizational „A performers" stems from the fact that talent is a tacit resource; it considers potential and not just actual performance (Collings, D. and Mellahi, K. (2009)). Nonetheless, 98% of the companies studied by Ready, D.A. and Conger, J.A. (2007), purposefully developed high potential talent lists.

Organizations need employees who possess knowledge that will help them to address problems and create innovative solutions.

Hence, employees need to be identified to fill knowledge gaps as opposed to fill narrow, specialized roles (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008).

TM activities

In order to ensure that the most appropriate talent is effectively deployed, some researchers (Huselid et

al., 2005) focus on those pivotal talent positions that may impact on organizational competitive advantage. Talented employees are identified to fill those positions through recruiting ahead of the curve.

The following TM activities help ensure that key knowledge talent is identified both from the external market and internally:

- Talent performance management reviews:

Performance management helps in identifying those knowledge workers who are performing best, and provides feedback on employees' roles and expected performance standards (Debowski, S. (2006)). Success metrics helps quantify performance and identify those who contribute most to knowledge initiatives. Value metrics (e.g. revenue per employee), as opposed to activity-based metrics (e.g. number of training hours) are important in communicating TM's success (Farley, C. (2005)).

Leaders are rated on their performance and promotion potential using a nine block matrix. This helps in identifying the organization's high performers and in implementing initiatives for addressing developmental needs. Such talent identification metrics need to be tailored when applied to knowledge-intensive environments characterized by collaborative efforts. Hence, talent programs which focus on individual accomplishments, such as GE's nine block matrix, can be erroneous when used to identify key talent in knowledge-intensive settings.

- Talent recruiting:

Recruitment has significantly evolved, from a time consuming process bound by limitations of traditional communication channels, to a sophisticated one heavily influenced by web technology. Online screening and analysis tools, such as resume analysis programs and online pre-employment assessments facilitate the identification of key talent sources from the resultant increased applicant pool (Frank and Taylor, 2004).

5.2 Creating the Knowledge

Monika's (1994) dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation proposes that knowledge is created through continuous dialogue between explicit and tacit knowledge. Some employees are naturally more creative than others. The tacit knowledge they accumulate through experience needs to become diffused, adopted and embedded into organizational routines. One of the key challenges to managing organizational knowledge is to understand how to amplify and crystallize the activities of creative knowledge workers (Birkinshaw, J. and Sheehan, T. (2002)).

TM activities

The organization needs to support and provide a context for key knowledge workers to create new knowledge. Strategies for enhancing knowledge creation include practicing relevant leadership behaviors such as providing vision and support for innovation; and cultivating an organizational learning culture (Pei, N.S. (2008)). TM can play a role in supporting such strategies:

- Cultivate knowledge creators:

Numerous theories are in existence which attempt to explain how organizational innovation happens. These theories tend to emphasis that only a fraction of the organization's workforce can be classified as true innovators.

Knowledge creators should be given preferential access to resources. One critical resource is time – knowledge creators need the opportunity to think deeply and generate ideas (Birkinshaw, J. and Sheehan, T. (2002)). They should also be given the space to codify their tacit knowledge, whether through writing a working paper or networking with internal and external experts to test their ideas. Key knowledge creators could also be fast-tracked to training programs on technologies that facilitate knowledge creation.

- Cultivate knowledge activists:

Knowledge creation is a fragile process, often hindered by strong barriers. In order to break down these barriers, a catalyst of knowledge creation is needed. This catalyst comes in the form of knowledge activits (Von Krogh, G., Ichijo, K. and Nonaka, I. (2000)). He or she may not be the prime knowledge creators themselves, but their skill is in creating the right enabling context for others to unleash their creative potential.

5.3 sharing the Knowledge

The importance of social networks and personalization strategies for knowledge sharing has been well documented in the KM literature. However, the role of the small number of individuals who occupy pivotal network positions and who are disproportionately influential in coordinating knowledge flows have been given far less attention (Whelan et al., 2010). Finding these star performers is not the only issue; a bigger problem is actually what to do with them (Cohn et al., 2008). In TM terminology, this is often referred to as "talent positioning" i.e. having the right talent at the right place at the right time with the needed competencies and motivation at all levels and locations of the firm (Tarique and Schuler, 2010). A better understanding of these key individuals is particularly important in today's era of open innovation, which promotes the importance of internal and external networking in order to exploit new knowledge (Chesbrough, 2003).

TM activities

In an extensive series of studies, Rob Cross and colleagues studied the networking activities of those individuals who were deemed key talent by their organizations (Cross and Parker, 2004). These studies revealed that individuals who occupy particular network positions – such as the central connector, broker, and peripheral expert – are hugely influential in ensuring that workgroup objectives are delivered. Many leading organizations have TM programs

which target and maneuver these individuals into positions where they can contribute most value. The following TM activities promote effective knowledge positioning and sharing:

- Mobility opportunities:

Internal mobility opportunities in the form of horizontal employee movements to other organizational units can reduce barriers and encourage co-operation and knowledge sharing. Looking externally, expatriates fill a boundary spanning role that facilitates development of social capital; they can transfer valuable knowledge from the parent company overseas and also import knowledge which can be exploited by the repatriating organization (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008). Job rotation enables employees to grow their network contacts and facilitate transfer of company culture. Talent managers can support KM by determining the appropriate timing for employee transfers that enable them to capitalize on group cohesion, social ties and diverse experiences. (Collings et al., 2007)

- Network mentoring:

Once high potential knowledge workers are identified, smart organizations will assign a mentor in order to connect them to other key knowledge holders. Over time, this will enable the high potentials to extend their network and tap into the expertise of others. Mentoring is particularly important for those rising stars that are deemed peripheral experts. A study of R&D engineers by Whelan et al. (2010) finds that these knowledge workers add value to the organization by scouting for and introducing new technologies into the internal social network. Peripheral experts were most effective when they were mentored by a colleague who possessed an extensive internal network and who distributed external acquired knowledge on behalf of the peripheral expert.

5.4 Developing the knowledge

Talent availability is of limited strategic value unless it is effectively developed (Mellahi and Collings, 2010). Organizational performance is correlated with its employees‟ competencies i.e. the underlying knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics needed to carry out an organizational role. Competencies possess three fundamental characteristics: 1) resources in terms of theoretical knowledge, procedural knowledge, know-how and know whom, 2) the context in which the competency is situated and 3) the objective in terms of achieving a goal, mission or task (Macris et al, 2008). In general, KM related competencies involve expertise related to collaboration, management, strategic planning, information skills, and relationship management. These are predominantly soft skills, and therefore are developed over a longer timescale.

The organization’s key challenge in competency development lies in the tension between personal goals and organizational constraints. Knowledge workers tend to learn in an informal, self-directed manner; however this learning needs to be aligned with organizational requirements. How this alignment is achieved remains an issue of debate. In current approaches to competency development, there is disconnect between competency descriptions and task performance, which may lead to unclear assessment results that are not linked to the work context . In addition, the delay between identifying and filling competency gaps through learning remains too large (Capuano et al, 2008).

TM activities

TM activities seek to develop the abilities of star performers and high potentials with the firm's strategic needs. This helps an organization identify and address new competitive situations (De Pablos and Lytras, 2008). Information regarding tasks performed in the past highlights an individual's available competencies and identifies areas for future development through critical skills gap analysis (Macris et al., 2008). The following TM activities can promote competency development in key knowledge workers:

- *Competency-based training:*

Training solutions should be responsive to dynamic competitive conditions and aligned with competency requirements. High quality training programs help assess employee skills; identify required competencies; develop skills, knowledge and attitudes; and improve performance (Abel, 2008). Effective competency-based training regards employees as active participants in the process, emphasizes problem-solving and demonstration performance methods during on-the-job training. Such training solutions can range from single event training workshops to expansive programs aimed at sustained cultural change (Debowski, 2006).

As an example, Capuano et al. (2008) describe an approach to technology enhanced learning that integrates employee learning and business processes, through optimizing a knowledge worker's learning with respect to business processes and optimizing business processes to take advantage of available competencies.

- *Success ion planning:*

This involves preparing for the organization's next senior team, developing a talent pool for internal recruitment by cross skilling employees, and/or ensuring the organization is future proofed with respect to skills availability (Hills, 2009). In the KM context, succession planning focuses on how the organization plans to replace key knowledge holders and how to ensure that high potential successors have been prepared to fill key roles (Bersin, 2006; Debowski, 2006; Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008).

Succession planning that involves continually recruiting, training and promoting employees is not only necessary to prevent a brain drain of corporate knowledge, but is also important in identifying required competencies and communicating needed

skills. TM needs to continue to develop high performers for potential new roles, identify their knowledge gaps, and implement nitiatives to enhance their competencies and ensure their retention (Cairns, 2009).

5.5 Retaining the Knowledge

Knowledge loss resulting from employee turnover - whether through competitor headhunting, redundancies, or retirements - exposes an organization to considerable risk. It can significantly reduce operational effectiveness and efficiency until that knowledge is relearned. Departing employees leave with more than just what they know; they also take with them critical knowledge about who they know. This relational capital is crucial for getting work done in knowledge intensive environments. Additionally, the departure of some employees causes more of a splash than others (Schutz and Carpenter, 2008)

These employees often possess rare or difficult-to-imitate knowledge which make them important to the organization's success.

Strategies for preventing knowledge loss have become a critical organizational concern today principally due to the economic downturn and the resulting workforce layoffs, but also due to demographics which sees 60% of experienced US managers retiring by 2012.

Hence, retaining those key knowledge holders who are of strategic value is of considerable importance. Yet, retaining key knowledge holders is difficult for a number of reasons. Firstly, a change in the psychological contract between employees and employers is evident, with the new Generation Y workers typically demonstrating lower loyalty and changing organizations more frequently. Workers are now more likely to favor "boundary- less" careers based on self direction (Terjesen and Frey, 2008).

TM activities

Much has been written in the TM literature on factors contributing to talent retention. (Tymon et al. (2010)) found that the key predictors of employee's intention to leave are satisfaction with and pride in the organization and perception of it being socially responsible.

The following TM activities are important in preventing knowledge loss:

- Reward and recognition programs:

Failing to reward key knowledge holders results not only in them eventually leaving the firm but also absenteeism, disengagement, and poor productivity. Planning effective programs that include both monetary and non monetary incentives requires an understanding of the organization's accumulated knowledge base and of what motivates talent to come to work, to be productive and develop expertise. Several reward and recognition models are adopted by organizations including traditional compensation packages, executive compensation, flexible compensation, perks, and informal and formal recognition (Debowski, 2006), For some employees, recognition may take the form of providing career development programs that match the individual's career aspirations (Lazarova, M. and Tarique, I. (2005)).

- Knowledge transfer mentoring:

Mentoring promotes direct transfer of critical tacit work-related knowledge from an experienced employee to a protégé and can increase an individual's social capital through exposing him/her to the mentor's social network (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008). It can enhance employee motivation and commitment through achieving a relational psychological contract between employer and employee, These mechanisms ensure that even if a key knowledge worker leaves the organization, his/her knowledge is retained through its transfer to other employees (Hartmann et al., 2010).

VI. ACHIEVING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH TALENT MANAGEMENT

Organizations work towards the achievement of their mission and strategic objectives. This requires a thorough understanding of the resources required for achieving the objectives. Resources here imply financial and non financial, and they are equally important and interdependent (Stinglhamber,F. & Vandenberghe,C ,2003)

Technically these resources have been divided into two, non contingent and differentiating capabilities. Whereas non contingent capabilities are basics that enable an organization to compete and exist in the marketplace, differentiating capabilities are those that differentiate an organization from that of the other and offer competitive advantage. Effective marketing management, for example can be one of non contingent capabilities. Similarly many HR processes aspire to develop non contingent capabilities but they often fail to align with the strategy and offer competitive advantage. Most of these processes end up developing people in similar areas and similar capacities as their rival firms but fail to provide any competitive advantage. (DeVos, A. and Soens, N. (2008))

- For organizations:

to develop competitive advantage through HR processes , it is very important to define strategic differentiating capabilities and then develop a process for identifying and developing the same. This empowers the HR people to create an impact on the organizational strategy and also provide a link between talent management and strategy. (Lawler, 2008).

- For HR:

to prove that talent management can be of strategic importance to organizations, the critical relationship between the two must be proven. Talent management

specially needs to be projected as a differentiating strategic capability that can offer real and substantial competitive advantage. (Kapoor, B. , 2009)

According to (Snell A. (2007)), a research conducted by various bodies, it was found out that creation of differentiating strategic capabilities signifies the relationship between business strategy and human resources. It was deduced that they are the primary sources of strategic advantage. The research study was primarily based on Resource based view (RBV) of an organization. This view has gained significant ground among HR practitioners as basis of models for formation and structure of resources.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the knowledge managers must focus on using TM principles to:

1. Identify key knowledge workers.
2. Maneuver key knowledge workers in network positions where they can enhance knowledge sharing.
3. Identify key knowledge holders whose departure would detrimentally impact knowledge flows, and implement plans to retain this knowledge.
4. This paper provides an initial guideline to KM managers by identifying and describing the various TM approaches.
5. This research represents an initial attempt to address the challenges of KM through the integration of TM principles.

CONCLUSION

KM has been traditionally viewed as a tool for change. This paper tries to advance the KM field by proposing an approach that focuses on those few knowledge workers who are deemed to be key talent. It is well established that organizational knowledge assets are critical to competitive success. The strategic value of knowledge embedded in individual know-how, actions and collective experiences and expertise suggests that effectively managing the top performing knowledge workers is necessary for enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness.

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