



## **DISFUNCTIONAL TALENT MANAGEMENT (October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013)**

It is sometimes easy to forget the "human" in human resources. Or, by that matter, the fact that there is a soul underlying the "talent" in talent management. What HR professionals do in talent management – who and how we hire, develop, promote, etc. – significantly and directly impacts the lives of many people.

Some years ago I read a blog entry which revealed a trend that is all clear these days: organizations are moving in the direction of developing two workforces – one that is nurtured, developed, and catered to, and the "other" that simply produces.

This very issue has been discussed and debated for some time now in HRM circles. Being a HRM lecturer a couple of Universities in the Netherlands, and a (HRM process) consultant for a number of years, has given me the opportunity to share this issue with aspiring international business managers, facilities managers and trade managers. Through lectures and debates I am raising awareness of this problem. My hope is that these future professionals will take decisive actions once they become managers.

It is well known that the broad goal of talent management in most organization is to hire, develop, and promote superior talent. However, these good intentions clearly raise a number of moral dilemmas, particularly as it concerns those who end up – rightly or wrongly – on the "other" end of the spectrum (those who simply produce).

In my lectures we have talked about the ongoing disconnect between the desire of businesses to create high-performing people/organizations and existing HR processes by which we identify and nominate "talent."



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The reality in most organizations is that performance management processes as they exist now cannot produce highly reliable data. These processes can't reliably and objectively differentiate employee performance. In quite a number of organizations, these processes are the foundation for making important talent decisions. One can see it coming: bad data means bad decisions. Most of these processes are often based on gut, at best, and politics, at worst.

The end result is a dysfunctional organization. Why? Since Talent Management is not fair and objective as possible, we are not creating better performing companies based on meritocracy. We are empowering the kind of gut-based decision-making, heavily influenced by policies, that has given HRM a bad name among everyone from college interns to the CEO.

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