



# Accenture Australian Business Agenda 2008 Video Series

---

*High performance. Delivered.*

• Consulting • Technology • Outsourcing

# Talent & Organisation Performance

## Talent management and high performance

### Michael Pain

Hello and welcome to the Australia Business Agenda 2008 Video Series, a series of interviews with senior executives within Accenture's Australian Management Consulting and Integrated Markets practice. The Series tackles some of the key challenges facing organisations operating in Australia today.

In this video, Catriona Brash will discuss the issue of talent management as it relates to competitiveness and high performance. Catriona leads our Talent and Organisation Performance service line in Australia and across the Asia Pacific Region.

Talent management is increasingly recognised as a significant challenge for business. In Australia skills shortages have reached critical levels, making the ability to attract and retain talent absolutely fundamental. Human capital is now being recognised as the source of competitive advantage and organisations that effectively link workforce planning to business strategy will have the greatest chance of success.

### Question

What are your clients telling you about the war for talent?

### Catriona Brash

Fairly consistently, organisations are saying that their sales and service workforces are mission critical to their business strategies. Yet a high number of organisations are saying: we do not have the skills of our workforce up to scratch compared to our competitors and we do not necessarily think that the actions we have taken to date in order to improve the skills and capabilities of

these workforces are delivering the returns that we would like to see.

### Question

How does Australia compare with the rest of the world?

### Catriona Brash

I think that in some areas we may be a little bit more behind the rest of the world in addressing some of these challenges. I think the emerging awareness of the challenges is there but some of the actions that perhaps are being taken are a little more piecemeal and tactical compared to other parts of the world.

### Question

How can organisations address the war for talent?

### Catriona Brash

Cracking the talent challenge is difficult because there are so many moving parts and that is why approaches that are very tactical will not deliver the benefits that organisations need. When I say it is complex, I mean there is a lot of integration required; integration between the human capital strategy - which, by the way, a lot of organisations do not have - back with their business strategy, then integration across the various levers of talent management. How you define the talent that you need, discover that talent, develop talent and then deploy it within the organisation? Those mechanisms have traditionally been non-integrated. Someone might own recruiting, which might be disconnected from training, or not competency-based, as we find in a lot of organisations. So there is no thread running through each of those processes, which actually integrates them together to maximise the power of it, and it is those integration and alignment points that are missing.

Then finally, as we talked about, there is a mindset change required and everybody knows that mindset change is not necessarily an easy thing to accomplish. To use the 'culture' word, your organisation has to be focussed on talent as part of the cultural norm in the organisation.

### Question

What is a talent powered organisation?

### Catriona Brash

A talent-powered organisation does a number of things differently to other organisations. First of all, they recognise talent as a strategic issue and put talent at the centre of their business strategy. So not just tacking on a bit of training and communications to rolling out a new business strategy but rather thinking strategically about talent and the extent to which talent will enable that strategy.

The second thing is that they recognise talent is not just the problem to be solved by the HR function, that it requires a mindset to change across the whole business. Everyone in the company should feel accountable for developing and managing the talent of the organisation.

The third thing I think that needs to be done differently is recognising the power of both diversity and engagement. Now this is where some of the generational changes become impetuses to help companies address talent, because generation Y has different views around engagement and how they like to be engaged. So recognising that diversity is absolutely critical - workforces are going to be more diverse in the future. You need to be able to handle that; and that engagement is absolutely critical to multiplying the talent in your organisation.

## Question

What are Accenture's four D's of a talent powered organisation?

## Catriona Brash

The four Ds, which is a key part of being talent-powered, involves: Dealing with the talent management process in a strategic way. The first part of this is defining what your needs are, not just in terms of numbers of people but in understanding what capabilities are critical to achieving your business strategy and thinking about it from a competency perspective. The definition of your talent needs is something most organisations have been challenged with. Most organisations have very limited workforce planning concepts. They do not necessarily think about their workforce from a competency perspective and if they do, it might be from a very functionally-focussed view but not strategically across the organisation, as in: what are the critical talent needs we have in order to be successful?

Once you have defined what you need, then the second D is about Discovering – where am I going to find those talent needs? Again you need to think quite broadly about where talent might be, particularly where we have a global talent market. It is no longer just about having employees that sit in your office, it is about understanding the various sources of talent, in fact taking almost a supply chain concept to talent management. Where am I going to find the talent? Where are the talent pools? They may not be physically in my geography they may be located elsewhere. There may be pools of talent that you need to access only occasionally. Do you need to employ those? So thinking quite broadly around where you might discover talent.

As an example, Proctor & Gamble has a website called InnoCentive in its research and development space,

which its team uses to post problems for others to solve, so they have actually netsourced the solution to the challenge of deepening their R&D skills. Similarly in Accenture, we have taken an approach in thinking about how we locate the talent we need in order to achieve our growth targets. We have created some innovative organisation structures in order to source that talent, recognising where the talent pools are, not just trying to drain the existing talent pool to the nth degree. So that's Defining and Discovering.

The third D is Developing. When people talk about the war for talent they talk about attracting and retaining but they are not necessarily talking about developing. Developing the resources that you have, or those that you bring into your organisation is absolutely critical. This is where learning, knowledge management and collaboration – and really harnessing the power of those three levers, is absolutely critical.

The fourth D is Deployment – how you deploy skills. So once you've Defined it and Discovered it and Developed it how do you best Deploy resources and move out of the concept of organisational silos where people have their career only in one part of the business? We are finding that leading organisations think about deploying talent across the organisation. The concept of people getting together to discuss their top talent and how they might move people around the organisation – across the functional boundaries, across geographic boundaries – in order to provide the types of skills and experiences that they know they are going to need in their workforce going forward. So it is a more flexible approach to deployment. It is not necessarily the fiefdoms of, "I own these resources and I am going to control where they go," it is a far more open-minded approach as to how you deploy talent in the organisation. So getting all of those things

strategically aligned and then aligned internally is what we call the four D's and they really do help to talent power your organisation.

---

Copyright © 2008 Accenture  
All rights reserved.

Accenture, its logo, and  
High Performance Delivered  
are trademarks of Accenture.