



LEADING TALENT

'The leadership success model in the post pandemic world demands a maniacal focus on talent: identifying, attracting, engaging, developing, leveraging, and retaining talent in a purpose driven manner that honors and serves all stakeholders, not just shareholders.'

- Doug Conant

TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND ATTRACTION TACTICS

There are simple ways to systematically build in Talent into a CEO's schedule to ensure the right focus is set and to demonstrate with facts the importance of the Talent strategy:

1. Aim to meet with two people every month that are high potential talent and get to know them and what they do.
2. Get involved in your direct reports' top talent acquisition process by going beyond a simple interview:
 - a. Send candidates a book with a note
 - b. Call them when they accept the offer to join
 - c. Make sure to be on their schedule on their first day .

01 WHY BUILD A WORLD-CLASS TEAM

You have to have a world-class team in order to deliver world-class performance when you're not in the room. To do that, it is necessary to share a coherent vision about how to build the company's talent base.

"999 decisions that are made in an hour in our enterprise are made when we're not in the room, but our thinking has to be well-represented in those rooms."

- Doug Conant

02 HOW TO BETTER IDENTIFY AND ATTRACT TALENT

CEOs need to invest in the single most important thing they do

Most CEOs don't devote enough time to Talent - in order for world-class executives to be attracted to your proposition, there is no other option than building a personal connection to that proposition with them in a way that is unassailable for those that also wish to attract the same executives. Still today, most organizations, most CEOs and most C-suite executives are not as good as they could be at it.

"You have a special opportunity to create world-class teams and attract world-class folks to your enterprises and get them fully engaged in the work. And if you get to be pretty good at it, you're well ahead of the curve. And if you do that, you win. It's that simple."

- Doug Conant

A note on managing talent across generations

We all deal with the issue of multi-generational relationships in the workplace. The members offered their shared words of wisdom:

- Adapting is effective - learn about each team member's demand and adjust accordingly, for example, when setting up early morning vs late evening calls.
- Purpose is a theme that ties all generations together - leverage this by highlighting the impact of the collective work by the company.
- Being flexible and letting everyone work at their own pace (while delivering against clearly communicated objectives) is equally valued across generations and the implicit trust makes team members feel valued, too.

(Re-)Take the reins in the war on talent

Attracting talented executives cannot be delegated. Often it falls on the Chief Human Resource Officer who then contacts one or multiple executive search firm to get the position filled.

Unfortunately this means ending with the same list of candidates that they're giving to somebody else, even to your competition.

The war for talent has never been more pronounced and there's never been more anxiety around it - a proven approach to manage that anxiety well for the people you want to attract is getting more personally connected to them.

Be *maniacal* in prioritizing the Talent strategy

Invest time and energy in continuously meeting potential talent ahead of there being an identified need. No matter how busy the life of a CEO is, there is no excuse for not being intentional and engineering into your life the process of: Identifying, Attracting, Engaging, Developing, Leveraging and Retaining talent.

The most valuable resource for a CEO is the team of ten, twelve or fifteen executives directly working with him or her in the enterprise. It is key to hold each of these direct reports accountable for the same focus on talent. They need to also develop the fifteen direct reports in their team and they need to know the talent in their space. And as a CEO, remain deeply involved with the top two or three talent searches within your direct reports' teams as well.

"Everybody in the organization has to know you really mean it when you tell them the [Talent] strategy is important. The workplace is important. Diversity's important. Everything's important."

- Doug Conant

THE THREE-YEAR TIMELINE

A well-known framework guiding CEOs dictates that three years is all the time available to prove your impact - the first year is for learning, the second year is to get traction and the third year is for results. One can adapt this thinking to developing a high performing team of executives:

1. The first year you build a differential relationship with your core talent base - it takes a year to form a team and get them onboard the CEO's agenda.
2. The second year is to get the development and engagement practices in place.
3. The third year is to hit your stride and perform consistently.

03 DEVELOPING TALENT

A trusted model

The model of forming, storming, norming, and performing is effective - you form the team, you storm through issues, you create norms for behavior and then you start to perform.

A three-year timeline for this model to work is a good guide, keeping in mind that churn is a constant and a team never fully settles. Three years is a balance that gives the team enough time to breathe, while making sure everybody understands that the enterprise has to be performing along the way.

“Give yourself a year to get those relationships from going from the honeymoon phase to being a great relationship by the end of year one. It takes a while to build a relationship that is better than anybody else who might want to recruit them would build the relationship - you have to be better than the other guy. You have to have a better relationship.”

- Doug Conant

Set clear expectations

As brought up by one of the members and confirmed by the CEO Mentor, clarity of expectations is mission-critical. For example, you can align a corporate-wide balanced scorecard and measure delivery against it. Having a common reference point makes the development conversations more productive from the beginning and paves the way for long term management.

ADVICE TO MAKE SKIP-LEVELS WORK

Implementing skip-levels in an organization that doesn't run them is a change process - here are some tips on **how to overcome some common concerns** raised by the members:

- If the **time commitment seems daunting** for your schedule or that of your directs', start small - do skip-levels **only for the top three** team members of your direct reports, maybe even **limit it to one area, function or region**.
- If there is a concern that your **direct reports might feel they are not being empowered**, (i) **clarify that the review process is independent** of and occurs before the skip-level discussions and (ii) **set the tone at the top** for the broader leadership that you are supportive of your direct reports and how they are leading.

Leveraging the review process

Focus the review process on two areas - what the person delivered and how he or she delivered in the quarter or the half-year. And implement skip-level discussions, too.

As a CEO, run this process exemplarily with your direct reports and also demand they do the same with their teams. Then sit down with your direct reports and the CHRO and have a discussion with each of the direct reports' team members. Focus this last conversation on what can be done to unlock even better performance - these people will develop stickier relationships with you and the enterprise.

Those hundred conversations (assuming ten direct reports and ten people in each of their teams) will then inform what you need to do with your CHRO on a corporate level to better orchestrate the development process.

Sample questions to focus the review process conversations:

What?	How?	Anything else?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did you deliver?• What were your results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you deliver your results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there anything else we can be doing to help you lift your game to new heights?• What can we do for you?

“Don't mistake the review process for a scenario where everyone holds hands - I once turned over 300 of our 350 top leaders in three years. It was a change process driven by our high standards. You delivered or not. A lot of people chose to leave because they didn't want to be part of the process; if you didn't want to be there, we would find someone who did.”

- Doug Conant

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