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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter considers:

- the definition of talent
- talent for future schools
- the nature of leadership
- a model for leadership
- the major themes and structure of the book.

Background

Talent management is increasingly seen as a critical factor in developing successful organisations and is a strategic priority for businesses. It is just as critical a factor for schools. Indeed, in a people-focused organisation such as a school, the key resource is the talent of the individuals who work there. In education, the 'talent' could be considered as the critical factor in school success. We would prefer to use the term talent leadership as it expresses what the whole process is about. However, common practice uses the phrase talent management and for ease of use we have followed this convention in the book. The growing leadership skill shortage, difficulty in appointing head teachers (and other senior/middle leaders) and the work-life-balance agenda is leading to a shortage of people who are capable of making a difference to organisational performance. A focus on talent management will contribute to other strategic objectives, such as building a high-performance learning environment and building leadership in depth in the school. This is different from simple succession planning and filling typical hierarchical leadership roles that exist today, as it is a process of providing able and talented people who will create new and different leadership roles in the future.

This is particularly important for schools which are facing the challenge of developing innovative and imaginative leaders to meet the

needs of school transformation. Individual schools need to develop a talent pool and to co-operate with other schools for cross-institutional development of leadership and curriculum talent. This is of significant interest to trusts, all-through schools, academy groups, federated schools and school network groups and school 'brands' where staff can be presented with a coherent developmental strategy, which may include planned work opportunities with different schools in the network. New staff or middle leaders could be provided with leadership opportunities across the institutions, such as award-bearing qualifications and in-house learning to systematically enhance the talent pool within the group.

It is not enough to attract people with high potential, there must be a planned strategy for managing their talents which is supported by processes to retain the commitment of talented people and properly use their abilities. The ability to attract and retain high-quality individuals is a key leadership challenge as the school community moves forward.

Definition

There are many views on the nature of talent. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development state:

Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential. (CIPD, 2007)

Talent management is defined as a systematic and dynamic process of discovering, developing and sustaining talented individuals. What works in the talent management process depends on the context and the way the organisation implements practices. So talent management may be organisational specific and dependent on the context but could be defined as:

Talent management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation. (CIPD, 2006)

Talent for future schools

One of the key reasons for taking a talent management perspective is

that leaders need to focus on the staffing needs of their schools as they move forward into the future and not simply to concern themselves with simple succession planning of existing roles. In doing so, leaders need to address the following questions:

1. What will schools of the future look like?
2. How do we view leadership for these future schools?
3. What are the characteristics of future leaders?

1. What will schools of the future look like?

This involves several ideas all starting from a consideration of the nature and dimensions of learning and how we need to construct human, organisational and structural arrangements to maximise the learning potential of each child. Initiatives such as Building Schools of the Future (BSF) and the new Academy Buildings have to not just represent 'best practice' but 'new practice' if a 'once in a generation' opportunity to refurbish and rebuild learning centres for our children is to be fully exploited. Most importantly, we should question how we lead and manage within those new building structures to create a successful framework for learning. Linking physical, structural, learning and leadership design needs talented individuals who can think 'outside the box'.

The establishment of the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda in England and the consequent establishment of Children's Services, which draws together a number of departments of education and social provision for children, has radically altered how we view schools. Instead of isolated units just looking after the education of a group of children in catchment areas, schools are now at the centre of a network of services which attempt to coordinate provision for children and young people.

The provision of education has traditionally been a public sector responsibility with the small additional provision by independent schools. Within the public sector, state education has been just that, state education. Although the private sector would be commissioned to build schools or provide materials such as textbooks, their role was limited. Increasingly during the 1990s and with greater pace during the first decade of the 21st century, the role of the private sector as a provider and deliverer of public sector education has grown exponentially. Private sector organisations run schools on behalf of the state and local authority services are contracted out to private sector companies. Organisations are encouraged to establish groups of

secondary schools or secondary school brands under the expansion of the Academy programme and the 'free schools' initiative with direct funding from central government thus by-passing local authority funding and local authority control.

The impact of technology has allowed students to be off-site or have multiple-site delivery of education which changes the way we conceptualise 'school' from a building to a process in a number of venues and locations with a number of delivery mechanisms. In considering talent development for future schools, we need to encompass a debate along these lines.

2. How do we view leadership for these future schools?

Consideration of this question clearly needs an understanding of the key elements of leadership but this needs to be understood in the context of new patterns of leadership. These patterns include executive leadership, hard and soft federations, school groups and providers, co-leadership and shared leadership patterns. This new re-conceptualisation of leadership and school configurations under the broad title of system leadership is re-writing the traditional picture of school leadership. If these ideas are built onto our existing knowledge of distributed leadership, this does indeed force a radical rethink of leadership for schools in the future. Certainly, a leader in the future will need to be both innovative and entrepreneurial. This encompasses the need to transform the learning and teaching process by looking at innovative practice but also the means of acquiring and utilising resources needs a different mindset from that of the traditional educational leader. It is important, as we have discussed above, to encompass systems leadership within a networked relationship with other providers. We will develop this idea next.

3. What are the characteristics of future leaders?

Talent management is the process of looking for individuals with the potential to lead, which is the focus for succeeding chapters, but it is worth emphasising that current performance is not the same as potential for future leadership, which may be a substantially different role. We suggest that these roles are likely to involve the ability to:

- > be change champions
- > be leaders of innovation

- be flexible and able to live with ambiguity
- grasp opportunities and be entrepreneurial.

The Hay Group (2008) see the change in leadership from formal management approaches to connected leadership approaches in the 21st century as follows:

Formal management	Connected leadership
Vertical	Horizontal
Hierarchical	Collegiate
Instruction	Dialogue
Constrained	Flexible
One-way	Two-way
Accountability	Reciprocity
Robust	Fragile
History irrelevant	History matters
Control of resource	Creation of trust

Figure 1.1 *The difference between connected leadership roles and traditional management posts (Hay Group, 2008: 9)*

This figure shows how we can reconceptualise leadership for future schools from the more traditional approach to connected leadership.

Changing organisational culture

Current development culture	↔	Talent management culture
Benchmark current practice		Be ahead of the curve
Reliable employees		Creative, challenging employees
Predictable promotion structures		New and different school structures
A job		A high performance role
Risk adverse		Adventuresome

Figure 1.2 *Current and future leaders (adapted from Peters, 2005: 131)*

Chapter 3

Performance evaluation

This chapter considers:

- linking performance management with whole-school processes
- approaches for developing leadership potential
- defining performance standards and the importance of trust
- the role of challenge and support
- identifying talent for leadership
- motivating staff for leadership.

Key ideas

Knowing how to identify, develop and get the best out of people is vital for any organisation. How to identify people who are doing a great job in their present role and how to help them to develop their potential is a vital process for the management of talent. Performance is the result of behaviour, how you choose to act and what you choose to say. We demonstrate who we are through our chosen behaviours. Behaviour is observable, detectable and learnable. Each role in school has an identifiable set of behaviours, setting out how to undertake the role, which will create the best performance. If we start by articulating and defining these behaviours, we can be explicit about our expectations for each role. This should not be a list detailing the 'what' of the job, often found in traditional job descriptions, but rather an explanation of the specific behaviours expected to ensure high-level performance in that role and which are aligned to the value system of the organisation. This is the 'how' of the job. Performance is job-specific, and good performance is when behaviour matches the expectations for that role or post. If we are to enable people to be the best they can be, we need to identify the specific key behaviours for each post.

A renewed era of accountability began in the 1980s, when statutory procedures replaced voluntary systems of professionalism. Since then it

has been statutory that every governing body has a policy outlining the performance-management process for their school. Revised regulations came into force in 2007 and amendments occur periodically, for example the involvement of the performance-management process in 'threshold' assessments in 2009. Model performance-management policies are readily available, which now also set out classroom observation protocols and the timing of the performance management annual cycle. Everyone accepts that performance management happens and schools ensure that all teachers take part. But is the performance-management process part of the broader culture of the school? Does it just happen or is it an integrated process for school improvement? In our research, we have talked with many groups about talent management and often the response is 'Oh yes, we do that.' Our challenge to readers is, do you just 'do that', which is a superficial agreement, or do you ensure that the process of performance management matters? Underperformance of staff probably presents the hardest challenge for educational leaders. Staff are the most costly resource in a school and are central to school improvement processes, therefore all performance should be evaluated, and there should be a consequence from the evaluation where performance is celebrated and supported or challenged and supported to become more effective. Evaluation of performance, and subsequent actions, really matter.

Reflection point

Does your performance-management process:

- > encourage self-reflection?
- > align objectives across teams?
- > improve motivation and morale?
- > make actions clear and transparent?
- > ask people what they need to do to make a difference?
- > identify and develop talent?

It is easy to say 'yes' but how do you know that your process matters to staff and makes a difference? In many schools, performance management is a process where participants go through the motions; it does not seriously affect any of these outcomes. To all those people who say 'yes, we do that', we ask whether you have evaluated the process from the participants' point of view? Have you effected any improvements since introducing your process?

protected from the 'toxic' members of staff who we call the foxes. These are individuals who are very aware of the history and the politics of the school but are closed-minded to change and development. They are clever and cynical and look for new staff to influence them to their point of view. Leaders need to isolate the foxes. The donkeys are hard working but have lost their way. They simply come in and do their job and make little wider school contribution. Leaders need to re-energise these staff. Owls are not uncritical but are realistic and will 'give new ideas a go'; they are positive and supportive. Leaders need to treasure the owls and help them to spread their influence. Amusingly, it might be said that the aim of talent-focused schools is to develop more owls, cull the foxes and develop the rest. It might be a useful exercise for the reader to consider if any of these creature types are on your staff and significantly what your plans are for them.

We need to consider what we can draw from these factors which will allow us to focus on developing positive leadership roles and positive leadership development frameworks to enable leadership talent to develop and grow. We all know schools or have worked in them where the culture is one of moaning or complaining and the language is one of 'battling' these attitudes which wear down staff enthusiasm and motivation. As leaders, we need to confront and tackle these cultures to a point where 'together we can' becomes the culture of the staff and 'all children can achieve and will achieve' becomes the value for the educational process. The challenge is one that has to be addressed with the realisation that it takes time to build new and positive cultures to replace negative and demotivating ones. Now would be a useful point to review your organisation's culture by undertaking the following evaluation:

Evaluation exercise: thinking about the culture of your organisation

How well do the following statements reflect the leadership culture of your organisation?

- | | |
|--|---------|
| A We excel at this | |
| B We do this to a degree but have room for development | |
| C This only happens in some areas of the organisation | |
| D We are not very good at this | |
| 1. We put children and the school first above our personal interests | A B C D |
| 2. Staff work collaboratively and work effectively as a team | A B C D |
| 3. Staff welcome new ideas and discuss them positively | A B C D |
| 4. We celebrate and take pride in others' successes | A B C D |

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 5. We believe that we can always improve | A | B | C | D |
| 6. We have a 'no-blame culture' and learn from our mistakes | A | B | C | D |
| 7. We seek evidence on which to make decisions | A | B | C | D |
| 8. Leaders ask questions and seek ideas rather than impose their views | A | B | C | D |

In undertaking the evaluation exercise, you will have identified some areas for celebration and some areas for further thought or development which could be part of your action plan to improve the culture of the school. It may be worth considering what other colleagues in school feel and how they would rate the questions. Is your view shared? Building on this consideration of culture in general, we will now look specifically at creating and developing a 'talent culture' in schools, since an effective culture is essential to attract and retain the best talent.

Creating a positive leadership talent-development culture

The culture of an organisation determines how the people of that organisation perceive what is possible, how they assess risk and opportunity and what behaviour is appropriate. Enabling talent is a future-focused activity which facilitates the securing and enhancing of key staff. Loyalty, commitment and retention cannot be guaranteed but in the process of developing people to 'step up', organisations should ensure they encourage people to 'stay on board' and commit to the school's development. Talented people need to feel valued and to feel that their contribution is making a difference. One leader in our research said 'the reason I became a head was that when I was a deputy my head believed in me and my potential. It makes a huge difference when someone wants you to succeed'. Affirmation is powerful; feeling appreciated, recognised and being valued is motivational. Opportunities will help the talented person feel motivated and aligned to the organisation. Future opportunities and roles will also need to be available at the right time. Being part of a wider organisational group could help to make this happen. Cheese et al. (2008) express the view that motivation, commitment, trust, empathy and inspiration ensure that an individual is able to align their own interests with the organisation. When we consider the management of talent, we have considered three elements:

- > identification
- > development, which includes 'on-boarding' the induction into a new role, learning and coaching to improve performance in that role
- > talent culture.