

THE TALENT MANAGEMENT POCKETBOOK

2nd Edition

Andy Cross

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"An invaluable guide for line managers, full of practical advice and thought-provoking questions. All managers will be able to develop their own talent for attracting, retaining and developing their best people."

Dr Jane Yarnall, Director, Skills Evolution Ltd

"Jam-packed with excellent suggestions for how we, as managers, can integrate talent management into our daily working lives. It takes a common sense approach and smashes the myth that talent management is something done to or for us. Instead, it reinforces the view that we have as much responsibility to focus on this as, for example, on managing the bottom line. Well worth a read!"

Lin Kendrick, OD & Development Director, Virgin Media

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TALENT SPOTTER

DEFINITION



If you are going to make the most of your talented people you have to be able to recognise talent in the first place – you have to be a talent spotter. So, what does the word mean? Look for a definition using Google and you will get the following:

Main entry : Talent
Part of speech : Noun
Definition : Ability
Synonyms : Aptitude, aptness, art, capability, cleverness, command, flair, genius, gift, inventiveness, knack, know-how, mastery, power, savvy, skill, strength

1. A person who possesses unusual innate ability in some field or activity
2. Natural endowment or ability of a superior quality
3. A variable unit of weight and money used in ancient Greece, Rome and the Middle East. A talent of gold was double the weight of a talent of silver

TALENT SPOTTER

BEING THE BEST YOU CAN BE



What do you look for when you are talent spotting? Ability, yes, but ability alone won't lead to enduring success. As they grow, even talented people need to have the courage to succeed or fail, to learn how to respond to defeat and how to bounce back. Sometimes talented people find life too easy and don't learn the lessons they need to succeed.

What qualities would be top of your list?

- 1st Passion to achieve
- 2nd Determination and perseverance
- 3rd Curiosity to learn and change
- 4th Ability

These translate into tough questions you should ask your team and yourself:

- 1. Do you want to succeed?
- 2. Do you believe you can succeed?
- 3. Will you keep going until you get there?

There are always people with more ability. The challenge for each individual is to have the passion, determination and curiosity to be the best **they** can be!

TALENT SPOTTER

MINDSET



One of the most important factors when spotting talent is mindset, those people who go that little bit extra when it really matters. Frank Dick describes people as either Mountain or Valley people. Pay attention to what people say, what they do and how they respond to a challenge and you will soon know if you have a Mountain person on your hands!

Valley People

- Seek calm and comfortable ground and shelter
- Value safety and security
- Aim 'not to lose' so playing for a draw is OK
- Are fit to survive but little else
- Make excuses for not acting and believe others have all the luck



TALENT SPOTTER

MINDSET

Mountain People

- Take the risk of winning because there is no such thing as the risk of losing
- Aim to be the best they can
- Take personal accountability for their own performance
- Want to test ambition on the toughest climbs
- Will fight and endure discomfort to overcome difficulties

Adapted from *Winning: Motivation for Business, Sport and Life*,
Frank Dick OBE

*"You have to lean away from
the mountain if you're going
to learn to ski."*

Anon



TALENT SPOTTER

APPRECIATE YOUR TALENT



Everyone has talent but some hide it better than others. A healthy organisation will provide the opportunity for **every employee** to be the best that they can be. Do you appreciate all of the talent in your organisation?

Within the scope of your team's ambitions, objectives and expectations, how do you define talent? Try this activity to start to define talent in your organisation:

Get together a cross-section of your employees, including senior managers, and ask the following appreciative questions:

1. Our best people can be described as....
2. The magic in our people usually shines when....
3. We are most successful in our organisation when...
4. Our future success depends on people who.....

Use the list you create or review your existing definitions of talent and agree what you must keep doing to find the talent you need.

TALENT SPOTTER

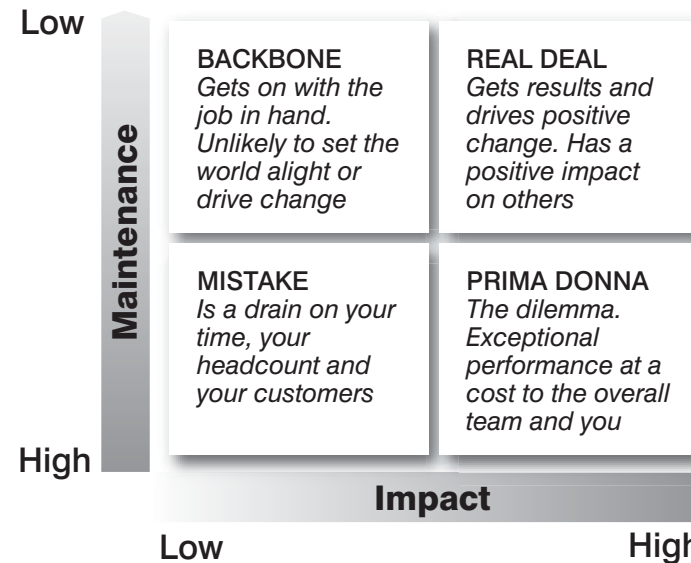
IDENTIFYING TALENT



Where do you set the bar when defining talent? Is it the people who stand out from the crowd? The people with a genius for making things happen? The following definition builds on ability and includes the dimension of **impact** on you and others.

Talent is:

- A genius for making things happen...
- With a minimum fuss...
- Inspiring others to do the same



Talent is often associated with *prima donna* behaviour – explosive and attention-seeking but undeniably able to make a significant difference. The performances must be good enough to justify inclusion. Don't fall into the trap of assuming that the most visible and vocal people are the most talented.

TALENT SPOTTER

WHAT TALENT DO I NEED?



The more precise you can be in defining your talent challenge the easier it will be to focus your efforts. The table below shows some of the questions every senior team should ask themselves when reviewing their business strategy.

Future skills

- What will it take to win?
- What are our core capabilities?
- Where are our competitors better?
- What skills do we need to succeed?
- What skills do we lack?
- What matters less now?

Strategic talent

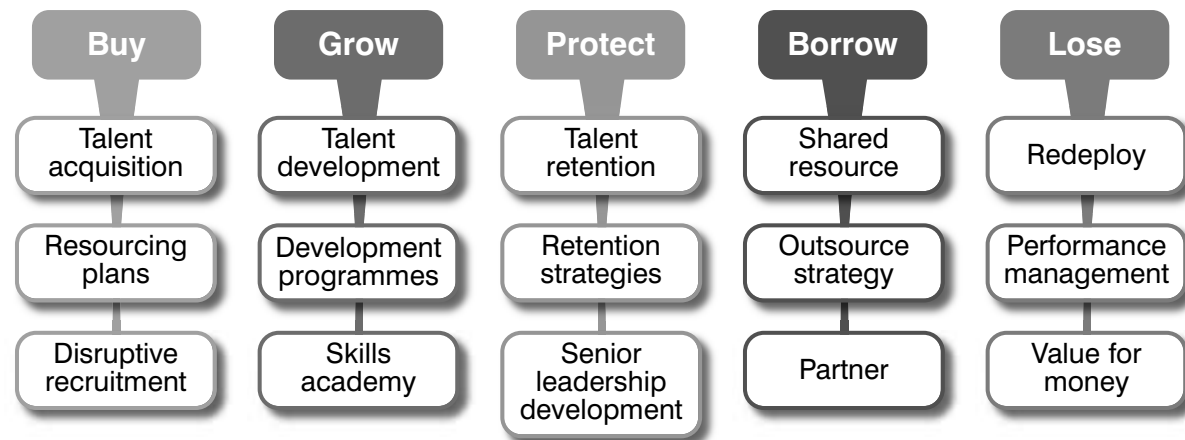
- Which roles are strategically critical?
- Who do we want on our top team?
- Where is our future talent coming from?
- Who can we disrupt now?
- How do we proactively strengthen our succession?

TALENT SPOTTER



ACQUIRING TALENT – A JOINED UP APPROACH

Acquiring talent needs a joined up plan. All too often, different departments focus on different parts of the talent effort, sometimes even pulling in different directions. Take the time to draw out your organisation's talent activities on a single page.



TALENT SPOTTER

TALENT CHAMPIONS



Every organisation has talent champions – the people who excel at finding hidden talent and helping them thrive. Who are yours?

- Cheerleaders** Excellent at pushing people into the limelight and getting recognition for those with potential
- Bridge Builders** Have the magical ability to open doors, build bridges and, most importantly, connect talented people with key decision makers
- Guardian Angels** Can put up a protective umbrella so that people can act with some freedom, and experiment in relative safety
- Wise Owls** The people with organisational know-how and awareness, who help others avoid conflict, understand the politics and navigate around the business

“There is something much more scarce, something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognise ability.”

Robert Half

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About the Author

Andy Cross

Andy is an experienced People Director who has held senior roles with Virgin Atlantic, BT, Colt and Unum, where his people-focused strategies have helped achieve business success. With a diverse background in human resources, customer service and financial services, Andy loves stimulating ideas and helping people, teams and organisations to perform at their best.



Andy's passion for growing talent extends to his love of his family, sport and travel – trying to keep up with his children and to slow down the transition from player of many sports to coach of a few.

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