

APEX PERSPECTIVE: TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent management is typically defined as the spectrum of activities that allows an organization to ensure it has the human resources it needs to meet organizational requirements – from recruitment through to retirement. In the federal public service, “talent management” refers to the investment in exploring career goals and aspirations with employees, in the context of how those could align with organizational needs. For the Executive cadre, it is expected that federal public service Executives participate in this process, annually.

Background

The APEX 2017 Executive Work and Health Survey (Survey) revealed that 22% of Executives were either satisfied or very satisfied with “The possibilities offered by the Executive Talent Management process to meet career goals and aspirations”. This insight quantified feedback that APEX had received through a series of in person engagement sessions with Executives across departments and agencies in the spring and summer of 2017 to explore issues of concern to the community. The importance of the finding was also reinforced, through questions and discussions, at the sessions led by APEX to share the Survey findings in the winter and spring of 2018.

Both the Office of the Chief Human Resource Officer and APEX believed it was important to further explore talent management with Executives in order to fully understand what was behind these results in order to inform how we could move forward to improve talent management. This was accomplished through a series of jointly-led **Talent Talks** sessions held during the summer and fall of 2018. A report on *What We Heard* is available online (http://www.gcpeia.gc.ca/gcwiki/images/5/57/Talent_Talks_report.pdf). In addition, APEX received feedback to its member survey on Terms and Conditions of Employment which included some findings specific to talent management.

This paper builds on the insights provided through these engagements with our community.



APEX Perspective

In the words of a *Talent Talks* participant, Talent Management should be:

“... a meaningful and transparent process that empowers executives to effectively manage their career while also enabling senior management decisions.”

Building an approach which empowers Executives to manage and influence their career also serves the organization by improving the quality of the engagement and investment in the process (resulting in improved integrity across the system). **Key criteria** for talent management based on input from the community are:

1. The value proposition of talent management is clearly articulated and understood.
2. Managing talent is a critical leadership skill.
3. Talent management is a meeting of needs and goals: for the organization and the individual EX.
4. E-enabled Talent Management system supports the overall approach.

The following highlights key points that APEX heard from executives during the *Talent Talks* discussions as well as through APEX surveys and our regular ongoing discussion with executives. Additionally, some clear areas for action emerged as a result of this feedback and APEX has a perspective on what this action should be.

1 - The value proposition of talent management is clearly articulated and understood.

Executives have told us:

- The **value proposition** of talent management needs to be clearly set out and communicated – including its purpose, scope, and expected outcomes. Why Executives and their managers should invest time in talent management discussions and documentation needs to be well-articulated.
- Guidelines on Executive Talent Map placements need to be clear, consistent and coherent. Misconceptions about the placements need to be eliminated– placements do not mean something other than what they are (i.e., Ready for Lateral Movement does not mean you are not ambitious, not committed; Transition to Retirement does not mean you are already retired).

- How talent management is going to be used should be clearly defined. The links to staffing, learning, succession planning and other HR processes need to be made clear, as should identifying who will see the information that is captured through the talent management tool. Outcomes of talent management, positions that are vacant and those that have been filled using Talent Management need to be consistently communicated.
- Tools and training need to support a valuable exchange between manager and Executive and the consistent use of placements, system wide.
- Clarification on what is discussed at Review Panels is needed. It should be clear from the onset what factors are considered when determining or modifying a placement proposed by the Executive’s manager and feedback to Executives should be based on these discussions.
- Optimally, a coherent and consistent base / approach for talent management should be used for all employees in the public service (not only Executives), allowing for the building of a common language and avoiding introducing new systems once an individual becomes an Executive.

Proposed Actions:	Lead
✓ Clearly define the Government of Canada value proposition for talent management in a policy on talent management. Why is it needed? How will it be used? What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved -- Deputy Heads, Managers of Executives, Executives, Review Panels, Human Resources, and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (Treasury Board Secretariat)? Who will have access to the information? What are the placements and what do they mean?	OCHRO
✓ Develop tools and training to support managers and Executives in understanding the Government of Canada approach to talent management. For example, to support giving and receiving effective (and sometimes difficult) feedback. Train Managers <u>before</u> they meet with Executives rather than calibrate after.	CSPS and OCHRO
✓ Communicate regularly and clearly the outcomes of Talent Management to demonstrate value – in terms of analytics about the community; regarding appointments to positions, either promotions	OCHRO, Organizations

or lateral movements; and, process steps and cycle.	
✓ Strengthen understanding of the value proposition, the roles and responsibilities of those involved, and the cycle.	Managers of Executives, Executives

2 - Managing talent is a critical leadership skill.

Executives have told us:

- Managers of Executives should be selected based on their capacity to manage a team, as well as their ability to have conversations, including difficult ones, with the Executives who report to them.
- The investment of time (through thoughtful reflection) in the talent management process needs to be valued, considered and acted upon. Discussions among managers and the Executives who report to them need to include career, aspirations and potential. These discussions should lay the foundation to ensuring that Executives understand what the talent map placement means as well as the placement being proposed for them and that their own interests (such as wishing to remain in their current role) are respected and factored into decisions.
- When executives are ready to move (whether up or over), their managers should be supportive and facilitate that movement. Information on talent “ready to move” should be readily available to hiring managers throughout the Public Service.
- Managers need to be advocates for the Executives who report to them. They must be able to speak on their behalf and demonstrate why a particular talent placement is most appropriate as part of Review Panel discussions. Ultimately, managers have the final say on the talent placement of the Executives who report to them, rather than a more senior leader who does not know them and is not familiar with their work.
- The commitment to talent management should be articulated at the most senior level (Deputy Head). Managers need to be assessed on how they manage talent.

- In situations where a manager and Executive disagree on a Talent Map Placement, there needs to be an avenue for recourse.

Proposed Actions:	Lead
✓ Select managers, in part, on their strength in managing teams, including managing talent.	OCHRO, Deputy Heads, Organizations
✓ Ensure that all Executives and their Managers have ongoing discussions about talent management.	Executives, Managers of Executives
✓ Provide all executives with access to the full Talent Management questionnaire (including their Manager’s comments and their placement) throughout the exercise.	OCHRO, Deputy Heads, Organizations
✓ Ensure that Executives understand and participate in the talent management process. If not receiving the input and feedback needed, they must be able to ask for it.	Executives
✓ Deliver mandatory skill-development in-person training to support talent management: from understanding the value proposition, the conversations needed, the process, and development on how to have difficult conversations – for all current Executives; and then, for any new Executives as they join the cadre.	OCHRO, CSPS, Deputy Heads Managers of Executives, Executives (participate in training)
✓ Ensure that analytics capacity built in to the new talent management tool provides Managers with line of sight on talent available across the system (to decrease some resistance to supporting strong team members who are ready for a change.)	OCHRO (system design) Managers of Executives
✓ Explicitly assess how Managers (including Deputy Heads) manage talent. Provide tools to support this assessment. Consistent and meaningful feedback is mandatory.	PCO, Deputy Heads

**3 - Talent management is a meeting of needs and goals:
for the organization and the individual EX**

Executives have told us:

- Both the needs of the organizations and the needs/goals of Executives should be respected and reflected in the approach. A process where Executives can see the value and are committed to making an honest investment leads to valuable insight / opportunity for the organization.
- There is increasingly less transparency in opportunities that are available. Increasing use of non-advertised staffing, and no clear inventory of staffing limits those seeking to move laterally or vertically to word-of-mouth or processes within their own organizations. Just as pools of talent-mapped possible candidates should be widely available, inventories of possible positions must be accessible – these widen the possibilities both for managers seeking candidates and Executives seeking opportunities, without impairing the staffing processes used.
- Talent management should benefit all Executives, not just the “high flyers”. The approach needs to recognize the value of movement (not just up) for professional development and enrich the quality of the Government of Canada talent pool. The focus should be on development and growth, not just promotion. When movement is the next career step, movement should be facilitated within departments, across organizations (in a specific region or in the NCR), or in and out of the public service (through an Interchange assignment with the private sector or a non-governmental organization, for example).
- Flexibility needs to be considered. Executives should participate when they are ready to move up or over. If they are new to a position or would like to stay in their position (still engaged and passionate in their current job), they should be enabled to opt out for an agreed upon period of time.

Proposed Actions:	Lead
✓ Provide Executives with the ability to opt out of the TM process. If they are recently appointed to a position, or well placed in role, they should have the option, after discussion with their Manager, to not complete the questionnaire in a particular year.	OCHRO (system design) Managers and Executives

✓ Integrate into the approach opportunities for Executives to market themselves to areas where they are interested in working.	OCHRO (system design) Managers and Executives
✓ Build data analytics into the system to allow for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the current cadre of Executives and support the management of talent within an organization, across the system, across a region, or for a group with particular skill sets.	OCHRO, Organizations
✓ Ensure that talent pools are easily accessible by hiring managers both within their department, across a region and across the system (don't have to go through HR). Consideration is given to Executives who could fill the role remotely.	OCHRO Managers of Executives
✓ Consider talent pools by affinity groups. For example, regional councils can take leadership roles in considering regional talent pools. Science based organizations may consider discussing talent pools across their organizations.	OCHRO, Regional Councils, Organizations
✓ Post all vacant Executive positions in a central repository accessible to all Executives for a minimum period prior to staffing, regardless of the staffing approach to be used.	OCHRO, PSC
✓ Develop suite of development options that support Executives whether they want to move up or laterally.	OCHRO, CSPS

4 - E-enabled Talent Management system supports the overall approach.

Executives have told us:

- The Executive Talent Management System (ETMS) should be replaced. The new electronic system that supports talent management should :
 - ❖ be flexible, agile, intuitive, simple, transparent and user friendly
 - ❖ captures only the necessary and "right" information – only useful and useable information is collected
 - ❖ operate on any device



- ❖ be interoperable / integrated with other related systems, such as performance management, learning plans, etc.
 - ❖ allow for opting in or out of the process for a given year
 - ❖ provide for the inclusion of objective assessments of ability (for example, 360 assessments)
 - ❖ allow for marketing; integrated social media functions (attaching video files, etc.)
 - ❖ be evergreen, and allows flexibility in timing
 - ❖ allow organizations to draw needed information in advance of TM Review Panels (without recreating/rewriting documents or tools)
 - ❖ allow hiring managers to search for talent
 - ❖ carry information forward from year-to-year
- What is captured in the system should reflect ongoing discussions between Executives and their managers about performance and career aspirations, and could be amended at any time with mutual agreement of both parties. It has a short, medium and long term focus. There would be a deliberate and explicit focus on the “how”.
 - Information captured in the system about an Executive should be transparent to that Executive. Nothing in the tool should be hidden to the Executive.
 - Executives should be able to choose who can see their information (only those in their current organization, those outside their current organization, or those in their region.)
 - The tool should support the corporate management of the cadre (across the public service, within organizations or across regions), and also should allow for active marketing by those who are interested in moving up or over.

Proposed Actions:	Lead
✓ Integrate user insight and best practice in the selection and implementation of a new system. Optimally, one system for all employees.	OCHRO, Organizations, Managers and Executives
✓ Pilot new tools to support talent management in advance of selecting a system that will implemented and used government wide.	OCHRO, Organizations, Managers and Executives

