

Book Review

Boudreau, J. W., & Ramstad, P. M. (2007). *Beyond HR: The new science of human capital*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Publication.

Human Resource is considered to be the strategic partners by today's corporate world, considering its advantage which it lends to the company to have a distinctive competitive edge in the market. This makes companies think, if their talent strategy gives them a unique advantage.

"You can have the best strategy and the best building in the world, but if you don't have the hearts and minds of the people who work with you, none of it comes to life." Renee West, Luxor and Excalibur Hotel.

As evident from the above quote of Renee West, One needs to strategically think about company's number one resource: its people. In this book, authors provides the HR profession with the next step by providing intriguing decision making metrics surrounding the optimization of talent acquisition and development. To do this, they give a new decision science approach- Talentship. Through talentship, you move far beyond the merely reactive mindset of planning and budgeting of headcount and hiring and retaining talent. The authors clearly illustrate through practical examples how HR professionals with understanding of this could provide revolutionary possibilities with regard to their talent process and operational strategies.

Using examples from companies like Disney, Boeing, SAS, Starbucks and Corning, authors exhibit how HR professionals influence making decisions strategically. They also draw on leading research in strategy, economics and organizational theory to provide a compelling new vision for HR's in the future.

The authors convincingly argue that applying a scientific logic to the resource of talent in a similar way to that which had occurred in the accounting and marketing disciplines would enable organizations competing for talent to refocus on reforming talent

based decisions. This is further explained in the 'Optimization theme'.

Boudreau and Ramstad argue that too often talent investments are centered on the maximization of workforce attribute such as engagement, learning and performance. The authors stress that this view point is way far different than that of the operational ddecionswher we need to 'optimise' rather than 'maximise'. Decision science approach in talent management requires to shift the attention to acquisition and development of talent in alignment with where it matters most to their strategic success.

The proposal of 'talent segmentation' is a new and lucid idea which should be constituted by core talent decision in the organization. The authors provide the real life examples exemplifying how various common assumptions or approaches to talent management may require thinking as the HR profession transforms into a decision science approach. The authors rightly include the 'zeitgeist' surrounding talent management and the war for talent by reframing the decision making process to provide a realistic picture of the talent segmentation importance. The authors put forward that critical success factors for future competitiveness will be found by selecting which talent wars to win by clearly distinguishing what is important from what is 'pivotal.'

The identification of 'pivot points' and subsequent acquisition and development of pivotal talent is defined as “where specific improvements in talent and organization performance will most enhance sustainable strategic success.” Building on this argument, authors put forward the idea that organizations need to search deep for this pivotal talent and learn to make rather manage the disproportionate investments in talent in place of scattered investment funds.

A strong point of 'Beyond HR' is that it is systematically organized around a framework that clearly puts forward the connectivity between HR practices, its effect on workforce leading to the subsequent strategic success of the organization. It provides a break through framework to manage talent, not just perform HR functions but applied business discipline to traditional HR functions in innovative ways, and acts as an eye opener to the vast future possibilities. It is an impeccable illustration of HR professionals vision as the strategic resource of an organization.

The book is of immense use for corporate professionals irrespective of their area of expertise and function as human resource is what they need to deal with. Also the academicians can make use of it to build the innovative framework of strategic HR and equip the future managers with this knowledge. Researchers can benefit a lot by the novel concepts and ideas given in the book. Researchers can benefit a lot from the novel and innovative framework in place of traditional framework. The book is a must read for students and any individual associated with the field of HR.

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