

Which way to the egress?

The great showman P.T. Barnum, who attracted large crowds to his “Grand Travelling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan and Hippodrome” which featured various “freaks”, had a sign towards the rear of the exhibition hall which read “This Way To The Egress”. People who went through the door learned a new word, because egress means exit.

Why do people leave companies? Finding and hiring good people is both difficult and expensive, so watching them walk out of the door should be very worrying. But organisations in general have a poor record of consciously and actively doing things to keep good people. Putting the onus on HR is not the way to deal with the problem. HR can manage the search process, and can do initial screening of applicants but the people who are being hired are not going to work in HR, they're going to work for managers in various departments. And the managers for who they are going to work must assume some responsibility for attracting and retaining people.

Because “talent” is one of the hot buzzwords of the moment senior managers everywhere are making sure they are seen to be at the battlefield in the so-called War for Talent. CEOs are said to be taking the management of talent away from HR and making it their personal responsibility. But although this has echoes of Henry V leading the charge at Harfleur, given the amount of time available to the average CEO, it bodes rather poorly for progressing and winning “the war”.

The real solution is not making the CEO responsible for recruiting, developing and retaining talent, but giving the accountability to line managers. Apart from the small group comprising the senior team, people don't work for the CEO any more than they work for HR. They work for

managers who must, ultimately, be responsible for whether they stay in the organisation, whether they are productive, whether they develop and grow, whether they're satisfied or dissatisfied, engaged or disengaged, supportive or antagonistic.

Why do people leave? The overwhelming reason is because of the way they are managed, not because of pay or the thousand and one other excuses given in exit interviews or management rationales. Good management keeps good people and bad management loses them. All the research and all the data make that absolutely clear.

Defining “good” management gets into a long debate. There are no specific behaviours that make for effective management in every job; it depends on the job and the situation. However there are a number of things that are basic to treating people well and to motivating and encouraging them to perform at their best and they can be observed and measured. But doing that is seen as implementing yet another system or process and managers are overburdened with processes already. Systems of performance appraisals are not talent management, and most managers know it. Performance appraisals tend to be seen much like dentist appointments – potentially painful, generally unpleasant, unlikely to change behaviour, but something that has to be done.

Do companies want to slow down the stampede to the egress? How about

making managers' remuneration directly related to the organisation's retention of their people? How about, rather than giving people long service badges, giving managers recognition for the length of service of people who have worked for them? Or for the progression of people to other jobs – promotions, changes, or other productive moves – in the company?

If the vast majority of people leave companies because of bad management, and stay because of good management, then employee retention seems to be a pretty good criterion for judging the effectiveness of managers.

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strategy people performance

Penumbra is a strategic business consultancy. We bring clarity by using research to drive understanding and direction. We deliver success by balancing experience and innovative thinking.

Whatever your aspiration, we'll provide the tools, information and analysis to turn your strategy into operational reality, in a way that motivates your people to outperform the market.

Overview

As a strategic business consultancy, our expertise is in helping our clients executing strategies and delivering results.

We achieve this by combining a robust management planning system with a focus on people which drives alignment and commitment

We work in partnership with talented and committed leadership teams to help organisations build corporate value with a wide range of customised, cross-functional advisory programmes and services delivered from four complementary service groups:

Strategy

(Development, formulation, implementation and alignment)

Our innovative **Penumbra Balance** approach creates dynamism, drives and sustains momentum and makes strategy real for stakeholders

Organisational Development

(Behavioural issues)

We call our holistic approach **Balanced Motivation** which encompasses activities that improve performance both for the organisation and the individual

Research and Insight

Our stimulating **Clarity** approach draws on our business consulting skills to deliver a mix of business analysis and market research which

provides compelling insights for winning decisions.

Operations

The Operations practice brings all of our hands-on practical experience to bear on execution and delivery of results.

Our technology enabling approach called **Totality** facilitates business focussed services and solutions, aligned to business needs, for people, processes and tools.

Why Us?

Organisations turn to us when they:

- Want to find a new strategic direction
- Have created a strategy and now need to execute it
- Need to drive more value from existing initiatives
- Have a big issue to resolve, usually dependent on lasting employee buy-in
- Need to explore new ways to drive value
- Need a breakthrough result
- Are seeking measurable results

Our Experience

We have real world experience spanning 20 years with our clients. This includes working with:

BP, Citibank, Morgan Chase, WestLB, RBS, UBS, Bankers Trust, Kleinwort Benson, Coutts, Natwest, Intel, Nokia, Adobe, Kall-Kwik, Glaxo Smith Kline,

Dupont, Pfizer, Savills, British Council, Clifford Chance, British Airways, Gillette, Unilever, Shell, Volvo, Vauxhall, British Gas, TradeStation, MWB Business Exchange, Investors in People, University of Cambridge

On projects such as:

Strategic Planning, Strategy development and implementation, Culture change, Post-Merger Integration, Vision, Purpose and Values, Current State Analysis, Organisation Re-design, Transformational Change, Client Focus Strategies, Perception Studies, Client and Staff Engagement surveys, Global Rebranding, Know your Customer, Market Forecasting, Consumer Insight, Market Segmentation, Process optimisation, Lean/Six Sigma, Project Management, ERP Systems Roll-out, Market Research, Financial Modelling, Franchise Start-up Evaluation models, Cost Benefit Analysis, Implementation Alignment, Strategic Alignment, Complex Database development, Custom Application development, Supply Chain Optimisation

Covering diverse sectors such as:

Financial Services, Pharmaceuticals, Manufacturing, Energy, Mobile Telecoms, Travel and Tourism, Aviation, Property, Hi-tech and Business Services