

Integrated Talent Planning

Talent management is at the top of supply chain leaders' agendas and will remain a priority for many years. Creating successful supply chains in today's global economy is a continuously evolving challenge that requires a structured approach, dedication, passion, and resilience. Of the different factors that come into play, the most obvious ones are: the expanding scope of supply chain management, the emergence of new technologies, and globalization.

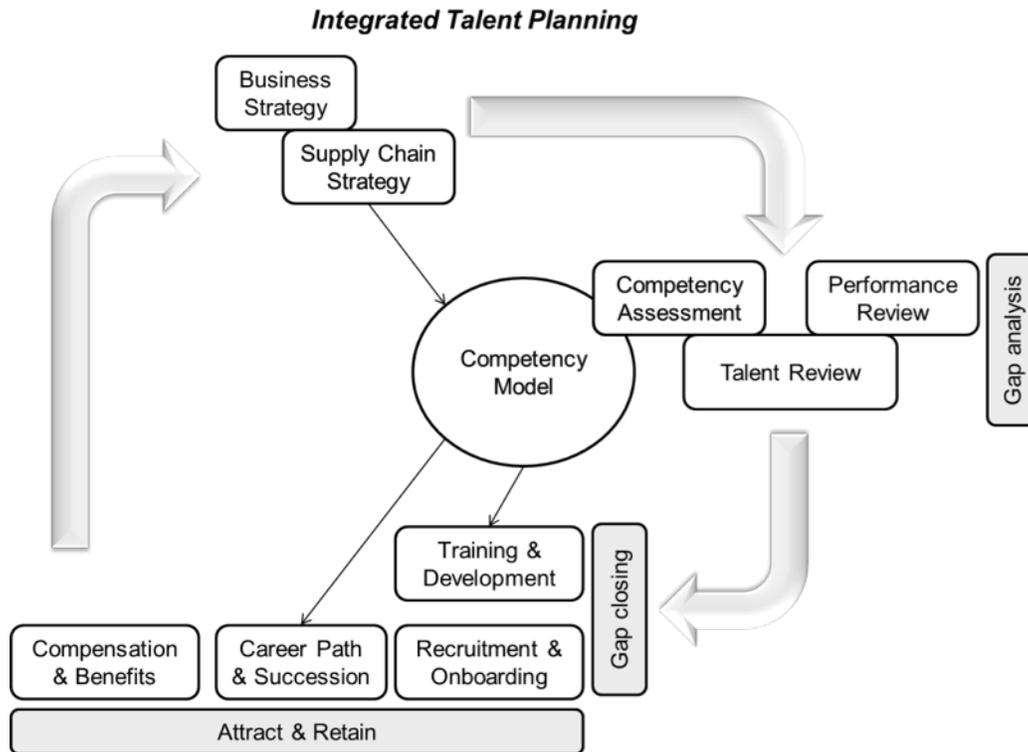
Supply chain's **increasing scope** and "span of control" cannot be denied. In leading organizations, SC looks after not only planning and logistics but also end-to-end network design, new product introduction, operations, global sourcing, etc. Research shows that the more advanced companies elevate the SC function to a central role as an integrator, making sure system performance is delivered beyond the individual performance of each discipline. This orchestrator role requires a set of capabilities different from the roles managing the Plan, Source, Make, Deliver disciplines. In the literature, the orchestrators are often called "T-shaped" individuals, because they have a broad, "helicopter" view, while the disciplines' experts are "I-shaped" individuals, because they focus on functional expertise and performance. Successful talent management must manage both groups.

This expansion of functional scope comes with acceleration in the speed of change, driven mainly by **technology**. SC performance is driven by excellence in business processes, which in today's world cannot be decoupled from proper use of technology. The new era of big data, the Internet of Things, and global control towers dictates requirements for new types of competencies and skills to innovate and leverage technology.

Globalization is not a trend anymore; it is a fact. These new global supply chains have "people inside"! Different people all around the globe having to sell, communicate, make decisions, negotiate, manufacture, ship . . . all with different cultural background, languages, and values. Is your talent strategy addressing the challenges and opportunities of globalization?

Broader scope, new technology, and global context must be taken into account when managing the people side of SC. Failure to do this will result in difficulties in attracting and retaining the talent you need to succeed.

SC professionals are familiar with Sales & Operations Planning (S&OP) or Integrated Business Planning (IBP); I would like to introduce the concept of Integrated Talent Planning (ITP). Just like S&OP, ITP is a set of business processes requiring regular review, orchestration, alignment, and commitment. Properly executed ITP will deliver a talent strategy aligned to business objectives, gap identification and closing, and "attract and retain" initiatives. The main elements of ITP are: leadership and strategy, competency models, recruiting and onboarding, training and development, performance management, career path and succession planning, and compensation and benefits. In the following section I will highlight key success factors for the first four elements.



Leadership and Strategy

SC leaders must **lead** the talent agenda and drive alignment with the SC strategy. Do not leave it to HR. Take ownership and use HR as a partner for guidelines, expertise, and policies. Embed the people-element in your strategy and review at least on a yearly basis. This **talent review** must answer the following questions: What organization/competencies do we need to deliver the strategy? What are the **gaps** vs. current state?

Good practices: build a “talent committee” to run the ITP process, focus on the future, identify talent pools, include succession planning, and articulate a communication strategy.

Competency Models

Close collaboration with HR is a must here; they provide the framework, SC leaders provide content. One of the collaborations concerns **terminology** alignment, a key success factor in the deployment of an efficient model. The role profile headings, job family groupings, competency library headings, etc., all need to be defined very carefully to be meaningful to the global organization and aligned to industry/academic standards. While HR usually “owns” behavioral and generic competencies, the definition of **specific competencies** and skills is a functional activity. There is a link with the strategy process here: the model must cover current and **future needs**. The most challenging step is certainly the communication of user guides and principles; failure to communicate the purpose of competency models and how to use them will result in distrust from employees and misuse by managers. Do not underestimate this step, especially for the delicate topic of competency assessments, which can take many forms (self-assessment, assessment by manager, questionnaire, assessment center, etc.). Clear,

up-front communication on process objectives (e.g., identifying gaps for current and future roles) will ensure a successful rollout.

Good practices: align terminology, include future competency requirements, provide gap-closing options, and separate the competency assessment from the annual performance review.

Recruiting and Onboarding

Globalization of supply chains offers a formidable opportunity to drive **diversity** through the recruitment process. “Minorities” can see big opportunities in SC careers since there is less of a glass ceiling compared to traditional functions. This also accounts for the high proportion of females (approximately 40 percent) in the SC graduate population.

Good practices: partner with universities offering the best SC curricula (e.g. graduate programs), do not “drive blind” with regards to salaries on the market, and attract “pros from outside” to accelerate pace of change.

Training and Development

Another SC principle can be applied here: segmentation. On the basis of competency models, the training and development offerings must be segmented and target specific populations. Scaling will be the driving factor for more populous positions (e.g., entry-level planners) while having customized development activities (e.g., peer networking, exposure, coaching) is more important for leadership positions. Development programs can be costly; leaders have a critical role to play in making sure the what is learned is applied and results in continuous-improvement activities. This can be achieved in combining the academic/theoretical teaching with “how to apply in our business” sessions.

Good practices: use internal leaders as teachers, follow up on implementation projects, measure the impact of training, use business games to apply the learning, and leverage professional organizations and certifications.

We have entered “the perfect storm” in supply chain talent management. In order to navigate through the ocean of opportunities and challenges, successful leaders will rely on a structured approach. The elements of Integrated Talent Planning are not new, however the need for alignment with the strategy and business process integration has never been greater.

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With twenty years' experience in industry (automotive, aerospace, and heavy industries), Cyril has covered roles in production, project/program management, ERP implementation, lean and supply chain management. In the past fifteen years, Cyril held SC responsibilities at all levels, with positions from plant SCM to global director, and carries a wide multicultural background. He now leads GKN plc's supply chain practice as Group Supply Chain Excellence Director where he successfully implemented functional talent management process, strategy, and governance.

