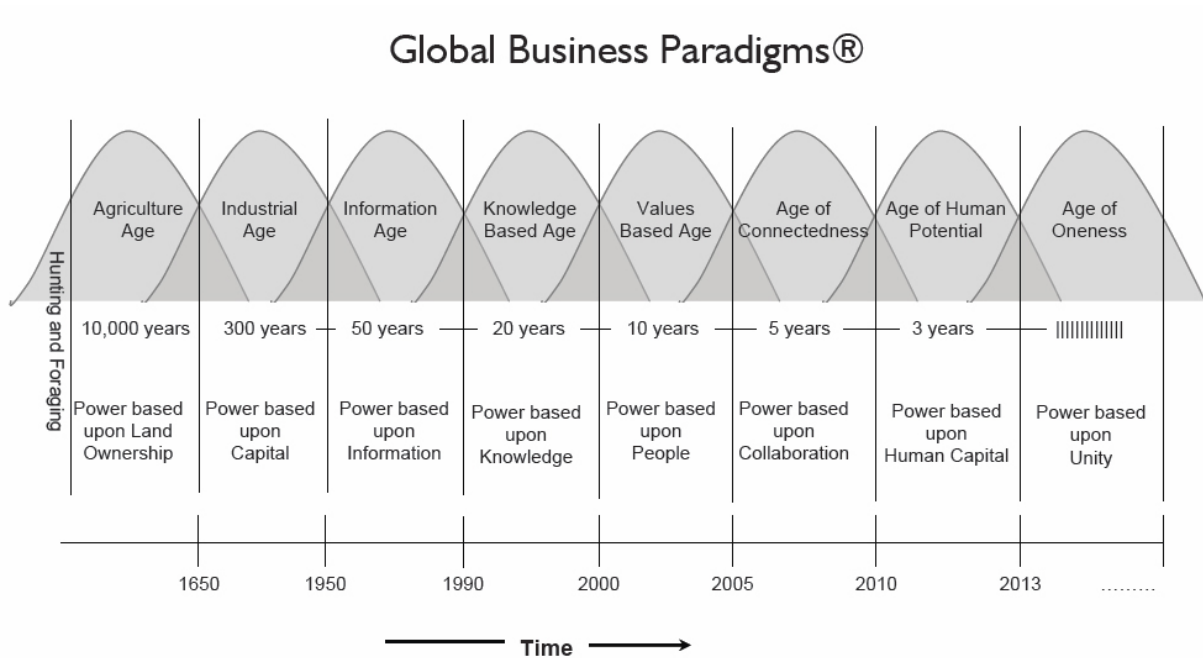


The Age of Human Potential—Talent Management

William A. Guillory, Ph.D. President
Innovations International, Inc.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117

Talent Management is an expression of the Age of Human Potential. Talent Management refers to *sourcing, recruiting, developing, empowering, advancing, and leveraging* the potential of the *naturally* existing diverse human talent available. The evolution of the Human Potential movement is shown by the succession of Global Business (and Societal) Paradigms over time.



As indicated, we are presently on the “leading edge” of the Human Potential Paradigm. The basic assumptions—or universal laws—of this paradigm with respect to business or organizational success are listed below.

Basic Assumptions (Universal Laws) of the Human Potential Paradigm

1. The quality of a product or service is synonymous with the mind-set of quality of the individual(s) who produce or deliver it; for example zero-defect thinking and performing produces the highest quality output..
2. The efficiency and effectiveness of operation of a product or service is synonymous with the functioning of the organization that produces it; for

example, an organization which maximizes performance by combining a highly empowered management system with highly competent employees.

3. The ultimate success of a product or service is synonymous with how successfully an organization or unit (project team) operates in terms of professional, interpersonal, technical, and cultural compatibility: external success is a reflection of internal success; the two are inseparable.
4. The ultimate objective of an organization is to create an “environment of expectation” for personal and professional growth and continuous higher-order creative exploration—which in turn creates the *next* generation product or service.
5. The achievement of an “environment of expectation” for growth results in the creation of a cadre of quantum-thinkers (futurists, visionaries, and strategic thinkers), who are capable of predicting succeeding global business and societal paradigms.

These assumptions are founded on the balanced utilization of individualism and group orientation in achieving exceptional performance; where collaboration is assumed to be the dominant mode of operation.

The Vision of Talent Management

The vision of *talent management* is to achieve a *goal* and an *objective*. The goal is to create a specific percentage of higher-functioning individuals where his or her potential approaches maximum performance. The objective is to create a permanent environment (culture) where higher-functioning individuals continually learn, flourish, and grow.

For example, exceptional performance requires both a higher-functioning individual as well as an environment that demands, supports, and celebrates such performance. This level of performance is simply not possible where there is the dominance of control management, hierarchy, and an environment of fear of risk-taking. The latter practices are particularly counterproductive during difficult times—even though the opposite of these three practices might appear to be counter-intuitive. The key is strategic choice-making and aggressive implementation.

The slogan of the Lexus Division of the Toyota Motor Corporation for years has been “*The relentless pursuit of perfection.*” This slogan has been recently

changed to “*We pursue perfection, so you can pursue living.*” These slogans are comparable to a vision statement. They are also vision statements that are pursuing an objective that cannot be achieved, because perfection continually changes to a higher level of performance, products, and service as it is being pursued!. The net result is slogan-driven continuous improvement of performance, products, and services.

Diverse Human Talent

Setting aside the question of the advantages of diverse human talent, the fact is that the talent *available* is humanly, culturally, and operationally diverse—both locally and globally. The *only* question is how do we uniquely develop and synergize such diverse talent. This question combines both diversity and human dynamics.

The key here is to use *inevitable* conflict resulting from differences as opportunities to “sling-shot” performance to an exceptional level. This assertion is based upon the assumption that the greater the barrier differences and emotional energy associated with conflict, the greater the human transformation and correspondingly, the potential for exceptional performance.

There have been numerous studies that show that diverse teams, perspectives, and ways of operating lead to more powerful results compared to homogeneous teams; *but*, only *after* such diverse team members go through their “rite of passage.” This rite of passage involves personal and collective transformation of the individuals involved—commonly experienced during diversity-related trainings or facilitated workplace conflicts.

Several years ago I facilitated a train-the-trainer program for a Fortune 100 Corporation. There were four trainees—a black male, a black female, a white female, and a Hispanic male. One of the skills necessary for certification is mastery of facilitation. I decided to develop this skill using a team consensus process *integrating* the ideas of all four trainees. The half-day exercise resulted in conflict, frustration, and ultimately “individual and team humility”—which was the experience I was attempting to achieve. It is “giving up” one’s individual idea such that it “disappears” into a much more powerful group idea. Achieving consensus is significantly more transformational than a simple democratic vote where collaboration is concerned.

Talent Management Competencies

The competencies required for the Human Potential Age can be categorized as *cognitive*, *behavioral*, and *strategic*. The most important distinction to be made is that behavioral skills can be taught by behavioral modification or learning whereas both cognitive and strategic skills can only be mentored, coached, or facilitated. The latter skills involve guidance, feedback, and transformation.

Cognitive skills are those involving a predisposition to behavior or mind-set. These include responsibility, accountability, dedication, commitment, sensitivity, persistence, awareness, desire, determination, creativity, innovation, and quantum-thinking. These skills are learned from childhood and strongly influenced by parental guidance. In the workplace, these skills are facilitated by stretch projects, case study exercises, and most of all organizational cultural influences.

Behavioral skills are the easiest to teach and learn because they do not directly involve a transformation in mind-set. They do become a challenge when the behavioral skills required exceed one's comfort zone. In such cases, they have the potential to also *force* a transformation in mind-set, if practiced and mastered. These skills include technical, interpersonal, cross-cultural, management, and self-management competencies.

The most subtle mental agility skills involve intuition, leadership, holistic seeing, strategic thinking, and visioning. These are skills that involve higher-level thinking *beyond* the mental constructs of the mind. They involve access to one's *creative consciousness*. They are the result of one's willingness to explore ideas and concepts far beyond those of the presently existing paradigm. The skill of quantum-thinking (which will be discussed below) involves the ability to explore consciousness *across* paradigms whereas creativity is exploration *within* a given paradigm (see the Global Business Paradigms diagram on page 1).

Talent Management Systems of Operation

Systems of Operation refer to the best structure and process for implementing *talent management*. When the emphasis is on maximizing talent and performance, then the most obvious structure is flat and the process is the least amount of management and control. Titles are less important. Positions are based upon highly developed skills and proven performance. Such systems require highly responsible employees who are exceptionally skilled in terms of

performance. The focus on management is providing the resources, challenging projects, and support necessary for the success of such highly skilled individuals. The support necessary involves coaching, mentoring, and continually communicating the mission and vision as guiding beacons for direction.

The process of implementing *talent management* is a balance of individualism and collaboration. This balance strongly favors collaboration in the form of project teams for the delivery of products and services. Individualism is best described by the saying, “no chain is stronger than its weakest link.” Keeping in mind the 2nd Assumption (or Universal Law), the internal system of operation is a reflection of how well a product or service performs for a customer or client.

Initiatives of Talent Management

In general, a different or updated system of initiatives is best suited for a given paradigm—or at the very least, a significantly improved initiative that raises performance to a higher level, e.g., Six Sigma. The initiatives I propose for the Human Potential Age are: *A Fast Response Work Force; Knowledge Management; Cultural Inclusion; Creative Adaptation; and Customer Integration*. All of these initiatives are ***built upon*** previously established initiatives, ***and not in place of***, of those of the 20th century.

Fast Response is evolved from *continuous quality improvement* and is complementary to Six Sigma. It is the holistic process of continually assessing, in anticipation, how one's products and services are affected by internal performance, external competition, and customer satisfaction. Based upon feedback and evaluation, readjustments and refinements are immediately designed and put into place. An example of a Fast Response organization is Google. It is known for its fast and much more efficient information search engine which makes it the present global leader.

Knowledge Management is the outgrowth of a *Learning Organization*. It is the process of collecting the data and information critical to creating new knowledge. It also involves the process of making that data, information, and knowledge available throughout the organization 24/7/365. This initiative is key to the elimination of silos that exist among various organizational units. Air Liquide, the French Industrial gas giant is an example of this initiative in terms of its knowledge sharing for the distribution of gases to 10,000 customers on a regular basis.

Cultural Inclusion is the quantum jump from *cultural adaptation or assimilation*. It involves both an expanded integrated culture for success as well as equity of opportunity for mainstream participation of persons of color and women. Therefore, inclusion requires both a comprehensive infrastructure for participation and support and also transformation of the work force. An organization that is well on its way to achieving cultural inclusion is Sodexo.

Creative Adaptation is evolved from *change management*. It is the process of anticipating, embracing, and proactively responding to change. Creative adaptation is based upon the belief that “the best way to adapt to future is to create it”. This mode of thinking is the characteristic of proactive, deterministic leadership. Microsoft, Intel, Apple, and, Oracle have traditionally been examples of this way of operating.

Customer Integration is the quantum jump from *customer focus*. It is the process of establishing a seamless relationship between the customer and provider—such that the separation is invisible. TD Industries is a construction company that exemplifies this initiative in services to its customers. No surprise, they have been selected in the top ten for nine consecutive years as one of the Fortune 100’s best companies to work for in America. CVS Caremark is also an example of exceptional customer to the buying public.

Vistas of Talent Management

As I stated earlier, when the organization accomplishes its achievement of *talent management*, it will have also experienced a two-dimensional transformation. One dimension is the creation of a higher-functioning individual in terms of skills, competencies, and self-management. Such an individual begins to approach his or her maximum performance capacity. The other dimension of this transformation is the creation of an environment where such an individual flourishes and becomes the norm. And in turn, a new standard is set for human potential and performance; these include holistic seeing, insight, imagination, and quantum-thinking.

Quantum-thinking involves the mastery of six higher-order skills: Personal Mastery; Creative Synthesis; Intuition; Context Integration; Hyper-accelerated Information Processing; and Mastery of Context. Each of these skills is briefly defined below:

- *Personal Mastery* is the combination of self-actualization and professional competency.
- *Creative Synthesis* is the ability to transform information into new knowledge.
- *Intuition* is the ability to access and validate spontaneous insights which are not rationally derived.
- *Context Integration* is the ability to combine information and knowledge from general contexts into one.
- *Hyper-accelerated information processing* is the ability of the mind to process information and data at extraordinary speeds.
- *Mastery of context* is the ability to “see” the whole gestalt of a paradigm from limited content.

Organizations with a core of such employees will have such a decided advantage that competition will be the least problematic. Maintaining an environment for their creativity and vision to be valued will be the greatest challenge.

An example of an organization exemplifying quantum-thinking is Textron; a multi-industry global technology corporation. Their present call to action is a slogan, similar to Toyota, “*Greatness begins with me: How can I contribute?*” This is a powerful statement. It establishes a vista for employees that few organizations have the *audacity* to aspire to. In particular, the word “greatness” implies “rarified air” at the top of the highest mountain.

Conclusion

The focus of this publication is to show the relationship between The Age of Human Potential and Talent Management. More specifically, *talent management*, as discussed in this paper, is one of the most prominent expressions of the human potential movement. This paper also discusses the ultimate goal and objective of a talent management initiative: produce a critical mass of highly skilled individuals and an environment that nurtures and support their development and maximum performance, respectively. Such a cadre of individuals comprises the human capital required for future success in the 21st century. Finally, I have outlined a system, mode of operation, and specific skills necessary to achieve such a futureperfect organization.

