

TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN A HIGH-TECH ENVIRONMENT

The role of the technical engineer is changing due to the increasing use of data in decision making, the expanding focus on customers and design, and changes in software development methodologies. On the other hand, high tech companies are struggling to find and keep high-tech talent for their development organisations. This is where talent development as one of the key missions of any organisation comes in. For Holland Innovative it's not about strategy, it's about culture. People – and their ability to lead diverse, flexible and versatile teams – are of the utmost importance to ongoing success.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This article was contributed by Holland Innovative, a specialist consultancy in project management, product and process development and reliability engineering, based in Eindhoven and Enschede (the Netherlands) and Straelen (Germany).

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Although business is fast-paced all over the globe, working at the High Tech Campus Eindhoven, the heart of the Brainport region amid the ever-shifting tech industry, we at Holland Innovative often find ourselves on the forefront of emergent business needs. Today, more and more of our clients and colleagues are talking to us about the need to build comprehensive programmes for talent management. More than ever, companies are realising that their people are of the utmost importance to success. Talent management is changing, and that change is driven by a number of trends.

ATD research [1] named these top trends influencing the next five years of global talent development:

1. The need for an innovative workforce.
2. More flexible organisations to adapt to our rapidly changing world.
3. Changes in skills needed for success in the workplace of tomorrow.
4. Employees demanding more of employers.

Holland Innovative recognises the urge for top technical talent at customers and feels the need for the same talented



¹ For Holland Innovative, talent development is about culture. (Photo: Gijs van Ouwerkerk/Holland Innovative)

people to help grow its own business. In this changing landscape we see a number of components that build a comprehensive talent development programme:

1. Talent management vision, values and goals
Drawing up a clear definition that supports business objectives. This serves as the framework to build and prioritise all other programmes. It means looking beyond filling positions – it's considering how talent ties in to the goals of an organisation and determining what roles are needed to make those goals a reality.
2. Talent development framework
Building an end-to-end framework that serves as the roadmap or programme for how to attract, retain and build talent. A diverse talent pool opens up networking capabilities, is proven to drive innovation, and helps attract top talent. In our own organisation and at customers we see very diverse teams; in age (from 28 to 68!) and gender, as well as in cultural and technical background.
3. Talent gap assessment
Serving as the baseline of near-term competencies and actions that need to occur to shore up immediate gaps and guide long-term talent investments: This is where consultants and flexible professionals are a useful investment. Bringing in individuals or teams with specialist technical expertise can help drive projects to success while the organisation is in the process of developing long-term staff.
4. Talent succession plan model
Defining the roles, responsibilities and demonstrated capabilities needed for the future. At Holland Innovative we use the 'good old' master-apprentice model where masters in their specific area of expertise train and guide their colleagues and take care of talent succession.
5. Employee engagement programme
Measuring perceptions of the workforce and providing data to leadership on the true pulse of the culture and the workforce: Once a 'top' team has been recruited, it's critical to monitor key measures of employee satisfaction such as making sure team members have access to the resources they need, aren't moving toward burn-out, and feel part of the workplace culture. Aim to build in processes that help ensure employee satisfaction and retention, and help maximise the return on the biggest investment: people. ■

REFERENCE

- [1] "The State of the Industry" report on training and development trends, 2017, ATD Research, www.td.org

Leadership in product and process development

"At Holland Innovative, we have long recognised that people are the heart of any organisation and the true drivers of innovation and ongoing success. We have years of experience helping organisations and our on-demand workforce and consulting services help to grow teams and drive success as we roll out and build on our critical programmes: project management, product and process development, and reliability engineering.

For us it's all about both heart and mind. In order to attract and retain top technical talent we listen to each other: Where are your ambitions? Where can we support your passions in life? What does your heart tell you? Writing a book, supporting student teams, peer coaching, becoming a teacher, developing your own idea into a product ... By providing support to our employees we help them in finding the balance between work, ambition, fun, personal life, passion and all that's important in life."

Holland Innovative provides inspiration with leadership and training in product and process development, project management and reliability engineering. Challenging projects ensure clients and experts are sharply focused. The customer base includes leading multinationals, SMEs and start-ups. They all have a strong desire to do things differently – in a better way. All projects arise from a customer requirement and a clear business case. The proven methods are strongly analytical, leading to a robust product with a predictable lifespan which can be brought to the market more quickly.

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T: 00 31(0)229-211 211 ■ E: gerrit@salesandservices.nl