

1. Smart talent management: on the powerful amalgamation of talent management and knowledge management

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One innovation that forever changed our world was the discovery of the dramatically new strength of materials obtained from the admixture of carbon and iron—resulting in steel. Both elements alone have their limitations in terms of material strength, but their unique characteristics in combination resulted in tremendous power that enabled the construction of our industrialized and post-industrialized worlds. We believe that in much the same way the useful concepts of talent management (TM) and knowledge management (KM) can be combined to form a powerful conceptual amalgamation contributing to an organization's success in our competitive global marketplace. For want of a more precise and scientific label, we call this combination simply 'smart talent management.' We hope that this book will prompt further examination of the benefits of this combined focus on talent and knowledge management, including the development of useful definitions. But in this early stage we define our concept of smart talent management as the combined use of the distinctly different concepts of knowledge management and talent management to resolve human performance problems and to achieve organizational objectives.

Our little play on words refers *not* to the effective management of only the top performers (i.e., the smart employees), but to the effective/smart integration of knowledge management (i.e., the 'smarts') into the paradigm. Smart talent management means the smart or effective management of all human resources, who embody an organization's knowledge capital and capability in generating, acquiring, storing, transferring, and applying knowledge in support of company goals and objectives (competitive advantage). 'Smart' also corresponds to our emphasis of the strategic role of knowledge management in today's organizations, and particularly within the human resource management (HRM) function. Our further

use of ‘knowledge assets’ in our book’s title provides an explicit reference to the essential role of knowledge management tied to the human factor, building upon the past use of ‘human capital’ as a strategic tool for competitive advantage.

Thus, the purpose of our book is to present a valuable fusion of two important areas of emphasis for current research and practice in human resource management: talent management and knowledge management. The significance of knowledge management to competitive advantage and organizational success in our rapidly changing global knowledge-based economy is immense—the generation/acquisition of ideas and knowledge, their internal transfer and application throughout the organization, cross-border transfer of knowledge, and so on—have all become an integral and important part of contemporary management, both domestic and international. But what many knowledge management scholars have missed in their predominantly theoretical perspective is the fact that effective knowledge management in practice is largely dependent upon human talent management, and especially upon such practical components as recruitment of talent, training, knowledge sharing, coaching and mentoring, performance management, succession planning, development of global leadership competencies, global alignment, and rewards management. As Illegems and Verbeke (2004) have noted, past HRM research generally fails to consider the new challenges that HRM faces in knowledge-intensive and knowledge-competitive organizations. And in its special issue call for research to address the interaction of strategic HRM practices and knowledge processes in firms, the leading HRM journal *Human Resource Management* recently stated: ‘From theoretical, empirical and managerial perspectives, the key issue is to understand how the deployment of specific HRM practices may best facilitate knowledge creation, transformation, transfer/sharing, and harvesting/application.’

On the other hand, existing publications on talent management are predominantly practitioner-oriented without a strong conceptual foundation that knowledge management can provide. They tend to focus directly on major practices in attracting, selecting, engaging, developing, and retaining employees, yet they largely fail to adequately recognize human talent as repositories of potentially valuable knowledge—both tacit and explicit. This shortcoming of current perspectives in human resource and talent management was evident in a recent remark by an HRM practitioner colleague of a large biotechnology firm that is undergoing some downsizing through mostly voluntary terminations (including her own). She indicated that a lot of valuable knowledge was unfortunately leaving the company due to inadequate attention to effective knowledge management.

TALENT MANAGEMENT: STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

With our somewhat novel conceptual admixture in ‘smart talent management,’ this text takes a fresh look at human talent in organizations, with employees at all levels representing potentially key agents of knowledge management in acquiring, transferring, and applying important knowledge for competitive advantage. Like ‘human capital’ and the more generic ‘human resource management,’ talent management is grounded in resource-based theory of organizations (Barney, 1991; 1995), where organizations can gain competitive advantage to the extent that their assets and resources with which they compete and pursue organizational objectives are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate. Organizations that are able to attract human talent consistently and effectively, as well as develop and update, deploy where needed, obtain commitment to organization goals, elicit ideas for ongoing improvement, and retain this talent will fare well in the long term in the global marketplace compared with other organizations that neglect such attention to human talent.

We believe that the term ‘talent management’ is an improvement upon other preceding common terms such as human resource management and even human capital. Although both of these terms are improvements upon the former ‘personnel’ moniker by lending a positive sense of employees as assets or resources for the organization, they still refer to some ‘thing’ that organizations use and expend—a fairly negative meaning from a humanistic perspective that reduces the human being to a material inventory level. Of course, as Fournies (1999) has pointed out, managers often look at their mechanical/physical material resources as something worthy of and needing continuous monitoring, caring for, upgrading, and investing in. Perhaps if managers really looked at their people as the potentially vital human resources that they really are, they would at least give equal consideration to their employees as to their valuable machines and physical resources. Nevertheless, talent management as a powerful image and attitude-shaping term can take managers even further beyond the terms ‘human resources’ and ‘human capital’ in valuing, utilizing, and benefiting from employees. Far more than the terms ‘resources’ and ‘capital,’ the word ‘talent’ conveys a sense of the important prerequisites of value, rarity, and inimitability—and in an inherently humanistic way—that contribute to an organization’s competitive advantage.

Although some writers might limit the term ‘talent’ to some kind of natural capability or learned skill that benefits an organization, and upon extension refer to talent as only those in the organization possessing these valued characteristics, in this book we generally refer to talent as all of the

employed people within an organization who may differ dramatically in levels of knowledge, skill, and ability. Certainly there are strategic points and positions of core competencies where the quality or degree of human talent within an organization is more critical than in other positions and locations within the organization. Nevertheless, especially in conjunction with knowledge management, in this book an organization's talent (employees) at all levels represent potential sources of valuable knowledge through their multiple points of external knowledge access and insight acquisition, internal idea/knowledge generation, and knowledge transfer and application.

We learn from the Sapir-Whorf theory of cultural anthropology that our thoughts, attitudes, and subsequent actions are very much affected by the language we use. New language and terminology can serve as keys to unlock the doors into new passageways of managerial approaches leading to performance improvement. What are some powerful semantic benefits of the use of the term 'talent management' over personnel or human resource management? We believe there are several. First, based on the language of the entertainment industry, the term 'talent' can serve as a powerful metaphor, evoking the image of a talented actor whose role in a motion picture or play is critical to the success of the production. The human talent in entertainment productions really make it happen. For those who are familiar with Western culture, can you really imagine the classic movie *Gone With The Wind* with any actors other than Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh playing the roles of Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara? Or Sir Laurence Olivier, for another example, had a powerfully unique and unforgettable impact on his many works on the stage and screen. It is due to the careful skills of a fine director-manager to identify potential, and to help guide and shape the performance of this talent that brings off a smashing success and memorable performance. Even when the acting talent is as of yet 'undiscovered' to the general public, as was Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday*, the perceptive and skillful director-manager recognizes this talent—even in rough form—and patiently works with and develops this talent to its stardom potential. As directors of human talent in their organizations, managers and supervisors bear the same challenge and opportunity of identifying the human talent in their midst, and in developing and managing this talent toward optimal performance and ultimate company productivity. But they must first sense the immense value of this human talent to their workplace productions, and how their concern and attention for this talent is essential.

Second, as in the above entertainment metaphor, talent management is more consistent with our more flexible trend in today's global marketplace in sourcing and utilizing human talent as the need arises—on a contingent

basis. On a global scale there is a burgeoning growth in contingent employee staffing in the use of temporary, part-time, contracted, leased, outsourced, and consulting services. In a major film production, you typically schedule an actor for the hours or days in which scenes need to be shot—not for the duration of the shooting of the entire movie. In fact, perhaps a more accurate way to think of actors today is as ‘temps,’ especially those not playing a leading role in the entire film production. Thus, as increasingly is the case with our more porous and open organizational boundaries, talent can also be represented by the workers of suppliers, vendors, contingent arrangements (e.g., temps), and outsourced services/manufacturing firms who contribute to our business viability. Although our book will focus primarily upon internal human resources as the talent, organizations should consider the needs of all workers who contribute to the success of their operations.

Third, the term ‘human resource management’ typically conjures up the image of staff professionals—the HR department of specialists that is often seen as only adding cost to the organization and reminding management of legal restrictions and what management can’t do. Unlike the HR functional specialist or professional that we typically equate with ‘HR manager,’ the talent manager is more easily seen as a general manager or supervisor who regularly works closely with human talent to achieve organizational performance objectives. Talent management emphasizes in our minds what all managers need to be concerned about and actively involved in—the identification, development, management, and retention of valuable human talent. HR specialists and professionals can provide essential input and guidance, but managers and supervisors bear an essential role in ultimately implementing the HR agenda. Thus, by fully embracing the concept of effective talent management, all supervisors and managers of people within the organization more fully adopt the role of human resource practitioners (not HR specialists or HR professionals), who are directly dealing with people challenges and opportunities on a regular basis.

Finally, the term talent provides an added meaning of preciousness and distinct value to a human resource that should be invested in, cared for, shaped, developed—but certainly not taken for granted or squandered. The obtuse and inane (but all too real) manager caricatured by Scott Adams in his ‘Dilbert’ comic strip often considers contingent workers, such as interns and temporary employees, as expendable resources that can be ‘deposited in a dumpster’ or otherwise easily discarded once their perceived value to the organization is ‘used up.’ But this minimal level of respect and appreciation for an organization’s human talent, which results in inadequate attention to the development and organization-wide utilization of vital human resource management practices, can never build a long-term strategy of

competitive advantage, let alone compete well with such a reputation in the war of attracting and retaining strong human talent (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001; Tulgan, 2002).

Unfortunately, notwithstanding the above important strengths of the use of the talent management designation over human capital or the more traditional human resource management, or the even more dated 'personnel,' much of the current TM literature seems only to be 'warmed over' old HRM and dressed in a catchy phrase. Much of this work appears to differ little from the previous generation of works under the label of HRM and the management of human capital. In their thoughtful critical review of recently published works and the growing interest in talent management, Lewis and Heckman (2006: 140) state:

It is apparent from the above that the term 'talent management' has no clear meaning. It is used in too many ways and is often a means to highlight the 'strategic' importance of an HR specialty (recruiting, selection, development, etc.) without adding to the theory or practice of that specialty . . . Perhaps it serves the purpose of re-branding HR practices to keep them seemingly new and fresh, but it does not advance our understanding of the strategic and effective management of talent.

Certainly a new 'spin' on an old concept can provide a refreshing change, as well as an opportunity to renew and recommit efforts for organizational improvement. But if talent management is to make a significantly new contribution beyond simply providing a rather superficial 'new and improved' label to essentially the same HR practices, it must hold a more clear link with strategic human resource management (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Wright & Haggerty, 2005).

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Besides the distinctly different emphases that we place on the term 'talent,' our addition of the conceptual discipline of knowledge management to the picture takes talent management to a more strategic level, where the human talent at all levels represent important sources, transmitters, and implementers of knowledge essential to competitive advantage. Consistent with the maxim 'knowledge is power,' the competitive advantages of organizations are derived from core competencies and 'know-how' that are developed within them over time (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). This collective knowledge is held explicitly within the set of documented policies, practices, directions, instructions, and so on, and implicitly or tacitly within developed

routines of organizational life, as well as the conscious and unconscious experience base of employees at all levels (Polanyi, 1966; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

To a significant extent, employees embody the knowledge in use within the organization. According to the knowledge-based view of the firm (Grant, 1996), this employee know-how that greatly contributes to a firm's human core competencies potentially provides a strategic resource to assist the firm in adapting and competing in its market environments (Haesli & Boxall, 2005). Clearly, when all employee talent (including both regular and contingent employees) are seen as current and potential sources and purveyors of knowledge and know-how for beneficial application within the firm, the perceived role of human resource management policies and practices to attract, develop, motivate, facilitate knowledge exchange interactions among, and retain this talent grows dramatically in importance. Unfortunately, in many organizations there is a lack of consistency and coordination among the HR functions such as staffing, training, appraisal, and compensation (Guest, 1987; Lam & Schaubroeck, 1998). Besides increasing the perceived importance of HR policies and practices to the organization, knowledge management also provides a common, unifying purpose and link to integrate and coordinate these policies and practices more effectively within the various HR functions.

Despite the valuable potential contributions of knowledge management, there are potential shortcomings that limit its value and utility in improving organizational performance. Many efforts in knowledge management have focused on hardware and software database applications (e.g., expert systems) with apparently little regard for human dimensions affecting both the entry and retrieval of experience-based knowledge and information, which can become even more problematic due to cultural differences within our global organizations (Paik & Choi, 2005). Much work that does focus on human organizational issues in knowledge management remains at a rather abstract, theoretical, and fairly macro level, with little reference to specific HR policies, practices, and procedures for guiding and bringing knowledge management to the micro level of local firm operations (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Bhagat et al., 2002).

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have presented the concept of the 'knowledge spiral,' which examines four modes of knowledge transformations, involving knowledge creation and transfer between tacit knowledge (i.e., know-how or experience-based knowledge that is difficult to document) and explicit knowledge (i.e., more easily communicated or shared) at different levels within the firm. Hansen, Nohria, and Tierney (1999) provide a simpler way of envisioning links between knowledge management and the

human dimension by distinguishing major approaches of knowledge management: the 'personalization' and 'codification' of knowledge. In the personalization approach, tacit or experience-based knowledge remains closely tied to the individuals who create or discover it from external sources, and transmit this knowledge primarily through person-to-person contact. In contrast, the codification approach attempts to make knowledge more explicit and facilitate its transfer through entry onto databases and into operations manuals and employee training plans for wider company dissemination. The application of the personalization knowledge management approach appears to work most favorably in unique, novel situations, while the codification approach works best in situations involving fairly predictable conditions and routine organizational practices. However, despite their contributions to theory development, these research efforts in knowledge management still fail to make a close link to specific HR functional practices for guiding local operations—such as in specific staffing, training and development, and various communications efforts and activities for creating and moving both explicit and tacit knowledge through the organization. There is still limited understanding of specific ways in which knowledge management and human resource practices may interact to support competitive advantage (Storey & Quintas, 2001; Currie & Kerrin, 2003; Haesli & Boxall, 2005).

Another limitation of knowledge management and related management of knowledge workers is the predominant focus on cerebral and cognitive, intellectual processes—what we call the cognitive domain (Bloom, 1956). There appears to be little attention directed at learning and skill development in areas critical for individual, group, and organizational performance within the affective (e.g., feelings, emotions) and psycho-motor (e.g., skills) domains (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964; Harrow, 1972). Although discussions about implicit or tacit knowledge can relate to the largely unconscious and internalized knowledge aspects of the psycho-motor domain, they tend to lack sufficient detail about how this form of knowledge can be effectively developed.

Considerable work in emotional intelligence, creativity, and nonlinear thinking also points to the need to look beyond strictly cognitive dimensions of rational data-gathering and logical analysis of knowledge and information for achieving and maintaining high levels of performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2004; Vance et al., 2007). In a departure from the nearly complete focus on the cognitive domain, past work analyzing the learning benefits of knowledge-sharing groups (both within and across organizations) has identified important forms of learning in the affective domain, such as increased confidence in problem-solving, reduced anxiety caused by feelings of isolation, or an increased

awareness of and accompanying sense of urgency in addressing a potential future problem (Vance, 1990; Vance et al., 1991).

VALUE OF THE TALENT/KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT HYBRIDIZATION

A combined conceptualization of talent management and knowledge management in smart talent management considers that which employees can bring of value to the organization as extending far beyond only the cognitive domain. The power of the concept of talent includes its relevance to other essential domains of human development and performance besides an individual's store of rational information and cerebral knowledge. The concept of talent held by an experienced employee provides a more vivid picture and strengthens the meaning of deep, hard to articulate, tacit knowledge, directing it closer to the influence of specific HR practices in identifying, surfacing and capturing, and spreading this tacit knowledge talent within the organization. The concept of talent also reaches into the affective domain, such as with emotional intelligence and the ability to read and manage one's own feelings in a constructive fashion, and to influence others in doing the same (Goleman, 1995; 1998).

We can see very successful global organizations today operating with the combined TM/KM model. One such organization is igus, GmbH of Germany, a leading manufacturer of energy chain systems that support industrial automation and robotics. The active involvement of all managers at all levels in HR practices combining talent management and knowledge management is quickly apparent in a visit to the headquarters manufacturing facility in Cologne. As symbolized by the lower case letters in its name, igus promotes a strong culture of humility, continuous learning, empowerment, and equality. This culture is apparent on its website (www.igus.de), which states that: 'nearly every team member acts as an independent manager from the start.' With 26 branches in 21 countries, the company heavily invests in training and talent development worldwide. Its open office space and furniture design supports an egalitarian atmosphere and facilitates the sharing of information. Everyone can contact anyone else in the company directly. A good example of this combined TM/KM smart talent management model in action, which here merges an empowerment approach with knowledge management, is the igus common maxim: 'First decide, then inform.'

As another good example, the multinational giant Procter & Gamble has been extremely successful in attracting, developing, and retaining its managerial talent worldwide. P&G's combined TM/KM effectiveness in disseminating key knowledge, skills, and abilities throughout its worldwide

operations has resulted in the distinct competitive advantage of decision-makers who share a common mindset and alignment that supports an integrated and coordinated global business strategy. This TM/KM merger affecting specific HR practice is evident in the work of P&G's East Asia regional senior HR executive, Hide Aida, in what he calls 'knowledge-based leadership.' The purpose of P&G's knowledge-based leadership approach is to enable all employees to perform at their peak by ultimately providing opportunities to make decisions in their area of responsibilities. In implementing knowledge-based leadership, employees participate in various forms of training and development to master their three critical areas of knowledge/understanding: (1) the specific technical expertise involved in their work, (2) successful P&G business strategies and approaches, and (3) the Procter & Gamble PVP model that makes up the core fabric of their culture: *purposes* (e.g., company mission), *values* (e.g., core personal and interpersonal values held by each employee such as integrity, trust, passion for winning, ownership), and *principles* of business practice linked to company success (e.g., 'mutual interdependency is a way of life,' 'innovation is the cornerstone of our success'). Once employees demonstrate that they have gained sufficient knowledge and demonstrable understanding (including internalized commitment—learning in the affective domain) in these three primary areas, they are fully empowered to make decisions on their own to accomplish their work performance objectives.

The TM/KM model hybrid merges the strengths of each individual approach, yet in combination is also able to surmount the limitations of each. From the above discussion we can summarize the distinct strengths of the combined TM/KM model in smart talent management:

1. With its merger with knowledge management, talent management becomes more than just a catchy, new phrase and is clearly raised to a strategic level of vital consideration.
2. Knowledge management provides a common purpose and focus to help unify and integrate HR functional efforts and activities, and broaden the link with HR and organizational strategy.
3. The term 'talent' has a potent meaning that conveys the current or potential value of each employee within the organization—including contingent employees.
4. The TM/KM model has sound theoretical grounding, yet is positioned within the realm of specific HR functional practices, where all managers and supervisors perceive they have an important, central role.
5. The view of talent extends knowledge management beyond primarily a conscious cognitive dimension to include deeper tacit and affective dimensions.

The intent of this book is to present the TM/KM conceptual hybrid, smart talent management, as a valuable multi-faceted direction for managerial action in key HR functional disciplines, leading to organizational improvement and enhanced competitiveness. However, the idea of building a stronger connection between knowledge management and key HR practices is still in its infancy. We hope that our selection of papers will serve to enhance our understanding of this potentially powerful union and spur further theoretical and applied developments.

OVERVIEW OF THIS BOOK

The four parts of this book will examine (1) HR planning and staffing, (2) training/coaching, (3) performance management, and (4) organizational learning and development. The first part of the book, devoted to HR planning and staffing, opens with a chapter by Patrick Schutz and Donald Carpenter on effective planning of human resources. In this chapter the authors examine in more detail the central positions that both talent management and knowledge management play in effective HR planning. They also investigate important conditions and practices that should be present to enhance the impact of both talent management and knowledge management on HR planning, and ultimately on effective strategic management in organizations.

The next chapter in this first part, by Mark Lengenick-Hall and Leticia Andrade, is dedicated to talent staffing systems necessary for effective knowledge management. The main purpose of this chapter is to integrate talent staffing systems as an essential HR function with knowledge management. In particular, the authors show that a combination of traditional HRM policies, programs, and practices, along with some new perspectives and approaches, can be used to help organizations develop staffing systems that manage people and knowledge effectively.

The authors of the last chapter in this first part, Siri Terjesen and Regina-Viola Frey, concentrate their efforts on the essentials of attracting and retaining Generation Y knowledge worker talent. In particular, this chapter is concerned with effective attraction and retention positions, policies, and programs for Generation Y employees, that is, those born between 1977 and 1994. The two aforementioned components of HR planning are extremely important to an organization's talent management and knowledge management processes. Attraction is important for establishing the pool from which individuals can be hired, while retention efforts are devoted to keeping these knowledge-carrying individuals engaged in their careers.

Our second part of this book, dedicated to training and coaching, begins with a chapter by Rob Poell and Ferd Van der Krogt on the role of social networks in managing organizational talent, knowledge, and employee learning. The chapter presents an interesting perspective on organizations as social networks of actors, which can help explain how employees (the talent pool of the organization) create individual learning paths, and what constraints and opportunities they encounter in doing so. The chapter illustrates how individual employees' opportunities to engage in development are strongly dependent on the social networks from which they operate in the organization. The authors attract our attention to two such networks, which they call, respectively, the work network and the learning network. Besides providing learning-relevant experiences on which individual learning paths are based and influencing how individuals make meaning of these experiences, these two networks also affect the opportunities for talent and knowledge management.

In the next chapter, 'The power of career counseling for enhanced talent and knowledge management,' Ans De Vos and Nele Soens describe the process of career counseling as a means of matching individual and organizational needs; integrate counseling within the broader career and performance management system; examine the involvement of HR professionals, line management and individual employees; and outline some critical success factors involving overall knowledge and talent management.

The following chapter in the second part, written by Konstantin Korotov, is dedicated to accelerated development of organizational talent. According to the author, organizations in many parts of the world are experimenting with ways to speed up the development of their management and employee talent in response to current and anticipated pressures from the global marketplace. They aim to equip organizational members with the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral patterns necessary for success in their future roles and tasks. Also, in preparation for an expected promotion of an executive, knowledge needs to be transferred to his or her potential replacement, and the latter needs support in preparation for the new job. Thus, concludes the author, in effective accelerated development and broader succession planning and implementation efforts one can see an essential link between talent management and knowledge management.

In the third part of the book, which focuses on performance management, the first chapter by Nancy Inskeep and Bettie Hall is called 'Reward and recognition concepts that support talent and knowledge management initiatives.' They begin by asking several important questions such as 'How can I make working attractive when even people in well-paying jobs want to leave them?' and 'How can I attract, retain, motivate, recognize, and reward a diverse workforce that is geographically scattered and working in the electronically connected e-world?' One of the answers to these and

similar questions, the authors suggest, is to provide sincere, valued and well-managed reward and recognition (R&R) programs that attract and retain talented individuals, develop and share their knowledge, and motivate them to continue specific behaviors and actions. Inskip and Hall make a strong argument that well-defined and supported talent and knowledge management programs are strategic imperatives for success in today's global business environment.

The authors of the next chapter, Patrick Schutz and Donald Carpenter, focus their attention on performance management and its sometimes elusive and confusing relationship with talent and knowledge management. Perhaps the main reason for such feelings of confusion and elusiveness, the authors emphasize, is that management practitioners in each of the three disciplines tend to become somewhat nearsighted within their own specialized environments and time constraints. Nevertheless, the authors continue, a relationship does exist. As discussed in their earlier chapter dealing with the broad function of HR planning, all three are related via the duty and responsibility of designing and implementing policies, procedures, and practices that are intended to enhance the inimitable competitive advantage gained by the organization through strategically directing the activities of its human resources.

The final part of this book deals with organizational learning and development. In the first chapter of this final section, Dennis Briscoe argues that the effective management of organizational talent is directly linked to organizational learning, which is paramount in today's hyper-competitive global economy. The chapter addresses the nature of that linkage, first defining talent and talent management and organizational learning in the global environment and then describing how these concepts are so intricately connected, relying closely on each other.

Drawing on knowledge management, social capital, and talent management literature, the next chapter by Rhonda Jones suggests that effective knowledge management rests primarily with an organization's ability to enable the exchange, enhancement, and application of social capital, which results from the deliberate and active management of employee talent. The author contends that talent management leads to the enhancement of social capital, which is key to knowledge management, and which in turn is essential to organizational competitiveness. In other words, in order for a firm to remain competitive, it must constantly manage the acquisition, flow, and application of knowledge; in order to manage knowledge, organizations should maintain and enhance their social capital; and in order to establish social capital, firms must first manage employee talent.

In the concluding chapter of the book, 'Certifying knowledge and skills is critical for talent management,' Jim Graber and William Rothwell discuss the necessity for a blueprint for systematizing and improving knowledge

and skills of an organization's workforce. According to the authors, organizations use many approaches to capture, multiply, and transfer knowledge, such as formal training, mentoring, expert networks, best practice databases, and professional gatherings. Although these practices are very valuable, their ability to transfer knowledge consistently to other employees is not entirely clear. Employee certification, on the other hand, is a rigorous and proactive approach to knowledge and skills management. It systematically addresses knowledge/skill acquisition and transfer. The chapter introduces a comprehensive approach to employee certification (named CT⁵), and provides two contrasting case studies that highlight the manner in which certification can be tailored to organizational needs.

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