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Authors	Jooss, Stefan;Burbach, Ralf;Ruël, Huub
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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Introduction

Stefan Jooss, Ralf Burbach and Huub Ruël

Talent management is one of the fastest growing research fields in business and management, and has seen accelerating interest from scholars and practitioners alike (McDonnell, Collings, Mellahi, & Schuler, 2017). In many organisations, talent management is now a strategic priority and recognised as a dynamic capability that can foster organisational agility, and, ultimately, be a key driver of organisational performance (Harsch & Festing, 2020). Building and sustaining a strong pipeline of talent is viewed as essential to compete in a complex and competitive global market (Stahl et al., 2012). A recent PwC (2020) survey illustrates that the availability of talent has consistently been a top 10 concern for global CEOs over the last decade. This confirms findings from the World Economic Forum (2020) reporting a widening skills supply–demand gap in many organisations and across occupations and countries. As such, identifying, developing, retaining, and deploying talent are key challenges faced by both small and medium enterprises (Krishnan & Scullion, 2017) and multinational corporations (Björkman, Ehrnrooth, Mäkelä, Smale, & Sumelius, 2013).

Since the appearance of the term talent management in a McKinsey report in the late 1990s (Chambers, Foulton, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998), we have seen a significant growth in academic publications with a talent management focus. Despite advancement of the field, it has been argued that talent management is somewhat fragmented without reaching a general consensus on its meaning, neither in academia nor in practice (McDonnell et al., 2017). While some authors (e.g. Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019) focus on strategic talent management and identify a set of routines including the identification of pivotal roles, the development of talent pools, and the establishment of a differentiated HR architecture, other scholars view talent management more broadly as the attraction, identification, development, retention, and deployment of talent (Baker & Kelan, 2017). While we acknowledge the importance of strategic routines, for the purpose of this book, we follow the outlined broad perspective on what talent management entails, allowing us to explore a range of subjects within the field, which is aligned with the aim of this book series.

While a more common paradigm around the boundaries of the talent management field has been sought, scholars have also called for more pluralistic perspectives (Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013) and contextualising

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(Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen, & Scullion, 2020; Vaiman, Collings, & Scullion, 2017) in research studies. This edited book focuses on talent management in the context of the hospitality industry; one of the fastest expanding industries with a significant impact on the global economy (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2019). This industry ranges from small individual businesses to multinational corporations, and from hotels to resorts, guesthouses, casinos, restaurants, cafes, and cruise ships. It is important to recognise that while some multinational corporations are widely known around the globe (e.g. Accor, Marriott, Hilton, IHG, Wyndham, Best Western, and Hyatt), there are also more than 100,000 individually operating businesses with more than 7,000,000 rooms worldwide (Smith Travel Research, 2015), and thousands of other businesses offering hospitality services.

Commensurate with the growth of the industry and the increased competition is the need to build sustainable talent pipelines (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). Despite recognising the critical importance of talent to achieve competitive advantage in this people-centric industry where employees play a critical role in delivering memorable experiences to customers, many organisations struggle to manage their talent effectively (D'Annunzio-Green, 2018). Identifying committed talent remains a key challenge in an industry with a relatively poor image and high staff turnover rates. Employees leave organisations due to excessive workloads, a poor work–life balance, limited career progression, and a lack of compensation, commitment, or trust (Deery & Jago, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial for organisations to consider talent management innovations to improve the image of the industry, employees' work experiences, and ultimately the strength of organisational talent pools.

The hospitality industry is among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 impact with a preliminary McKinsey report indicating a slow recovery that may take until 2023 (Krishnan, Mann, Seitzman, & Wittkamp, 2020). Hospitality organisations remain among the last to re-open their businesses to the full extent which has an immediate effect on the workforce. The pandemic has amplified the effects on contingent and precarious workers, which make up a substantial part of the hospitality workforce and which, from an organisational point of view, make long-term talent planning a major challenge. While some 'employers of choice' continue to invest in their employees, for example, by extending healthcare benefits, the pandemic has highlighted the precarity and vulnerability of hospitality workers (Baum, Mooney, Robinson, & Solnet, 2020).

While research in the hospitality industry has made major progress in the last decades (Rivera & Pizam, 2015), it has received exceptionally limited attention by talent management scholars and we still know little about how hospitality organisations manage their talent (Jooss, McDonnell, & Burbach, 2019). This contribution to David Collings and Vlad Vaiman's talent management series aims to unpack some of the challenges and examine potential and above all innovative ways to managing talent in the hospitality industry. The scant attention of the research community to this industry is a significant gap in the literature which the contributors to *Talent Management Innovations in the International Hospitality Industry* try to address and which we hope will stimulate further research and debate in this area.

The hospitality industry sometimes is described a laggard as far as innovation is concerned. Yet, the worldwide crises brought about COVID-19 has illustrated that existing modus operandi of many firms fall short of addressing comprehensively the major disruption to their core business all industry players, large and small, have experienced and are likely to endure for some time (Baum et al., 2020). Thus, novel and innovative approaches to product and service design and delivery, the exploration of new markets and innovative approaches are required to overcome these challenges.

What do we mean when we refer to innovation? Innovation oftentimes still has a highly technological connotation, however, it can also be social, cultural, or institutional (Edwards-Schachter, 2016, 2018).Taking such a broader perspective, innovation can relate to new or amended products and services, ideas, processes, and methods, which can lead to incremental or radical changes (Martin, 2016). Innovation can be considered a process as well as an outcome of creativity. According to Edwards-Schachter (2018, p. 66) innovation 'produces broader effects in the economy and technological advances'. Ultimately, however, approaching innovation in that way does not take cognisance of the creative processes involved in innovating the intangible aspects of managing talent. The literature on social innovation may therefore offer more fruitful grounds in this context. We build on Phillips, Lee, Ghobadian, O'Regan, and James' (2015, p. 449) perspective on social innovation as 'an interactive process shaped by the collective sharing of knowledge between a wide range of organisations and institutions that influence developments in certain areas to meet a social need or to promote social development' to consider innovations in the talent management field. As many hospitality organisations continue to struggle managing their talent, traditional practices applied arguably are insufficient and we therefore call for a greater need to consider talent management innovations, which we define as a process as well as an outcome of creating, inventing, or changing strategies, policies, tools, or practices to attract, identify, select, develop, retain, and deploy talent.

Our book is structured in three parts: Chapters 1–3 conceptually review talent management, while Chapters 4–6 provide empirical evidence on talent management innovations in the hospitality industry. Chapter 7 concludes the book with a reflective note on talent management in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the chapters have a diverse focus ranging from establishing strategic talent management to developing creative talent, building talent pools, creating strong employer brands, and rethinking mentoring initiatives, there are several common themes across the contributions for this edited book. We briefly outline these themes in the following before providing an outline of each chapter.

One of the key themes in the chapters is the need for strategic coordination, management support, and a talent philosophy (Meyers, Van Woerkom, Paauwe, & Dries, 2020) in hospitality organisations, which still appear to struggle with the concept of talent itself and how it can or should be managed. It is also very evident that talent management remains a challenge across the entire hospitality sector irrespective of the size, nature, or location of the operation, and that organisations are under pressure to innovate their talent management in the same way as they must continuously augment their product and service offerings (Martin-Rios &

Ciobanu, 2019). The contributions across the seven chapters highlight the theoretical diversity permeating the talent management literature. Additionally, a common theme in the chapters is the distinctly pluralist view applied which centres around the individual talent rather than treating employees as part of a larger group in the workforce. Based on the empirical evidence presented in this book, organisations seem to increasingly personalise their approach to managing talent, for example, by establishing personal development plans.

Although this book focuses on talent management, several chapters allude to the importance of employer branding and frequently novel talent management practices are considered a key element in that effort. Ultimately, a strong employer brand has a significant impact on the attraction and retention of talent. Closely associated with the employer brand are the corporate social responsibility initiatives taken by hospitality organisations. Several authors call for more socially responsible approaches to managing talent which see organisations move from a highly exclusive, senior management focus towards consideration of the wider workforce, and talent at all levels and across all functions. The shift towards talent at lower levels was also reflected in the considerable efforts taken by organisations to provide development opportunities to leverage their internal talent. At the same time, it also reinforces a more dynamic and sustainable 'talent ecosystem' that, in response to the chronical talent shortage in the industry, goes beyond a firm-level focus and considers a multiplicity of stakeholders. Part of these debates is the notion of extending talent pools beyond the boundaries of an organisation, which will open up many new opportunities but also challenges for firms in their efforts to attract and retain talent. We argue that such socially responsible and innovative approaches will play an even greater role in the future. However, to date, there still exists a lack of literature specifically focussing on sustainable talent management as opposed to sustainable HRM.

In Chapter 1, Tom Garavan, Geraldine Matthews-Smith, Ann Marie Gill, and Fergal O'Brien review the literature on strategic talent management and integrating key issues and themes identified in the hospitality industry. While strategic talent management is a topical issue for organisations irrespective of size and geographical region, it is less clear what strategic talent management entails, and its meaning may differ from other industries. The authors review the nature and scope of strategic talent management, challenges, and innovations, and conclude with a call for more research with an explicit focus on strategic talent management. A comprehensive research and practice agenda is presented.

In Chapter 2, Anastasia Kulichyova, Sandra Moffett, Judith Woods, and Martin McCracken explore the strategic role of human resource development as a function of talent management, and discuss how development activities can help to facilitate more creative behaviours in the international hospitality industry. Using a system-based approach to creativity, they illustrate how creativity can be promoted and developed at work by incorporating developmental initiatives such as talent management.

In Chapter 3, David W. Brannon and Ralf Burbach review the concept of sustainable talent management and development initiatives. They advocate for long-enduring common talent pool resource institutions as a solution to address

talent shortages within the hospitality industry. Rather than focussing on firm-level talent management, this chapter proposes an alternative view to firm-level talent pools which considers sustainable industry talent pools.

In Chapter 4, Donagh Davern explores the use of employer branding as a key strategy in talent management, in an effort to retain employees in the context of the Irish hotel industry. His mixed-method empirical research combined interviews with hotel general managers with employee questionnaires. He finds that hoteliers in Ireland are aware of the necessity to tackle talent management issues, but many are just starting to explore potential approaches. This chapter provides practical recommendations around how employer branding can be linked strategically to talent management, allowing organisations to become employers of choices in a competitive global market.

In Chapter 5, Judie Gannon, Diana Clayton, and Anna Klenert empirically review the nature of mentoring initiatives, through the lenses of social capital and communities of practice, offering a distinctive understanding of talent management innovations in the international hospitality industry. Analysing existing mentoring programmes from the UK, Australia, and South Africa, they conclude that mentoring initiatives can exemplify innovative ways of supporting talent management and address diversity and inequality issues in fragmented and dispersed sectors, such as the international hospitality industry.

In Chapter 6, Celine Chang and Simon Werther identify innovative talent management strategies, programmes, and practices that hospitality organisations have implemented in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in order to identify, develop, and retain their talents. Using a qualitative content analysis, awardees of the Hospitality HR Award, were analysed. The authors present a range of talent management strategies (e.g. cultural and leadership development), programmes (e.g. apprenticeship development programmes), and practices (e.g. fast and digital recruiting processes).

In Chapter 7, Julia Christensen Hughes and Jonathan D. Christensen consider talent management in 'situ', comparing normative advice from the talent management literature with publicly available accounts of talent management strategies employed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors also include perceptions of employees from publicly available reviews and a personal account. They conclude that successful organisations throughout the pandemic and in the longer term will be those that prioritise people and develop innovative talent management approaches.

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