



Pool talents, pull up growth

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CORPORATE Bangladesh is likely to face an acute shortage of mid- and senior-level professionals by 2021 unless immediate steps are taken to nurture and develop its own pool of talent, say management experts.

"We will require nearly 80,000 leaders and professionals at mid- and senior-levels in 2021 to achieve and maintain a middle-income country's status," says M Zulfikar Hussain, chief executive officer of Grow n Excel, a leading human resources and management consultation firm in Bangladesh.

"And the personnel supply will then stand at less than 10,000 based on the current state of the private sector organisations," he said.

The existing practices of the private sector show they can develop and groom about 6,000 talents in the next 10 years. The major multinationals as well as foreign banks operating in Bangladesh absorb roughly 100-plus raw talents annually whereas a few local conglomerates, financial institutions and some other sectors can train up around 500 graduates a year through structured management trainee programmes.

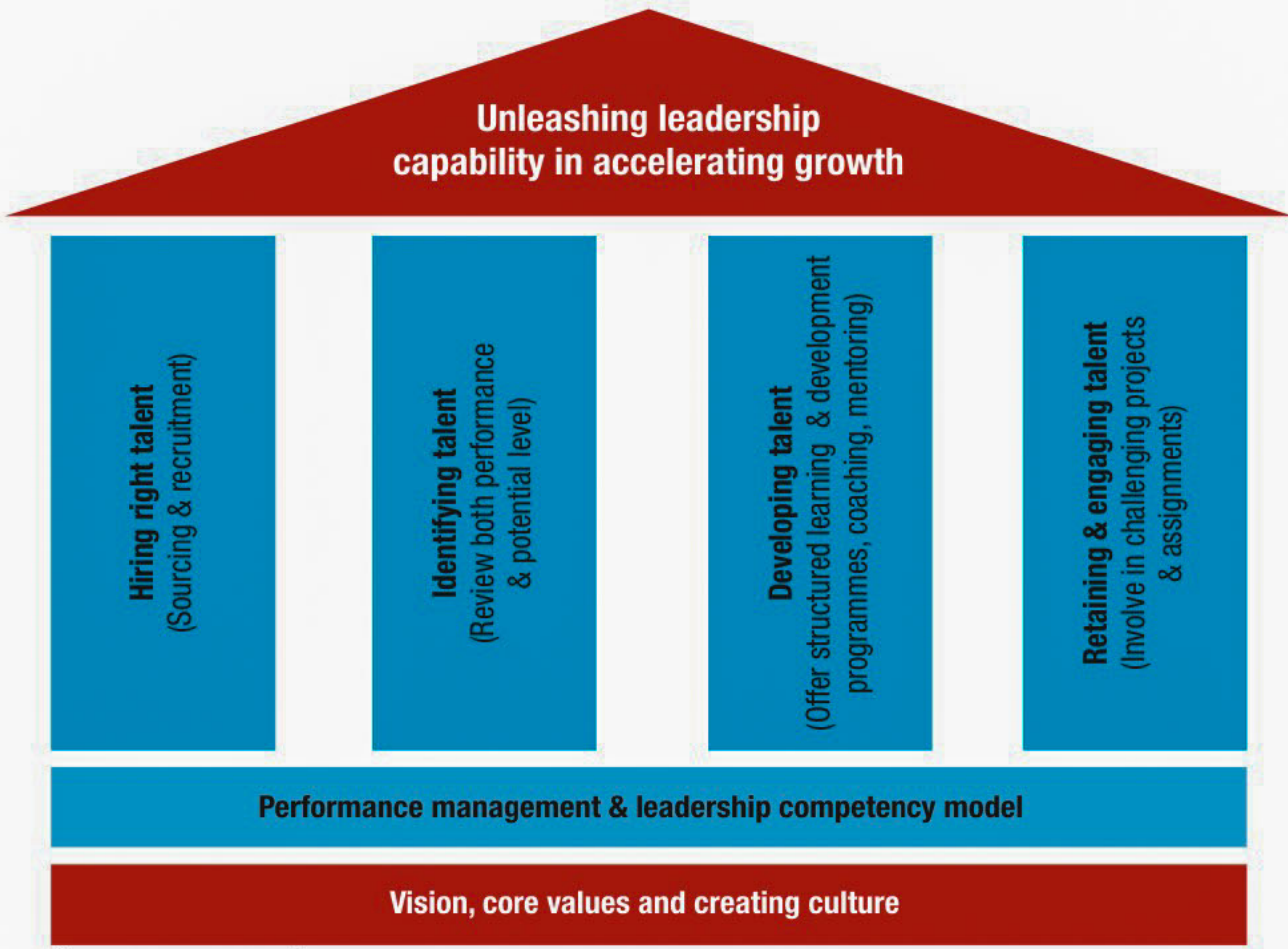
But, many of them will also migrate to other countries after 3-4 years when they will have gained work experience, says Hussain.

The new generation will have to lead the future growth in the private sector because many of today's leaders will retire, said Hussain, who is also the lead consultant of the company.

He said, executives or management trainees, who are joining organisations now, will lead their respective departments in 2021, the 50th anniversary of our independence.

It is apparent, therefore, that our current pipeline does not look promising enough to support and meet the mid- and senior-level personnel requirements even for the next 3-5 years if we do not focus on nurturing and developing talents, he adds.

Ashraf Bin Taj, business director for consumer brands of ACI, also



Source : grow n excel

admits that the current supply is too low against the burgeoning requirements that will arise in 5-10 years.

The country will require adequate white collar talents to manage the growth of the existing organisations. Besides, the foreign multinationals will also require local supply of talents to sustain, as the country has been continuously trying to bring in new foreign direct investment, says Taj.

"The corporate sector, therefore, should draw strategic plans and begin to nurture and develop its own talent pool immediately and secure its own future," says Noor Mohammad, country human resources manager of Nokia Siemens Networks Bangladesh. "Otherwise they would have to pay a hefty price in the form of less productivity, lower business growth and even loss of business."

Talent development, similar to any other process, involves culling input, processing and yielding output. The process starts with mobilising raw talents from the market. Then, the

organisations need to classify the talents by reviewing their performance and potentials and then train them according to their inclinations, strengths and needs, says Hussain.

In Bangladesh, around 20,000 business graduates (BBA, MBA from the public and private universities), 3,000 plus engineering graduates and close to 100 professional accountants (CA, CMA, ACCA) are entering into the job market every year, says Hussain.

Hussain, who worked more than 12 years as HR director and head of human resources at Nestle and Citycell, said, "It cannot be denied that the country still suffers a huge scarcity of quality graduates because few universities produce them."

Developing talents is a long term process. It is complex, expensive and also risky as talents may move out after attaining development. But the returns are enormous, if they can be retained, says Mohammad.

The present state of the Bangladesh cricket team is the outcome of

long term talent development because Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan nurtured about one-third of the current team members since they were children, he adds.

Mohammad, who worked for Fonterra, previously known as New Zealand Dairy, as head of its HR in Saudi Arabia, urges the local companies to begin their own talent development programmes without delay to sustain their position and stakes in the highly competitive market.

Sinha Textiles is one of the largest textiles groups in Bangladesh. Mohammad said: "Would it be able to hold and maintain its current status through next ten years without the talent sourcing it needs to ensure its business growth in this hyper-competitive, cut-throat industry?"

He asked if Pran, ACI, Akij, Otobi or any organisation like them would become a global brand in twenty years without developing their pool of right talents.

Mohammad, who is also a certified facilitator for Foundations of

Leadership Program, says Rahimafrooz has a chance to become a global brand as it has already started the process.

In order to maintain a talent pool, an organisation must have the ability to attract talents on a continuous basis. Then the organisation must build a reputation of offering clear career pathways with appropriate development programmes to build up knowledge, skills and competencies of its people. To make an enterprise successful, it must have fair appraisal system in place, and ensure growth of people through succession planning, says Taj.

For the organisation, talent development would need to be one of the strategic focus areas. Indian company Tata has successfully acquired global businesses like Corus, Jaguar and Land Rover because it has developed talents over the last 60 years thanks to its administrative services. It is the in-house leadership training and development programme that paved the way for Tata, says Mohammad.

Taj, who has over 16 years of experience in the areas of marketing and advertising, says organisations should be open-minded to send their people on appropriate training programmes conducted by reputed organisations to enhance the knowledge base of its human capital.

Mohammad suggests developing the potential talents through pursuing the 70-20-10 model. It means 70 percent on-the-job learning, 20 percent through mentoring and coaching and 10 percent through formal training.

He also urges the government to develop a framework where talent development is the focus. In many countries, the government actually either subsidises training and development costs in both public and private sectors, or provides tax exemptions on the development expenditures. The government, therefore, should allow tax exemptions on the expenses incurred for talent development by treating it as corporate social responsibility, says Mohammad.

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How to pass the interview hurdle

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MOST jobseekers stay uncomfortable while finding out the best way to face an interview board intelligently. They always strive to discover the secret to impress the board. A communication expert says confidence, right attitude and preparation are the keys to be successful in such a case.

"Because an interview is about selling yourself for the position," says Kazi Monirul Kabir, chief communications officer of Grameenphone.

So, the jobseekers need to make a powerful first impression through appearance, greetings, a firm handshake, eye contact and voice because these tell the stories about them, adds Kabir.

Kabir recommended the interviewees to keep their belief that they are the right fit for the job alive, and convince the interviewers about their knowledge, experience and exposure by sharing stories, statistics, analogies and quotations.

Enthusiasm, drive, creativity and agility are the weapons for a fresher to win the heart of a job provider, says Kabir.

"Interviewees can be nervous during the conversation for which a deep breath can be a great source of relief then."

He also asked the freshers to learn and

unlearn certain things during job life where their experience may not match with personal expectations and acquired knowledge. "They may have to unlearn some things they learned in the classroom."

Kabir, who also served Banglalink as the head of direct sales division, suggested the interviewees do some homework on the company, the market it operates in and, most importantly, the roles they are trying their luck on. "Otherwise it will be difficult to convince the job provider."

Each applicant has to know the company's culture and values beforehand because all organisations want not only the right set of competencies for the role but also the right fit for the company.

Former group chief commercial officer of Rahimafrooz, Kabir says he is a strong believer of "First who, then what" (Jim Collins, Good to Great). So, he judges the candidates' competencies based on how they work under pressure, show positive mindset as a team player, rationalise and stand by a decision.

He also advised the applicants not to look for a certain field to fit themselves into because "You never know what opportunity is waiting for you". "So be flexible and choose the finest career."

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Kazi Monirul Kabir

Enthusiasm, drive, creativity and agility are the weapons for a fresher to win the heart of a job provider, says Kazi Monirul Kabir, chief communications officer of Grameenphone