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## War for talent is relentless...



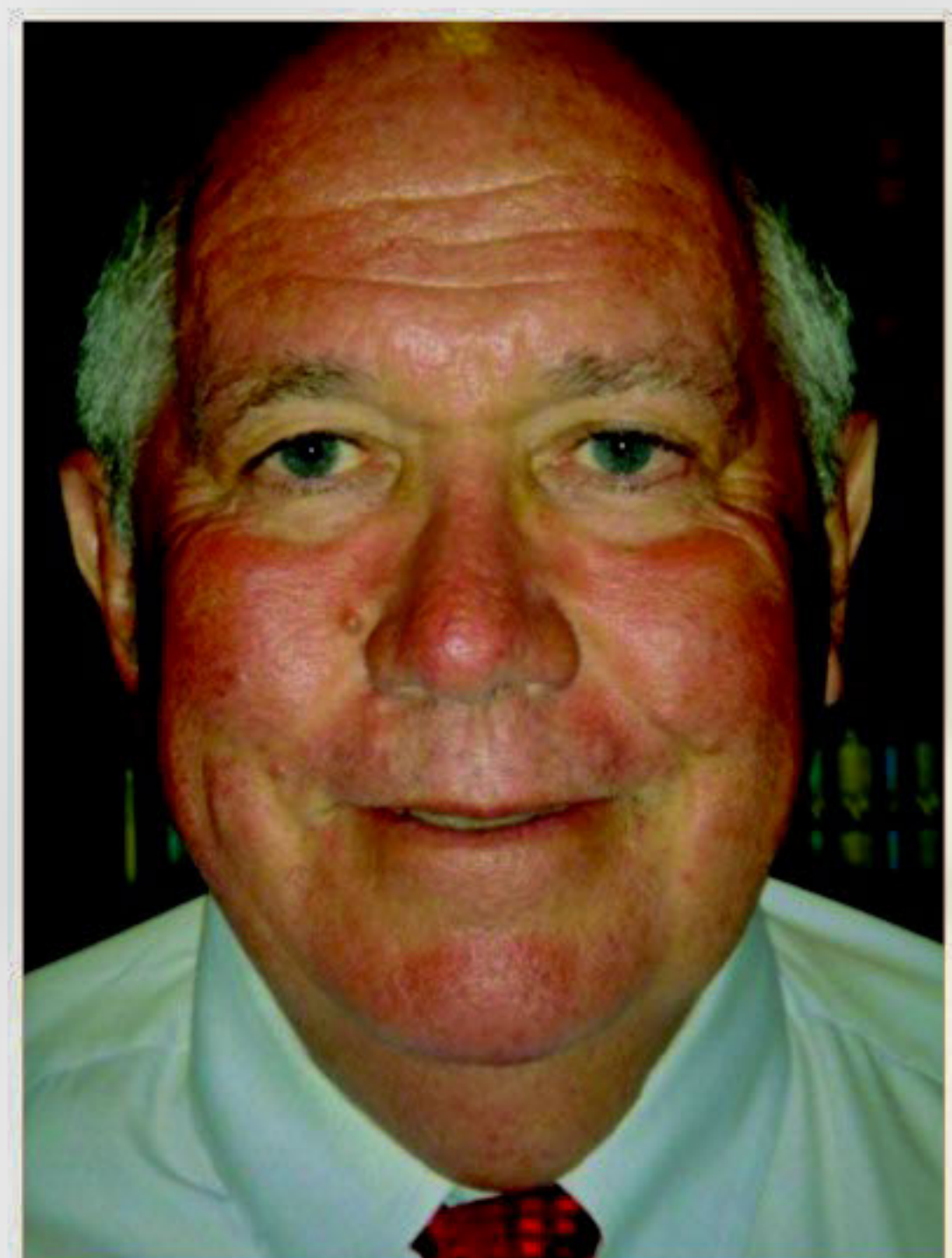
Rashmi Sharma



Arnfinn Groven



Biplob Banerjee



David Weller

**Business enterprises now focus more on attracting and developing their own talent pools rather than only buying talent for attaining excellence in business**

SUMAN SAHA

**T**HE idea of 'building or buying' talent is almost outdated now and is critical to business success because getting the wrong talent leads to high cost for the organisation.

Further, getting the right talent is not the end -- it is just the beginning. Then comes the need to understand the talents, and their engagement needs to enhance talent retention.

So, the war for talent is now relentless, as the corporate sector faces a huge talent shortage with changing times. Business enterprises now focus more on attracting and developing their own talent pools rather than only buying talent for attaining excellence in business.

And talent management is becoming a key strategy to drive business success and part of boardroom discussion in most companies.

An international seminar in Dhaka on Saturday brainstormed a set of human resources issues.

Experts there said talent management today spans as integrated set of initiatives to create a talent pool that can drive the organisation's success.

"Talent is a scarce resource," said Rashmi Sharma, director for HR of American Express Banking Corporation in India.

And, she said, talent management is an integrated set of initiatives -- understanding current and future talent requirements, predicting tal-

ent availability trends, balancing 'build vs. buy' decision and creating an employer brand to attract the right talent at the right time.

Sharma suggested business organisations focus on building talent pools as well as buying talents.

Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management organised the daylong 'C-suite HR Summit 2011' in collaboration with Bangladesh Brand Forum at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel.

More than 500 people from corporate bodies, academia and NGOs took part in the biggest ever event on HR in Bangladesh.

A key driver of retaining high performers is to give them career growth option and development opportunities, said Sharma. "Because people want careers, not just jobs."

For this, the company should formulate a well managed talent strategy because it would create win-win solutions for both employees and the organisation, she said.

"We measured employee performance on 20 parameters at American Express Bank." She suggested using the 'old guy of the company' as a mentor or ambassador.

Biplob Banerjee, an Indian consultant, said good HR people have a huge demand in job markets because the demand is growing exponentially.

But a section of HR professionals have some shortcomings such as their inability to speak business language, presenting data in informative manner and lack of communication skills,

he added.

To be successful in HR profession, they have to understand global tools and processes of best practices, and have an exposure to work in multi-cultural workforce, said Banerjee.

An HR leader has to be innovative to get proper value from the top management, he added.

Banerjee, who boasts a career in various HR roles in both national and international exposures, asked entrepreneurs or promoters to spend more time with HR professionals to get great results from them.

Organisations should focus on developing talents rather than buying readymade talent to attain sustainable growth, he said.

He also suggested imparting proper coaching for the development of talent because it plays a critical role to attain the best results.

Banerjee cited an example from Indian cricket team. "For example, MS Dhoni played the critical role as the captain or CEO of the India team, but Gary Kirsten also played a very impressive role silently through imparting proper coaching in the ICC Cricket Cup Final-2011."

Arnfinn Groven, chief people officer of Grameenphone, stressed organisational change or transformational issues.

He said Grameenphone has already initiated a comprehensive transformation programme aiming to develop a customer-centric organisation and culture in the company.

They have already introduced a 'flatter

organisation structure' to speed up decisions and communication processes. The company focuses on strengthening its leadership capabilities by identifying needs and executing customised programmes for them.

"We have created an open office environment to foster leadership behaviour," said Groven. "Because walls are a hindrance to communication, so we have broken the walls."

He said: "The best time for transformation of an organisation is at its good time. Our change is always directed to its (the company's) values."

David Weller, a strategic HR consultant from New Zealand, called for promoting the HR manager as business manager strategically. The creation of a human resources strategy within an organisation is now as important as a customer service strategy, a quality strategy and a growth strategy, he added.

He said: "A modern HR department will have communication, organisation development, remuneration and reward, as well as more traditional areas such as union relations, employee administration and staff welfare."

The HR experts at the seminar also urged the top management of the country to see human resources department as a strategic business partner to attain sustainable growth.

They also stressed attracting and developing talents, treating HR as frontline operation and branding the HR functions.

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## What a chief executive wants from HR

SUMAN SAHA

**H**UMAN resources professionals often get frustrated due to poor attention from the top management as they are not invited to even a routine meeting with key executives.

So, the HR department often sees discrimination in budget allocation, even though it continuously adds value to the organisation by providing basics to strategic HR services.

HR leaders claim the chief executive officer (CEO) of an organisation attaches less importance to human resources department compared with other departments such as sales and marketing, accounts or finance department.

But, a number of CEOs in the country say the HR department gets relatively less attention from the top level of the organisation due to their poor communication skill, inability to present data meaningfully and poor understanding of own business.

The chief executives recently spoke on it at a panel discussion on "what CEO wants from HR" at an international summit styled "C-suite HR Summit 2011" organised by Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management in collaboration with Bangladesh Brand Forum at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka.

Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, deputy managing director of Pran-RFL, said "Organisations must know the impor-



Top executives take part in a discussion on "what a CEO wants from HR" at a programme organised by Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management and Bangladesh Brand Forum at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka on Saturday.

tance of HR as they represent the people of an organisation."

But, the HR department must be extremely communicative to share its innovative plans with the top management, he said.

"We obviously need good HR leaders to run plant operation smoothly," said Chowdhury, adding that the organisation, therefore, should pursue a scientific recruitment procedure.

Chowdhury said Pran-RFL will practise Employment Value Proposition (EVP) to attract and retain the high performers of the organisation.

The EVP is a set of attributes that the employment market and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment in an organisation. It includes important factors like compensation, organisation stability, development opportunities, future career opportunities, respect,

quality of managers and work environment.

"HR is a part of our executive committee in our organisation because we treat human resources as a key element for success," said Khalid Hasan, managing director of The Nielsen Company Bangladesh.

He said: "We value the role of HR as they are the supplier of talents."

But the HR professionals should have to be very much aware of the

core business, said Hasan.

K Mahmood Sattar, managing director of The City Bank, said: "Human resources are a very core part of strategic management because all line managers have to work as the HR managers to run the daily operations of an organisation effectively."

The HR department generally works as the biggest change agent of an organisation and adds value to the business process through arranging necessary training and engaging the workforce, said Sattar.

So, the top management should consider chief people officer as important as chief financial officer, he added.

Naveed Mahbub, country head of IBM Bangladesh, said: "We should pursue the best HR practice as the organisation can run effectively if the people of the company are run smoothly."

Tapas Kumar Mondal, country manager of International Beverages Pvt Ltd (Coca Cola), said: "We should see HR functions as frontline function as they are the builder of an organisation."

Aameir Alihussain, managing director of BSRM Steels, said: "Business organisations are now facing the challenge of getting the right people at the right place."

He urged the HR professionals to be pro-active for adding value to the organisation.

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**Many CEOs say the HR department gets relatively less attention from the top level of the organisation due to their poor communication skill and poor understanding of own business**