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Talent

by Bob Manna & Matt Manna • 0055BC4B(R05)

“An organization deficient in talent should no more anticipate success than an individual who is unable to throw hard should expect to become the next Nolan Ryan.”

Building an organization is not rocket science, but it’s also not a piece of cake. It begins by determining and acquiring essential resources.

Interestingly, when one examines the resources of an organization, *any* organization, *all* organizations, and reduces those resources down to their fundamental irreducible parts, it becomes evident that an organization has only three resources: time, money, and talent. In the final analysis, the successful pursuit of any desired outcome is dependent upon time, money, and talent.

Time is abundant and given to us free of charge. We don’t have to search for time because it results from being alive. Of course what we do with “our time” is up to us.

Money is slightly more scarce than time, but not by much. Money at rest is money in decline, an untenable predicament. All that an organization must do to receive money is convince an investor the money will be returned. The only way an organization can make that argument is demonstrate it has the third and scarcest resource — talent.

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Talent is an autonomous measure of natural ability. It exists independently of character, intelligence, and discipline. That's not to say character, intelligence, and discipline are unimportant. They are important. But character, intelligence, and discipline are not proxies for talent and they will not lead to talent's creation; although they occasionally lead to the discovery and development of talent.

We have all heard that anything is achievable so long as one *works at it* long enough. The idea that talent inevitably flows from the intelligent, disciplined effort of persons with enough character to *work at it* is absolutely wrong. It is common for highly intelligent, rigidly disciplined persons to produce results not much different from those whose efforts are sparse by comparison. The reason is that knowledge afforded by effort is not interchangeable with talent. This disconcerting truth is easier to grasp when presented in familiar terms.

Imagine a nascent wanna-be Nolan Ryan looking for a book, course of study, or list of instructions entitled, *How To Throw A 100 Mile An Hour Fastball*. In business these kinds of things might take the forms of case studies or "How To" sales and management books.

The idea that the next Nolan Ryan could be produced by studying a book is comical. Everyone who has ever thrown a baseball knows you either have the talent to throw hard or you don't. It doesn't matter how much knowledge you accumulate, or how much you throw, without talent you will never throw a 100 mile an hour fastball — end of story!

This doesn't mean everyone capable of throwing hard will develop the ability to throw a 100 mile an hour fastball. It usually takes development to turn raw talent into top performance. What it does mean is that no amount of coaching or training will turn an untalented individual into the next Nolan Ryan. You might get to the majors based on other pitching skills, but no amount of coaching or training is going to make you the next Nolan Ryan if you don't have the talent to throw hard.

Organizational success is no different. In order to succeed an organization must possess the requisite talent. Stated plainly, an organization deficient in talent should no more anticipate success than an individual who is unable to throw hard should expect to become the next Nolan Ryan.

Nothing speaks more certainly about an organization's potential for success than recognition of talent as the scarcest of all resources and management of talent as the scarcest of all organizational skills. Talent, and the environment in which it is managed, define the nature and nurture of all organizations. While it is possible to identify and analyze these elements, it is wrong to assume that such knowledge will provide a means to their inheritance.



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