

THE RHETORIC AND THE REALITY OF TALENT MANAGEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS

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TO START, A QUICK POLL

How effective do you believe your company's talent management practices are?

- 1) Rock bottom
- 2) Decidedly average
- 3) Gold standard



DOES ANY OF THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?



We seek to attract, retain and develop the best people in our industry.

Join us! We help you to achieve your potential!

Get the right people on the bus!

Succession planning is an integral part of our annual people review

9-Box-Grids to provide an objective assessment

Strategic Workforce Management

Key Talent Programmes & Career Progression

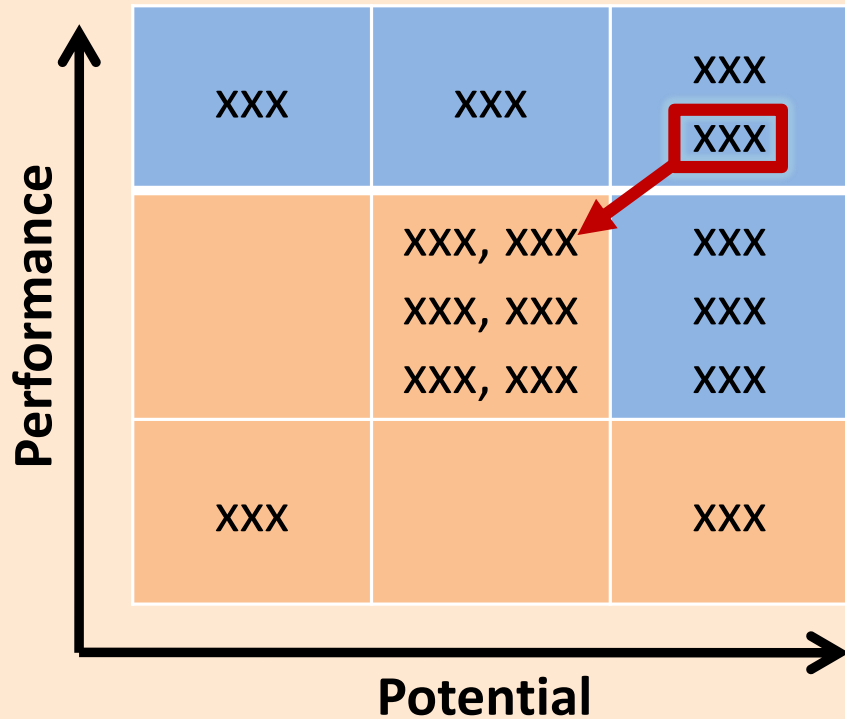
We are winning The War for Talent through innovative talent solutions.

THE RESEARCH

- Social Constructivist perspective (concerned with 'what' and 'how'; facts are constructed in a particular social context, such as organisations)
- Semi-structured interviews (Qualitative)
- Cross sectional (within a defined timeframe)
- Various industry sectors and sizes of organisations
 - Pharma, IT, telecoms, government, FMCG,
 - Between 85 – 105,000 employees
- 14 participating organisations
- Inductive thematic analysis

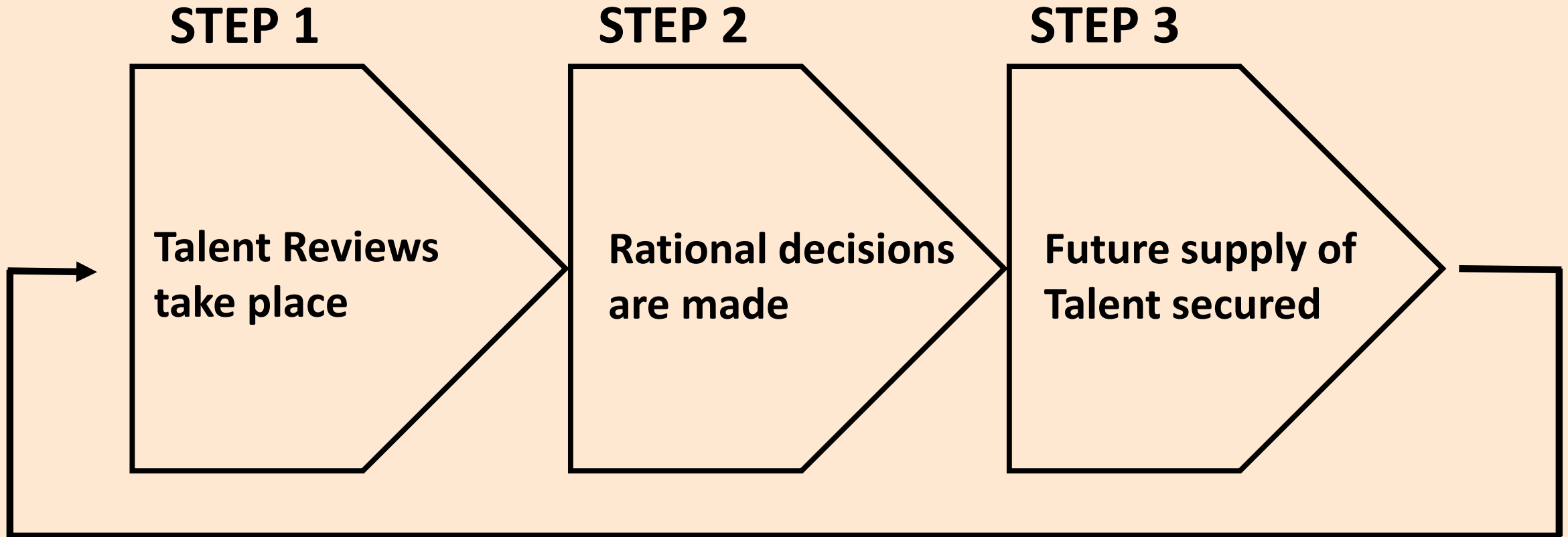


THE RHETORIC OF TALENT MANAGEMENT



Role	CEO	CFO	SVP Sales	SVP Marketing
Stop Gap		XXX	XXX	
Short Term				
Medium Term		XXX	XXX	
Long Term	XXX	XXX		

THE RHETORIC OF TALENT MANAGEMENT



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CLOSER TO REALITY



SANTA FE
RELOCATION

Described as a “**curiously vague subject**” by Morgan and Jardim (2010, p. 25)

Low performers are left in their roles for too long, out of ‘**loyalty** or a **sense of compassion**’ (Jacobs, 2005, p. 3)

A **social process** in organisations in which organisational **politics, personal connections and sponsorship** play an important and unavoidable role; in which talent demand cannot be predicted no matter how well succession is planned (Legge, 2005; Cappelli, 2008; Thompkins, 2007; Scullion et al, 2007).

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The challenge of maintaining objectivity in talent management:

- Can subjectivity be reduced?
- Managerial anxiety plays a key role as many are ill-equipped to lead people.
- Exposure to senior leadership is critical to 'success'.
- Lack of structured assessment in favour of less objective methods.

The desire for more structure and follow-through in talent management:

- Participants shared how the use of tools, such as the 9-box quadrant, affects talent discussions and how structured, externally facilitated assessment is finding its way into organisations.

Disappointment and unfulfilled promises:

- A sense of promise that good things could happen, if only managers were more capable, processes less complex and politics openly addressed. Disillusionment.



THE 'REALITY' OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

Scene: The hotel bar after the team dinner:

- **'I know we said we'll promote Mike in our talent review today but I don't think he's ready. Instead, we should go for Josh who is a really solid guy.'**
- **'Forget the succession plan. We need to get fresh blood into the business.'**
- **"We should reconsider that talent programme. It's too expensive and we don't need to invest in management skills.'**

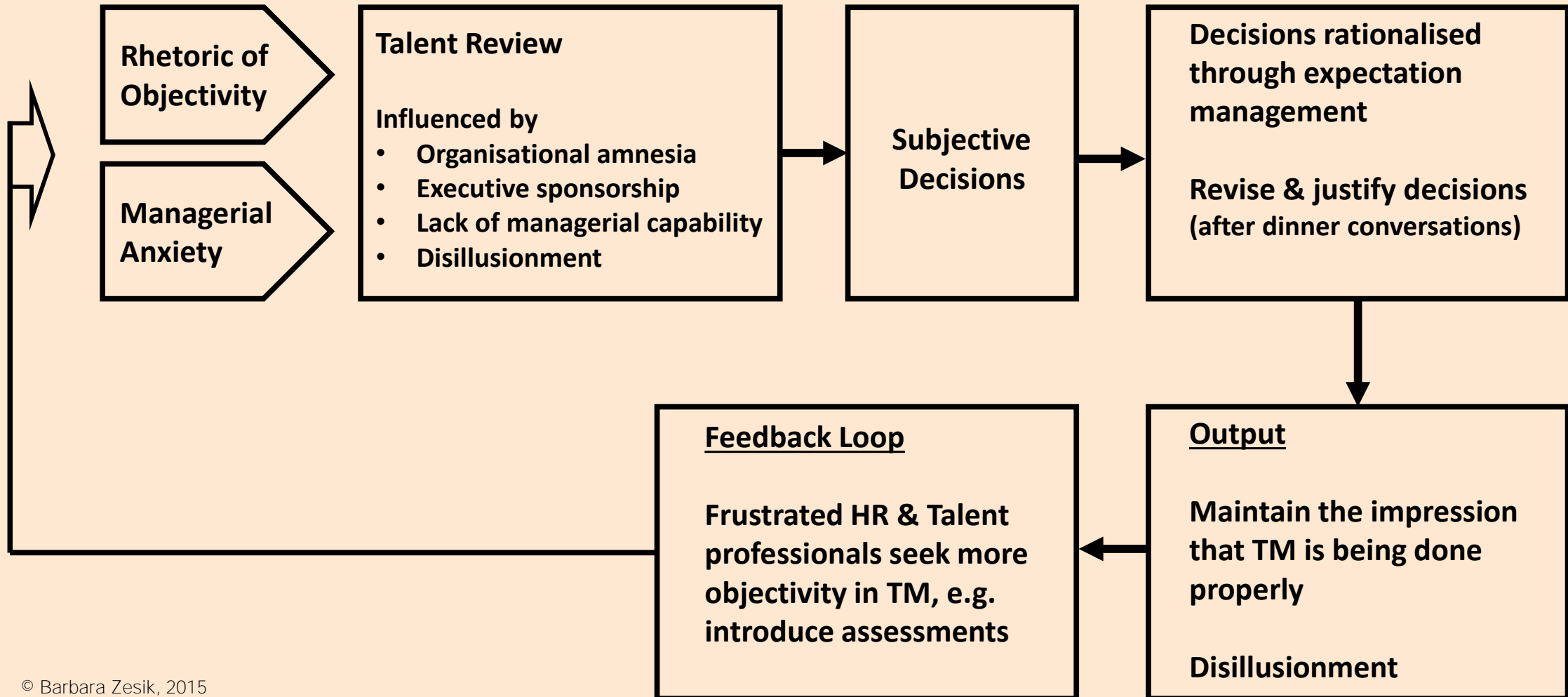
TOP TIP:

“Never miss the
‘after dinner conversation’
at the bar!”

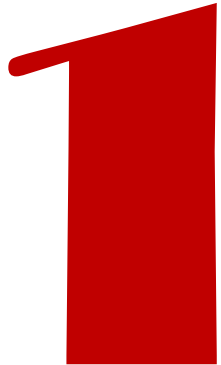
Research Participant 5



THE 'REALITY' OF TALENT MANAGEMENT



ISSUES TO CONSIDER



Lack of managerial capability – either through promotion of technical experts to management and/or a lack of personal development interventions for newly promoted managers – **impacts the potential effectiveness of talent management in organisations.**

ISSUES TO CONSIDER



2

With what appears to be a **relentless focus on the ‘war for talent’** in academic contributions to the literature, **the real issues**, e.g. the socially constructed reality of talent management, including the role of the social and political aspects of talent management, **are largely omitted, perhaps avoided.**

ISSUES TO CONSIDER



3

Talent management, from a theoretical perspective, **should** perhaps **be seen as a collaborative and social organisational process** in which people come together to learn about one another's perceptions of employees and their rationale for such impressions (supported by **external assessment data for neutrality purposes**).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- Acknowledge that, as long as people assess people, there will be subjectivity, comparisons, politics and bias
- Employees should be assigned, or find themselves, a mentor within the first year of joining an organisation (executive exposure) *
- Implementation of structured, externally hosted assessment centres in combination with a personality inventory / psychometric assessment *
- Educate HR professionals to work with the social and political aspects of talent management
- Accept that tensions will exist as long as there are human beings!



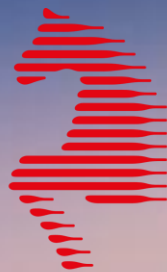
OVER TO YOU

So, on reflection, how effective do you believe your company's talent management practices are?

- 1) Rock bottom
- 2) Decidedly average
- 3) Gold standard

How does Talent Management 'work' in your organisation and does any of the aforementioned resonate with your experience?





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RELOCATION

Thank You!