

Talent Management – Is it the all you can eat buffet of HR?

Ask ten people to define talent management and chances are, you will get ten very different definitions covering everything from how you hire to how you fire. But no matter how you define it, there is one common element at the root of talent management - people. Ideally, talent management should be a series or set of integrated processes that impact every stage of an employee's career with the goal of keeping them engaged, motivated and productive in order to help a company meet its strategic and operational goals.

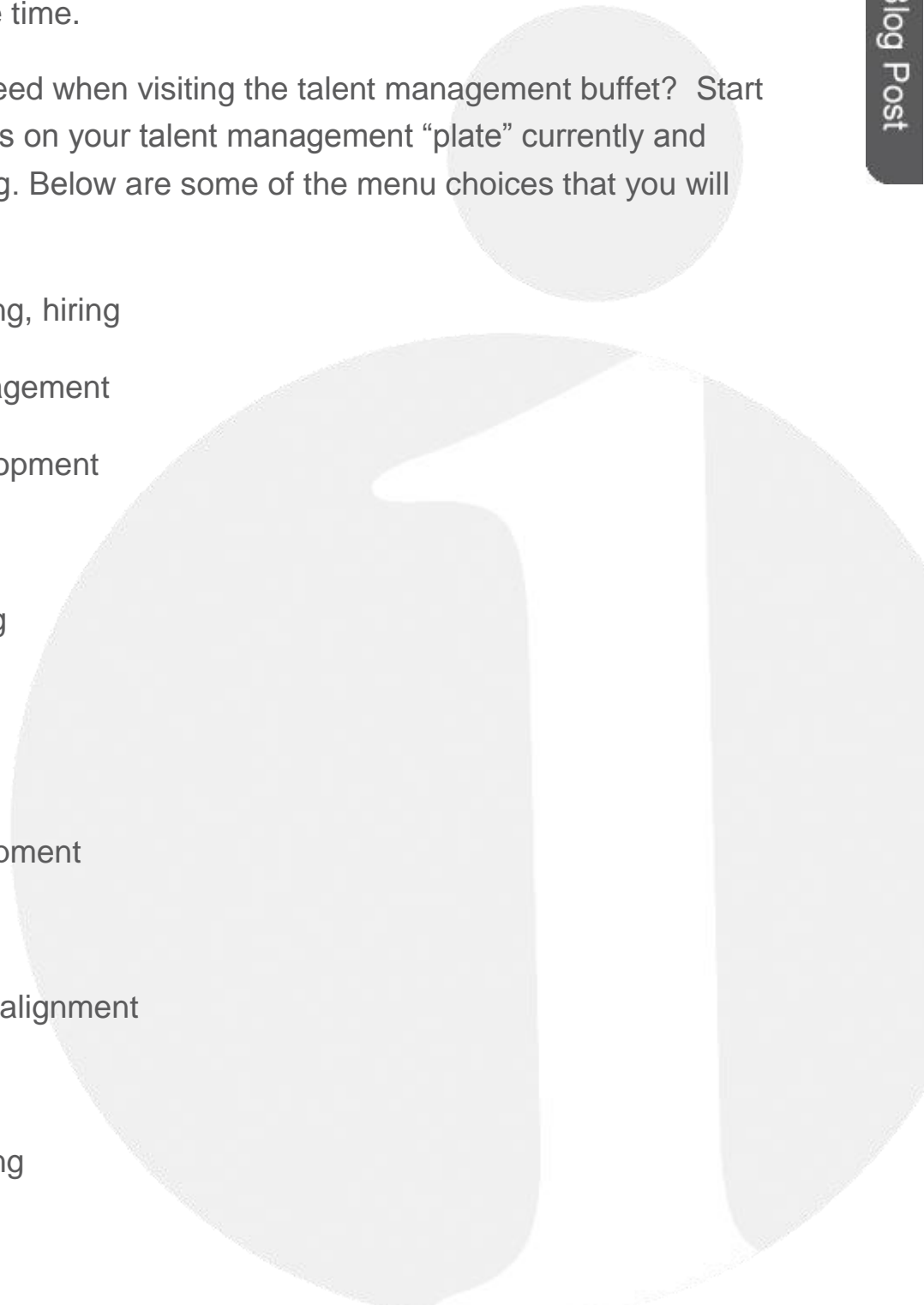
An effective talent management strategy should have processes to support every step of an employee's career, but unfortunately, many companies treat talent management myopically and only focus on one or two elements such as talent acquisition and performance management. However, if an organization only has processes in place to support how someone gets hired and then how they are evaluated or reviewed each year, they are actively neglecting their most important asset for the majority of the year. With more and more buzz around integrated talent management and better tools and resources available, more companies are starting to realize that their talent management strategy has some serious holes or is entirely nonexistent. But for many, their challenge is not knowing how to implement a more cohesive process or where to begin.

A few weeks ago I was having a conversation with a recently appointed VP of Talent Development who is tasked with implementing a new talent management strategy at his company. As we were discussing his needs and priorities, he referred to talent management as the "Golden Corral Buffet of HR" with an overwhelming selection of choices. This was perhaps the best analogy I had ever heard and I thought it very accurately described the challenges that many organizations have when trying to figure out how to improve their talent

management strategy. Just like a buffet, there are a lot of different options and how you prioritize and what you select will have a big impact on your desired outcome. Also like a buffet, when it comes to implementing talent management processes, we tend to pile entirely too much on our plates and try to bite off more than we can chew at one time.

So how should you proceed when visiting the talent management buffet? Start by taking a look at what is on your talent management “plate” currently and evaluating what’s missing. Below are some of the menu choices that you will want to consider.

- Recruiting, attracting, hiring
- Performance management
- Professional development
- Career pathing
- Workforce planning
- Onboarding
- Coaching
- Leadership development
- Recognition
- Goal planning and alignment
- Assessments
- Succession planning
- Rewards



Once you have identified what you have versus what you don't have in place, begin analyzing what would benefit your organization the most in its current state. Next, evaluate the impact of change and what you may be able to realistically change near term versus long term. Think in terms over the next few years what can realistically be changed or implemented. For example, you may need a complete overhaul of your rewards process, but don't have the resources to do so immediately, so starting with a simple recognition program may be all your company can handle for now. Finally, in order for any talent management strategy to be successful, you need buy in. Be sure to do your homework before presenting your plan so you can speak to the ROI for any area of the performance management process and be sure to map out the plan in small digestible portions. Just as with a buffet, piling a lot on your plate may be tempting, but the end results frequently is not what you set out to achieve!