DASA | DEVOPS AGILE
SKILLS ASSOCIATION

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE TALENT ECOSYSTEM

Executive Summary

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Organizations that have the right talent can respond to technological advances, so they can evolve and compete. But the right talent is harder than ever to come by, with acute staffing shortages accelerating the need for better talent management and nurturing approaches.

Technical talent is critical to executing a digital strategy; however, finding, developing and deploying technical talent is becoming increasingly difficult for enterprises due to the technical talent shortage, especially with great digital acceleration the world is currently witnessing.

Based on one of the forecasts by Korn Ferry, there is expected to be a deficit of more than 10 million people by 2030 in the financial and business services. In addition, the telecom sector is expected to face more than 4 million workers shortage worldwide. This deficit in the workforce can definitely stall the digital revolution that is in the process.

Taking this data into consideration, talent management practices such as talent acquisition, nurturing, mobility, career development, and employee engagement to keep retention open have become such an integral part of the strategic discussion. So much so that it has become an integral part of the sustainable talent ecosystem of an organization.

At DASA one of our goals is to provide a platform for leaders and practitioners to share DevOps experiences. In turn, these events help organizational leaders overcome the challenge of creating a sustainable talent ecosystem by asking the right questions, including what is the business we are in now, how is that business changing, what are the critical roles, now and in the future.

DIGITAL TALENT ECOSYSTEM

When talking about digital, the first and foremost thing is that people have varying definitions of digital or DevOps transformation. There is no standard definition, which results in the lack of understanding of the type of talent required.

Second, it is observed that to build the right digital talent ecosystem; one needs to understand the type of talent needed.

The third aspect is ensuring that the talent available is being placed into the correct positions.

Today, most companies are planning to grow their business by investing in digital tools to bring the much-desired digital transformation.

Indeed, the digital tools available in the market can help companies not just bring in the digital transformation but can also help them scan the right candidates that are available and are suitable for the vacancies available.

Further, it is important to scan the candidates properly as these potential candidates are going to help these companies in driving the much needed digital transformation along with the investment in the required digital tools.

During the hiring process, management often feels the pressure of hiring people with the right domain knowledge, fitting into the team, and who can deliver what is expected. With the help of DevOps and the right digital tools, companies and management can secure the right talent.

However, these tools can only help the organizations secure the right talent if companies share detailed information related to the different aspects of the business in terms of strategies, tools being used, and the possible challenges, among others.

Overall, one can say to build the right ecosystem and to secure talent, organizations need to spend time and analyze the barriers they are facing and search for the right people to bring solutions to these concerns.

BUILDING AND SUPPORTING THE TALENT

There is not one single strategy to build and support talent that can act as the magic wand. Instead, using multi-pronged solutions that are more beneficial. These include strategies such as talent acquisition to build the pipeline and focusing on the evaluation of the talent pipeline and the learning and development aspect to support the talent.

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING

Strategic workforce planning helps build an ecosystem by deeply analyzing the different models of pipeline building and the overall governance. Further, one of the most important aspects is that companies must define the right talent required? Which digital skill or competency must the talent possess to fit into the 'digital talent category'.

To quote an example, Siemens is conducting a deep segmentation analysis on Digital Talent. The aim of the analysis is to identify who are the people who fit in the Digital Talent bucket. To carry out this study and analysis, multiple organizations covered under Siemens along with several others outside Siemens are being approached to get the right insight.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF WORKFORCE PLANNING

One of the strategies that companies can follow in building the pipeline is value-based pipelining. Under the value-based pipeline building approach, that is identifying critical roles based on the valuable contribution they make to the organization. The value of the contribution must be in the context of both present and future. This helps companies in identifying the possible strategies they may opt for. This in-turn leads to identifying the job roles that will be critical in future as well.

Defining the Skills Needed for the Role Or Identifying and Defining the Need of the Organization

The process of establishing and defining the need begins with the following question that companies must ask themselves.

- What is the purpose the organization is trying to achieve?

- What are the business objectives of the organization for the coming 12 to 18 months?

- What are the critical and not so critical areas? How is the overall culture of the organization? What is available in the marketplace in terms of talent pool?

- How to build and utilize the talent in future, if the right talent pool is not available at present?

Once the answers to the above-mentioned questions are in place it helps in understanding the requirements of the organization as a whole. Post this exercise, the focus shifts to the talent available in the market. People today look for organizations where they can find a purpose and can add value. Therefore the type questions that organizations must ask themselves should be focused on the type of candidate required.

- Whether the employee should be from a startup or a candidate with a 10 to 15 year of experience is needed?

- Whether the candidate understands an agile way of working?

- Which type of candidate will be suitable based on the culture of the organization?

- What skills should the candidates possess?

- How much experience is required?

- What is the overall professional background of the candidate?

These questions help in screening the candidates based on their CVs. This shortlisting procedure helps in selecting the right candidates who can fit into the culture of the organizations and can add value.

Relationship building and proper communication are the two major factors when it comes to acquiring the right talent. Digital tools and systems are highly important in this entire process as they help with this entire process of selecting the right candidate, in the background.

The digital tools help in getting the technical assessments done of the candidates, demarcation of candidates on the basis of skills, and identify any issues if there are that point to the fact the candidate is a no fit.

UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL FIT

A lot of people talk about people being culturally fit or not. How does an organization decide what will be considered as cultural fit? To get a grip on this the organization must analyze the team for which the person will be hired. Study how the team is being managed, if there has been any changes in the way a team is being run then what it is.

The above analysis will help the organizations in understanding the culture and dynamics of the team. To quote an example, it is similar to how the client and software engineers can be working from a remote location but the infrastructure

engineers are available on-site in a team, so the cultural aspect will vary in case of the three. To overcome there is again a series of questions that can help organizations in understanding the overall cultural tone of the organization and of the team.

Another example that we can quote here is Siemens has recently acquired an organization, named Mendix, based out of Rotterdam. Mendix, is a low code platform to build and proof mobile web applications at scale. The culture at Siemens is very different from Mendix. But the culture of Mendix is such that Siemens, the company, decided not to integrate Mendix with Siemens culture.

On the contrary, Siemens is trying to inculcate Mendix's culture into Siemens in small pockets. With the successful implementation of this, Siemens is targeting to develop small speed boats on the big Siemens mothership. These small speed boats, if developed successfully, can act like internal startups within the organization, i.e. to move at a fast pace and the overall cultural aspect will be different altogether.

Acquiring the right talent is important but then being able to retain them is even more important and having the right culture actually helps to do that. However, at the same time people who have already been there with an organization and have been working with a particular mindset it's difficult to expect them to change overnight.

This is further linked with how the leaders should set things in motion for this cultural change and at the same time influence people to adapt to it. During this change, there will be several

barriers that will restrict this change. So it is important that leaders are being educated and made aware of how to become a digital leader. How it is that they can drive this change successfully. The leader must understand what the mindset shift is all about, what it is to be agile, how to perform in hyper-growth markets, and other similar challenges. The leader must be concrete about these thoughts and not just consider them as mere buzzwords.

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