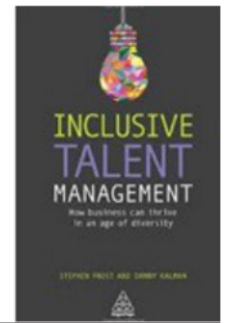


Inclusive Talent Management

By Stephen Frost and Danny Kalman



To say that organisations have a wider talent pool to choose from if executives can eradicate mental blocks about people they might otherwise discriminate against (deliberately or otherwise), is self-evident. But increasing levels of globalisation mean that the requirement for innovation and creativity is continuing to mount. Arguably, this means that looking for fish in a larger pond is becoming more of an imperative.

Certainly this book considers an inclusive talent management approach to be an “urgent” response to negative world events, which include the 2008 financial crisis - and its authors use lots of egg analogies to make their point. On p23, for example, they say: “We are in effect staring down the barrel of the gun. In failing to learn from the extinction of the Dodo...we are putting all our talent eggs in the same basket.”

And the work undoubtedly offers some good pointers as to how and why personal bias exists; how the legacy of colonialism has created segregated attitudes; how someone’s skin colour can lead to labelling; and how such prejudices affect talent management. It also considers different identified stages of diversity awareness and management, which is all interesting stuff.

But the downside of the book is that it fails to provide any real business reasons as to why employers should choose to engage with diversity or inclusion programmes. There are no case studies showing

how profits have improved or market share has increased as a result.

Moreover, although the book tub-thumps about homogenous approaches, it also states that (p71) “an agreed common language is the key to success” - that is, everyone should be able to speak English. The issue is that, while such a statement may be logical, it is hardly likely to promote diversity.

Too narrow

Additionally, although examples of companies such as Kodak and Nokia are supposed to illustrate “the consequences of largely homogenous, mostly male teams”, the impact of such a set-up is unclear. Statements such as “diverse teams can improve the quality of decision making at all organisational levels, reduce groupthink” are also unsupported.

There are likewise no suggested approaches for quantifying the benefits of being inclusive, thus enabling organisations to measure results for themselves - even though it would have been

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easy to adapt the concept put forward by management consultant [Subir Chowdhury](http://subirchowdhury.com) <http://subirchowdhury.com> on how to obtain a [*Return on Talent*](#).

What really gives the narrow focus of this book away though is simply a glance at its index. There is no mention of mental or physical health issues, limited reference to disability, but lots of allusions to gender and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender matters.

This is a shame as good case studies illustrating the benefits of diversity in the workplace in its widest sense would have been very useful. So, to summarise the work (and only because the authors like their egg analogies so much): Rather scrambled. ■

Review written by Mark Northway, director and courses co-ordinator, [*Deltic Training*](#).

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