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978-1-107-03210-1 - Strategic Talent Management: Contemporary Issues in International Context

Edited by Paul Sparrow, Hugh Scullion and Ibraiz Tarique

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Strategic Talent Management

With contributions from leading scholars and practitioners, this *Cambridge Companion* examines the topical issue of talent management from a strategic perspective, mapping out insights from a number of related fields including strategy, organisational learning, marketing, and supply chain management. The authors examine the challenges faced when viewing talent management in a global context, showing how both comparative and international HRM thinking have become increasingly important when, for example, managing talent in emerging markets, or trying to globalise the talent management function. The book concludes with a valuable summary of key learning points about talent management for both practitioners and researchers, as well as a discussion of the most fruitful areas for future research. This *Companion* will be an essential resource for academic researchers, graduate students, and practitioners of global strategic talent management.

PAUL SPARROW is the Director of the Centre for Performance-led HR and Professor of International Human Resource Management at Lancaster University Management School. He has consulted with major multinationals, public sector organisations and inter-governmental agencies and was an Expert Advisory Panel member to the UK Government's Sector Skills Development Agency. His research interests include cross-cultural and international HRM, HR strategy, cognition at work and changes in the employment relationship. From 2008–2012, he was voted amongst the Top 15 Most Influential HR Thinkers by *Human Resources* magazine.

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Dedications

To Denise, thanks for all your support and love. Hugh

To Sue, as always, who sees me through my writing. Paul

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Foreword

In any gathering of human resources professionals today their conversation is dominated by questions of strategic talent management. These professionals and their executives want to know how they can more effectively acquire and manage the talent their organizations need to meet their current client and customer needs, as well as be staffed for the demands they expect to be facing. This is without question the most pressing practical challenge in human resources management today throughout the world. However, this cacophony of practical questions and ad hoc advice makes it difficult to know what to trust. People use the word “talent” to mean very different things. For example, does talent management refer only to elite employees, or is every employee in the organization talent? Further, is talent management just old human resources management under a new name? Such questions, and the circumstances that make any one approach useful or not, are not well understood. Scholars have only recently begun to provide the clarity and coherence necessary to the effective application of strategic talent management in organizations, as is reflected in the numerous recent journal special issues on the topic. However, such collections of divergent perspectives do nothing to bring coherence to the subject.

Here Paul Sparrow, Hugh Scullion, and Ibraiz Tarique address this challenge by collecting the growing body of systematic research and integrating it into a coherent framework. Making a compelling case that talent management places strategy at the center of employee hiring and management retention, and that there is a range of useful innovations and programs, developing one strategy is the driving objective. This volume makes it clear there is indeed something new and important happening under the umbrella called strategic human resources management. Yet this book does not shy from addressing the competing ideas and interpretations of talent, but lets the disputants make their cases in their own words. The editors then go on to explain where each perspective has the most value, using the differences to explain

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and illustrate rather than taking any one perspective and seeking to impose it on others. This volume contains contributions from (and has value to) those in fields as diverse as strategy, organizational learning, organizational behavior, marketing, supply-chain management, as well as human resources management. Further, it has a global focus, recognizing that the most challenging talent management is in far-flung global firms and non-governmental organizations.

This volume will be of interest to practitioners because it will help them to distinguish armchair speculation from what has been systematically tested, as well as providing a framework for strategic human resources management that will aid them in sorting out all of the conflicting views flooding the practitioner literature. Management scholars now have a credible resource they can use to design their own studies of talent management, as well as use in their teaching and advice. We congratulate the authors for presenting and developing such a diverse set of perspectives on strategic talent management, and hope this ambitious work spurs the further development of this critical yet nascent area of scholarship.

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Paul Sparrow

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Hugh Scullion

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Ibraiz Tarique