

Competencies That Indicated Top Talent for Whirlpool Corporation

Rena Renae Bartow

HR 660 51

Career Development /Management Systems

Dr. Marie-Line Germain , PHD

December 7, 2010

Competencies That Indicated Top Talent for Whirlpool Corporation

The global leader in the home appliance industry is the Whirlpool Corporation. They have led the way through the manufacturing and marketing of durable goods. Established in 1911, the acquisition of the Maytag Corporation in 2006 increased the need for change management to drive efficiencies; this due in part to the increased competitive global market. The merger and aforementioned change management resulted in an even stronger organization that became a more efficient supplier to the trade customers. Today, the Whirlpool Corporation offers a high-quality, innovative branded portfolio of products and services with the efficiency that has been demanded of their business.

The right talent became essential to derive the desired efficiency. Recently, over the past two decades a number of factors impacted how the Whirlpool Corporation attracted, engaged, and developed talent to insure that it had the level of leadership needed to succeed in the “constantly changing global business environment” (Weirick, 2010). These factors included: 1) different skill sets and capabilities to compete in the global marketplace – development of internal talent or acquire external new hires, 2) consumer demand required innovative products and services adaptable to fast-paced change, 3) great talent was highly desired and scarce, and 4) reduced loyalty to the corporation causing decreased tenure of talent. The globalized market was more complex and required “better talent to drive greater results ... differentiation ... scarcity of the talent that could provide it” (Ibid). It was necessary to define competencies in leadership and a management system for talent that allowed Whirlpool to:

- Define needed leadership roles to remain successful
- Define gaps in current leadership talent and competencies
- Develop required internal leadership competencies in talent

- Assess future leaders in respect of these competencies for external talent acquisition and/or succession plan of internal talent
- Provide the defined process, resources, and tools consistently to efficiently manage global talent
- Fostered and embed competencies and operational resources and tools to support competencies

Phase one of the design processes began in 1999 with the development of the Whirlpool Leadership Model (Appendix I) that took active participation from leadership and input from executive management. In design of the leadership model the goal was “to provide a common language for leadership around assessing and developing employees, managing talent pool and succession planning, and assessing external talent for acquisition” (Weirick, 2010). Uniquely, the model identified *who* was wanted as a leader, *what* expectations were desired of leaders, and *how* the leaders were expected to perform. The *who* is termed “Leadership Attribute”, *what* is labeled “Leadership Practices”, and *how* identified in “Leadership Performance” (Ibid).

The Whirlpool Corporation desired team leaders that had characteristics and behaviors that were valued Leadership Attributes; the company expected their leaders to uphold great character and enduring values, confidence, diversity/inclusion, and thought leadership. The company needed people with Leadership Practices who exercised vision, strategy, communication, management skills, attracted- developed- engaged talent, and were customer champion by putting the customer at the heart of every process.

The Whirlpool Corporation listened to the consumer and provided products with a calculated “environmental footprint, policies and strategies to manage that footprint, and reputation among environmental experts” (“Newsweek names whirlpool”, 2010). Recently, Newsweek magazine ranked Whirlpool Corporation at 116 in the Top 500 “Green” companies in the United States (Ibid).

This ranking of quality in the company's "environmental reporting, policies, programs, and initiatives are measured, including 700 metrics such as emissions of key greenhouse gases, water use and solid-waste disposal" (Ibid) The company had to have great leaders that were able to deliver performance and truly extraordinary results- beyond all customer expectation.

Finally, *how* the Leadership Performance would be measured through extraordinary results being a driver of change and/or transformation within the Whirlpool Corporation. Teaching leadership how to identify the *who*, *what* and *how* can help enable any company to measurable success.

Phase two of the design processes – The Top Talent Indicator and Derailer Training was launched globally in 2005, after the Leadership Model continued to be a part of the organizational culture and the people processes were successfully embedded (Weirick, 2010). The success of twelve competencies continued as the foundation and were exhibited by the "top talent - high potential" team players within the Whirlpool Corporation (Ibid). The leaders that had "continuously delivered successful results over time, demonstrating both performance and potential" became the focus of the analysis to determine the "top talent indicators" (Ibid). Specific demonstration of four competencies in the Leadership Model led to success for that team player – *Thought Leadership, Driver of Change, Extraordinary Results, and Attracting, Engaging, and Developing Talent* (Ibid). The analysis also discovered that the lack of *Character and Values, Management Skills, or excess Confidence* derailed success. After top talent indicators and derailers were identified, the global talent training curriculum was developed. The curriculum highlighted the indicator and derailer competencies assigning a five point scale to identify growth through four modules: 1) Deeper understanding of each top talent indicator and derailer, 2) Recognized and eliminated traps and biases that could impede the process of assessment, 3) Utilized the assessment to measure external talent and appropriate alignment of the results, and 4) Utilized the assessment to measure internal team players and succession plan process (Ibid). The top-down approach began with the executive

committee, progressed to senior-most leadership, and over a period of five months the process was shared throughout the Whirlpool Corporation “in all regions across the globe”(Ibid).

Phase three of the design processes – Master Assessor Program (MAP) began in June 2006, after line managers and HR professionals, of both Whirlpool Corporation and the newly acquired Maytag, had successfully completed the phase two training. These team leaders were certified as a “Master Assessor of Talent” entrusted to develop the capability to describe the identified behaviors that top talent demonstrated, assessed confidently between top talent and competent talent, analyzed resume information to elicit relevant experience for interviews, produced accurate data through clear report writing, participated and/or lead alignment meetings for placement decisions, and taught other top talent the Master Assessor Program (Ibid).

Finally, the Quality of Hire Metric (Appendix II) indicated positive impact on the quality of hire. The new hire supervisor completed a short survey at six and twelve month progression with questions that targeted four key criteria: satisfaction, promotability, leadership, and performance. These hire reports provided a snapshot of function and individual resulting in dashboard reports used “for the comparison of functional and individual hiring measures” (Weirick, 2010). The results have shown above average for each new hire being assessed . the level of attributes that were displayed by the new hires rated on top talent indicators had fifty percent scoring a 4 on the 5 point scale, with 5 appraised as a “role model” (Ibid). Assessments identified that seventy-seven percent of the new hires would be promotable at least one band level within the next five years that included seventeen percent that would be promotable two band levels (Ibid). The performance metric measured ninety-three percent of the new hires and showed strong results that included forty-three percent achieved exceptional or very strong results (Ibid).

In Summary, The Whirlpool Corporation conducted new talent through these competency measures and revealed one-hundred percent of the assessed new hires would be recommended for another role by exhibiting satisfaction (Weirick, 2010). The value of talent being acquired and

developed is exceptional. The focus on top talent competencies has built awareness of leadership needed for continual success, narrowing gaps in leadership competencies, developed and prepared future leaders against these competencies, provided consistent processes, tools, and resources to manage global talent for a global corporation.

References

Weirick, K. (2010). Whirlpool corporation. Goldsmith, M; Carter, L. (Eds.), Best practices in talent management: How the world's leading corporations manage, develop, and retain top talent. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Newsweek names whirlpool corporation a top 500 green company. (2010, November 23). *McKnights Long Term Care News and McKnights Assisted Living*, Retrieved November 30, 2010 from LexisNexis Data Base.

Whirlpool logo. (2010). ANS – A noble service. Retrieved November 28, 2010 from http://anobleservice.net/html/about_us.html

Appendix I

WHIRLPOOL'S LEADERSHIP MODEL



1. Character and Enduring Values
2. Confidence
3. Diversity and Inclusion
4. Thought Leadership

1. Vision
2. Strategy
3. Communication
4. Management Skills
5. Attracting, Developing, & Engaging Talent
6. Customer Champion

1. Extraordinary Results
2. Driver of Change/ Transformation

Appendix II



Quality of Hire ~ Sample Individual Report

Rena Renae Bartow

Position: Benefits Analyst
Band: 3
Hiring Manager: S. Thompson
Function: Talent Management



Gender: Female
Education: Franklin Univ (BS)
 WCU enrolled (MS)
Experience: ConMet [industrial];
 RHA [medical]; WIPC [hospitality];
 Swift [transportation]; ITT [industrial]

