



# Forging a New Path in Talent Management

Calgary firm links performance evaluations to every aspect of a company's strategic objectives

BUSINESS IN CALGARY STAFF

Pat Worthington knows that when kids in school don't get regular feedback from teachers, they suffer. Their level of engagement goes down, performance drops and they lack a sense of direction and purpose.

So, when the director of human resources at Rocky View School Division # 41 embarked on a mission to revamp the organization's talent management system, he applied the same kind of philosophy.

"I frame it first around kids," says Worthington. "If we're doing a great job as teachers, kids are getting ongoing relevant feedback with the work that they're doing and that whole piece is so critical in the learning process. The irony, though, is that I don't think we're doing a great job in relation to performance appraisal of our own staff."

He explains how the school division strives to be a learning organization, whether it's for the students or teachers or support staff. "We want to ensure we're doing all the things to maximize the learning potential of everyone," he says. "If we're not engaged in a fruitful performance appraisal system, then we're really restricting ourselves in terms of where we're going to go with a large sector of our employees."

Performance appraisals, of course, are but one critical element in the overall talent management of any workforce. That's why Worthington turned to a Calgary company, called *enCompassing Visions*, to take a lead role in the school division's overhaul of its own talent management strategy.



Aly Bandali, enCompassing Visions

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~ Aly Bandali, enCompassing Visions

The company has developed a unique talent management software suite that sits on any organization’s server, can be easily accessed securely online and addresses such crucial pieces of the talent management puzzle such as a detailed job evaluation and description, performance management tools, training and development, succession planning and then links them all to the organization’s strategic objectives and corporate values.

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It begins with a detailed analysis of each individual job description – breaking each one down into specific job duties, training and development goals, key competencies required and links it directly to how it helps the organization meet its business objectives within the context of that particular organizational culture.

“Our software gives them the ability to make sure it’s translated all the way down to the front lines,” says Bandali, who says lack of engagement is the second-biggest reason why people leave an organization. Engagement starts with clear objectives and expectations, along with timely feedback linked to how the worker contributes to the bottom line.

His company’s software allows managers to bias or weight various competencies for any given job according to the priority placed on each one, eventually creating an organization-wide picture of how effectively goals and objectives are being met.

Rolled out the the past three years, Bandali says he spends a lot of his time trying to educate organizations about making a shift in their talent management philosophy to see the big picture, but based on a series of highly specific detailed analyses from the outset.

As Worthington pushes ahead on implementing the system among its 650 non-union employees over the next two to three years, he realizes that while man organizations think about this concept carefully when they first get going, it often gets overlooked – a potentially huge mistake.

He plans not to make that mistake by being proactive now. “Performance appraisal is one of those things organizations tend not to focus their energies on enough,” says Worthington. “It’s important.”