

## Delivering High Performance

# Leveraging Talent Starts at the Top

It's late in the first decade of the 21st Century. Do you know what talent your organization has and what talent you need to be successful in the future? Many top executives don't. They are discovering that talent is harder to find and retain. They are also discovering that it is a challenge to deploy talent and multiply its value.

Executives who understand and are focused on these issues are typically at the helm of companies that outperform their peers. They know that the pressures of globalization, changes in workforce demographics and the knowledge-

### TALENT DEVELOPMENT GAP

Although top managers say talent-related capabilities are important to achieving better performance, they acknowledge poor execution in developing those capabilities.

■ Percentage of respondents indicating capability was very important to influencing high performance.

■ Percentage of respondents indicating their organizations were addressing those factors "very well."



Source: Accenture High-Performance Workforce Study, 2006

based economy have made talent their most important competitive asset. "Most top executives have a keen appreciation of the critical value of talent," says Peter Cheese, global managing director of Accenture's Human Performance practice. "But when it comes to how best to manage and develop that talent, they're often frustrated by the lack of progress."

Accenture uses insights from its research and experiences to help clients achieve high performance. In its analysis, Accenture identified the critical links between effective talent management practices—a key driver of high performance—and organizational success. Accenture also found that executives who manage high-performance companies view their talent strategies as a top priority in sustaining the superior performance of their businesses.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**The Research Report** To learn more about the Accenture High-Performance Workforce Study, go to: <http://accenture.com/workforcestudy>

**More on High Performance Business** To see insights from Accenture's research and experience, including its study of over 500 high performers, go to: <http://accenture.com/research>

**The Book** To read a summary of *The Talent Powered Organization: Strategies for Globalization, Talent Management and High Performance*, go to: <http://accenture.com/talentpowered>

fragmented talent management systems, processes and practices are still the norm at too many organizations. These companies have not sufficiently focused on building talent management capabilities across the organization. And as competition for talent increases, they are increasingly facing shortfalls in critical workforce segments.

For example, most of the 251 executives polled last year as part of Accenture's High-Performance Workforce Study noted that they considered three talent-related factors—attracting and retaining skilled staff, having a performance-oriented mindset in the workforce, and finding and developing talented leaders—to be very important in influencing high performance. Yet few respondents thought their companies were addressing any of these factors very well (see chart, "Talent Development Gap").

Indeed, relatively few senior executives were satisfied with their human resources and training functions. Knowledge capture and transfer, knowledge management, change management and aligning workforce skills to business priorities were particularly weak at most companies (see chart, "HR and Training Not Up to the Task").

### HR AND TRAINING NOT UP TO THE TASK

Research shows that few senior executives believe their current human resources and training functions are highly effective (% of respondents indicating their organization was "highly effective" at each function).



Source: Accenture High-Performance Workforce Study, 2006

In contrast, Accenture found that truly talent-powered organizations are adept at defining talent needs, discovering diverse sources of talent, developing individual and collective talents, and deploying talent in ways that align people with strategic objectives.

"To create what we call a talent-powered organization, companies must be prepared to do more than just fill in gaps by adding people," Cheese says. "They have to be able to multiply their talent to generate superior levels of effort, imagination and creativity." ■