



Leadership, recruitment, selection & talent Management; the role of all Managerial Leaders **By Andrew Olivier**

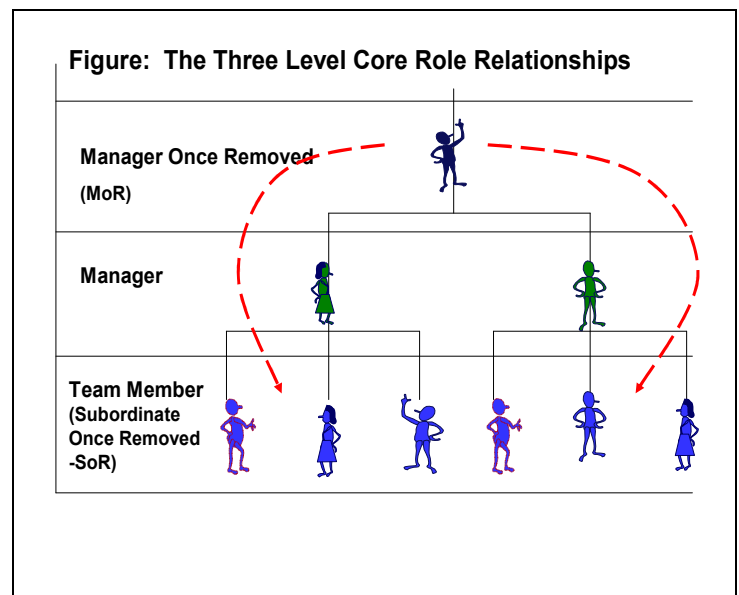
In a recent article in The Economistⁱ the author lamented the fact that the work of Elliott Jaques had been shunned by academia; “One suggestion is that neither he nor Brown (Wilfred) felt the work of management academics had scientific validity. So they never quoted them, and the management academics returned the compliment.” Whatever the cause, the authors conclude “The net impact has been the isolation of this theory from the main dialogue on management and organisations” This has significantly detracted from a broader understanding and application of the basic principles for effective organisation design and the leadership inherent in role types; thus lowering the level of debate and hampering organisational effectiveness.

A number of recent instances where HR has been instructed to develop or revamp their Talent Management systems have reinforced this fact. No reference is made to the role of management.

In this short article I look at how recruitment, selection and talent management forms a key part of the authority and accountability in the following structural roles;

The Nexus of Core Relationships: The Manager Once Removed (MoR), Immediate Manager and the skip Level Employee (Subordinate Once Removed - SoR)

This three level relationship is essential for ensuring quality and coherence of many aspects of organisational culture and leadership. This relationship spanning a minimum of three work levels has a direct impact on how an Organisation goes about designing recruitment, selection and talent management systems, among other accountabilities. The Figure (right) illustrates the relationship while the Table below lays out the complimentary and differing role authorities and accountabilities for the two key line roles of MoR and Manager.ⁱⁱ



Talent Pool Development

It is the MoRs role to ensure that the department / function has a sufficient number of available, trained and capable people to do both current and future required work. The immediate managers is accountable to deal with his or her direct reports ongoing work, evaluate how effectively they are performing in their role and coach them to more effective

performance. The immediate manager may recommend a direct report for promotion, transfer or even dismissal, but it is the MoR who approves this.

The MoR holds accountability for looking at his or her SoRs to see who has the potential capability to move up, when and if opportunities are available. They provide mentoring services where appropriate to SoRs and direct coaching to their own immediate reports.

No manager can select his or her successor; this is a dual act between the MoR and the immediate manager concerned. Table I indicates that both roles have veto rights on an appointment to the team (this is the manager's direct reports and the SoRs to the Manager once Removed). The reason for this is to ensure that the talent pool from which the MoR has to pick his or her direct report at some future stage offers the required diversity, knowledge, skills, experience and level of work ability. The MoR is responsible for ensuring he or she has a talent management plan and through processes such as Talent Pool Gearingⁱⁱⁱ he or she is aware of their human capital.

Likewise the Immediate Manager has veto rights on appointments to his or her team. In one case in a large bank managers had to accept people seconded to their department without any veto right. Why do you think the manager should have the authority to veto any appointments to his or her team? (Answer at end of article)^{iv}.

Table: The Three Level Nexus: Role Accountabilities and Authorities ^v

	Manager once Removed (MoR)	Manager
Veto Appointment	Decide	Decide
Assign Tasks	Not Applicable	Decide
<i>Coach, Develop, Train</i>	Not applicable	Decide
Increase or lessen tasks	Not Applicable	Decide
Induct / set context for role	Not Applicable	Decide
Recorded Recognition	Not Applicable	Decide
<i>Expand or reduce role based on performance</i>	Not Applicable	Decide
Increase / decrease pay	Not Applicable	Decide
Initiate Removal from Role	Not Applicable	Decide
Adjust pay band	Decide	Recommend
<i>Assess Future Career</i>	Decide	Recommend
<i>Promote/Demote</i>	Decide	Recommend
Appeal	Decide	Recommend
Dismiss	Decide	Recommend

(Blue highlights the authority and accountability directly linked to recruitment, selection and talent management)

MoRs are accountable for establishing development plans for their SoRs. MoRs are the person who are most directly concerned with the talent pool and the long range development of their SoRs. This is called *mentoring*. SoRs discuss their aspirations and career opportunities with their MoR, not their immediate managers. Immediate managers are concerned with the subordinates continuing growth and development in their current role and provide active *coaching* to the current role more effectively.

Development needs are also specific - MoRs and Managers need to ensure that their reports are effective **in the five basic Managerial leadership competencies**. Thus mentoring, coaching and learning experiences must *at minimum* be focussed on making them effective and effortless practitioners of these basic tools of the trade. This is a prime responsibility for development of all managerial leaders and never the responsibility of HR. For Managers and MoRs who are accountable for executive development, *a further set of five basic Executive competencies must be developed*. Failure to do so mean incompetent managerial leaders are promoted sometimes at great cost to the organisation.

MoRs ensure **quality of leadership** throughout their organisation / department or function. By ensuring competent managerial leaders are selected, trust and fairness in due processes are built up. MoRs hear appeals and SoRs can appeal against their immediate manager's judgement if they feel they are being unfairly treated. This creates and reinforces acceptable behaviours.

One recent case was an immediate manager who was setting the limits of work too tightly and not allowing his team member the freedom to choose their pathway for doing the role and its tasks. This micro management became so bad the employee contemplated resigning. I asked if she had not appealed to her MoR. This was not possible she said, he was not interested and had nothing to do with "management". Ignorant or incompetent or both? How had the organisation promoted someone like this?

In another case an overextended divisional business CEO, behaved irascibly, being a bully and played power politics. The limits of the work became so loose that it was impossible to get accomplish business objectives and only those "in" managed to make progress on pet projects. No discussions were allowed and hasty, inappropriate or worse still, no decisions were made. The level of work plummeted, dragging morale with it. Not surprisingly reputation and image slumped. Poor decision making and loss of leadership was reflected in slumping profitability and market share. Part of why the Divisional CEO could get away with this was there was no active MoR in the process. The group CEO was not available for a MoR review and was derelict in their duty as the direct manager. He trusted an incompetent managerial leader who had been promoted beyond his level of comfort.

Also essential to building team spirit and consensus of direction is the **three level business meeting** – where the MoRs hold meetings between his or her own direct reports and their SoRs. When all three levels are all together, the MoR can give the group a sense of where the business is going, discuss corporate policies, and review problem areas and opportunities. These meetings allow MoRs to observe their SoRs at work, observations that are necessary for the MoRs career development and mentoring accountabilities. These three level meetings also provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other and work on an atmosphere that strengthens trust, collaborative effort and facilitates the cooperativeness of employees with each other.

In a recent case a MoR thought morale was low and wanted to talk directly to her SoRs but did not want to bypass their immediate manager. After discussion she had three options;

- ◆ hold an MoR interview,
- ◆ hold a three level team business meeting
- ◆ practice the old art of management by walking around!

Finally from a structural perspective the MoR is responsible for Assigning SoR roles – how many and at what level because these are major resourcing decisions. MoRs cannot leave it to their immediate subordinates to decide how many subordinate roles they shall have and where those roles

will be positioned.

Immediate managers have the authority to decide what tasks they assign to the subordinates' roles. MoRs have the authority to make the final decision on cross functional working relationships in order to integrate the work flow across functional areas. Thus talent management not only for current work, but also for future work must involve the MoR as a key figure.

In Conclusion

Failure to understand the role structure plays in authority and accountability in recruitment, selection and talent management is just one aspect that the isolation of Jaques theory has had in the rich debate and practices of the Managerial Leadership dialogue.

Notes

ⁱ Elliott Jaques., May 1st 2009 from www.economist.com

ⁱⁱ By authority I refer to the power invested in a role to expand resources and accountability refers to the fact that there is a body or person who can hold the person in a role accountable for their actions and reward or penalise them according to how authority has been exercised

ⁱⁱⁱ Talent Gearing is accomplished through a process called [Rapid Talent Pool Evaluation](#).

^{iv} A Manager cannot be held accountable for a team member when they cannot veto an appointment. A holds B accountable for the output of C, so B must have minimum managerial authorities, and one of these is to ensure the team member is the right person for the job. By removing the power of veto, A can no longer hold B accountable for the performance of C.

^v Adapted from: Elliott Jaques; *Requisite Organisation*. Cason Hall. 1992