

Nurture not nature: develop your talent from within

 By [Zubair Timol](#), issued by [Meltwater](#)

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As every leader knows, one of the most important, yet most difficult responsibilities is nurturing home-grown talent. I recently read that 36% of global employers are struggling to find candidates with the right skills to fill positions¹. Coming from a business with an entrepreneurial culture, I've learnt that it's important to know about an employee's career goals and aspirations. If, as a manager, you don't know how to nurture your team, you could end up with a skill gap that's difficult to fill.

More and more employees are now looking to move into management roles early in their careers. At Meltwater, over 70% of our senior management started in the line organisation on our International Management Trainee Programme. So what's stopping other businesses from promoting within? This is what I'm urging other leaders to do.

Recognise

Nurture your natural talent. Start by getting to know your team during the selection process. As a leader, you'll have the first-hand opportunity to understand your team members' strengths and weaknesses. This should start during the interview itself, where you can learn about their career goals, motivations and inspirations. Ask yourself – how do these ambitions fit into the future goals of your business?

Value

We should always champion our team's strengths, just as we define their weaknesses. Active listening and morale-building is a necessary ingredient in grooming future leaders. Build appreciation into the culture of your company - stick a Post-It note on someone's desk with a cheery message if they are stressed, buy a cake for somebody's birthday (unless they're on a diet of course), take your team out for lunch if they've met a particularly gruelling challenge.

Develop

Set clear goals, give constructive feedback and create a dialogue based on regular reviews. Craft an educational environment. In my opinion, most professionals have the right answers in them; they just need to be coached to unlock their potential.

The pressure is now on us, as leaders, to help talent thrive in our teams. Businesses are at risk of losing out on precious skills if leaders fail to take action quickly. There is no substitute for showing genuine commitment towards nurturing someone's career; setting shared goals and helping them achieve success.

¹ According to research from ManpowerGroup

ABOUT ZUBAIR TIMOL

Zubair Timol is the Partner and Area Director of India, Middle East & Africa at Meltwater. He joined the company during its startup phase, being trained in Oslo, Norway, under the tutelage of the CEO.

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