



Brandon Hall Group
**EXCELLENCE
AT WORK**

Executive Interview

with **Morné Swart**,
Vice President of Global Product
Strategy & Transformation
SumTotal

Learning Strategies to Make
Organizations Change-Ready



About SumTotal

SumTotal provides a unified, comprehensive Learning and Talent Development suite that delivers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle. With SumTotal, organizations can build a culture of learning that is critical to growth, success and business sustainability. SumTotal's award-winning technology provides talent acquisition, onboarding, learning management and talent management solutions across some of the most innovative, complex and highly regulated industries, including technology, airlines, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing and pharmaceuticals.

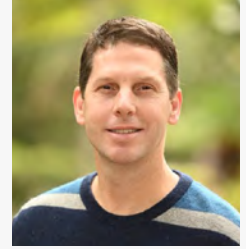
SumTotal partners with many leading global organizations, including a number of Fortune 500 companies. SumTotal's Talent Development suite supports learning and talent management initiatives for their customers and offers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle.

Learn more at sumtotalsystems.com.

The Brandon Hall Group Preferred Provider Program is specifically designed as a single source of truth that can validate your technology selection decisions.

[Learn More](#)

About Morné Swart



Morné Swart has been responsible for leading innovation and driving product strategy with more than 20 years of experience in enterprise-wide HR Technology products and services. He has a passion for building higher-performing organizations by optimizing the effectiveness of people, processes, information and technology.



About Rachel Cooke

Rachel Cooke is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.

Q RACHEL

What do Learning and Talent look like in the current state of the market?

A MORNÉ

There is an opportunity right now to align the desired outcomes for employers and employees.

Four core themes could help us take advantage of this opportunity. The first is the workforce. Organizations have recently emphasized skills and acquiring skills. That need must be balanced with flexibility in work options, specifically for individuals with the skills you seek to employ. Potential employees are looking at how employers can help them grow in current or adjacent roles.

Brandon Hall Group created a publication a couple of years ago around a high-performance Employee Value Proposition (EVP) — A Framework for Excellence. The key question was: What will employees say they value about the organization? It was divided into three core categories: opportunity and growth, alignment and results, and collaboration and innovation. An example of what an employee would say about opportunity and growth is: “I value this organization because it engaged me in meaningful work.” On the flip side, the organization could also point at the employee and say: “We value this employee because they represent these values to our organization.” How do we connect those two aspects? Regarding the workforce pillar, employees want development opportunities, career growth opportunities and

flexible work options. If an employer wants a potential employee’s skill, they must evaluate their employer offering.

At the same time, the connection we can make between the employer and the employee is one of culture, where you truly align on purpose. That alignment is so critical. Organizations should lead with their purpose because it will attract individuals who align with that purpose. There are three core elements for successful engagement; the first one is purpose and knowing what you are coming to work for. The second one is mastery of your skill; having the knowledge, ability and skillset to execute. If I come to work and I am a master of my craft, I know exactly what I’m doing and I feel happy. The third one is autonomy; once a person knows their purpose and has master-level knowledge of executing that purpose, then you as the employer can connect that to the culture of your organization and its mission and vision and what it stands for. People who are appropriately aligned to the execution of their role within an organization are a perfect combination for success. The EVP framework is indicating that an organization will be more successful if they align both the value to the employee and employer.

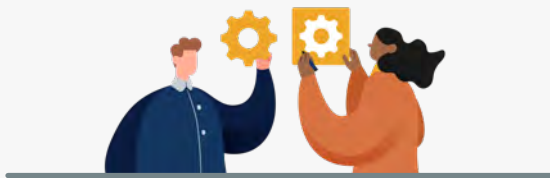
Q RACHEL

Where do you find that happy medium between employee and employer expectations? How can it all be more cohesive?

A MORNÉ

We're trying to create a balance because balance results in retention and attracting new employees. There were two other components of the state of the market. The third is finding the ability for employees to elect which technologies they can use to improve job execution and alignment. To create elective participation — getting people to leverage these technologies and return to them of their own free will — is easier said than done.

Organizations seek to **simplify their ecosystems**; they're moving away from the complexity of multiple vendors and experiences.



Simplify and create a single experience for individuals to come in and feel comfortable using that technology. Ultimately, that results in a meaningful outcome for them, which is important because employees must find value in the programs to leverage those technologies. Organizations should bring these things together. We spoke about digital maturity in the workplace for a long time which was converting items to Word documents and connecting people — essentially leveraging those technologies more efficiently. Organizations needed to be digitally mature and through COVID we found that they did exceptionally well and adapted to all the changes that needed to happen.

Q RACHEL

Often, organizations equate engagement to the EVP but instead of focusing on both, they center on engagement. What do you advise companies that focus on engagement over the entire EVP?

A MORNÉ

The technology change rate over the last few months has skyrocketed. However, productivity has not gone up by more than 2.8% over the last few years. Productivity hasn't increased at the same level as changes in technology. The gap in business performance is not due to just engagement or lack thereof. There are components such as public policy, business and security, people and then technology. We can use our tools to look at how we can optimize and close the gap between technology, individuals, business, society and government. How can you take that policy and business process and quickly bring people up to proficiency in technology? It can be done. Think of the world's largest technology companies — we buy from them online daily. There are companies that successfully connect their people and processes with their technology. Organizations need to have knowledge, engagement and the right toolset to close that performance gap, then tie the elements of the business process together and educate the individuals about it so that they can either influence it or innovate with it. That will close the technology gap because they'll be more digitally mature, but they'll also bring the business along with it.

Q RACHEL

How do you create a program or initiative to help employees determine their purpose and ensure that purpose aligns with the work that they're doing?

the experience they had. Technology can provide information, guidance, coaching and mentoring during that process. Prepare the individual for the organization that they will be working with. That is very important when we look at how we can enable technology to support the employee's lifecycle, where they are getting that meaningful value.

A MORNÉ

As we look across the employee lifecycle within an organization, too often employers assess or engage an employee in a manner that may not be connected to a time in the lifecycle where they could universally provide guidance. For instance, learning was traditionally assigned to somebody once they've been onboarded and in their job for a certain number of days. We looked at this and determined that the employee needs more guidance — including coaching, mentoring and support — during the pre-hire and onboarding phases where learning can play a vital role in that lifecycle.

If I'm applying for a position within an organization, am I just going online and filling out a form and submitting a resume? Or is there a beautiful infographic or welcome video talking about the wonderful things we are doing as an organization? That influences pre-hires. I read a statistic that said 20% of individuals leave their organization within the first 45 days. This is due to a disconnect between the brand they saw and

Q RACHEL

How do you figure out where the disconnect is and how to bridge it?

A MORNÉ

This is one area where your EVP framework is so important because it talks about alignment and results, then setting goals so the individual understands what they're signing up for and what the objective is. But it balances out with opportunity and growth on the other side. It brings it together through collaboration and innovation, where people share best practices and work together as a team. I am excited about the opportunity for organizations to look at the performance gap in the market and leverage the tech and tools out there in a manner where that's meaningful to employees. Then we can finally get the alignment and results we want.

Q

RACHEL

Where should companies begin the process for EVP?

A

MORNÉ

We've worked with thousands of organizations to develop an organizational maturity index, which is a survey focusing on nine indicators of maturity within an organization, including governance, people strategy or whether it's a people-centric culture. It measures all these components that allow you to form an opinion of where your organization is. To achieve that balance in the EVP, where you have alignment, collaboration, growth and opportunity, you need technology. There are many tools and materials out there for establishing your level of maturity. And don't just look at where you are; look at where you want to be and how to get there.

Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:



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EXCELLENCE
AT WORK**

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications

Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership

Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards

Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

**SOME WAYS
WE CAN HELP**



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.



SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.