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## The Talent Powered Organization

### Strategies for Globalization, Talent Management and High Performance

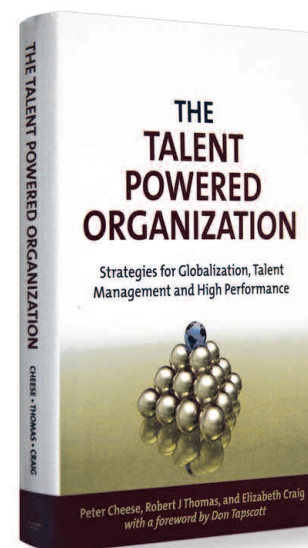
#### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Globalization has created new markets and spawned new operating models for work forces, creating huge challenges for businesses that must remain productive, efficient and competitive to survive. The source of value for businesses has changed. Where a company used to have most of its market value based on its tangible assets like machinery and facilities and the efficiencies of those, now value has shifted dramatically to intangibles like the knowledge of production, service and delivery methods, market knowledge, relationships with customers and suppliers, and its brand value and reputation. The competitive edge for businesses is more reliant on the pure talent of who they hire and how that talent is aligned and motivated. Because of this, talent issues have been propelled to the top of the corporate agenda.

*The Talent Powered Organization* underscores the need for organizations to adopt new work styles and new career paths; new and current employees need to be mentored and coached to contribute to business performance. The authors provide framework and examples for creating and sustaining talent power that can help any business in the evolution to become an organization powered by talent.

#### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How talent has become the greatest source of value in the modern economy.
- How to put talent at the heart of your business strategy.
- How to define your talent needs, discover your talent sources, develop your talent's full potential and deploy your talent for maximum impact.
- How to build new skills and learning throughout your organization.
- How to engage and motivate all the people who are working for you and get them aligned with your goals.



by Peter Cheese, Robert J. Thomas and Elizabeth Craig

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE TALENT POWERED ORGANIZATION

by Peter Cheese, Robert J. Thomas and Elizabeth Craig

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## Introduction

The key factor in determining the success of any organization is its ability to use human talent — to discover it, develop it, deploy it, motivate it and energize it. Human talent — the combined capacity and will of people to achieve an organization's goals — is a productive resource like no other, with a unique capacity to add value to an organization.

For that very reason, talent issues need to be handled strategically. They are too important to be assigned only to specialist functions and regulated by specialist processes, however well designed in themselves. They need a holistic approach in which every part of an organization, every individual within it, is connected and animated by the need to foster talent.

## The Search for Talent

The conditions faced by every organization in the search for talent are changing with astonishing rapidity in every part of the world. Familiar talent pools are shrinking, new ones are emerging; new technologies are transforming the nature of work, the skills demanded at work, and the ways in which people can work; new elements are arriving in the global talent mix with new attitudes and ambitions. All these trends are making talent an ever more critical and complex issue for every organization.

Although the modern world tells us repeatedly how vital it is to use talent well, there is precious little guidance on how to do this — particularly on how to do it in an integrated way across the wide range of possible interventions or investments, and how to look at talent more strategically.

## The Effect of Globalization

Globalization is having a huge impact everywhere, but the globalization of work and talent has become the defining theme of this new era.

Things are moving so fast in India, for example, that the country's leading manufacturing and engineering companies are struggling to recruit the people they need. The boom in IT services and the rocketing demand for associated talent have not been especially good news for India's traditional industries, which have suddenly become desperately unfashionable.

This was the first "whammy" to hit traditional Indian industry. Following it was the fact that these traditional industries have never paid much attention to talent management in the past — leaving them sorely ill-equipped to cope with a sudden shortage of the kind of skilled marketers and managers they so desperately needed. What made it a triple whammy was that the best HR people, who might have been able to help them sort things out, had all been snapped up by the booming IT and telecoms sector.

## The Competition for Talent

The global competition for talent between organizations and even between countries now has major economic and political implications. It concerns governments and lobby groups; it is redefining organizations; it is changing the way we live.

The challenge for today's leaders and managers is to build engaged, productive and committed work forces for their organizations. Indeed, engaging talent in creating value for the firm is now a critical organizational



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capability. This is an enormous and important task for every organization.

The most successful organizations have a deep understanding of the strategic value of their talent. These talent-powered organizations build and nurture distinctive capabilities in multiplying talent, unleashing the energy, creativity and collective contributions of their work forces. ●

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### Talent Imperatives for a New Economic World

The world is changing at a bewildering pace. Everywhere new markets are opening up, new work forces are emerging, and new ways of working are challenging our thinking. We are in a new stage of globalization where talent and brainpower are becoming the predominant currency.

The traditional management paradigms that focused on productivity and efficiency were designed for the 20th-century economy. Enabled by technology and process engineering, they derived from the need to obtain high productivity from a work force whose costs were rising. This narrow focus made sense for the world's developed economies at a time when more than half the world was effectively excluded from the global marketplace. In the past two decades, politics and technology have changed the world beyond recognition: With a total world population of 6.4 billion, fewer than 100 million people are excluded from the new global economy.

The first phases of globalization in this new era focused on the movement of production from the developed world to the developing world as a means to reduce costs — working cheaper. Now we are emerging into an era that is about working everywhere — a truly multi-polar world — going where the talent is, where the resources are and where the markets are, connecting people and processes globally and breaking down traditional barriers.

#### A New Context

The task of finding and managing talent has become more complex, turbulent and contradictory than ever before. Once-familiar talent pools are drying up as new ones are rapidly opening — rich and seething but often full of crosscurrents and hidden rocks. This is creating great challenges for managers and leaders of organizations large and small.

Talent managers today must cope with a world of

change and contrast such as:

- Global abundance but local scarcity of talent;
- Fewer young people and more older people, many heading rapidly toward retirement;
- Rising demand for new skills aggravated by demographic pressures and educational shortcomings;
- New methods of working and new relationships between users and suppliers of talent;
- More diverse and remote or even virtual work forces, with different attitudes to work across the generations;
- Steady change in the nature of work, with more and more of us working in the fuzzy world of information.

Simply securing the best talent will no longer ensure competitive success. The secret to sustained competitive success in the new economic world is to build a talent-powered organization that sustains and builds all the skills needed to compete.

#### The Talent-Powered Organization

The talent-powered organization is an organization that invests in building distinctive capabilities in managing talent to produce extraordinary results for the organization. Talent-powered organizations are adept at defining talent needs, discovering diverse sources of talent, developing the organization's individual and collective talents, and deploying talent in ways that engage and align people around a compelling set of objectives. When these talent management capabilities are highly integrated, aligned with the organization's business strategy and embedded in its operations, they constitute a distinctive organizational capability and a source of lasting competitive advantage.

Talent-powered organizations nurture this distinctive capability in talent management alongside the other distinctive capabilities that underpin the organization's formula for success, allowing talent power to propel the organization to high performance.

Organizations such as Best Buy, Starbucks, Google, Marriott, Microsoft, UPS and Accenture have figured out how to build and leverage talent power to achieve extraordinary success. Every organization can build the talent power necessary for success in the new economic world.

#### Five Talent Imperatives

Five talent imperatives can help you navigate your way to success and become a truly talent-powered organization:

- Talent is a strategic issue, and a human capital strategy

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is an intrinsic part of any business strategy. This means understanding the value of talent, and recognizing the critical components of business strategy that require us to think through the talent and organizational implications and options.

- Diversity is your organization's biggest asset. Your ability to attract and work with diverse talent is a critical competitive advantage.

- Learning and skills development is now the most important capability for the talent-powered organization. It needs to be focused and built around a clear understanding of the specific skills and competencies your organization needs to succeed.

- Engagement is the mystery ingredient that can transform business performance. Aligning and motivating people will enable you to multiply talent in your organization and improve its performance.

- Talent management is everyone's job in your organization. The HR function is a key enabler, but best practices and a talent mindset must be embedded and sustained throughout your business.

Your organization's survival depends on the ability to discover, develop and deploy talent of every kind. This is the new competitive paradigm, and the challenge is different from anything your organization has faced before. It demands a new mindset — inspired by new leadership, informed by new strategy, supported by new expertise. We are entering a new Age of Talent, and we must move beyond the oft-quoted platitude of “people are our most important assets” to meaning it and doing something about it. ●

### A Strategic Approach to Talent

Research distinguishes three separate approaches in the evolution of talent management.

#### Model 1: Personnel Control

Organizations are simply trying to achieve the basic people administration activities. They make little attempt to create comprehensive or integrated people development processes, but tend to focus on activities such as the administration of pay and benefits, the recording of attendance at formal learning and the control of recruitment processes. They have little understanding of what talent and competencies are needed and where there are gaps. People are treated as headcount, and the focus is on administrative efficiency. Just as with quality and IT in the past, all the emphasis is on the control of inputs, and there is little understanding of the linkage between inputs and outputs and business goals.

#### Model 2: People Development

HR is focusing more on the development of people. Performance management is in place, more or less supported by compensation and rewards and penalties; learning is better focused on improving performance; and most parts of the organization probably have some form of objective-setting process. But these processes are not truly integrated and are not executed consistently, and therefore the connections are not fully understood or recognized by line managers or clear to employees. There is no real understanding of the mix of competencies and skills in the organization, and talent is not being looked at collectively or strategically. Although some people metrics are in place, they are not sufficiently connected to business outcomes, and fail to show how to drive up value by investing in people.

#### Model 3: Talent Multiplication

Talent multiplication begins with a pervasive talent mindset and culture driven by top leadership, a top-down understanding of the human capital strategy required to support the business strategy, and understanding of the value linkages. Talent needs are defined at a competency level, and this underpins the close integration between all the talent discovery, development and deployment processes. Employee value propositions are tailored and targeted with a clear understanding of the needs of the different segments of the work force. HR supports consistent processes across the organization, but is also able to support a range of working arrangements and total reward programs. Outcome and value measures associated with work force performance are understood, while direct investments in talent and associated key performance indicators are tracked across the organization.

Most organizations today appear to be employing some version of the people development model of talent management, and too many are still taking a personnel

### Human Capital Strategy

A human capital strategy is essential to support your organization's strategic goals. Only with such a strategy can you do the following:

- **Anticipate** and meet the talent demands of your chosen goals;
- **Map** how talent impacts your whole organization;
- **Use** the dynamic possibilities of talent to create new intangible value for your organization; and
- **Create** a “virtuous cycle” of talent multiplication to power your organization to high performance.

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control approach. To move toward talent multiplication, organizations must:

- Improve the degree of alignment between talent management activities and the business strategy;
- Achieve total integration of all talent management activities;
- Move from adding value by managing talent efficiently and effectively to creating extraordinary value for the organization by multiplying talent;
- Shift responsibility for talent management from the HR function alone and get the entire organization involved in multiplying talent.

Evolving talent management capabilities to achieve talent multiplication must now be a critical strategic goal for any enterprise. It requires drawing on a wide range of capabilities new to the world of people management, such as supply chain management, to innovate in the area of talent discovery and supply-demand balancing; marketing, to innovate in the area of communications; and branding, to attract potential talent. Given the range of challenges in finding and managing talent, it is clear that organizations that never evolve to the level of applying talent management are fated to go the way of all organisms that fail to evolve with their environment. ●

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### The Discovery of Talent

How can you actually discover the individual talent you need and attract it to your organization? This question becomes vastly more complex because of the need to source talent from increasingly diverse and unfamiliar talent pools.

Not long ago, companies could generally afford to limit their search for people to places or methods that were familiar to them. But now the familiar places are shrinking as sources of talent. And increasingly the sought-after people — particularly those with special skills — are turning their backs on familiar methods of working and relationships with conventional employers.

The global talent market has made work force diversity inevitable. Successful companies are those that do not wait to be forced into it but actually embrace it as a source of advantage. Diversity should become your biggest asset.

A few decades ago you might have concentrated your search for some kinds of expertise on certain business hotspots and other specialist clusters. Today the rapid growth and spread of talent, knowledge and technology make it not just harder but also distinctly foolish to narrow your choices.

You might easily be searching for some kinds of talent in, say, Bangalore or San Francisco, when the best sources are now in Zhengzhou or Rio de Janeiro. Indeed, thanks to the Internet, the talent you need may even be in cyberspace.

Then you have to figure out how to reach the right people and persuade them to work with your organization. Even more precious is what you discover, through successful recruitment, about what attracts talent to your company — and what repels it.

### A Double Message

When you have identified the sources and type of talent you need, you need to send people a double message: first, about your general “brand” and appeal as an employer; and second, about the specific expectations that individuals can meet by joining your organization. You need to maintain those double messages consistently in every recruitment channel you use — especially your own Web site — and at every stage of the recruitment process. You must seek to extinguish everything that might contradict those messages to a potential recruit. Most important of all, you must keep the promises you make to new recruits as soon as they start working for you and thereafter throughout their careers. ●

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### From Talent Development to Deployment

To become a talent-powered organization, you must multiply talent by developing and deploying the talent you have discovered. The rise of the celebrated knowledge worker is a reflection of changing skills requirements in the work force. As businesses continually apply new techniques, new processes and new growth models, and work in new locations, their need for upskilling becomes constant and continuous.

Career development efforts in large corporations are too often limited to programs that target future leaders and people with high potential. Given the demands of knowledge work and the increased strategic importance of human capital, broad investments in employee capability development should be a top priority for firms.

Work force development is especially vital in businesses and sectors where employees’ knowledge, skills and capabilities are the main tool for creating value. Talent-powered organizations have well-honed capabilities in deploying talent to the mutual benefit of the organization and its employees.

Deploying talent is becoming an increasingly strategic capability, with the proliferation of possible ways to orga-

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nize work and access talent. Now, jobs or tasks can be moved to people as often as people fill jobs. More important, perhaps, technology increasingly allows work to be divided and distributed in novel ways. Work need no longer only be conceived of structurally in terms of organizational roles.

The way your organization deploys its talent will also have an enormous impact on employee engagement — the secret sauce of talent-powered organizations. ●

### Engagement

Talent is the engine of the modern organization, and engagement is the mystery ingredient that can transform the engine's output. The primary drivers of engagement can be listed as six Cs:

- **Content.** Do I enjoy what I do?
- **Coping.** How am I supported?
- **Compensation.** Am I fairly rewarded?
- **Community.** Is it socially rewarding?
- **Congruence.** Do values align?
- **Career.** Where am I going?

Focus on the strategic role of line managers in building engagement. Do everything you can to make them take responsibility for building engagement, and give them the training and support they need to do it. Make clear that they will be judged on their success.

To succeed in this, you will of course have to ensure that line managers are engaged. So begin by applying each of the six Cs to them.

### Engaging Line Managers

Do line managers have satisfying jobs? Do they have enough support, especially training, to cope with their existing demands, let alone the new challenges of building engagement in others? Are they fairly compensated and fully recognized for their contributions? How do they feel about their own careers and personal development? As to congruence — line managers almost certainly know your organization well. Do they identify with its values? Do they have faith in the way the organization applies those values?

If your line managers cannot give a satisfying answer to these questions, your organization has almost no hope of building an engaged work force.

However, line managers also need one further resource. They need a clear strategy, created and sustained by senior leaders, and a clear understanding of their role in delivering it. ●

### Embedding and Sustaining Talent Power

Embedding and sustaining talent multiplication capabilities is not simply a matter of measurement. It requires robust and integrated processes that support all aspects of talent management throughout the employee lifecycle, and it requires complete alignment of mindsets and efforts within the organization. Talent multiplication happens in the course of the daily business of the organization as employees engage in their work activities, create and innovate together, and interact with customers and clients.

Top management and leadership must understand where and how investments are necessary in improving the performance of the work force to drive greater business value, and it is equally essential for every line manager to understand how the competencies of their teams line up and how well they are performing against specific organizational objectives.

### Giving People Management Back to Managers

The most critical task is to integrate human capital management practices into the very fabric of business. The way to do that is to ensure that line managers, to whom the majority of people in any organization actually report, take on proper accountability and responsibility for talent management.

How does an organization accomplish this change? The principal ways being used by companies to give a significant boost to work force performance through hands-on talent management include shifting active people management responsibilities back to line managers, creating the expectation that managers ought to be teachers and trainers, and measuring the effectiveness of line managers in managing and developing talent.

The measurement and alignment of talent management activities creates and sustains the virtuous cycle of talent multiplication.

Talent-powered organizations treat talent not simply as another resource to be managed but as a strategic asset to invest in. They make strategic investments in human capital processes to build the organizational capabilities that multiply talent and create value.

HR is organized around capabilities, and focuses the administrative and transactional activities in shared service centers. Measurement of all HR processes and activities is in place, including agreed service levels and key performance indicators. Consolidated HR systems provide a solid base of talent-related data and information.

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### A Talent Mindset Begins at the Top

American Express Company's CEO Ken Chenault drives his company's talent mindset. He recognizes that "people are the company's greatest strength." He spends 30 to 40 percent of his time on leadership issues, working directly with leaders. His involvement includes leading a twice-yearly CEO summit, where top talent meet with him for two days to work through a significant business issue. He also dines quarterly with top talent and annually has several chairman-led sessions during which talent is discussed. He is personally informed about how employees feel — he listens and is very approachable. Not only does he play a visible and active role with all employees, but he also has similar requirements of his staff. There is clearly a top-down emphasis on talent.

### Everyone Must Be Involved

Everyone in the organization must be involved in multiplying talent. Leaders of talent-powered organizations take a visible role in using people's talent to gain sustainable competitive advantage.

Talent management needs to become everyone's responsibility in every organization. While top leadership and HR involvement are essential, a talent mindset and capabilities must be embedded and sustained throughout the organization. In talent-powered organizations, capabilities in discovering, developing and deploying talent allow everyone in the organization to identify and nurture talent in ways that enhance performance. ●

### Next Steps and the New Imperatives

There is no simple formula for becoming a talent-powered organization, but among the core tenets of talent-powered organizations, five principles stand out:

**1. Talent is the single most important force creating strategic value for your organization.** Strong leadership involvement in talent management is absolutely necessary to create a talent-powered organization. Leaders must demonstrate understanding of the key components of their strategies that depend on developing and using talent to gain sustainable competitive advantage. They need to identify the distinctive competencies they need to nurture and grow, and to think about talent holistically, aware of how it underpins every

effort by every part of their organization to fulfill its strategic goals.

**2. Diversity is your biggest asset.** The extraordinary complexity and multiple paradoxes embodied in today's global talent market — especially the combination of local scarcity and global abundance — have created talent pools of unprecedented diversity in age, gender, ethnicity, geography, work arrangements, attitudes and career expectations. Your organization can accept diversity as a forced response to labor market pressures or new regulation, or it can embrace and leverage diversity deliberately as a means for competitive gain. To achieve this, you will need to be able to attract and retain more diverse talent than you have in the past.

**3. Learning and skills development are critical organizational competencies.** The knowledge economy constantly redefines the skills it demands from the work force. It requires ever-greater competencies associated with information technology; it turns the ability and the willingness to learn into cherished qualities. A talent-powered organization is both a "learning" and a "teaching" organization: It has mastered how to invest in learning and development and knowledge-management capabilities, and how to use them to accelerate skills building and improve competitiveness in all its critical work forces. It has also inculcated a culture of knowledge sharing and teaching.

**4. Engagement is the key to high performance.** Engagement is a combination of heart and mind. People who are engaged exhibit a high level of energy and emotional connection in their work. They invest additional effort, and persist in their efforts despite challenges or setbacks. They are dedicated because their work is meaningful and provides them with ample opportunity to use and develop their competencies and strengths. To understand engagement, you must recognize that different segments of the work force have different needs, aspirations and expectations.

**5. Talent multiplication is everyone's job.** In talent-multiplying organizations, everyone assumes responsibility for developing and nurturing talent. The HR function provides much of the enabling processes and support for talent management, but is not ultimately responsible. HR should also provide the information to the organization to ensure that it understands the talent issues and challenges, the investments in talent, and progress on performance improvement. It should be a source of expertise in talent management and development.

Once the building blocks of a high-performing HR

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function are in place, it can respond better and more flexibly to the needs of different work force segments.

### Critical Tasks for Key Stakeholders

In reality, we are all stakeholders, whether we are leaders, managers, employees, investors, regulators or in the public service. Here are some of the ideas and actions we can all take in our different roles and responsibilities in managing and developing people, and the talent we need to successfully build our businesses and organizations:

- **Business Leaders.** Business leaders have a primary role in creating the mindset and context for creating truly talent-powered organizations. They need to understand the issues and changes happening in the world around talent, skills and the nature of work, and set these issues in the context of their own business and business strategy.
- **Line Management.** Line managers have the most direct impact on talent across the organization simply because most of the people work directly for them or with them. Their role in talent development and engagement is therefore critical. They need to be aware of their personal responsibility for talent development, especially in managing diversity and building engagement, and the skills and behaviors they need.
- **Talent Management Functional Leaders.** Human resources, learning and development are the functions most directly focused on the development and management of talent. They have the specific responsibilities to enable the practices and processes across the organization to support talent multiplication, and to provide the information the business needs to carry out its wider role in this context.

• **Finance Leaders.** Finance leaders need to move beyond the limits of conventional accounting and collaborate with HR leadership to develop new metrics to value human capital investments within the organization, consider what metrics can provide more insight to external stakeholders on the talent and organizational capital of the business and encourage the development of standards, and support talent management functions in developing stronger skills and knowledge in finance and key business fundamentals.

• **Employees.** Employees need to articulate their needs and desires for learning, development and advancement for satisfaction and meaning in work in ways that their supervisors and the organization can understand and respond to. They must also be proactive

and take full advantage of the opportunities given to them for learning and development.

• **Governments and Regulators.** Governments and regulators provide the environment in which businesses operate, and in which they can access and employ the right talent. Regulators need to adapt and respond to the many rapid changes in the world of talent.

• **Investors and External Stakeholders.** Nonexecutive board directors have a responsibility to the organization and its shareholders to ask management how it is building human capital, and how well it understands and is responding to the internal and external issues. The investor community, financial analysts and others all play a significant part in keeping a focus on talent in both quoted companies and privately owned enterprises.

### Beyond Talent Multiplication

State-of-the-art talent management has evolved from a system of personnel control to one of people development, and now to talent multiplication. Current organizations that have found it possible to multiply talent through effective discovery, development and deployment will likely find themselves profoundly affected by the processes they have helped set in motion. They will themselves become networks of talent — forming and reforming in response to opportunity, technology, and social and political change. Beyond talent multiplication lies an exponential increase in creative capacity.

This evolution is unfinished and there is still much to learn. We are all on a journey to discover how to access, engage, develop and channel human potential to create organizational values; and new ideas, new approaches and new challenges are emerging all the time. We are truly in a new age of globalization and talent, and the promise that technology is finally beginning to really show is unlocking the potential of talent everywhere. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Talent Powered Organization*, you'll also like:

1. ***The New American Workplace* by James O'Toole and Edward E. Lawler III.** The 1972 Work in America taskforce set the stage for groundbreaking changes in the quality of work life for decades to come. But the results of such changes on today's workplace conditions have created a whole new set of issues and challenges.
2. ***The Enthusiastic Employee* by David Sirota, Louis A Mischkind and Michael Irwin Meltzer.** Drawing on detailed case studies and employee attitude surveys from hundreds of companies, the authors describe a dollars-and-cents business case for high employee morale, and present specific management practices that offer the greatest positive performance impact.
3. ***The War for Talent* by Ed Michaels, Helen Handfield-Jones, and Beth Axelrod.** The authors say employers must develop talent through the efforts of every leader in a company. These efforts must address people management with as much effort and commitment as a company puts into its customer management.

For additional information on measuring the value of talent, go to <http://my.summary.com>