

Research on the Recruitment and Retention of Competent Talent in Interior Design Companies

Chung-Hung Lin*, Ying-Pin Cheng **

*Department of Creative Product Design,
I-Shou University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
E-mail: chunghung@isu.edu.tw

**Graduate Institute of Visual Communication Design,
Ling Tung University, Taichung, Taiwan
E-mail: a190ch@yahoo.com.tw

Abstract

The Third Industrial Revolution, which consists essentially of the transformation of traditional economies into knowledge-based economies, is currently happening around the world. For knowledge-based design companies that need to create knowledge capital, employees who are innovators and learners, as well as a leader who also plays the role of an educator, are critical to making valuable products and services available for customers. Most design/art studios and design companies encounter operating difficulties due to a lack of marketing and management techniques. Thus, researchers believe that the reason a company is able to gain a superior competitive advantage is often due to the presence of certain key talents. As such, the recruitment and retention of competent talent is not only an important topic for organizations striving to achieve competitive advantages, but also an important point of focus for a typical interior design company.

Keywords: interior design, competency, recruitment, retention.

1. Introduction

The Third Industrial Revolution, which consists essentially of the transformation of traditional economies into knowledge-based economies, is currently happening around the world (Rifkin, 2011). For knowledge-based design companies that need to create knowledge capital, employees who are innovators and learners, as well as a leader who also plays the role of an educator, are critical to making valuable products and services available for customers (Mendelbaum & Doorley, 1997). Most design/art studios and design companies encounter operating difficulties due to lack of marketing and management techniques (Rubeling, 1994; Soldressen, Fiorito & He, 1998; Ramroth, 2006; Poggenpohl & Sato, 2009); more than 90% of small and medium enterprises encounter failures due to lack of experience or mismanagement (Carland & Carland, 1990). Thus, Scholar believes that the reason a given company is able to gain a superior competitive advantage is often due to the presence of certain key talents (Brandstätter, 1997; Frable, 1997). As such, the recruitment and retention of talents is a key issue for organizations in pursuit of

competitive advantages, and also the primary focus of the present research. Due to the aforementioned research background and common problems faced by interior design companies, this study formulated 3 primary research objectives: (1) to investigate the staff competency of interior design companies; (2) to investigate the recruitment of talents in interior design companies; and (3) to investigate the retention of talents in interior design companies. As there was a lack of empirical research on this topic, it was necessary to conduct a previous investigation using a qualitative survey (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996). Therefore, this research collected data through semi-structured questionnaires based on several research cases.

2. Literature Review

Since many researchers believe that retaining key talents is important to companies (Brandstätter, 1997; Frable, 1997; Stevenson, 2000), the following sections discuss the recruitment and retention of talents in interior design companies.

2.1 Competencies of Talent

Scholar believes that competencies can be classified as either individual competencies or organizational competencies. Blancero, Boroski & Dyer (1996) believes that the working competency of an individual can be classified as: (1) managerial; (2) commercial; (3) technical; (4) interpersonal; (5) cognitive / imaginative; (6) influences; (7) organization; and (8) personal. Chuang (2001) categorized the professional competencies required of an interior designer into: (1) basic designing; (2) interior designing; (3) technical knowledge; (4) communication skills; (5) relevant laws; and (6) operating competencies and professional practices, among others.

Based on the concepts noted above, the competencies in an interior design company can be classified as: (1) professional competency, which includes design analysis/integration/planning, spatial design, floor plan/elevated plan/cross sectional planning, theories and practices of interior design, ergonomics/anthropometry, contractual document expertise, furniture/fixtures/equipment/surface decorations, communication methods, laws/technical rules, interior design history, structural system/project completion, CAD and 3D application, professional ethics of interior design, lighting, relevant social ecology studies, design elements/principles, design explanations, idea/conceptual design, design development, purchase of materials, professional development; (2) business competency, which includes operation techniques, fundraising, financial control, business experience; (3) management competency, which includes planning, organizing, leadership, control, education, appointment, decision making, time management, application of technology, management experience; (4) interpersonal competency, which includes communication, expression and interpersonal interaction competency, partnership; (5) cognitive ability, which includes discovering problems, solving problems, memory/creativity, analytical ability, foresight, recognizing opportunities; (6) personality features, which include the need for achievement, a tendency to practice self-control, strong determination, being a risk taker, passion, craving control, being a dreamer, advocating independence and freedom, strongly pursuing wealth, and individual remuneration; and (7) attitude features, which include enthusiasm, taking the initiative, high levels of self-discipline, making value judgments, and motivation.

2.2 Talent Recruitment

In an ever-changing environment, companies in pursuit of competitive advantages and exceptional

performances have to rely on human resources coordination, particularly in the recruitment and cultivation of talents, which requires long-term, systematic planning in order to meet the requirements of future development (Stevenson, 2000). Talent recruitment is conducted after manpower requirements and planning are finalized, and is carried out using the following resources: newspaper and professional journal advertisements, job agencies, agreements with schools, and internal recruitment (Straub & Attner, 1994). In recent times, there has also been an increasing trend in online recruitment (Crawford, 1999). In addition, companies can obtain the required resources through internal development, external purchases from the market, and development cooperation with others. In other words, companies can also choose to groom their own talents through education, training, and organizational learning should they not be able to recruit suitable talents (Yusof & Aspinwall, 2000). Strategic alliances and partnerships for developmental cooperation are also avenues for recruiting key talents (Larson, 1996). As outstanding talents are often difficult to recruit or retain, forming partnerships and alliances can result in a larger pool of knowledge and technical know-how to run companies (Straub & Attner, 1994). Therefore, besides the traditional forms of talent recruitment, small companies can adopt partnerships or alliance relationships when sourcing for manpower to enhance the company's competency (Grönroos, 1999).

Drucker (1993) believed that the learning environment and competency of human resource development is the key to building an excellent team. Currently, human resource development in most companies relies on interaction between employees on work experiences, thereby improving their skills in different tasks through secondary learning (Bohn, 1994), which becomes a reference for the contents of human resource training programmes (Kotnour, 1999). The various methods of human resource development include: curriculum workshops, work guidance, seminars, job rotations, presentations, team brainstorming, speeches, internships, spontaneous education, vocational training, and overseas training. In summary, the methods of talent recruitment for interior design companies include: (1) purchasing from external markets: through newspapers, internet, job agencies, professional journal advertisements and agreements with relevant schools etc; (2) collaborative development methods: invitation to form a partnership, strategic alliances, industrial collaboration network; (3) internal development: gradual improvement of task handling skills by secondary learning through work experience development between employees, thereby becoming a source of reference for the contents of human resources development training courses.

2.3 Retention of Competency

Presently, many companies face the issues of knowledge and technology retention in order to enhance organisational success (Zeng & Guö, 1999). Some proposed that in order to gain competitive advantages (Schulz & Jobe, 2001), companies need to know how to expand, communicate, and develop organizational knowledge (Szulanski, 1996), how to protect knowledge to prevent competitors from imitating and plundering (Liebeskind, 1996), and also how to effectively share, transfer, and receive knowledge from business partners (Mowery, Oxley & Silverman, 1996). Replication, transfer, and flow of knowledge include 5 important points (Schulz & Jobe, 2001): (1) retain knowledge for the various units in the organisation; (2) create convenience for the connection and flow of work amongst various unites; (3) enhance cooperation amongst the various units and formation of knowledge capital; (4) formulate strategies through competitors, customers, and suppliers; (5) enhance the expansion and knowledge of economic scale and scope.

The flow of knowledge can be done by compiling and formatting to benefit transfer and transmission. For

example: knowledge compilation can be completed through formatting, professional systemization, records, archives, templates, or interviews. Therefore, companies can use professional systems, internet networking, database sharing, emails, modeling technology, flow diagram, and records for knowledge management (Schulz & Jobe, 2001). Typical methods include: interviewing senior employees, data recording process, developing a framework and classification tree, mechanical learning and other avenues (Nissen, 1999). As it is difficult to manage and retain implicit knowledge, companies can create knowledge through social experiences (knowledge transfer) to allow sharing of implicit knowledge among individuals (Schulz & Jobe, 2001). The optimal method is to form mentoring partnerships amongst the working team and build implicit knowledge through learning, attempting and interaction (Johannessen, Olaisen & Olsen, 2001). In summary, effective management, flow, and retention of knowledge relies on the following (Schulz & Jobe, 2001): (1) retention of knowledge sources: requires active coordination of the various units (Egelhoff, 1991); (2) duplicating past successes: allow transmission among internal environments (Simonin, 1999). Johannessen et al. (2001) classified management of implicit knowledge into 4 points: (1) enhance the total volume of the company's foundation knowledge; (2) focus on innovation and continued improvements; (3) focus on organisational learning; (4) organize mentoring partnerships. Interior design companies are knowledge-based companies that focus on the management and retention of knowledge and competency. Though it is not possible for interior design companies, regardless of scale, to establish a knowledge management department, the flow of knowledge and retention of competency is critical to the company's continuous competence.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Subject

This research focuses on interior design companies in Taichung city in order to enhance the homogeneity of the research subjects. Upon recommendations by professionals and researchers, 6 companies, run by renowned designers and successive presidents of the Taichung Association of Interior Design & Decoration, were chosen as research subjects in order to provide sufficient representation.

3.2 Research Tools

As statistical reliability analysis cannot be performed on open-ended questionnaires, probing and pre-testing of industry professionals have to be constantly conducted throughout the development process of the questionnaire. This could help to discover loopholes and understand if the questionnaire serves the research purpose. Upon completion of the questionnaire development, the remedied questionnaire also needs to be reviewed by experts and researchers to have a sense of its validity. The development of this research tool is based on the aforementioned method and principles.

3.3 Data Processing

This research adopted a qualitative survey research method. The compilation and analysis of data were conducted according to the following steps: (1) data compilation: convert the recorded data of the interview into written contents before compiling based on the interview outline and constantly perform on the spot cross comparison of materials during the interview to have a complete grasp of the interview and understand the logical thinking of the interviewee when answering questions; (2) data classification: compile the preliminary data of the various companies in this research according to the interview outline in

a tabulated form; (3) data analysis: cross-verify the compiled data with the literature review to investigate the correlation, similarities, and differences in order to come up with the research conclusion and recommendations.

4. Result Analysis

4.1 Individual Data

A total of 6 companies participated in this research. The companies were represented by the letters A, B, C, D, E, and F, and were arranged according to the order of interview as per the following: (1) Company A: founded in 1973 with 3 existing departments including the management department, engineering department, and design department, specialises in comprehensive design domains, and has recently began focusing on the overall spatial design of hospitals; (2) Company B: founded in 1976 with existing departments including administrative, design, and public works and 70% of its business specializing in luxurious residential homes, medical spatial design, and large-scale offices; (3) Company C: founded in 1989 with existing departments including public works, design, management, public relations, and finance, mainly specialising in hotel designs, commercial malls, and restaurants etc; (4) Company D: founded in 1989 with existing departments including design, public works, and finance, as well as extensive businesses throughout Mainland China; (5) Company E: founded in 1994 with existing departments including design, public works, administrative, and development and main businesses spanning across landscape, architecture, product designing, and interior designing etc; (6) Company F: founded in 1988 with existing department including administrative and design, while its main businesses include architecture and interior design.

4.2 Analysis of case interviews

4.2.1 Company A

(1) Talent competency: Products/services include professional and enthusiastic work attitude, basic training, practical experiences, take pride in winning, aesthetic feel, eloquence; marketing includes design competency, grasping of trends, innovation, lifelong learning, knowing people, compassion, enthusiasm, teaching; finance includes financial management, thriftiness, experience, crisis awareness, resilience, teamwork, IT competency; human resource includes professional competency, sales competency, management competency, meticulous, responsible, concentrative, caring, experience, compassion, enthusiasm, innovation, reading ability, self-discipline and training, intelligence, expression capability, professional ethics, ability to compromise and integrate, insights, thorough investigations, human resource development. (2) Talent recruitment: due to the excellent image of the company, schools recommend to them the brightest students. Therefore, too many people would want to enter this company, whether they be online jobseekers, recent graduates, or individuals for the broader society in general. In terms of the grooming of talents, the company used to design their own training courses in the earlier stages, while adopting a policy of conducting examinations before training in the middle stages. Now, it recruits talents from various design fields and encourages mutual learning within the design team to great effect. (3) Talent retention: the company capitalizes on incentives to retain talents, and allows newly recruited talents to have past templates and resources of the company's 3D, hand-sketched, and all other paperwork through establishing the company's standard operating procedure.

4.2.2 Company B

(1) Talent competency: Products/services include illustrative capabilities, efficiency, accuracy, refinement, creativity; marketing includes interpersonal network, business development competency, persuasiveness, presentation skills, individual appeal, humor, depth of knowledge, humanistic qualities, observation skills, listening ability, spiritual insights, gentleness, understanding of society, understanding the scene, reaction capability, solving environmental issues, ability to withstand stress, mild personality, acuity, problem-solving ability, integration capabilities, budget control, quality control, aesthetic perception, artistic standards; finance includes financial management, accounting, volume control, capital, alternative sources of capital; human resource includes tolerance, motivation, guidance, illustrative abilities, efficiency, accuracy, meticulous, artistic standards, observation skills, acuity, training. (2) Talent recruitment: mostly through newspapers, online postings and referrals which constitute more than half of recruitments. In terms of talent grooming, spontaneous education is conducted on the work site followed by normal training which includes illustrating, modifying and rectification of graphics to cultivate the correct professional concept. (3) Competency retention: the company standardizes every step and procedure through a manual with 200 and something pages as well as graphical files that allow new recruits to understand clearly the required knowledge. In addition, the company arranges for a project designer to lead a team of employees to build a mentoring partnership between the new and more experienced senior designers.

4.2.3 Company C

(1) Talent competency: Products/services include time management, quality management, cost control; marketing includes broadening horizons, humanistic thinking, cultural knowledge, taste, experience, artistic awareness, sense of responsibility, self-management, self-evaluation, enthusiasm, observation skills, creativity, work allocation, alliance networks, integration capabilities, aesthetic qualities, regular tracking and caring, awareness of competition, talent integration; finance includes hiring professionals to handle financial processes; human resource includes understanding employees, implementing a promotion pathway and rewards scheme, recruiting employees with potential and select employees based on particular skills. (2) Talent recruitment: used to be mostly through newspapers or referrals; mostly through online avenues now. In terms of the grooming of talent, attitude is particularly emphasised upon as it is the most important attribute in design. (3) Competency retention: the company has a set of guidelines designed for retaining competency. Designers are required to record the entire process of design development (Draft sketch, graffiti, and text) in order to show their thinking process.

4.2.4 Company D

(1) Talent competency: Products/services include accuracy of drawings, strict control of the design process, attitudes (including design, work, and personality), customer interaction, design quality, environmental science, psychological science, organization and integration, professional foundation, design and work regulations, outsourcing of work, quality of work, work progress, budget control, financial budget and integration, changes to the design diagram is forbidden; marketing includes a sincere attitude, humility, self-confidence, moral awareness, pragmatic, caring, ability to think from a resident's perspective, environmental quality control, functional solutions, design quality control, design effort, effective communication, sincerity, design aesthetics, fulfilling the customer's requirements; finance includes financial planning, savings and deposits, reserves, design budget, budget for outsourcing of work,

credibility; human resource includes constructing a working model and system, honesty, potential, design attitudes, conduct, endurance, morals and attitudes towards life, environmental awareness. (2) Talent recruitment: mainly through manpower agencies and newspaper postings. In terms of the grooming of talent, the company provides retraining for employees constantly. (3) Competency retention: the company believes that retention of talents and competency relies on a good system. Design is a flexible thinking process which cannot be modeled with a template, though a design and work model can be used for learning.

4.2.5 Company E

(1) Talent competency: Products/services include quality of design and work, honesty, sincere, service; marketing includes understanding, acute, analytical ability, professional experiences, talent, hard work, internal and external environmental analysis, implementation, published works, media interaction; finance includes hiring a professional manager and giving him full authorisation; human resource includes self-initiative, ambitions, self-motivation, selflessness, a conducive environment, honesty, the right attitude towards architecture, tacit, not fussy. (2) Talent recruitment: mostly conducted through the media in the early days of the company's formation; employees started approaching the company on their own after the company grew in fame and established its style. In terms of the grooming of talents, the company provides training through work, expects a passionate attitude from employees, and emphasizes on accuracy and quality in hopes that employees can show more strength and determination than during their school days and take full advantage of the knowledge learnt in school. (3) Competency retention: the company emphasizes on teamwork, which allows junior designers to learn the skills and competencies of a senior designer should he leave the company. Most importantly, the company in charge would participate personally in each and every case, which allows employees to meet the standards required of them by the company after following working for 3 to 4 years.

4.2.6 Company F

(1) Talent competency: Products/services include understanding the method of work, understanding the customers, ergonomics, onsite hydrological data, physical functions of the architecture, different roles of the working team, quotation, observation, self-learning, accuracy; marketing include diligence, predictive, experience, understanding the needs of customers, creating customer values, packaging and promotion, self-marketing, courage, strength; finance include respect, remuneration planning, sharing of interests, tolerance; human resource include emotional management, self-precipitation, self-learning, role guessing, leading by example, facing challenges, travelling, through personal experience, observational skills, aesthetic feel, meticulous, gracious. (2) Talent recruitment: mainly through newspapers, online avenues and referrals from friends. Some employees volunteered themselves to join the company. In terms of the grooming of talent, training is mainly provided on the job, though it can also be occasionally outsourced, while external professionals can also be hired to give speeches at the company. (3) Competency retention: junior employees are led by senior ones through a mentoring relationship.

4.3 Comprehensive Discussion

4.3.1 Talent Competency

Each of the companies studied feels that the attributes required in an interior design company include professionalism in the products/services department similar to that discovered in the research conducted by

Chuang (2001). That professionalism included a professional knowledge foundation (product development, design strategy, product innovation, internal and external environment analysis, environmental psychology, regulations, ergonomics, drawing capabilities) and practical experience (onsite inspection, process planning, quality assurance). However, most researchers only briefly touch on the business competency in their research on the professional knowledge and competency needed. In other words, professional courses make up by far the largest component in the training of a typical designer. This research discovered that successful interior designers possess the business competencies of entrepreneurs including: grasp of the market/customers, budget/cost control, creating opportunities, differentiation strategies, cost control, financial stability, pricing appraisal, operation strategy, strategic alliances etc. Therefore, Rebellin (1994) recommends that strong marketing and business competencies are needed to avoid failure in the business venture.

The professional competencies required in the financial department are relatively simple since the companies outsource this aspect to professionals. Company supervisors would only need to be proficient in understanding the accounts and cash flows. The professional requirement is low and recruitments are relatively easier. However, this is the most lacking aspect of a typical interior designer, and also the biggest reason behind business failure. Therefore, researchers like Ebert & Griffin (2000) and Mier (2000) have called for greater financial control. The interviews with various companies in this research show that human resource management in interior design companies is undertaken solely by the business owner. This could be due to the small scale of typical interior design companies, though the type and quantity of work is not typical of small scale companies. The work requirements in this department include: selection (recruitment of employees with exemplary conduct/talent/attitude/artistic/design/innovative), helping new recruits to settle down, training, performance evaluation, manpower planning, manpower development, organizational learning. This shows that human resource is a critical component of entrepreneurship activities (Jones, Morris & Rockmore, 1995).

The risk-taking characteristic of entrepreneurs mentioned by Begley (1995) has not been brought up by any of the companies in this research, showing that interior design related entrepreneurship is not risk-taking in nature, and in fact requires extra vigor. All of the companies in this research emphasized on the importance of attitude and conduct, which are compulsory conditions for entrepreneurship or employment, similar to the views of Blancero et al. (1996). The competencies of an interior design company can be classified under 7 dimensions: professional competency, business competency, management competency, interpersonal competency, intelligence, personality, and attitude. As the professional requirements of various departments vary, managers should look for talents based on the different needs of the respective departments.

4.3.2 Talent Recruitment

The methods of recruiting talent vary for the different companies and are stated below upon analysis and compilation: Company A has an excellent image, is sufficiently large scale, has good relationships with the various faculties in the major universities, and frequently provides internship opportunities for students. Therefore, it is able to recruit the brightest students from the schools. The company supervisor, despite being above 50 years old, still practices learning and grooms younger talents through education, based on the diversified specializations of the team members. The organizational culture of Company A, which has diversity and variations would encompass more cooperation, bonding and innovation, a view shared by Haetenian & Gudmundson (2000) and other researchers.

Companies C and D have sought talent through online job sites recently, which is the current trend according to Crawford (1999). Companies B and C have started building strategic alliances and industry collaborative networks in order to recruit talent and reduce training durations, a method similar to the views of Larson (1996) and Grönroos (1999). All the companies provide on-the-job training to groom their respective talents, which also explains why students are not exactly the finished article after graduating from school, as school does not provide them with an actual interior design case to work on. Therefore, their training as an interior designer only begins when they start working. Only through the guidance of senior designers, standardised work training, or spontaneous education onsite can the students gradually mature in their illustrative, design, conceptual, and application performances. This is similar to the method adopted by most large corporations mentioned by Bohn (1994), which focuses on secondary learning through interaction amongst employees to gradually improve upon individual skills. Companies like A, C, and F would use lectures and workshops to conduct active retraining for employees, which builds an excellent work team through developing a learning environment and enhancing competencies, similar to the concept of Drucker (1993).

It can be seen through observation of the various companies that: (1) Companies A and E focus on on-the-job training as they emphasize on the planning of job competencies of employees in accordance to the company's future development. This philosophy stems from the fact that both company supervisors possess the demeanor and ideals of educators, and also the confidence in their respective companies' competencies and advantages. They are not afraid of losing their talented employees as they focus on interaction and retention of competencies through organisational learning and actively absorbing the strengths of employees through training. (2) Companies B, C, D, and F emphasise on training which has an immediate effect on work performances and a higher rate of return which would allow employees to fully commit into work processes and accumulate practical experiences. Otherwise, employees would typically leave the company to venture out on their own after developing a sufficient level of competency. Therefore, Scholar recommends that the grooming of employees should combine the changes of the internal and external environment with the actual needs of the company. (3) In terms of talent development, Companies C and D have more specific measures such as: Company C would send talented employees on short shifts to overseas branches as part of their promotional pathways, in an attempt to enable employees to continue their development at the company through work rotation, a view shared by Brandstätter (1997); Company F would invite outstanding and selfless employees to become company partners just part of a mentoring relationship in order to retain them at the company, a method similar to the views of Larson (1996) and Grönroos (1999).

In summary, most of the companies in this research go through the avenues of newspaper postings, the internet, job agencies, school agreements, friend referrals and self introductions for their talent recruitment, which is similar to the views of Straub & Attner (1994) and Crawford (1999). The methods for training include: self-designed training courses by the company, on-the-job training, spontaneous education onsite, general training (cultivating the correct professional concepts through drawing, modifying, and rectification), training of attitudes, outsourcing of training, hiring professionals to give speeches, hiring a wide variety of design talents, and promoting interactive learning among the team. Although some companies emphasize on the mentoring partnership form of learning, similar to the views of Larson (1996), Grönroos (1999), and Johannessen et al. (2001). In addition, Companies B and C adopt strategic alliances or industrial collaborative networks to recruit critical talents. All in all, talent recruit can be done through 3

avenues: self-development internally, recruitment from external markets and collaborative development; the education, training, and development concepts of the various companies. In other words, the company invests on the employee through education, training or different development methods after considering its own interests and the employee's development.

4.3.3 Competency Retention

Most companies adopt similar methods to retain competency, and are listed below upon compilation and analysis: Companies A, B, and C create archives and templates of the company's 3D drawings, sketches, and all documents to make it easier for new employees to learn. Company B creates a 200-odd page manual with all the various regulations in order to create a system for competency retention. This is similar to the concept proposed by Simonin (1999) who states that past successes should be replicated within the internal environment. Company C requires its designers to record their design developmental process (sketches, graffiti, and text), to allow future employees to understand the thinking and innovations of previous designers, a method especially effective for the retention of implicit knowledge. As design is an extremely innovative activity, recording of the designer's design development process is actually a dialogue between implicit and explicit information, a method similar to Nonaka (1994)'s proposal.

Company D believes that talent and competency retention relies on a good system. The company builds a good system and work process to carry out tasks and create a template for employees. The concept of building such a system, though not exactly the same as knowledge management, is similar to the concepts of Szulanski (1996) and Liebeskind (1996) in terms of expanding, transmitting and developing organizational knowledge and protecting of knowledge of imitation and competitors. Companies A, B, E and F believe that a mentoring partnership is the best avenue for competency retention, a view shared by Johannessen et al. (2001) and other researchers. This stems from the fact that arts and aesthetics learning in the early days being conducted through mentoring partnerships, which was also the case for many contemporary architects. However, there are still variations in methods undertaken by the respective companies. For example, most companies would set up a special project group and task the senior designer to mentor his assistant, with the exception Company F, which organizes the entire company to work on one project regardless of scale. The latter method allows mutual interaction and learning during the work process and is a more effective form of competency retention. It reduces the chances of critical talents leaving the company and enhances the company's capability.

Summarizing the various methods adopted by the companies, competency retention can be carried out via the following methods: system, templates, manuals, image archives, standardisation of work, design and work modeling, recording of design development process (sketches, graffiti, and text), adopting a work rotation system for employees to work at different departments, task a project designer to lead a team, allow new recruits and senior designers to build a mentoring relationship, and focus the entire company onto one single project regardless of scale. These methods are similar to the views of Nissen (1999), Schulz & Jobe (2001), Johannessen et al. (2001) and other studies.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Overall analysis results of this research discover that interior design companies have to focus on the recruitment and retention of talents. Therefore, this research has come up with 3 conclusions: (1) Interior design companies have the following form of talent competencies: professionalism, business competency, management competency, interpersonal competency, intelligence, individual personality and attitudes. (2) Avenues for recruiting talents include: internal development, external recruitment and collaborative alliances. (3) Retention of competencies and explicit knowledge is done mainly through documents, image archives and manuals; implicit knowledge is retained through mentoring relationships.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, this research provides the following recommendations: (1) Understand the different forms of talents required by various departments before recruitment. (2) Management and grooming of talents can be carried out through resource planning, recruitment, remuneration, performance evaluation, human resource development and other methods. (3) Competency retention can be achieved through organizational learning and mentoring relationships. In summary, talent recruitment and competency retention are extremely critical issues in the management of an interior design company.

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Corresponding author:

Dr. Chung-Hung Lin

Department of Creative Product Design,

I-Shou University, Taiwan

Email: chunghung@isu.edu.tw

Telephone number: 00886-7-6577711 ext.8364

Postal address: Dept. of Creative Product Design, I-Shou University

No.1, Sec.1, Syuecheng Rd., Dashu District,

Kaohsiung City 84001, Taiwan, ROC.

Author 2:

Dr. Ying-Pin Cheng

Graduate Institute of Visual Communication Design,

Ling Tung University, Taiwan

Email: a190ch@yahoo.com.tw

Address: No.1, Ling-Tung Rd. Taichung City, Taiwan.

00886-04-24517250 ext. 3031