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Talent Management: A Focus on Excellence

Managing Human Resources in a Knowledge Economy

Patrick Merlevede

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Foreword

Ever since I took courses on topics such as advanced information systems and computer applications in management in 1989 at the University of Leuven, I got intrigued by what is now often referred to as knowledge management. As a consequence, upon graduation I decided to sign up for a second master program at the same university, in order to deepen my knowledge of cognitive science. There I learned that the biggest challenges have to do with "knowledge acquisition", gathering knowledge from the talented professionals who form part of an organization. I subsequently started my professional career as a "knowledge engineer", a consultant who specializes at making human knowledge explicit and building models of excellence. After a few years, it occurred to me that, rather than acquiring the knowledge of top talents, it would be better to improve the management of these talents and I therefore started focusing my career on people and their talents.

Over the past 25 years the thread which connects the dots throughout the various activities I have enrolled in has been to find better ways of using the knowledge and talent available in organizations, in order to increase benefits for both the individuals and the organizations to which they contribute.

These activities led to the creation of jobEQ.com in 2001, whose focus is to help individuals to find the jobs of their lives and to develop their talents, while also helping organizations to make better use of the talented people they employ. At the time of writing, jobEQ trained practitioners are active in over 30 countries on every continent. People from 180 countries have completed one or more of our questionnaires, making us a truly global organization. To make jobEQ grow, I have continued to assist organizations, trainers, coaches and consultants world-wide to face their challenges in the area of talent management.

The current book summarizes the best practices I have witnessed internationally over the last 25 years in all areas of business where talent is being managed, whether it's called recruiting, training, coaching, leadership or outplacement. The aim is to offer you a practical book without going too deep in the underlying techniques or theories. Much of what is written on the following pages may look simple and appear just common sense or good business practice, but it may nonetheless prove to be more challenging to implement than one might expect at first read. Unfortunately, the execution of some of it remains more often the exception rather than the norm at this moment in time. Sometimes shortcuts are taken during the implementation stages, in other cases follow up is lacking or great initiatives come to a stop when other managers take over and want to put a different emphasis. A well executed talent management strategy demands a long term vision and a sustained devotion to the cause. In an era where many organizations think that they need to focus on the next quarter, this requires courage. I hope that this book may prove to be a resource to help create a vision of a well integrated talent management system and find the courage to lead the way.

Patrick Merlevede
Founder of jobEQ
1 October 2014

1 Introduction

"To find joy in work is to discover the fountain of youth."
Pearl S. Buck[1]

1.1 Making the case for talent management

Talent Management may seem a buzzword, but there is actually some relevance to it…

According to a study done by Vives and funded by Google, some 10 percent of total employment in the European Union, or about 21.8 million jobs, were linked to high-tech in 2011. This constituted an increase of 20 per cent compared to the year 2000. Some of these jobs can be found in ICT,[2] Pharmaceuticals, Biotech and aircraft & space industries, but most employees with a background in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics can be included in these figures as well.[3] Each one of them represents talent that needs to be managed. As they generate a considerable amount of economic value, such types of employees are in high demand. Given this high demand, it is not surprising that the average unemployment rate for these categories remain lower than 4%, even when an economic crisis strikes. Other types of talent requiring special attention can be found amongst types of employees which seems to be in short supply. Examples include nursing, doctors, technicians, salespeople, …

In 1997 McKinsey & Co started a research which pointed out that the war on talent was the main area where many organizations were fighting to obtain or maintain a competitive advantage[4]. In a knowledge economy, organizations are competing to hire and retain top talent, both amongst the ranks of knowledge workers and of executives. Increasing job mobility is making this even more challenging. No wonder that, in the UK, 84% of organizations experience recruiting difficulties. 65% have been complaining for years about the lack of necessary specialist skills. Other complaints include pay expectations which are considered too high (46%), and candidates with insufficient experience (37%).[5]

Given this context, it may come as no surprise that high-tech companies such as Google, Apple, Intel, Pixar, Intuit and Adobe Systems would conspire to refrain from soliciting one another's employees.[6] Talent Management is a more positive approach to the issue and, in 2014, more than half of employers in the UK deploy talent management in their organizations, and three-quarters (76%) of very large organizations (5,000+ employees) undertake talent management activities.[7] This domain starts being taken seriously as soon as organizations realize that people are their most important asset, and that these assets are leaving the organization every day. But even organizations working on this issue will acknowledge that much remains to be done.[8]

The purpose of Talent Management is to hire, retain and grow the talent and knowledge held by the workforce. When taking a look at the processes and activities carried out by a talent management professional, the question is what needs to be done at each stage of an employee's lifecycle, from the day the person is being attracted to work for the organization, till the day they leave. When looking at the individual worker, a state of the art Talent Management System for the 21st century requires a philosophy in line with the Positive Psychology movement and Emotional Intelligence.

One must note here that Talent Management is not "just" about talented individuals. It's not enough to aggressively hire and promote individuals just because they seem "talented". Already in 2002, Malcom Gladwell warned against this in his article "*The Talent Myth*", using Enron as an example of how talented people can fail.[9] This book recommends to identify which key jobs are critical for the organization and to primarily focus on those. For those jobs, study the best performing people. Rather than promoting talented individuals, study what they do differently from colleagues occupying the same function, and transfer these skills and attitudes to other team members. Also make sure that the right skills and attitude are managed at a team level. Create highly talented teams, rather than individuals.

1.2 This book's contents and intentions

This book isn't a full course in Human Resources Management or a legal guide concerning employee relationships. It's more about enhancing your current practice to take better care of the talent inside your organization and to attract new talent. From an organizational perspective, it's all about highlighting excellence. Put a spotlight on the best collaborators inside your organization. Learn from them. Teach managers to motivate them. Hire others who are similar to them. Facilitate the share and transfer of their competencies. Coach them to improve further and help others to become like them.

Four factors are key to the success of any integrated HRM practice: "*Hire for Attitude, Train for Competence, Coach for Performance, Manage to Retain*". To be successful, this also implies aligning performance appraisal with pay and benefit systems so that they help to attract, grow and retain top talent. Other activities within talent management include succession planning and managing high potential. All this needs to be linked to the organizational strategy.

This book will elaborate on each of these topics and show how a modern talent management system can add to the value of an organization, provided one avoids the pitfalls of shortcuts often taken by HR professionals. Apart from managing talented people carrying out specific jobs with high added value, a different type of talent management focuses more on detecting "high potentials", the 3 to 10% "best of class" whom appear to be amongst the employees who will be promoted within the coming years, and who ultimately will become the future leaders of the organization. We'll deal with this second approach in a chapter on high potential programs.

From a personal perspective, it's all about happiness! It's about helping people to find the jobs of their lives. And as Aristotle already taught his disciples centuries ago, pleasure in one's job brings perfection in the work. Research by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi shows that when people get into a peak flow state, they focus their energy on getting the work done, often with great results. Therefore, this book will start by explaining some key concepts about work motivation and attitude which need to be taken into account to achieve a performing talent management practice. And a chapter at the end of the book will focus on the concept of job crafting, where employees themselves take the initiative to make their job more meaningful end enjoyable.

2 Strategy First

"Strategy is about making choices, trade-offs;
it's about deliberately choosing to be different."
Michael Porter

In Human Resources Management, the competency movement was launched in 1973 by David C. McClelland (Professor at Harvard) with his paper "*Testing for Competence rather than Intelligence*" which appeared in "American Psychologist". He recommended that organizations should determine which characteristics are required to carry out a job well, by comparing successful people with less successful ones, and to use behavior based approaches such as interviews and open ended simulations to get there.

During his research, McClelland distinguished several building blocks: *Self-Concept* (Attitude & Values); *Knowledge* (information about the content area) and *Skills* (the ability to perform a physical or mental task). He further argued that, while the latter 2 building blocks may be relatively easy to acquire and develop, self-concept was the most difficult to assess and develop, and was therefore the most cost effective for selection.

As the notion of competence management grew more popular, many academics and vendors began to develop competency frameworks. Around the year 2000, Annalisa Rolandi, at that time consultant in an Italian company specialized in leadership development, identified that several companies specializing in assessment & development had come up with 43 competence models for "leadership". The number of competencies in these models varied from 23 to more than 70. However, other research shows that 5 "competencies" seem to convince assessors: *Planning & Organization Skills, the Ability to Convince Others, Leadership Skills, Flexibility* and *an Initiative-Oriented Attitude*. In other words, many of these competency models appear seriously over-engineered.

Apart from that, a common mistake is that organizations wanting to get "serious" about competence management or talent management think that it should be applied to *every* function inside their organization. I remember a case where the director in charge of a sales organization saw how successful a talent management program had been in another director's division. In that other director's division many people were doing similar jobs, and the talent management program had only been rolled out for some key roles. Rather that following this example, the sales director wanted to apply "talent management" to all the roles. Obviously, when confronted with the cost and complexity that such an initiative would imply, he concluded that the idea was not realistic. Unfortunately, rather than ditching the whole idea, a better conclusion would have been to focus on the key positions in his own division.

2.1 Strategy helps to determine Priorities

The purpose of Strategic Human Resource Management is to link the actions of the HR department to the strategic objectives of the organization. The main outcomes of any HR strategy is that the organizational culture is sufficiently clear, that all HR initiatives are aligned, that the structure of the organization fits with the organization's goals and that the budgets are allocated to realize the goals. However, instead of expanding on this topic at large, let us just see how it impacts on talent management.

Rather than insisting that competence management or talent management be rolled out throughout an organization, it should be linked to a clear strategy. To this effect, begin by identifying which **key functions** add the most value and are critical to the success of the organization.

To do that, let us revisit the notion of Core Competence. When applied to an organization, a core competence results from a specific set of skills or production techniques which deliver additional value. They are the result of the "collective learning across the corporation".[10] There are 4 important criteria: the competence adds value; few people and few competitors can do this; it's difficult to replicate and because of all this, others envy it. It's important to focus on these core competencies, because they may be difficult to retain in the long run or may lose their importance as the market changes.

Once you have figured out the key competencies, you need to ensure a stable flow of these competencies. Dave Ulrich summarizes it with 5 keywords[11]:

- **Buy**: bringing in new talent from the outside.
- **Build**: developing new talent by training and investing in learning.
- **Borrow**: bringing in outside consultants and professionals to help to develop the new competencies.
- **Bounce**: getting rid of employees who get in the way of developing the core competencies, are not performing at an acceptable level, or can't learn new skills.
- **Bind**: paying attention to the retention of key talents, those who are the holders of the key competencies, at all levels.

This book will offer strategies to enable this competence flow. But, as Ulrich states, just focusing on competencies will not be enough. You will also need to ensure that employees are committed. "Having more competent employees who are not committed to doing good work is like trying to win a team sport with an all-star team. However talented the individual players, any firm's success derives from teamwork, commitment and adherence to a commonly held goal and standard."[12] Therefore we will also be focusing on the organizational culture as well as building teams.

Key Questions to focus on Key Talent

- Which competencies do you consider core for your organization? Which core competencies will you need tomorrow?
- Who are the key talents for these competencies?
  Who are the talented persons of today? Who will be the talented people you need tomorrow?

3 How people achieve Results

"Attitude, not Aptitude, determines Altitude."
Zig Ziglar

3.1 The link between wanting to, knowing to and being able to.

Let's suppose that you decide to spend your next holiday at the sea-side in Belgium. Given the weather, we recommend you do that in July or August. The Belgian coastline features the longest tramway system in the world, which proves to be ideal for tourists. Now suppose that we are in the middle of the afternoon, and that you decide to check out the nearest tram stop in order to buy a ticket to go to a tourist attraction the next day. The person sitting at the counter will most probably be a student who is earning some extra money. While you are standing at the counter, inquiring about possible tickets combining the tram ride with an entry to a tourist attraction, a group of other people arrive, wanting to take the next tram, due in a couple of minutes. Rather than answering your question, the student will ask you if you can bear to wait a couple of minutes, so that people who need tickets before the tram arrives get served first. How will you react?

Or with the words of Viktor Frankl: "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."

The story above illustrates all elements of the diagram below. The "*Context*" is the ticket counter at the tramway stand. The "Event" is you approaching the ticket counter. The "*Filter*" depends on the attitude of the student. He is supposed to notice you right away, even if he hadn't seen anybody at the counter for the last 15 minutes. Given the potential long waits between customers, the student might be reading a book, or listening to some music on their iPod…in other words, he may not exactly be displaying the customer-friendly attitude the tram company is expecting from him. They would prefer that he is patient and motivated to help the customer. That's the right "*Attitude*"!

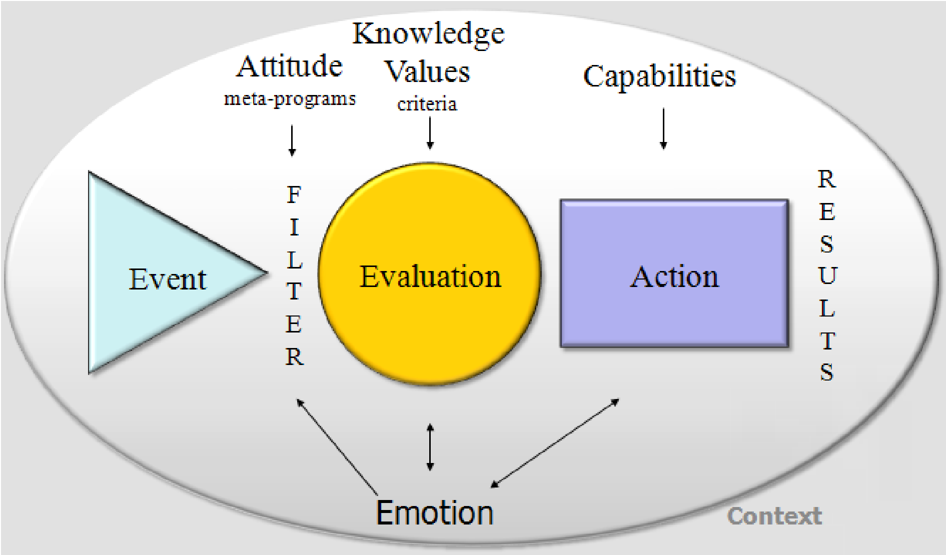

Figure 1. jobEQ's performance Model

Of course, attitude is not sufficient by itself. Once the student notices you, he will need to "*Evaluate*" whether the question you ask requires his immediate attention (given that other people are approaching the counter and the next tram is due in a couple of minutes). Given these "*Criteria*", the right "*Action*" will be to serve them first. Evaluating also presupposes that one has the right "*Knowledge*". Now the word "*Value*" is at the root of the concept of evaluation. One evaluates depending on some particular values, e.g. serving the customer as fast as possible while keeping the queue to a minimum. "*Capabilities*" refer to the skills needed to perform the right actions in order to achieve the desired "*Results*".

"Emotions" will emerge and influence the whole process. The student might not feel at ease when having to ask that more urgent matters be dealt with first. A customer who is asked to wait may not like it. Whenever the brain is studied regarding emotions, an intricate web of neural connections linking thoughts and feelings is found (because emotion and cognition are connected).

In summary, these are the building blocks involved in the process, from event to results:

- **Context** – The environment & culture in which it all takes place.
- **Event** – The condition or stimulus which initiates the behavior process.
- **Filter** – The attitudinal/motivational patterns that
  (a) filter and (b) enable us to interpret experience.
- **Evaluation** – The stage at which we make a (conscious or unconscious) judgment or decision about the event.
- **Action** – The behavior (or lack hereof) that we take as a result of the event-filter-judgment chain.
- **Emotion** – The feeling experience that both has an impact on and is impacted by each stage of the flow.
- **Results** – The outcome or impact of our behavior.

Whenever one wants great results, it's important to manage all steps of the process. Make sure that you hire the people who have the right *attitude* and *values*. A student is more likely to be motivated for this job if they *value* helping others and friendliness. Train them to have the necessary *knowledge and skills*. Teach them emotional intelligence in order to manage their *emotions* and those of their customers. Coach them both on their *attitude* and the *actions* they take. If you want different actions, look for the source of action, and help people change their limiting beliefs. Make sure that managers create a *context* where there is room for performance, and that they manage their teams in line with the motivation and attitude required to perform well. All these topics will be covered in more detail in the chapters that will follow.

In Competence Management or talent management, the above process is often simplified to a triangle:

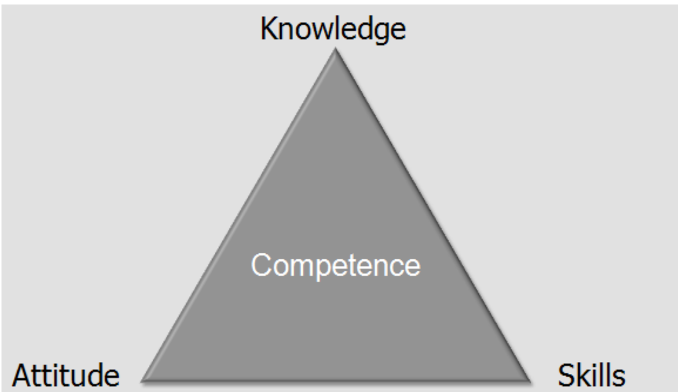

Figure 2. Competence Triangle

It is then said that **"Competence" = Attitude** × **Knowledge** × **Skills**

Attitude is about wanting to. Knowledge translates into knowing to and skills are about being able to.

Some people are assumed to be "predisposed" or are considered "talented". It is said of them that they have the right "Aptitude" (as opposed to having learned skills or knowledge). Some tests, such as the SAT, which tests the right Aptitude for Academic Success, will seek to combine testing for both aptitude and skills, all the while knowing that one needs to study in order to obtain great SAT scores. Others test for mathematical reasoning. While seeking to determine innate mathematical ability, these also depend on learned knowledge and skills.

Note that it isn't always easy to determine to what extent a given result comes from skills or from attitude. In the example we gave at the beginning of this chapter, the student may like to work with people and their emotions. In this context he might manage to get a grumpy customer to smile, even if the person isn't happy with the Belgian weather (because it rains regularly). But it may also be possible that our student acquired his skills in a course section teaching "customer friendliness", and learnt that saying 'Hello' and 'Thank you', as well as smiling, are desired behaviors. And perhaps, if these learned skills become "routine", the difference between spontaneous and learned behavior will be hard to detect.

3.2 Attitude, Filters and meta-programs

In the first part of this chapter, we showed that, given that our attitude filters our reality and thus determines what we pay attention to, everything begins with having the right attitude. Or as William James sees it: "What we attend to becomes our reality, and what we don't attend to fades out of our reality." So, why does our brain need filters? Simply because too much information is thrown at it. We can consciously treat at most only 7±2 chunks of information simultaneously. Both the span of absolute judgment and that of short-term memory impose severe limitations on the amount of information that we are able to receive, process, and remember at any one time.[13] When we have to face an overload of information, we only pay attention to some of it, while the rest is ignored or "filtered out".

Here is an example that may have happened to you. You drive home from work, thinking about something which happened during the day. When you arrive home, you realize that you drove on "automatic pilot", and that you can't really remember what happened on the familiar roads that got you home. The information reached your brain and was processed unconsciously. However, filters prevented it from reaching your consciousness, in this instance probably because it wasn't necessary or essential for functioning correctly. This is an indication that you are unconsciously competent.

Filters, or ways of thinking, are determined by attitudinal or motivational patterns, also known as "meta-programs". Some examples of meta-program categories are:

- Does a person prefer to *look for problems* (and solve them) or is their *focus on goals*?
- Do they *listen to feedback others give them* or do they prefer to *decide for themselves*?
- Are they willing to *follow procedures* or are they more *looking for alternative ways* of doing things?
- Are they focusing on *people and their emotions*, or are they more concerned with *"things", such as having the right information*?
- Are they focused on the *past*, the *present* or the *future*?

For a longer list of meta-programs with some explanation, see www.jobEQ.com/categories

> **Resource: The inventory for Work Attitude and Motivation (iWAM)**
>
> JobEQ has developed an instrument to help determine a person's preferences in terms of attitude and motivation. A personal version is available for free on the jobEQ website. You will get a report showing some strengths and development areas in terms of attitude and motivation. Try it Out!
> http://www.jobEQ.com/SelfTest

3.3 Knowledge, Values & Beliefs

When one has noticed that an event is taking place, we reach the evaluation step. The question to ask is whether an individual has the appropriate knowledge and subscribes to the right values in order to come to a decision about what needs to be done.

Example:
Consider the case where a building inspector needs to evaluate whether a rental unit can be rented out. The inspection is caused by a tenant who contacted the housing inspection in the hope of getting housing benefits if he became evicted because the building was declared "unfit to live in".

The inspector's task: To determine whether the building lives up to expectations.

This by itself is an evaluation. The *knowledge* required to carry out a housing inspection boils down to knowing the rules a rental unit has to comply with. Some errors might occur if the inspector didn't know all the rules and how to interpret them. *Different values also may lead to a different evaluation*: If the inspector feels empathy for the tenant's situation, he might be tempted to do a "hatchet job", inflating the "problems" he detects. On the other hand, if he suspects that the tenant is after housing benefits and caused the problems himself, this might bias his reaction in the other direction and minimize the problems. Such things happen… If there only was one possible interpretation, many lawyers would be out of a job…

Beliefs may also influence the evaluation process. An example of this is the myth that one can't learn a second language because one is too old.[14] When you are confronted with it, you can wonder whether the person actually "believes" this, or whether they just use it as an excuse. A friend of mine who is active in the area of public relations pointed out that, in reality, many expats who move to the Netherlands to take up the lead of branches of their company will learn to speak and understand Dutch, whatever their age. Similarly, whenever Belgium decides to nominate an ambassador to a given country, the prospective diplomat may not know the country's language yet, but will be given 3-4 months to learn the language sufficiently well before their appointment gets confirmed.

Resource: Value Systems Questionnaire (VSQ)
The jobEQ website also provides an instrument to examine preferences in terms of values, value systems and additional cultural patterns. This instrument is also available for free for personal use.
http://www.jobEQ.com/SelfTest

3.4 Skills

Even when people are motivated and decide to act, this is still no guarantee that they will produce the results we expect. A person may become a loose cannon because of a lack of some crucial skills and create damage, even with good intentions. When hiring or promoting an individual, one needs to identify beforehand which skills will be covered by training and which ones the person will be expected to have already (either because they will not be trained on them, or they are too difficult, lengthy or expensive to train). Moreover, the fact that someone has obtained a degree is no guarantee that they will have the skills required to achieve the practical results we need.

For instance, when hiring an engineer, one may presuppose that the graduate acquired some skills during their studies, and consider their degree as sufficient proof of that. Sometimes, however, it may be worth checking whether this is actually the case. For instance, it's not because their degree indicates that they took a course on statistics that they really are able to apply these principles in practice. Being skilled requires more than just knowing a particular theory. Knowing how to use Excel as a tool for carrying out a statistical data analysis will probably end up being more important than remembering the theory behind a T-test. Similarly, it's not because one has obtained a degree as cabinetmaker that one can install a door properly.

An example of this occurred in France around 2010. As there was a significant shortage of teachers in secondary schools, the government of the day decided that students learning to become teachers should be sent in schools, even though they had received no practical training on teaching skills previously. Many were actually asked to teach subjects with which they had no real affinity. Consequently, a great many encountered a variety of problems, especially when confronted with unruly pupils. However, when they complained about their situation, instead of receiving support, the school inspectorate blamed them for their lack of competence, arguing that "If they couldn't face the heat, they shouldn't be doing this job." As a result, many left the profession, despite having felt a vocation for it before. Instead of improving, the shortage of teachers nationwide worsened, and many young people began in their professional career with a significant burnout and a negative reference experience. As the saying goes, "They had been sent to fail," and this is what actually happened.

jobEQ has developed a methodology for modeling which skills really correspond to excellence on the work floor (more about this in the next chapter). This approach is based on behavior-based interviews. We also offer a test instrument to enable our customers to build self-assessment or 360° feedback instruments on the basis of the skills that have already been modeled. To experience this instrument, we have made a couple of questionnaires available for free in self-assessment mode.

Free Resources: COMET/EQ and COMET/Mentor

On the jobEQ website you can take 2 self-assessment questionnaires to evaluate your skills in the area of emotional intelligence and mentoring & coaching. These instruments are based on the books "*7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence*" and "*Mastering Mentoring and Coaching with Emotional Intelligence*" see: http://www.jobEQ.com/SelfTest

3.5 Implications for Talent Management

In summary one can say that people are at their best when their attitude (or meta-program preferences) and values are aligned with their job requirements. But of course, they also need to have the required skills. As some are harder to train than others, some organizations may need to design a sequence of tasks to complete in order to get a new employee attain a desired level of expertise. For instance, consulting firms might begin by hiring a young MBA graduate and send them out to carry out audits for a year after their graduation before providing additional training that will turn the former student into a real consultant. Once key consulting skills are mastered, a next step might be to teach the consultant how to "create" additional business while working on a project. Later on, the senior consultant will be asked to take the lead on particular projects, and thus become a project manager. And if/when they become experts in a certain field, they may become a "practice leader", etc.

The task of a Talent Manager is to identify which attitude, knowledge and skills are necessary for each of the key functions of the organization, and to take this into account throughout the lifecycle of staff throughout the organization. In other words, designing the appropriate processes for hiring for attitude, training for skills, coaching for performance and managing in order to retain and grow key talent. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapters of this book. At the same time, it may become clear that, as an employee, given the amount of work this may involve and the complexity of the task, you cannot expect your career to be fully managed by Human Resources professionals.

Inspiring Quotes to end the chapter with

"Success in the knowledge economy comes to those who know themselves – their strengths, their values, and how they best perform." – Peter F. Drucker[15]

"Too many companies believe people are interchangeable. Truly gifted people never are. They have unique talents. Such people cannot be forced into roles they are not suited for, nor should they be. Effective leaders allow great people to do the work they were born to do." – Warren G. Bennis[16]

Further Reading:

A more detailed coverage of the model explained in this chapter can be found in the following books:

- Harshman, L. (2009), *Decoding Behavior to Improve Results, published by The Institute for Work Attitude and Motivation* (see http://iWAMinstitute.com/) – this book covers jobEQ's performance model and serves as a practical guide to understand the iWAM instrument.
- Merlevede, P., Bridoux, D. & Vandamme, R. (2001), *7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence*, Crown House Publishing – this book contains a chapter on meta-programs as well as several other models related to emotional intelligence. It also contains a chapter on modeling excellence, a topic which will be covered in the next chapter of this book.
- Rose-Charvet, S. (1997), *Words That Change Minds: Mastering the Language of Influence* (2nd Ed.) – this book is based on the LAB Profile, a method which helps to detect motivational and attitudinal patterns and explains how to use them for applications ranging from marketing and sales to motivating people. The iWAM can be seen as the "electronic version" of the LAB Profile.

4 Focus on Excellence

Nothing ought to be admitted true,
but that which has been proved by good and solid reason
Descartes

4.1 The danger of generic solutions and other shortcuts

Many misconceptions exist about the qualities required by someone to be successful. For instance, what do Albert Einstein, Warren Buffet, Mahatma Gandhi, Charles Darwin, and Rosa Parks have in common? Of course they are known as leaders who made an impact on their world. Actually, it turns out that they were all introverts as well.[17] Unfortunately, many HR professionals think that extroverts make better leaders or better salesmen. Apart from the counter-examples mentioned above, there are several other flaws in such reasoning.

1. Personality has proven to be a weak predictor of work performance. Here are a couple of reasons:
   a) The notion of "Personality" presumes that someone reacts in the same way independent of context. One of the findings of cognitive science is that everything is contextual. In other words, a person will not react in the same way at home as they do at work or on holiday.
   b) The constructs used by personality models, such as the label "Introvert", invented by Jung in the 1920s, can be decomposed in several building "independent" blocks, which means that they do not always need to be grouped in the same way. E.g.: It is said that introverts (1) prefer to be alone to "reload their batteries", (2) that they think before acting and (3) that they don't need external praise. However, this doesn't mean that they don't function well in a job context where they need to work with others. When one studies the test results of respondents to the iWAM questionnaire, one finds only a weak correlation between these 3 patterns (thinking before acting, needing validation & wanting to work alone). In other words, you will find people who prefer to work alone, but also want approval or feedback. And it's not because one "acts fast" that one needs applause…

2. Depending on the type of organization or teams, other attitude patterns might be required.
   a) In some teams, such as sales, where all team members are doing the same job, you can identify which patterns are predictors of performance, and which should be required. But depending on the type of customer you are selling to, the type of product you are selling, or the type of context or situation, other patterns might work as well, if not better. E.g. in some sales contexts, you want a salesperson who acts fast. This might be the case when you are selling a telecom solution to a SOHO business, where the business owner might be willing to take a decision on the spot. In other sales contexts, more patience and reflection before acting will be preferable. This might be the case when selling telecom to a larger business, with a correspondingly slower decision process.

b) Another factor is the organizational culture. In one telecom organization people might be working in the same shop for 10 years and longer, and if you want to survive in that culture it may be important to like to work with your colleagues. In another, younger organization, people may switch from one shop to another, even in the same week, depending on expected shop attendance. They have a more individualistic culture, where one's won results are more important than being popular with one's colleagues.

c) In other teams, where team members are carrying out a range of diverse tasks, it might be better to have complementary patterns. We'll discuss this in more detail in the chapter about team building & leadership.

This means that relying on an instrument "because it was tested on 100.000 people doing that job" is probably going to be a bad idea. This type of instrument will only be predicting "averages", and thus not really be suited to predict top performance. Trying to tweak the interpretation of the instrument "manually", by asking HR professionals or line managers what should be the key characteristics to look for will fail as well, as they will tend to bias their judgment towards what they think or like in their answer. Even if they could manage to remain objective, at best you might only reach an approximation of what the real factors predicting excellence actually are.

4.2 Modeling Excellence

So how can we really know which characteristics will be needed to perform in a job? Rather than asking a Human Resources professional what they think, or even of asking the boss what he thinks his subordinates need, we recommend you look for exemplars, people who are known to be successful in the given job being studied.

Much of the expertise and knowledge of an organization is hidden “below the radar”. An expert’s know-how is often unconscious, therefore it is not easy to make it explicit and to transfer it to others. To make this unconscious knowledge explicit, it is necessary to document key “stories” (or cases) and to model excellence. HR professionals in general, and Talent Management specialists in particular, can profit from this explicit knowledge to enhance all typical HR processes. It can be used to attract the right candidates, to make better hiring decisions, to promote the right people and to shorten the learning curves of new knowledge workers.

To make a model, start by interviewing and/or testing several top performers in that specific job. Find out what motivates them and what they value, learn which knowledge they see as crucial and explore what skills they use to achieve results. The model will be built on the basis of the output you collect by modeling these exemplars. The elements common to the exemplars will indicate what is crucial to obtain good job performance. A good statistical model will be able to predict job performance so, if you take the test results of people doing this job, the ranking coming out of the assessment system should be as close to the real performance as possible. The model can then be validated further during a workshop with the key stakeholders (talent management, managers in charge for the job being modeled, etc.) who will adapt and approve the final model.

Steps in making a model

- Determine who the exemplars are. Decide what the key performance indicators for the job are and rank all employees doing this job on the basis of those criteria. You need at least 3 top performers and 3 low performers to be able to do a contrastive analysis. If you have a larger population, look for the top 10 and the bottom 10. Also include a group of average performers.
- Interview and test the exemplars to determine the attitude, the knowledge and the skills needed for the job.
- Make your model on the basis of this input.
- Validate the model statistically and by organizing a workshop with the stakeholders.

What if you don’t have enough exemplars? In this case you are not really modeling, but “engineering”. A well trained profiling consultant or modeler can derive which attitude, values, knowledge & skills are needed from the interviews & test results of 2 or 3 exemplars in conjunction with a job analysis input. However, this model cannot really be validated, as it will be based on some general assumptions. This means there will be a greater uncertainty as to whether the model will really predict performance or not. Such a model should be closely monitored and adjusted as soon as more information becomes available.

4.3 Using the Model

Once a model is made, it's recommended to be consistent in its application. We'll be covering the subject in more detail in the next chapters, but here is a summary.

The way you advertise a post needs to be congruent with the way people are motivated. For instance, to carry out 12 visits a day in order to make a sale 2 or 3 times, requires somebody who sees that as a challenge. But what may be a challenge to some will scare off others. A good announcement will be explicit enough to motivate the right profiles and scare off people who can't function well in such a role.

Whether you recruit people or want to promote someone from inside your organization, the model can tell you which motivational patterns are crucial to achieve the desired result. It can also predict which knowledge and skills need to be present at this moment in time, because they cannot or will not be covered by future training or coaching.

On the basis of the recruitment and assessment, you will know what motivational patterns, knowledge and skills present in exemplars are missing from the new person who needs to carry out that job. You can even design a specific training based on the model of excellence. Coaches can be trained to help new hires to adapt themselves in order to perform like the exemplars.

Even if all previous steps are well executed, you still need to check that managers motivate their collaborators in the correct manner to increase performance and to avoid retention problems. For instance, if we know from exemplars that weekly feedback is important, managers should organize themselves in order to provide sufficient feedback. Were that not feasible, you might lose talented employees because they will start complaining about their manager.

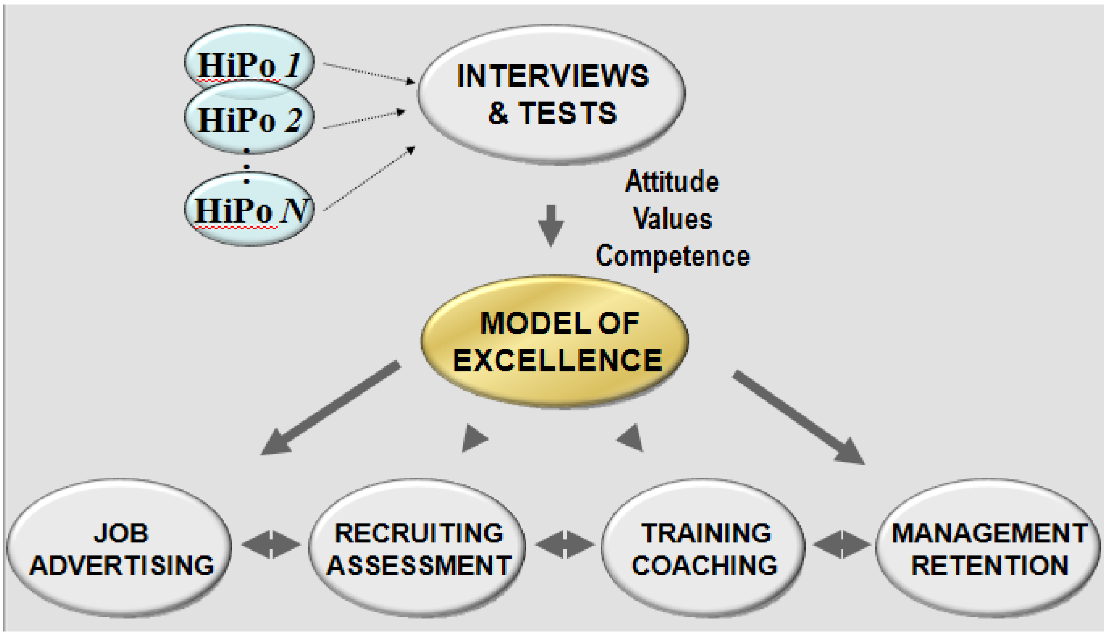

Figure 3. A model and its applications

5 Talent Acquisition: Recruiting & Assessment

"Ability is what you're capable of doing.
Motivation determines what you do.
Attitude determines how well you do it."
Lou Holz[18]

This is where you begin in order to get a great Talent Management system in place. Hiring the best recruits and promoting the most suitable candidates will help an organization to spend less while achieving better results. Experts estimate that the cost of a bad hiring decision can amount to anywhere from 20% to 200% of an annual salary. In the case of a wrong hiring decision, the new recruit will be unproductive, and the employer will have to pay to fire that person and to hire and train yet another worker. Therefore, much is at stake. You may have come across cases where the most talented employees in a role were 3 times more productive than some of their colleagues (selling 3 times as much, programming faster and delivering better code, keeping IT projects within budget, rather than 50% over budget and with months of delay.)

5.1 The Recruitment Process

The following diagram explains in a nutshell how the recruitment process is organized. It's often triggered by a line manager urgently asking when HR will be helping to hire the additional headcount required, either because of new needs linked to new projects or business growth, or of staff turnover, in which case people need to be replaced urgently. HR tries to comply by writing up the job requirements and advertising the position in newspapers, websites or social media. If the organization is lucky, candidates start visiting your organization's website and send in their CVs. Then, someone from the HR team needs to sort through all applications and decide which candidates will be invited for an interview. After the interview, a final selection is made and an offer made to the best candidate(s).

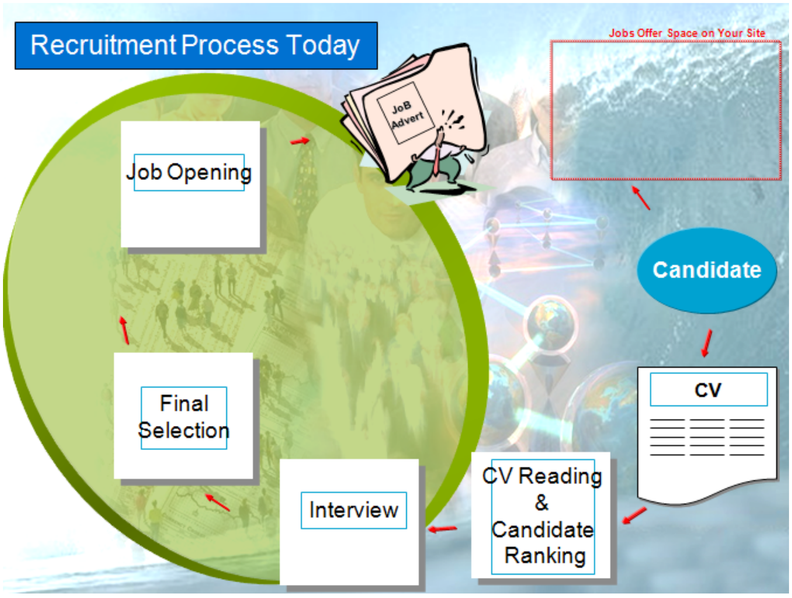

Figure 4. The Recruitment Process

Several challenges need to be addressed in order to bring this process to a successful conclusion. Here is an overview of the main issues, together with their solution:

1. **Knowing what type of person is suited for the job.** We recommend formulating a model of excellence in order to map out the job requirements in terms of critical attitude patterns, values and skills. See our discussion in the previous 2 chapters.
2. **Getting the right candidates.** This includes writing a Job advert which manages to attract the right candidates. Detailed answers will be given below in the chapter.
3. **Knowing which Résumé to select.** Rather than just looking at a Résumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV) the candidate sends, we recommend you develop a candidate or profile template which can be matched to the job requirements defined by the modeling, in addition to the candidate's CV. Later in this chapter this topic will be addressed in more detail.

4. **Recognizing the best match.** To do this objectively, use the template you developed in response to issue #3 in combination with a scoring mechanism. Candidates who fall too far from the requirements can be notified immediately that you won't take it further.
5. **Minimizing Cycle time**: Make sure you reply fast enough. Even if legislation gives you a month before you answer[19] today's candidates expect to receive feedback within a couple of days at most. If you can't answer them within this time period, candidates might expect that you are not hiring them. A consequence might be that you lose top talent to the competition. Worse, your organization's reputation may suffer because people will presume that you don't really care about candidates. If applicants start complaining to their friends, your reputation may deteriorate rapidly. We recommend integrating and automating the process as much as possible.
6. **Motivating to join**. Knowing the job requirements, as well as the motivational patterns of a given candidate, enables you to explain the job in terms of this candidate's motivational patterns and to indicate to them to what extent they match the job requirements.
7. **Being able to retain**. Even if you managed to convince a matching candidate to join your organization, there is no guarantee that this person will remain a part of your organization for a reasonable amount of time. For instance, problems may arise when management doesn't live up to promises made. The topic of retention will be covered in detail in another chapter, further in this book.

In the remainder of the chapter we will explore in greater depth the two main parts of the recruitment process: attracting the right kind of candidates and selecting the best candidate from those who present themselves.

5.2 Attracting the right candidates

What is the image of the organization, its brands and its products? An organization's reputation is a key factor in its ability to attract talent. This is far easier for a well known organization with a solid reputation, where candidates have the impression that they can contribute and/or they will be able to learn. A good image will enable you to attract top candidates, even for average wages. For instance, a young graduate starting on a career in sales and marketing is more likely to apply for a job with an organization which has a reputation for being a market leader or a brilliant challenger with innovative products, in the hope that they can learn more and that this job will look good on their CV. Given that people can be expected to find all sorts of information about your organization on the internet nowadays, it's best to share as much information as possible, in the hope that this will help convincing potential employees.

Exemplars can teach us a lot about creating an environment that will attract talent. They will help to answer why people should work for our organization. The box below gives a couple of questions you can ask exemplars, as well as candidates.

Some motivational questions to ask

- How did you find out that this job was available? What have you done to prepare for this interview?
- Why did you choose to work for our organization? Why did you choose your current job? What made you choose this post over other offers?
- What do you like most about your current job? About our organization?
- If you had to recommend your post to a prospective candidate, what would you mention as its key strengths and advantages?
- How do you know you have done a good job?

In the case you are hiring for a position that doesn't exist yet, you can two things. First suppose that you had to do the job yourself. How would you feel about it? Second, talk to some people whom you think would be able of doing the job. Ask them the same questions mentioned above.

Rather than using a standard text, create a specific one based on what the exemplars tell you. Rewrite the job announcement, first positioning your organization, stressing in particular what it stands for, and how it differentiates itself from similar organizations in terms used by the exemplars. Then, describe the position in terms of what a work week looks like, and include the challenges that exemplars encounter and tackle successfully. A good announcement will attract people with the right attitude and should scare off people whose attitude doesn't match the position.

Of course, the formulation of a meaningful job announcements isn't enough. Whether the candidate is hired or not, their experience with your recruitment process should leave a positive impression of your brand. If you carry it out well, even a candidate who is not hired can become an advocate for your brand, perhaps even recommending others to apply for a job. This implies that candidate should get feedback that is of use to them and this should happen within a short response time (aim for 2 business days or less). Other keywords are respect, transparency and easiness to apply.

Also, even if you have done everything to post your announcement everywhere, you still may be missing out on many potential candidates. Fewer than 50% of candidates come through "traditional channels", even if you include internet sites such as Monster. In fact, many talented people are not looking at job postings. That's why some in the HR industry refer to this approach as "post & pray".

This means that you need to consider complementary "channels". Some organizations will choose to outsource part of the task to external specialists, such as temp agencies, recruiting firms or headhunters. And yet a lot can be achieved with in-house resources. Nowadays a good recruiter will also be active on the social media in order to attract talent. But HR should also get help from the rest of the organization. While this happens, the manager to whom the new recruit will report should be networking, looking out for potential collaborators, both outside and inside the organization. Similarly, current employees should be helping to find future colleagues. It's important that everyone knows how to pitch the job, so ensure all have the job announcement at hand. In addition, use what you learned from your employees. How did they get hired? How does that inspire you to be innovative about marketing the job?

In the case you choose to use an outside partner, such as a search firm or temp agency, be aware that you can't expect them to really screen candidates for fit with your organization.

A couple of years ago, one of our customers had to recruit 100 salespersons. They decided to delegate part of the project to a large international temp agency, who was then asked to present candidates they saw as having the potential to be successful at this job. As a next step in the process, the organization put in place the iWAM in order to compare candidates against the model of excellence which had been created for this role.

Today, the same temp agency is still recruiting people for that role. Over a period of 5 years, 1035 candidates were tested for fit with the model, 132 of whom didn't even bother to complete the questionnaire, clearly lacking the motivation to be recruited. Of the remaining 903 candidates, only 193 were "top candidates", or close enough to the required motivation and attitude patterns to fit the organizational culture, as well as the demands of the role. Some 309 of the presented candidates clearly didn't match the model. Luckily, having the instrument in place reduced the time wasted interviewing the wrong candidates.

A checklist for evaluating you talent attraction strategy

- Are you using the best communication channels for this position?
- Does the content and form of your communication fit the attitude of the right candidates?
- Does your strategy generate an appropriate number of suitable candidates in terms of quantity (neither too few nor too many) and quality?
- What is the overall effect of your attraction strategy in terms of promoting the organization as a good employer?

5.3 Some notes about résumés

While we recommend to recruit on the basis of attitude, knowledge and skills, in practice our customers are using two strategies, depending on how many candidates send résumés. If you are receiving an "overload" of applications, carrying out an initial selection on the basis of CV may be appropriate. For instance, it may appear that a previous job experience or even the degree obtained isn't relevant for what you are looking for. Some recruiters will throw away CVs with typos or spelling errors, incomplete information, unappealing formatting, or which are just too long. Of course, some of the candidates that get rejected this way might actually be quite talented; it's just that they haven't mastered the skill of CV writing. This is why, sorting based on attitude rather than CV is recommended, especially if you struggle to have enough good applicants. Other candidates may pass this initial screening solely because they received some training or coaching in the art of CV writing. Recruiting on attitude will be a better filter in this case also.

The following anecdote illustrates that it is not only attitude which is hard to detect on CVs.
During a recruiting training a sales team manager expressed doubts about an applicant who was trained as a hairdresser. He thought that she wouldn't be able to fill a sales position and declared that he definitely wouldn't hire her. It turned out that the CV we had used during the training was based on a real example, and that the "hairdresser" was actually one of the best salespersons of one of his colleagues!

Summary

If you ever need to write a CV, rather than just drawing a list of the jobs you did, reformat it to clarify what skills you have and how your attitude helped you reach your goals and overcome the challenges you had to face.

If you are recruiting on the basis of CVs, focus on proofs of relevant skills and attitude (or lack thereof).

5.4 Hiring the Best Candidate

As discussed in chapter 4, having a model for the position will help you to be more objective and to focus on the meaningful facts. The candidates on your shortlist will then need to get evaluated for fit by using a mix of structured interviews in order to check their track record (is there evidence they have the skills we need?) and their motivation for this new job (will they like doing the job and do they have the energy to acquire new skills?) For the reasons discussed previously, we recommend adding an instrument to assess to what extent their attitude and motivation fits the culture of your organization, as well as the needs of the job. Otherwise, you may incur the risk that it will be the candidate with the best interview skills who gets the job, rather than the candidate who is the best match for it.

But there is a further challenge. By only taking the short-term into account, you may probably want to give the position to the individual who comes closest at this moment in time to the job requirements in terms of attitude, knowledge, values and skills. However, some long-term factors may need to be considered as well. Questions that come to mind are: "How long do we need to have someone in this position?" "How long can we expect to keep the person into this job role?" "What happens after that?"

You may perceive the job as an entry position, with the further aim of promoting the person to another role later on. Law firms are examples of this, and also "the big four", the 4 largest international professional services networks, who are offering a large array of audit, tax and consulting services. They offer several entry positions to graduates, and have an "up or out" model. Their strategy is to recruit massively amongst the best graduates and use the entry position as a filter in order to retain the best students for more senior positions. In this type of approach, you might not be looking for the person with the best match for the entry position, but for the person who will stand the best chance to grow to a senior position. In these cases, the people to model as "the ideal graduates" may not even be individuals in entry positions, such as a junior accountant or a trainee in a law firm, but perhaps instead some of the younger partners in the organization who quickly grew through its ranks. At the same time, a recruit should be good enough for the position they get hired for because, should they fail at this post, there won't be any further future for them within the organization.

You may also expect that the role will disappear, or that it will be turned into something else within a couple of years. Examples are sales departments where an innovative product is launched in a market, and which need to be converted once the market matures. In sales, terms like "hunters" and "farmers" are employed. Hunters are salespeople who need to create the demand: it's their job to discover new opportunities for a new technology, perhaps pointing prospective clients towards solutions for problems which they maybe didn't even know existed. Farmers are salespeople who maintain and deepen the relationship with an existing customer. This second type of salesperson may evolve into a more consultative role in which they help the customer to solve problems. Each type will require a different attitude and a different skill set.

In such a situation, it's good to figure out how long a candidate expects to remain in their position. Some people will have a "natural tendency" to switch jobs every couple of years, which might a good thing in the example cited above. We'll return to this topic in the chapter on retention. For now, the key point is to ensure that the candidate's expectations match the organization's.

Candidate Checklist

- What are the gaps between the candidate and the job requirements, in terms of attitude, knowledge and skills? How critical are these gaps? (split up in need to have / nice to have)
- Can the gaps be filled with training and coaching?
- Which "extra talent" does the candidate bring us?
  (e.g. positive attitude patterns, knowledge and skills not needed for this job)
- Does the candidate fit into our organizational culture?
- Are there other "challenges" you see when hiring this candidate?
- What's in it for them? How can we "sell" the job to this candidate? What will trigger the person to sign up? (think about "benefits" linked to the job as well as the organization e.g. flexible work hours, training & development programs, the job as a challenge, …)
- How does the job fit the candidate's interests and career path?
  (as seen by our organization / as seen by the candidate)

If it turns out that the candidate is not matching your requirements, the best response is to tell them so, including some "coaching advice" specifying what exactly they should be working on in the eventuality that they might want this type of job in the future, or what other type of job you see fitting them. This will leave a positive impression. In a campus recruiting program which came with a job fair where candidates were "speed interviewed", we trained the recruiters to use this approach. As a consequence, their organization saw more candidates than expected. Even candidates that were turned down in this honest way told their friends that they should be talking to us, because they might learn something from the interview.

Bad ways to say "no" include the following: "We'll be in touch" (without doing it); "You are a good candidate, but we have invited some others as well" (if the candidate is not good, just be honest about it instead); or "We are definitely considering your application, but maybe for another job" (only say this if it's really the case). Lying to the candidate may leave them with a bad impression. At best, they won't be mentioning it to their friends. At worst…

5.5 Assessment and 360° feedback

Assessment centers can be used for recruiting, but also to assess whether existing staff members have the potential to fill new positions. We will discuss some specific examples in Chapter 10, when talking about programs for high potentials. In general, assessment centers tend to combine interviews and psychological tests with simulation exercises, such as in-basket exercises (where candidates are provided with a series of items that they might find in an in-tray, and ask them what actions they should take about them) and leaderless group simulations (where several candidates are put in a group setting with a task to complete). The various parts of an assessment center are picked to assess a series of competencies (generally about 4 for each activity). Trained raters review the candidate's performance in each exercise and provide scores.[20]

The use of Assessment Centers raises a lot of controversy. Some research list assessment centers amongst the techniques which present the best chance to predict future performance. Other studies reveal that the average return on investment of assessment centers is close to zero. Well, it may seem a contradiction, but both points of view are actually correct! Using an assessment method can only work if there is a clear understanding of how the results of the assessment are evaluated in the light of the current or future position of the person being assessed.[21] If you design a "standard" assessment center that is not based on the specific attitude and skills people require in your organization, you may end up wasting a lot of time, money and credibility. Worse, you may lose top talent, because the assessment center may wrongly estimate their future abilities to perform.

The same is true for 360° feedback. It can give you a real insight in the day-to-day functioning of a candidate, but it is limited to existing employees, because you ask colleagues, superiors and the persons who directly report to the candidate to complete a questionnaire Also, it will only work in an organizational culture where people both feel that feedback is appreciated and trust that their response will either be anonymous or will be treated in such a way that their honest reply won't backfire. To carry out a 360° feedback correctly can also be quite expensive, because you will be asking many people to invest their time in assessing one of their fellow workers, in addition to which you need to invest more time to carry out a proper feedback yourself on the whole process. Moreover, in order to succeed, it also requires that the questionnaire employed measures skills that are really relevant for the job at hand.

Consider using assessment center and 360° feedback techniques, but make sure that all real key competencies measured and the line of questioning matches the reality of your organization.

5.6 Performance of Recruitment Methods

Several recruitment methods are known to have low predictive validity. The table below lists them from Most Predictive to Least Predictive. To some extent, some of the higher levels will only be reached if the recruitment method is based on what we called "Modeling Excellence" in chapter 4. In other words, on average, the real number might be worse. The high number for assessment centers is achieved because it combines several other methods. As explained in chapter 3, such a combination is needed because measuring work attitude and skills requires different instruments and approaches.

Recruitment Method	Predictive Validity
Work Attitude & Motivation	.45–.65
Behavior Based Interviews	.40–.60
Assessment Centers (multiple methods)	.18–.65
Work-sample Tests	.34–.54
Cognitive Capability Testing	.34–.53
Modern Personality Tests	.39
Biographical data (Structured CV)	.10–.38
References	.23
Traditional Interviews (unstructured)	.05–.25
Older Personality Instruments (< 1988)	.00–.20

Table 1: Predictive Validity Findings of Different Assessment Methods[22]

The recommended combination consists of structured CVs and structured interviews to make it easier to compare candidates. Part of the interview might be used for testing skills (using behavior-based interviewing). In addition, test for work attitude and motivation (either using interview techniques or test instruments). Adding assessment centers to the mix (allowing for "work sample tests") will be more costly and may be harder to organize, and may not add much additional predictive validity.

5.7 A word of warning

Several organizations build up complex recruitment websites, where candidates need to register, etc. Fair enough, as explained previously in this chapter, this may be needed. If you are recruiting for entry positions, you risk being overwhelmed by candidates. Some automation may therefore be the best way to cope with that. However, if you are trying to recruit talent for more advanced positions or with more specific skills, if good candidates are rare, a procedural system may be counter-productive.

An example: while doing research for this book, I found that a large bank was looking for a talent manager. The job posting was quite elaborate, but I can imagine that a candidate with 5 years of experience in the field might like to ask a few more questions before applying. It turned out that this was impossible, as the only possibility that the website offered to apply for the job required going through a lengthy registration procedure. In this case it may be more useful to offer outside candidates an easy way to get in touch with the manager who is opening this position, so that they can have an informal chat with them about it.

When recruiting for positions where market demand is higher than the available talent, consider treating the prospective employee as a customer, and make them feel welcome. One of the campaigns I helped setting up to recruit B2B salespeople was called "We call you": Candidates would complete a simple questionnaire with the promise that they would be contacted by the firm for a follow-up telephone interview . Contrast this with the first experience Elon Musk had when applying for a job at Netscape in 1995. As he didn't even get a reply, he went on to start his own software company. His share from the sale of this company in 1999 was worth 1.5 Million dollars. His second company became PayPal, where he walked away in 2002 with 165 Million dollars. Meanwhile he founded Xspace and Tesla and invested in SolarCity. So, it seems Netscape missed out on a great chance to recruit a great talent…

Recruiting process checklist

- To what extent does your recruiting website & recruiting process convey the message that a candidate is appreciated and that you are offering more than just "a job"?
- How accessible is your organization to provide more information to prospective candidates? Do you always send replies to candidates?
- Is there really more than "a job"? (Do you offer career opportunities? How can one grow and develop? How will they be supported after being hired? (training, coaching, managing?) What about balance between work & the rest of one's life?

6 Talent Development: Training & Coaching

"If you're not willing to learn, no one can help you.
If you're determined to learn, no one can stop you."
(source unknown)

As the scope of this book doesn't allow for going in depth on the subject of how to train or to coach, this chapter focuses on offering you guidelines for the design and follow up of training & coaching programs that will be aligned with a comprehensive talent management system. The last section of the chapter will cover knowledge management and creation as another significant form of talent development.

When renting out (or selling) a house in the European Community there is a directive making it mandatory to show a prospective tenant (or buyer) an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). These certificates are produced by accredited energy assessors using standard methods and assumptions about energy usage. As the work of assessors is checked by doing quality control on a random sample, an assessor risks incurring heavy fines if it turns out that they have issued incorrect certificates. A certificate is seen as acceptable insofar as it doesn't differ by more than 15% from the correct score.

*During accreditation training, future assessors learn how to follow a procedure and how to make decisions about energy efficiency on all relevant elements in the building. Key skills, such as the ability to calculate a building's volume and roof surface, are presumed to have been acquired previously. However, some candidates fail their accreditation exams because they make too many calculation errors. Problems with incorrect certificates can occur owing to (a) Assessors not following the procedure (*wrong attitude*), (b) Assessors making wrong evaluations* (owing to missing knowledge) *or (c) Assessors making calculation mistakes (*lack of skills*).*

This example shows how standalone training fails as an efficient method to guarantee good quality. To increase the likelihood of training success (with students passing the certification exam), you may want to organize an up-front assessment. To improve the quality of certificates, some coaching might be useful (rather than simply punishing individuals if they happen to make errors). This means that an integrative approach combining needs analysis, assessment, training and coaching is recommended. You may also find useful to nudge people towards participating in trade associations or "communities of practice" in order to keep their skills up to date and to learn from their peers. Of course all these topics apply to talent management.

6.1 Needs Analysis

When an organization asks a consultant to design or deliver a training program, the best reaction is to spend some time to study what problem it aims to solve. A training that doesn't fit any specific need, or doesn't fit the organization culture, may end up causing a negative return on investment! Let me illustrate this with an example:

Around 1998, when Emotional Intelligence was a buzzword, I was asked to deliver some training programs on the subject, as I was one of the first trainers in Belgium who had specialized in this area. A particular program was for a large IT organization which had just purchased a large consultancy operation. When examining the feedback sheets after the pilot session, it turned out that half the participants still had no clue as to why they should pay attention to emotions. The other half were thrilled by the program. It turned out that these latter were the students who came from the consultancy operation. We also found out that the students who worked for the large IT operation had been recruited to pay little attention to their emotions! This, of course, perfectly explained why they hadn't seen the purpose of the training program… Their talent was that they were able to think clearly in challenging situations where others might fail because of emotion overwhelm. And when I followed this up about a year later, I discovered that all the students who had initially had worked for the consultancy firm had actually left the large IT company.

This example illustrates that half the students didn't perceive a need for the program, and that the training didn't match either the organization's culture or its needs at that time. Being "talented" at paying attention to emotions didn't make sense to them. Worse, the training may have accelerated the "outplacement" of good consultants. Instead of following the buzz, the IT firm would definitely have saved some money by choosing not to run this program.

Obviously, this taught me the importance of paying necessary attention to carrying out a needs analysis. This may take a variety of forms, from asking a few critical questions when a prospective client asks for basic emotional intelligence training, to making a model of excellence, or using our iWAM software for carrying out an analysis of the company culture.

In 1999 I turned down the demand for EQ training for nurses by a hospital. When it comes to customer service and patient friendliness, some hospitals have a bad reputation. In many cases, critical questions often show that the actual problem has to do with the low emotional intelligence of doctors and with managerial problems. I later learned that the EQ program has been delivered by some colleagues, but with little difference. The trainers could only confirm that my initial diagnosis had been correct.

The complexity of the organization or the situation may sometimes warrant the costs of investing in a survey. For instance, when running post-merger integration programs, it helps to have a good picture of the different parts of the organization in terms of their respective motivations, attitudes and values. Good integration can be achieved by building on the qualities or talents of the different parts of the new organization. Showing how these actually complement each other, rather than competing together, can prevent many potential rifts and conflicts.

6.2 Some Musings about Training

A good training program doesn't stand on its own. It needs to be integrated in a complete development system. Ideally, it starts with an intake and with an assessment to take stock of the student's current situation. This will be followed by a coaching session, either with the trainer or with a coach who knows the content of the training. During that session, the student will be asked to formulate his personal goals for the training session. "Why am I attending?" "What's in it for me?" "What should I get out of it?" After the training, there should be plenty of occasions to put into application what has been learnt. If the student can't apply what he has learnt, one can expect that the contents of the training will be forgotten.

When it comes to creating talent, the following questions will point some "presuppositions" which it might be useful to take into account for designing a training program:

- Does it make students act and take control? Are they motivated to take responsibility?
- Does it make students generate their own opportunities and solutions?
- Does it make students pursue their dreams? Do they turn these into achievable goals?

6.3 Coaching in the context of Talent Management

A lot can be said about coaching, but this book is not the proper setting for that. For techniques and more insights in relation to the subject, I would recommend our book "*Mastering Mentoring and Coaching with Emotional Intelligence*" (Merlevede & Bridoux, 2004). In this section, we mainly revisit the topic from a talent management perspective.

As mentioned before, a training program is most successful when the skills or knowledge acquired can be applied immediately on the job. But even then, the added value of the program may not be fully realized without follow-up. This is where coaching comes in.

Coaching generally consists of a variety of steps: creating awareness for what could be improved and making the person take responsibility, formulating a goal to work towards, setting actions towards that goal, following up the results as they happen, etc. The focus is positive, and aims to create behavior change. It can be applied in an extensive range of fields, from sports, where coaching originated, to business and life coaching. In the context of this book, where the purpose of training is to teach new knowledge and skills, a common purpose of coaching is to help people make better use of these skills, and/or to adapt to given environments or situations. To maximize work performance, two particular types of coaching programs should be considered:

- **Action-Oriented Coaching**: a coaching program linked to a specific job profile, where the coach is also sometimes an expert on a given subject. E.g. a sales coach who follows up new salespeople, either on an ongoing basis or after a training program. As there is always room for improving job performance, this coaching approach can also be extended to more senior profiles. This type of coaching is often well organized and well structured, with dedicated coaches. In some cases, organizations expect a manager to be able to carry out this type of coaching himself.
- **Remedial Coaching**: *ad hoc* coaching to deal with a specific problem linked to a specific employee. In this case, the coach's expertise is not related to a given subject, but in the skill of coaching itself. This coaching approach generally presupposes that the employee has all the necessary skills, and that the coach doesn't therefore need to be an expert in the subject. Some larger organizations make coaches of this type available to staff to be called upon.

If a model of excellence is available for a given job profile (see chapter 4), one can also use coaching to help close specific gaps that staff members may have relating to the model. This goes beyond skills and knowledge: **Attitude Based Coaching** focuses on helping to cope with job demands which won't fit the usual thinking style or motivational preferences of the employee.

Of course, coaching can have wider applications and it may be considered as a resource to help talented employees overcome other problems related to their current job, such as enhancing their people skills or communication skills, or helping them to progress in their career. Compare the previous paragraphs with what Mel Leow, founder of the Asia Pacific Institute of Coaching, wrote in his book "*Bring Out Their Best*"[23], where he suggested adding generic **Performance/Talent Coaching** to the mix. "Idealistically one of the key reasons why coaching is being introduced has to do with getting 'improved performance'. Companies realize that their top Leaders (and Talents) are already technically sound and competent to execute their roles effectively. Therefore, they offer Performance Coaching as an incentive to support their role and as a chance for creating greater self-awareness and self-reflection to further develop themselves and others around them."

Mel Leow also recommends implementing a workplace coaching culture.
"Ultimately a culture that breathes coaching will thrive with it on a wide scale and seek to make it part of its 'everyday activities', from setting up coaching programs for middle managers to ensuring that it is included in performance systems, to creating specific internal coach roles, and even to making it part of managers' job descriptions. Such integration of coaching in an organization can only take place with the active endorsement of a top management that sincerely desires change, innovation and open feedback. This encourages coaching to move from a solely 'program-based' approach to a 'adopted lifestyle' approach, and truly changes the mindset of people from a telling culture to an open conversation (coaching) culture."

In order to achieve the best results with talented people, you may also want to coach their leaders. General John J Pershing said: "A competent leader can get efficient service from poor troops, while on the contrary an incapable leader can demoralize the best of troops." Anneli Blundell, co-author of *Insight to Action: Coaching the change that matters*[24] (2014) and director of Motivation Matters, uses the iWAM to support her **Executive Coaching**, particularly for interpersonal influence and communication effectiveness. Anneli relies on the surgical precision of the iWAM to help clients to separate behavior from intention and to decode people and performance dynamics in the workplace.

Joe Blogs (not clients real name!) came to coaching to improve his interpersonal skills, particularly around leading and motivating his team and navigating the frustrating behaviors of his boss. Joe reported that his team seemed disengaged and frustrated by his leadership style and that he in turn was frustrated by his managers' leadership style.*

From the iWAM results it was clear that Joe was motivated to make his own decisions (Individually Motivated), *paid careful attention to the words spoken when communicating with others and less so the accompanying body language* (Neutral Communication) *and was motivated to take quick action on ideas* (Use).

His boss liked to call him into the office and 'chat through ideas'. He would talk to Joe about work issues and ask for Joe's opinion and feedback on the ideas discussed. Joe found this an interminable waste of time and couldn't understand why his boss couldn't just make a decision on his own and get on with it. After debriefing the iWAM it became clear that his boss was likely to be motivated by seeking external input for his ideas and then talking them through with someone else to become totally convinced about the actions to take (Externally Referenced *and* Convinced by Hearing). *When Joe realized the intentions behind his boss's actions, he was able to suggest other ways that his boss could have a 'sounding board' that didn't involve him. And more importantly he realized that his boss wasn't just incompetent and wasting time, it was actually what he needed to become motivated to get on with the work!*

When it came to Joe's team members, they reported feeling frustrated with him also. They felt unsupported by him and this created some disengagement in the team. Knowing that Joe was motivated to pay more attention to the words spoken than to the body language used to deliver the message (Neutral Communication), *I asked Joe to describe a typical interaction with a team member. It turns out that Joe would sit at his desk and continue to work on his computer as his team members were talking to him. He wouldn't look at them or provide any non-verbal clues that he was listening and had heard them, other than his verbal response. After the iWAM debrief the impact of this behavior became clear to him. He realized that the rest of his team were motivated to read and interpret his body language to provide clues as to how the communication was progressing* (Affective Communication) *and he wasn't providing very 'interested' cues! His team judged this behavior as 'unsupportive', 'not paying attention' and 'not caring', which was in fact untrue. He realized that even though he was listening, his team members only felt listened to when he was looking at them when they spoke. His intention to listen on the inside, was not supported by his behaviors on the outside. Once he realized that all he had to do to improve motivation and engagement was look at people when they spoke to him at his desk, it became an easy behavior for him to adopt.*

In both cases we used the iWAM to decode the intentions, the behaviors, and the resulting perceptions that were causing interpersonal frustration. As a result, Joe was able to adapt his behaviors to better serve his intentions and ultimately improve his interpersonal effectiveness.

6.4 Knowledge Management & Creation

There is only so much you can learn in a classroom. After all, most executive leadership skills are the result of experience. It means that one should design development programs to allow top performers to go through the experiences that they will need to nurture and cultivate their talent. It presupposes of them an ability to make the most of experience and a desire to search for opportunities to learn, while taking calculated risks. It also expects of them enough self-awareness and self-confidence to learn from mistakes, feedback or outright criticism. Chapter 10 will cover this topic in depth.

It's not just the future generation of leaders who need to learn outside classrooms. As Jack Welch puts it: "An organization's ability to learn, and to translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate advantage." Charles Jennings, a British consultant, advocates that you ask yourself: "What was one of the greatest learning experiences I've had?" and following it up with: "Where did that learning occur?" Was it during some form of 'training', or was it linked to a real life experience, e.g. while completing a task? When asking this question informally during workshops, he found out that approximately 80% of participants referred to real life experiences.[25] Several studies point in the same direction, namely that a variety of informal learnings account for 70 to 90% of learning experiences. This means that a development plan should include learning from real life and on-the-job experiences, from tasks and problem solving, as well as from feedback and from observing key role-models in action and working with them.[26]

The first consequence of this finding is that one should apply it to training design. For example, Denis Coleman, an Irish trainer who facilitates a series of study skills workshops for adult third-level students, teaches them that their most important source of learning is not the tutor or lecture, but both their own experience (and how they link it to their learning) and the knowledge and experiences of their fellow students. He recommends seeing the classroom as a setting where information on outside experiences is shared for the mutual learning of all. A trainer then becomes a facilitator of information from the participants. An added benefit of this approach is that it increases the speed of learning and allows students to get much more out of the training program.

However, a more significant consequence is that training may become far more effective and efficient by focusing on the 80% of the learning, rather than on the 20%. Several solutions are possible, such as:

- **Organizing networking** inside the organization, so that employees know who has what talent and knowledge, and linking this to a mentoring program.
- **Working with development plans**: give your talents goals for development and the freedom to be creative about the way they reach their goals, and empower them with a small budget to be spent on gathering the required new knowledge and skills (e.g. books, attending short seminars, …) to attain these goals.
- **Creating knowledge inside the organization** by allowing "creative time" for talented people. Rather than working on their "normal" business goals, they can use this time to work on experimenting and setting up projects that lead to innovation (maybe by creating new products, services, or new applications)
- **Motivating talents to profile themselves** as talents or thought leaders outside the organization, by writing papers or books, and participating in conferences and associations.
- **Creating Knowledge Quality Circles or Communities of Practice**, whereby domain experts and talents get together in regular meetings to discuss how the organization's knowledge can be kept up to date and applied for improvement. This can lead to projects where several talents work together to develop knowledge.

Talent Development – A summary

- Make sure that the training and coaching programs cover all the needs of a job, in terms of attitude, knowledge and skills required.
- Design training programs which help transfer the knowledge and master the skills needed to be competent at one's job.
- Provide coaching to help people perform their job better, both job-specific (e.g. in support of training programs), as well as general.
- Install a system that ensures continuous improvement:
  - Putting people in control of their own development, by using development plans.
  - Measuring the effect of training and coaching programs and using this feedback to improve programs
  - Viewing "training" as wider than what happens in classrooms, etc. (informal learning is an important part of talent development)
  - Integrating assessment, training and coaching (creating a system)
  - Organizing talents in order to grow the knowledge and skills available inside the organization.

7 Talent Integration: Leadership & Building Teams

"I must follow the people. Am I not their leader?"
Benjamin Disraeli

7.1 Fitting Leaders within a culture

Suppose you hire a talented manager because of his track record. The person held a similar function at his previous company and has the proven skills to fill the position you are hiring for. Hiring this talent will also allow you to learn from his experience at the previous organization, which has a good reputation. Yet even if this is really the case, in reality, there is a 50% chance of failure… How can that be?

A major factor is organizational culture. Suppose that you are hiring for a relatively young player in the telecom field. You are considering a candidate whose previous employer was a large telecom operator which, a couple of decades ago, was the "state monopolist". The former state monopolist may have 3 times as many employees on their payroll to generate a million Euros of revenue. On average, each of these employees may have been with that company for more than 10 years, which is longer than the new player has been in business. The previous employer's management structure might be quite hierarchical, and managers there aren't really empowered to take their own decisions. When working for the young company, decisions and changes tend to take place faster and the decision power of the managers may be greater. But to get things done in both companies, one also often needs to rely on informal contacts with people in other parts of the organization.

In the example above, the skills may appear the same, but the much faster and more direct culture of the young player may require a different type of motivation. You need someone who is more proactive, who likes to take their own decisions, who is more concerned by the results than about the people and their "history" with the company. In short the new hire may fail owing to cultural differences and the way each business operates, as well as the lack of established relationships with other employees in the new firm. And if you make bad hires for senior positions, it might be even worse, because of the damage this can do to the morale and culture of their department. As Jim Collins mentioned in his book "Good to Great", there is a link between strong organization cultures and their success.

Organizational culture can also be a major issue when two companies merge. If cultural differences aren't taken into account and your talented employees aren't coached through the merger, you might end up losing many talented individuals. They may end up feeling it's no longer the same company as the one that hired them, and may feel that they no longer belong here. Even worse, by ignoring the culture of the company which is acquired, the merger may end in a disaster, because the new bosses think they can do a better job, and the feedback of talented employees is ignored.

Whether the issue is about hiring managers or making sure that a merger succeeds, modeling excellence can bring the solution. When hiring managers or leaders, make sure they fit the organizational culture by building a model based on successful managers inside the organization. When implementing a company merger, you could build two models, one for each organization, and figure out where there might be potential conflicts.

Checklist

- What do we know about the organizational culture? What do we do to promote it?
- Does the leadership of the organization fit the culture?
- Does our hiring policy fit the culture? (How do we take culture into account?)

7.2 Induction Programs

It's not just leaders who need to fit within the culture. Each employee is a part of the culture, which is the aggregation of the beliefs and values held by each of the employees. New hires need to understand the culture they are becoming part of. The first days when they start working for an organization are determining moments in an employee's career. This is the time when the professional relation with their new "boss" and colleagues gets established. It is also when they should be informed about the organization's culture (its values, formal rules and habits, but also its unwritten rules) and how they will fit in (e.g. how their job will contribute to achieving the organization's vision and mission). Independent of the size of your organization, an induction program is definitely something worth investing in. How it is set up should fit your organization culture and be supported by the executives. In 2004, when Zappos was just a couple of years old and had about 90 employees, Tony Hsieh, the CEO, decided to compile a Zappos Culture Book, collecting stories of employees to describe the culture. This handbook is handed to prospective employees and can be found on-line.[27]

7.3 Strategic decisions may destroy key talent

In September 2014 Marc Buelens, previously professor at the Vlerick Business School, published a book entitled "*Bye Bye Management*". After 40 years of tenure trying to find out the secrets of management, he concluded that he still hadn't discovered them. Management theory isn't an exact science. What appeared to make sense in economic theories around 2005 was proven wrong by the financial crisis which began in early 2006, when the housing bubble started to burst, and went on to become a great recession.

Similarly, the way many organizations are structured is largely determined by the preferences of the executive board. An example is what happened at the City of Antwerp between 1997 and 2003.

In 1997 a large and internationally renowned consulting firm presented a plan to reorganize the administration of the city of Antwerp into a series of "business units". These were to be led in a decentralized manner by very talented managers. The plan was made possible because the mayor and the city aldermen had agreed that they would act as an executive board, and leaving day to day operations to a management committee. This appeared worked well for a couple of years, until the October 2000 elections, at which point the newly appointed aldermen decided that they wanted to run the city in a more hands-on manner, which resulted into conflicts with the management committee. Despite all the competencies of the managers, they lost out to the aldermen. A public scandal arose, whereby the managers were accused of making illegal benefits on top of their salary, which was used to sack most of them. By 2003, a new mayor and the alderman were firmly in control. The so-called scandal ended silently in 2008, when the court acquitted the accused managers. In the meantime, the career of several highly talented city managers has been broken, while a few others had managed to move out without too many scars.

Unfortunately, we need to conclude there is no "right way" to manage and structure an organization. Even assessing how good management decisions actually are is difficult, as it often takes 5 years or more before their consequences become really clear. And, by that time, the next reorganization may already be announced.

However, although you can't predict the future, you can build an organizational structure which is "future proof". To do this, an organization needs leaders with a long-term vision, who will steer a steady course for many years running. And it is unsurprising that organizations led by such leaders tend to outperform their competitors. As Jack Welch says: "Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion."

When a decision is taken to change a leadership style or an organizational culture, programs should be set up to enable this new leadership path to adhere to some principles. Not only should suitable training be developed to match the desired culture, but other HR processes should be aligned as well to ensure that the desired change takes place (e.g. compensation & benefits, hiring & assessment processes, coaching, mentoring programs, programs for high potentials, etc.). Ideally, the program should be rolled out in a standardized way, throughout the organization, starting with its top managers.

Be warned, however, that a culture has a lot of inertia, which is often proportional to the size of the company or society which upholds it. Trying to change a culture may seem at times like trying to make a supertanker stop or change course. A leader may need to convince the company that, in continuing in the direction it is going they are on a sure collision course or that, by doing so, they will go to the wall [*See France at the moment*]

Organizations, and the individuals which compose it, often have many vested interests in not changing, probably for fear of losing the underlying and often unexpressed positive intentions and secondary gains of their current culture. To make change possible, they need to be persuaded that they have more to lose by not changing than by changing, and more to gain by changing than by not changing. Changing existing beliefs and values, and bringing people to your side who may be convinced of the exact opposite requires time, perseverance, good communication and persuasion skills, and above all a lot of foresight, which is why "Vision" is a critical ability for a leader.

In the end, something may give, and many organizations find that the easier option is just to sack the CEO who sought to upset the apple cart. After all, "Better the devil you know" goes the saying. No surprise they sink without trace soon afterwards.

Checklist

- What is the long-term vision of the organization? How does it leadership work towards its execution?
- What's the impact of strategic decisions on top talent? Which skills will be required in the future?
- Are all HR processes aligned with the vision, the culture and the leadership style?

7.4 Building Teams

When talking to entrepreneurs, there seems to be a pattern in the way they think about building a team or hiring someone. Interviews with Tony Hsieh, Steve Newcomb and Peter Thiel indicate that they think larger than just the job. They almost create cults.[28] Apart from checking whether the individual has "talent" (the right attitude and skills for doing the job), an extra control question you might want to consider is "Is this the type of person I would want to hang out with outside my work?" You want to connect with them, to be able to understand them without too many words (rather than someone that seems to misunderstand you) and know how they make decisions.

Once the team is assembled, it turns out that trust and conflict are key differentiators. Trust is about predicting a person's behavior based on past experience. Conflict is about being able to work out differences between team members and may account for 40% of the variance in team performance[29]. There will inevitably be differences, as each one of them will have their own weaknesses and strengths. However, one person's skill deficiencies can be compensated by the strength of other team members. The strength of a good team is the manner it brings together complementary people to work together on a common goal. Conflicts cannot be solved by shutting up and creating a fake sense of harmony. On the contrary, it requires the self-confidence to speak up, and the trust that all team members are willing and able to sit around the table and to have open conversations, so that all ideas, issues and point of views can be aired in an atmosphere of mutual respect to get real solutions. In other words, transparent communication is key.

In his book *"The Speed of Trust"* (2006), Stephen M.R. Covey advocates the importance of trust in all aspects of the work context, including teams. He distinguishes 4 cores of credibility. The first two are linked to attitude & values: (1) ***Integrity***: Is someone congruent? (2) ***Intent or Motive***: What is their agenda? The two others are linked to competence: (3) ***Capability***: Does someone have the right skills? (4) ***Results***: Do they deliver? (What is their track record)? These are obviously questions worth asking when selecting people for a team.

When applying the questions at the team level, they become: (1) Does our team knows where it stands for (*Vision & Values*)? (2) Are we going for it (*Commitment*)? Do we care? (3) Do we have the Talents to get there (*Knowledge & Skills*)? (4) Are we reliable? Is our team organized for obtaining results (will we manage to deliver)? These questions are to be answered when forming the team, as they enable a group of individuals to really function and perform as a team. Or, as Patrick Lencioni puts it: "Remember teamwork begins by building trust"[30] Lencioni recommends that team members should identify what kind of contributions they can expect from the other team members, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each team member. He argues that a profiling instrument measuring behavioral preferences in a non-judgmental way may bring the answer.

In the section below, Carl Harshman, author of "*Teaming Up*" (1994)[31], shares his experience using a key profiling instrument to work with the executive teams of several large American corporations. According to Harshman, this profiling instrument provides a critical piece of the performance puzzle which, when missing, prevents us from seeing the whole picture, leaving a gap that is difficult to fill and potentially leading to dangers, mistakes and miscommunication.

The composition of a team can be built on similarity, complementarity or difference. Each choice has the potential for strengths and challenges. Using the inventory of Work Attitude and Motivation (iWAM) with teams can uncover where both possibilities exist. Here are some examples:

- A team member who is high in Individual Motives (*internal decision making*) and low in External Reference (*wanting input and feedback*) will enter into a decision process differently than a colleague who has the opposite patterns.
- A team member with high Procedures and high Past time orientation may resist or object to proposals or ideas that do not fit their preferred way of doing things, or their sense of what worked in the past.
- A team member's convincer channels (the way they like to receive data when being convinced) are critical to know how to deliver information in an influencing process. Further, their convincer processes will strongly influence on how they manage the influencing information.

As these examples show, not knowing about these motivational and attitudinal patterns in general, or not appreciating how powerful they may be in driving a colleague's behavior in particular can be a huge barrier to team effectiveness.

Carl Harshman used iWAM team profiles to educate teams about the patterns of respective team members and to the way they might affect team functioning. He found the work of the authors of *Cracking the Code for Workshop Performance* (2014)[32] helpful to craft some questions to guide the team's review and analysis of the profile. He asked them three questions:

1. **Where is your potential for shared brilliance?**
   This is an opportunity to explore where team members' individual motivation & attitude characteristics may complement each other. For example, a team member may want to achieve the goal immediately (*Goal Orientation* and *Initiation*) while another will prefer to reflect and consider possible risks (*Reflecting & Patience* and *Problem Solving*). The actions of one may be demotivating to the other if their different motivational patterns are not understood and acknowledged.

2. **Where is the risk of friction/frustration in the team?**
   Based on individual differences or similarities, where might we encounter difficulty in working together, and/or simply annoy each other in the course of doing business? Two individuals with high *Individual Motives* might each want to decide, and each might want to take a different direction. Differences may emerge when one team member who scores high in Assertiveness (*wants others to follow their rules*) interacts with one who is low in Assertiveness.

3. **Where is there a likelihood of group-think (exaggerating our stronger/similar patterns)?**
   Where are we so alike that we might deal with a situation or with others as though our view or interpretation were the only correct one? When this happens, we incur the risk of "group-think". or over-valuing our patterns. This phenomenon creates the danger of having only "one view" of the situation, or one-sided perspective, which may form the basis for blocking or ignoring information that would be helpful.

Groupthink is often encountered in a case of war or conflict. Each side is locked in group-think mode, convinced that the other side is wrong. This precludes the idea that there may be alternative choices, or possibilities for negotiation. This mode of functioning also makes the group impervious to feedback. Conflicts where each side is locked in group-think mode can often escalade, and people not locked into either side's group-think are often perceived as the enemies of both: "If you're not with us, you're against us."

Similarly David Klaasen, Founding Director of 'inspired working', a consultancy based in London specializing in working with Small and Medium sized Enterprises, includes the iWAM in his needs analysis when starting work with a management team. One of his customers is the Big Choice Group, a major force in youth communications in the UK, helping students to find jobs in large organizations such as Tesco, Rolls Royce and the NHS. The initial challenge for this business was forming an extended management team after purchasing fledgelings.net and campusmedia.co.uk, two other start-ups who were active in the same field. His approach helped resolve conflict and generate a 30% increase in productivity.

Before meeting the whole team, David carried out iWAM profiles with each individual to understand the key motivational patterns behind each of the personalities involved and to identify any possible areas of conflict within the team. With that additional insight, David began to facilitate the implementation of the fundamental elements of an HR structure and good management practices with the team. This started with a workshop to clarify the Vision, Mission and Values for Big Choice.

When the Motivational Profiles of the Directors were compared and the Vision and Values of the business were agreed, it became clear that one of the directors was more inspired by her own personal goals which were taking her away from the business. This resulted in her parting company with the others and applying renewed vigor to pursue her own goals. This also removed a lot of conflict and time-wasting discussions about things that the three remaining Directors were in full agreement about.

Next on the agenda was the development of a Balanced Business Scorecard. David facilitated a number of workshops to help determine exactly what needed to be measured and what should be done to achieve the vision, incorporating the financial drivers as well as marketing, operations and finally learning and innovation. Once this foundation stone was in place, David started drilling down to the more 'nitty gritty' aspects of HR, working with the directors to set out the organizational structure, formulate job descriptions and determine a performance appraisal process. The Director's Job Descriptions took some of the key motivational drivers identified in the iWAM into account so that people could play to their strengths. Finally they ran a series of workshops to help embed the management skills deemed most critical to the success of Big Choice, including time management, communication skills and how to conduct effective performance appraisals. As well as working to embed the necessary structure and skills, David helped to mediate differing opinions along the way, transforming some difficult situations which were becoming personal. With the insights from the iWAM and David's calm confidence, the Directors became able to look at each other's behavioral drivers more objectively and to diffuse any tension, thus helping the business to grow very rapidly and achieve its ambitions targets.

Team Checklist

- Does the team have a clear vision & mission?
  Are there processes to keep track of progress?
- What is the level of trust existing within the team?
  Are there pending conflicts (or are conflicts avoided)?
  Is there transparent communication?
- Is the team well-balanced in terms of attitude, knowledge and skills?
  Does it have the required resources?
- Are team members aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses
  (in terms of attitude, knowledge & skills)?

8 Appraising & Rewarding Performance

"What is measured improves"
Peter F. Drucker

The topic of this chapter is a controversial one. Some people have been arguing that we should throw away appraisals & performance review altogether. In *"Out of the Crisis"*, page 101, Dr. Deming (1982) states the following as one of the seven deadly diseases: "Evaluation of performance, merit rating, or annual review… The idea of merit rating is alluring, the sound of words captivates the imagination: pay for what you get; get what you pay for; motivate people to do their best, for their own good. The effect is exactly the opposite of what the words promise." He further states that one of the main effects of performance evaluation is nourishment of short-term thinking and short-time performance.[33]

Alfie Kohn, an American sociologist; is known for stating that "pay-for-performance is an outgrowth of behaviorism, which is focused on individual organisms, not systems – and true to its name, only looks at behaviors, not reasons or motives and the people who have them"[34]. He concludes that we should pay people well and fairly and then do everything possible to take money off people's minds. While seen as the fiercest critic of pay for reward systems, he has a point: these systems may clearly present several traps. For instance, a danger may be that contradictions emerge between the quality norms of an organization and what the payment system encourages staff to do. Also, having a "standard" reward system may make it impossible to give ample rewards to your real top talent, your top performers who clearly go beyond "normal" expectations. For instance, Jack Welsh almost quit General Electric when he was offered the standard raise after having spent a whole year working overtime.[35]

So do we actually need to throw away all these evaluation and reward systems?

8.1 Feedback & Responsibility

Not according to Ben Horowitz: "It's not because there is a war for talent that you need to make everybody feel good about themselves at all times. Being nice to everybody and not telling them what's wrong turns out to be a terrible thing. In good tech companies, bad news travels fast: when there are problems with a product, people talk about it and deal with it."[36] For this reason you don't want to wait for months before giving feedback. Just collecting all the information and waiting for the annual evaluation time to give it out doesn't make sense.

Elon Musk even goes further. He recommends actively seeking out negative feedback and very carefully listening to it. He asks people what they don't like about his products. To him, this is something people tend to avoid because they find it painful to express.[37]

Giving feedback may work better for employees than for others. Some people are "*externally referenced*", which means they require more input from the outside world (both in the forms of "approval" as well as feedback). They might lose their motivation when they do not get sufficient feedback on their contribution, including specific guidance on how to improve things in the future and/or when, by not communicating clearly, their boss gives the impression that he doesn't care about his employees' growth and well-being. Other people tend to be "*internally referenced*". They can figure out how they are doing for themselves and need less approval. Their downside is that it might more difficult to make them listen to feedback. In the latter case, suggestions might work, along with asking them what they themselves think and to explain what they could do differently.[38]

Of course, looking back only makes sense if one can learn from it, and if it really feeds the system for the future. But that's what the word initially meant when it was used by engineers: you feed input back into the system. It should be food for thought. Which is why some people are using the word "feed forward", to stress that feedback is only useful when one can figure out how to use it for creating a better future. Marshall Goldsmith defined feed-forward as "focusing on solutions, rather than mistakes, on the future, rather than the past", with an idea of "enhancing the self. What's in a name? Feedback and feed-forward are two sides of the same coin. What matters is to become a better person for the future. If you want to become better, it implies that you got feedback from the past somehow that there was something to improve…

Another factor to take into account is to what extent people actually want to take responsibility or look to their boss for getting directions. Who needs to solve perceived "problems" at work? Instead, an employee will often be regarded as more talented when they do not only notice a "problem", but also can come up with the solution to it (or at least bring a proposal with them, when they walk up to their boss to present the "problem").

Adapt your feedback and follow-up style to match your talent's preferences

Do you know to what extent your employees are internally referenced and to what extent they need feedback (and can do something constructive with it)?

Do you know whether people want sole responsibility, or whether they prefer to share it with others?

8.2 Appraisal & Reward Systems

In his article, *The Talent Myth* (2002), Malcolm Gladwell warned against "rewarding talented people disproportionately, and pushing them into ever more senior positions." To him, McKinsey's vision on talent management advocates a "differentiation and affirmation process": "Employers, they argue, need to sit down once or twice a year and hold a 'candid, probing, no-holds-barred debate about each individual,' sorting employees into A, B, and C groups. The A's must be challenged and disproportionately rewarded. The B's need to be encouraged and affirmed. The C's need to shape up or be shipped out."

It's clear that such a strategy has several pitfalls. A first challenge is to "sort" employees in a correct way. What is the "correct way" anyway, according to whom and based on what criteria? For sales and call center positions, this seems reasonably easy: there you have a lot of objective information, such as data on sales volumes, churn rate, customer satisfaction, numbers of sales calls done, call time, etc. But even then, when we ask organizations to rate their staff in these positions, the process for defining an objective rating often turns out to be harder than expected. For most positions, and certainly for management, no data is ever objective. It's not surprising therefore that we have come across firms where remuneration had little to do with real performance. Just rewarding "potential" doesn't make much sense if the person hasn't been able to deliver in the past.

Secondly, in some organizations, ratings and compensation are closely kept secrets, because everyone fears that many people will be demotivated when the real figures come out. Maybe subjectivity is the cause. The most notorious case was when we were asked to build a model of excellence for a law firm in order to predict who was made of the right stuff to become a partner. Not only did the compensation of partners not match their accomplishments, but the real "success rate" had to remain top secret.

Thirdly, a strategy of promoting talented people too quickly may create too much turnover. This is particularly the case for managerial positions, where it may take 3 years to really achieve something. And maybe the manager should remain in the position one or two years more before you really see long-term effects.

So what should you do instead? First separate feedback and appraisal from salary discussions. Rather than carrying out only one appraisal meeting a year, schedule a quarterly meeting to evaluate how the employee is doing, both in relation to their job as well as certain developmental goals, and to set new developmental goals for the next quarter. Call this a type of coaching if you prefer. Make sure that these meetings are documented. To avoid having to do too much work on these meetings, put the employee in charge of documenting the meeting themselves. Once a year, schedule a meeting to discuss salary and various rewards and benefits. Of course, the conclusions of the quarterly reviews will be used as input when discussing rewards and promotions. If a manager can objectively assess the added value of an employee, it will be easier to reward them accordingly.

Secondly, remember the famous Harvard Business Review article *"One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?"* by Frederick Herzberg which made the case for his Motivator-Hygiene theory. Even though it was first published in 1968, it's still highly relevant today and is high on the list of best HBR articles ever. The article clearly states that the principle consisting in spiraling salaries and increasing fringe benefits is not working. As long as an employee feels that their compensation package is comparable to what they should be earning according to market standards, you are doing fine. Paying people too much may actually create other problems, which we will discuss in the next chapter.

The recommendation of the article was to focus on real motivators, which come from within the individual. According to Herzberg, these emerge from interest in the work itself; getting recognition; the pleasure of achieving results; opportunities for personal growth; and feeling a sense of responsibility. The box below translates this in more specific suggestions. Just a word of warning: not all these factors may motivate individual employees to the same extent. And the applicability of some of these may also depend on culture. Adapt the advice below on the basis of the specific information you have about someone's motivation triggers (*see chapter 3*).

Herzberg's Guidelines – Working on the Real Motivators

- Make sure the person feels in charge: delegate responsibility and provide freedom and autonomy; have less control, and more accountability; give people a complete task-unit.
- Consider having more direct communication instead of hierarchically-based communication
- Adapt the task to the individual instead of the other way round (e.g. make the job challenging)
- Enable employees to grow towards more expertise (e.g. specialization in task, case…)

In addition to working on motivational factors, also check whether the other "hygiene factors" are OK. Apart from salary, these include the relationship with the direct boss and the kind of supervision they receive, other interpersonal relations, work conditions, the way the company is run, etc.

An example:
Mobistar, a Belgian Telecommunications Company, set up Certification programs for a range of sales profiles. Obtaining a certificate is an achievement and is a way of being recognized for that achievement, which goes beyond sales bonuses. A salesperson will be certified if they have a good attitude and the right level of knowledge and skills. Many HR processes are aligned with this certification. It begins with the recruiting process which checks that candidates are checked have an attitude close enough to the model, and some basic sales skills. Once hired, the new recruit receives training to learn the skills and knowledge required to be a good salesperson. They then get on the job coaching, to make sure they further refine their attitude and skills. On a regular basis, Mobistar organizes knowledge testing, to see whether salespeople have the necessary knowledge about the products to offer the solution that will best match the customer's needs.

8.3 Exit

A consequence of an appraisal and reward systems may be that one is forced to conclude that an individual isn't the right "fit" for the position. Maybe the position has changed, or the person himself has changed (e.g. lost motivation). A recent survey by Bain & Company found that engagement was lowest in the lower tier of the company, where people have less control but more customer contact.[39] Taken collectively, employees on the frontline have the best knowledge of what customers want and what bothers them.

But if the right person isn't at the right place, this can seriously damage the rest of the organization. A misfit needs to be addressed. Maybe training and coaching can solve the problem, but it that doesn't work, the person should be asked to take on another position or to leave the organization.

Incapable people are not the only people to leave an organization, as talented people may also decide to leave. In that case, look for feedback by conducting an exit interview to find out what caused their departure. And don't be satisfied too quickly if the answer is "I will earn more money" or "I will get more responsibility". Check out all of Herzberg's factors! You may obtain further feedback this way about how the organization is doing and what should be done differently.

Tip: Set up an Alumni Program

Very few people see their job as being for life these days. But at the same time, people may come back and they may even bring some new skills which they may have acquired while working elsewhere. An alumni program can serve as a way to maximize access to talented former staff.

9 Retention & Succession Planning

However useful a strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.
Winston Churchill

Why do people quit their jobs? They may be frustrated that their manager doesn't understand them. Or maybe their job no longer seems meaningful to them. Or perhaps they just got bored with it, no longer being challenged by the job, and every workday seemed a repeat of the same old story. And to some it might be the reverse: the organization may appear to change too fast, and this need for change is not understood.

Much of the above is highly subjective. Depending on how much change or stability a person likes, one can predict how fast a job could become demotivating for them. If people thrive on change, they might end up looking for a new job after just two years. If they like stability, they might resist change. But the question is also what one considers as "change". For a salesperson doing the same job for more than 10 years, the small changes in products and the ever-changing customer base may be sufficient to keep them motivated. Another salesperson in the same job might have the impression after 3 or 4 years that "they've seen it all", "been there, done that, got the T-shirt". It may be that the first one is noticing more the small details. But if the second person had the impression that they could be doing another, perhaps better, job than they are doing at the moment and that they feel stuck in their existing one, the situation could lead to a burnout.

Whatever the cause may be, one shouldn't underestimate the costs of losing a talented employee, or worse, of having an unmotivated employee on the payroll. To the extent that the organization could have prevented some of the causes above, it is its responsibility for losing money.

9.1 Don't Burn Out the Talented People

A danger for staff members who are considered "talented" lies in the risk that they may get over-burdened. Their manager knows they are perfectly able to do a certain task, and so it's tempting to pass it on to them. The talented individual may know themselves that they can do it, but the sheer burden may make it impossible. Sometimes, although the situation isn't what they prefer, they may choose to hang on and work harder, even when asked to achieve goals that may not make much sense to them personally, or if asked to do things that no longer present a challenge to them. Their manager might ignore some of this, and worse, pass them over when it's time to look for candidates who deserve a promotion.

Time Management or assertiveness trainers might claim that they have solutions to these problems, that the person just needs to learn how to say "No" or "That's enough", but this is too simplistic, as they often dare not refuse for fear of being disciplined. Of course, an individual can learn to find ways to cope with the situation, such as learning better manners to deal with stress, avoiding perfectionism, learning to focus (rather than to multitask), creating a balance between their work and other aspects of life, or by finding some meaningful and enjoyable activities outside of their work-context, etc.. But, most often, it is unrealistic to expect that such a situation will be resolved without a helping hand from the organization, overruling the line management who is charge of the talented person. In several countries, laws are put into place to oblige large organizations to offer their employees support in cases where this is needed.

A couple of years ago one of my students in an emotional intelligence class clearly was in this situation. She was the top salesperson in a part of the organization, and had been their number 1 salesperson for several years in a row. She was ready to move on, but although she was one of the people in the team who looked out for her colleagues, she had been passed over when they had been looking for an assistant manager. Given that she worked in a remote area, applying for promotion outside the sales department didn't really appeal to her, given that it would entail having to commute to the headquarters and might result in a loss of earnings. In a nutshell, she felt stuck in her current position. This is the type of situation that leads to a burn-out, and sure enough, soon after the training I learned that she ended up being at home diagnosed with "depression". Luckily for her, the story ends reasonably well. Even if the organization didn't offer her a solution, she managed to get out of this situation because she invested in training outside the organization to learn new skills, learning to say "no" to unrealistic demands from the organization, and also how to manage and coach others. Finally she landed a job as team supervisor in another part of the organization which had offices in the same town. But maybe the organization missed a good opportunity to have a great sales coach with the talent to teach others how to become n°1 salesperson.

Signs that predict burn-out situations

- A person is overburdened: they have more tasks than they realistically can do during normal working hours and have difficulty prioritizing between tasks (e.g. because of conflicting goals)
- The meaningfulness of the job isn't really clear. The employee can't get satisfaction out of the work done or doesn't feel that their contribution makes a difference.
- A person has been too long in the same position – the job description doesn't offer challenges anymore and they can no longer grow or develop, but the organization doesn't notice and doesn't take the steps to get her out of this situation themselves (a bore-out is waiting..)

In many countries it's now mandatory to monitor the workplace for so called "psycho-social risks" which can be caused by the way the work is organized (including management style), the work content (including task load and emotional stress caused by difficult customer relationships, e.g. in call-centers), the work environment (how the workplace is physically arranged, noise level, etc.) and other factors, such as development opportunities and evaluation procedures, The signs mentioned above for burn-out are amongst those to be monitored. Further "signs" might actually be bad predictors.

It's not necessarily because a work situation is considered "stressful" by some that all employees in that situation are actually stressed. The amount of stress someone experiences depends on their attitude. Eg. Somebody who doesn't have much patience will be stressed if they need to wait for too long (for instance while standing in a queue or stuck in a traffic jam). Others might be stressed by observing some of the work habits of that same person, because things never can go fast enough. There is also no clear correlation between experiencing "stress" and unhealthy living habits (such as smoking, drinking, bad food habits, BMI>30). Stress and unhealthy habits do seem to correlate with contribute to physical health problems (e.g. higher risk on heart diseases), but some people might actually better cope with stressful situations by living a so-called unhealthy life.

Likewise, it's not because some people prefer to work alone that an open plan office has to be a problem, quite the contrary. To some people it would be a punishment if they had to work all day in their own office with the door closed. Which type of work environment people prefer can be derived from their attitude and their motivational preferences.

Apart from looking for personal preferences, in line with what was advocated in chapter 4, this book recommends modeling excellence. Such a model enables you to adapt the workplace in all its facets to suit most talented people. If this has already been done, "psycho-social" problems experienced by an employee may actually be an indicator that they don't fit the job or the organizational culture, or that there is no fit inside the team where they were working.

9.2 Flexibility & Part-time employment

It makes sense to consider where and how flexibility can help to increase retention, work satisfaction and productivity. The old model whereby a boss required his employees to be present in the office "from 9 till 5" is getting replaced with several formulas allowing part-time work and flexible working hours. Organizations are now factoring in workers' needs and working time preferences, which vary by gender as well as life cycle.[40]

In several European countries, over 25% of employees have a part-time job[41] Women, young people and older workers are more likely to have jobs amounting to fewer than 30 work-hours. Up to 15% of employees work at home, and this number is probably even higher if you only take into account knowledge workers who often only require a computer with internet access, and thus can work from basically any location on the planet. By organizing work the way the worker desires, these flexible formulas allow for a better quality of life, and can also help avoiding stress related to the daily commute and its accompanying traffic jams.

It may also help to attract talent. For instance, a large US organization recently allowed one of its talented Vice-Presidents to work out of Denver, rather having to move to Washington to be located at the corporate headquarters.

Unfortunately, in many workplaces, the reality still seems to suggest that the higher one's level of skill and experience, the harder it becomes to have a flexible job. Despite numerous arguments to the contrary, many organizations continue to consider that people who ask for flexible working hours are not ambitious enough or lack responsibility and their likelihood of getting promoted will decrease. As a result, many part-time workers are actually overqualified or skilled[42].

At the same time, when organizations get into trouble because of lower demand or raising competition which obliges them to reduce costs, flexibility may be offering an escape route. Cuts in overtime work, reductions of weekly working hours, forced or prolonged vacations, temporary lay-offs or temporary plant closures come to mind, or more innovative formulas such as the possibility to accumulate "debit hours" on working-time accounts or training during idle hours. But if organizations do not allow for flexibility during periods when business is good, how can they expect workers to accept such measures during a downturn?[43]

9.3 Knowledge Management & Succession Planning

When we address the topic of Knowledge Management, some of the key questions to ask are:

- What happens if one of your talented employees hits a tree while driving a car?
- For which knowledge and talents is there a "bottleneck"?

The idea of knowledge management is to make better use of the knowledge present in the organization, and to ensure that the organization will not lose knowledge if or when some talented persons are no longer available (e.g. because of an accident, or because they leave). When it comes to ensuring that the needed talent (in terms of attitude, knowledge and skills) is retained when a person moves on or needs to be replaced, succession planning can be seen as a significant part of knowledge management. Rather than keeping their knowledge to themselves and departing with it, a proactive star performer will be taking measures to assure they have shared it with a suitable replacement. After all, if their talent is seen as irreplaceable, they risk remaining stuck in a particular post. Some outsourcing of competencies, such as working with self-employed talented subcontractors, external companies or networks, may have their pitfalls. It increases the risk that you may not have the talent you need, or that your competitors will gain access to the knowledge.

Some examples:

The CIO of a company was forced out after a dispute with the CEO. Now it turns out that this CIO was the only person in the company who had a clear overview of all processes of the organization and how they had to be supported by computer systems. This talented person co-founded a start-up to develop software for the industry, joining forces with another contractor who also had gained experience by developing software for her previous employer as well as similar companies. Their joined knowledge resulted in a leading product which is now sold to several competitors of the original organizations who helped to create the knowledge, helping these companies to be more competitive. On top of that, the company who had lost their top talent still needs to rely on the founder of the new start-up, because they have failed to attract new talent who could take over this role.

Key lessons? (a) A toxic organization can push out key talent. (b) Knowledge Management and succession planning would have helped to avoid the talent problem the organization is now facing.

As already mentioned in the Introduction, finding good IT specialist is a common problem leading to "talent wars". An additional problem is that good programmers may conclude, after 5 to 10 years of career, that they deserve to be promoted to project leader. Not only does the organization then risk losing a good programmer, but they might also end up with a lousy project leader, people often ending up appointed to their level of incompetence, as the saying goes[44]. When doing a development center project for a large bank in Luxembourg, consultant-coach Peter Van Damme found that half the project leaders and managers would actually have preferred to return to their previous position as a programmer!

More key lessons? (c) Find ways to allow key talents to experience at first hand that leading a team may not be as motivating to them as doing their current job. (d) Modeling Excellence of top performers may enable them to help others learning from them. Giving them an additional task as mentor or coach of upcoming talents may increase their motivation to remain in a job. (e) Adapt reward systems to make it more interesting to remain in a job for which one has an aptitude. A "promotion" from a position as a successful salesperson or senior programmer to a position of manager might (should?) entail a decrease in salary.

Of course, retaining a person in a position might result in a burn-out or bore-out. Talented people should be helped to grow vertically and techniques such as Job Crafting (see chapter 11) should be used to change the job for the better, so that the person remains motivated.

Retention & Succession-planning – A Summary

1. Figure out what is a normal "talent cycle" for a given job or role.
2. Check whether people's attitude & motivation still corresponds their work environment and the way their work is organized.
3. Examine whether people stay as long as is expected and learn from it:
   a. If people stay longer than this period of time, you risk a burnout when the person gets bored and is no longer challenged by the job.
   b. If people stay for a shorter period than you might expect, it may be due to recruiting mistakes (the person not being apt for the job or not being motivated for it), or management mistakes (promises broken, people not getting along with manager, etc.)

4. Plan for successions and promotions
   a. Prepare yourself well in advance to replace talented people who may be ready to move on.
   b. Negotiate with them if possible a handover to ensure knowledge is preserved within the organization.
   c. Make sure you keep talented people on board by offering them a career path or additional tasks that stretches them.

10 Programs for High Potentials

If an egg is broken by outside force, life ends. If broken by inside force, life begins. Great things always begin from within.
Jim Kwik

You may have heard the story of Thomas J. Watson, founder of IBM[45], who was asked somewhere during the 1940s if he was going to fire an employee who had made a mistake that cost the company $600,000 (which was a fortune, at the time). No, he replied, "I just spent $600,000 training him." Watson was a firm believer that progress was only possible if people dared to take risks and think through the causes and consequences of their mistakes. He saw this as a key part of the development process of both his employees and of new products.

A program for High Potentials generally consists of a series of assignments to get experience with various parts of the organization, but in an accelerated manner. It's consistent with a quote from Richard Branson: "If someone offers you an amazing opportunity and you are not sure you can do it, say yes –then learn how to do it later." Where a manager typically remains 3–5 years in a position, assignments in a high potential program tend to last 6–12 months. During the program, they receive additional coaching and training to put in practice during the assignments. Various assessments take place, at the start, during and at the end of the program to track how candidates are doing. This chapter will cover a couple of examples.

10.1 Selecting Candidates Into the Program

Some years ago one of my customers decided to set up a high potential program, where the future generation of middle and top managers were offered opportunities to fast-track their careers. Because this was a government organization, they had to offer any person with a master degree an opportunity to participate in an "exam" or assessment, if you prefer a more modern word. Over 200 people were entitled to apply. Nobody in the HR team felt motivated to carry out 200 interviews. We decided to use the iWAM assessment.

In order to know which profile we were looking for, we first asked several top managers who were seen as great exemplars to complete the questionnaire. On the basis of their results, we created a model of excellence and a customized report which would show prospective candidates to what extent they matched the demands of their future role in terms of work, attitude and motivation. All 200 people were informed that they could go on-line and take the iWAM. After completing the questionnaire they immediately got to see their test results, along with the customized report which would explain to what extent their attitude patterns matched those of the top executives. Given that we couldn't exclude anyone, candidates were informed that the text was not a basis for excluding them, but that their results would be discussed with them during the next steps of the assessment process. If they chose to cancel their participation, nobody inside the organization would find out about their test results.

In a nutshell, the iWAM was used as a self-assessment which presented the candidates with a mirror, allowing them to judge themselves. Of the 150 people who participated in this survey-step, only 40 chose to apply, which simplified the remainder of the assessment process. Only 2 candidates showed up despite having a motivational profile which clearly didn't match the modern leadership attitude the organization was looking for.

During the remainder of the assessment process we validated whether they had the right attitude or were coachable, and checked to what extent their current skill level was good enough to participate in the training program. Because of the nature of the organization, some union representatives were given the opportunity to participate in the assessment interviews to check whether our process was objective. 25 candidates were retained and no complaints were filed.

Conclusion:

1) When you build a model of excellence and develop a customized report, you end up with a tool that can serve as a valid self-assessment which will have a high level of credibility.
2) In government organizations where official exams need to organized, this may significantly reduce the number of candidates needing to participate in the remainder of the assessment process, thus reducing costs.

3) Because the model is based on clear and objective criteria, few discussions about the findings of the assessment procedure will be necessary.
4) The self-assessment also has an added value for people who did not chose to participate in the next steps of the assessment, because they got feedback why a high level managerial position may not fit who they are today, without excluding them from future opportunities to look for a promotion.

10.2 Running the program and evaluating the results

Gill Coleby, a consultant and coach based in the UK, helps Barclays with their Finance Graduate Leadership Program. The contribution of Coleby Consulting got the award for most outstanding training organization at Barclays. At the core of the program is the "Development Journey", combining assessments, training and a rotation through several jobs. 40 High Potentials are enrolled in this program for three years, first focusing on functional experience and then on leadership. All graduates begin with 2 or 3 placements around the business, for a period of up to about nine months. Next to these placements, they receive several training modules, some of which typical courses in communication and presentation skills, but others which focus on several of the topics we have discussed in this book, such as work attitude and motivation, and modeling excellence. The training modules feature pre-work, attendance at a day's workshop incorporating theory and practice, and an assignment. Coaches provide ongoing feedback and support throughout the program. During the second period, the best graduates can be part of the Leadership Development Network, which aims to develop the future leaders of Barclays, and which invests in potential leaders with a list of additional courses to attend.

At the end of the first 18 months all the graduates come together for an assessment day, which determines whether the graduate can stay at Barclays and can move on to the second part of the program. They need to demonstrate three of the core skills required to make an impact on their second rotation and to gain some credibility. These skills include becoming a highly performing willing learner, knowing how to set and manage their own goals, and how to handle challenging situations. As a learner, one of the main ways that graduates can show talent is in their willingness to learn and in their ability to ask questions that show their intellect and understanding.

The day is constructed out of several parts, each aiming to test several competencies. More specifically, it consists of an **Interview** to evaluate business fit, motivation and drive, their commercial attitude and their personal & interpersonal excellence; a **Presentation** where the graduates present an overview of what they have learnt during the first part of the program (from both the training and the placements), and how they see themselves evolve in the future; a **group exercise** during which they are required to work as a team on a realistic task based on what's happening in the business world at the moment of the assessment day; and finally **Psychometrics**, in this case the iWAM, which has been calibrated by constructing a specific model of excellence. In order to be objective, outside consultants serve as assessors during this day. Their conclusions are then presented to Barclays, who takes the final decision and communicates the results to the graduates. After that communication, graduates will receive further detailed feedback and coaching.

High Potential Projects – Lessons Learned

- Build a model of excellence for both the attitude and skills desired from high potentials.
- Design a "Graduate Development Journey", consisting of job assignments & training, with several evaluation points along the way to track progress.
- Assess the skill level at several stages: as an entry requirement to enroll into the program, as an intermediate point to track advancement, and at the end to see whether the program goals have been achieved.
- Based on the assessment of skills and attitude, set specific developmental goals for each individual

10.3 Guerrilla projects for the Nimble

What can we do if our organization doesn't have the size to create its own "talent Program" for High Potentials?

One approach is giving people a chance to do things they haven't done before, by providing them with a series of different assignments which, depending on the size of the organization, may entail moving to different departments, daughter firms and/or geographical locations (even internationally).

Another approach is to team up with other organizations to create a common program. Whereas the examples in the previous sections of this chapter were specific to one organization, an alternative can be do design a "multi-company project". In such a program, which was led by a team including Peter Van Damme, a Belgian trainer consultant, 4 or 5 companies were allowed send 4 high potentials each. The contents were somewhat similar to those included in the Barclay's case, and also incorporated the idea of setting personal development goals at the start of the program, and a "graduation" at the end. This program has proved especially useful for organizations lacking the necessary size to run a full high potential program in-house. A further benefit of this approach is that the high-potentials can learn from each other, and identify the similarities across industries and the effects of different organizational cultures. The disadvantage that it's not tailored to a specific organization and needs to focus on generic ideas of skills and attitudes one expects from a leader.

Growing Talent: Some "generic characteristics" for High Potentials

- Awareness of personal strengths and development areas
- Enthusiasm, going for their dreams, having the "zeal" to get there, fulfillment
- Eagerness to learn, open to change and sufficient confidence to embrace the unknown and to step outside their comfort zone
- High on Trust, creator of Win-win-wins, team player wanting to obtain harmony & unity
- Taking into account personal happiness and wanting to get the most out of life

11 Job Crafting

"A man must make his opportunity, as oft as find it"
Francis Bacon

Many of the preceding chapters started from the premise that one needs to create a fit between the employee and the given job requirements. The focus was on hiring the right person, and to work with them to close the gap between their current attitude, knowledge and skill set and those needed for the job. Even if this book stresses the importance of consulting the exemplars of each function by using a modeling approach, this is a top-down approach. Job crafting, however, is a bottom-up approach which aims at empowering employees to take initiatives to improve their own job conditions, thus leveraging the unique knowledge they have of both their jobs and themselves.[46]

It starts from the premise that many jobs are actually quite flexible. In a knowledge economy, with fast changing technology, star performers will actually take initiatives to bend their job description into uncharted areas when they feel they can create more value to the organization.[47] In other words, one can to some extent change the job to make it correspond better with the employee. It's about turning the job one has into the job one wants, and thus increase the level of motivation and efficiency. It could also be about finding better ways to combine the job with other aspects of life (e.g. kids, hobbies, …) As long as it doesn't harm colleagues, the overall team or the organization, why wouldn't you allow some freedom on the way people organize their work, or organize it amongst themselves? And maybe employees will also be telling you how the job and the procedures one needs to follow could be improved in general… The Job Crafting approach can also be used during a merger or reorganization, because it allows tapping into the collective intelligence and creates a bigger buy-in.

When doing Job Crafting workshops, Wim Thielemans, a Belgian specialist at this approach, recommends that students focus on their strengths and on the parts of the job they enjoy doing most. Ask participants to list the tasks they do and to calculate how much time each of these takes. Then ask them to make a list of what they like to do, what they want to do, what tasks drain their energy and which they think could be better done by someone else. The outcome is to get people to be happier at work by molding their job to make it fit better with their own preferences and to allow them to make better use of their existing skills. Maybe one can rearrange tasks between team-workers, enable some people to work together, allow telecommuting because some people can concentrate better when they work alone, etc. Participants learn to take more initiative to work on these organizational aspects of their jobs, better sharing the work amongst team members rather than expecting that their bosses or HR finds a solution for them. This approach has many positive effects, among which increased engagement, reduced absenteeism and longer retention.

Although many people may be motivated at work by doing different things all the time, starting something, completing it and moving on to something else, this is not a universal rule by any means. In an advanced workshop on motivation aimed at medical practitioners in the UK, Denis Bridoux identified that medical doctors who, from the outside, may be perceived as carrying out repetitive tasks for years on end, actually have a quite different way of motivating themselves and of sustaining their motivation. They like nothing better than doing what they are best at doing, which is seeing patients, diagnosing their health problems, prescribing and following up on the results of tests undertaken. What they appreciate most in their work is regularity, cyclicity and rhythm. Even though they may be perceived as doing the same job all day long, they have an ability to appreciate difference with similarity. Thus, each new patient doctors see offers them something new and fresh to think about every few minutes, which stimulates and sustains their interest, problem-solving on a micro level, as it were.

However, anything which disrupts their established regular work pattern is perceived as distracting and demotivating. General medical practitioners deeply resent the fact that each new government, once in power, wants to reform the National Health Service… As each new reform appears to reduce to nothing all their efforts at creating order and at developing a meaningful work pattern, doctors perceive it as preventing them from sustaining whatever structure they have endeavored to establish. They are also profoundly annoyed at having to carry out many administrative chores, such as an ever-increasing requirement for form-filling, which they see as a misuse of their time, a misapplication of their energies and an underuse of their competence, as it diverts them from their core calling, which is to make people better. Thus each new wave of reforms is accompanied by a wave of stress and burnout among medical staff, and the growing pile of administrative documents they are asked to complete is an ongoing source of bore-out.

Medical doctors are not the only people to sustain long-term motivation in repetitive situations. For instance, Rudolf Laban, a movement specialist and the inventor of the dance-notation system which bears his name, noticed this during the 1940s when he was invited by the UK War ministry to help streamline chain assembly lines as part of the war effort.[48] As that time, the weaponry production lines were mainly staffed by women, because most men were sent to one of the many war fronts. These complex assembly lines had been developed following principles pioneered in the USA by Frederick Taylor in the 1880s and '90s, the chief of which was that "Economy of Movement => Economy of time => Economy of Money". However, the complexity of the tasks required, the infernal cadence imposed on staff and the noise of the machine tools lead to the exhaustion, the injury, the disability and even the death of a number of employees.

Laban visited a problematic assembly line to see how it was set up and to identify what caused the problems. While studying the line in operation, he noticed that one of the employees, a middle-aged woman, had a slightly different way of doing things from her colleagues. She never seemed to get tired and was always in a good mood and, although her movements seemed a bit more ample than her colleagues, they had none of their jerkiness and always maintained perfect rhythm. Although employed there for some time, she never seemed to get tired, was not bored with her repetitive work, and had never experienced exhaustion or sustained any hurt or injury. She had not even become deaf or developed tinnitus. Laban interviewed her to ask how she operated. He learned that she had initially suffered from the noise and the rhythm, like most of her colleagues, but that, being musical and a good dancer, at some point the noise produced by the machines had spontaneously turned into music in her mind and then, that "it was just a question of letting the music do all the work and suggest the best way of making the movements by following its rhythm." He asked her to teach her colleagues to do what she did and all the problems experienced on this line disappeared.

To summarize, job crafting is an empowerment process. It's about learning to innovate one's job, changing it from within, taking small steps to make it evolve, to make better use of one's talents, or by learning from others. Star Performers are doing that by themselves, intuitively. As such it's about helping people to become more talented…

Job Crafting – Lessons Learned

Empower the employee to tweak or mold their job to better suit their preferences, taking into account the following principles:

- Improve employee resources by increasing talent: provide training and other opportunities to broaden their scope of operation (job enrichment or rotation)
- Agree with the employee suitable criteria to define what satisfactory standards consist of.
- Enable the employee to define the satisfaction they derive from the job according to their own criteria, as long as they come up with the goods to satisfactory standards within realistic deadlines.
- Let the employee find the rhythm which suits them best, instead of imposing one on them. Let them use their skills to the best of their abilities, and find ancillary staff to carry out the tasks that would distract them from using their competences.
- Protect the employee from undesired distractions or disruptions (e.g. consider telecommuting).

12 The Talent Life Cycle: Integrating all of it

Hire for Attitude. Train for Competence. Coach to Perform. Manage to Retain.
jobEQ's mantra

In the previous chapters, we have discussed all the topics of the talent life cycle, from finding out to attract the right candidates, over to recruiting and deploying them, how to develop and evaluate their results and how to retain them in a position and considering their exit. The figure below illustrates that ideally all of these steps in the Life Cycle should be connected to a model of excellence. At the end of this chapter, you will find a checklist to evaluate the talent Life Cycle. If all of this is done, there is one remaining task for the talent Manger: measuring performance and using that as feedback to improve upon the life cycle where needed.

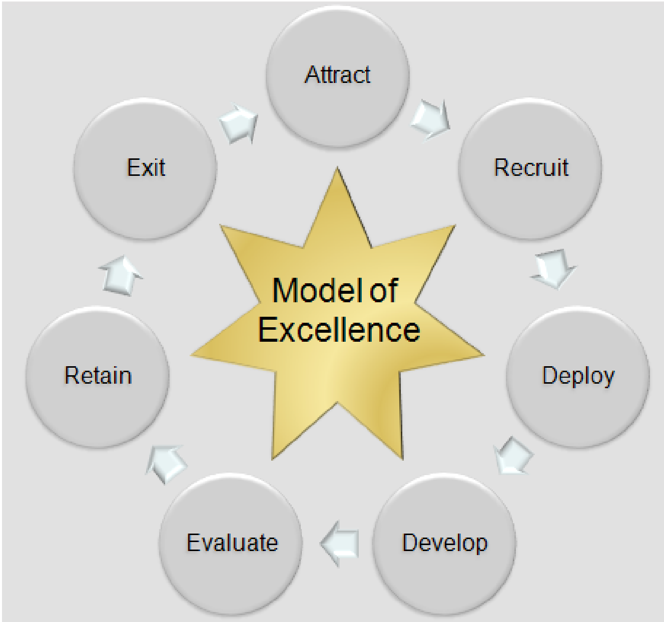

Figure 5. The Talent Life Cycle

12.1 Measuring Success

Listen to the real customers of Talent Management. Rather than talking to trainers, coaches and recruiters or to other people involved in HR, the real customers are the managers of the operational divisions for whom the talent is being recruited, developed and retained. Dare to ask the right questions: How happy are the customers with the current solutions they get in this area? Are the right people being hired? How long does it take to get a newcomer up to speed? How is overall performance? Do talented people stay long enough?

If you come across success stories, help to make them spread throughout the organization. Build on their momentum to replicate their success. If you come across projects that could have been executed better, learn from them or check whether there is an opportunity for doing something different. And in cases the customers are really feeling the pain caused by their current situation, they may be willing to help you set up more advanced programs, perhaps applying some of the principles set forth in this book.

But success can also be measured in more formal ways. Since the 1990s, the implementation of Total Quality Management (such as ISO 9001 in Europe) and continuous improvement processes have forced HR professionals to focus more on measurement and evaluation. Vincent Desmet, a Belgian specialist in Talent Management with over 15 years of experience as Consultant and Interim HR manager, stresses the importance of knowing your numbers: "HR metrics gives you an insight in the situation of your organization, helps you to prioritize, enables you to compare internally as well as externally, gives you an objective measurement of your actions, ensures adaptability, flexibility and evaluation. Finally it helps you to set objectives and communicate those objectives to your team as you move through your project and your change management in general."

Some Frequently Used HR Metrics:

- Presence ratio: total worked hours / FTE
- Added value per worker
- Average cost per worker
- Development of leadership talents: % of employees in a development program
- Elasticity of the personal cost
- HR / employee ratio
- HR expense
- Absenteeism
- Age pyramid
- Organizational fitness review
- Performance management employees: average of performance meetings per employee
- Average retention <-> retention by division
- Recruitment fulfillment
- % of hired candidates out of shortlist
- Knowledge management; degree of knowledge that is mapped in a systematic manner

All this data can be found in your HR department as well as in the social balance sheet.

12.2 Return on Investment

Resources of organizations are always limited and budget constraints are the reality of the day. Sometimes, "evidence" such as improved sales numbers or reduced employee turnover will be enough to convince top management of the effectiveness of new programs. A more elaborate method is based on Return on Investment (ROI) calculations. Referring to the proven ROI of training & coaching projects may be key in order to establish credibility and to justify training budgets. Before doing a project, sell it using the ROI estimate. I came across a case where the entire coaching group, consisting of 9 coaches who were following up on some 200 salespersons was dismantled during a reorganization because nobody could explain to the new CEO that it wouldn't be more profitable to have 9 more salespeople instead of the coaches…

Again, a considerable number of books have been written on this topic. The all time classic is probably "*Return on Investment in training and performance improvement programs*" by Jack J. Philips (1997). As this author acknowledges, isolating the effects of separate programs (e.g. training) can be quite challenging and converting data in monetary values might even seem harder. Essentially, ROI is a simple formula:

$$ROI\ (\%) = 100 \text{ x } \frac{\text{Net Program Benefits}}{\text{Net Program Costs}}$$

Here is an example of such a calculation.

In this particular case, a consultant implemented the "Hire for Attitude" mantra. The iWAM's model of excellence technology was used to determine which were the important motivation patterns and to help the company redesigning the recruiting ad by using iWAM's suggestions regarding motivating language. Given this company's reputation and brand, normally about 100 people react to their job ads. With the redesigned campaign, more than 300 candidates responded, 120 of which were tested using iWAM.

Using jobEQ's tools also helped accelerate the recruiting process: the time spent on recruiting was cut into half. With the new recruiting process bringing objective criteria, both the HR staff and the Sales staff agreed on the candidate (to hire or not). iWAM's reports pointed out that, given the kind of job and ideal conditions, the salespersons would stay between 2 and 3 years on average. After that period, they would either get a promotion inside the company or go elsewhere. In reality, using iWAM reduced staff turnover by more than 62 percent.

The exact numbers:

• Total sales people	40 (26 newly hired)
• Cost of firing (average)	1,500 Euro / person
• Cost of hiring (because of low initial productivity)	5,000 Euro / person
	• Cost of training & coaching:
• Group training (4 days/10-person group)	600 Euro / person
• 3 months personal coaching (4 hrs/day average)	150 Euro / person
• Cost of avoidable complaints per person	300 Euro /person
• Previous staff turnover rate	80% per year
• Expected turnover after this project	50% per year
• Actual turnover after this project (for the first year)	0%
• Actual turnover after this project (after one year)	30%

Savings for the company (1 year)

• Reduced ad costs	25,000 Euro
• Reduced recruiting, training, firing, and quality costs	90,000 Euro
• **Total savings** (conservative estimate)	**115,000 Euro**

Cost of working with jobEQ 13,500 Euro

This included (1) making a Model of Excellence, (2) the consulting fee of the certified iWAM consultant and (3) using the jobEQ software for testing candidates and ranking them against the model.

Conclusion: **Return on Investment** after 1 year: 100 x (115.000 – 13.500)/13.500 **752**% **ROI**
Benefits – Cost ratio: Each Euro invested saved the company 8.5 Euro!

As the example illustrates, calculating the ROI can definitely make the case of doing a project. The ROI figure in the example is actually an underestimate, since the 26 new recruits ended up realizing 140% of the team sales target, even if initially 4 extra salespersons had been planned. Of course, if your program wasn't successful (because of making one of the many mistakes against which this book warned you) the ROI might even be negative. According to Jack Philips, often ROI is not calculated, because of lack of time, fear for bad results, as well as lack of skills for doing a calculation as explained above. Some HR professionals think they might get away without measuring and reporting results, but that attitude might backfire, as was shown by the case where the CEO decided to scrap the whole coaching department… On the positive side, calculating the ROI can serve as a learning tool, helping to learn from failures as well as from successes.

Question:
What will be your Talent Management Metric of the Year?

12.3 Talent Life Cycle – Full Checklist (for each key position)

If you have implemented all the advice we have been sharing in this book, the following checklist should be fairly simple to answer:

1. **Attract:**
    - How consistent is the employer branding?
    - Does it attract the right candidates?
    - Is it based on a Model of Excellence?
    - If not? Do you need to adapt your advertising to attract motivated candidates?

2. **Recruit (Select & Hire):**
    - How do the people you select correspond to the Model?
    - Are there candidates you would like to hire that do not compare well to the Model?
    - Does the Model give you too many candidates?
    - Can you motivate the right candidates to join your organization?
    - If not, why not? Are you using your knowledge of the patterns in the Model of Excellence to motivate the candidates to say "Yes!"?

3. **Deploy:**
    - Do you create a developmental plan for each new employee based on motivational patterns where there is not a good match with your Model of Excellence? (As well as for other competencies?)

4. **Develop (Train & Coach):**
    - If you hire for attitude, be sure to train for competence!
    - Are you linking your training strategies to developmental plans?
    - Have you used the analysis of new hires from the Model of Excellence to help define both the training content and training strategies?
    - Are you coaching for performance? For Attitude? (This implies helping new recruits to use the skills and motivational patterns identified in the Model of Excellence.)
    - Are you planning for the next step in a person's career? (Giving them new challenges, expand their tasks, train them to advance, …)

5. **Evaluate:**
    - Do you conduct regular performance reviews?
    - Is a portion of the review based on checking behavior consistent with the performance?

6. **Retain:**
    - How is the situation with respect to the Herzberg's recommendations?
    - How well are the manager and the employees directly reporting to him getting along?
    - To what extent do job environment, work conditions and tasks match motivation and attitude?

7. **Exit:**
    - Are exit interviews being conducted?
      Is the data of these interviews evaluated for recurring patterns?

8. **Annual Review of the Cycle:**
    - Do you check how your Talent Life Cycle is doing annually?
    - Do you calculate ROI of programs? Do you have other metrics?
    - Do the people we hired perform as expected? (see achievements)
    - Does this lead to improvements of the steps of the Talent Life Cycle?

Finally, remember the wise words of Peter F. Drucker in his book *The Essential Drucker*: "To be sure, the fundamental task of management remains the same: to make people capable of joint performance through common goals, common values, the right structure, and the training and development they need to perform and to respond to change."

12.4 How jobEQ tools fit into the Talent Life Cycle

jobEQ's tools have been developed to support Talent Management along all stages of the Employee Life Cycle. Most of the contents of this section are a summary of what has been covered throughout the book.

1. **Attract:**
   - Build a Model of Excellence for the function: iWAM will measure attitude and motivation, the COMET methodology can be used to model which skills are needed. VSQ can be used to nail down the specifics of the organization's culture (in combination with the iWAM)
   - The iWAM model will indicate how to adapt your advertising to attract motivated candidates.

2. **Recruit (Select & Hire):**
   - Use the iWAM as a pre-screening tool to find out to what extent candidates match the model. Generate an iWAM ranking report to rank the candidates against the model and to decide who to interview first.
   - Employer branding: jobEQ provides your organization with customized web pages which will display a header with your branding on it. All iWAM reports are branded as well.
   - During an attitude-based interview, use the iWAM results to evaluate whether the candidate can be trained and coached to close the gaps in terms of attitude, motivation and cultural fits.
   - Plan a behavior-based interview to check whether the candidates have the knowledge & skills they need (and won't be taught during training).
   - After deciding who the best candidates are, offer them feedback about the selection process and explain how you plan to close the gaps by using training and coaching.
   - Use the iWAM Communication Report and your knowledge of the patterns in the Model of Excellence to motivate the candidates to say "Yes!"

3. **Deploy:**
   - The feedback from the selection process is also useful to create a developmental plan. Make sure it's based on the IWAM motivational patterns when there is not a good match with your Model of Excellence, as well as for knowledge and skills.
   - The manager should get an insight in the attitude and motivation of his new recruit. Offer him the iWAM Management Report and the iWAM Communication Report. Also make a paired comparison report showing potential areas of conflict between the manager and the new recruit.

4. **Develop (Train & Coach):**
    - The Model of Excellence should be used to help define both the training content and training strategies. The training design should be compatible with students' preferences (as indicated by the iWAM Team Communication Report).
    - Are you coaching for performance? For Attitude?
    - Use the iWAM reference comparison report of the model of excellence for the current function to check where the person needs coaching. Use the iWAM reference comparison report for potential future function to see in what direction they could develop (through new tasks, training,…).

5. **Evaluate:**
    - Use the iWAM to check to what extent possibilities exist for "Job Crafting": is there something that can be done to mold the jobs to make better use of the person's motivations & strengths?
    - The COMET software can be used to create a 360° feedback instrument, to evaluate how the talent is progressing in respect to the skills of the model of excellence (with regards to their current position and/or a future position).
    - Is the portion of the review based on checking behavior consistent with the performance? (Hint: The COMET will be helpful as well as some techniques explained in our book "*Mastering Mentoring & Coaching with Emotional intelligence*")

6. **Retain:**
   - Tailor Herzberg's recommendations for each individual, using the iWAM Management Report.
   - Use the information from the iWAM Paired Comparison Reports and the iWAM Team Report to check how well the manager is getting along with employees directly reporting to him.
   - Use the iWAM management report to check for early warning signals of burn outs (using the predicted time a person will remain motivated in their job).
   - Use the iWAM communication report and the Attitude Sorter Wheel to check to which extent the job environment, work conditions and tasks match the personal preferences in terms of motivation and attitude?

7. **Exit:**
   - If you are losing talented employees, check their iWAM for potential causes linked to attitude & motivation.
   - Correlate the time employees remain in the job with their score on the iWAM report comparing them with the model of excellence. Do top performers stay longer?

8. **Annual Review the Cycle:**
   - Do you check annually how your Model of Excellence is doing? Generate an iWAM ranking report and check its prediction against performance data of people in this function.
   - Generate an iWAM Team Report and see what can be done to make better uses of the Individual Strengths, as well as to see what the overall weaknesses of the team might be.
   - Aggregate the COMET data from 360° feedbacks and look for indicators that training programs, coaching strategies and other development activities need to be revised

For more information on the jobEQ tools and samples of the report, check out the jobEQ website:
www.jobEQ.com

13 Conclusion

"Excellence is a better teacher than mediocrity.
The lessons of the ordinary are everywhere. Truly profound and original insights
are to be found only in studying the exemplary."
Warren G. Bennis

At the end of the book, it's also worth pointing out a couple of things this book didn't cover in detail. We didn't address the question of who needs to be doing the HR work involved. It might be HR professionals (in house or outside resources). It could be line managers or other staff groups. Most probably, it's going to be collaborative work. HR could come up with the specialists; the line comes up with the content. I've seen cases where HR didn't take the initiative and the line decided to do it themselves with the help of outside consultants (and as a result, HR ended up being cut out of the process).

Secondly, we didn't cover all of the subjects in detail. There simply wasn't the space to do that. Even writing a thicker book wouldn't be enough. Almost every chapter contains 1 or even 2 topics which would deserve a separate book each. Actually, quite a few other books were mentioned, and the footnotes are often pointers to even more books. But however short our chapters have been, this book has accomplished a couple of things.

This book revisited the key areas which matter in a talent management system, each time starting by focusing on excellence and on talent, rather than on mediocrity or averages. This was done while taking into account a model in which attitude, knowledge and skills are seen as the key building blocks for human performance. We ended by pointing out that all the areas in which HR is involved deserve to be connected, integrated and aligned.

Another thread throughout the book is the importance of taking "jobs analysis" very seriously (what we have called "Modeling excellence" in this book) and using the resulting models as key building blocks for all your talent management activities. The avid reader will have noticed that many HR practices may lose their entire added value if job modeling isn't taken seriously. Worse, using a job profile which doesn't fit the reality of the organization may result in a negative return on investment, because it causes the organization to chase talent out of its doors, or because the organization misses the opportunities to recruit new top talent.

I hope that this book will prove to be a valuable resource for you to create a great talent management system, and if you need a helping hand, consider asking someone who is trained to apply the messages in this book or to provide them with a copy.

Annex 1. Some factors to take into account when selecting an assessment instrument

There are literally 1000s of questionnaires and tools, all of which all claim that they will help to solve your Talent Management issues. But how can you distinguish a good instrument from the pack? Here are some suggestions.

How modern is the instrument?
Some instruments are based on psychological theories going back to the 1920s. Many claims made by those theories have been proven wrong by current research in the areas of psychology and neurology. Check whether the underlying theory is still compatible with current research in psychology and cognitive sciences.

Is the instrument aimed at the work context?
Since the advent of cognitive science around 1983, researchers tend to acknowledge that everything is contextual. Simply stated, a person will not react in the same way on holiday as they are in the workplace (and you are probably grateful that they don't).

Does the instrument claim to solve everything?

Some instruments will pretend that they can measure attitude, values and skills. Well, the reality is that these 3 building blocks of competence need to be measured in different ways. For instance, you measure skills by doing simulations or by asking behavior-based questions. But it's not because someone can do something (they have the skill), that they will be doing it (having the right attitude). For measuring attitude, one needs to analyze the thinking patterns of a person. Measuring values is even harder. Value words, such as "caring" or "respect", can mean different things to different people.

To what extent is culture taken into account?

Many instruments developed in the UK and USA have been developed by people who have little experience with other cultures. Their instruments lack the sophistication to acknowledge cultural differences. As a bare minimum, when using the instrument outside the UK and the USA, the instrument should have norm groups or standard groups which calibrate the instrument based on culture. In an international organization it should be possible to evaluate the results of an individual against different cultures.

How does the instrument predict performance?

A good instrument can be calibrated to predict how current employees, as well as future ones, will perform in a specific job. This means that if you applied the instrument on your current staff in a specific position, it should be able to rank them quite accurately from "very good" to "struggling".

Does the instrument make a claim involving large numbers?

Some instruments will claim to be based on a survey of, say, 100.000 salespersons. While such a large number definitely is impressive, the question that you need to ask yourself is whether a salesperson who functions well in another work context would be functioning as well in your own organization. Many people will know examples of successful salespeople or managers who were not successful at all in their new work environment. "One size fits all" doesn't work – rather than detecting averages, statistics based on large numbers tend to deteriorate down to averages.

What application is the instrument developed for?

Some instrument developers recommend not using their instrument for an application such as recruitment, but "clever" salespersons or enthusiastic users may fail to acknowledge this. Be aware that, if an instrument isn't really developed for the work context or for recruiting specifically, your organization could be liable to claims of discrimination.

How is the instrument backed up by research?

It's not because the key developer has a PhD that the instrument is valid. For the reasons cited above, the research should be recent and come from different universities in different countries, by preference showing it has been used in a variety of cultures.

Author biography

Patrick Merlevede is an internationally recognized specialist in the areas of talent management and emotional intelligence. Based on his own experience in these fields, he founded of jobEQ.com, a cloud based service providing tools for assessing work attitude & motivation, values & organizational cultures and competencies. At the time of writing, jobEQ's tools were available in 18 languages and were being used by consultants, trainers and coaches in over 30 countries.

jobEQ's customers use these tools for projects which follow the principles that have been outlined in this book. Applications range from recruiting & assessment, over training & coaching to team building, leadership and changing organizational cultures. Patrick continues to consult organizations in these areas, and coaches an international network of consultants and trainers who use the jobEQ principles and tools.

Patrick obtained a Master degree in Applied Economics (Commercial Engineering and Computer Science) and a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence (Cognitive Science Option) from the Catholic University in Leuven (Belgium).

He is the author of several books, including 2 which are available in English: *"7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence"* (2001) and *"Mastering Mentoring & Coaching with Emotional Intelligence"* (2004). More recently, a couple of additional books were published in a tips-format (see 105tips.com).

For more information, see the professional profile on LinkedIn: http://lnkd.in/bQk6chD

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19. Legally speaking, in most European countries there is a 30 to 40-day deadline that applies when dealing with requests to provide personal information. In the UK, the ICO (The Information Commissioner's Office) provides a comprehensive topic guide explaining how one can assure that employment practices are in line with data privacy and information rights. https://ico.org.uk/Global/~/media/documents/library/Data_Protection/Detailed_specialist_guides/the_employment_practices_code.ashx
20. Paragraph partially based on the Wikipedia entry – see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assessment_center

21. This is actually recommended in the *Guidelines and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations*: "Job analysis/competency modeling – A job analysis of relevant behaviors must be conducted to determine the dimensions or competencies important to job success in order to identify what should be evaluated by the assessment center."; Unfortunately, although many vendors claim to follow these guidelines, in reality they take shortcuts when carrying out the analysis… see http://www.assessmentcenters.org/Assessmentcenters/media/Misc/2009EthicalGuidelines.pdf
22. Sources: British Psychological Society/Accord Group, complemented with jobEQ information and research done by Paul van der Maesen , as published in his PhD, personal communication October 2012.
23. Ashdown, N. & Leow, M (2014), *Bring Out their Best: Inspiring a Coaching Culture in your Workplace*. More information about Mel Leow is available from www.apicoaching.com
24. The book can be obtained from http://www.peakperformancepatterns.com.au
25. See his slideshow "*The 70:20:10 Framework*" on slideshare – uploaded on august 4th, 2011 http://www.slideshare.net/charlesjennings/the-702010-framework – for more information on this framework, see *The Career Architect Development Planner* (3rd ed.) by Michael M. Lombardo and Robert W. Eichinger (2000).
26. *Where did the 80% come from?* Informal Learning Blog from Jay Cross and Internet Time Group http://www.informl.com/where-did-the-80-come-from/ – downloaded 27 September 2014.
27. Tony Hsieh (2010), *Delivering Happiness, A path to profits, passion and purpose* also see: http://www.zapposinsights.com/culture-book
28. E.g. Thiel, P., 2014, *Zero to One: Notes on startups, or how to build the future*

29. Research paper "*Virtual Team: Variances of virtual team effectiveness*" by Sin Mun Chang, Aston Business School, Birmingham, UK – research done in 2013-2014 – paper accessed on 20 September 2014 https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bw0bxkTYFC7bdmNHUklyV1RoNk0/edit
30. Lencioni, P. (2002), *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*
31. Harshman, C. & Phillips S. (1994), *Teaming Up: Achieving Organizational Transformation*
32. Amour, C., Blundell, A, & Cohen, B. (2014) *Cracking the Code for Workshop Performance: Facilitating the Change That Matters*.
33. See http://evop.blogspot.be/2005/04/performance-without-appraisal.html
34. Alfie Kohn (1993), *"Punished by Rewards"*
35. Jack Welsch (2001), *"Jack, Straight from the Gut"*
36. Kevin Rose's Foundation video series – interview with Ben Horowitz in November 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHXcMhs5orE
37. Interview with Elon Musk by Kevin Rose, posted on YouTube on 10 September 2012: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g92rP1Mi_oQ
38. When engaged in "group-think", a group becomes internally-referenced (internally in reference to the group). The only feedback they would be ready to accept would be from people they would perceive as "on their side". This, in most cases, would be useless. A possibility would be portraying oneself as sufficiently on their side to open them to think differently (rapport, etc.). Similarly, grand-parents are much better at doing that with grand-children, than parents, who may often be perceived as "the enemy".
39. Lukens,M. (2014), *The key to employee engagement has less to do with management than you'd think*, Fast Company, May 2014 http://www.fastcompany.com/3030710/the-key-to-employee-engagement-has-less-to-do-with-management-than-youd-thin k
40. The International Labour Association conducts research concerning Working time and work organization.
41. Source: *OECD Factbook 2013* , section on Part-time employment
42. Research paper on http://timewise.co.uk: *"A flexible future for Britain?"* (2014) and *"The Flexibility Trap"* (2013)
43. Angelika Kümmerling, A. & Lehndorff, S., 2014, *The use of working time-related crisis response measures during the Great Recession*, Working paper for the International Labour Association
44. Also known as "*The Peter Principle*" (title of a book by Dr. Laurence J. Peter and Raymond Hull from 1969)
45. Watson joined the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Co., as general manager in 1914. The following year he became president. CTR has been created in 1911 as the merger of several companies producing tabulating machines. The company was renamed "International Business Machines Corporation" or IBM in 1924. (source: "The IBM archives" – http://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/index.html)
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