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Global Challenge: From Intra-Company Staff Management to Working With the Talent

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to analyze modern management transformation – focus is shifted from intra-company staff management to working with the talent. This paper examines a number of concepts that represent different approaches to the phenomenon of a talent and creativity. In these conditions, the essence of management is changing. Author's approach to this problem is that modern labor market has special requirements to the employee's competencies, creativity and critical mind. According to this people have become more important than the organization itself. Subject of a talent was related to the emergency of new business strategies which were called "people – oriented". Their special feature – personalization of approach, its focus on the "talent", meant that an employers' attitude shifted from treating staff on "general terms" to the stage when they started appreciating the differences. Research findings related to talent search and development highlights the importance of this phenomenon and its skills; the relationship between talents, skills and competences; assessment of future demand by occupational groups. Therefore the role of talented employees becomes most important in a rapidly changing environment. It is they who in these conditions create sustainable competitive advantage in organizations, generate and implement innovative ideas, allow organizations to go in line with the trends. Digitalization in the economy creates new opportunities to work with the talents, but in Russia, professional qualities of a talent are still considered to be the most important. Hence there is a need to revise the very concept of a talent, especially when it comes to life goals and attitudes. Key role belongs to the acquisition of skills of the future, continuous development, conscious independence when choosing a career, competency flexibility, respect for employees' values, work life balance, open networking within the team.

INTRODUCTION

People are everything. Those words said almost 80 years ago became a slogan and a guideline back then. They are still relevant today. Main strategic resource – their skills and talents, high intellect, non standard way of thinking and ability to resolve most complicated tasks. Nowadays talented and competent people are the scarce resource. It is the right time for creating a global talent market space representing creative people. The whole world and our country in particular are entering an era of a sixth technological paradigm. According to analysts' forecasts it will become dominant in some 25-30 years in the economy of every developed country. Modern management recognizes a growing importance of a human factor in the conditions of a fourth industrial revolution in production and development of the new forms and methods of human resource management. This article examines a number of concepts that represent different approaches to the phenomenon of a talent and creativity. In these conditions, the essence of HR management is changing - focus is shifted from intra-company staff management to working with the talent (Nikulín and Odegov, 2012, pp. 81-87; Bilan et al., 2020; Micík and Micudová, 2018; Teeranantawanich and Phimolsathien, 2018; Kohnova et al., 2020, pp. 83-102; Lauzikas and Miliūtė, 2020, pp. 562-579).

Corporate staff today has become its main resource for improving the production efficiency. Having that in mind the requirements for qualifications become more demanding in terms of professional training, skills, creative thinking etc. The mismatching between business needs and employees' skills in Russian economy is growing. New vacancies come up faster than valid candidates manage to get the experience or learn the new methods of completing the required tasks.

This leads to the situation where employers are constantly facing difficulties to replace previous employee by someone with the same level of experience and knowledge. Therefore they are forced to either take a less qualified specialist for the same money that in fact means a hidden raise of the wages or to offer greater salary to the right candidate. But employers keep on looking for the people who are no longer on the market – those who are willing to do the hardworking and get the money for the job necessary for the business or try to keep people by increasing their wages and providing social benefits. As the result they find themselves in a constant process of looking and complaining about severe shortage of qualified personnel (Gavurova et al., 2019; Saulius et al., 2019). However, the main problem of the Russian labor market is not the reduction in the number of working age population and an annual increase in the share of elderly and unemployed. E.Gonthmaher (2014) insists that *“the most disturbing factor is the reduction in the ‘quality’ of the workforce its ‘deprofessionalisation’.* We have lack of qualified workforce, engineers, managers, accountants and even journalists....and 75 mln of economically active population have very low professional potential”.

At the moment many of the leading companies start to realize that the market is drained to the point where levels of quality and professionalism is not compatible with the money demanded. In other words “easy” solutions have stopped working and companies find themselves exposed to certain HR policies. In future only those employers will benefit who will have a freedom of choice. This means they will have an option to choose the best from those who are unemployed. Having an understanding that true professionals can not be adherent to a particular company, business will no longer invest into most conservative ones hence most loyal. Plain production units will start implementing full automation and robotization into its routine processes breaking the limits of having workforce available only within a particular city, region or even a country.

1. GLOBAL CHALLENGE IN THE WAR FOR TALENT

Availability of IT environment and lack of any barriers for choosing ways of self fulfillment would become one of main factors of employee's loyalty. In their research analysts of the web service “rabota.ru” are calling current condition of the Russian workforce as *“skills mismatch”* providing that the market has very few specialists in certain fields while having oversupply in others. Problems of “structural unemployment” have been widely discussed in Russia in the period of 2016-2018. Later the discussion of this issue has almost been dropped as the result of a lower economic activity along with the reduction of

overall unemployment level. However this problem has not disappeared. According to BCG countries which are part of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) have 17 to 52% of working population that fall under “skills mismatch” category. If talking numbers we can see the following statistics (Mass uniqueness..., 2019, pp. 17,25):

- employers experiencing problems in finding employees of a certain qualification – 45%
- employees considering they might be facing work related issues in future – 76%
- share of workforce unsure they will be ready for the future market requirements – 30%
- number of employees being misfit for a role – 1,3 bn of people
- outdated technical skills make up to 2-5 years
- cost of education for the past 30 years has gone up 2-3 times
- market share of the new types of professions will reach up to 27% by 2022.

Main reason for the “skills mismatch” is related to the gaps in education system and in personnel training that follow guidelines of the XX century that have become obsolete or that will change by the time when they graduate. As a result (according to Rosstat 2018 figures) in 2015 – 2017 years 29% of people with university degree and 40% with secondary education chose different occupation. A study by the recruitment agency Hays revealed that most Russian employers (78%) expect difficulties with hiring in 2020. Shortage of suitable employees is at the top of the list of difficulties (37%), other 22% of respondents are expecting high competition for staff with other companies, 19% complain about unrealistic salary expectations of job seekers. Nearly half (44%) of employers face shortage of candidates only for particular vacancies.

Compared to 2018, their share decreased by 3%. 37% of respondents indicated that their industry is lacking personnel in general (38% in 2018), 19% of companies confirmed they have enough offer on the market (over the year their share has gone up by 3%). Authors of the research “Mass uniqueness. Global challenge in the war for talent” (Aug - 2019) which was held by the company BCG, World-skills Russia and ROSATOM indicate that today 45% of employers around the world cannot find and hire an employee of the right qualifications - they are simply not available on the Russian labor market. At the same time, experienced professionals cannot find work due to the fact that their skills are no longer required. Therefore it has become obvious that the main reason for “skills mismatch” and “skills gap” typical for each and every country in one way or another - is a discrepancy between knowledge and competencies of potential employees and market requirements. According to a Deloitte survey results (2019), 55% of top managers from international companies drew attention to a significant gap between the skills of their employees and those required in future; 25% prefer to hire new employees rather than retain the “old” ones.

2. METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 People are more important than the organization itself

Author’s approach to this problem is that a modern labor market has special requirements to the employee’s competencies, creativity and critical mind. According to G. Hamel (2013, p. 302) “*people have become more important than the organization itself*” as “*modern world is a world of a disrupted stability and lost confidence*”. And although every strategy life cycle is getting shorter, one’s orientation towards creativity and creative enthusiasm intensifies as opposed to hard working, competence and even discipline. In other words, the role of talented and highly qualified employees becomes primary in a fast changing environment. It is them who create strong competitive advantages in modern organizations, generate and implement innovation ideas and ensure the company keeps up with the market dynamics. No science or economy development, no evolutionary innovations or any activity of such kind is happening without them. In the meantime digital economy is creating new technological solutions for HR organizations to manage talents, evaluate employees’ qualifications, consolidate and store information about them, manage their motivation and loyalty degree etc. Therefore digital economy opens up many new possibilities and ways for staff development.

As L. Nikulin (2013, p. 44) noted, if before the 2000s there was a link = “organization → person (talent) → profit”, later it changed significantly = “person (talent) → organization → influence (without moving up the hierarchy)”. Analysts highlight a shortage of qualified specialists on all levels including top managers. Current demographic structure and disrupted educational system make it impossible for the problem to be solved “by itself”. Under the circumstances when the overall number of newcomers is too low to substitute those who will be retired it also drives them to shift to new positions where after retraining they will be in demand. This situation gives a chance to almost any potential candidate to find a good and well paid job and change it every 1,5 – 2 years for even a better paid one. Therefore the only way to overcome a problem of “skills mismatch” is by intensifying a program of working with talents which started in 2013 and is running to date and employers are actively looking for the new instruments. According to the research “Talent for each company” held in 2016 by NPP “Labor market experts” together with the agency for working with high potential students “Challenge” there is very poor practice amongst Russian companies of working effectively with talented people. A big number of talented people in a company is considered challenging by the employers for the reason of concurrent requirement to create special conditions for such people’s self-realization. Apart from that the following issues were outlined amid others: change of processes in line with the needs of key people (65%), high probability of conflicts within the team (29%).

Today having talented employees onboard is not a business goal but rather a competitive advantage. It is a fact that today market leadership is gained only under the management of talented personnel. Starting from the 90s of the last century the demand for talented and active people with leadership potential was dynamically growing. Not only is this related to a shortage of such employees but also to a current transition of the developed countries’ economies towards the sixth technological paradigm (TP) which according to the analysts forecasts will become dominating in some 25-30 years. Major breakthrough of the Russian economy towards 6 TP is not possible without competent and talented people.

2.2 Talent and skills phenomenon

Subject of a talent or in other words genius was raised at the end of the XX century. In our opinion such attention was related to the emergency of new business strategies which were later called “people – oriented”. Their special feature – personalization of approach, its focus on the applicant, on the “talent”, meant that an employers’ attitude shifted from treating staff on “general terms” to the stage when they started appreciating the differentiation (Odegov et al., 2015, p. 32).

Today there is no generally accepted definition of the term “talent”. For example social science dictionary gives the following definition: “Talent” – is a person with outstanding abilities in certain area, that is, the concept of a “talent” is defined taking into account the etymology of a given word, originating from the Greek TALATON – outstanding abilities (Social Sciences Dictionary). In “Small encyclopedia by F.A. Brockhaus and I.A. Efron” talent – is a “*special natural gift, outstanding potential to succeed in any given area whether it will be scientific, artistic or practical (politics, technology, etc.), talent needs practice in order to achieve a certain degree of perfection, it is different from a genius by a lower degree of ingenuity*” (Brockhaus and Efron Talent. Small Encyclopedic Dictionary). Psychological dictionary gives the following interpretation: “*talent*” – *is the excellence of skills, resulting in creative achievements, important in the context of cultural development. In HRM, “talent is a bright employee with many skills and highly motivated to meet the target”* Ancient Greeks understood talent as outstanding abilities (Talent. Psychological dictionary).

In the opinion of S. Krylova talent – is a highly efficient person in a particular area of activity. Talent nature stands out when compared to the genius phenomenon. Talent is usually limited to one area of activity; genius tends to be more universal (Philosophical dictionary). Therefore in our opinion one should be considered as talented if he/she:

- is able to and meets the targets using his/her intellect and creativity
- is highly productive, with a leadership potential
- is able to critically take notice of the opinion of the majority, push the boundaries at workplace
- is respected by the colleagues, ultra-mobile, decent, able to put public interests first

- loyal to the interests of the firm, aimed at personal and professional growth within a particular organization.

Therefore we can come to a conclusion that talent is a combination of a sharp strategic mind, leadership skills, emotional maturity, communication skills, business skills, technical skills as well as the ability to work in a team and involve other talents. According to H. Marina (2012, p. 288), the essence of a talent is the intellect structure, shaped by practice and other skills. Upon that role of intelligence is to guide talent's actions i.e. perception of one's desires, motives, feelings, beliefs. Therefore, talent is "not a pure mind," but its dynamic employment in the conditions of economic, social and cultural environment (Sulkowski et al., 2019). However its character has a double nature: on one side talented people bring success to a firm, on the other they often become a reason of conflicts and are overly ambitious. Leadership represents a peak of a talent's maturity. In the conditions of unstable and controversial relationships with the talents this particular goal in our opinion defines the essence of HR management V 3.0. Talent types are categorized in line with the area they are involved in:

- managerial
- technical or single area specialization (i.e engineering or finance)
- communication or networking (those who create network within a company with the clients or suppliers, connecting different project groups / subdivisions) etc.

However it should be noted that "Creative Personality" and "Creative occupation"- are two different concepts. "Creative occupation" exists in different areas of activity. "Creative personalities" are not necessarily representatives of creative occupations; the main idea is that no matter what they are engaged in they always involve creativity into the process. As a rule, these people cannot explain what exactly they are doing "not" like the rest. For example, patients are visiting one nurse reluctantly, and form a queue to visit another (saying she has a "light" hand) - although both give a lot of injections using the same techniques. Those employees with creative methods, unconventional thinking and intuition to find best solutions are to be called talented. It's their "creative impulses" (innovations, quality service, emotional connection with the clients etc.) that allow a firm to become more noticeable amongst others, win the clients and become a leader on the market. Since it is not possible to copy this attracting and retaining talents allows a firm to keep and develop its competitive advantages. Today in hyper dynamic market conditions a company must always be ready for a change. Sooner or later markets become saturated, and industry opportunities exhausted. Therefore brand new people are needed in order to find new business ideas and make a breakthrough in new areas. Questions arise – just how much are corporate talents universal? Will they be able to acquire new skills fast enough? In this regard we find particularly interesting the interpretation of talent proposed by E. Emelyanov and S. Povarnitsyna (1998), who looked at it from the perspective of a company life cycle. At the stage of:

- company set up – talented person is a self – sufficient leader able to head a team towards working on common goals defined by him (in 90s such people were creating first commercial businesses)
- business development – talented - is a highly qualified specialist who achieves his goals by mobilization of his internal resources
- achievement of key performance indicators by the organization – talented - is every employee who utilizes all available resources provided and meets the targets successfully.

Each person being a biosocial type not only has his own individual features, but also carries characteristics of hereditary genotype. Most people find it hard to speak about their talent. Though everyone seems to think of themselves as talented. Nevertheless, if you try to ask a person whether he is talented, you will most likely hear that he counts himself gifted. And only Japanese will answer this question unequivocally - everyone is born gifted (Suzuki, 2011, p. 196). The key to success is the environment favorable for development through numerous repetitions.

According to HeadHunter Research Center, during the interview only half of respondents mentioned their achievements and 20% chose not to talk about them at all. Conservative people justify themselves by the fact that they feel uncomfortable to emphasize their strengths. It is more typical for people working in Media, Art or for top managers to talk about their worthiness. According to J. Dyer et al. (2018, p.

320) talents distinguish themselves by demonstrating such cognitive and behavioral features as associative thinking, ability to ask the right questions, get into the heart of the matter, observe, experiment, develop relationships. Authors showed that various talents are similar only in one thing - observation skills and partially in training methods, whilst having differences in thinking, setting goals and experimenting. In other words talent as a gift is a combination of a sharp strategic mind, leadership skills, emotional maturity, communication skills, business institutions, functional skills as well as the ability to work in a team.

But, according to A. Eriksen et al. (1980), manifestation of a talent is not dependent on genetics. Success is based on “conscious practice” characterized by activities that improve quality of work, including its independence, intellectualization, feedback availability, creativity (ingenuity) and ability to learn fast in both real life and virtual space. It’s better not to judge beforehand who is talented and who is not. People are classified as HiPo (high potential) and HoVo (homo vulgaria -ordinary) on the labor market (Galenson, 2005). All the above indicates that we are in a process of a complete shift of focus from a certain strict list of requirements to other priorities, i.e. graduates are now evaluated not by their results but rather by their potential. On a practical level their potential (though not obviously) may be at a HiPo stage. According to D. Galenson (2009), such people should be divided into two groups: young geniuses with innovative thinking and people, accumulating their experience and potential over time.

There was a theory during the times of an industrial era that “a talent will get on top by himself” meaning no assistance, if not he should stay where he is. Its author was a marketing director of the Wakesoft software company, Harley Sitner. According to him, the most capable employees will get to the top in any case. “On their way” they will accumulate all the necessary knowledge and experience to successfully undertake increasingly sophisticated tasks. Said otherwise the concept of a “talent” has never been even considered when working with personnel. Business was traditionally built on average employees - performers and a certain number of management personnel. First ones had a clear task to perform their duties in line with instructions; the other ones were in charge of managing people and working on strategies. Talents in their basic understanding were never a part of that model: their presence in the company meant only additional problems to the management - to bring them to an “average state of a good performer”.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS: DISCOVERY AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The relationship among talent, skills and competences

During the formative period of a Russian business there was a huge number of people on the market who were hungry only for money needing to provide for their families. Back then no one was even thinking about self development or protection of their rights and least of all people cared about meeting talent’s needs and wishes. At that time people were left to themselves – those with entrepreneurial skills were trying to organize their own business and those without could only hope for the well meaning of their employers and luck. However this attitude is long gone in modern society, now people are searching for talents, developing them and learning how to manage them (Odegov et al., 2016, p. 27). Talent is often referred to as a successful (basic) mind “successful intelligence”. Their development comes through personal growth by acquiring professional, life and personal competencies, skills and knowledge during interaction with the clients and “influence” through the use of enhanced self-identification “with the client” and vice versa¹. Talent of an employee as a derivative of his skills and competencies presented in Figure 1.

¹ Talent search within an organization should start with initial identification of employees with high potential and focusing on the idea, that talent is “hidden” in every person.

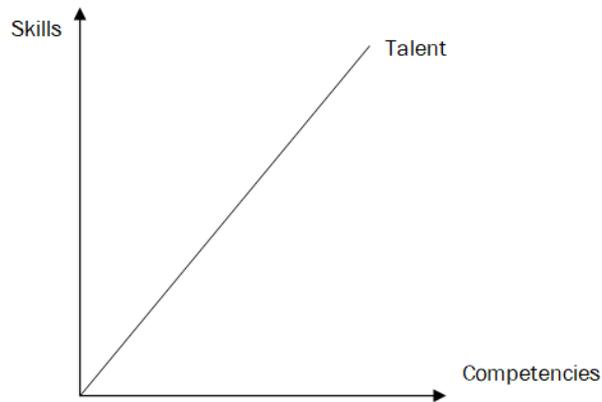


Figure 1. Correlation between employee's talent, skills and competencies

Source: Suggested by the Authors of the Article

Based on correlation presented on Figure 2 – talent is a person endowed with at least one outstanding quality (significantly above average) who shows this quality during work. Scheme of talent development as a professional is shown in Figure 2.

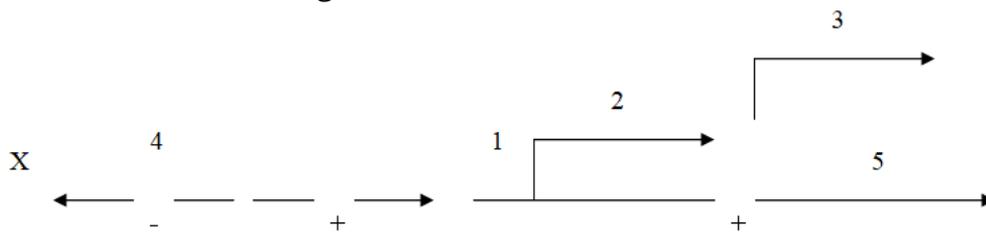


Figure 2. Changes in talent's competences

Legend:

1 - depression; 2 - average set of competences; 3 - super competent; 4 - lack of knowledge; 5 - ex-competence; X- initial state of a talent.

It's the duty of an employer to open up the talents of his employees as only third of them would provide this information during the interview. Therefore theory of a talent as a natural gift that reveals itself during the course of work becomes a history giving way to a new concept of talent searching and development.

3.2 Assessment of future demand by occupational groups

According to the report of the World Economic Forum (WEF) "The future of Jobs" (2018) there will be 75 million of dying professions in the world by 2022 due to technological progress. Simultaneously new activities will appear whilst the old ones will become more complicated. According to the experts of WEF this may lead to the creation of 133 million of new jobs that will bring higher requirements to applicants in terms of their qualifications (Sulkowski, 2016; Lincenyi and Laczko, 2020). New technologies 6TU, artificial intelligence, cloud technologies, robots, Internet, etc., have a huge impact on a labor market, putting out of work millions of people and widening the staff gap. According to the research, 1/3 of employment types will change by 2035 due to automation and digitalization (Mass uniqueness, 2019, p. 11). Surveys held by Hays confirm that only 1% of Russians (2550 employees of Russian enterprises) are optimistic that their profession will be in demand in 10 years time- these are mainly personal development consultants, business trainers, sales staff, internal communications managers, IT- specialists. Only 2% are of the opinion that their profession will disappear because of automation and digitalization.

According to survey participants industrial jobs (37%), accountants and shop assistants (15%), drivers (8%), interpreters and operators (4%), travel agents and travel guides will disappear faster than the others. Skolkovo Business School and Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) prepared an atlas of 100 professions that would soon be gone. Those would be notaries, librarians, copywriters, test engineers, system administrators, banking operators, analysts, secretaries, logistics specialist, drivers, dispatchers and journalists. This list is addressed to the young people planning their careers, because many professions that are popular now will not be in demand in 5 to 10 years, so these areas are better not be considered when choosing your future occupation.

In 2018, there was a growing demand for IT system designers especially amongst industrial enterprises introducing digitalization of production. According to Head Hunter in February 2018 they had 1.5 times more programmer vacancies advertised than in 2017. Companies were mainly looking for program writers to process big data for numerical control machines of the latest generation (3D modeling). Most popular are young programmers familiar with western management accounting systems, they are hired in groups. According to an employment agency "Unity" and some others, companies usually take such candidates on board even without having any work experience. Second most popular profession in 2018 was engineering particularly specialists in configuring, testing and operation of rare equipment. According to Head Hunter, number of vacancies for this group of specialists for the period of Feb 2017 - Feb 2018 increased by 47%.

If we take an example of NPO Energomash which is now modernizing its production processes they require narrow specialists with working experience which are almost impossible to find on the market. Therefore they have to train their own most experienced technologists and engineers. Meanwhile the system of vocational schools that specialized in training of such specialists on board of large enterprises was completely destroyed by the Russian government during the 90's. There is a much smaller number of companies in Russia willing to invest into retraining of their own staff than in the other countries in general. Almost 90% of companies however are planning on hiring new staff in line with their amended requirements. As mentioned earlier talent – is a creative employee (Florida, 2007, p. 432), eager to advance his qualifications on a regular basis. In these modern conditions talent management function undergoes a digital transformation facing new challenges, therefore we need to develop a different approach from the one typical for the XX century.

The Future of Jobs 2018 report highlights that the changes in jobs structure lead to the situation when instead of retraining and developing your own personnel organizations plan to hire new staff with new skills or use a temporary pool of specialists. Speaking of the future labor market, leading futurologists and sociologists agree that the "old" classic employer is forever gone. Matthias M. Horx (2010), author of "Wie Wir Leben", describes the future job marketplace as an "era of humanitarian talents", where ideas, knowledge, talent, creativity and pioneer spirit will take over products, production and capital. He announces "Creative Class" a driving force of the future being more flexible and completely ignoring social and hierarchical boundaries. It will consist of people from various social classes but it should not be confused with academics.

4. DISCUSSION ON THE MODERN LABOR MARKET: HYBRIDIZATION OF COMPETENCIES VERSUS PROFESSIONALISM

Focus has shifted from functionality to the result which reveals talent. Specialization becomes less valuable than the ability to modify functions. According to Burning Glass technologies research (2019) (explores global labor market trends) "hybridization has already restructured over 250 professions, and in the next 10 years a number of "hybrid" types of work should double: 21% of the "hybrid" - against 10% of the common type.

"Hybridization" is the latest trend on a modern labor market providing that there will be no specific names of professions instead there will be people not with one or two competencies but with a set of competencies representing their potential. In this regard one may find controversial the idea behind "At-

las of new professions” by ASI and the Skolkovo School of Management that there will be professions with specific names in future.

CONCLUSION

Therefore the role of talented employees becomes most important in a rapidly changing environment. It is they who in these conditions create sustainable competitive advantage in organizations, generate and implement innovative ideas, allow organizations to anticipate trends. Digitalization in the economy creates new opportunities to work with the talents, but in Russia, professional qualities of a talent are still considered to be the most important. Hence there is a need to revise the very concept of a talent, especially when it comes to the life goals and attitudes! Key role belongs to the acquisition of skills of the future, continuous development, conscious independence when choosing a career, competency flexibility, respect for employees' values, work life balance, open networking within the team. Even though these characteristics are typical for most young people they are more evident in the ones who can be called talented.

Summarizing all the above, we can assume that in the future talent will turn into an innovative worker, and their consolidation will form a creative layer. But for this we need to void mass standardization and embrace the idea of professional development throughout lifetime. Modern world principles provide that to be successful one has to demonstrate flexibility of thinking, ability for quick and continuous learning and commitment to mobility.

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