

MENTORING ROLE IN TALENT MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

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Abstract

In the dynamically changing, information and knowledge driven economies the value of human resource – so as the talent has sharply risen: they became the strategic components of the competitive market. The study seeks to explore how talent management projects implemented in the education sector of the importance of mentorship, pointing to the report, the essence and practice. The primary goal of this research is to draw attention to the actuality of talent management. In addition, to highlight that which the education sector can be observed and observable mentoring elements are those that are translated into corporate practice. Because the mentoring especially prevalent and well-established practice in the education, however, there are several examples of successful enterprise. The study is based on secondary sources which are complemented with the author's own thoughts and insights and which provide a basis to continue in the business sector and the primary research.

Keywords: talent, talent management projects, mentoring, education sector, business sector

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Introduction

Mentoring has an increasing value and role in raising talents. Firstly it appears in places of education, where it is considered as an activity with huge traditions. It is quite frequent, that some teachers are using its methods unconsciously, professionally or merely it just derives from their humanity. Recently, it is applied in various regions, outside of pedagogy too. Therefore, beside of its field of use, the methods and devices became more complex and more diverse. This study mostly focuses on its characteristic related to education and its application in corporate practices.

In societies and economies, parallel to human capital, talent also gained a strategically important role in the life of organizations. The purpose of this study is, to explore the importance of mentorship in the talent management projects of the education sector, while

pointing out its meaning, its essence and the practice of it. The main goal of this study is, to draw attention to the actuality of talent management. In addition, it should highlight those elements of mentoring, that can be spotted in the education sector, as well as in corporate practices too.

Secondary sources of literature are the basis of this study. Considering its content, we start with the economical and psychological description of talent. Then, we sketch the changing situation of talent management in education and also in tertiary education. After this, we discuss the features and difficulties of the mentor's and protegee's relationship. At the end of this study, a successful corporate practice will be introduced.

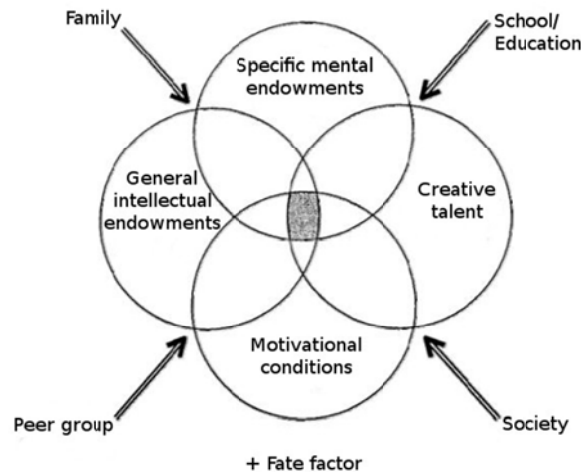
1 The talent

The talent is replaced with the word „talentum” in literature, it worth getting into the questions, where does this expression come from and what it really means? Talentum was used as a unit of currency and weight. At the same time, according to The Concise Dictionary it was more than a high value currency unit, it also has further meanings, like excellent intellectual skill and talent. (Bögel & Tomka 2010) The definition of talent must be approached from a psychological and an economical aspect as well.

1.1 The psychological interpretation of talent

The notion of talent has changed from time to time, depending on how the social and cultural needs of a given time have changed. Although we can not give a general definition, researchers agree that it contains an „inner force” that may provide the possibility of increasing social performance. (Gyarmathy, 2006) Hereinafter we see Gyarmathy's definition as a standard, which says „The talent is a possibility in the individual, which is created in an interaction by external-internal factors. Talent is also behavior and attitude, value system and self-detection.” (borsod-ped.hu, 2012) So it does not have the slightest meaning of today's easily identifiable and measurable high intelligence. We are talking about such a mentality and behavior that can lead us to new paths, solutions and realms. (Gyarmathy, 2006) In our research Czeizel's 4*2+1 factor talentum model will be considered as one of our corner stones, in which heredity and environment are both listed, and the connection between them is illustrated by the Figure 1..

Fig. 1:4x2+1 Talent model of Czeizel



Source: borsod-ped, 2012, own edition

Czeizel considers the 4*2 elements, *the four genetic talents*, (*heredity as a general intelligence talent, specific mental talents, creativity talent, motivational talent*, as well as *the four environmental factors*, like *family, school, contemporary groups, general social environment*) as a source of emergence of talent. The listed create a complex mixture, because all of them can be positive, and negative too. The last „+1” factor of Czeizel model is formed by the so-called *fate factor*, which wants to emphasize that in the development of talent, fate and random has a large role. However, it is true that when researchers create talent concepts, they mostly forget about this. (Gyarmathy, 2006) We should have a look at how can we place this complex notion into the constantly changing economy!

1.2 Interpretation of talent in economic processes

Talent management or talent nursing became strategically important in the 20th century, in the life of organizations. Its basic task is to forecast human resource needs and to plan the service of needs. Talent management can not be characterized as self-serving action, since its essence is not to improve employees, or to create incidental succession plans, but to ensure the reachability of the organizations' general aims, with which every organizations survival, and everyday actions can be easier or more transparent. The organizations perform actions or take role in relating progresses that relate to talent nursing with increasing awareness. Thereby creating other and other added values for those who concern about the organization, even if we speak about executives or subordinates.

Talent management is implemented in the strategic human resource management's system, and is a complex process which extends to several areas. For its successive operation it is

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indispensable to fix the notion of talent in the organizations' thinking. (Antalovits, 2010)

From economical aspect talent can be widely interpreted, but basically we focus on economically exploitable skills. Organizations try to operate with new values, norms, while bearing the thoughts of more effective and profitable functioning, not only willingly but because they were forced to by recent years economic events.

Despite of the fact, that many of them trys to sustain themselves from decreasing budget, they strive to ensure the principle of „right man in the right place”. This encouraged such strategies, that allowed them to reach outstanding achievements despite of reduced resources. (Bencsik, 2007) As it was said earlier, the key for the competition is a good expert and on the other hand the rapid reaction to the labour markets challenges. We may call the recently discernible period in society or economy as „Human Age”, when human intellectuality and potential are revalued for the enterprises and become the engine of innovation. Talented labour is considered as good expert, who became more important because of hardly filled job vacancies, and high unemployment rate. (Manpower Group, 2011) It is generally defined as a natural skill for better performance and quality. (Osvát, 1995, p. 25.)

In the elaboration and application of recruitment plans, a wariness and prudence can be detected. The search after a properly skilled manpower can hinder the development of business. Talent shortage not only affects the developing countries, but the world's advanced economies as well. The nominee with technical and professional experiences can be listed as a good expert, and the lack of this individual obviously slows down and makes the everyday work of organizations harder. The expansion of developing countries is one of Human Age's phenomenon, which devotes intensified attention to the role of talent in business success. Because the more skilled experts the company or country has, the more fierce the market competition will be. (Manpower Group, 2012)

2 Talent management and mentoring in education

Talent management got revalued in education for the end of the 20th century. According to Szakács (2008) we find two different interpretations. In case of the english definition, talent is the result of a managing process. However „gifted” referes to hidden talent. In our opinion, teachers in talent management should encourage the hidden talent, and give an alternative path to its unfoldment. Talent is diverse and different, however these individuals are more vulnerable. We must be cautious not to impose on them too much, as a child they need to play too. At the same time their attention should be drawn to those areas, where they are better

then the average. In their case, mental hygiene problem is more frequent, for example performance anxiety, which is considered as a behavior malfunction in most of the schools. Expectations of parents or schools usually tend to worsen the decreased self-confidence of the individual and increase his/her negative self-image. It is important to devote proper attention to these young people since their childhood. It is true that talent management is not easy, in fact we should strive to find the basis of a person's talent in his/her age of adolescence or childhood.

2.1 Education at a glance in talent management

The low standards of hungarian talent management was highlighted in 1988 by the known former mentor, Harsányi (1994). According to him „Hungarians are recently lagging at the end of the race for institutionalized exploitation”. The demand for raising highly capable individuals is almost natural in the era of change. However, in everyday situations a contrary practice can be observed. Since talented individuals are always striving to show something new, therefore take attention to themselves, a bigger part of society is starting to suffer from jealousy and minority sense. As Gyarmathy (2006) wrote, the average will „tackle” the talented for their own defense. Which does not seems like a hard thing to do, knowing that they walking on an uncertain path. In fact, situation of current education and culture does not help either, according to the author the spiritual values of the forementioned can be described with an elephant in the china shop. To put it simply, institutionalized talent management is only in its childhood. The stiffness and hostility of the environment is the main reason for losing diverse talents in our society.

In addition to Gyarmathy, the thoughts of Csermely (2010) are relevant to highlight, who compared the relationship of talent and education to animal characteristics. In his opinion, talent management in hungary favours the chickens, because for him, it is enough what a chicken can offer. So it flies around, their voice does not cause happiness, we have not use of their meat, however they look alike. Therefore, the eagle that flies excellently, is too fast for the education, the blackbird with a beautiful voice is too noisy, the turkey with lots of meat on its bones is too fat. Nevertheless, an efficient educational system should be open not only for identical, but for different, sometimes even for extremely talented individuals. According to literature in connection with talent, first comes the definition, afterwards comes the identification and eventually comes the development. However practice shows that, in the 21th century, the order has changed. Namely development shall come first, so talent management is needed to be installed into culture and education, and it shall be given a

possibility to unfold. By showing themselves they made identification easier, and eventually a proper term can be defined for the age. The sternberg pentagon is considered as the starting point of talent management, the five conditions are excellence, rarity, productivity, demonstrability, and value. During identification, besides defining talent image, setting goals is named as a top priority too.

School effectiveness, in aspects of grades, results in competitions, psychological tests, and teacher and other assesments, a bouquet is formed, which, according to international reasearch, is the solution for the process. Depending on the situation, we can talk about special, in other words general skill development, where of course selection processes are changed. They can apply filtration, entrance examination, perceptual conversation, simply application, but even PTA designation. Selectional processes in talent management, in terms of content should devote attention to criteria, such as general intelligence, curriculum knowledge, special ability, interest, academic success, and results achieved in competition. As we mentioned above, the type of education is determinative. For instance, during university entrance, the assesment of curriculum knowledge is useful, but assessing independent thinking skills is also getting a more relevant part. The interests of a young individual is the least investigated area. (Gyarmathy, 2006)

By phasing in the bolognese system, an expansion in tertiary education, and a recession in qualitative education can be observed. It is true that we moved to the direction of knowledge based society, to which the aforementioned decrease in the merit of education does not good, because an ensure of a constant quality is needed. Fundamentally the system does not cause problems, however its implementation in our area and the misguided attempt to adopt it in the environment is more likely to cause problems. Mistakes should be corrected and students should be motivated for more qualitative performance, furthermore the educational process shall be adjusted for the needs of eventual employers. Institutions are striving to accreditate more diverse training courses, but often even the bachelor (BA/BSC) and master (MA/MSc) courses are not in line with each other. In light of the listed facts the question of talent management in teritary education becomes more urgent, and the role of small-group or individual courses are strengthened. We can say that hungary in terms of talent management has a decades of tradition in all three levels of education (bachelor-, medium-, teritary). However it doesn't mean that, referring to future there is no area, where changes or developments could be made. We summarized briefly the tasks for teritary education, in the area of talent management, which were defined by the council of sages. They highlighted the establishment of closer and more counscious relations with high schools among the first,

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which help the orientation and identification of talents, head for the right discipline. Secondly, they emphasize, that an organization such as this can be fit for selecting motivated and effective students from the crowd, which helps the society to acquire highly educated expertise. Tertiary education can not fulfill the role of innovator, nor the role of actual educator in the future, without the increasement of the expenses for education, or in other words in the absence of proper support. Naturally in addition to financial assets, a complex strategy is needed for the future, which involves a comprehensive plan, that allows us to plan the long-term education. If we possess all of the above mentioned things, then we should not neglect the constant shadowing, that helps us to draw conclusions for the realization of our future activity. (Farkas, 2010)

Youngsters in Hungary can choose the so-called talentpoints, in addition to or instead of institutionalized talent management, which works on a national level. Their essential tasks are counseling, career orientation, and showing possibilities and information by collecting and dividing their services and offering them to Hungary and to transboundary talent management organizations. Because of smaller traditional past in Slovakia, only a few cities, like Gúta, Galánta, Dunaszerdahely, Fülek, Balogfala, Királyhelmeč, can boast about similar talentspot headquarters. (Magyar G3nius Portál, 2012) Although we highlighted the Talents of new Europe (Talenty Novej Eur3py) event organized by the Slovnaft corporation since 2007, where youngsters can apply between the age of 12-25, both from areas of science and arts. Only those participants who earned a rank in domestic and foreign competitions or those who work on a study, without regard to the possibility of being a handicapped talent, can submit their request. Because the goal is to help those who have extraordinary skills and came from similar background. Overall, an amount of nearly 33 thousand euro is provided to distribution. (Slovnaft, 2012)

We can declare that, those teachers, who are highly educated and enthusiastic in their job, can choose and perform techniques and methods that can occupy the attention of talented children, and in addition it can contribute to the unfoldment of skills and to self-realization. (Simonyi, 2010)

In the followings we will confirm the connection between mentoring and talent management, while highlighting the interpretation of the person of mentor and the determinant elements of his/her relation to his/her protegee.

2.2 Mentoring activity

The definition of mentoring derives from the Greek name „Mentor”, who was the friend of Odysseus and the teacher, counselor, and supporter of his son. Among other interpretations, leading teacher, fatherly good friend, preceptor, patron can be found. Mentoring as an activity, means raising someone personally. (Nagy, 1983) Essentially mentoring is a result of spiritual and mental, or in other words inner development, and the remaining part can be obtainable from outside. But who the mentor really is, and who can define this role? We can say, that after the change in the system, persons were employed as a mentor in several educational, work-related and social programs. There are many interpretations that fits the definition, but mostly by mentor we mean those colleagues, who had advisory, guardian, social helper, leading roles and at the same time they were directing some kind of educational process. By a widened definition lay helpers also had a part in mentoring. According to this, the mentor is the person who supports his/her clients to achieve their goals with his/her time, expertise, energy or replaces some kind of shortage. In teacher training, mentoring can be devoted to handicapped children and/or to those with special needs, as well as to support the career choice of youngsters. Both has the same goals, which is to establish a supporting system, that can provide more attention and personal role models for those who need it. (Mlinarics & Juhász, 2008) In corporate practice, the need for special help, which is formally approved and appreciated in teachers career, also occurs. In case of entrants, mentoring can be determinative in areas of training, improvement, career development. Also, compared to previous years, mentoring becomes more and more approved as a corporate device for sharing knowledge. It helps with assimilation, improvement, knowledge transfer and also helps in repairing empathy and social skills. (Bencsik & Stifter, 2012)

Sloane and Fuge (2012) tried to measure the background of mentoring and its applicational methods in Austrian college or bachelor education. Tab. 1 contains the examined theoretical aspects.

Tab. 1: Theoretical dimensions of mentoring

	Theoretical background	Possible theoretical viewpoints		
		Mentoring as a temporary support (Developmental psychology)	Mentoring as a learning support (Educational psychology)	Mentoring as a social support (Social psychology)
Theoretical approach	Dyadic relationship	Developmental relationship	Learning partnership	Relationship between human

Functions	Educational function	Coping function	Intermediary function	Supporting/Guardian function
Conditions	Mentoring experience	Mentor's influence	Mentor as a role model effect	Relationship of trust
Opportunities for college education	Academic socialization	Orientation and leadership	Consulting and training	Stress Management

Source: Sloane & Fuge, 2012, own edition

Mentors provide orientation and guidance in academic jungle. They introduce the forms of academic behavior, in addition to organizational informations. According to the investigation, mentoring gives possibilities for students to develop their knowledge, and for being approved in examination and performance requirements. Besides social relations, cooperative skills, structural development in communications, facilitation of creating student groups and relations also has a positive effect. These will allow those students who participate in mentoring to improve their stress managing skills. Mentors can show the right path and influence preference and behavior at the same time.

In Homer's work mentors have distinctive characteristics, such as life experience, or „the wisdom of the old”, the skill of knowledge transfer and the thirst for knowledge, which is basic for modern pedagogy and for knowledge management, which becomes more and more popular in the corporate sector. Bearing reputation in expertise can not be neglected, because it is fundamental for devoting attention to young generation. The expansion and activity of the system of relationship and the skill for properly handling a conflict should be connected with the list as well. The latter should be separated into a group, which deals with conflicts occurring in education and generational problems. (Mlinarics & Juhász 2008)

In the relationship of the mentor and his/her protegee, common interest and passion, adequacy in learning style between the mentor and protegee, symmetric connection based on mutual trust, and the same style are relevant factors. Environmental factors around the talented individual can give possibilities both in areas of expertise and in increasing connections. Cooperation between mentors is a good way for transferring knowledge, where not only communication, but common activity is also a valued source for youngsters. (Bencsik, 2007) However, according to differences between genders and due to disabilities, needs can be diametrically opposite with each other in this area. Gyarmathy (2007) emphasizes in her writings, that the characteristics of the mentor and his/her talent should match. If we picture the determinative characteristics of the mentor as a basket, then it shall

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include high intellectual ability, creativity, inner driving force, openness, tolerance, acceptance, and commitment for a given area. The author also points out, that the mentor is basically not a talent manager, however a qualified talent manager can be a mentor. What do we mean by talent manager? To put it briefly, those who are psychologists, teachers, managers and trainers in one person. According to literature mentoring means noticing, supporting, training the talent at the same time, which requires a high level of attention and consumes a lot of energy. (Gyarmathy, 2007)

Working as a mentor will increase the persons workload on his/her own working sector, both if he/she is a teacher or a corporate employee. In addition, a preparation should be done for negative critics, most if these derives from envy. No matter how much beauty this occupation comes with, doing this job by only internal motivation without other allowances, can not be required, in fact, the efforts of a valued subordinate should be awarded. (Szatmáriné Dr. Balogh, 2001)

Hereinafter we will examine the range of successful examples in corporate mentoring.

3 Methods of mentoring in corporate practice

Furthermore, without the need of completeness, we will introduce mentoring methods, which application and existance were proved by successful corporate practice. In the selection of these methods and instruments, we can not neglect the age structure diagram, because generational differences are determinative in this activity.

Tab. 2: Summary of the characteristics of generations

Veteran generation (1925-1945)	Baby-boom generation (1945-1960)	X- generation (1960-1980)	Y- generation (1980-1995)	Z- generation (after 1995)
an employer, a specialty	they want to new roads, new knowledge	messenger generation	the first wave of digital generation	IT or Digital X-generation
is used to hold on to good-looking solutions	build a career	getting started with the interne: teenagers and young age	qualitatively new level relative to the X-generation	at the beginning of 21th century are beginning to work

in today's job market is not really typical	rebels of '70	most of them are typical „salary man”: leave to be told what to do and how to do it	realistic internet users, their shaping and forming of jobs in their own image	faster pace of life than their predecessors, rapid changes in life (zappers = switched on)
	important: the old, rearings schemes	business rules to keep in mind	an evaluation of the performance as a joint effort involving the willingness to adapt to declining job	social relations: the real and virtual life at a time, determining: personal relationship, internet
	discipline, respect	ability to innovate again and again	freedom, democracy, slack labour conditions	less inclined compromise, courage, proactive
	bind to the workplace	able to keep the accelerated rhythm of life	competition: there are not losers, participation is important	practical perspective, freedom, immediate environment
	importance of horizontal career	triumvirate importance of status, money, social ladder	expectations are too high and falling humility about the money, less loyal, more skeptical	revolutionary ideas are not alone, but realized in corporation

Source: Kissné, 2010, own edition

The difference between generations in ideology, philosophy and attitudes towards work, are clearly visible on Tab. 2. Therefore, it is required to devote extra attention to their mentoring. We can declare, that for corporate success, we need every generation of workers in the given organization to work efficiently and effectively. In my opinion, besides leaders the HR department should be as open-minded and as flexible as they can get.

The General Electric is a multinational company, that employs more than 10.000 employee. One of the known three methods of mentoring is *external mentoring*, the aim of which is to search for and support youngsters who perform outstandingly in secondary school, which also increases the early selection of committed workers. (Mlinarics & Juhász, 2008) It is noticeable, that this method is similar to the initiative of Slovnaft, which was described earlier. *Executive mentoring* appears in second place, that applies for senior managers. *Women's Network method* comes third, which focuses on searching up and supporting

outstandingly talented women, on its area of profession, who are also gifted with managing ambitions. In addition to the forementioned method, this multinational company is also trying to provide equity for women listed in its mission. This program started in the early 2000s, the realization of it requires not only mentoring, but different kind of trainings and networking. (Mlinarics & Juhász, 2008)

With the successfully applied methods in the mentoring of millennial generation, a study was initiated recently by Meister and Willyerd (2010), as a result of which three other corporate mentoring practices are sketched. It was proved during the study, that millennial generation really needs complex feedback both in education and in work related mentoring.

The Burson-Marsteller, PR and communicational company, which is presented in 85 countries, was experimenting with *reverse mentoring*, whereby those talented employees were trusted to organize mentoring, who will learn from senior managers by mentoring them. Just think about the effective and successful social media, which can make the connection establishment and retainment smoother in case of a company. As a first step the company organized a course for both youngsters and older generation, where they could learn the basics of a trusting relationship. It was proved that both parties were supported because for young workers an image of quicker career establishment occurred, when he got to know the operational method of senior level. In addition the senior manager, besides getting the planned information, was given a peak into the life of workers in lower levels. (Meister & Willyerd, 2010)

Group mentoring became a success, both in case of BT, a British telecommunication company and in the case of AT&T company. According to the method mentioned earlier, it is less hungry for resources, which proved that it is not only suitable for millennial generations. Its fundamentals are provided by a technological platform, where participants can determine the activity of mentoring. This type can work between groups, but it can be driven by a senior manager. As for the former, groups in given circles of management were typical. In case of AT&T, the process was realized in fully self-organizing, topic divided groups, because of which, much more workers could get involved. Cooperation between one mentor and more than one of its protegee was available thanks to online platform. The BT company created a Dare2share social platform, where they try to support each other with the help of RSS feed and short, 5-10 minute audio- and video records. In the first four months of experimenting expectations were exceeded. In addition to great interests the decrease in training costs was booked as a positive thing. (Meister & Willyerd, 2010)

Thirdly and finally *anonymus mentoring* comes as a method from the aforementioned study, in which they devote attention to determinative background information and psychological tests, and in which they pair individuals who are in need of support with mentors from different organizations. In most of the cases the role mentor was fulfilled by a professional coach. Almost all of the participants of the program were skeptical about the efficiency of the method, but eventually they marked anonymity as the best advantage of the method. They thought that in this way deeper factors will be discussed. Besides, time zones caused no problems. (Meister & Willyerd, 2010)

Conclusion

To sum it up using the trio of Lukoschat and Kletzing (2006), we may say, that in addition to the fact, that it is distributing knowledge, mentoring is also an informal learning process, that provides the possibility of full and simultaneous personal development. Secondly, it is not one direction, but intensive, reliable exchange and learning process between mentor and his/her protegee. Thirdly, it is the flexible element of organizational functioning, which is relatively fast and comes with low expenses and is able to satisfy the needs of the target audience.

With mentoring, capacity will be improved, no matter if we talk about a company or an educational institution. With the support provided for employees both youngsters and older workers have an advantage. Mentoring contributes to the supporting of the other party and it helps make the mentor feel valued even more. Thereby increasing his/her commitment and responsibility towards his/her workplace. As we detailed it, it is necessary to follow the changing needs of generations and to be flexible for adequacy towards these needs. Because we deem that the question „can I continue my studies and/or my development?“ occurs in every age. The given organization can provide help to answer the question, thereby supporting the expansion and distribution of their knowledge, and also the unfoldment and development of their talent.

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