

AN EVALUATION OF TALENT MANAGEMENT FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF VODAFONE

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ABSTRACT

Together with changing working conditions and increasing competition among organizations, the human factor has increasingly become a significant priority in the development of organizational activities. In order to obtain and maintain superiority within a competitive environment, manager, together with his professional colleagues, develops overriding strategic goals which in turn are realized, in part, through the recruitment of the most talented employees to the organization. As well as bringing talented people to the organization, it is also significant to retain these people and to ensure that these people are well utilized within the organization. These developments continuously enhance the value of an organizations' talent management and their works towards this end.

This study is composed of two sections. In the first section, a review of the literature is provided. In this section, concepts of talent, performance and potential are explained and the talented employee and their characteristics are discussed. In the second section, the Vodafone Brand is examined as a case study pertaining to talent management. Research has shown that the talent unit of Vodafone is responsible for issues such as recruitment, identification of talent as well as potential talent, uncovering the potential of employees and increasing their performance. It is also evident that these processes are professionally executed by the talent unit of Vodafone.

Key Words: Talent, Talent Management, Organizational Performance, Personal Potential.

Kurumsal Açıdan Yetenek Yönetimi Üzerine bir Değerlendirme: Vodafone Örneği

ÖZET

Değişen iş koşulları ve örgütler arasında artan rekabetle birlikte, insan faktörü, örgütlerin etkinliğinin artmasında öne çıkan kavram olmuştur. Rekabet ortamında üstünlük sağlayabilmek ve bu üstünlüğü devam ettirebilmek için örgüt yöneticisi, stratejiler geliştirmekte; bunun içinde stratejileri gerçekleştirecek en yetenekli çalışanı örgüte kazandırmayı hedeflemektedir. Yetenekli kişilerin örgüte kazandırılmasının yanı sıra bu kişilerin elde tutulmasını ve onlardan maksimum derecede faydalanılmasını sağlamak, örgütler açısından son derece önemli olmaktadır. Bu gelişmeler, örgütlerin yetenek yönetimi ve bu doğrultuda ortaya koyacakları çalışmaların değerini sürekli olarak arttırmaktadır.

Bu çalışma iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde ayrıntılı bir literatür incelemesi yapılmıştır. Bu bölümde yetenek, performans, potansiyel kavramları açıklanmış, yetenekli çalışan ve özellikleri irdelenmiştir. Devamında yetenek yönetimi kavramı ve süreci üzerinde önemle durulmuştur. İkinci bölümde ise yetenek yönetimine ilişkin örnek olay incelemesi olarak Vodafone Markası ele alınmıştır.

Araştırmanın sonunda Vodafone'un yetenek biriminin, kişilerin işe alımında yeteneklerinin ve potansiyellerinin tespiti, çalışanların potansiyellerin ortaya çıkarılması ve performanslarının arttırılması gibi konulardan sorumlu olduğu ve bu süreçlerin profesyonelce yürütüldüğü görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yetenek, Yetenek Yönetimi, Örgütsel Performans, Kişisel Potansiyel.

Introduction

The competition (started in the 1980s) between organizations is currently in terms of talented employees rather than in the fields of technology, capital, or market. One possible reason for this is that whilst it may be possible to easily imitate technology and similar tangible values in competition, the most inimitable and valuable capital is the human resource. For this reason, the concepts of talent, talent management, and talent wars have been discussed from the 1990s through to the present day. With the transition to the knowledge economy, there has been an increase in the need for qualified employees in relevant fields who can use information communication technologies, who create value, and who provide advantages against the competition.

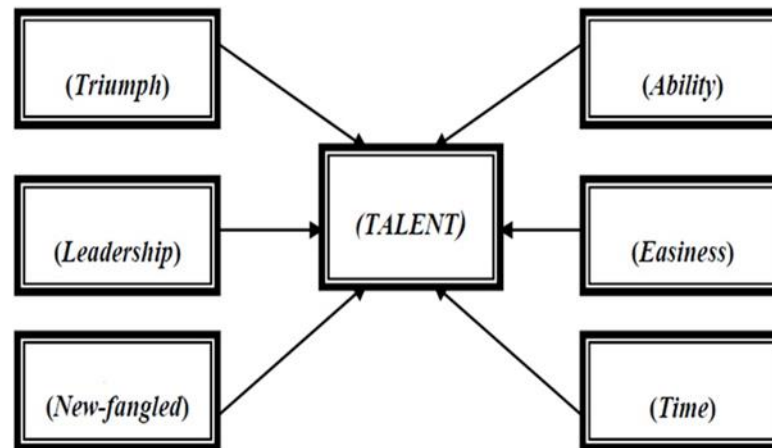
From the perspective of the organization, the “talented employee” can be defined as an employee who shows high performance, has high potential, and provides high productivity over many years. Characteristics such as the tendency to constantly transform and progress, entrepreneurship, use of initiative, affinity for teamwork, creation of value, management of differences, having a vision, a spirit of sharing and leadership are some of the primary values searched for in talented employees. Having employees with these characteristics in active roles within the organization can bring about positive results, for example, growth in market share and can contribute to the differentiation of an organization from its competitors.

In the context of talent management, organizations aim to attract talented employees, provide for their development, obtain from them maximum productivity and increase either commitment to the organization. However, they should be conscious, as far as possible, to avoid a situation where vital information and experience is confined to one person. Hence, there should be embedded as a part of the organizational culture, the existence of an open communication structure with well established information/media sharing protocols, which include the promotion of the existence and use of transparent communication platforms. Even though there are millions of unemployed in the world, there is a serious lack of talented employees. The dearth of talented employees brings about a non-market competition between organizations. That is the reason why organizations can compete with their competitors through talent management applications and keep alive succession policies.

The Concept of Talent and the Concept of Potential

In today's world where changes occur rapidly, organizations are aware that the most fundamental factor that will promote innovation, differentiate them from competitors and bring success in global competitive market place is to maximise the skills of their workforce. From this point of view, defining skilful workers and matching them to appropriate tasks gains more importance. In the dictionary of the Turkish Language Society (TDK), talent is defined as “the quality of perception, definition and capability, talent, predisposition in a certain way; the inborn power based on the organism in respect of their ability to adapt to a situation”. From the aspect of pedagogy, talent is mentioned as “the limit or the power of getting the outer effect, based on genetic features and the surrounding learning domain” (TDK, 2014, p.1626). It may be inferred from the above definitions that the concept of talent is derived from a person's genes and their capacity to improve over time when faced with a given set of circumstances. According to another definition, talent is explained as the ability to provide vital contributions to a current position as well as to contribute to the future of an organization in the environment of human resources. As it is clear from Figure 1, talent is understood as the unity of triumph, ability, leadership, easiness, new-fangledness and time (Doğan and Demiral, 2008, p.151).

Figure 1: Key Features of Talent



Source: www.insankaynaklari.com, (2012).

The concept of talent can be summarised as those mental features associated with understanding relations, analysing, resolving, getting results, as well as those physical features concerning realizing some phenomena. So, talent may be thought of as the mental and

physical capacity used for organizing and directing behaviours (Erdoğan, 1999, p.87). According to another definition, talent is the application of mental and physical capacity used in the process of repetitive thinking, feeling and behaviour skills in a fruitful way (Buckingham, 2001, p.21). The most general definition of talent is both to display high performance and to maximise the potential of a skilled individual. (Horvathova and Davidova, 2011, p.459). Generally, the concept of talent is mostly confused with the concept of skill. Skill is the features that can be acquired or learnable behaviour pattern while talent is accepted as a broad concept genetically gained, difficult to learn and embracing performance.

Organizations would like to work with talented people who adapt to their culture and contribute to the working process. The fundamental aim of human resources has been to bring the qualities and talents of the workers into the forefront, and thus, to manage them according to the company's needs and best interests. While doing this, to take precautions meeting the worker's expectation has gained importance in our day. To gain and retain workers who have high potential, and, that is especially the concern of this study, must be approached seriously about talent management on showing performance to enrich organizations (Yazıcıoğlu, 2006, p.1).

According to the Turkish Language Society dictionary (2005), potential is defined as "power or talent which remains hidden, not come to light yet, possible to improve, ready to use". Potential may be regarded as power or talent hidden in the present time, which is expected to be developed or revealed by the individual. In talent management, the importance of potential is vital for the future performance of the worker. In this sense, to find out potential talents and to determine management politics helping the workers' potential talents come out turn into a strategic advantage in competitive environment from the aspect of investing in future.

From another point of view, talent reveals the capacity to potentially do a certain work. For that reason, it is very important to establish features of potential properly when considering talent management. In this context, potential is accepted as the standard of success that the worker may take responsibility for, and the standard of success s/he achieves for the higher duties entrusted to them (Altınöz, 2009, p.9).

The Talented Worker and His/Her Features

In history, organizations have often used workers in a physical way to produce the product for sale. With the onset of machinery it was understood that human resources were an important factor that made a difference to the success of organizations, especially their effectiveness and ultimately their lucrativeness. Since 1990's, workers have become referred to as 'human capital', a term which seeks to embrace education, skills and talent (Geylan, 2006, p.3).

Therefore, since the world has moved towards being a global village, the importance of workers with their varying talents have proved crucial is the battle between organizations to increase their market share and be different from the rivals.

Talented workers are regarded as indispensable for the organizations that want to live, improve, grow and keep up with the times. Nowadays, it can be argued that a lot of organizations do not have sufficient consciousness and the relevant strategy to deal with talented workers. Yet, organizations have begun to accept that it is necessary to develop and retain key talents because of the harsh realities of competition therefore organisations have strated to develop processes around it (Altınöz, 2009, p.10). Thus, there is the emergence of evidence to show that organizations have begun to be more serious and conscious about defining what they consider are talented workers suitable for them, including them in their structures, and seeking to retain them within the organization. Arguably, it is not possible to be a leading organisation in their sector and be able to retain talented workers if the organisation ignores those on whom its future depends. The features of talented workers requested by organizations are listed below (Fulmer and Conger, 2004, p.176):

- Being an entrepreneur and using initiative
- Being creative and an innovator
- Being successful at intercommunications
- Being eager to learn
- Being focused on marketing
- Showing a tendency towards team work
- Managing differences and changes
- Having the skill of effective communication
- Being a visionary, having the capability to estimate the future
- Being able to transfer what s/he has learned,
- Being participative all the time

- An ability to take the lead in team work

When the fundamental features of talented workers are examined, the tendency to change and improve upon their work and even their private life is seen. In general, they are the ones who do not want to be limited; they are ambitious, intellectual and creative with a desire to learn and improve constantly. The talented workers who create value for the organization should be praised and appreciated perpetually (Demircioğlu, 2010, p.10). In return, foundations expect the talented workers to be prone to team work, be participative and display leadership qualities.

Talent Management

Developments and rapid changes experienced in recent years have changed the approach of human resources. Human resources now play a strategic role moving away from routine roles such as recordkeeping, controlling and collecting information. Human resources take responsibility for defining and realizing organizational strategies by having a more proactive role on the activities of organizations (both internally and externally), and play roles such as being the creator of general aspects and values of the organization, global thinking, counselling, new-fangledness and developing human talents and creating worker loyalty (Atlı, 2012, p.98). In classical periods, it was expected from workers to adapt to the system without questioning and to do their bests to discharge the duty imposed. Human resources, regarded and evaluated as equal to machines in the past, has been elevated towards the center of the organization.

The expansion of organisations through achieving a ‘competitive edge’ is inextricably linked to the ability of human resources to producing new and creative projects and to apply them effectively at the right time. When an organizations strategies are examined, it is evident that talent management comes to the forefront (www.ntvmsnbc.com). Talent management becomes an approach rising in importance gradually to [designate] the success of the human resources function (Cappelli, 2008, pp.1-9). The organizations which understand the value of this approach, aim to increase their profitability/success in the long term by focusing seriously on talent management.

Cubbingham (2007), describes talent management as a process for: determining and supplying positions of leadership constantly in key areas of the organization, encouraging the development of individual talents via human resources, and in addition, managing supply and demand, and the flow of talent. When this description is taken into consideration, this approach which emphasizes especially the leadership aspect, requires a strategic sense of leadership. In addition, talent management requires the profiling of workers, evaluating,

improving and focusing on the movements of talents within the organization. Additionally, it provides some opportunities such as developing leadership, evaluating talents and bringing talents together (Sims, 2009, p.9). As it is understood, talent management provides bringing talented people who are the core of the organization together, including them into the work process in the most effective way, and employing them for many years. Another description of talent management says that it is the system of perception, development of memory and talents according to many experts (Horvathova and Davidova, 2011, p.459). In Green's words (2008), talent management is stated as a unitary approach to human resources planning which aims to strengthen the priorities of business conduct and organizational capacity by using a series of human resource attempts. In a broad sense, talent management is a process which embraces all the organizational activities with the purpose of selecting, improving, and positioning the best workers to the most strategic roles in the global frame (Vaiman, et. al., 2012). In another sense talent management is an approach confronting many organizations by necessity and containing various steps such as including corporation and communication among the managers of the organization on all levels, labour force planning, recruitment, education, improvement of personnel, reviewing talents, success planning, performance evaluation, keeping the existing talents in reserve (McCauley and Wakefield, 2006, p.10).

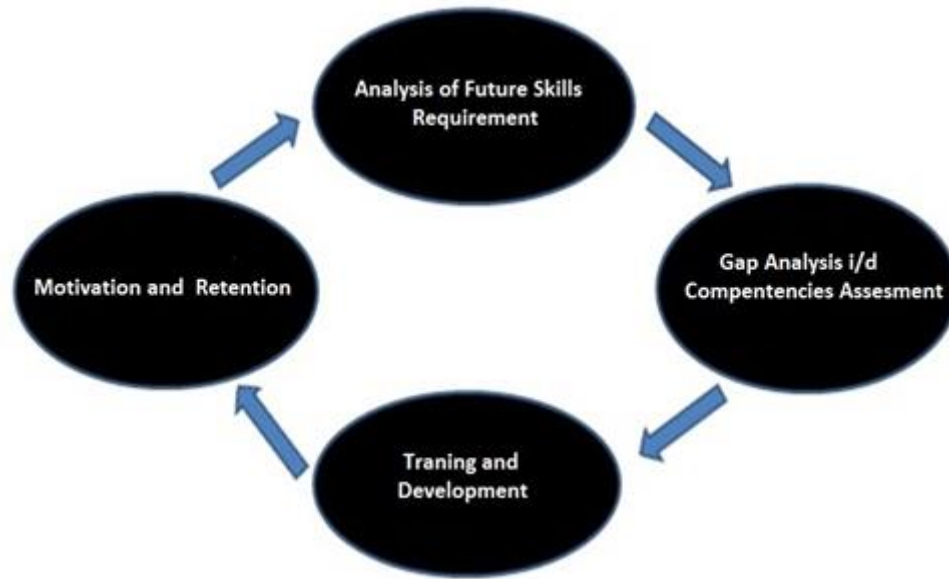
Organizations' embracing this approach accept this as the first condition to form an organization structure based on the concept of talent and to manage it successfully. After this a talent management strategy integrated with organization culture, objectives, aims, and strategies is constituted. Top management should support human resource departments on this topic consciously in this process. In this management approach, taking people into the organization and creating an added-value environment by keeping them thanks to effective development programs are needed. Then, the workers who show high performance are brought to strategic positions with reward systems and succession methods by differentiating them from the others. This obliges organizations to have a high performance and result-oriented based organizational culture (Çelik, 2011, p.4).

The scope of talent management is used for emphasizing strategic importance of powerful human resource applications in organizations. Most of the literature studies about talent management include the idea that talent management is related with various human resources management applications such as strategic empowerment, mind, improvement and skill, training the workers with high performance or high potential. Talent, in general, can be associated with the ones who have high performance or it can be up to the individual. How well an individual shows performance potentially or his/her performance displayed actually

may be associated with the performance s/he shows in a particular work (Nilsson and Ellström, 2012, p.35).

Before applying a talent management program, the goals devoted to talented workers must be specified and talent planning must be done according to these goals. Talent planning, which is a key point of talent management structure can be defined as the planning for qualified and numerical demands of the organizations' future talent. Talent planning is mostly regarded as planning of financial resources or the working plan, shift table, and coordination planning. For that reason, a strategic and proficiency perspective of planning remain uncertain and they are underestimated most of the time (Siikaniemi, 2012, p.52). In this context, addressing talent planning in a versatile way, thinking comfortably of the organization's long term goals, preparing talent planning according to the workers' talents and expectations may decrease deficiency and uncertainty in the organization.

Talent management is a comprehensive and integral process. This process is generally composed of the phases of making human resources planning in the direction of organization strategy, identifying talent strategy in the direction of this plan, determination for which fields need which talents by making profile analysis of the available labour force, determining, attracting, integrating to the organization, developing and evaluating talents, and providing withholding of talented workers (Alayoğlu, 2010, p.78). Additionally, it is possible to say that talent management continues as a cycle and can be dealt with in four steps. As it is seen in Figure 2, a talent management process starts with the evaluation and analysis of perfections. Thus, employing the right person for the right work and the right one's doing the right work are supplied. Then, education and development phases commence. In this phase, the objective is to display potential values, make the individual understand his/her skill and potential, and develop him/her by making him/her see his/her development line. In the phases of motivation and withholding, will of doing a work of the people whose potential is come out is increased by several studies and reinforcement of a sense of belonging to the organization is provided. In the last phase, what a person can do, how much s/he can increase his/her performance, and what s/he would need for the phases found suitable for him/her are put emphasis on the basis of a person's present talents.

Figure 2: The Talent Management Process

Source: Glen, (2006, p.44).

The steps to be followed in talent management process are listed below respectively (Çırpan and Şen, 2009, pp.113-114):

a. Identification of Aims and Strategies: Aims are necessary for identifying strategies and underpin the application process of talent management. As an organization, it is necessary to identify beforehand what the aim is and which paths would be followed to reach this aim. It is obligatory to identify the aims especially for the organization's specifying the right strategies and evaluating the application results.

b. Determination of Key Positions: Administrative and technical positions, which are of importance for realizing the strategies identified, must be specified as a result of the research. While specifying these positions, a possible failure which may be experienced at this stage should have a qualification related to the demanded aim. Otherwise, to focus on talent management for all positions may cause economic problems.

c. Construction of Talent Profile: In this phase, the features of a qualified worker are required who can make the best of the key positions defined in the before step and can show the performance demanded. The features demanded from an ideal worker are clarified in detail according to knowledge, skill, experience, interest and education, and experience area. This ideal profile description has a great importance for the sake of training a person to the corresponding position or taking him/her to the point aimed to be reached while assigning the worker.

d. Identification of Potentials: In this phase, the candidates who have the potential to discharge the duty in question are identified. Moreover, this phase becomes the crucial point of talent management. In this context, what kind of talents the workers have for the key positions and which workers have the most appropriate features for the specified positions among the workers are identified.

e. Analysis of Talent Deficit: In this process, an analysis report is revealed by analysing how the potential talents identified as candidates match up with the features demanded. This analysis shows what is needed for the development of potential candidates and which proficiencies are needed.

f. Preparation and Application of Improvement Plans: At this step, improvement activities devoted to the workers are planned by looking at the previous analysis. All the varieties of improvement such as education, coaching, rotation must be taken into consideration within the future plan of the candidate. An improvement activity needed for each of the candidate's aspects may be different. The most important mistake here is regarded as postponing improvement and retarding a person's training by day labour and practices precluding the process of talent improvement.

g. Evaluation of the Candidate's Performance: As a result of investments on the person within the scope of improvement plans, the extent of the deficit between the current situation and ideal profile is evaluated. In other words, the candidate's performance in the process of preparation is scrutinized. The evaluation effects the decision about the candidate's promotion, remaining in or being removed from the potential pool.

h. Situation Assessment and Promotion: The candidates standing in a potential pool is evaluated so that they are assigned to a position they are trained for in case of need. In this evaluation, some factors such as the possibility of the effects of the candidate's present deficiencies on the position s/he is going to be assigned, and the period of time to meet this deficit are considered.

To be able to sustain this process properly, first of all, top management must take the matter of talent management into consideration seriously and spend the necessary time on it, and additionally, top management must back up by working with the other department managers in co-operation. Another important condition for dealing with these studies effectively is to have an effective communication network in the organization and to use it in an active way. Lastly, activities must be put into practice by providing co-operation and coordination without wasting time.

One of the most important factors for running talent management process is to be able to run organizational communication flow sturdily. A clear and transparent communication environment in the organization provides sustainability of talent management applications with the other departments comfortably, sharing of organizational values among the workers, embracement of aims and strategies in the context of talent management by the workers. On the other hand, a successful organizational communication plays an important role on continuing team spirit among talented workers, on effective communication based on interaction between the workers and talent managers and shows high organization performance constantly by appreciating and motivating the talented workers. Organizational communication enables managers to learn the job satisfaction levels of the talented workers. So, the managers who learn what is expected from the work by the workers provide job satisfaction by identifying new policies to meet the workers' expectations.

Field Research on Talent Management at Vodafone*

Organizations realize talent management applications for revealing the potentials of the personnel recruited, integrating them with the mission and vision of the organization easily, and working in the direction of the common aim. The purpose of this study is to present how talent management in Turkey is addressed from an organizational point of view. Vodafone was chosen for several reasons. First, the strategic transformation program that Vodafone Turkey introduced and successfully completed in 2009 has been discussed as a Case Study at universities in London and Turkey (www.sabah.com.tr, 2015). Second, there exists a separate unit concerning talent management. Third, Vodafone is ranked by Fortune Turkey's study of "Turkey's Most Appreciated Companies" with the participation of 790 senior executives among the most appreciated companies under the titles of talent management (www.fortuneturkey.com, 2015), creativity (www.fortuneturkey.com, 2015) and global arena (www.fortuneturkey.com, 2015) which are among the main characteristics of talent management. And finally, that it was granted an award (www.peryon.org.tr, 2014) in the category of talent management as part of the human management awards by PERYÖN (Personnel Management Association of Turkey).

This research has been chosen because of the limited studies on talent management in the literature and the lack of departments related to this field. Within this information, the point of investigation of the research is "what the contributions of talent management are to an organization". The sub-questions of the research are:

- a. What are the problems faced in the application process of talent management?
- b. How talent performance is evaluated?

* For further information on Vodafone Turkey and Their Talent Management Programme see the appendix to this article.

In this study, an in-depth qualitative research is done by using a “case study” model. The sample event is described as examining a special and interesting phenomenon within the condition of its own and environmental factors (Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2011, p.82). According to another description, event is “a study in detail on a test subject or a few test subjects related with each other”. Data is acquired about a person, a group or an organization with an in-depth questioning, and thus, the factors showing the present condition of the test subject worked on it, and relationship among these factors are determined (Altunışık, et.al., 2012). Sample events can be reached in different environments and conditions. The researcher must take advantage of these opportunities. They are listed below as (Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2011, p.82):

- The researcher may be aware of an interesting event while doing a questionnaire or an interview.
- S/he may find out a sample event while observing.
- S/he may be told that there is a sample event in another place.

If the researcher defines the subject to be reached initially, there is a high possibility to meet the items above. However, if the subject is defined initially, new events must be the subject of another analysis.

While putting this study into practice, face-to-face meeting, observation and document examination are used as data collection tools. The usage of these three methods exemplifying data diversification is to hinder misunderstandings and misdetections. Interviews are done with a semi-structured interview form composed according to the criteria defined by the researcher. During the interview, the answers of new questions emerged in the dialogue between the researcher and the interviewee so that in-depth information is obtained.

The questions prepared for the interview are based on “the steps to be followed in the process of talent management” stated in the article named “*An Effective Tool to Improve Newfangledness in Managements: Talent Management*” by Çırpan and Şen (2009). As it is stated in the theoretical part of the study, the steps are pointed out as eight steps in total: identification of aims and strategies, determination of key positions, construction of talent profile, identification of potentials, analysis of talent deficit, preparation and application of improvement plans, evaluation of the candidate’s performance, situation assessment and promotion. Information communication devices such as computers, telephones and recorders were used while carrying out data collection and analysis.

Face to face meetings were carried out in the İstanbul head office in August 2014, with Vodafone Talent Improvement Director and Senior Talent Management Director, because

they had a full knowledge of the process mentioned. Questions were asked separately via semi-structured interview form, the interview was recorded by getting permission from relevant persons and the records were resolved by the researchers. The interviewees allowed their names to be mentioned in the study. Knowledge acquisition about the process, reaching related persons, interviewing with them, collection and analysis of the other data included 15 months-process in total.

Findings and Discussion

In this part, obtained data are resolved in 8 titles in total: “Identification of aims and strategies”, “determination of key positions”, “construction of talent profile”, “identification of potentials”, “analysis of talent deficit”, “preparation and application of improvement plans”, “evaluation of the candidate’s performance”, “situation assessment and promotion”.

Identification of Aims and Strategies

Vodafone authorities state that they have started off to be an admired organization. For that reason, they explain their common goals as “to enable Vodafone to be a favourable organization and to convey a sensitive and rational perception expressed as ‘I am very happy to have a connection between the trademark and me’”. Moreover, they want to be known with these seven behavioural patterns by their customers: “customer focussed”, innovation hungry”, ambitious and competitive”, “one company, local roots”, “speed”, “simplicity” and “trust”. Accordingly, Vodafone defined some primary elements for specifying both their goals and their strategies under the name of VodafoneWay* with this expression: “The only way of working fast and productive together is to embrace a common business manner”.

“After goals are defined, to apply them in every rank is the key point of this system. This case is the way to strategy. Workers are off course when they do not know why they struggle, and become unhappy. Workers should understand well the goals of the organization, and match up them with their own professional goals. You can recognize its positive contribution when it is realized. Achieving the goals supplies personal satisfaction for the workers, and contributes the persons’ happiness. Running after uncertain goals, losing the focus, saying “I don’ know, I do whatever they give” move personal satisfaction away”.

In the researches held, it is seen that Vodafone’s vision is “to be the most trusted and preferred communication trademark by pleasing our consumers unconditionally” (Vodafone Sustainability Report, 2012, p. 1), and they deliver their values through, in part, these expressions: “We give a fast, qualified, simple and confidential service to our customers while helping them use the opportunities of life ideally and realize their potentials. We are

* An corporate concept in Vodafone which mean that how a personel does work and how a personel communicates with others.

progressing in the direction of all of our users' understanding that we are a new-fangled, competitive and international company with local roots" (Vodafone Sustainability Report, 2012, p. 1).

Determination of Key Positions

Determination of key positions in Vodafone is directly related with determination of potentials. Potentials are divided into three groups as high potential, medium potential and low potential.

"We place the defined performances in a specified matrix. 3200 workers are evaluated with equal criteria. Calibration map is discussed and approved as a result. If s/he is with high potential, education is concentrated on, or rise in salary is taken into consideration. Here, we combine talent and performance management with education, improvement and reward. The more performance is high, the more payment taken gets high. We unite talent systems and human resources systems. There are three groups here: human resources, managers and workers. Firstly, we get into contact about calendar and important criteria. First of all, we tell how the managers must run the performance interviews. Then, we expect them to save performance goals on the system. At this point, we do another communication study with managers. Our workers define their goals in April and May. We evaluate whether we reach the goals or not with semi-annual evaluation in October, and annual evaluation in February. We communicate with workers and managers in different ways. Open communication is done. In May, workers learn their performances from managers. We convey this case to the workers via e-mails, posters and team meetings. The real message is that the skill of the manager on critical issues is very important. S/he needs to interview well on feedback and coaching issues about workers' performances. Otherwise, there comes out many problems. People do not know their open-improvement sides".

Determination of key positions in Vodafone is directly related with the detection of key persons. So, not the point the person starts or is at, but the work s/he does is key point. It is about how much these persons called "talent" use these talents.

Construction of Talent Profile

Vodafone describes talents as the first step to construct a talent profile. So, according to Vodafone, talent is described as: "We call the persons "talent" who have the proficiency of contributing himself/herself and the department, not only knows 'what', but also knows 'how', reflect patterns of behaviour, displays potential for the future". According to Vodafone, there are some process and mechanisms to pass to be a 'talent'. The person who passes these steps is accepted as 'talent' for agents of Vodafone all around the world.

"To define a colleague, we are looking for two criteria. The first one is 'What'. That is, it is the technical features of the work, and 60% of importance. The second part is 'How', and %40 of importance. Let's give an example: A person may be the only person to do a work on the world. If s/he does not transfer

or display with behaviour his/her experiences with usage, the other relationships, managing, - and we call the way of realizing it 'Vodafone Way' - , the person is not of much importance for us".

While constructing a talent profile, Vodafone takes the Vodafone Way process into consideration and carries out an evaluation based on how many persons succeed in this process and internalize the process. Hence, the Vodafone Way process is attributed in all improvement programs.

Identification of Potentials

Identification of potential properly means employing the right person for the right occupation or the right person doing the right work. So, this case is of great importance for talent management. The Vodafone Way focuses on the potential of a person while constructing a talent profile.

"Our values are also tried to be reflected by behaviour. Vodafone Way behaviours finger on the pulse in all of our works. These behaviours are internalized with this value on each step. These values are asked on each step. While identifying potentials, we evaluate performances according to how much a person displays Vodafone Way behaviours and according to its level. They place at the heart of all talent system".

The persons whose potentials are identified display their performances at the positions needed or wait for the right state and time for the next process.

Analysis of Talent Deficit

Appropriateness or inappropriateness of the candidates for the position needed is detected with questionnaires and interviews at Vodafone.

Preparation and Application of Improvement Plans

Vodafone detects whether the persons are pleased with the work they do or not according to a specific matrix. Initially, how the substantial work is run, patterns of behaviour of managers towards the workers, whether the workers are pleased with the work they do or not are identified via research and an improvement plan is prepared accordingly.

"We evaluate the rage of persons with percentage. In addition, the manager's score comes out with satisfaction questionnaire of workers, loyalty index of the manager, and promoter scores. So, I can understand directly whether the manager manages his/her team well or not thanks to the workers' questionnaire. We ask the reasons of this case to the managers who stands below the average. We prepare improvement plans both with him, and with the workers and the managers. We run a system and keep them hidden. I plan actions with this questionnaire after learning how the managers motivate the workers. When the workers adapt to the program, it reflects both their education and salaries, and

their careers at the same time. The persons who adapt and understand the system smooth the way for themselves personally and professionally”.

While forming the content of improvement plans, some cases are kept hidden not to give harm to any group or anybody, these plans are prepared in common with the persons at different agents, and if the application phase is successful, they benefit the process at Vodafone.

Evaluation of the Candidate's Performance

Performance evaluation of Vodafone is done by some of the responsible specialist managers and human resource specialists according to manager index and loyalty index defined by them. Evaluations are realized as half-year evaluations for semi-annual or annual evaluations. In this evaluation, the person's change, communication with others, strategic thought, skill of managing process/problems, and new-fangledness is examined. However, there is a different request of talent managers on this process. Performance managers, with reference to direct proportion of performance and talent, advocate that performance evaluations- especially on talent- must be done monthly and thus, some cases would be reviewed early. Various improvement programs are activated and studies for reaching personal and business targets are done.

“Talent system is based on two bases: performance and potential. We call this process PIGEX. We define annual performance aims in April. Subsequently, there is a half-year evaluation in October. At the end of October, we say to an organization with their human resources and business associates that “Let's do a half-year evaluation on this colleagues performance”. We do it in all organizations. We look for some things on improvement potential. There we say that “How does this colleague think strategically, work with changes, manage it, communicate with the others, and bring innovations about the future, accordingly. There are four criteria to identify potentials. Our colleagues define goals in April, and they do evaluations of these goals with their managers in October. Goals are revised if necessary, the point we state is updated constantly. Right after, they talk about plans in next six months again.

We say that “do not wait for six months about goals, especially. Make current evaluation meetings with your team. What have you done in this month? What will you do in the next month? What is going well, what is going worse? Thus, do not wait for six months”. We say it to get feedback. There is a constant auto-control. In this context, we advise them to focus on personal improvement goals as well as business goals. In this context, we present improvement programs with different functions, such as Red Academy which functions differently as sales academy, finance academy, marketing academy. These colleagues are educated in these academies for doing their best and for their personal and professional improvement. As a result of semi-annual evaluation, we prepare an organization map. we prepare organization for such as detecting the situation of performances and potentials of present workers of senior managers. In October and February,

we are in ten-month process. Then, we say to all workers that you may evaluate your performance year with your managers. These are evaluated at the end of the year, the last performance scores are given and these scores are discussed at calibration meeting. Performance scores of 3200 workers are carried to talent matrix via personnel and directors. Thus, there is a very clear-cut table in front of us”.

An integrated system is applied on Vodafone performance evaluation. Vodafone does not regard the persons’ performance and the others’ independently, and do performance evaluation studies according to this principle. In addition, the things made right and gone wrong are seen clearly with these annual performance evaluation tables, and the points that must be addressed can be targeted.

Situation Assessment and Promotion

If problems occur with the process these problems are eliminated with proactive intervention.

“Being lower than expected of managing and loyalty indexes and performance indicators measured by investment-linked applications (such as education) on the workers creates some problems for our organization. On the other hand, well-trained and organizational-invested persons leave Vodafone after getting “talent” mark because of some problems, and it becomes a problem for us. Sometimes, misplacement of some persons with talent potentials and inability to support their education rarely create problems. However, such risky situations can be turned into advantage with evaluations and new strategies”.

From the start date of employment, there is an evaluation and tracking system on periodical, departmental, organizational and directorate base. Some situation assessments and evaluations are like that: how many of the leaving ones are high talent? How many of the persons who are employed in the first year have low potential? How many of them have deficiencies on their education?

“Promotion case is directly related with talent at Vodafone. We apply promotion for the colleagues with high potentials and displaying Vodafone Way behaviours as prioritising in training programs, helping them go attempt programs by nominating them as candidates, salary and rewarding policies. The ones promoted or the ones attending this process think that “If I go this training, the organization contributes me about my future, so it means that they believe in me”. Feeling of trust and loyalty towards organization are awakened in this way”.

To be promoted is bound to talent, and evaluation of talent is bound to the Vodafone Way at Vodafone. In this respect, to progress in Vodafone, one needs to embrace the Vodafone Way steps. As a result of the meetings and studies realized, it is necessary to get some details. Within the frame of talent management in an organization, it is important to primarily

determine talent management targets and strategies. In the process of determining key positions, it is imperative to ascertain the potential of the personnel and to place people with different potentials to different positions. Since each personnel would have different talents, employees need to have their talent profiles constructed through definite scales/criteria. These scales may change for each organization according to institutional structure. Besides, it is possible to conduct studies of talent analysis of the personnel with determined potential and talent, thus detecting their weak areas. With the preparation of personnel development plans, it is possible to detect their successful subjects and to reorient their carrier within organization accordingly. In addition to analyses made, it may be possible to assess the candidate's performance via new studies and to promote as a result of this assessment, so that someone who knows the organization as an insider may be at a top position.

Conclusion

In today's competitive environment, organizations that reach for leadership by creating distinction from their competitors must place emphasis on talent management applications. Even though in these last years, talent management, which has become widespread in the United States and Europe, gained even a little value in our country, studies completed upon the subject remain insufficient. An integrated and comprehensive talent management program must conform to the organizational targets; otherwise it will not be possible for the program to be productive. For an organization to obtain high productivity from a talent management program, it needs to draft a talent management program specific to its organizational structure. It is observed that in organizations successful in this endeavor, the talent management application is compatible with the organization's values and sectorial structure.

Talent is the whole of the mental and physical properties that allow a person to be able to grasp, analyze, resolve certain relations, and realize certain facts. From another perspective, it is the mental, emotional and physical capacity that individuals use to orient their behaviors. In organizations, as talented employees are determined, criteria such as having high potential, high performance and leadership skills are taken into consideration. In this context, it is observed that Vodafone determines different strategies and designates different applications for employees with high potential in line with its values. It is of paramount importance that the employees considered as potential talents by Vodafone fulfill important positions in the future as well and that minimum cost and time is used for that. That is because of the fact that recruiting managers outside the organization is very exhausting and costly to the organizations.

In this study, the main research question is determined to be “what are the contributions of talent management to the organization in Vodafone?” The research sub-questions are (a) “which problems are encountered in the process of application of talent management?” and (b) “how is the talent performance evaluated?” When the main research question is evaluated, findings show that talent management provides harmonization of employee targets and organization targets, employee’s feeling of self worth, high levels of organization loyalty and motivation, and maximum level of productivity. Besides, it has contributions including quick and efficient fulfillment of open positions within the organization and retention of talented employees in the organization. When research sub-question (a) is considered, even though most of the time no problems occur in the process of the talent management process, it may happen that after training and other developmental applications, performance below expected levels is shown and individuals with talent labels leaving the job may pose problems in regards to talent management. However, talent managers who focus on solving problems can generate new strategies to solve these problems. When the other research sub-question (b) is analyzed, after an application of 6 months, some responsible expert managers and human resource specialists assess performance of the talented employee half-yearly and yearly according to manager index and loyalty index that they themselves have ascertained. An employee’s performance cannot be assessed independently of other employees. What was done wrong and what was done right in the process of application is seen in the yearly performance assessment tables. Most recent performance notes are discussed in the calibration meeting at the end of the year. Performance notes of 3200 people are transferred to the talent matrix through personnel and directors. As a result, it is observed that Vodafone’s talent management system is done within the framework of professional applications.

The success of the talent management application is determined through various tests given to the employees. A test given at different periods of time can reveal the results of performance management including the measurement of individuals’ motivation, the direction of change of individuals’ perspective of organization, and performance changes.

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Appendix

On Vodafone¹

Vodafone Turkey is part of the Vodafone Group. The Vodafone Group is one of the largest international mobile communication companies in terms of income and global coverage. Vodafone Turkey is the second largest mobile communication’s company in Turkey with 19.6 million subscribers as of 30th September 2013. Vodafone Turkey, is the second largest international direct investment in Turkey equalling 12 billion Turkish Liras. Vodafone Turkey’s total income in the financial year 2012/13 increased to 5.5 billion Turkish Liras and it recorded growth of 19.2%. Vodafone Turkey acquired Borusan Telekom in 2010 and in 2011 it acquired one of Turkey’s largest alternative telecommunication operators, Koç.net. Vodafone Turkey seeks to create a complete communication environment by offering services in mobile voice, fixed voice, mobile internet and ADSL. Vodafone Turkey operates with an ecosystem composed of over 3300 staff, more than 1200 retail stores and a shareholder family of 43,000.

Development Rules in Vodafone

Talent management starts from the identification of people with high potential and continues with their ongoing personal development including their preparation for leadership roles. In order to constantly develop its business goals and develop its future leaders, Vodafone positions talent management as a vital priority and thus makes substantial investment in it both globally and locally. Important key practices are carried out within this

¹ The information provided in this section is composed of the answers obtained from the interview questions and the feedback on Vodafone website.

process. Assemblies of Development, which are formed in a global process, have crucial importance in terms of creating an institutional culture in which high performance and talent are identified and developed for leadership positions. Thus, the development of the workers in management is examined through the Assemblies of Development, the workers with high performance and potential are identified and their development requirements are discussed and assessed for a number of global talent programs such as “Inspire”, “Virtual Business Challenge” and “Rising Star”. With the Assemblies of Development, Vodafone Turkey seeks to clearly identify the talent and organization capacity of the company which enables it to create substantial back up plans for leadership positions. Practically, Assemblies of Development arrange meetings which bring together managers from different levels to discuss the performances and potentials of the workers over different time spans. Assemblies of Development also relate to different processes such as Performance Management, Recruitment and Placement, and are repeated annually.

Vodafone Turkey motivate their workers in the aforementioned conditions to help them display a constant high performance. Furthermore, the company assist their personal and vocational development in a transparent manner so that the workers which produce high value remain within the body of the company and continue their effective production.

Inspire Talent Program

Inspire Talent Program, which is created with the goal of developing leaders who will continuously carry the organization of Vodafone further, is intended for managers with consistent rates of high performance and potential. The evaluation process for the program participants requires nomination from the Vodafone Turkey Leadership Team during the meeting of the Assembly of Development for Vodafone Turkey, no limitations of working internationally (mobility) and being successful in the evaluations of an external consulting firm during the global selection process. Participants who are qualified to be participants in the Inspire Talent Program attend different educational modules for a year while having opportunities such as coaching, developing leadership skills and being assigned to different global projects with developmental purposes. One of the most important advantages of the program is networking, having the chance to meet the top executives of Vodafone and to make an appearance as part of a global talent pool. VodafoneTurkey has been participating in the program since 2008 and it has been proven to be a very important development opportunity for the successful Vodafone managers who want to fulfil their potential.

Virtual Business Challenge Talent Program

Virtual Business Challenge (VBC), specifically designed for the workers in Vodafone’s talent pool, is a global online simulation contest. VBC offers an experience which brings competition and training together and gives the participants an opportunity to better perceive Vodafone’s operational process, functions and clients. Vodafone Turkey has been participating in the VBC since 2007 and the contestants who are to represent Vodafone Turkey in the VBC are chosen from the workers who constantly show high performance and potential in parallel with the outcomes of the Assembly of Development. The contestants who are chosen compete with the other contestants from other parts of the Vodafone Group in teams of five and undertake the role of a leadership team of their company for three virtual years. During this process, they have the chance to clearly understand how the decisions made in the different parts of the company affect others and what the results of these decisions are, along with analysing the effects on the company’s profitability. Moreover, contestants also learn to analyse the necessities and requests of the clients which help them understand the key factors that enable a telecommunication company to succeed. The groups are coached by a member of their own choice from the leadership team before the contest. During the contest, which lasts for a couple of months, the groups are evaluated and ranked in order at the end of each virtual year and at the end of the contest the members of the group who take first place thanks to the success rate of their company are announced on Vodafone Global Website.