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# CONNECTION OF TALENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT – DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

Review  
Article

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## Abstract

*Talent and career management has become a function of central significance not only in international but in Hungarian HR practice as well, since the employment and keeping of excellent colleagues might constitute a strategic competitive advantage for organizations. In order for an organization to be able to manage its workforce – not only to find talents but also to be able to keep, motivate and train them – deliberate identification and management are necessary. In terms of its objective, the talent management system is identical with career management; its primary focus is to improve organizational efficiency through the satisfaction of employee demands and to offer an attractive organizational life cycle to the program participants. Due to the above, application and interpretation of the two systems are often mixed on organizational level. In the scope of the study, organizational interpretation of talent is defined, differences/similarities between talent and career management systems are introduced and the possible operation within an integrated system is proposed.*

## INTRODUCTION

Necessity for the existence of talents has evolved to a demand mentioned increasingly in the field of the international and the Hungarian labour markets because they form a workforce within an organization which can give their employers a strategic competitive advantage through their personal skills. Consequently, a tactical competition has emerged amongst the organizations in order to acquire and retain employees having outstanding skills. One possible way of acquiring talented employees is to attract them. However, in order to make a company attractive at an organisational level, it is essential to operate such conscious and unambiguous systems which offer unequivocal opportunities for the talents. Talent management systems help to carry out the planning, organisation, checking and control of the talented employees within an organization; these systems are similar to the carrier management systems in various aspects, with regard to their aim and toolkit. Aim of this treatise is, beyond the conceptual definition and interpretation of the talent and career management, to shed light upon the differences in systems of the talent management and career management as well as the parallels between them, thus reflecting on the optimal application. This treatise focuses on setting forth those theories and practices which have been already created on the subject. Our goal is to define the talent at an organizational level as well as to set forth those opportunities which are aimed at the methods of talent management. Our further aim is to state the differences and parallels between the talent and career management systems as well as to shed light upon how the two systems can be harmonised and operated in an integrated approach.

### DETERMINING THE TALENT FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW

In order to come close to the concept of talent management, it is primarily expedient to determine the meaning of talent. Albeit the concept of talent can be primarily linked to the field of psychology science where a large number of psychological professionals dealt with the evolution of talent and its differing models, inter alia Renzulli (1978), Tannenbaum (1983), Mönks (1992), Sternberg (1995, 2004) or Czeizel (2004) as well. However, with regard to its practical applicability, the concept of talent has increasingly become subject to the public interest on the labour market and thereby the possible connection points to the talent have been started to research in several fields of the social sciences. For that reason, this treatise is examining the existence of talent appearing at

organizational level and thereby determining the labour market processes.

Although the talents can be determined in different ways, we cannot present such a definition which is generally approved. That colleague is a talent and a real key person who is able to perform more and better, in a measurable and demonstrable way, than an average employee (Tompa-Steigerwald, 2006). However, in certain opinions (Bokor et al, 2007:190), the concept of talent can extend:

- Within a few years, ability to take responsibility bigger than the present one
- Excellent performance or proving for a long time
- Behaviour suited to the organizational values, commitment to the company
- (managerial) style suited to the company culture
- Appropriate professional competences and background
- Awareness, clear goals, values, ability to manage the personal development

Apart from the fact that the content of talent may vary by industry and firm, it can be generally stated, based on the facts written by Karoliny-Poór (2017) and their fellow authors, that certain company-specific interpretations have also common features. This due to the fact that there is drafted talent concept, either pronounced or implicitly, in the managerial way of thinking in case of every organization. Naturally, its focus, within the company, can be different by field of work, on which the corporate culture, ownership preferences, company strategy, clientele etc. may have great influence. A possible summarizing method of interpreting the talented employees can be reviewed in Figure 1.

A part of the theories states that talent is a congenital aptitude which becomes an unfolding capability by practice and targeted development, thereby it can result in performances being significantly greater than the average in certain or more fields of activities (Harsányi, 1998); this fact unequivocally underpins the importance of improvements within an organization, regarding the talents. Talent is a certain measure of potential and promise for the future that an individual will be able to achieve outstanding results in the field of some employment which is, in one respect, socially useful and, on the other hand, gives the individual satisfaction and sense of achievement (Czeizel, 1997). In case of this wording, a strong connection nature of talent and HR can be strongly perceived, given that one of the essential goals of the human resource management is to satisfy the organizational and employee interests in parallel, similarly to the state of talent concept described (Karoliny-Poór, 2010:26). But what can work satisfaction and sense of accomplishment mean?

Csikszentmihályi (1997) is one of the outstanding experts of the field whose opinion relating to the “stream” or “flow experience” – which we can live through during our everyday activities – is that the most typical feature of people living through the experience is that they are capable of taking pleasure in such situations that others could think intolerable. This is such a feeling which results in an effect that we focus on what we do in such way that we do not pay attention to any other things, we do not worry about our problems, the conscious self may disappear and our sense of time may also become distorted. Reward value of this kind of experience is such high that the people can carry out certain experiences solely for this reason. They are not even interested in what benefit it will bring to them or what they do is possibly dangerous so even a reward system developed with special professionalism cannot compete with this feeling. These experiences could also emerge spontaneously but it is more typical that we get these ones as a result of a regulated activity. So, in a nutshell, we have a big chance to be outstanding, i.e. talented, in those fields that we can efficiently perform with joy and devotion and this activity may come about not only in a form of leisure time but at a level of working and it comes about very often. Thus, the talented employees form a tiny fraction of employees which can give their employers a market competitive advantage through their certain personal skills. Their economic value is therefore inversely proportional to their available quantity. Consequently, the individual personal talent most commonly represents the measure of potential in the outstanding performance, success and the high-level, conscious and unique professionalism; it is accompanied by a sweeping “flow experience” from employee side.

### **INTERPRETATION OF TALENT MANAGEMENT**

Is talent management is one of the several sonorous HR terms? It is unlikely since the presence of talent management in an organization shows a commitment to acquiring, retaining and developing the most talented and the highest level employees being available on the labour market (Heathfield, 2016). Based on the facts written by Schumann-Sartain (2010), it can be generally said that the employees of nowadays work not only for one or two companies during their lifetime but change jobs seven or eight times on average. The consequent concomitant of it is that the employees, after getting into an organization, are expecting concrete guidance from the organization: with regard to the career, advancement and inter alia the compensation system as well, because the personal professional development as a new and dominant

employee preference has been given a prominent role. This also causes that the organizations shall make very large efforts to be able to acquire, retain and motivate fellow workers (Gergely-Pierog, 2016). Thanks to this change, talent management also begins to spread increasingly since it can give the organizations a basis for the long-term cooperation with the most valuable employees.

A prudent management is necessary for the effective operation of an organization. And, the management is not other than planning of the human, financial and information resources of companies as well as a process of decision about, organization, management and control of the resources in order to reach an effective operation (1987). Given that the human resource being essential for an organization shall be managed in general, an enhanced role shall be given to the scope of talented employees as well, in addition to the resource in general. Based on the assumption that one of the fundamental tasks and the main priority of a management is to direct people, a close relation can be established with HR; talent management has also become a relating field and function of it.

Based on a simple interpretation, talent management includes the development of those employees who can be promoted (Bokor et al. 2007). According to Duttagupta (2005), in wide approach, it is a strategic management of the flow of talents through an organization. Holbeche (2009) complements the above with the systematic attraction, selection, application, retaining and development of those talented employees who are representing individual values and presenting at an organizational level. Nevertheless, it can be also regarded as a whole of such integrated HR practices which are intended to realize the attraction and retaining, in light of the approach ‘the appropriate people at the appropriate time and to the appropriate place (Heinen and O’Neill, 2004; Schweyer, 2004). In addition, it can be also stated that supporting talents are not other than the forecast of human resource needs and the planning of serving these demands (Capelli, 2008). Thus, it is expedient to interpret this system as a way of thinking which leads to that the focus of the organizational efficiency and success will be on the talents (Creelman, 2004). Figure 2 shows a possible compilation of supporting HR functions necessary for the operation.

Talent supporting/management mean the handling of skills, competence and power of employees having outstanding quality within an organization. And, considering the human resource functions, all that is necessary for the recruitment, development, retaining, rewarding as well as better performance of employees and its measurement can constitute a part of the talent management system (Om, 2016). As well, though the experts of the field do not have

a completely identical opinion about the systems necessary for supporting the talent management, the above can be also completed with the competence systems, the succession planning and career improvement as further HR functions necessary for supporting the talent management as well as, according to Tompa and Steigerwald (2006), with the optimal creating and planning of jobs. One of its reasons is that there is a frequent tactics in case of the undertakings operating developed talent management system, namely attracting the talented people and creating their jobs after acquiring them since experience shows that the performance can rather be influenced by whether the job occupied brings out the full potential of an employee than the investment in continuous trainings. So, talent management is entirely such an HR function the primary task of which is to reach, attract, acquire, utilize and retain the potential talent resources inside and outside an organization. This system is responsible for making good use of skills of the acquired talented employees maximally and for retaining them for the long term; its operation shall be shaped spiced with enjoyable and experiential processes, ensured the professional engagement of participants in the program and the maintenance of the related productive enthusiasm. Focus and target group of the operation should be an important feature of the system, considering that the system shall not cover the whole organization because it may be operated aimed at only that workforce of the organization which has outstanding skills. Its advantage is that getting into the system can be itself interpreted as prestige which may be used as a tool increasing the loyalty. Naturally, communication in the public consciousness will also play an outstandingly important role in this case because, in the absence of prudent and clear-cut publication and scheme, it can even trigger negative emotions off the persons not taking part in the program; this may have a destructive effect with regard to the everyday atmosphere of an organization. We could ask ourselves the question that numerous experts are of the opinion that everyone is talented in a certain field, thus the talent management system can be established even covering the whole organization. We do not wish to argue with the fact that such a special ability can be found in everyone which has the effect of achieving outstanding results in numerous fields. However, while these fields are not realized and not in determined accordance with the jobs occupied at the organization, it will not bring particular results, success or satisfaction either at organizational or individual level thus it is unnecessary to regard the personage as talent at the given organization. Here, it should be however emphasized that there are many systems among the HR functions (such as job planning, human resource development, incitement, knowledge

management, performance measurement etc.) which is aimed at maximizing the skills of an individual, determining the tasks suitable for him/her and employing him/her in a fitting job. Thus, the whole HR has a great responsibility in highlighting the outstanding skills of an individual, however, cooperation and “willingness to develop” from side of the individual are essential to realize it.

### **CONNECTION BETWEEN TALENT MANAGEMENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT**

In certain respects, it can be said that a parallel can be made with the operation of talent and career management systems in many cases. Due to this, the mixing of these two ones is frequently the case in business thus it is often unclear whether talent- or career management actually take place in the framework of certain programs. There are examples that very similar solutions are referred to as talent program at an organization while as career- or key person program elsewhere (Karoliny-Poór, 2017). Timeliness of the topic is underpinned by the research (De Vos-Dries, 2013) which examines the connection between the talent- and career management, in one respect, by means of literature analysis, on the other hand, through the opinion of 360 Belgian HR directors. As the result of the research, it can be ascertained that the talent- and career management systems equally support the individual career and the strategic goals of the organization. The literary background of the two fields complements each other from more than one angle. In one respect, the thought from the literature of talent management would be exemplary for the career management literature according to which the individual career extends to the practice of the strategic human resource management (Dries et al. 2012). Conversely, it would be necessary if the talent management took over the viewpoint worded in the career management according to which the operators of career are “free actors” (Inkson, 2008) which means that the approach of talent management only on the basis of resources is not apposite, considering that the people cannot be measured as calculably and rationally as other resources.

We already have a picture of the interpretation of talent management but it is necessary to get to know the career management in particular in order to compare. “Career management causes problems for a lot of firms since there are more and more “flat” companies i.e. which have few hierarchical levels. In these organizations, the number of managerial positions is limited thus it is difficult to ensure promoting opportunities for the majority of employees” (Czizik, 2007:18). Job career is a result of the mutual coordination of the individual and the

organization; this can be also interpreted as a consequence of demands and opportunities and the organizational career management is responsible for managing it. In this case, career management means the career of workforce living in the organization which includes series of decisions even in the absence of systems established in a complex way. Decisions shall extend over the issue of seniority and special knowledge with regard to the advancement as well as over the realization of building up formal and informal career channels (Dessler-Cole, 2008).

Based on the facts worded by Dara (2010), it is unequivocally clear how much the two mentioned management fields are overlapped; this excellently underpins the possibility for the mixing of the two processes differing from each other. The described things produce evidence of that the career management is a managerial task, the essence of which is to filter out the following, by measuring the employees: who can do more based on the performances, who are those ones whom the job duties no longer satisfy and what are those goals which may continue to inspire the individuals. Subject to this, the managers bear responsibility for recognizing the talents in parallel with evolving the loyalty as well as continuously improving, motivating and retaining them. In addition, the managers shall sketch out the possible career paths that can be effectively elaborated both in vertical and horizontal ways. A group of experts (Turlington Consulting Group, 2015) analyses the deepening of the organizational knowledge and the strengthening of the connection network as an effect of the career management which indirectly extends over the organizational effectiveness and efficiency as well. In addition, career management plays a decisive role in the change of organizational culture, the participants can be initiators of a process for change of attitude and they can constitute the group “change agent” of later changes for the HR.

As described, the complexity of career- and talent management processes becomes clear-cut and, nevertheless, the limits between the two fields are appreciably merged with each other due to the parallels. When interpreting the differences between the two HR functions, it is important to take into consideration that the programs cannot be fully identified and replaced by each other, although there are overlaps between the two processes.

The most significant difference between the two systems is that, while the career management specifically evolves and improves the employees by comparing the survey results of the employees existing at the organization to the expectations desired by the organization, the talent management system primarily sets out from acquiring the talented employees the potential targeted subjects

of which are the talents both inside and outside the organization. After drawing the lesson, two pillars of the talent management system are the acquisition and the retaining and of the career management are the collation of the organizational and employees’ expectations and the parallel maximization of the parties’ interests. It can be said that an equal attention is paid to improving, motivating and retaining the “average” and “talented” employees which may be due to the fact that a part of the talent management researchers thinks that each employee can be talented in certain fields (Heathfield, 2016; MaRS, 2014; Tompa-Steigerwald, 2006). However, the individuals are not aware of these fields but – with increased vigilance, improvement and incitement – the possible talent factors could surface with a greater change from an individual point of view, thus the “dormant talents” can be also integrated into the system of talent management.

Figure 3 can best illustrate the connection between the two systems which includes the processes required from the point of view of operation (MSG – management study guide, 2017; Chakraborty-Rudbeck, 2014).

After interpreting the figure, the possibility for the mixing of the two systems at an organizational level becomes unequivocal because these ones consist of very similar processes from the point of view of their operations; only a few steps characterize the processes which can be found in one of these ones but is less typical of the other. However, before interpreting the single processes, it is necessary to emphasize again that the talent management system focuses on the fellow workers having prominent skills and performance in relation to the single organizations, while the system of career management is more generally to be interpreted for the whole organization.

Actually, the two systems can be really ideally operated in a fused way, given that these ones have functions completing each other. In case of a satisfactory operation of the talent management system, the inward talented employees can be integrated into the organizational career management system already in place which will take them to the “island of retaining” on the “ship of improvement and incitement” in a stream-like way. However, in greater details, the harmonized operation of the systems can be shown in twelve steps in summary. At the beginning of both systems, an overall preparation and analysis phase are needed where the operational goals of the systems shall be determined. In case of the system of talent management, this means the determination of talent at an organizational level, in parallel with elaborating the requirements, through the review of job descriptions. Subsequently, in the system of talent management, the emphasis will be transferred to the recruitment which will mean the

recruitment of employees complying with the talents determined in the first step, touching both external and internal resources. And, in the system of career management, the next step is a selection of persons from the existing workforce because it is important to elaborate personalised programs and it needs a precise determination of the persons. A prominent task of the talent management system is to attract and acquire talented employees. To do so, the internal and external communications of an organization are essential via the systems of HR and Employer branding; it is the most typical in the framework of advertisements and promotions. Due to this, the talents can call on an organization by themselves, evolving an inner longing for the joint work. In case of the employees involved in the systems, this is followed by the examination of existing competences along which the areas to be developed can be determined as well as the educating methods and the expected results will become appointable. In case of an optimal operation of the systems, each of these antecedents serves the retaining and the evolving of loyalty in case of participants both in the talent management and career management systems. As a consequence of the proper systematics, such a level of support and incitement can be provided that will make the advancement realizable. In this case, this may also mean an enlargement of jobs, paying due regard to the diversity, given that the unchanged routine circumstances may have unfavourable effects on the individuals, specifically on the talents, because they are typically those ones who form their environment thanks to their creativity. The continuous monitoring and performance evolution can be even interpreted as a check of the system where, beyond the individual assessment of the persons being in the system, the work of colleagues responsible for the program is also placed under unequivocal control. In case of the talent management, result of the assessing process is the career planning of the persons being in the system i.e. the outline of advancements expected in the future and the clarification of conditions required for that. With regard to the career management system, the unequivocal goal is to plan the career in case of each aspect thus it pervades itself the whole system. Consequently, at each development point, the following tasks are essential: harmonization at organizational level, continuous maintenance of the global hierarchical system and its modification if necessary. The succession planning, as an indispensable part of the processes, is aimed at serving the sustainability which will be also guarantee for the further long-term efficiency. In both cases, end of the processes will appear in the same ternary possibility: either the person will remain in the situation elaborated for him/her or he/she will develop further or he/she will leave the life of the organization.

## CONCLUSION

All in all it can be said that the talent management system works not in case of every organization, regardless of this, every firm has a “talent concept” drafted at managerial level – even if only at the level of thought – which determines what viewpoints can contribute to the outstanding performance. These viewpoints may be different for every organization with regard to the differing goals, strategies and operational areas. However, it can be uniformly stated that these viewpoints will be typical of those employees who can give their employers market competitive advantages through some of their personal talents. In the long-term, it will serve not only the interests of an organization but it will contribute to the self-realization of an individual by helping to reach the “flow experience”. However – in order to perceive the talents appropriately, to elaborate and maintain the operational system – it is necessary to apply such a system which is elaborated thoroughly, includes widely available possibilities and operates in the framework of continuous interactions. The opportunities to elaborate the system can be chosen in a very wide range but, during the elaboration, the conscious coordination synchronization with other HR functions is important, with special regard to the career management. This is due to the similarity between the operations of the two systems and the resulting frequent misinterpretation at organizational level. One of the fundamental differences between the systems is the focus of processes. While the talent management primarily focuses on acquiring and retaining the talented employees, the career management system is aimed at elaborating the organizational pathway of the existing employees in such way that the personal and organizational interests will be satisfied at the same time. From this, it becomes clear that the career management system can be generally extended over the whole company while the talent management system concerns a little special group (talents) at a given organization. The systems contain similar processes during their but, due to the different focuses, these ones yet include differing contents in more cases, in addition to the existence of the parallels. And beyond this, the systems have special part processes which can be exclusively found within only one system. For instance, within the talent management, the recruitment process which especially focuses on the attraction and the acquisition. With regard to the career management, the maintenance and modification of the organizational hierarchical system will be the unique process, contrary to the talent management. The two systems can optimally cooperate with each other but its condition is to set forth the systems clearly and have them accepted at an organizational level.

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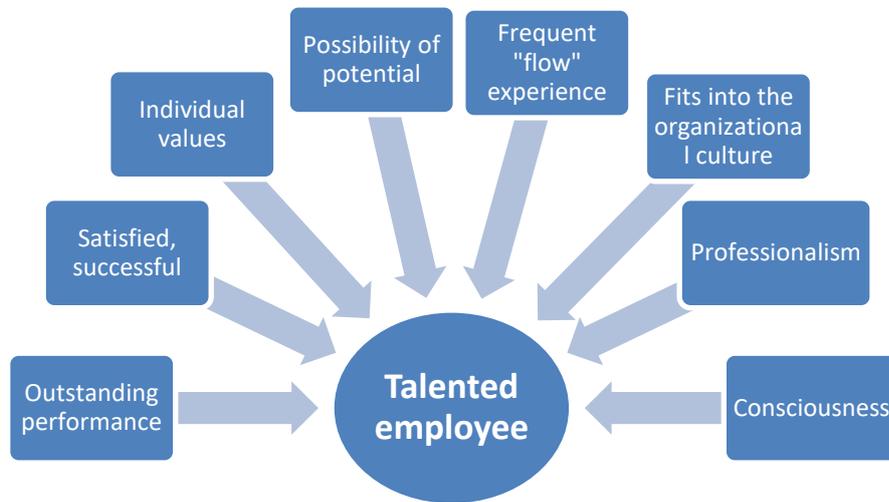
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ANNEXES



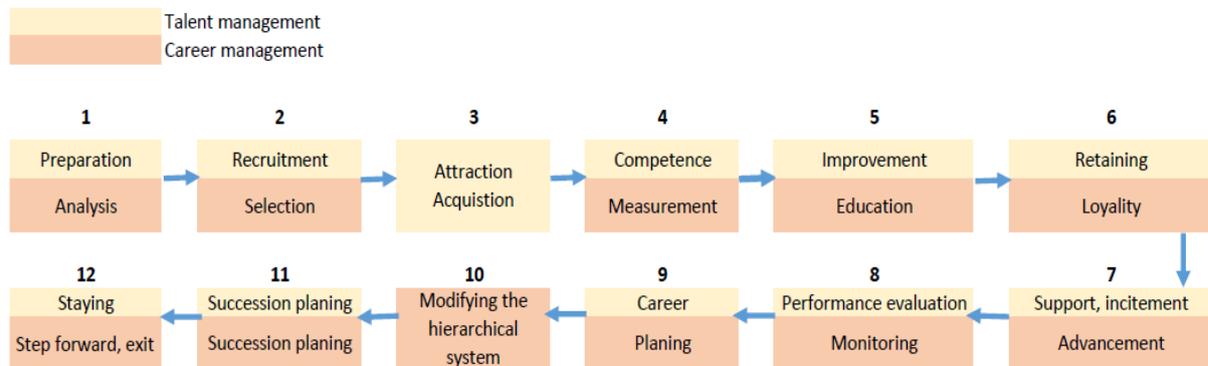
**Figure 1: Possible characteristics of the talented employees**

Source: own editing (2017) based on Bokor et al., 2007; Harsányi, 1998; Ceizel, 1997; Csíkszentmihályi 1997)



**Figure 2: Possible list of HR functions supporting the talent management**

Source: own editing (2017) based on Om, 2016; Oracle, 2012



**Figure 3: Possible synchronization of the operation of talent- and career management systems**  
 Source: own editing (2017) based on MSG, 2017; Chakraborty-Rudbeck, 2014; Tower, 2014; Drljaca, 2012; Antoniu, 2010