

Executive summary

Talent management

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Talent management or, as our first collaborator, **Andreu Mas-Colell**, a professor at the Pompeu Fabra University and president of the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics puts it: «cultivating, securing and fixing talent» – this is the main content of the monograph *Paradigmes* devoted to an intangible asset turned a key driver of production in the knowledge society. Doctor Mas-Colell opens the block giving a general overview over this matter, pointing out two basic ideas that will be developed in further articles. First of all, he explains that without a good educational system potential talent will not become effective. Secondly, talent lures talent, and he defines quality of life as a mechanism assisting in setting up this virtuous circle.

Following **Gabriel Ferraté**, president of the Institut Cerdà, «*despite talent may have a more or less strong inborn component, it requires continuous work, hands-on experience based on trial and error and especially a clear orientation*». As he goes on saying, «*we shall not make wise (which is also desirable) but talented people: managing talent, commercial talent, technical talent, administrative talent, innovating talent, entrepreneurial talent, marketing talent...*».

Roser Salvat and **Xavier Marcet** believe that «*talent is synonymous with competence, ability, aptitude and qualification*». In their opinion, talent involves knowledge classifiable into three categories: theoretical knowledge, commonly called *knowledge* or *science*, know-how and discernment or *savoir-faire*. They further point out the difficulty in laying out, deploying and assessing talent policies to be programmed «*with a ten-year horizon, geared to a large proportion of the student and working population, as well as ambitious entrepreneurial strategies on top of tactical policies*».

Professor **Tom Cannon** from the University of Liverpool introduces *ideopolis*, the «city of ideas», «*the place where those who can choose where to work and live, choose to work and live*». He further explains how science and technology parks play a key role in creating «*environments in which entrepreneurial talent that has migrated can return to work in uniquely supportive environments*».

Lluís Torner, director of the Institute of Photonic Sciences, deepens into this rationale and sketches out a world scenario of what he calls «*talent nests*», characterised by the offer of «*higher education and borderline research as tools to attract and cultivate a certain type of talent*». Catalonia, as the rest of Southern Europe, still plays a marginal role in such nests.

To finish this first block, **Xavier Testar**, director of the BCN: *research and innovation programme*, states that Barcelona and Catalonia have the necessary ingredients to attract talent but there are still legal and other obstacles making it difficult to have talented people settle.

The section on talent and enterprise opens with the article by **Josep Lladós**, vice-rector at the Open University of Catalonia, who points out «*critical aspects in creating an entrepreneurial spirit, such as avoiding excessive dislike of risk and disproportionate punishment of failure as well as the ability to foster creativity, talent and personal initiative*». These points, he goes on, «*need to be well settled long before entering university*».

Ramon Ollé, president of La Salle Business Engineering School and member of the *Paradigmes* Publishing Council, deepens into the subject of entrepre-

According to Andreu Mas-Colell, talent needs to be cultivated, secured and attracted to be managed. This is the main content of the monograph *Paradigmes* devoted to an intangible asset turned a key driver of production in the knowledge society.

neurship. In his opinion, entrepreneurship *«not only means stimulating the creation of new businesses, but we also need to create favourable environments to allow consistent overall growth of such local initiatives»*. Hence it is necessary to focus on quality of such environments and the support they get, especially as to sufficient funding in the right moment.

Robert Gili from Alta Partners Capital SGEGR deals with business financing and states: *«The main driver of business success has been historically access to capital. Now a new decisive factor is coming in: access to talent. It is very important to point out that talent does not replace capital, but they need to go hand in hand.»*

Josep Maria Llaurador, a human resource consultant, asserts the need of *«identifying talent, knowing what it means to each company and each area of the organisation in order to know how to measure it»*. He further states: *«Many companies have wrongly believed that talent is paid with money only, placing economic aspects above the rest.»*

This second block closes with two significant cases that have turned talent management into one of their drivers to success. **Salvador Morera**, vice-president and general manager of the Hewlett-Packard large-scale printing business, points out that the main condition to attract talented people to his organisation lies in fitting the candidate's professional project into the possibilities of developing their professional career the company is able to offer. He also explains the lack of engineering vocation with an insufficient offer of really qualified jobs so many engineers have to accept positions with lower qualifications and thus a lower salary.

Carles Grau, director of Microsoft in Catalonia, explains in detail the elaborate strategy his company develops to seize and retain talented people. This strategy requires, among others, to have a favourable working climate based on *«sharing values inspiring and fostering a new teamwork style»*.

The section devoted to talent and education opens with an article by **Enric Roca**, professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, who states that our educational system is not prepared to recognise talent, and in doing so it cannot foster nor take advantage from it. To Roca, it is not about leaving aside pupils with more needs but *«assuming that everybody has learning difficulties if the learning target is to get the maximum performance out of everybody»*.

Max Senges from Stanford University, **John Seeley-Brown** from the University of Southern California and **Howard Rheingold** from British De Montfort University reflect on the challenges and opportunities the age of the internet and digital technology pose for entrepreneurial learning. Entrepreneurship is defined as *«the practice of identifying and creating all kinds of opportunities and then taking action aimed at realizing them»*. To the authors, ICT can be used *«for critical inquiry that allows [students] to develop as humans and as professionals»*.

Josep de Mirandés from the Higher Council of Experts in High Capacities points out that overgifted pupils or pupils with other capacities are at least 5% of the total. The fact that only a little part is adequately identified results in 70% performing poorly at school, which in half or more cases eventually leads to drop-out. It is thus an extreme case of unused

talent due to a lack of diagnosis and specific treatment of these pupils.

Lluís Jofre from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia talks about the drop in science and technology vocations among Catalan students, especially due to the lack of appeal, the difficulty to grasp the subject in secondary school and unattractive salary perspectives and professional careers. To tackle this situation, he mentions the different initiatives promoted by the EnginyCAT programme, aimed at reverting this trend.

Within the block called «Experiences», we find again multiple initiatives related to education and training. **Albert Montori**, a teacher at the Salvador Dalí secondary school in El Prat de Llobregat, close to Barcelona, asserts that in this phase of education, *«talent has to be treated as a potentiality rather than a given fact, especially because in this phase of education the individual has a whole set of abilities and skills they have not been able to develop yet».*

Maria Calsamiglia and **Miquel Perdiguer** from the Caixa Catalunya Foundation introduce an innovative initiative aimed at fostering scientific vocations by means of summer camps. One target is to enlarge the view of secondary school pupils towards scientific activity and research. To the authors, it is the critical point of curiosity and creativity, stringency and ongoing discussion that makes research unique and attractive.

Within university, **Ana Ripoll** and **Rafael Grasa** from the Autonomous University of Barcelona tell the experience of this university to change professor training and recruitment policies with the aim of seizing the best foreign talent, both related to students and to teachers and researchers. Some clues to do this require the definition of an appealing teaching career that allows among other things to reduce the age at which professional stability is reached and having it converge with those years in which creative production of researchers is biggest.

Pere Pascual is the director of the Centre of Higher Interdisciplinary Training (CFIS) at the UPC, the task

of which is to enlarge the academic offer of the university by means of double degrees. This is a mechanism by which students with high academic performance and interested in an interconnection between the different engineering branches as well as with mathematics have access to more complete training in order to satisfy specific labour demands requiring high training.

Xavier Mendoza, professor at ESADE and member of the *Paradigmes* Publishing Council, explains how business schools proceed to attract international talent to Barcelona. To him, *«the key question is how many graduates will decide to stay here to set up their own business or enter a local company, which will need to make them a competitive offer».*

Jaume Bertranpetit and **Mariona Costa** from ICREA point out that their task is done in a context in which *«universities and research centres usually have extremely clumsy and complex mechanisms to attract international talent».* In their opinion, *«Catalonia is very competitive in life sciences and biomedical research, but also in photonic sciences, organic chemistry and economics».*

Experiences take a block of general initiatives to attract and retain talent. First, **Nick Leon**, director of Design London, highlights how the 22@Barcelona district is becoming the hub out of which the Catalan capital is becoming a knowledge-intensive city. This goal is intended to be achieved by attracting and retaining talent through employment and life quality opportunities. Other tools are the development of talent through programmes addressed at all educational levels and the connection of social networks of local and international business. A brief insight into one of these educational programmes aimed at primary and secondary schoolchildren is given by **Ricard Huguet**.

Marcel Prunera from the Directorate General of Economic Promotion points out different action lines related to talent in Catalonia. The creation of programmes and focuses to attract talent in different places in Catalonia, retention of talent related to students from business schools and other international

top quality universities as well as detecting and giving value to migrant talent are singled out. He also highlights the importance of facilitating the arrival and settling of talent in Catalonia, especially regarding legal issues, as well as international promotion of Barcelona and Catalonia as a place attracting international entrepreneurs.

Svafa Grönfeldt, rector of Reykjavik University, explains how Icelandic universities have done a very effective task to recover most professionals having gone abroad to study so they return to their country to develop new entrepreneurial projects. The governmental drive for education and talent has contributed decisively to overcoming the closure and backwardness of the country and shall serve to do away with the impact of the current financial crisis.

The last block on experiences refers to areas in which the concept of talent had traditionally been used to describe rather inborn qualities typical of artists and athletes. However, it is proven that in order to have success with such talent, a good deal of other kinds of talent is needed, especially in organisation and management.

Marta Camps and **Inmaculada Urrea** of Sofoco Media go through a considerable case of success stories in fashion, where it is indispensable to know how to detect, foster, manage and capitalise creative talent. This is why couples of creators and outstanding managers in marketing and brand creation are so frequent in the world of fashion.

To the early music player and conductor **Jordi Savall**, *«everybody has a special talent for something»*. Moreover, *«everybody has something inside them. The artist who has talent is able to convey it to the others»*. In his opinion, a problem Catalonia has is that *«we believe that anything coming from abroad will be better»*, and he adds: *«Nobody is a prophet in their own land, but there are countries where it is more difficult»*.

To close this monograph on talent, **Ferran Soriano**, president of The Node Company and a former board member of FC Barcelona, states that *«talent management in a big football club bears very complex and even*

extreme challenges, but I think that they are subject to the same rationale and common sense as in any other company or organisation». He points out the drive of the FC Barcelona board to develop talent of young players in their country of origin.

To complete the contents of this *Paradigmes* issue, the Miscellany section features two articles. In the first, **Ignasi de Delàs**, director of Turisme de Catalunya, raises the issue of how the exhaustion of traditional advertising methods brings about the need to explore new ways of reaching and seducing outbound tourist markets. He describes and reflects on the experience undertaken by Turisme de Catalunya in interactive communication through the internet, in what is called web 2.0 philosophy.

Finally, **Joan Costa** from the London School of Economics tackles the traditional difference in relative prices between Catalonia and the whole of Spain. To professor Costa, *«despite a certain stagnation as to the level of competition in distribution in the last five years, it does not seem to affect prices, especially not the level of relative prices»*. However, *«the low incidence of the public sector and the relative foreign opening of Catalonia explain the higher prices in Catalonia in relation to the rest of Spain»*, so if the relevance of the public sector doubled as of Catalan GDP, prices would fall between 4 and 10% in Catalonia.

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