

# HOW TO MAKE PEOPLE MATTER IN WORK LIFE

A fresh  
look in 22  
minutes

# THE FOUR INSIGHTS THAT MAKE PEOPLE MATTER IN WORK AND EFFECTIVE



***It cannot be denied since the economic crisis late 2008 our world was thrown completely into shock. A phenomenon that is still very difficult for many people to process, never mind respond to appropriately. From leaders of countries and businesses to those preoccupied with family or self-government.***

*In our quest to get back on track, every day we are faced with the aftermath of the explosion in the upward march of the economic growth at the end of 2008. The fall of Lehman Brothers, the state takeover of ABN Amro and Fortis, the financial debacle in Cyprus and the all-time high unemployment and negative productivity figures sent us back to "Start". The pitfall for many managers is to hold on to the thought that time and cost reduction heals all wounds.*

Because it is such a huge challenge, particularly in economically difficult times, to continue to positively motivate people. I would like to share a number of insights in our gift that might be useful to help you to succeed. In my opinion, the key to bringing and keeping economic growth on track is mainly logical. You are only able to see after the penny drops (Johan Cruijff). An insight that may certainly be called a condition for structurally shaping your follow-up actions

# INSIGHT 1: THE SHIFT COMING FROM THE INDIVIDUAL

## ***The individual shifts-***

For quite some time we can read in publications that the bar has been raised and that the productivity achieved in work is in bad shape.

According to various institutes and bodies (including TNO, PW, SHL), in the Netherlands alone over EUR 60 billion annually is thrown away as a result of unused capacity, long and short sick leave or by an unmotivated staff. Internationally, for some causal areas, this figure is much higher.

Bringing the problem back to its core, it is actually about two parties who systematically suffer damage during a process whereby one party connects to another to achieve a specific result and receives compensation for that from that party.

A difficult subject? It all depends on how complicated you make it. If your kitchen overflows because the tap is leaking then you take action and fix the cause. So if you know the obstructive factors that bring about unproductivity then surely a solution is also close to hand?

## ***Just want to matter***

Perhaps the solution for a more productive society is closer than we think. Thus, Aart Bontekoning carried out research into value differences between generations.

His research showed (2007) that there are significant value differences, in a rising degree of importance, between generations. Across the generations, the values of learning, having fun, and finding opportunities are growing in importance.

We can see a confirmation of these increasingly important values among other things in a more exponential increases of:

- ☑ The number of members of online "feel good" communities. That is why the Dutch "Fun for Everyone Every Day" platform grew to 81,350 followers in 2017;
- ☑ Increase in worldwide sales of the top10 books about personal growth or finding happiness (more than 200 million).
- ☑ The constant growth in the number of published copies of the Magazine Happinez (215.000) with stories, insights and handles for finding purpose and being happy.

Ronald van den Hoff also signals a movement. In the book Society 3.0 he describes the emergence of the so-called global citizenship. Global people, Global Citizens who form the pillars in a society that really works better. Characteristics of these global citizens:

- ☑ See differences between man and culture as a source of creativity
- ☑ Want to learn from and with each other, and grow and collaborate
- ☑ Act out of transnational values and standards

Isn't man himself simply the driving force behind a shift? A shift which allows our society to be open to the launching of new ideas, methods and forms of creativity.

Where a renewed professional emerges who wants to have fun, wants to feel good and expects to be valued in his work. And even self-manages the development of his or her talents and stays on track through self-reflection.

# INSIGHT 2: THE SHIFT DUE TO ECONOMIC NECESSITY (1)

## ***The economy shifts-***

We move from the individual to the economic environment where management gurus, economists and other scientists have long been preaching that it is time for an economic turnaround. Each organization, multinational or SMB today is faced with at least three huge challenges.

### **Challenge 1**

The first is the speed at which changes are and will be taking place in comparison with 20 to 50 years ago. Whether we zoom in on the growth in the number of smart Phone users, the CO2 emissions, data storage or the growth of the number of community members on social media. All of these developments are growing exponentially.

### **Challenge 2**

A second challenge facing organizations more and more is the emerging competition. In contrast to 10 years ago, organizations are now challenged to continually focus on safeguarding their margins. Margins that, due to the scarcity of raw materials on one hand and due to Blue Ocean business models of competitors on the other, are coming significantly under pressure.

### **Challenge 3**

The third challenge facing organizations is the increase in freely available knowledge and expertise. With the advent of the internet knowledge has become a common commodity. The ever faster switching of employees, the outflow of seniors and the transfer of best practices by organizations, dramatically reduces the sustainability of acquired knowledge and competitive advantage of expertise.



Scottcham  
picture

### **Challenge 1:**

***In the last 16 years the worldwide use of the smart Phone increased to over 1 billion in 2012. The expectation is that in 2018, 6 billion users will be reached. The number of monthly users of Facebook grew worldwide from 360 million in 2009 to 1.2 billion 2014. It took the eBay 15 years to get 100 million users, for Google+ that only took 1 year. Steady growth makes way for exponential growth.***

### **Challenge 2:**

***Tony Hsieh bought an online shoe shop in 1999 and after a couple of setbacks took it to a turnover of 184 million dollars in 2004. By, among other things, sticking to the business credo "Delivering a WOW through service". Providing plenty of service online that is not in proportion to the pricing of the shoes. This is what put Zappos in the picture at Amazon and why it was named as "best company to work for" a couple of times and continued to turn the footwear market on its head for a number of years. Zappos was also the model for the European player Zalando that achieved a record sales growth of 50 percent and grew to 1.7 billion Euro turnover in 2013 with its business model .***

### **Challenge 3:**

***Larry Sanger and Ben Kovitz launched the first Wiki in 2001 and within four weeks had more than 1,000 pages of information online. Currently 40,000 articles per month with information are placed online with Wikipedia. Advanced software in combination with new business models make it possible to find and share information faster.***

# INSIGHT 2: THE SWITCH DUE TO ECONOMIC NECESSITY (2)

Driven from the outlined economic perspective, the organizations of tomorrow will be obliged to form new collaborations:

## Organizations:

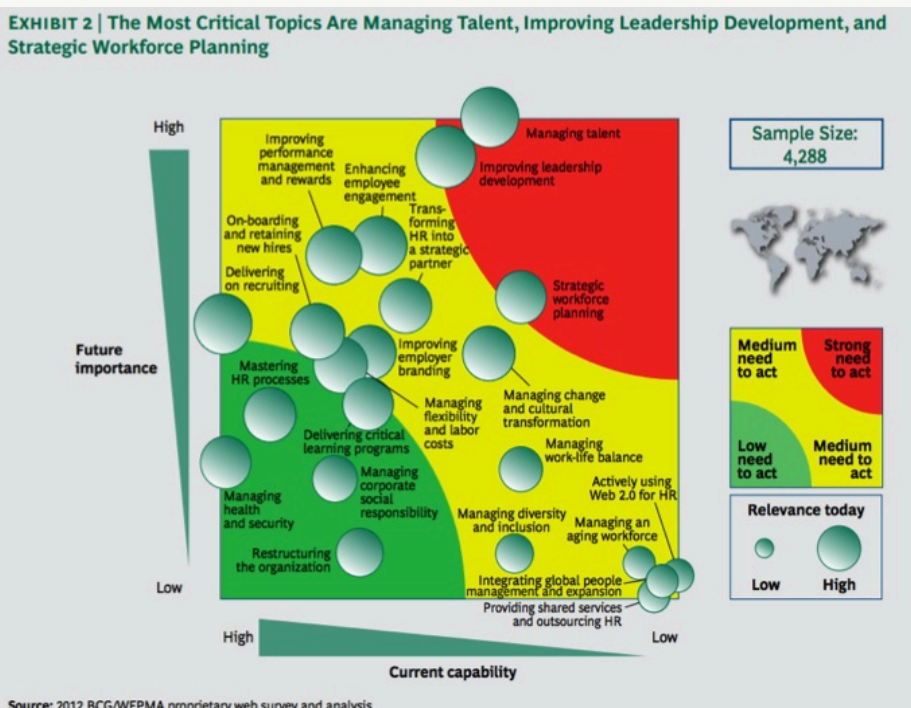
- that are able to change as quickly as the change itself.
- where innovation is the work of everyone, everywhere and every day.
- where everyone wants to bring their passion and creativity each day

The urgency for taking action appears to be increasing on the agenda of CEOs and boards. That is what the results of research (over 4,000 Ceos (BCG/WFPMA) showed. The top three topics to address directly within the organization and to put on the strategic agenda are:

- treat talent better
- develop leadership
- develop strategic workforce planning.

This is heartening and offers room for the realization of support base.

- a. **Gary Hamel**, *London Business School* has been convinced for many years that organizations that make the fastest progression, will experience a sustainable future growth.



# INSIGHT 3: QUALITY OF CONNECTION DETERMINES GROWTH (1)

## ***Sustainable growth-***

The consequence of the shift will be that organizations must place the emphasis on connection. There will be new forms of cooperation manifested in the way they are organized. On the other hand, within these forms, the degree of connection that the people have with the role or the value they create will change.



Stuart miles picture

## ***-Connection of the whole***

This new form of cooperation is very aptly described by Marcel van Marrewijk in his book Cubrix. He describes this form as a so-called network and fluid organization.

### *Network Organization:*

- ☑ *Has a pragmatic organizational structure which can handle complexity, uncertainty and rapid change*
- ☑ *Organizations are no longer arranged along the lines of power and functionality, but arise as spontaneous coalitions that temporarily experience connection on content and dependency.*

### *Fluid organization:*

- ☑ *The organization operates as an Ecosystem in which people work towards the full potential of their humanity in reciprocal connection with the whole.*
- ☑ *Organizations are exclusively and only established and maintained for their contributions to the whole, however small or big.*

The precondition for people to be able to connect in the future is that organizations and new forms of collaboration must have the right to exist and identity clear.

As Simon Sinek nicely expressed "It's all about the WHY". The "purpose" as the ultimate condition for bringing about synergy and taking account of the whole.

Also, when attracting more people the focus will be on the right people, with particular attention being given to the "complete" person. Look further than what you see and can surmise from a training or CV.

Eye and attention to a better balance when it comes to the ability to and the desire to contribute. This goes so much further than selecting on cognitive capacities and does include individual drivers, ambitions, values and beliefs.

To make sure people excel in the development of their talent continuous attention is necessary when striving for an optimum connection with the value creation process (work). The progression made is determined by the degree of control in discovering, giving direction and facilitating the development of this so-called human capital.

# INSIGHT 3: QUALITY OF CONNECTION DETERMINES GROWTH (2)

## ***-Connection of the complete person***

Never before was the person seen as so important for making a real difference for organizations and within forms of collaboration.

The question quickly arises on how the person is going to make the difference.

For decades it was mainly assumed that the quality a person brought about could only be derived from the cognitive capacity present (intelligence, Raymond B. Catell). Unfortunately in many actual selection processes this capacity still determines to a large extent the stack a person ends up on.

Over the years, more proof has been found that cognition capacity alone does not determine whether a person will excel in a certain role. There is more and more attention for a person's intentions and the way in which he wants to apply his intellect.

Elements such as personality, ambitions, motivations and beliefs are deeply rooted in the personality and determine attitude and behavior. This is a more complete picture and in many cases also supports a better prediction of the ability to develop in relation to the expected effectiveness in a certain role.



Sheelamoham picture



# INSIGHT 4: KEEPING THE INDIVIDUAL ON TRACK

## **- From the individual**

In the first insight of the series it was already highlighted that companies are faced with a "renewed professional".

A professional who believes it is important to have an impact, who continues to develop and more importantly has pleasure.

Ensuring that this new professional does not lose connection with his "activities" is essential in order to have sufficient future manpower as an organization .

## **Handles**

For many years science has searched to find the ultimate predictors of work performance and has examined the consistency with work environment, personality traits and motives ( **Science** ). Right now it is important for organizations to apply recent insights provided by science in a pragmatic way and to be service minded.

To keep professionals on track for the coming years it is necessary to constantly keep abreast of which work context now empowers this professional. This requires the adoption of new instruments for personal development that create space for genuine dialog between organization, management and professional.

## **The Dantefactor compass**

The research of T. Notenboom was the foundation for the development of the Dantefactor compass. This scan monitors quickly and pragmatically the current connection of a person or a team, with the work. It measures the predictors of work-effectiveness and satisfaction and makes clear what work context areas empower a person. A unique addition to the spectrum of measuring instruments that contribute to gaining more return from role matching, potential development, sustainable employability and performance management.



Keerati picture

## **Science**

*In the 70s Csikszentmihalyi developed the Flow theory. A sense of intrinsic pleasure that motivates someone to do his or her activities and to continue to do so.*

*He considered that when there is balance between the experienced challenge of an activity and the experienced level skills that someone needs to perform this activity there is flow.*

*In the Netherlands Bakker en Schaufeli expressed flow (operationalizing) by the component passion or engagement. They concluded, on the basis of customer satisfaction research, that engagement has a predictive value in relation to work-effectiveness.*

*In 2006, Trude Notenboom did research on the predictors of work effectiveness and satisfaction. The concepts passion, conviction (self-efficacy) and growth motivation expressed the concept of flow. She came with breakthrough results that this expression of flow, "the Dantefactor", has an additional predictive value on work effectiveness and satisfaction than the earlier operationalized concept of "engagement". Even in respect of the famous Big Five dimensions it appeared that the "Dantefactor" had a significant additional predictive value.*



# INSIGHT 4: KEEPING LEADERSHIP ON TRACK

## ***-From leadership***

The binding power of leadership within the organization will in future also determine how people stay on track in the connection with their work.

The last few years a lot of new forms of leadership have been defined, where it seems that the creation of a new term is more important than the content.

## **Effective leadership**

What is effective leadership? Without re-inventing the wheel things would be much better in the world when "what you do not want to be done to you, don't do to another" was applied more often.

The perceived shift from the individual and the organization makes it necessary that the leadership of the future continuously runs on three important wheels.

- Inspire and give direction to the organization ("the whole")
- Facilitate by creating context within which individuals develop
- Streamline individual ambitions measure organization ambitions

## ***Characteristics of this leadership:***

- Inspire and give direction to the organizational form ("the whole")
  - a. This characteristic here is a person who has the ability to enthuse others for a certain vision and moves them to deliver exceptional value-creation (performance). This person will voluntarily place the importance of mission (dominant purpose) over private interests.
- Facilitate by creating context within which individuals can develop
  - a. Characteristic is the concern for the personal development of the individual. Are in a position to recognize motives and call up what situations require.
- Streamline individual ambitions with organizational ambitions
  - a. Characteristic is the constant operating on the basis of trust. Create environment for frequent dialog where feedback can be provided with respect.

# INSIGHT 4: STAYING ON TRACK AND DECISIVENESS

To avoid getting bogged down in well-intentioned and new types of leadership it may be assumed that the characteristics have many similarities with *transformational or charismatic leadership*.

## **Transformational or charismatic leadership**

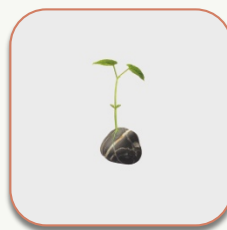
A form of leadership where a transformation in the perception and the motivation of staff is brought about. The self-image and the vision of what they are is reinforced when the ambition that the leader displays matches important personal values of the people in the organization.

A form of leadership that strengthens self-confidence, enhances personal leadership and intrinsic motivation. This provides a lot of energy that then leads to more synergy.

## **Science**

*According to theorists, charismatic leadership builds on transactional leadership but not vice versa. The expectation that in the prediction of effectiveness charismatic leadership adds something to the predictive power of transactional leadership is also largely confirmed (T. Notenboom 2006).*

Not only were correlations found with work effectiveness, but it has also been shown that charismatic leadership is positively linked with passion, inspiration of employees, employees' conviction about their own abilities and personal growth. This means that this form of leadership makes a positive contribution to the sustainable connection of an individual with work.



## **Decisiveness**

In this gift I have shared important insights, which in my view are useful for giving direction to the sustainable growth of people in organizations.

It goes without saying that the article will be concluded with a firm point, but what point? There are so many management architects, executives and visionaries who have given stimulation to think and act. This article will therefore end with a firm point but with the following food for thought:

*Will your organization in 2020 be one of those that:*

- *Implemented change?*
- *recognized that organizations changed?*
- *wondered what going on?*

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***Jos Snippenberg is founder of The Dantefactor Company and facilitates professionals so they can contribute to a world in which each individual within an organization has the space to work continuously on a pleasant and lasting connection with work.***

[Contact](#)

# NOTES

*How can I use these insights to contribute to the increase of employee job satisfaction and effectiveness?*



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*-The compass to create happy people & great results*