

## Scientific and Theoretical Aspects of the Staff Recruitment Organization within the Concept of "Talent Management"

Nina Victorovna Dmitrieva<sup>1</sup>, Natalia Alexandrovna Zaitseva<sup>2</sup>, Olga Sergeevna Kulyamina<sup>3</sup>, Anna Anatolyevna Larionova<sup>4</sup> & Serafima Anatolevna Surova<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Technology Tourism, Moscow, Russia

<sup>2</sup> Baltic Federal University, E. Kant, Kaliningrad, Russia

<sup>3</sup> Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia

<sup>4</sup> Moscow State University of Design and Technologi, Moscow, Russia

<sup>5</sup> Russian International Academy of Tourism, Moscow, Russia

Correspondence: Natalia Alexandrovna Zaitseva, Baltic Federal University. E. Kant, Alexander Nevskystreet, 14, 236041, Kaliningrad, Russia. E-mail: zaitseva-itig@mail.ru

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study of scientific and theoretical aspects of the staff recruitment organization within the concept of "Talent Management" was a generalization of existing scientific approaches and results of original author's research in this area. The article presents the research results of organizational problems on effective staffing system at enterprises that use the concept of "Talent Management". In particular, the article studies the main theoretical and practical approaches for organizing and conducting various types of interviews, when selecting employees and rotating them within the organization in accordance with the plans for staff training and development. The article also describes the principles of the structured interviewing techniques and one of its kinds, namely competency based interview, built on STAR or PARLA techniques, allowing one to evaluate not only professional, but also social and psychological competences of applicants. Importance of preliminary preparation for the structured interview is substantiated and the author's scheme of a structured interview is suggested. In addition, as a result of the study, the author generalized peculiarities of application of research methodology and evaluation of meta-programs, based on the linguistic analysis of applicants' and employees' discourse. Author describes the main types of meta-programs, allowing assessment of the applicants' motivation and their preferences in terms of the business relations development, applicants' ways of thinking and making various production and management decisions. Author gives original recommendations on preferences, when choosing candidates for certain positions in the organizations with regard to the objectives of the organization within the concept of "Talent Management".

**Keywords:** talent management, recruitment, competency, interviewing, meta-programs

### 1. Introduction

The concept of "Talent Management" has been scientifically grounded and described in the late 90s of the last century. David Watkins (Monacko, 2008) is considered one of the founders of this concept. The essence of this concept is in creation of a personnel management system, which is capable of encouraging a high creative potential of employees and involve them into the innovation process (Farzaneh, 2006; Afrazeh, 2005).

Despite the fact that the innovation concept is actively discussed all around the world, including Russia, the Russian science and technology still lags far behind the global indicators. Thus, if at the beginning of this century, new advances in science and technology have been used by 80% of the companies in Western Europe, in Russia this figure was just 5% (Rakitov, 2004).

However, most studies in the framework of the "Talent Management" address the issues on development of an appropriate corporate culture and incentive systems (Nonanoetal, 2005; Ghorbanietal, 2013). The problem of candidates selection, consistent with the objectives towards the implementation of concerned concept at a specific enterprise, is still largely unexplored.

## 2. Methodology

The main focus in recruitment of specialists for enterprises that have implemented the concept of "Talent Management" should be placed on development of requirements to the candidate and the assessment of his compliance with these requirements (Edwards et al., 2006). In this article author considers the second aspect, i.e. how to assess the suitability of the applicant to take the announced position.

Currently a great scientific and practical material has been accumulated on research and application of various techniques and technologies for assessment of candidates during the interview in the process of intercommunication.

**Interviewing techniques used during the intercommunication.** The following methods can be noted among the most well-known interviewing techniques (Ivanova, 2014; Komarov, 2007; Raigorodskiy, 2006).

- *Structured interview*, which is conducted according to a previously developed scheme and contains a list of questions, agreed with the responsible / interested corporate employees. A list of questions is different for each job. Since all candidates are given the same questions, the interviewer has the opportunity to compare their answers and choose more objectively the one most suitable for the position profile.
- *Free unstructured interview* is practically conversation with the candidate in a free style. Typically, this method is used when selecting candidates for the creative positions, because standard questions in this case do not give a complete idea of the person. Furthermore, for the application of this method, a number of applicants for a position should be small.
- *Situational interview* is often used for the selection of candidates for managerial positions and positions with a high level of responsibility. Typically, special psychological tests, adjusted for specific features of the job duties, are used for situational interview. When evaluating the responses to the test questions, one should comprehend that there are no absolutely correct answers, though the responses for questions are more or less close to the right answer.
- *Biographical interview* is used to confirm and clarify the information provided in the curriculum vitae (CV). Almost all other methods of interviewing include the elements of a biographical interview. According to statistics, at present this method of interviewing, in its basic form, is used no more than in 15% of interviews with the candidates for senior management positions. This is because the higher the level of the employee in the corporate hierarchy, the greater the impact of his personal traits, life values and motivational map in the company production activity.
- *Standard biographical interview* is a series of questions aimed at establishing the accuracy of the information specified in the CV and obtain detailed information on education, work experience and competences of the applicant. Today biographical interview is used in about 15% of the interviews with the candidates for the top positions. The logic of conducting this interview is as follows: the higher the position occupied by a person, the greater the impact of his personal traits, life values and motivational map.
- *Case interview* is based on the technique where the applicant is given a description of a certain situation (real or abstract) and is requested to describe his behavior or decisions to emerged problems. Such cases can use the situations, similar to actual production situations both with regard to the professional competencies and personal qualities of the candidate, his souls and values.
- *Stress interview* is one of the interview varieties, in which the candidate is placed into the specially created discomforting situation. Since this kind of interview somewhat makes it possible to assess qualities, such as communication skills, stress tolerance, flexibility, and others, it is more suited for the interviewing candidates in the service business sector (employees of the contact zone), sales and customer service managers, as well as leaders at all levels. In everyday work these employees often run into unconventional and even conflict situations. This interviewing technique is also used in situations, where candidates are selected to work at the department, directed by a person with sophisticated and grave character. However, one should not be too enthusiastic in using this method. As is shown by the results of Career.ru studies, 52% of respondents compare the interview with the employer to appearance in front of a large audience, while 48% compare the interview with an exam. At that, 4% of respondents compared their emotions after the interview with a parachute jump, whereas 3% compared it with a jump into the pool with crocodiles (Research Center of SuperJob.ru portal)
- *Panel interview* is a combination of group and stress interview. The procedure for conducting this interview suggests that during an interview the candidates are communicating with several company employees, who ask questions, usually at a rapid pace, not giving enough time to think about the answers. One variety of the panel interview is a technique, which experts in the field of personnel management call "Carousel". In the course of carousel interview, different employees ask the applicant the same questions. For example, the

applicant begins to tell recruiter about himself, and then another interviewer comes into the office and asks to tell his story again, after a while a third interviewer comes and the story repeats from very beginning. At that, the first and second interviewers can go out and come in several times to ask the same questions. In fact, the interviewer's task is to track the response of the candidate to such a situation and to assess his readiness to work under constantly changing, unstructured conditions («Planet HR» project).

**Technology of conducting structured interview.** As follows from the above described types of interview, used in the intercommunication process, the most effective interview, when selecting candidates for the enterprises that use the concept of "Talent Management", is a structured interview. Consider its application technique as exemplified by one of its sub - kinds, namely, competency-based interview. In various modifications it is called also as STAR-method or PARLA-method. According to the classic rules of such kind of interviews, each competency should include at least two questions.

It is desirable that all questions were constructed based on the STAR model, i.e. in the following order: Situation - Task - Action – Result. In each question the recruiter asks to tell the specific situation, in which the candidate had to deal with certain specific problems and how they were solved. In the PARLA the assessment is taken in a similar manner using the following algorithm: Problem - Action - Result - Learned - Applied (Ivanova, 2014).

We would like to dwell on the specifics of preparation for the stress interview. Personnel service manager should determine in advance, what stressors will be used and how to interpret the results. Based on the study of the existing approaches to stress interview and author's practical experience (Dmitrieva et al., 2013; Zaitseva et al., 2013), we propose the following form for the stress interview (Table 1).

Table 1. Example of stress interview form

Description of stress situations	The purpose of using stressors	Who is considered to have passed the interview successfully
You gave the applicant a lot of simple tests, not related to his professional activities, at that, providing no explanation.	Usually filling of such test forms is very annoying. In addition, after receiving this test form, the applicant begins to think that the interviewer just does not know how to conduct interview or shows that in fact the conversation will be free-and-easy and informal. This is conducted to check whether the applicant is able to perform monotonous work without losing composure.	Anyone, who patiently and thoroughly filled in all the tests.
You are interviewing in unsuitable conditions (in a small or noisy room, do not offer applicant to take off over clothes, etc.)	These techniques allow one to test candidate's endurance and tact.	Anyone, who did not experience much inconvenience caused by the environment, where the interview was taking place, did not require moving to another place, as well as asked for permission to take off over clothes.

The most important condition for the successful conduction of any kind of structured interview is a good preliminary preparation of an employer. Moreover, this preparation begins with creating a position profile, which lists not only biographical characteristics of the "ideal" candidate, but his professional competences, personal qualities and other additional information, including consistency with the objectives of the "Talent Management" concept (Survey findings).

### 3. Results

Based on the research of methodological and practical approaches, as well as author's original developments, we can suggest the following form for a structured interview (Table 2).

Summarizing the existing scientific approaches and our own practical experience, we can identify the following principles of conducting structured interview (Chernetsova, 2011; Volodina, 2010).

- Specific questions and their number for each vacancy are determined in advance, i.e. before the interview. It is not recommended to retreat from the selected list of questions and their sequence during the interview; also various elaborative questions are not allowed;

- The use of mostly open-ended questions (How? Why? Whence? etc.) is a compulsory condition. These questions require from the applicant, to a greater or lesser extent, more detailed information that is needed for the meta-programs analysis and linguistic analysis of the applicant's discourse (Lilly, 2001);
- Personnel service manager, who conducts the interview, should not express his emotions and opinion on the applicant's answers to the questions;
- It is important to comply with the time limits; about the same time is given for the interview with each applicant (usually it is the maximum possible time);
- During the interview, the interviewer is required to make the necessary notes and records.

Table 2. Example form for a structured interview

Stage #	Stage content	Investigated questions
1	Welcoming of candidate	Introduction of partners to each other, thanking applicant for his interest and participation, substantiation of the invitation for interview.
2	General information	Filiation, marital status, place of residence.
3	Education	Successes in the secondary school, special education, training programs and professional development, education plans.
4	Professional development	Basic profession, professional changes, professional plans.
5	Leisure	Family, interests, hobbies, and sports.
6	Information on the employer's organization	Information on the enterprise, job and requirements to candidate, working conditions, the company incentive system.
7	Discussion of the contract terms and conditions	The previous earnings, expected earnings, the opportunity of additional revenue, the special conditions.
8	Completion of an interview	Quick summary, direction to the next steps, thanking for the interview.

Thus, we can conclude that the effectiveness of a structured interview technique will depend on the professional competence of the interviewer, including his awareness in the candidates' psychological constitution.

**Applicants' meta-program evaluation procedure.** Meta-programs survey and evaluation methodology, based on the linguistic analysis of applicants' and employees' discourse, has not yet sufficiently widespread in the world. The conducted study allows us to conclude that just the individual components of this approach (analysis of individual meta-programs) are used most often.

Since this methodology has a great potential to produce objective and comprehensive "portrait" of an employee or candidate, we consider the nature of this approach and justify the practical recommendations on its application in the framework of the "Talent Management" concept.

The study of existing research allows determining the essence of meta-programs as "patterns" that we use to estimate what information will be allowed into consciousness. Based on dominance of a particular "pattern" type in an employee or applicant, we can form a preliminary value judgment about the person and his adequacy for the job that he occupies or aspires.

Typically, there are three types of meta-programs:

- Meta-program "external–internal" type of job reference. Type of job reference shows how person's own and external opinion are correlated in decision-making and self-esteem. The internal reference primarily means orientation on person's own opinion, life values, his vision and attitude. External reference is focused on the opinions of others, the unbiased results, the accepted norms and public opinion. As a rule, each person has a mixed reference, as a combination of both, though feeling an aptitude to a certain type of reference. It should be noted, that the employees working on regular positions prefer external reference, while top managers prefer internal reference (Ivanova, 2014).
- Meta-program "result – process". As a findings of the interview with the candidate, one assesses applicant's orientation whether on the result (result-oriented) or the process (process-oriented). Preferred type of job reference of employee or applicant depends on the specificity of a particular type of activity. For example, for an accountant preferred is orientation on the process, while for the project manager (the manager to open new stores or offices) preferred is the result.
- Meta-program "activity – analytic abilities – passivity". The assessment of whether the applicant or employee is focused on active or passive participation in various activities, as well as his ability to think analytically, allows more accurate assessment of the candidate's readiness to professional performance of

official duties under the current job, as well as making assumptions, whether company employee will be successful or not in his horizontal or vertical rotation.

Each type of meta-program can be revealed based on specific approach. Table 2 shows examples of the author's questions allowing one to determine the type of job reference (internal, external or mixed) that is preferred by an applicant, for example, from sales staff.

Table 3. Example of questions to reveal type of job reference in sales personnel

Question	Answer	Reference type
Do you consider yourself as a good sales representative (sales manager)? Why?"	Yes, I do, because there were no claims on me.	External
	No, I do not consider myself as a very good specialist, because I'm not quite satisfied with the results and I think that I need to learn a little more sales techniques and work with objections.	Internal
	Yes, I think so, because I can easily establish contact with potential customers, identify their needs and thus achieve good sales. And the boss praises me and points at as an example to others.	Mixed
	Usually, I decide myself, whom to give some discount. In some cases I can increase a little bit percentage compared to the level, allowed by the company, if I understand that the client may become permanent and provide large sales volumes.	Internal
How do you make the decision to give discounts to wholesale customers?	I do not care about it and do everything strictly according to the standards defined by the company. To me more important is to meet the requirements of the management than to take a risk and maybe get a big client.	External
	I have clear guidance on discounts, received from the parent company, and always doing them, without going beyond the specified limits. But in each particular case, I listen to my intuition and can take the risk, providing the maximum discount to customer, who is perspective to my mind.	Mixed

In addition, when selecting personnel within the concept of "Talent Management", it is important to assess, which candidate has the "result-oriented" type of job reference, and which has "process-oriented" type of job reference. For this purpose we suggest the author's methodology of evaluating applicants, using the questions presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of questions to identify the type of job reference in terms of result– process

Question	Answer	Type of job reference
Describe your duties in a previous job.	In a previous job I had to meet the requirements of the job description, i.e. ensure staff recruitment, their adjustment to ensure the timely selection of candidates for the vacant positions.	Process
	I had to ensure selection of candidates for the vacant positions in a timely manner and with the best result.	Result
	My duties included drafting personnel documentation, interviewing candidates, etc.	Mixed

Creation of a team, able to work hard, requires employees with analytical mindset, a proactive stance in dealing with certain problems. In this case, certain kinds of work require employees, who have the reference of "passivity". For example, work of accounting staff welcomes a candidate with "process" and "passivity" orientation that means strict compliance with the requirements of the statutory and regulatory documentation (Table 5).

In addition to the above considered references, it is important to evaluate the candidate's reference in terms of "avoidance" or "achievement". In the first case, the candidates usually use negative forms of expressions in their responses. For example: "a good team is not one, in which there is mutual respect and mutual support, but the one, in which there is no conflicts" (Table 6).

Table 5. Examples of questions to identify the type of job reference in terms of activity– analytic ability–passivity

Question	Answer	Type of reference
Describe your actions in a previous job in the event of a problem (conflict) situation in the team.	When our team was involved in a conflict between two employees that, as a result, has gripped the entire department, I immediately attempted to reconcile the parties.	Activity
	...I thought that it was not my business, because my interests were not affected in this conflict.	Passivity
	... first, I analyzed the causes of the conflict, the interests of each party, and then I offered to take part in their reconciliation.	Analytic ability

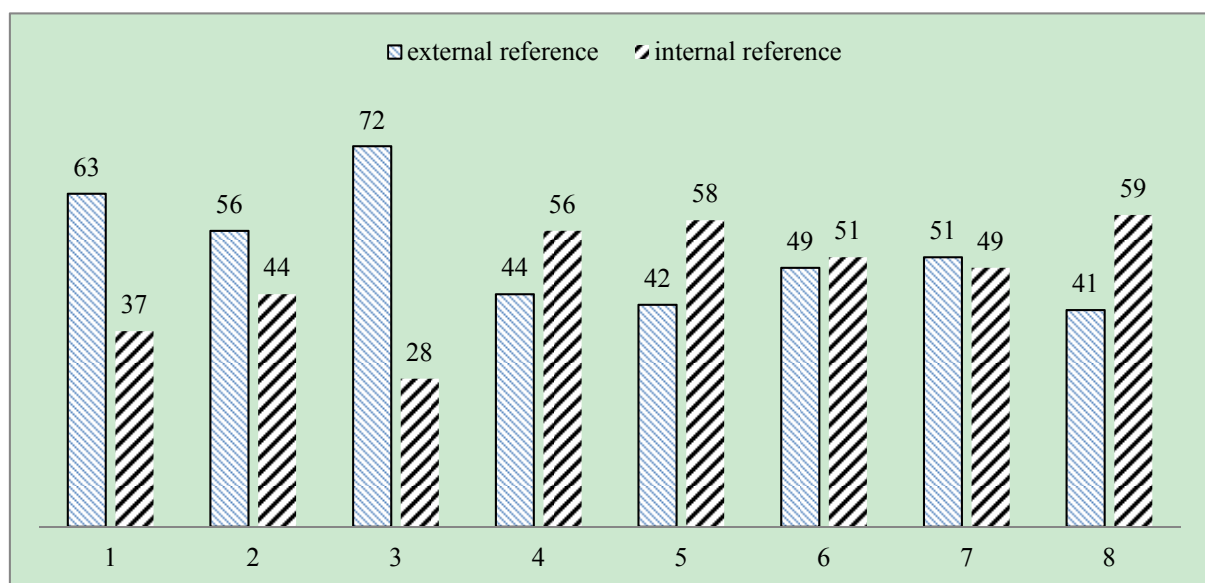
Table 6. Examples of questions to identify the type of job reference in terms of avoidance– achievement

Projective question	Possible answers	“avoidance-achievement” reference type
Why do people tend to make a successful career?	To fulfill their potential and have more opportunities and resources for work.	Achievement
	Not to be a loser, because the one, who did not succeed in making a career, in our society is considered a loser.	Avoidance

Thus, the above techniques allow us to assess not only the motivation of the candidates, but also evaluate with a certain probability, how a particular applicant will behave in a given situation and which behavior model he will use out of his own set of stereotypes.

#### 4. Discussion

Based on the author’s assessment methodologies of applicants’ types of job reference, a certain study was conducted (a sample of 540 people were tested during the study period from January to September, 2014). According to the results of this study, the following data were obtained on the structure of job seekers with different types of references (Figure 1).



1 - Police staff members; 2 - Staff members of the Investigating Committee of the Russian Federation; 3 - Service personnel (except of n. 1 and 2); 4 - Employees of service and trade industry; 5 - Education staff; 6 - Employees of the industrial enterprises; 7 - Employees of the financial sector; 8 - Employees of IT-business and consulting.

Figure 1. Results of the study on job reference types of the applicants from different scopes of activity (based on author’s original research, 2014)

1 - Police staff members; 2 - Staff members of the Investigating Committee of the Russian Federation; 3 - Service personnel (except of n. 1 and 2); 4 - Employees of service and trade industry; 5 - Education staff; 6 - Employees of the industrial enterprises; 7 - Employees of the financial sector; 8 - Employees of IT-business and consulting.

Thus, based on the results of the conducted study, it can be concluded that the applicants, related to activities that require a strict adherence to established norms and rules of conduct (police and the Russian Investigative Committee staff members, as well as other military staff) tend to external reference (56-72% of applicants from these groups have external job reference). Close to them were candidates in the financial sector (51% of applicants had external reference) that is also determined by the specifics of their activities. The opposite pattern is observed in IT-business, consulting, education, as well as trade and services industries. In these activities only 41-44% of applicants had external job reference.

Thus, we can conclude that the predominance of job seekers with internal job reference in service and trade sectors has a negative impact on the performance of the established service standards. Therefore, the use of the above methodologies to identify the type of job references will allow identifying the most suitable candidates in the framework of "Talent Management" concept.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on this study, it can be concluded that for different purposes of enterprises, which are using the concept of "Talent Management", various techniques may be used; moreover, these techniques can be combined. At that, it has been proved that meta-programs investigation method is one of the most promising techniques for the selection of candidates. It allows recruiter not only to evaluate the potential ability of staff to undertake new functional responsibilities, but to reveal in the course of interview with the candidates their willingness to work in a certain corporate culture that prevails in a particular organization.

At the same time, it should be recognized that any recruiter may commit a certain percentage of errors while selecting personnel. It is almost impossible to completely eliminate mistakes, especially given the fact that the decision in respect with the candidate is made not only based on choice of recruiter, but a person taking the final decision. However, continuous training in the field of recruiting, as well as professional self-development in this area enhances the effectiveness of the selection process of candidates and encourages the achievement of the development goals of an enterprise or a company, which use the concept of "Talent Management".

The conducted study indicates the need for further work in the field of science-based approaches to the assessment of the candidates and their conformity with the objectives of each particular enterprise towards implementing the "Talent Management" concept (Yeremina & Lavrov, 2010). The research on the effect of different types of job references on the employees' models of conduct should be also continued in the future.

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