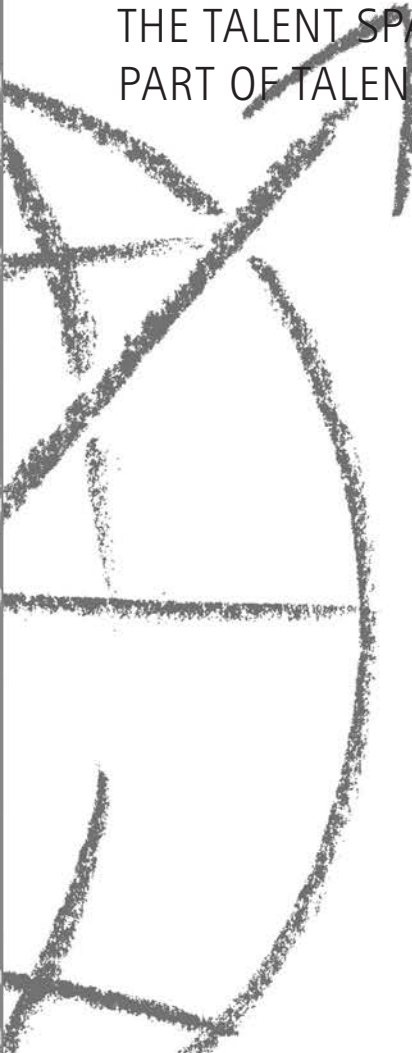


ROMAN NEUMANN

# TALENT MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY

BUILDING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH  
THE TALENT SPACE PROGRAM AS INTEGRATED  
PART OF TALENT MANAGEMENT



ABSOLVENT MSC05  
(11/2009-10/2011)

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## SUMMARY

Nowadays it can no longer be denied Talent Management (TM) has a positive impact on a company's success. Various authors concluded that TM plays a central role in the long-term and sustained success of an organization (Heidegger; H. et al., 2010, p. 99, Tochtermann, T, Abend, A., 2005, p. 964). The systematic application of TM measures, especially in times of crisis, increases the likelihood of long-term success (Heidegger, A. et al., 2010, p. 94). Only those companies who ensure top talents and leadership skills can permanently gain a competitive advantage and therefore be financially successful (Boedeker, N., Huebbe, E., 2010, p.239).

This work identifies the challenges in dealing with TM. Furthermore, it introduces a concept of a program to foster visibility and networking for talents as an integrated part of TM. It illustrates with the help of the partnering organization, Deutsche Telekom (DT) practical applications and provides an outline for future development.

The concept named Talent Space provides a platform to foster visibility for talents, help them to distinguish themselves and support them to position their talent in the entire organization. This approach is not limited to one business area, function, country, or department but it applies throughout the whole Group; no matter where talents are located or in which area of the organization they have proven their talent. Talent Space helps to increase the performance of the organization and leads to a higher employee engagement. Furthermore the cost savings can be obtained by interlinking Talent Space with succession management. The organization can reduce the expenses for external recruitment companies, which are associated with high costs (Oberli, H., 2007, p. 38, Magin, I., 2009, p. 295), and the probability of placing unsuitable employees on vacant positions (Steinweg, S., 2009, p. 45).

Companies who are lacking behind are often missing a strategic orientation of TM, in the integration of learning models for building knowledge through experience, in a consistent TM across all hierarchical levels and in the expectation management of talents (Graf, G., et. al., 2010, p. 22, Duttagupta, R., 2005, p. 156, Ritz, A., 2010, p. 43).

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 MOTIVATION

»The economy is gaining momentum and so is the war for talent« (Busch, C., 2011, p. 1). Companies facing the new economic world, dominated by demographic, macroeconomic, and technological changes need to see talent management (TM) as a business priority in order to survive. At the same time, the fast economic changes add pressure on managers, forcing them to rethink the business as well as Human Resources (HR) strategies. Especially within the highly developed western countries TM has become a critical success factor.

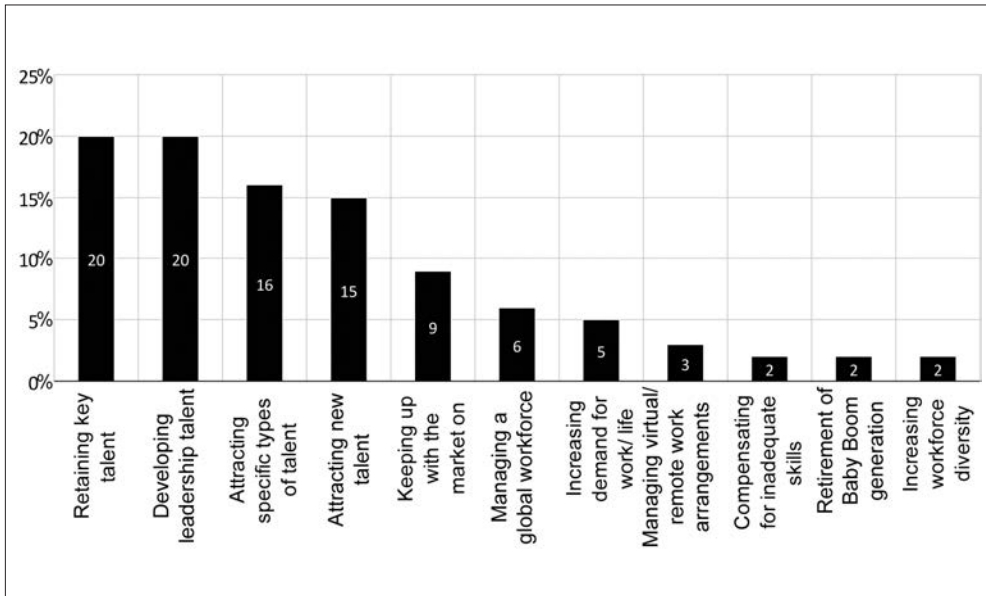
TM includes any activity to attract, select, integrate, develop and promote talents to add value to the business. A continuous TM can provide a long term benefit to the company. For over ten years now, the topic of TM has been on everyone's lips (Maria-Madela, A., Mirabela- Constanta, M., 2008, p. 27). If the prognoses occur: demographic development, shortage of staff, self-assured talent, knowledge and know-how as an important driver of value creation and increase of business, then TM is already today the ultimate discipline of HR management. TM is not a short term investment, it is a long term arrangement (Jaeger, W. 2010, p. 5). The ups and downs of business cycles challenge the HR management in terms of a sustainable TM again and again.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the current global economic context, intense demographical, macro economical and technological changes add pressure on companies, which in order to survive and to be efficient have to transform TM into a priority. It is recommended that managers invest a lot of time in creating strategies that attract, motivate and retain talent (Maria-Madela, A., Mirabela- Constanta, M., 2008, p. 25). Although, the official unemployment rate in the 16 EU countries that use the € rose up to 10% in January 2012 as a result of another recession, talent deficit becomes more and more pronounced, considering it has a critical importance for the companies (Statistisches Bundesamt (a), 2012, p. 1). Predictions however regarding the talent crisis are more and more pessimistic. It is forecasted that the four industries of health, production, energy and the IT/ Telecommunication will suffer or are already suffering because of the lack of an highly educated workforce (Statistisches Bundesamt (b), 2011, p. 14 ).

A complex competition takes place in the labour market. On the one hand companies fight for hiring experts, on the other hand for hiring managers, those who possess a rare skill: namely critical talent. Two global surveys performed by Deloitte 2010 and McKinsey 2011 highlight the companies' concern regarding TM (Asmundson, P., 2010, p. 5, Suder, K. et al, 2011, p. 29). The Deloitte survey explored the changing talent priorities and strategies of global and large national

companies. These results were acquired during a survey held in October 2010 that polled 334 senior business leaders and HR executives at large businesses in America, Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The surveyed managers from a range of major industries, consider TM – attracting, developing, and retaining talent – to be their most critical people-related issue for the next years (figure 1). These issues reached 56% of 100% of all answers.

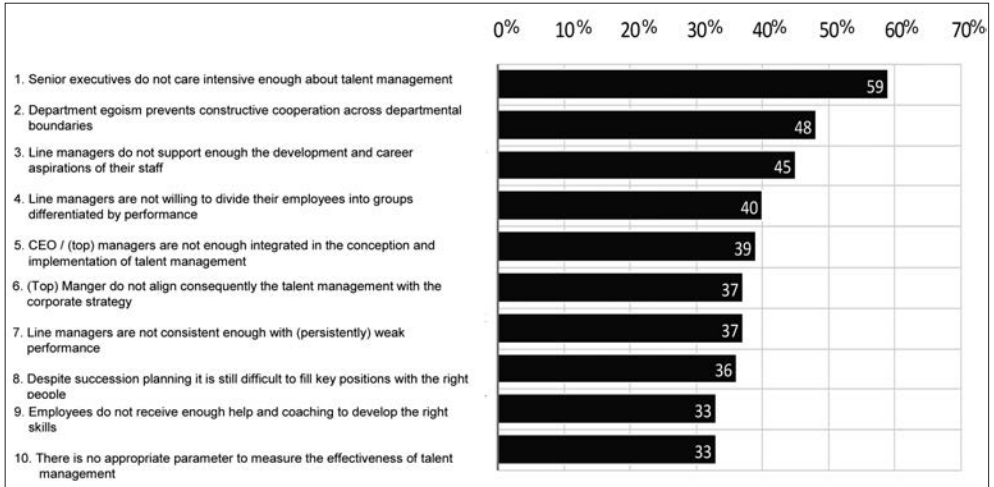


1 | Most critical people/talent issues facing the organization (%)

Source: Asmundson, P., 2010, p.5.

The second survey, carried out by McKinsey in May 2011 analyzed external research results and worldwide experiences of McKinsey’s own experts. In addition, numerous discussions and interviews were conducted with personnel managers of companies, including DAX-listed companies and small and medium sized enterprises (SME) from the public administration. The study analyzed strategies from German companies which aim to ensure their need for skills within the next 10 to 15 years.

Figure two illustrates the biggest obstacles of TM and underlines the fact that more than half (56%) of the respondents (multiple entries allowed) consider the lacking commitment of the senior executive management towards TM to be the biggest obstacle (Suder, K. et al, 2011, p. 29). Furthermore, departmental boundaries in an organisation prevent TM to lead to a success. Line managers fear to loose their talent to another department and receive nothing in return (48%). In addition, line managers do not support the development and career aspirations of their talent enough (45%), which might lead to dissatisfaction and, in the worst case for the company, the resignation of the talent.



2 | Obstacles of talent management  
Source: Suder, K. et al, 2011, p. 29.

As illustrated by the studies, the competition for talent is a certainty and a growing global issue. Especially highly technically oriented industries such as the IT/ Telecommunication sector will experience the major impact over the following years.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT

The objective is to identify the challenges and strategies in dealing with TM. Furthermore, this work introduces a concept to foster visibility and networking for talents as an integrated part of TM and how it can be measured and monitored. It illustrates practical applications and provides an outline for future development.

In the first step of the paper, the author introduces the changing environmental conditions and the specific challenges of the telecommunication sector. The concept of Talent Space as a platform to foster visibility and networking, with all its implications, is introduced to the reader in chapter three. The last chapter will reflect the current status of the concept and derive recommendations for a future TM development.

## 2 CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET AND THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

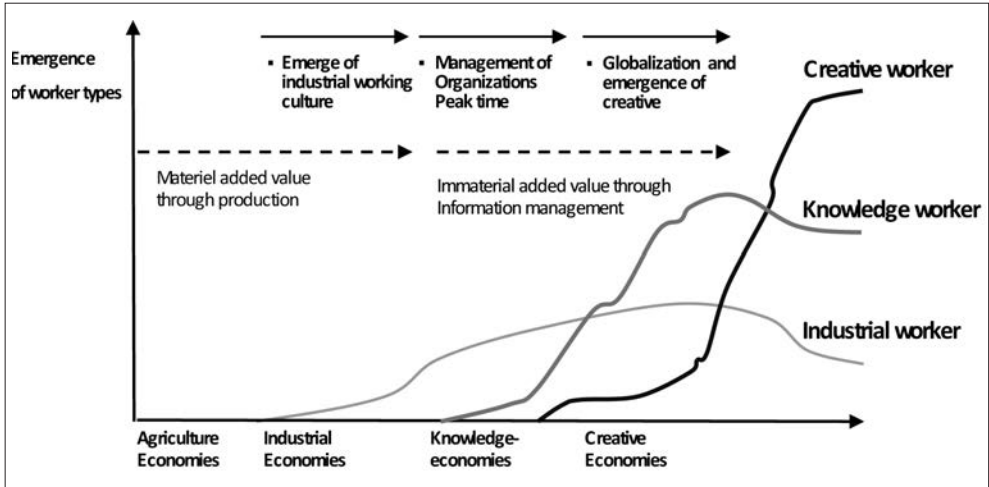
### 2.1 PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARDS THE CREATIVE CLASS

*»We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.« (Einstein, A., 1954, p. 256)*

The ability to come up with new ideas and better our ways of doing things is crucial to increase innovation and productivity. The great transition from the agricultural to the industrial age was based on natural resources and physical labor manpower. The previous shift substituted one set of physical inputs (land and human labor) for another (raw materials and physical labor) while the current one is based fundamentally on human intelligence, knowledge and creativity (Florida, R., 2004, p. 14).

Workplaces are changing. Stress is rising as creativity and mental labour have become the force of innovation and production. The driving force is the rise of human creativity as a key factor in our economy and society. Both at work and in other areas of lives, we value creativity impulse as the attribute that distinguishes us as, humans, from other species. Consider first the realm of economics. Many say that we now live in an information economy or a knowledge economy. What is more fundamentally true however is that we now have an economy powered by human creativity. In every industry, from automobiles to fashion, food products, and information technology itself, in the long run winners are those who can create and keep creating. The key dimension of economic competitiveness is the ability to attract, cultivate and mobilize these resources (Florida, R., 2004, p. 36).

Figure three illustrates the demand shift from the industrial worker to the knowledge worker up to the creative worker. Especially highly technically oriented branches such as the IT/ Telecommunication have high demands for the creative workforce to come up with the solutions which will be required in the future (Putlitz, J., et al, 2007, p. 23).



3 | Transformation of job market

Source: Zukunftsinstitut, Creative Work, 2007, p. 16.

Economic crises, political conflicts, revolutions and the financial break downs of countries rapidly change our environment. The only sure thing is that everything changes. The rate of change increases, so if society wants to keep up people need to speed up. That is the message of today and the future thus seems increasingly uncertain. The search for creative employees at global level will go through a rapid development. While the market becomes more flexible, the creative workers are more and more capable in moving to where the best opportunities are offered. By the year 2020, it is predicted that only 40% of all job contracts will be unlimited contracts. The other 60% consist of short term contracts in which the creative class jumps from job to job every one to two years (Jánszky, S., 2011, p. 45). The pace is becoming faster even today, with a typical professional having worked for nine companies by the age of 32 in the US. It is predicted that today's students will have 10 to 14 jobs by the age of 38 (Sony BMG, 2008, p. 1). There no longer seems to be a stigma attached to workers who jump from job to job, building up a portfolio of knowledge and skills. By constantly changing jobs, with the associated changes of locations and employers, the people seem to have become job nomads (Seifert, L. 2010, p. 7).

It is not their creativity that characterizes the emerging mass of project workers, but the way they work and their understanding of work as a designable element of self-realization in their patch-work biography. Not only partners, children and homes will be mosaics of individual bio-patch-works, but especially jobs, activities and projects. In comparison the project workers think differently to their parents and representatives of the classical industrial and employee culture. While the former generation went through the hierarchical levels and income groups, the new workers look for project challenges and lifetime stories (Jánszky, S., 2011, p. 45). The central drive is personal challenge and their applicability to the market.



On the other hand, there is countermovement regarding the projected changes. This movement refers to a stronger desire of slower movement in life. Therefore several authors illustrate that there is a countermovement, which is so called »slow movement« (Seifert, L., 2010, p. 34, Michalk, S., Nieder, P., 2007: p. 38). The slow movement advocates a cultural shift toward slowing down life's pace (Butterworth, T., 2009, p. 1). The philosophy reminds everyone that our basic needs never change. These include the need to be seen and appreciated, the need to belong and the need proximity and care. This can only be achieved by taking the time for human relations. In order to master changes, we have to recover slowness, reflection and togetherness: there we will find real renewal (Honore, C., 2008, p. 3).

People are looking for a safe environment with a secure job, less stress and a constant balance between work and private life. The majority of the creative class expects some element of office-based work without having to change location every month. The notion of portfolio careers is not likely to become a reality for this group – of whom two-thirds believe they will have between two and five employers in a lifetime. Training and development is the most highly valued employee benefit. The number choosing training and development as their first choice of benefit is three times higher than those who chose cash bonuses. Working with strong personal coaches and mentors is seen as an important part of the development (Seifert, L., 2010, p. 7).

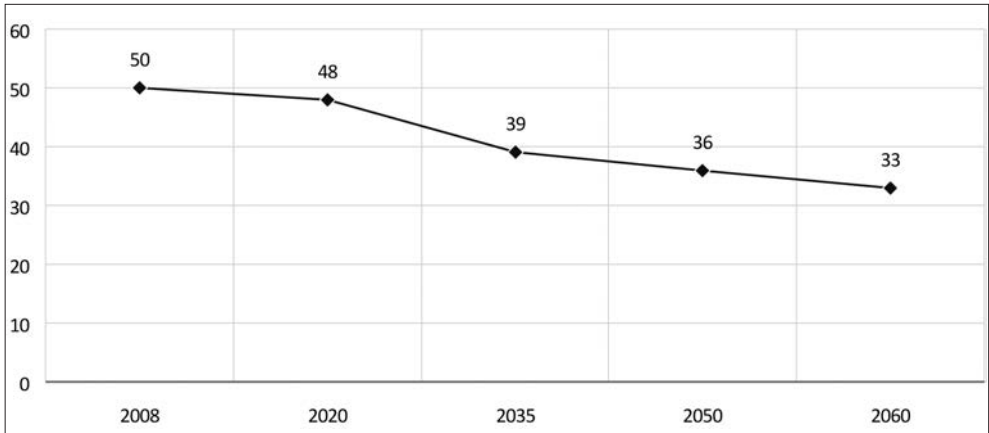
## 2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT IN THE POPULATION PYRAMID

The determining factor for the business world in the following years will be of a demographical nature. Companies confront themselves with demographic scenery dominated by the withdrawal of the so-called baby boomers and the lack of young workforce, especially in the developed countries. Although there has been talk of the danger of overpopulating the planet in the developing countries over the past years, the reality is that we facing a growing under population in the developed countries, with all the economical implications (Drucker, P., 2006, p. 8).

A closer look at Germany shows that the demographic development has two major implications. Firstly, the increasingly aging population and secondly the declining birth rate. Today's people have a longer life expectancy than it was in the 1950's, due to a healthier lifestyle and the development of the pharmaceutical industry. Besides, the predictions show that people will have fewer children than in the 20th century. The average birth rate for each family has declined from 2.4 children in 1950 to 1.3 in 2010 (Statistisches Bundesamt (c), 2011, p. 36). It can be deducted that this will lead to a shrinking working population (Sebald, H., Enneking, A., Woeltje, O., 2005, p. 4). This is also reflected in the projection, which predicts that the German population will decrease by about eight million between 2004 and 2034 (Steinweg, S., 2009, p. 12).

The Federal Statistical Office forecasts a 17 million workers decline of the working population in German by the year 2060 (figure 4) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010, p. 16). Projections have also shown that, in 2030, half the German population will be over 50 years old. On the one hand,

the number of working persons per year decreases by about 150,000 people, on the other hand, people are living longer which leads to future challenges for the pension system and health care sector (Bednarczuk, P., Wendenburg, N., 2008, p. 204).



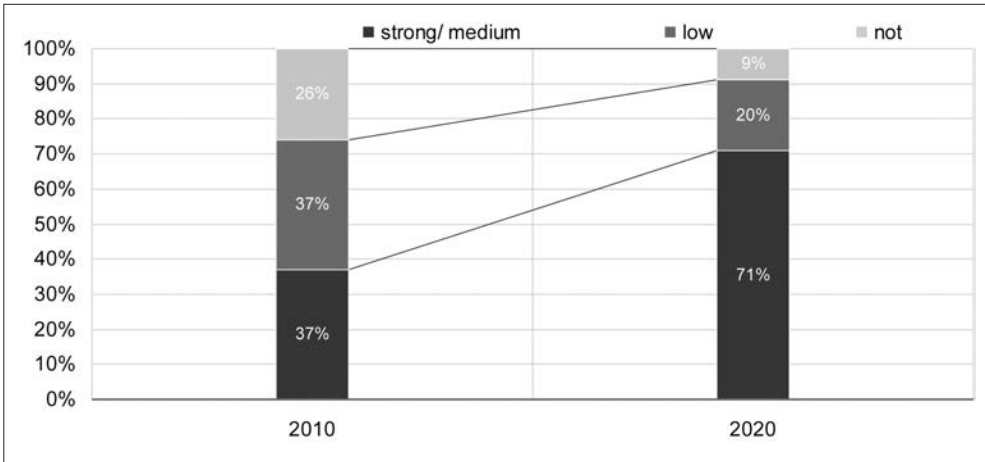
4 | Population of working age in Germany (in million).  
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010, p. 16.

This scenario assumes a constant immigrant flow in Germany. At this point, the scenario is limited to the unpredictable future immigration regulations of the German government. It should be considered that a larger number of qualified professionals could enter the German labour market in the next 15 to 20 years. Especially the emerging markets such as China and India, will release millions of well-educated young professionals each year from their universities reaching for jobs in the western world (Wiedling, H., Wiesmann, S., 2010, p. 2). This scenario, an increase of skilled workers from abroad, will also have an impact on the absolute numbers of workers in the German labour market. Especially multi-national cooperation will further extend their recruiting markets to a more global approach (Schweyer, A., 2008, p. 110).

How extensive the workforce shortage ultimately may be can not be predicted precisely, but it will reach an unprecedented size. The resulting loss of workforce can only be compensated to some extent by the increasing labour productivity. Many companies today are already suffering under the lack of skilled workers and expect a further deterioration in 2020 (figure 5). More than 70% of the German companies see shortage of talent as a strong or medium challenge for their organization (Suder, K. et al, 2011, p. 29).

In Germany in 2009, nearly 50,000 engineering and IT specialist positions could not be filled due to the decline of engineering and informatics graduates. The shortage of academic employees especially in the branches of IT and Telecommunications is expected to worsen over the next

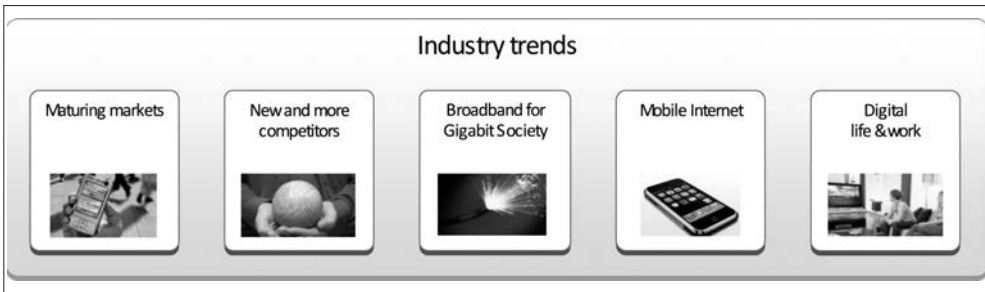
years (Strack, R. et al. 2009, p. 7). When speaking of the aging population, the author focuses in the following on the German labour market with particular reference to the telecommunications industry. To understand how the telecommunication industry has changed and is going to change the development of the telecommunication sector is introduced.



5 | Expected workforce shortage  
Source: Suder, K. et al, 2011, p. 29.

### 2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

Telecommunications is one of the fastest moving branches. Customers become more sophisticated, but also more overwhelmed by complexity (Gattuso, J., 2011, p. 1, Hess, T., Schlaeffer, C., 2010, p. 18, Connault, F., 2009, p. 3). Figure six shows the trends that influence the telecommunications industry the most.



6 | Industry trends  
Source: Deutsche Telekom AG, 2009, p. 7.

**MATURING MARKETS:**

Most of the industrialized countries have successfully changed their markets from supplier markets to consumer markets (Grant, R., 2010, p. 62). The customer has the power to choose between several suppliers and in only a few niches – fields of specialisation of products or services – does consumer demand exceed the supply. Buyers have gained more influence and prices in mass markets will continue to fall which leads to a decline in growth rates (Best, R., 2005, p. 65). In the telecommunication industry especially fixed line and mobile business suffer from declining growth rates (Kelly, K., 2010, p. 7).

**NEW AND MORE COMPETITORS:**

Since the opening up of the former monopolistic markets such as the telecommunication or the mail market in Germany, new innovative and capable competitors have emerged (Zolenhoefer, R., 2007, p. 395). Fewer regulations, result in more open and attractive markets, especially for smaller companies. It fosters innovation regarding aspects such as new product ideas or new business models. This could be e.g. merging competencies from the IT-, software, media and entertainment industry.

**BROADBAND FOR GIGABIT SOCIETY:**

In 1984 there were approximately 1.000 technical devices with internet connection worldwide. Between 1992 and 2008 the number of technical devices with internet connection increased from one Mio. up to one Mrd. (Sony BMG, 2008, p. 1). The demand of web-enabled devices has tremendously increased over the last years. In 2007 the fastest internet connection was nine billion bits per second. Only three years later companies are testing broad band lines which carry 14 billion bits per second. These new broadband lines are able to transfer about 210 million telephone calls or 2.660 CDs per second (Sony BMG, 2008, p. 1). In our society gigabits of information and data is shared world wide and needs to be supplied in appropriate time.

**MOBILE INTERNET:**

Due to the fast development of the internet the consumers have changed their expectations towards mobile internet. The consumer wants to be supplied with information permanently by demanding more capacity and speed. Smart phones are not only used to communicate via voice, but also to ask directions or to find the closest repair shop. That explains the forecast of Cisco stating that data traffic will increase by a factor of 40 by 2014 (Gruman, G., 2010, p. 1).

**DIGITAL LIFE & WORK:**

In 2015 around 40% of business customers will use cloud services (Hess, T., Schlaeffer, C., 2009, p. 24). Cloud services will be used to share information with colleagues across the globe. Not only at work, but also in homes, digital devices are used to manage daily life. In the connected home, cloud services enables the user e.g. to monitor energy consumption or to program the TV with their smart phone. There is a need for transformation to support the customers.

Due to the introduced macroeconomic development; the rise of the creative class, the demographic shift in the population pyramid and the fast moving telecommunications industry it is very important for HR to establish a TM system at an early stage to counteract this trend and act accordingly to remain competitive and to become more innovative. TM is therefore rapidly becoming one of the most important factors in providing strategic orientation for organizations. The key factor in determining the success of any organization is its ability to use human talent (Cheese, P., et al, 2008, p. 32). Tasks for TM are to discover, develop, deploy, motivate and energize their talents. A company only remains competitive if it acquires, develops and uses knowledge faster than its competitors. To do so the Talent Space program was created and implemented together with the partnering organization to support the TM of DT as one puzzle of a for business success. In the following chapter, the TM program Talent Space will be explained in more detail.

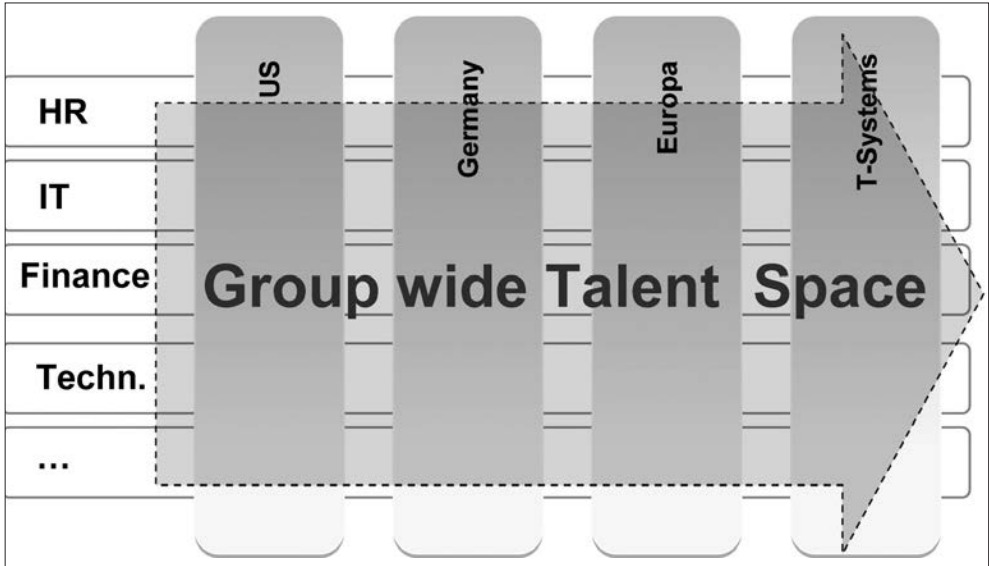
## 3 TALENT SPACE CONCEPT AS INTEGRATED PART OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

### 3.1 A GROUP WIDE CONCEPT

DT is facing the challenges posed by demographic shifts and the associated changes, in particular, a future shortage of talented employees. One major objective of the HR function is to confront this future shortage with specific activities such as TM and tailored recruiting initiatives. Talent Space provides a platform for new opportunities for both talented individuals and the Group as a whole, which will be explained in more detail in this chapter. In the last 15 years TM of DT operated more in regional silos in the US, Germany, Europe, and T-Systems. These old talent silos, called »goldfish bowl«, focused only on a few talents within a restricted area of the company. There was no company-wide transparency and the management wondered why the company ended up with too little talented people in executive positions. Talents were kept in the restricted areas of the unit where no or only a little exchange of talents was fostered. Cross functional career opportunities (horizontal moves between functions and business areas within the Group) were limited and only »chimney careers« (vertical moves within one function or one business area) were usually offered (T. Sattelberger, 2010, p. 2).

Hence, the exchange of ideas and know-how was restricted and creative potential and innovation came to its limits. To fulfill the business transformation, needs for driving innovation and providing a flow of creativity, these silos need to be opened. The business transformation is about developing a strategy that takes into account the dramatic shift in the market, the customers and their desire for products as well as talents' request for wider career possibilities (Nair, M., 2011, p. 36). Talent Space provides a platform to foster visibility for talents, help them to distinguish themselves and support them to position their talent in the entire organization. This approach

is not limited to one business area, function, country, or department but it applies throughout the whole Group; no matter where talents are located or in which area of the organization they have proven their talent. Figure 7 illustrates the approach of the Group-wide, functions specific concept. This approach is open for exchange of talents and knowledge to foster collaboration between all dimensions in the matrix.



7 | Group wide Talent Space  
Source: own illustration by the author.

Within Talent Space talents are meant to stretch their comfort zone by leaving their behavioural state, within a person operates in an anxiety-neutral condition, using a limited set of behaviours to deliver a steady level of performance, without a sense of risk (White, A., 2009, p. 94). By stretching the comfort zone of talents, by exposing and making them visible to Group-wide decision-makers, their chance of being considered in strategic succession planning and staffing will increase and they might be granted the possibility of personal and professional development (Ritz, A., 2011, p. 202). In contrast to training opportunities, which mainly focus on improving the performance in the current task, Talent Space primarily focuses on increasing the visibility of talents and thus the chance for taking over a new task or position within the company.

## 3.2 IDENTIFICATION AND REQUIREMENTS OF TALENTS

The prerequisite for participating in Talent Space is the inclusion in the Group-wide Talent Pool that consists of a defined group of employees. Talents in the Talent Pool have been assessed, using the various HR development tools in place in the Group. The identified employees show the combination of above-average performance and high potential. Members of the Talent Pool must fulfill the following additional criteria to be eligible for the Talent Space:

1. Potential and ability to take over more complex tasks in a short period of time
2. Mobility and willingness to change the current geographical location
3. From a development perspective »mature in their current position«
4. Lack of visibility among decision makers to make a next development step
5. Profound English skills (classification of language skills)

The identification of potential Talent Space participants takes place within the functional talent and succession reviews. The line-management, the HR Business Partner and the Human Resources Development unit use these meetings to discuss the functional talents in terms of their ability to be a successor for potential openings of management positions. These meetings are held in each function once a year. To ensure a diverse Talent Space the Group-wide diversity quotas of at least 30% female and at least 40% international talents must be obeyed in the nomination process. Once the quotas are fulfilled, the talented employees from the different hierarchical levels below the executive level are assigned to different talent categories.

## 3.3 TALENT CATEGORIES

Talent Space aims to cover the whole talent pipeline which includes fresh graduates up to managers. The talent categories are an approach to classify talents into three categories according to their professional experiences and their readiness to take over a new position. These categories are called »Top Talent«, »Professional Talent« and »Emerging Talent«. Professional experience is defined as the competence and skills they have acquired in interacting intelligently and skillfully with their professional environment (Celeste, B., et. al., 1994, p. 221). Readiness is defined as the information, based on observation, how prepared the talent is to take over a more complex task, either a management position or a new position in a new professional field.

### TOP TALENTS

Individuals, who have shown in several job positions, and after broader validation and assessment, to have potential for and are able to take over key positions (e.g. strategically relevant) immediately with a minimum risk of failure, and therefore justify extensive advancement initiatives.

## **PROFESSIONAL TALENTS**

Individuals, who have proven themselves in at least one or two positions. These candidates are assumed to have the broad potential to take on a new position in their target area.

## **EMERGING TALENTS**

Individuals who do not have a large amount of professional experience (a maximum of three years). Nonetheless, they have already succeeded in standing out and, based on their strong personality, can be entrusted with a more responsible position after a short introductory and induction phase (Deutsche Telekom 2011 Talent Space product description, 2011, p. 5).

The classification of the talents into the introduced categories is very important for offering appropriate initiatives to the Talent Space participants. A top talent e.g. might need less exposure time to senior executives, because he or she is already known in the company, than an emerging talent who did not have the chance to get in contact with the management and therefore needs more exposure time.

## **3.4 TALENT SPACE INITIATIVES**

The activities of Talent Space differ widely from the personnel development of employees that relate to Human Resources Development products such as programs, training courses, etc., which aim to improve performance and make the individual more capable in their current role. Development within Talent Space mainly involves making the employees more visible in order to substantially improve their chances of changing their role or job. Derived talent initiatives can be grouped into conferences, workshops and individual initiatives:

### **1 CONFERENCES**

The conferences can be divided into talent conferences and meetings. Talent conferences are more formal and include the attendance of board members and senior executives. The goal is to discuss strategic business topics of the different functions and to allow executives to get to know the talents and their point of view. Talent meetings are characterized by a more informal meeting style. Guest speakers from within and outside of DT, talk about their experiences in business and life with the goal to demonstrate how a certain attitude or strategy can affect the personal life and business.

### **2 WORKSHOPS**

The workshops are conducted outside of the work environment together with executives of the Group. The executives take the time to discuss current business topics with a limited number of persons and to work closely together with the talents e.g. on new functional processes or projects. Conferences and workshops give the talents the chance to get to know the executives of their functions and to train their networking abilities.



### 3 INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES

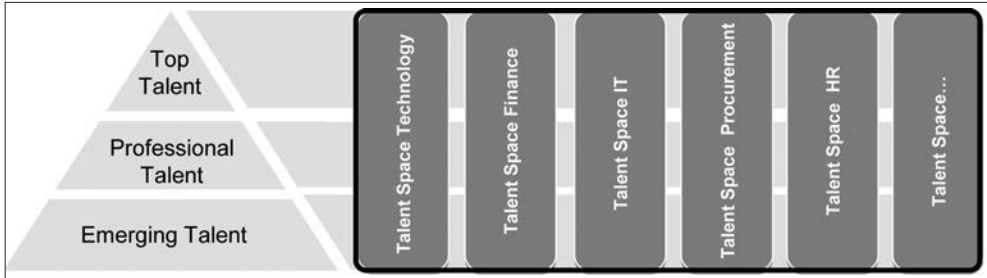
Individual initiatives shall foster the development of each talent. The talent market place for example provides a platform for job rotations. The concept of talent market place combines knowledge transfer and networking between the talents and management. During the market place, participants have the opportunity to obtain information on market stands on strategically important issues, to network with the project leaders and the management and to find out about interesting job opportunities. Project assignments during which participants work on a project in another function or unit grant the talents the chance to enlarge their professional experience. Talent Space participants are furthermore asked to find an individual business mentor who works with the talent on his personal progress. Target areas are reflection, individual development and career advancement. These mentors may become advocates for the talent in the succession review and increase the talent's chances when filling job vacancies. This might also foster the motivation of talents to stay within the company instead of searching for jobs externally due to limited career perspectives.

### 3.5 CONCEPT STANDARDS

To ensure a consistent and efficient Talent Space concept, standards need to be defined and communicated. The figure below (figure 8) shows the functional Talent Spaces of which each is managed by a functional Talent Space team. Each functional Talent Space needs to fulfill the key features to ensure a standardized structure and process throughout the group. The key features are:

- Talent Spaces are functionally driven and steered
- Each functional Talent Space hosts 40 to 50 talents
- Target group of Talent Space is below executive level
- Nomination of talents must reflect the international and female quota
- All functional Talent Spaces are broken down into Top-, Professional-, and Emerging Talent categories
- Time talents spend in Talent Space is restricted to 18 months
- Each talent is supposed to participate in at least 4 initiatives over the course of 18 months
- Participation fosters individual development

All functional Talent Spaces together form the corporate Talent Space.



8 | Functional structure of Talent Space  
 Source: Deutsche Telekom, 2010 (b), TM policy, p. 17, extended by the author.

The functional set-up of the Talent Spaces ensures an exchange of talents across all units. Furthermore, through the Group-wide initiatives, talents are not bound to stay in their function, but also have the opportunity to participate in cross-functional activities. These initiatives are provided to all talents within Talent Space. As mentioned the Talent Space is primarily used to improve the visibility of previously hidden talented individuals within the company. If well executed, TM can be used to increase the internal staffing quota and to reduce costs.

### 3.6 COST REDUCTION POTENTIAL

TM increases the performance of the organization and leads to a higher employee engagement (Steinweg, S., 2009, p. 40). But there is another important aspect that is achieved through an effective TM - cost reduction. The cost savings can be obtained by interlinking Talent Space with succession management. The organization can reduce the expenses for external recruitment companies, which are associated with high costs (Oberli, H., 2007, p. 38, Magin, I., 2009, p. 295), and the probability of placing unsuitable employees on vacant positions (Steinweg, S., 2009, p. 45). Management positions with strategic impact - so called key positions - are often filled through external recruitment firms (Adams, T., 2010, p. 263).

Talent Space provides the potential candidates for these future key positions and thus enables long term succession planning and succession management. Succession management is a process for identifying and placing internal people with the potential to fill key positions in the company. Succession management increases the availability of experienced and capable employees that are prepared to assume these roles as they become available (Carroll, B., et. al., 2008, p. 98). In addition, the retention of the talents avoids negative drawbacks for DT, for example, loss of production, interruption of work flow, loss of knowledge and expertise, and disruption of communication networks (Phillips, J., Edwards, L., 2009, p.31). These significant negative consequences of excessive fluctuation additionally show how important effectively reduced turnover due to Talent Space can be. The reduced turn over rate, the creation of new development and

promotion opportunities might help the Group to become even more attractive as an employer and strengthen the employer brand externally as well as internally. The increase in the internal placement rate aims to provide career opportunities to the internal staff so that valuable know-how remains within the company. However, this is accompanied with the risk to generate a certain degree of tunnel vision since candidates who come from other companies normally bring new approaches and perspectives into the company. Thus a too high target value of the internal placement rate could be questioned.

### **3.7 BENEFITS FOR TALENTS AND MANAGERS**

Besides the mid term and long term benefits of Talent Space the program provides added value for the individuals. Candidates in Talent Space are visible to managers in other strategic business units and have an opportunity to network amongst equals. Talented individuals can find out about new areas and get to know potential line managers and colleagues. By taking on a more complex role in an unfamiliar area, the candidate is given broad learning and development opportunities and the chance to grow with this challenge. The excellent networking possibilities in the Talent Space make the new candidates part of a Group-wide dialog. They have the opportunity to use the Talent Space as a communication platform and to share their experience and potential in the Group. In the end the long-term commitment to Deutsche Telekom might also be reinforced (Deutsche Telekom, 2011 (b), product description, p. 6).

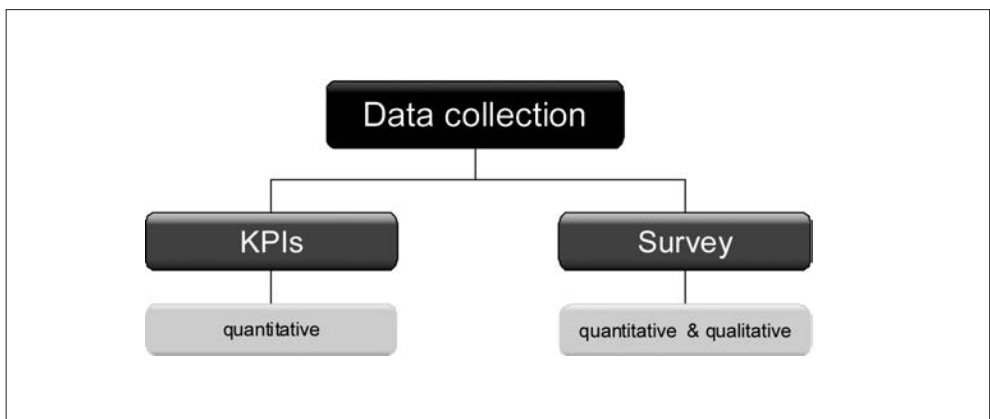
The positive effect of Talent Space for managers is that talented individuals become visible and accessible. The Talent Space could be compared to a market place, with managers being able to find and fill their vacancies with candidates. Talent Space enables managers to obtain a clear picture of potential applicants (Deutsche Telekom, 2011 (b), product description, p. 6). The effects of a good and efficient Talent Space do not only help the company to become more successful, but also depict plenty of advantages for talents and managers. Although, the predicted cost reductions in executive recruitment and benefits for talents and managers seem to be foreseeable, the implementation of the program still needs to show the performance within the business context. To prove the implementation and the success of the program measurement methods and metrics are necessary. The following chapter introduces the systematic of data collection and monitoring methods to be able to measure the performance of the program and derive actions when needed.

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING METHODS**

The Impact of TM measures to contribute to the success of a company is difficult to measure (Becker, E., Huselid, A., Ulrich, D., 2001, p. 1). Nevertheless, the effect of Talent Space should be communicated in numbers and in words, so that analysts, CEOs, managers and investors, who speak mostly in numbers can be reached (Doerfler, W., 2010, p. 12; Davenport, O., 1999, p.

202, Phillips, J., 1997, p. 19, Cheese, P., Thomas, J., Craig, I., 2008, p. 189). The management and leadership need to know about what investments of Talent Space and specifically for the company's success is important to make the right investment decisions in future (Cheese, P., et al., 2008, p. 189). If it is made clear that the company's growth is related to the Talent Space measures, because their own internal employees have been promoted to higher positions, then Talent Space, as well as the succession management becomes measurable. That is what really counts for the analysts to make it interesting, meaningful and understandable (Doerfler, W., 2010, p.13). Also, the increased quality requirements demand the use of specialized measurements. This can be enabled by assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of Talent Space initiatives. Due to the objectives of evaluating an internal product (Talent Space) from both sides the quantitative and the qualitative perspective the exploratory approach is used. The exploratory approach is divided into qualitative and quantitative research. To understand which method suits best it is necessary to understand the difference of the approaches. Qualitative research involves methods that emphasize the quality of meaning in consumer perceptions and attitudes; for example, in existing databases. (Thomas, M., 2003, p. 2). Quantitative research uses numbers and statistical methods such as structured interviews to seek general information or to estimate future events (Bedward, D., 2001, p. 13).

Date collection of Talent Space is divided into two methods. Firstly, systemic data acquisition through quantitative key performance indicators (KPIs) and secondly through participants feedback gained through the Talent Space survey with quantitative and qualitative measures (figure 9).



9 | Data collection methods

Source: Ulich, E. 2005, p. 183, extended by the author.

The collection of data by using both approaches allows a rich data basis which helps to steer the program and report the current status to the management. According to the first results of the first Talent Space cycle of the partnering organization the program carries some challenges and limitations.

## 4 CRITICAL REFLECTION AND OUTLOOK

### 4.1 CRITICAL REFLECTION

The successful implementation of Talent Space as an integral part of talent management offers many opportunities. Firstly, the motivation of talent may be fostered which reinforces the positive impact on productivity. Secondly, it is assumed that the retention rate increases and thus the loss of high performers, experienced staff, and know-how are reduced. Thirdly, in the creation of a talent platform to make talents more transparent and therefore accessible to other functional areas forms the greatest benefit. In connection with the succession management this will increase the chance to promote the right people to the right positions and to reduce cash out through external recruiting services (see chapter 3.6). The benefits of the program will be more clearly to measure in the future. If this program is successfully managed and it is anchored as an integral part of TM, the benefits can be demonstrated in concrete numbers to the business. Thus HR can shape the strategic direction of the company together with the business on eye level.

To integrate Talent Spaces as an integral and successful part in the TM there are still some challenges to be mastered in the future. First, the monitoring measures have shown that the program was promising implemented according to the guidelines. In comparison to the statements of the participants, this is only selectively confirmed. Especially, the specific involvement of the international HR department is still insufficient, and the participation of talents outside of Germany is still not ensured.

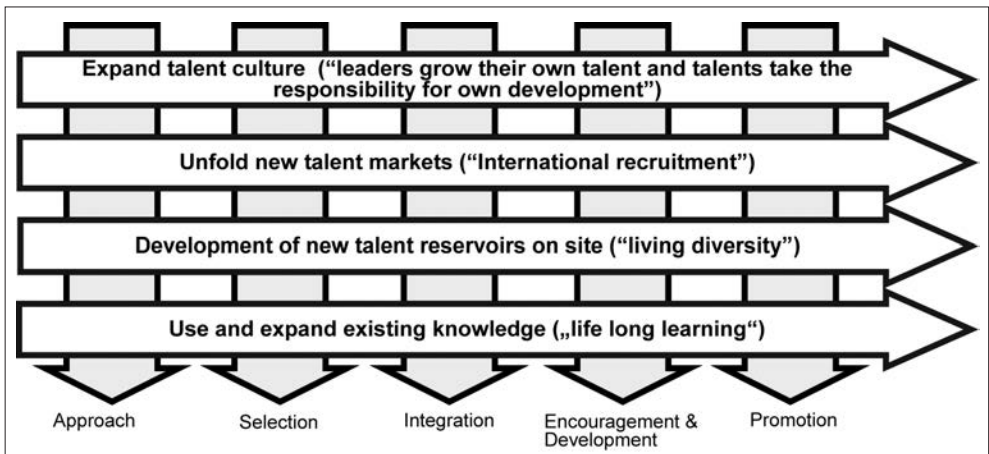
Second, the dropout rate from Talent Space can still be regarded as critical. In such a program the success is largely dependent on the active involvement of the participants. The nomination of talents is therefore a critical success factor and needs to be well planned and performed. In the first round of the program, 203 talents were selected. This makes just 0.08% of the total workforce of DT. Promoting such a small group can quickly be seen as elite society which promotes 'old boy's networks'.

Thirdly, Telekom seems to not to have a distinct TM culture so far. In a talent culture talent platforms are not seen as 'old boy's networks' but as a driver for change and innovation, which is needed in fast-paced industries such as the telecommunications and IT sector. The support from the supervisors towards the program was rated critical to some extent. The feedbacks from the supervisors have expressed the concerns about talent leaves. In the case of a job change of a talent towards another department or another function, the company is primarily strengthened but the supervisors who loose a talent have difficulties to compensate or even replace the loss. It can therefore be concluded that there are some concerns of the supervisors to nominate talents to the Talent Space. Incentive systems are needed to promote a talent culture in the future such as anchoring TM into the individual targets of executives. The philosophy in TM of 'leaders are talent managers' is not lived

yet. To understand Talent Space as an integral part of TM the bigger picture has to be considered. Talent Space can accelerate the effectiveness and efficiency of TM processes but it can not be the only answer. Further actions have to be taken to establish a talent company.

## 4.2 OUTLOOK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TM of DT includes any activity to attract, select, integrate, develop and promote talents to add value to the business. A continuous TM can provide a long term benefit to the company. To do so TM processes and dimensions need to be constantly reviewed to derive improvements. DT and its TM aims to be a benchmark and a role model in telecommunication/ IT industry and beyond (T. Sattelberger, 2011, p. 2). Figure 10 illustrates the TM approach along the employee life cycle and introduces four important dimensions which should be considered within TM strategies of DT. All dimensions should not be seen independently and separately instead it should be understood as dimension which influences each other. Each dimension affects the other. The presented dimensions along the employee life cycle form the basis for the derived recommendations to further elaborate TM at DT.



10 | Talent management dimensions

Source: Redewitz, F., 2011, p. 2, extended by the author.

### EXPAND TALENT CULTURE

A key factor to anchor a successful TM in an organization is a common understanding of a talent cultural. The top TM companies in Germany have more or less successfully anchored an overall talent culture in their organization. Companies such as Deutsche Lufthansa, SAP and Volkswagen possess a high level of maturity of their TM according to TM index model from Graf. Graf analyzed companies in Germany, Swiss and Austria from the finance, service, industry, utilities,

logistics, IT/ Telecommunication and chemistry sector. The study of Graf combines a qualitative and quantitative questionnaire to measure the interaction between the dimensions of strategic, operational and methodological/ instrumental TM elements. The in 2010 conducted analysis leads to a maturity model consisting of three maturity levels for each dimension. According to the results of Graf the transformation is made from the traditional education and training for specific target groups towards an integrated understanding of tailored learning and development models, which encompasses the entire organization in all areas (Graf, G., Laske, S., 2010, p. 22).

In this context, leaders understand their original and most important task as to discover real talent among the staff for the organization and encourage them. TM can therefore not be a principality of HR or HRD but it has to be understood as an essential management task. Successful companies who discover, encourage and make talents transparent earn 33% more revenue per employee than comparable companies in their industry (Moehrle, M., 2011, p. 15). Building a global talent culture that shines through all areas is desirable for DT.

### **UNFOLD NEW TALENT MARKETS**

The demographic change will put companies in front of big changes. A declining birth rate in Germany will lead to local labor shortage. In order for DT to be able to cover their needs for highly qualified staff they need to move out of their comfort zone and recruit from broader pools of talents in the future. Expanding international recruitment strategies becomes therefore necessary. Emerging countries like China and India have caught up in their educational landscape and the training of highly qualified people compared to the standards in Western Europe. In India every year, around 300.000 students received a degree in computer science, in Germany there are approximately 15.400 students per year (Wiedling, H., Wiesmann, S., 2010, p. 2). Building up corporations with universities abroad could set the opportunity to leverage research and development and also recruit specialists.

### **DEVELOP NEW TALENT RESERVOIRS ON SITE**

Most executives are aware of the relationship between corporate success and the proportion of female managers in companies (Rath, K., 2011, p. 1). On the number of women in top positions this awareness has only changed little. In the boardrooms and executive committees women are still underrepresented. In Germany, supervisory boards count only 13% women in senior management (Biallas, J., 2011, p. 1). For DT, the individual development programs for women must be more focused. It could be advisable to first focus on training, coaching and mentoring modules, so that female talents can demonstrate their capabilities and develop their career paths. Secondly, another important element is the establishment of networks within the company, which young talents, where male and female talents are provided with access to role models. Nevertheless, the discussion of diversity should not be limited to the female quota. It is recommended to see diversity management as an approach to foster social variety within an organization to prevent social discrimination against minorities and to improve equal opportunities (Benser, B., 2008, p. 38).

### **USE AND DEVELOP EXISTING KNOWLEDGE**

In the coming years, the educational demand within the working life will increase considerably. Today, in Switzerland it is already visible in which direction this trend is leading in consideration with more experienced workers. In Switzerland for example the labour force participation rate among 60 - to 65-year-olds is at 70%. In comparison in Germany, this figure was only at 35% in 2010 (Eurostat, 2011, p. 5). Not only economists are now clear on the fact that this situation needs to change permanently in consideration of a longer life expectancy and a decreasing number of younger workers. The experiences demonstrate that performance and motivation decrease during the course of years - even if the retirement age for a 40 - to 50-year-old is still somehow far away (Roßnagel, C., 2010, p. 8). However, those employees are extremely valuable due to their knowledge and broad experience. Deutsche Telekom should therefore be able to inspire these employees of the Group of 40 plus. For example, jobs are created for professionals who may not reach any management position, but can contribute valuable service as a specialist in a particular field. Rather than freeze promotions and development from the age of 45, older employees should receive continuous training offerings, placed on changing positions and evaluated according to their performance and increased competence.

In this regard, considering the introduced dimensions could be beneficial for the further development of DT's TM. Just focusing on selected aspects might not be enough to ensure an en vogue TM. Understanding TM as an intergraded part of the business strategy makes it necessary to consistently focus on the business progress. Especially the ups and downs of business cycles and the changing environment challenge the HR management in terms of a sustainable TM again and again.



# APPENDIX

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AG	Listed cooperation
CHRO	Chief Human Resources Officer
DT	Deutsche Telekom
e. g.	For example
ELC	Employee life cycle
Et al.	Et alii (and others)
EU	European Union
HR	Human resources
HRM	Human resources management
ICT	Information communication technology
IT	Information technology
LT	Leadership team
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SME	Small medium sized
T	Telekom
TSLC	Talent space life cycle
TM	Talent management

**SYMBOLS**

€	Euro
%	Percentage