

“STRATEGIES FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF OPTIMIZATION IN
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS”

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Abstract:

The absence of a mechanism for the enhancement of human talent in the public sector is a constant throughout Spanish territory. In this paper we will briefly analyze the situation in the area of town halls and we will indicate some proposals for improvement.

Key words:

Human resources - talent - local public sector - digital environments-teamwork -good practices

The concept "optimization" is related to two other fundamental concepts, which are “*optimistic*” (understood as character trait of the personality of an individual) and “*optimus*” (synonymous with excellent).

Therefore, we can define optimization as those strategies or mechanisms to manage in an excellent way the existing staff in an organization.

When we speak of staff, we speak of people, not only in the aspect related to the ability to work, or as a workforce consideration, but also to their personal and emotional aspect, as well as to all their very personal abilities and attitudes for professional performance.

One of the most important tools for the optimization of personnel from a strict perspective of human resources, goes through the enhancement of **human talent**, which can be defined as the special intellectual capacity or aptitude that a person has to learn things easily, or well to develop an activity with great skill.

Talent is usually identified with skills or abilities of an artistic, literary or musical nature, although it goes much further. Howard Gardner¹, neuroscientist and researcher at Harvard University and father of the theory of multiple intelligences, explains that there is no single intelligence, but only eight (mathematics, linguistics, kinesthetic or movement, artistic-musical, among others).

This interesting perspective allows us to connect talent with intelligence, considering that talent is part of the cognitive processes that are generated intellectually in the human brain, as a result of the intellectualization of perceptions². Therefore, not only is a person born with talent: it needs to be practiced, working in, and, to a certain extent, doing it.

In the public sphere, unfortunately there is an important absence of tradition regarding the enhancement of human talent and the optimization of the abilities of the public servants that work in it; circumstance that has as possible causes -and among others- the following:

-The rigidity of the system of access to public employment: despite the fact that the current regulatory framework, in application of the provisions of the 1978 Constitution of the Kingdom of Spain, has designed a selective system based on the essential principles of equality, merit, ability, publicity and competitive competition, certainly the system does not allow, in many occasions, to select the best employees, from a global

1 Gardner, H. *Frames of Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, 1993, Basic Books, Harper Collins Publisher Inc., New York, USA, ISBN: 0-465-02510-2 D.R.

2 Rendón Uribe, M.A. *Creativity and brain: neurological bases of creativity*. University of Antioquia, Colombia. Biblid. [0214-3402 (2009) (II time) n.º 1; 117-135. ISSN: 0214-3402

and integral perspective. A clear example of this is the case of the technicians of General Administration or of the officials of Local Administration with qualification of national character (in Spain, FHN) as titular of directive organs in the municipalities of big population. Both in the first and in the second case, we may find ourselves with excellent technical profiles, but with the absence of competencies necessary for the exercise of the position (among which are the skills of communication and interpersonal relationship, or the ability to resolve conflicts and management and problem solving).

-The peculiarities of the selective systems: today, and with some exceptions, the content of the selective processes is defined by the performance of knowledge tests of an eminently memorial nature, to the detriment of the assessment of skills and aptitudes necessary for a proper performance. This is despite the open door of article 61 of the Spanish Public Service Act to carry out tests of psychological abilities measurement, with irregular follow-up in Spain.

-Training strategies aimed at internal promotion, rather than the detection, promotion and enhancement of human talent.

-Absence of articulation of professional career systems aimed at acquiring a desirable “expertise” in the performance of the job, without a strict need for promotion, in clear contrast with the private sector, which does contemplate a professional evolution by categories linked to seniority in the company, assumed responsibility, exercised and demonstrable, and effective performance, such as the transition from the junior category to the advanced or senior category in business management.

As practical action proposals for the enhancement of talent in a Public Administration, we contemplate the following:

-Analysis of deficiencies and dysfunctions: both in staff -structural deficiencies, obsolete professional categories- and within the framework of the Job List Catalogue itself - in terms of the study of job profile needs, functional content, analysis of tasks and skills or competences, among others-.

-Definition of strategic action frameworks, tending to establish strategic lines of action, objectives, actions to be developed, material and human means, schedule and evaluation, monitoring and control systems.

-Configuration of dynamics of generation of collaborative synergies and work dynamics and group interaction: either through communities of practice, working groups of technical action groups, chaired by principles such as:

- institutional loyalty with ethics and values on public sector, aiming to the creation of public value
- continuous personal and professional improvement
- knowledge sharing
- attainment of a quality public service for the satisfaction of the general interest
- constant interaction through the use of digital media

As a practical example, the experience of the technical training groups of the City Council of Vigo, Spain, EU, linked to the practical implementation and development of the Strategic Training Framework can be an illustrative aspect of the enhancement of human talent in a city council.

It is an example of experience and collaborative dynamics, aimed at the global reorientation of planning and management of training, which considers, in a global way, the existing problems at the local level, enhancing the use of internal trainers, both as a means of optimizing the number of employees, and as a tool for motivation and for the valorization of human talent.

Additionally, the Training Needs Detection Study approved in 2017 is attached, together with the evaluation, monitoring and control systems. We will analyze this interesting context in a later research work.

REFERENCES OF INTEREST:

-Link to video: How to build a work team (fragment of “The Lord of The Rings: the fellowship of the rings”. Peter Jackson, 2001):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLC3R9f7cEk>

-Link to interview with Howard Gardner in LA VANGUARDIA:

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/lacontra/20160411/401021583313/una-mala-persona-no-llega-nunca-a-ser-buen-profesional.html>

-Link to specialized publications: Piñuel and Zabala, I. "LEADERSHIP ZERO".

<https://www.leadersummaries.com/ver-resumen/liderazgo-zero>