Beta talent forward (2)

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All of our beta talent forward candidates possess remarkable (intellectual) qualities. In our time, however, more and more processes are dependent on the intellect of the group (tribe) and less on unique individual qualities. Ultimately, no individual can compete with this collective intelligence, no matter how smart you are.

Take Wikipedia as an example. Without any supervision, anyone can contribute. If it is not right, the content will be corrected by "the tribe", without an editor in chief. Nevertheless, Wikipedia has surpassed all traditional encyclopedias in terms of quality and completeness. The organization of hospital care can serve as another example. No longer does a patient have to deal with the exceptional talent of one doctor - or a sister Nightingale - but with a bunch of perfectly collaborating team players, utilizing the strength of the group. ICT plays an essential role in this. Recently, I was in hospital with my parents-in-law, and after a few hours we had spoken to 16 health care professionals; the acute danger was systematically detected and treated. After a few hours the danger had completely disappeared. In working as a team, healthcare professionals do not even have to know each other by name.

Back to our participants. The difficulty with going to work is in part that they are perfectly capable of great intellectual performance, but that they often unconsciously and unintentionally place themselves against the intellect of the group. And then you come into a position, or "battle", that you can win less and less easily. Last week I have considered this. The question now is how our autistiform beta talent candidates can use their powers as part of the "tribe", so that they reinforce the team's intelligence.

Two perspectives

Two perspectives. The first comes from the scientific literature. American professor Amy Edmondson has researched the conditions a team must meet if people who do not know each other have to work together successfully. Think of a rescue team. These are completely different processes than a perfectly matched team that acts as one machine, such as a band, orchestra or football team. New and unique situations require unique and often individual talents, just like the talents of our candidates. The solution is not present in advance. Autistic people can play an essential role (and often do so, as we know), but as stated, they sometimes have difficulty getting involved in the team. According to Edmondson, each person is neurologically hard wired to act on the assumption that he / she already possesses the knowledge to solve the problem. This is even stronger for specialists and top talents, who are valued even more for their talents. If they feel insecure because they differ from others in many ways, they have at least their highly valued knowledge and abilities. But someone who knows is not really open to learning, whereas in new situations the team must be allowed to assume that it does not yet have the answers. This is extra difficult for autistic people who are often less focused on teamwork and therefore have less experience with teams. According to Edmondson, three conditions must be met in order to flourish in a team: humility (daring to assume that you do not know), curiosity and psychological safety.

The second perspective comes from by my colleague Frederieke Hermsen (anthropologist) and relates to the oxytocin levels: research shows that people can work much more easily in teams if the oxytocin levels are high enough. As Paul J. Zak showed, oxytocin increased the trust among teammates. Oxytocin is released during, among other things, embracing and touching, and it is these cases that are less self-evident in autistic people. Maybe, Frederieke suggests with a wink, we have to offer the candidates regular massages under the guise of preventing RSI. Anyway, in the project we will now try to make a much more focused link between the intelligence of the group and the (unique) intelligence of the candidates. Anyone who has suggestions on how to deal with this may say: the intelligence of the network!