

Learning conditions for excellent professionals

Mareikje Pfenning

Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen
School of Business Management



Introduction

The significance of being a high performance organization is increasing. The fast pace of environmental, social and technical changes requires high performing people but this group of people is limited. In this study our perspective on talent is defined as a small group of 'Excellent Performers'. And which learning conditions and crucial experiences lead to excellent performance in higher education and in organizations?

Research question

'What kind of learning conditions, especially in higher education and work life, have (in the opinion of excellent professionals themselves) contributed substantially to their outstanding development as an excellent professional?'

Theoretical background

'Excellent performer'

Based on experience and expertise a talent can deliver an outstanding performance within an organization, partly due to the interaction between individual and his learning environment and circumstances. To excel a talent needs opportunities.



Learning conditions (SCA- Model, McCauley & Van Velsor (2003))

It is supposed that (the degree of experienced) support, challenge and assessment are the most crucial learning conditions.

Support:

The extent to which someone experiences support, confidence, and space for personal development.

Challenge:

People are challenged to leave their comfort zone and to operate in an unknown situation. New knowledge, skills and perspectives are needed.

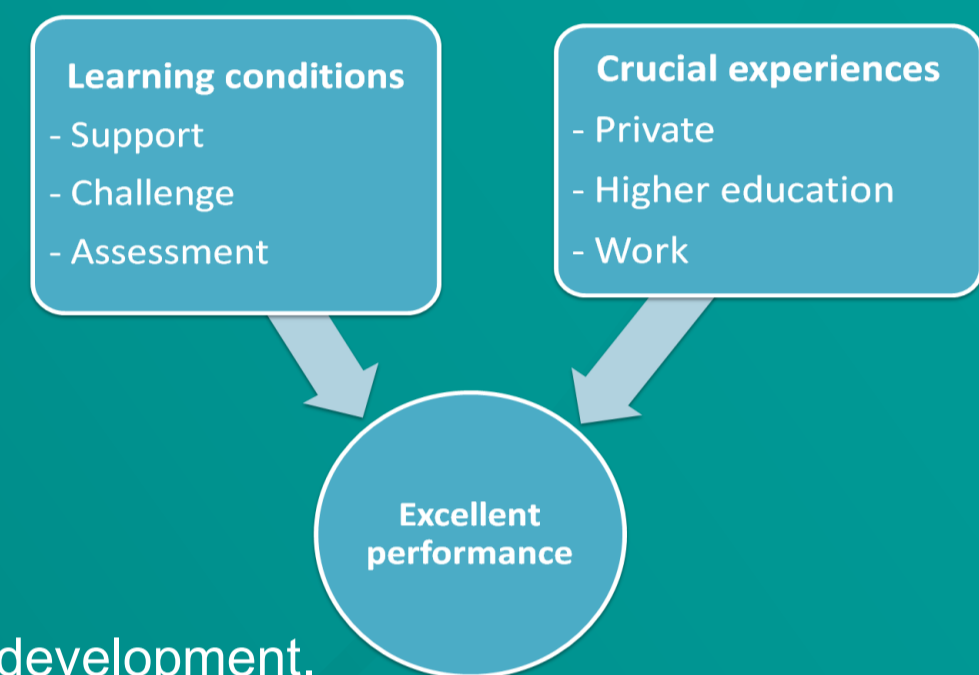
Assessment:

Assessment gives a person an insight into his strengths and weaknesses.

Crucial experiences

Experiences in private life, higher education and work which supported excellent performance.

Conceptual model



Method

- Semi- structured interviews with six outstanding HR professionals, selected by 'Position, Experience & Expertise'



Getting to know the significance of the presence of SCA for the development as an excellent performer.

- Interview part 1: Crucial experiences in private life, higher education & work.
- Interview part 2: Collecting personal examples → SCA

Results

'Excellent performer'

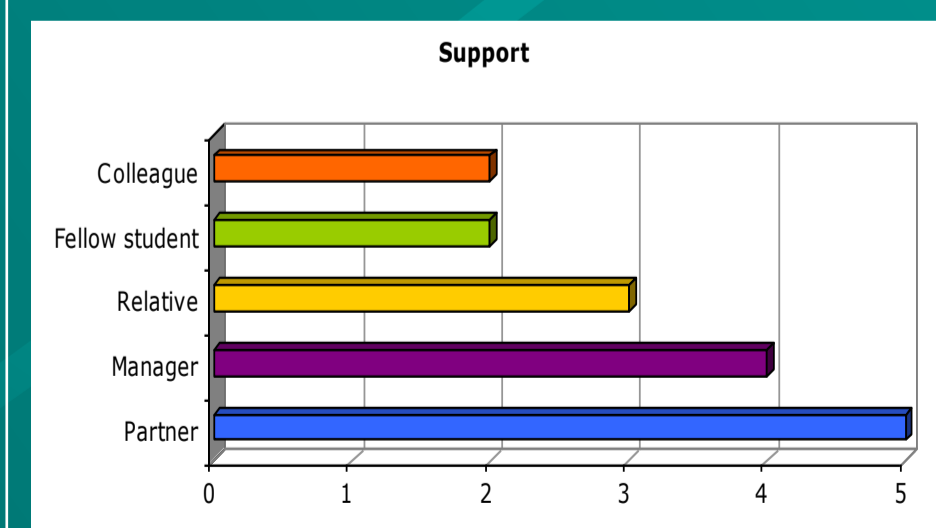
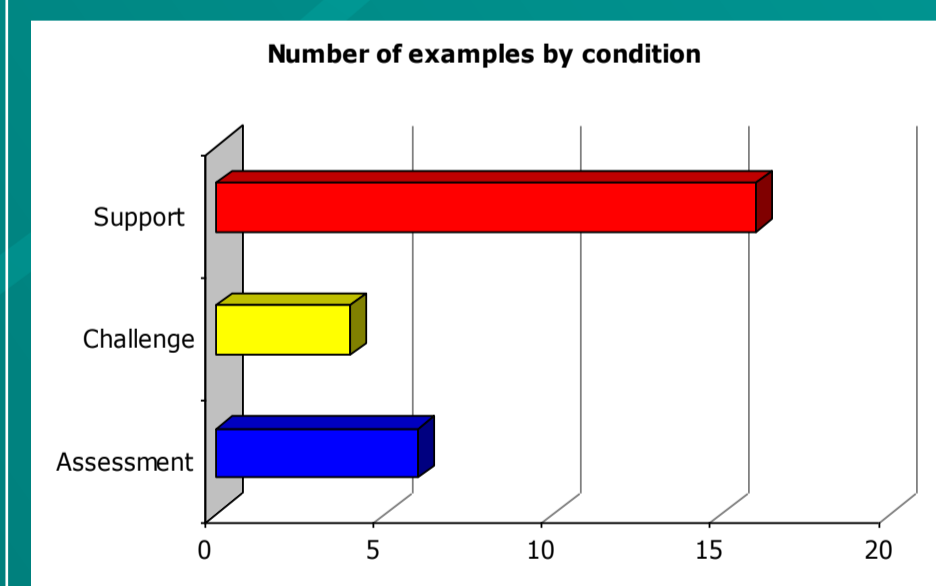
- Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation is crucial
- Working hard

Learning conditions

- In all respondents' lives, there was *one crucial person* in their personal development, offering challenge, support and assessment at the same time. '
- 'Support' experienced as most important
- No significant relation between performance pressure in school & later excellent performance
- Manager has a relative important role in development

Crucial experiences

- Home situation (positive/negative) influenced personal development/decision making
- All respondents had a lucky moment



Conclusion

The combination of intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation and the three elements of the learning conditions 'challenge, assessment and support', affected the respondents in their development as an excellent professional.

Support has been of great value to the participants. More than the conditions assessment and challenge, but the existence and a combination of the three is essential for reaching outstanding performance.

CONTACT

Mareikje.pfenning@gmx.de