

# Caring for talent

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Designing and implementing a talent management program in healthcare.



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## **Abstract**

Talent management has gained ground in strategic human resource management (HRM) literature. It is also adopted by some world-leading organizations. Talent management is acknowledged for its contribution to organizational performance and employee satisfaction, as it helps an organization to attract, develop and position talents, so that an optimal person-job fit will be achieved. In healthcare organizations, talent management is extremely important, as recent trends like an aging population and the increasing complexity of healthcare stimulate organizations to care for their talents.

In order to successfully implement a talent program, all stages of the implementation process need to be considered. Following this process, this paper will try to find out what is required to introduce, design and implement a talent program within a healthcare organization. This was studied using a case study within a big hospital in the East of the Netherlands. A total of 22 respondents from different HR stakeholder groups were interviewed on their perceptions and needs regarding talent management. Additionally, documents were studied to find out what currently adopted policies are involved with talent.

It was found that the strong internal and strategic fit between healthcare and talent management makes it easier to introduce a talent program, but the lack of cultural fit is a main challenge for this introduction. Personal development and excellence need to become valued more in order to prevent frictions during the introductory stage.

For the quality of the talent program, it was concluded that objectivity is required in healthcare with regard to the selection and development of talent. It should be no longer dependent on your supervisor whether you are given chances to develop. 360 degrees feedback, competency profiles and an organisation-wide talent pool contribute to this.

For the implementation of the talent program, it is required to deal with line management's lack of time, support, capabilities and clarity. Suitable recommendations to cope with these challenges are made. Most HR stakeholders within healthcare have congruent expectations and perceptions on the talent program; it should improve patient care. This is a valuable common ground to start from in order to achieve high-quality implementation. Putting emphasis on this shared value might also overcome the found cultural misfit.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Talent Management**

Talent management has become one of the most discussed topics in Human Resource Management (HRM) over the last years (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Talent management is defined as 'the systematic identification, selection and development of talent in a structured and enriched program of activities and instruments, in which multiple actors are involved and assert influence (Thunnissen, 2015; p. 135). Prominent organisations currently acknowledge the importance of managing talent (Paauwe, 2007). The so-called 'war for talent' is identified as a performance driver for organisations (Michaels et al., 2001), and the search for talents is considered an important business activity (Deloitte, 2010).

There are varying perspectives on what constitutes talent management or talent. Some scholars stress that the whole workforce should be filled with talented employees (Michaels et al., 2001), while others propose that talent management should be applied to fill the positions that have most effect on organisational performance with talents (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Because of its wide acknowledgement by academics and practitioners (e.g. McDonnell et al., 2010; PWC, 2012; Deloitte, n.d.), the latter perspective is adopted in this paper.

A well-executed talent management program enables an organisation to attract and commit talented employees. It is found that talent development has multiple advantages like increased job performance, satisfaction and commitment (Groves, 2007). Sharma and Bhatnagar (2009) found that a talent program decreases turnover. Talent management thus prevents organisations from spending large amounts of money and time needed to replace talents that leave the organisation (Bhattacharyya, 2015). It is further argued that talent is critical to organisational performance, change and innovation (Lawler, 2008). Talent management helps an organisation to place the right person on the right job, which will ultimately lead to competitive success (Schuler et al., 2011).

A talent management program that is aligned with organisational strategy is a source of competitive advantage and organisational success (Bjorkman et al., 2007; Lewis & Heckman, 2006). It has a significant effect on strategy achievement and organisational performance (Morton & Ashton, 2005). Talented people can be considered a strategic resource for the organisation when they add value to the organisation and are hard to replace. This makes talent a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Zuboff, 1988).

An effective talent program is one that positions talent in pivotal positions: those positions that contribute most to organisational performance (Collings & Mellahi, 2008). In these positions, talent can make a difference and help an organisation meet its strategic objectives. When an organisation fails to execute an effective talent program, the continuity and contribution of these positions might be endangered. When these positions are not filled or filled with poor-performing employees, the organisation might not achieve its organisational strategy, which is influenced by these pivotal positions.

Talent management has become a more evident business challenge in recent years due to demographic developments. The supply of labour diminishes because of the retirement of a large group of baby

boomers (Garssen, 2011). Derks et al. (2006) further add diminishing birth rates and an increased immigration rate to this equation. Additionally, the people currently entering the job market belong to the so-called 'Generation Millennial' born between roughly 1980 and 2000. This generation differs from their precedes on their work-life balance, valuing part time jobs and free time (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Consequently, there might not be enough talent available for every organisation, making it more important to manage every talent effectively in order to attract and commit sufficient talented people to the organisation.

This paper focuses on talent management for healthcare organisations. In healthcare organisations, the workforce is a valuable asset in the achievement of organisational success (Farley, 2005), as the quality of healthcare services largely depends on the workforce. So, for excellence in healthcare provision, talented employees are needed. Additionally, talent management is particularly value-adding in healthcare, as the ageing population does not only decrease their supply of labour, but it increases demand for it as well. Elderly people generally make more use of healthcare services, so the larger this group gets, the larger the demand for healthcare services is. The number and complexity of diseases increases as well, (Arbeidsmarkt Zorg en Welzijn, 2011), resulting in an unmet demand for qualified employees (Calo, 2008). Consequently, healthcare needs to efficiently attract, develop and retain talent within the organisation to ensure sufficient talented healthcare employees in order to respond to the changing demand.

## **1.2. Problem definition**

Although many organisations recognize the opportunities talent management offers, there are only few businesses that manage their talents in a systematic and successful way (Axelrod et al., 2002). When a talent program is implemented ineffectively, its added value to organisational performance drops, since a high quality talent program makes a better contribution to strategic goals (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013).

It is argued in HR literature that the effectiveness of a HR program increases when the entire implementation process is considered (Nishii & Wright, 2008; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). Consequently, effectiveness of a talent program might be harmed when there is a difference between the intended, actual and perceived talent program (Nishii et al., 2008). The intended program is 'the program as formulated by policy-makers (HR professionals and senior management)' (Khilji & Wang, 2006, p. 1172). The implemented or 'actual' talent program is 'the operationalized program that employees experience' (Khilji & Wang, 2006, p. 1172). Employees base their perceptions of the program on the implemented program, not the designed, intended one (Wright & Nishii, 2006). These perceptions will then influence whether employees adopt the desired behaviour indicated by the program.

The implementation process includes multiple relevant HR stakeholders, respectively senior management, HR professionals, line managers and employees. To manage the entire process successfully, perceptions and preferences of all these stakeholders should be considered (Tsui, 1984). Placing too much focus on one group of stakeholders such as HR professionals might cause differences between intended and implemented practices, for example. Such differences can lead to a gap between the desired

and actual outcomes of an HR system, leading to misaligned expectations, resistance and scepticism (Orlikowski & Gash, 1994). Additionally, Baluch et al. (2013) found that when health care employees have a positive perception about the HR system, patient satisfaction increases. A shared understanding between different stakeholders adds to organisational effectiveness (Kase et al., 2009) and successful HR innovations (Bondarouk et al., 2009).

Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013) designed a model of HR implementation to help guide the implementation process. The model suggests four stages: in the first stage an organisation decides to introduce a certain HR program, the second stage assesses the quality of the intended program, the third describes if and why line managers choose to implement the program and finally the fourth stage assesses the quality of the implementation, considering stakeholder's perceptions. The authors follow Tsui (1984) and argue that different HR stakeholders have responsibility for or evaluate the quality of the different stages of implementation. Their adapted model is graphically represented in figure one.

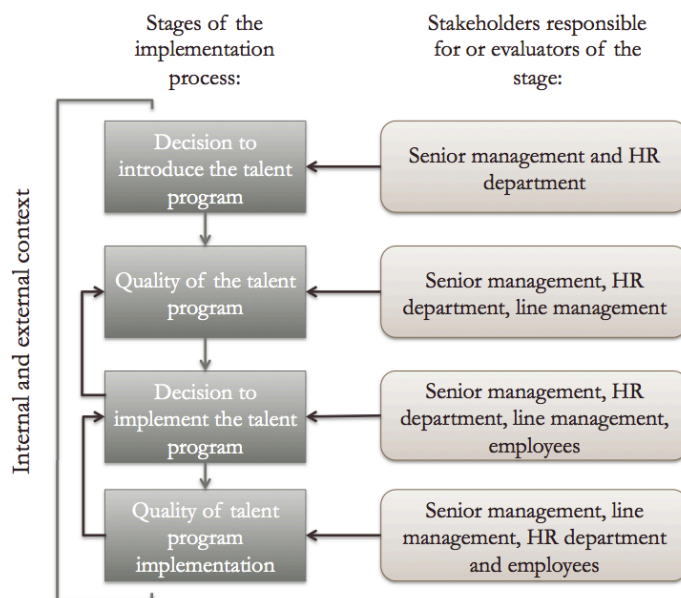


Figure 1: The implementation process of a talent program, adapted from Guest and Bos-Nehles (2012; p.81).

The stages within the implementation model are dependent on each other, both top-down and bottom-up. For instance when line managers decide not to implement a talent program, the quality of the program should be adjusted, considering bottom-up feedback from the line. On the other hand, when line managers are motivated and committed to implement the talent program, this is likely to have a positive top-down effect on the perceived quality of implementation by employees.

The implementation model demonstrates the vulnerability and risk of failure of the implementation process of a talent program. Within every step after the decision to adopt a talent program, the effectiveness of the program could be improved or harmed. Even when the talent program consists of high quality best practices, line managers might have their own reasons to refuse implementation. This vulnerability makes the effective implementation of a talent program extremely difficult for organisations. The risk of failure is caused by HR stakeholders' perceptions and requirements influencing every stage.



When senior management, HR professionals, line managers and employees have different opinions and expectations of a talent program, it may cause discrepancies in the implementation process (Bos-Nehles & Bondarouk, 2012). In earlier talent management literature, it was found that HR professionals and line managers might have differing perceptions on talent development, for example (Stahl et al., 2012). Diminishing the discrepancies within the talent program implementation process will lead to better organisational performance (Reger & Huff, 1993), organisational effectiveness (Kase et al., 2009) and more successful changes and innovations (Bondarouk et al., 2009).

Effectively managing the implementation process of a talent program is particularly vulnerable in healthcare organisations, as it is found that there are substantial differences in culture between management and the employees, who are generally medically educated, in healthcare (Klopper-Kes, 2011). Klopper-Kes (2011) found that medical personnel perceive managerial efforts as inhibiting their professional discretion, while managers perceive medical staff as 'stubborn and not seeing the greater picture' (p. 129). These stereotypical images could inhibit both parties to accept efforts from one another. This poses a challenge for effective cooperation between stakeholders and thus implementation (Smalarz, 2006; Klopper-Kes, 2011). Klopper-Kes (2011) foresees implementation problems when policy is made by HR management based on what they assume employees need, without asking employees themselves.

So, the problem stated in this paper is that a talent program might be difficult to implement effectively, because the implementation process consists of multiple stages involving diverse HR stakeholders. Within healthcare, it is found that these stakeholders can have different perceptions on talent management (Klopper-Kes, 2011; Stahl et al., 2012). When a talent program is not successfully implemented, it will not lead to the desired employee behaviour (Khilji & Wang, 2006) and will consequently fail to contribute to organisational performance (Nishii & Wright, 2008). Insights in the requirements needed to complete the implementation process successfully might solve this problem, by considering the needs, preferences and beliefs of all HR stakeholders involved in the talent program implementation process. This will then fill the knowledge gap on how talent management can be implemented most effectively in healthcare organisations, specifically.

### **1.3. Research question**

Emerging from the preceding problem description, the following research question will be addressed in this paper:

*Which requirements are needed to design and implement a talent management program in a healthcare organisation?*

In order to answer this research question, the following sub questions are conducted:

1. What factors influence a healthcare organisation's decision to introduce talent management?
2. What should a high quality talent program look like for a healthcare organisation?
3. How can a healthcare organisation implement a talent program?
4. What stakeholder needs should be considered to guarantee the quality of implementation?

## **1.4. Research goal**

The aim of this paper is to provide healthcare organisations with recommendations on how to design and implement a talent management program that identifies, attracts, develops and retains talent. Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013) described a model in which the different stages of effective implementation are emphasized, along with key influencers in every phase. Every stage is affected and influenced by internal and external context as well. This paper will apply their model in order to make recommendations for the implementation of a talent management program in healthcare organisations.

Following this model, the aim is to identify the expectations and needs of the different organisational stakeholders concerning talent management. The objective will then be to derive requirements from these expectation and needs, in order to make the design of the program and its implementation of high quality. The means to which this objective is accomplished is by identifying factors influencing the decision to introduce a talent program, the line manager's implementation of such a program and stakeholders' perceptions of implementation quality.

## **1.5. Relevance of research**

### **1.5.1. Practical relevance**

The practical relevance of this paper consists of recommendations made to healthcare organisations that decide to introduce a talent management program. The recommendations will stress the whole implementation process, emphasizing both the design and implementation of such a program. Since the whole implementation process and multiple involved stakeholders are considered, these recommendations will help improve the effectiveness of a talent program (Nishii & Wright, 2008). This will increase its contribution to organisational strategy (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). These recommendations may be useful for organisations within the healthcare environment, but might provide insights to organisations in other contexts as well. After all, the war for talent is present in numerous industries and within every sector a competitive advantage could be achieved through talent (Michaels et al., 2001). Even when an industry is not (yet) affected by an on-going war for talent, the recommendations made in this paper are relevant for improving the allocation and development of talented employees, which is useful as the labour market tightens through the retirement of Baby Boomers (Calo, 2008).

### **1.5.2. Academic relevance**

In this paper, the call from Thunnissen et al. (2013) to broaden insights on talent management is answered. Multiple authors found that the existing talent management literature might be biased by an overrepresentation of Northern American context, strongly focusing on private, multinational enterprises (Powell et al., 2012; Collings et al., 2011; Thunnissen et al., 2013). This paper counterbalances this, as it applies talent management to the healthcare sector. Healthcare currently is an underrepresented sector in talent management literature. The case study chosen in this paper is a general hospital, characterized by its non-profit strategic nature and located within only one country, the Netherlands. Academic insights on what is required specifically for this type of organisation are valuable for research for multiple reasons. First of all, talent management is dependent on an organisation's strategy (Zuboff, 1988). As non-profit

have fundamentally different strategic objectives than profit organisations, talent management procedures found to be successful in profit organisations may fall short in non-profit organisations (Klopper-Kes et al., 2011). What is more, the organisational culture and employee mind set differ between non-profit and profit organisations. So what works for profit-oriented talents might not motivate a healthcare talent. As academics try to unravel the theoretical implications of talent management in the holistic business context, they should therefore consider the healthcare organisations as well. This paper helps achieve that.

The implementation process in talent management is not explicitly described in literature yet, though Stahl et al. (2012) identified some challenges in line managers' adoption of talent programs. This paper applies insights on talent program implementation as given by authors as Nishii and Wright (2008) and Guest and Bos-Nehles (2010). Consequently, insights will be given on how multiple stakeholders are involved in talent management implementation and how a multi-constituency approach can be taken. Such a multi-constituency approach to talent management is new in talent management literature (Thunnissen et al., 2013). This is a relevant addition to both implementation and talent management literature. A multi-constituency approach is found to improve implementation success (Nishii & Wright, 2008). Consequently, by anticipating on this with regard to talent management, the recommendations made here could be useful to improve the implementation of talent programmes in organisations. As said before, Stahl et al. (2012) identified some challenges for talent implementation, but this paper will provide academic knowledge on how to deal with occurring implementation challenges and how to ultimately stimulate implementation. This paper provides directions for further research as well. All in all, this paper is a valuable contribution to and elaboration on existing literature on talent management.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

The implementation model designed by Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013) can help enable the successful implementation of a talent program within a healthcare organisation. As was mentioned in the problem statement, implementation is considered effective when the healthcare organisation can identify and attract talented employees and develop them to succeed in those positions where they contribute most to organisational performance (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

In the following sections, the theoretical framework will be outlined. The sections follow the stages of the implementation process, starting with factors that influence the decision to introduce talent management, what should be included in a talent program and finally what factors influence the quality of program implementation.

### **2.1. The decision to introduce a talent program**

The first step of the implementation process model describes the decision to introduce a certain HR practice within the organisation. Organisations hold some freedom in what practices are included in the HR system and how these should be shaped (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). Both internal and external

contextual factors could influence to what extent an organisation introduces different HR practices like a talent program (Boxall & Purcell, 2011).

In the following sections, an explanation will be given of the added value of talent management for an organisation, accompanied with its possible challenges. Finally, it is described how appropriateness of the talent program could influence the decision to introduce it.

#### **2.1.1. Effects of talent management**

The advantages and opportunities talent management provides to an organisation were already lined out in the introduction of this paper. In short, a talent program ensures that the right person is placed in the right position (Schuler et al., 2011), reduces turnover (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2009) and increases job performance (Groves, 2003). As talent can be a strategic resource, a talent program can contribute to a competitive advantage and organisational success (Farley, 2005). These positive effects are all likely internal drivers of the decision to adopt such a talent program. Possible external drivers to introduce talent management are an ageing labor market (Garssen, 2011) or an intensive competition within the industry regarding human resources (Ashton & Morton, 2005).

Though talent management provides a lot of benefits to an organisation, there are downsides to it as well. First, entitling someone as a talent may cause this person to be self-centred, which means that the person is more focused on itself than on the organisation (Bottger & Barsoux, 2010). This might be visible as well for the other employees, leading to a perceived arrogance (Clark, 1992). Further, the talents might consider opinions from other employees as irrelevant, while diverse opinions usually contribute to better decisions (Amason, 1996). Following this, differentiating between groups of employees may lead to perceived distributive justice, as more resources might be allocated to talented employees (Gelens et al., 2013). Subsequently, talented employees might be unable to deal with the pressure and expectation put on them, and these feelings might result in stress and turnover (Dotlich et al., 2004).

#### **2.1.2. Fit of the practice**

The decision to introduce a talent program within an organisation might be influenced by the appropriateness or fit of the specific program with the organisation (Boselie, 2010). A distinction can be made between three types of fit that might be relevant: the strategic fit, internal fit and cultural fit.

Strategic fit assesses the extent to which the talent program is aligned to organisational strategy. When the level of strategic fit is high, the talent program will help the organisation to achieve its business objectives (Boon, 2008). A program that demonstrates a clear congruence with organisational strategy is more likely to be adopted by an organisation than one with less contribution to strategy, as it is argued that strategic fit yields high performance (Huselid, 1995). Strategic fit is further argued to lead to a commitment by senior management to the talent program (Ready & Conger, 2007). This commitment and support from top management is a critical success factor of a talent program (Collins & Collins, 2007), as it will increase top management's willingness to invest and allocate resources in talent management activities like training programs (Carriere et al., 2009).

As was mentioned by Lewis and Heckman (2006), talent management is most effective when it is aligned with organisational strategy. After all, it is found that strategic changes and decisions influence the need for talents (Zuboff, 1988). For example, the choice of a healthcare organisation to adopt an electronic patient system increases the demand for talents with computer skills (Richman, 1989). Organisations where the HR function is perceived as important and relevant by organisational members will likely achieve a better strategic fit, as the HR department in these organisations is timely informed or even involved in strategic decision-making (Wei & Lau, 2005).

Internal fit relates to the extent of congruence between the different individual HR practices within the system. An optimal internal fit results in a system of practices that enforce each other in a synergy (Delery & Doty, 1996). There are two possible relationships between HR practices: additive or interactive (Boon, 2008). Additive practices are merely two practices that independently effect the same outcome, but in other ways, while interactive practices depend on each other for effectiveness. One specific kind of an interactive relationship between practices is that of a positive synergy, in which practices yield a better outcome together than they would if they were isolated (Becker et al., 1997). Internal fit helps improve effectiveness of the practices, as employees experience consistency in the messages received when practices are congruent (Baron & Kreps, 1999; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). When the talent program aligns well with the existing practices currently adopted, this can be an incentive for the organisation to adopt it.

Cultural fit assesses whether the talent program will suit the organisational culture present in the current workforce. Organisational culture is defined as the 'collective values, beliefs and principles of organisational members and is a product of such factors as history, product, market, technology, strategy, type of employees, management style and national culture' (Needle, 2004, p. 44). When equality is a shared value within the organisation, for example, it will be less likely that a talent program will be introduced that differentiates between talents and the rest of the workforce. It is found by Thunnissen (2015) that a fit between the talent program and the organisational culture leads to more success of the program, as cultural barriers can cause resistance to change within organisations (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). If the organisational culture is supportive towards talent developments, it might prevent tensions between talents and other employees as found by Clark (1992) and Gelens et al. (2013), among others.

### **2.1.3. Conclusion**

In the preceding sections, it was made apparent what the added value of talent management could be. Managing talent can provide a strategic capability (Zuboff, 1985), increased satisfaction and reduced turnover (Groves, 2007), among other advantages. Next to these internal stimulations to introduce talent management, external factors could be a rising competition for talent or an ageing labor market (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Garssen, 2011).

Possible challenges of talent management relate to the differentiation of the workforce. This might cause conflicts between the talented employees and the others (Clark, 1992). Employees not qualified as talented could experience feelings of distributive injustice as well (Gelens et al., 2013).

The decision to introduce a HR practice might further be influenced by the fit between the practice and the strategy of the organisation, as well as its appropriateness considering the practices currently adopted and organisational culture.

## **2.2. A high quality talent program**

The second stage within the implementation model puts emphasis on the quality of the practice to be introduced. Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013) stress that a practice is most likely to contribute to organisational objectives when it demonstrates high quality.

Collings and Mellahi (2009) emphasize the need for talents on those positions that play a pivotal role in the performance of the company (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). This view is consistent with Jackson and Schuler (1990), who already identified the value of 'ensuring the right person is in the right job at the right time' (p. 235). This perspective on talent management is acknowledged for its efficiency, as it makes sure that talents fill up the most critical positions in the organisation, as most organisations do not have the resources to build up all positions with talented individuals (Huselid et al., 2005).

Following this perspective, a high-quality talent program will include a proper identification and attraction of talented employees, an identification of strategically critical positions and development tools to reduce possible gaps between talent and the positions they are planned to fill. These elements will be outlined in the following sections.

### **The inflow of talent**

There are many different ways scholars characterize and recognize talent. In this section, first the most prevailing dimensions of a talent are identified, so that these dimensions can be used to recognize talents. Further, some methods generally used to spot talents are discussed. Subjective talent identification by executives could be biased, since managers tend to be more positive about someone that looks or sounds like them (Wood & Marshall, 2008; Makela et al., 2010). Therefore, in theory more objective methods are preferred.

#### **2.2.1. Defining talent**

As a starting point of its identification, it should be clear within the organisation how talent is defined. Though there are many available definitions present of who and what constitutes a talent, every organisation is encouraged to form its own, firm specific definition to work with (Ford et al., 2010).

Reviewing multiple academic definitions of talent, Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) divide definitions based on two dimensions. The first dimension relates to whether it is assumed that talent is either stable and innate, or developed and acquired (Dai, 2009). The second dimension relates to whether scholars argue that talent management efforts are exclusive for a distinct group of employees or that all employees are included in the target group (Iles et al., 2010). For the innate-acquired trade-off, it is found that in healthcare, talent is usually taught, not naturally present (Ericsson et al., 2007). After all, nobody is born a talented nurse or doctor. Following Collings and Mellahi (2009), not every individual within the organisation is able to develop into a strategically critical position. Consequently, an exclusive approach to

talent definition is taken. This places the definition of talent in the healthcare sector on the so-called nature-nurture interaction (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014): it is stressed that talent is developable, but only for those that show a certain potential to do so.

### **2.2.2. Characteristics of talents**

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) added to the before mentioned innate-acquiring debate that talented people divide themselves from other people through their commitment to their function and organisation and fit with the context. Committed talents are motivated, passionate and interested (Weiss & MacKay, 2009), which results in them accomplishing tasks others are unable to finish (Nieto et al., 2011). It is indicated that proper talent management is dependent of context (Gonzalez-Cruz et al., 2001). Considering this, the performance of a talent relates to organisational culture, type of work (Pfeffer, 2001), leadership (Iles, 2008) and position (Becker & Huselid, 2006). Consequently, talent management involves consideration of different contingencies influencing its effectiveness (Delery & Doty, 1996).

This finding is consistent with the person-job and person-organisation fit as described by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005). The person-job fit relates to the match between a person's traits and abilities and the job characteristics (Kristof, 1996). Person-organisation fit relates to whether an employee's personality suits the organisational culture (Cable & Judge, 1997). It is found that when there is a mismatch between talent and their job or organisation, their contribution drops (Bhattacharyya, 2015).

Nijs et al. (2014) subdivide talent in two characteristics: ability and affection. Ability is defined as a combination of born abilities and their systematic development. This clearly is a nature-nurture interaction approach as mentioned before. Affection is indicated by an employee's interest and motivation to invest. Silzer and Church (2009) also take a nature-nurture interaction approach, subdividing talent based on three dimensions: a born personality or cognitive ability, a person's motivation and learning ability and their leadership competency and knowledge, which can be at least partly trained.

Following these insights, figure two graphically displays the most generic characteristics of talent found in the assessed literature. These characteristics could differ dependent on who defines talent. McDonnell and Collings (2011) stress that the needed talent competences are dependent on the strategy and goals of the organisation as well. Therefore, a multi-stakeholder approach to define talent is encouraged (Greenwood, 2002; Thunnissen, 2015).





Figure 2: Generic characteristics of a talent.

### 2.2.3. Methods to recruit and select talent

There is some discussion in literature on the balance between attracting talent from within or outside the organisation (Cappelli, 2008; Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Since the demand for talent nowadays exceeds the supply of it, an incentive is present in many organisations to recruit external talent efficiently (Michaels et al., 2001). External talent could be recruited through social media or other internet sources (Cheese et al., 2008) like vacancy websites or the organisational website. Recruitment might be effective through presence on job fairs and educational events on for example a university as well. These latter recruitment sources facilitate interaction with possible talent, which is likely to make the organisation more attractive (Allen et al., 2004).

Résumés and referrals give an indication of the performance and potential of external recruits (Silzer & Church, 2009). Online tests like a personality questionnaire are useful in measuring fit with the organisation (Jansen & van der Pool, 2009). In recent years, more organisations turned to e-recruitment and selection to cut costs and reach more applicants (Bartram, 2000). Both applicants and recruiters increasingly use online platforms like LinkedIn to display themselves.

For the recognition of talent within the existing workforce, performance appraisals are a useful tool to collect information about a talent's performance on the job. Especially 360 degrees feedback gives useful insights from the supervisor, customers and colleagues, among others. However, appraisals are found to focus on past performance, not including a talent's future potential (McDonnell & Collings, 2011). Therefore, talent reviews are a useful complementary tool to use. Talent reviews stimulate HR and line management to consider both a talent's current performance and future potential, and then compare this to the future skills required for a higher position within the organisation (Makela et al., 2010).

A possible outcome of the talent review is a portfolio of employees according to the HR3P model (Evers, 1998). This methodology assesses an employee's potential, the future prediction of excellent performance, and performance, present excellent performance (Robinson et al., 2009). This methodology further suggests that when an employee's potential and performance are both high, he/she should be retained



and developed to promotion, one with high performance but low potential needs to stay motivated for the current job, high potential-low performance employees should be moved to another position within the organisation and low performance-low potential employees should be replaced by more competent employees (Silzer & Church, 2009).

E-recruitment, job interviews, assessments, performance appraisals and talent reviews can all make use of competency profiles as a helpful tool in the selection process (Meyers et al., 2013). A competency profile is 'a descriptive method to identify the skills, knowledge, personal characteristics and behaviours needed to effectively perform a role in the organisation and help the business meet its strategic objectives' (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999, p. 5). Competency profiles for talented individuals are firm specific, but differences within organisations based on function or level exist as well (Stahl et al., 2007). Assessments of important characteristics like intelligence, personality and learning ability indicate a person's competencies (Spreitzer et al., 1997), as well as its fit with the organisation and the job.

Collings and Mellahi (2009) stress that an efficient talent management program should be aimed at those positions that benefit most from a talent filling the position. Therefore, the methods outlined above should take into account the needed skills and competences for those positions during talent selection.

#### **2.2.4. Pivotal positions**

It is argued that one of the main issues of talent management is to ensure continuity in pivotal positions that differentiate organisational performance (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). This means a shift from reactive recruitment driven by vacancies to proactive anticipation on future workforce demands in strategic positions (Cappelli, 2008). Pivotal positions are not limited to the top management layer of the organisation, but are found across the whole organisation (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Pivotal positions are not necessarily the jobs that need most skills and expertise or have the highest compensation (Huselid et al., 2005). Rather, it is stressed that pivotal positions have the most critical contribution to at least a part of the execution of the organisational strategy. These positions are not solely found in higher levels of the organisation, nor do all positions on a certain level need to be critical.

There is no generally accepted way to identify the pivotal positions in an organisation yet (McDonnell, 2011), but it is evident that identification of the pivotal positions within an organisation starts with a clear understanding of its strategy (Becker et al., 2009). Then, an analysis should be made on what role a certain position or group of positions plays in the achievement of this strategy (Huselid & Becker, 2011). Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Collings and Mellahi (2009) identify pivotal positions based on their value, rareness, inimitability and uniqueness, derived from the resource-based view theory (Wright et al., 2001).

Pivotal positions are marginal in the sense that an increase or decrease in performance in these positions impacts organisational success (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Boudreau and Ramstad (2005, p.129) identify pivotal positions based on the following question: 'What are the talent jobs, roles or competencies in your organisation, where a 20% improvement in quality would make the biggest difference to

organisational success?' Becker et al. (2009) argue that pivotal positions are characterized by performance variability, which means that there is a great difference between high and low performance in the position. After all, when everyone would perform optimally in a certain position, the marginality would no longer apply. Crandell (2011) further adds that pivotal positions are the positions in which successors are limited and with the greatest impact if they would disappear.

Numerof et al. (2004) stress the use of job charters to describe a position's impact on organisational performance. They address the following elements of the position: its duties and responsibilities, its accountabilities, its critical internal and external interfaces and its decision-making authority. Crandell (2011) further adds an analysis of what strategies, needs, resources or differentiators of the organisation will be affected if the position would disappear.

The final product of the inflow of talent should be a clear understanding of what the pivotal positions are and who the talents are that would be developed in order to fill these positions. It is useful to make an overview of the competences current talent has and competences needed for pivotal positions in order to estimate the needed developing program. Even though the focus is on specific pivotal positions, talents should not be recruited and trained based on one position (Karaevli & Hall, 2003), as a strategic change may change requirements or needs for the specific position, which makes efforts useless (McDonnell & Collings, 2011). Rather, it is beneficial to build a competency profile based on what generic skills and abilities they should develop to advance the organisation, over time specifying it when it becomes clear to what position the talent is getting promoted (McDonnell & Collings, 2011).

### **The internal flow of talent**

#### **2.2.5. Developing talents**

In the preceding sections, an overview was given on how to recognize talents and pivotal positions, respectively. To ensure succession, however, the identified talents should be developed in order for them to perform well in their future positions.

Conger and Fulmer (2003) stress that training and development is an evident element in talent management, as both development and talent management place focus on the same objective: getting the right people with the appropriate skills in the right positions. Potential talents therefore receive extensive training, mentoring and job rotation to prepare for their future position (Stahl et al., 2012).

It was found that in many situations, talents are promoted based on excellent performance in one field. This may lead to failure after promotion to a higher position that demands knowledge of more diverse fields (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). The experience with these kinds of failure resulted in recommendations for talent management by Conger & Fulmer (2003), stressing that focus should be placed on development: succession should not be based on rewarding excellence, but rather developing it.

Career opportunities lead to an increased motivation of employees (Menefee & Murphy, 2004). Developing talents to get promoted increases employee commitment to the organisation and thus leads to talent retention (Pfeffer, 1995). Furthermore, developed talents help an organisation deal with dynamic

and fluctuating demands and requirements (van Duuren & de Haan, 2009). Development through mentoring increases participation and information sharing. Developing internal talents does however bear a risk, while a talent could always leave the organisation during or after the organisation invested in their development (Hoeger et al., 2009).

Claussen et al. (2014) state that talent management efforts should be adapted to different positions, contradicting the view that training and development of talents should be universalistic and standardized (Hartmann et al., 2010). This further increases the exclusiveness of talent management programs, as not even every talent receives the same training. The goals and ultimate outcomes of developing efforts should be communicated clearly, so that everyone involved in the process knows what is expected.

Some useful elements when developing talent will be discussed in the following sections.

#### *2.2.5.1. Training*

Training helps attain leadership skills (Kouzes & Posner, 1987), competencies and knowledge (Gail et al., 2006). Many training practices are based on deliberate practice (Ericsson et al., 1993). Training based on deliberate practice focuses on conscious and repetitive training on certain tasks the participant is not able to manage yet. Such training uses trial-and-error learning in a protective environment, so that the participant will not be slowed by a fear of making mistakes (Ericsson et al., 2009). Following the attempt within the training, the participant should achieve immediate feedback on his or her performance on the task. Training has the greatest impact when it is tailored to the potential of the talent (Papierno et al., 2005). Training is found to correlate with talent retention (van der Sluis, 2007).

#### *2.2.5.2. Job rotation*

Job rotation is a useful method to broaden the knowledge and competences of talents. It gives talent the opportunity to gain work experience on different tasks or departments (Seibert et al., 2001). Based on talent transfer literature, it is found that potential can be trained and developed in different directions (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). As long as the different jobs or positions share similarities, a talent with potential can flourish in any position (Bullock et al., 2009). Job rotation increases the competences of employees and helps expand their vision. It is commonly used to make management candidates familiar with different departments within an organisation (Jaturanonda et al., 2006). Job rotation can improve organisational commitment (Lu et al., 2007) and job satisfaction (Melnik, 2006) in healthcare (Ho et al., 2009).

#### *2.2.5.3. Mentoring*

Mentoring is a developing method that is most effective when there is a clear match between the experience and skills a talent needs to develop and the expertise of its mentor or coach (Crandell, 2011). A mentor is believed to tap an employee's full potential, even beyond his or her own expectations (van der Sluis, 2009). A mentorship relationship is mutually beneficial to both parties: the protégé is offered emotional support, career assistance and a role model, where the mentor gets the chance to pass their knowledge to others (Scott, 2005). Johnson et al. (2010) used a case study to found that the daily coaching of nurses over a three-month period improved the competences of participants significantly. This is

because mentoring facilitates experiential learning in a real-life environment (Johnson et al., 2010). Learning through experience is the best way for leadership development, according to McCall (2010). Van der Sluis (2009) agrees that good leadership competences are best attained through coaching and mentoring. A mentor can guide a recently promoted talent in what work values come with the new position (Charan et al., 2001) and where the focus of work should be placed (Hoeger et al., 2009). Mentoring is found to result in employee retention in healthcare organisations (Lacey, 2003).

#### **2.2.6. Retaining talent**

Although talent development efforts are found to improve a talent's commitment to the organisation (Groves, 2007), there is a possibility that talent will leave the organisation during or after their development. Talent turnover can inhibit a healthcare organisation to provide high quality care to patients (Shields & Ward, 2001). To prevent this from happening, an organisation might make modifications to accommodate talented employees. Adaptions might include an increase in compensation or a difference in working conditions (Lazear & Gibbs, 2008). A change in working conditions might be most effective in healthcare, as it is found that medical professionals have a higher intention to leave when they are not satisfied with the quality of their work life (Almalki et al., 2012).

A clear communication towards employees about the talent program could prevent turnover as well. It is found that talents leave an organisation when they do not have a clear view of their career path and opportunities within the organisation (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2009). Even when a talent decides to leave the organisation, an exit interview provides insights on what can be improved or adjusted to retain the other talents within the organisation (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2014). Exit interviews are even stressed to be a retention method, when the organisation can show the talent alternatives to accommodate their needs and improve on their reasons to leave (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2014).

#### **2.2.7. Conclusion**

When the perspective of Collings and Mellahi (2013) is followed, it can be seen that a high quality talent program identifies, attracts, develops and retains talent.

Who the organisation identifies as a talent depends on the firm-specific definition of talent, the use of multiple methods and what the pivotal positions within the organisation are. When both pivotal positions and talents are identified, talents can be prepared for their future position through talent development efforts. Attention should be paid to retaining talents within the organisation as well.

It can be argued whether the proposed talent program can be adopted in the healthcare environment as such, while a talent program is contingent of the external and internal environment of the specific organisation (Paauwe, 2004; Boxall et al., 2007). Though, the talent program as described above could be a useful starting point.

### **2.3. Implementation of a talent program**

The third stage of the implementation process emphasizes the decision of line managers on how to implement the designed talent program. Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013) stress that this decision might be influenced by multiple internal- and external factors.

In the following sections, the reasons why implementation usually depends on line managers are outlined, followed by a description of the different factors found in literature that either stimulate or inhibit line managers to implement a certain program. Subsequently, possible challenges in line managers' role in talent management implementation as outlined above will be discussed.

#### **2.3.1. Line management devolvment**

Organisations increasingly make active use of line managers to execute certain HR policies and practices (Larsen & Brewster, 2003). To a greater or lesser extent, line managers are involved in recruitment and selection, training and development, absence and re-integration, performance management and compensation, among other practices (Larsen & Brewster, 2003). This devolvment gives a great responsibility to line managers. Garrow and Hirsch (2008) emphasize that line managers might be the most important people in talent management, through their influence on talent identification, development, performance appraisals and coaching and mentoring. Nishii and Wright (2008) identified that line managers' implementation of a certain practice can deviate from the intended purpose of the practice. This is the result of the discretion line managers possess (Zohar, 2000), since not every aspect of the practice can be predetermined. Within health care, professionals have a great extent of discretion, while they are street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980). This means that they have direct contact with the clients and are hard to monitor by executives. As a result, variability between line managers concerning behaviour and implementation may arise (Hasenfeld, 1983).

There are some mixed thoughts about the devolvment of HR practices to line managers. Some authors state that it is a logical following of line managers' responsibility for the people in their own department (Guest, 1987). In this sense, line managers also have the ability to solve occurring difficulties faster than the HR department could (Budhwar & Sparrow, 1997). On the other side of the coin, there are a lot of factors that might inhibit line manager's effectiveness in implementation.

#### **2.3.2. Factors influencing implementation**

Line managers may not implement those practices of which they think are out-dated, which they do not understand clearly or which they perceive as inappropriate to the organisational culture (Sikora & Ferris, 2014). Sikora and Ferris (2014) conducted a model that describes how social context factors influence the decision to implement. These authors propose that an organisational culture and climate in which human resources are valued and emphasized is a likely antecedent for the decision to implement. Additionally, it is proposed that a trusting relationship between line managers and HR staff leads to more implementation (Garavan et al., 1993).

Bos-Nehles (2010) found that there are five dominant factors that limit line managers in the implementation of HR practices. These factors are a lack of desire or motivation (Harris et al., 2002), time

(Brewster & Larsen, 2000), competences (Renwick, 2000), support from HR (Bond & Wise, 2003) and clarity on the policies. Some line managers might choose to not implement a practice because of personal interests in doing so, for example to show a dissatisfaction about the organisation (Analoui, 1995). Other studies show, however, that line managers emphasize the value of implementing HR practices for the performance of their organisation (Wright et al., 2001).

### **2.3.3. Challenges in talent program execution**

In their study on talent management in various multinationals, Stahl et al. (2012) identified that involvement of line management is crucial. These managers contribute to talent program execution by acting as a mentor, facilitating job rotation across business departments and assessing development in performance evaluations. Schuler et al. (2011) identified that a lack of involvement of line managers in talent management is a substantive barrier to talent management execution. Additionally, the same authors found that some line managers are unwilling to explicitly make a distinction between talents and other employees.

Some line managers might feel threatened by a talented subordinate. It is found that some line managers impede talents for this reason, eventually even causing the talent to leave the organisation (Bhattacharyya, 2015). Line managers do not widely implement job rotation, despite its recognized usefulness to improve the versatility of talented employees (Stahl et al., 2012). This can be ascribed to the impeding attitude of line managers, who might be unwilling to exchange their talents out of self-interest for his or her department (Guthridge et al., 2006). Therefore, the organisation should stress out the use of internal talent marketplaces, emphasizing that job rotation is in everyone's best interest (Bryan et al., 2006).

### **2.3.4. Conclusion**

In this section, it was argued why line managers are granted with the responsibility for HR implementation. Line managers are responsible for their employees, so logically this involves responsibility for HR practices aimed at those employees as well. Devolvment further fastens decision-making.

There are some factors found in literature that either stimulate or inhibit a line manager to implement a program. The most dominant factors relate to the line manager's ability, motivation and opportunity to implement (Bos-Nehles, 2010). Personal interests (Analoui, 1995) and social context (Sikora & Ferris, 2014) are other possible influencers. Line managers might reject implementing a talent program as they find it hard to explicitly make a distinction between their employees (Schuler et al., 2011) and find it hard to let talents rotate jobs in other departments (Stahl et al., 2012). To stimulate the implementation of the talent program, it is beneficial to stimulate the drivers for implementation and reduce the found inhibitors.

## **2.4. The quality of implementation**

The final stage of the implementation model addresses the variability in implementation quality among line managers. Even when two line managers choose to implement the talent management program, the

first might execute it as a necessary duty, while the other might fully use its options and possibilities (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). The factors identified in the preceding sections as antecedents of the decision to implement will influence the quality of implementation as well. These factors are in short motivation, time and ability from the line manager, support from HR, an organisational culture favouring implementation and a clear program.

In the following section, it will be described that stakeholder's might have varying perceptions on the quality of implementation. In addition to considering stakeholder's expectations and perceptions, the quality of the implementation of the talent program can be objectively addressed by assessing set key performance indicators (KPIs), such as the percentage of talented employees, the number of talent turnover and the number of promotions made by talented employees.

#### **2.4.1. Stakeholder's perceptions**

According to the model by Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013), employees are one of the evaluating parties that assess the quality of implementation. Employees' perceptions of practices implemented are called perceived practices (Wright & Nishii, 2006). These perceived practices can differ from the implemented practices and can even differ between employees (Guzzo & Noonan, 1994). Values, goals, experiences and background are all possible influencers of a positive or negative perception towards implementation quality. Research has found that there are multiple differences in values between managers and the medical staff within a healthcare organisation (Davies et al., 2007). A possible source of conflict between senior and HR management on one hand and medical line managers and employees on the other is the goal incongruence between these groups. It is found that medical staff primarily focuses on giving the best treatment to patients, where senior- and HR-management tends to focus more on costs and quality of the services provided (Klopper-Kes et al., 2009).

Differences are found as well when comparing the value of talent management for the organisation and for the individual employee (Thunissen et al, 2013). Organisations commit to talent management because of profit aims, the flexibility and efficiency it provides and to improve the competitive position of the organisation (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). An employee, however, values the financial reward and job security emerging from being included in a talent program (Kalleberg & Marsden, 2013). Other needs fulfilled by a talent program for the individual are meaningful and challenging work, growth and social needs and a fair treatment. So while both parties emphasize the economic value of a talent program, the organisation does not value its contribution to employee well being and the individual does not seem to consider the competitive advantage it could provide to the organisation. A line manager should consider the needs of both the organisation and the individual employee in implementing the talent program, to keep all stakeholders satisfied.

It is argued that when variation in perceptions diminishes and different stakeholders find shared values and perceptions, the performance and quality of implementation increases (Klopper-Kes, 2011).



#### **2.4.2. Shared perceptions**

To achieve more shared perceptions and values, Bowen & Ostroff (2004) propose the concept of system strength. A strong HR system sends signals that are high in distinctiveness, consistency and consensus. Distinctiveness means that organisational members experience the talent program to be visible, understandable and relevant, with the HR function being perceived as legitimate (Delmotte et al., 2012). Consistency means that the talent program does what it intended to and stays the same, disregarding time or situations. Finally, consensus is achieved through agreement among top management, HR management and line managers on the talent program.

Fulfilling these three elements of a strong system leads to a shared understanding and expectations among organisational members on the talent program. Such a shared understanding improves the quality of implementation, not only because it stimulates line managers to implement the program as it is intended to, but also because employees achieve an unanimous understanding of the implemented program. This is likely to lead to more desirable behaviour of employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). It was mentioned that talented employees would consider leaving the organisation when they cannot envision their further career within the organisation (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2009). Therefore, it is important for the organisation to be distinctive, consistent and concessive in their communication so that talent's expectations will be in line with the intended talent program. In this way, the organisation will probably be able to meet stakeholder's expectations (Garrow & Hirsch, 2008). Shared perceptions can also help an organisation to overcome tensions within the workforce related to talent management (Gelens et al, 2013).

Bos-Nehles and Bondarouk (2012) suggest that when HR, line managers and employees share assumptions, knowledge and expectations, implementation quality improves. Congruence results in a similar understanding on the practice, for example a similar understanding of both HR, line managers and employees of what talent entails within the organisation. Incongruence might lead to scepticism, resistance and conflicting expectations (Bos-Nehles & Bondarouk, 2012) between parties, which inhibits implementation quality.

Klopper-Kes (2011) found that cooperation between management and physicians in healthcare is conflicted by incongruence. A solution to this problem from Klopper-Kes (2011) is the search for a common ground for both parties to cooperate from. In healthcare, usually both management and medical staff emphasise the importance of patient wellbeing and service offering.

#### **2.4.3. Conclusion**

The final stage of the model assesses the quality of the implementation by line management. Multiple organisational members evaluate this quality. These members might have differing perceptions about this quality, because of differences in background, interests etcetera. Variation in these perceptions can be minimized through a strong HR system, which is achieved through consistent, concessive and distinctive messages and congruent cognitive frames among organisational members. Finding common perceptions,



key performance indicators or goals could provide a starting point for perceived high quality implementation.

From the theoretical framework, some generic requirements for the design and implement of a talent program in healthcare can be derived. These requirements are graphically summarized in figure three.

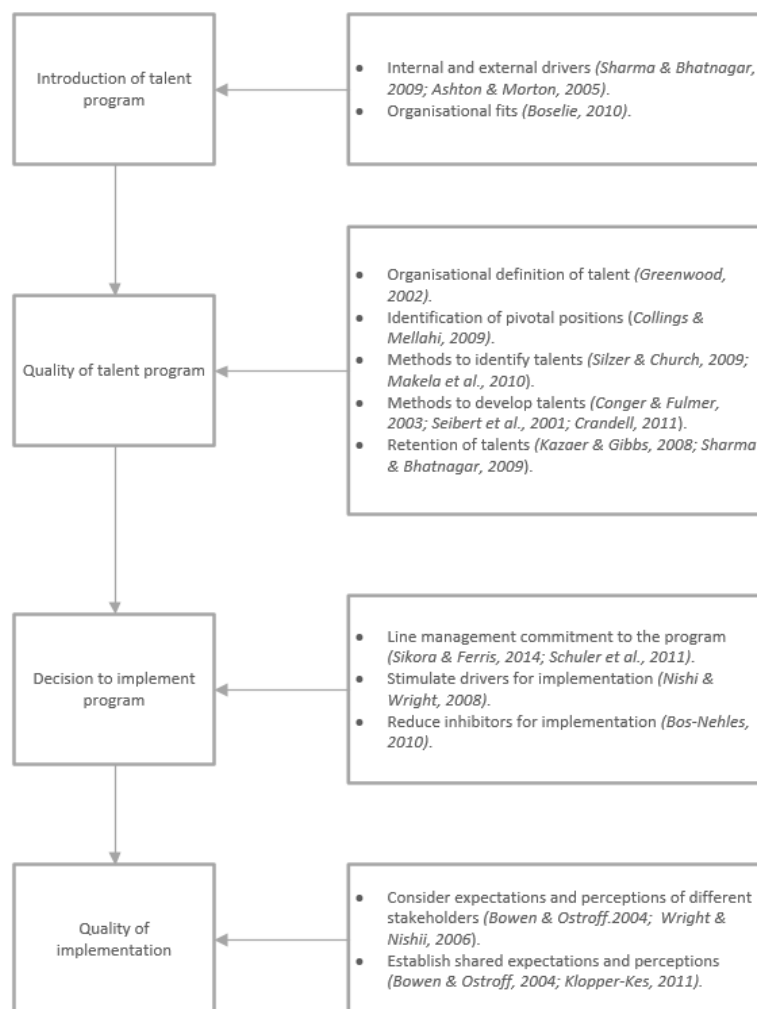


Fig. 3: Summary of requirements found in theory.

### 3. Methodology

The requirements needed to successfully design and implement a talent program will be studied using a single case study. A single case study is a suitable method for talent management research, as it facilitates the in-depth study of a phenomenon in its natural setting (Yin, 2003). In this paper, we wanted to find out extensively what is required for the entire talent program to succeed. As was mentioned before, varying internal and external factors might influence this process. To grasp and understand the interactions between these different factors, context-dependent knowledge needs to be derived (Flyvbjerg, 2006). A case study facilitates this (Yin, 2003). Additionally, respondents are expected to be more open about their

perceptions when they are researched in their natural environment. A case study is proven very suitable to develop all-inclusive propositions from actual cases and phenomena (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The organisation under study is a general hospital, Medisch Spectrum Twente (MST), located in the east of the Netherlands. This case study is chosen because it is a typical case for the healthcare sector (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). A healthcare organisation is one 'that provides services that promote health, prevent health problems, diagnose and treat health problems to cure them, and improve quality of life (Slee et al., 2008, p. 245). A general hospital like MST fits this definition, as they have multiple departments in order to cure illness and improve the quality of life for patients. Concerning talent management, MST is a suitable case because they have the desire to introduce a talent program for some years now. Although there have been previous orientations on what is talent within MST (Sleiderink, 2012), the hospital is still curious how it can design and implement a talent program.

The nature of this research is exploratory, as it will be explored how talent management can best be designed and implemented in a healthcare organisation like MST (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 1995).

### **3.1. Data collection**

#### **3.1.1. Document analysis**

A document analysis was conducted to explore the current situation and requirements within MST regarding talent management. As no documents existed yet on talent management, the document analysis was limited to documents related to the requirements found in the theoretical framework concerning the introduction and design stages (see figure 3).

In order to identify the factors influencing the organisation's decision to introduce talent management, strategic documents will be assessed. The document analysis will include the other HR policies implemented in MST, in order to assess the internal fit of a talent program with the existing HR system. Further, a document analysis on the current strategy, vision and mission is useful to determine the strategic importance of talent management to MST. This is described in the Strategic Agenda (n.d.) and Strategic Education plan (n.d.). The strategic documents will also be assessed on what they tell us about the culture within MST. Trends in healthcare relating to talent management are derived from the document Zorgberoepen 2030 (2015), which explains how different developments affect healthcare professionals.

For the quality of the talent program, it is important to know how to attract, identify, develop and retain talent most effectively for MST. In order to assess this, a document analysis is used on the current practices and instruments used within MST to attract, identify, develop and retain talent. For recruitment and selection, the document explaining this procedure within MST is assessed (Recruitments and Selection Procedure, n.d.). The 'Memo appraisal system MST' (2009) will provide insight in the current appraisal system within MST. Additionally, the Framework letter is a tactical document including remarks on the general recruitment and selection procedures in 2015. The Best Practice Unit (n.d.) document is

included in the analysis, because it is one of the main current talent development initiatives adopted within MST.

In table one, an overview is given of the documents used for the document analysis in this paper.

Table 1: Documents analyzed in every step.

Step in implementation process:	Documents used:
<b>Decision to introduce a talent program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic Agenda (n.d.)</li> <li>- Strategic Education plan (n.d.)</li> <li>- Zorgberoepen 2030 (2015)</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of the talent program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic personnel plan (n.d.)</li> <li>- Recruitment and selection procedure (n.d.).</li> <li>- Framework letter (2015).</li> <li>- Memo appraisal system MST (2009).</li> <li>- Best practice unit (n.d.).</li> </ul>
<b>Decision to implement the talent program</b>	
<b>Quality of implementation</b>	

### 3.1.2. Semi-structured interviews

In addition to the document analysis, interviews were conducted with HR stakeholders. The interviews were semi-structured. Consequently, the frameworks (Appendix 2,3,4,5) were set since it was known beforehand what we wanted to find out, but the conversation is free to change (Miley & Gilbert, 2005). As a result, the structure of the interview might be different for every participant. Semi-structured interviews are useful to find out every participant's perceptions and expectations, as the questions can be tailored to every individual (Berg, 2001).

The interviews serve to find out what requirements from theory stakeholders in healthcare needed, and what additional requirements might be needed to design and implement the talent program.

In interviews with top management and HR professionals, the future value of talent management for MST will be assessed, together with a determination of strategic, cultural and internal fit within MST.

To get insights on the current methods to identify, develop and retain talent, interviews with all stakeholders will be used. This will be an addition to the document analysis on these methods. Additionally, stakeholders will be asked what instruments could be added or improved for the future talent program.

Factors influencing line managers' decision to implement a talent program will be assessed through interviews with line managers, their employees and HR professionals. These interviews will focus on line managers' ideas on talent management, what inhibits them with regard to talent management and what they will need in order to implement it in the future.

It was mentioned that the perceived quality of an HR practice depends on perceptions and expectations of stakeholders. Therefore, the interviews will address the different perceptions stakeholders have on talent

and talent management, and how these perceptions could be translated to requirements and KPI's that need to be considered. These findings will demonstrate what constitutes a high quality implementation of talent management in healthcare, according to the stakeholders.

Since this research tries to identify perceptions in an explorative way, an open-ended approach should be taken. Consequently, semi structured interviews as applied in this paper are helpful to grasp serendipitous and deeper findings that were not anticipated beforehand (Downs & Adrian, 2004). This research attempts to balance perceptions and insights of multiple HR stakeholders, consistent with Tsui (1984). This helps to consider different perspectives on the same problem (Gerhart et al., 2000). This follows McCartney and Garrow (2006) who argued that multiple stakeholders should be considered when defining talent in an organisation.

### *3.1.1. Sample description*

The sample chosen for the interviews consists of 22 respondents. In table two, for every step it is demonstrated which stakeholders will be interviewed. This sample is conducted based on the implementation model and the organisational structure of the case organisation. Guest and Bos-Nehles (2012) make the distinction between implementers and evaluators in the implementation process. This distinction is also considered during the interviews. Implementers are stakeholders accountable for the execution of the specific stage, while evaluators assess the quality of that stage. For example business managers were asked why they think talent management is important to introduce within MST, as implementers of the introduction of talent management. On the other hand, they were asked what they perceive is a high-quality implementation of talent management, as evaluators of the implementation of the talent program. Following the same philosophy, only line managers were asked what they would need to make implementation easier. It makes no sense to ask employees what they need, as they will not be implementers of the stage.

Business managers are considered top management within MST. Business managers give direction to multiple departments. Team managers direct one of these departments. The business managers in this sample are thus the supervisors of the team managers in the sample. These team managers fulfil the line management role, so for sake of readability, they are referred to as line managers in the remainder of this paper. HR advisors support and guide business and line managers with personnel issues and activities. For the line managers and employees, five diverse departments are chosen from the organisational structure within MST, to get the most holistic view of the organisation: one department is supportive, one is surgical, one is polyclinic and two are nursing departments. For every department, the hierarchical line was sampled: the business manager, the HR advisor, the line manager and some employees were included. The sampled employees included nurses, project consultants, advisors and secretaries.

The number of interviewed persons on every level was determined by their added value. At each level, interviewing more people likely will not lead to fundamentally new insights. For instance for the employees, the initial sample was estimated to include 15 employees. After some interviews, however, it

became evident that most employees knew very little about talent management and its implications for their department. Therefore, it was chosen to decrease the number of employees in the sample.

Table 2: Stakeholders interviewed for every step.

Step in implementation process:	Implementers interviewed:	Evaluators interviewed:
<b>Decision to introduce a talent program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 business managers</li> <li>- 2 HR policy makers</li> <li>- 2 HR advisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 business managers</li> <li>- 2 HR policy makers</li> <li>- 2 HR advisors</li> <li>- 5 line managers</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of a talent program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 HR policy makers</li> <li>- 2 HR advisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 business managers</li> <li>- 2 HR policy makers</li> <li>- 2 HR advisors</li> <li>- 5 line managers</li> <li>- 10 employees</li> </ul>
<b>Decision to implement the talent program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 line managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 business managers</li> <li>- 5 line managers</li> <li>- 2 HR policy makers</li> <li>- 2 HR advisors</li> <li>- 10 employees</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 line managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 business managers</li> <li>- 2 HR policy makers</li> <li>- 2 HR advisors</li> <li>- 5 line managers</li> <li>- 10 employees</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Data analysis

During the interviews, the interview method proposed by Miller and Wollnick (2002) was followed. This means that interviewers first listen to the answer given, give a summary of this answer and then ask confirmation of this summary by the interview respondent. In doing so, it is clear during the interview whether the respondent is understood. The qualitative data derived from the interviews were recorded, in acceptance with the interviewed person. Recording ensures that every word said in the interviews will be considered in the data analysis. The interviews are transcribed verbatim for sake of completeness. After the interview transcription, the transcript is sent back to the respondent to check on correctness.

The interview transcripts are coded using open coding and deductive coding (van Aken et al., 2012), dependent on the interview question. Open coding means that interesting quotes were coded, based on similarities of differences between different participants. For example on the question *‘What do you need to make implementation of talent management easier for you?’* a range of questions emerged. Using open coding, most answers could be coded under generic categories. Deductive coding means that the data is coding with specific categories determined beforehand. This coding method was used for the questions concerning fit, for example *‘To what extent does talent management fit the culture within MST?’*. Before the interviews, it was already known that answers either indicate a fit or a misfit, so these categories were used to code the data.

### **3.3. Company profile**

Medisch Spectrum Twente (MST) belongs to the biggest non-academic hospitals in the Netherlands. The great size of the hospital can be explained by its rich history of mergers in the 1980s and a substantive growth rate ever since. MST has locations in Enschede, Oldenzaal, Haaksbergen en Losser, all municipalities within Twente, a region in the east of the Netherlands, near the German border. The area MST currently serves consists of 264.000 residents.

MST offers patients all kinds of specialisms, for example gynaecology, psychology and cardiology, among others. The organisation is managed by the board of directors, which is under the supervision of the supervisory Board and is advised by the medical staff board, the works council, the client board and the nurse advisory. The departments are structurally placed in profit centres ('Resultaat Verantwoordelijke Eenheid', hereafter RVE) so that departments that serve similar patient needs share responsibility. An example of such a RVE is the 'Mother-child centre', an RVE that consists of gynaecology, paediatrics, urology and paramedical care. Every clinical RVE is led by a medical and business manager and has its own budget and responsibilities. For non-clinical RVEs, a business manager is solely responsible. Consequently, the organisational structure at MST is decentralized. A team manager directs one or multiple departments within an RVE. A graphical representation of this organisational structure of MST is given in Appendix 1.

MST currently has around 4000 employees, of which 250 medical specialists. In 2015, MST received the 'Top Employer Award', which is recognition for organisations offering great employee conditions and development opportunities. MST received this distinction for its offerings on e-learning, coaching, employee discounts and more (Top Employers, n.d.). MST values development and learning among its employees, and most of their development offerings are facilitated through their learning institution, the Medical School Twente (Medical School Twente, n.d.).

MST's mission is to offer general and top-clinical medical specialist care to patients, in such a way that patients in the region will not have to reach out to hospitals outside Twente (Strategic Plan, n.d.). This means that MST strives to meet the growing and more complex demand for their services.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. The decision to introduce a talent program**

#### **4.1.1. Drivers to introduce a talent program**

The stakeholders interviewed clearly emphasize the value and importance of a talent program for MST. First of all, most stakeholders stress that a talent program improves the organisational performance of MST to improve the care of patients:

*'To improve our strategic position, we need talents. These talents will also carry their colleagues. They (talents) bring your company to the next level' – HR1.*

*'Enabling your talented employees will influence the patient care. In the end that is all what matters, and it is good if you can improve this care' – LM1.*

Stakeholders mention the value of talent management for both the organisation and the employees. Many stakeholders stress that a talent program can challenge talented employees. Some stakeholders believe that if employees are not challenged enough, they will eventually leave the organisation. They also stress that this currently is an underexposed phenomenon within MST:

*'Currently there is a lot of unused employee potential. There is not enough attention for it right now, but I am afraid that it will cost us talented employees in the future' – LM2.*

Recently, multiple managers within MST left the organisation. Since there were no known suitable successors for these positions, new managers were recruited outside the organisation. For some stakeholders, this lacking succession planning highlighted the growing importance for MST to be more concerned with talent management:

*'There are people within the organisation that are suitable to succeed a manager, but they are not known within the organisation. Although senior management wants to give internal candidates an opportunity, it is not clear to them who might be able to succeed' – HR1.*

The same problem was mentioned with regard to internal knowledge. Currently, a lot of external consultants and project leaders are employed within MST. Stakeholders now see that when these external people are done with a certain project, they leave the organisation. Since they are taking their knowledge with them, there are few people who can take over the project from them. They think talent management could help get more employees who can carry out such projects, so that the knowledge stays within the organisation for a longer period of time:

*'The organisation depends on external consultants a lot. You recently saw that someone set up a whole project, but then left after implementation started. No one had as much knowledge and experience on the project internally, so quality of the project drops. That is a waste.' – EM7.*

To conclude, it is shown that stakeholders within MST generally mention that there are some profound reasons to introduce talent management within the organisation. One of them is the lack of succession planning. Stakeholders think that talent management will improve both the organisational and employee performance within MST.

#### **4.1.2. Strategic fit**

The findings concerning strategic fit are twofold: on one hand, strategic fit is determined through the programme's contribution to organisational goals, while on the other hand strategic fit is improved when the programme helps an organisation to deal with external trends.

##### *Organisational goals*

In the Strategic Education Plan (n.d.), it is stressed that 'the quality of MST's medical care is partly determined by the quality of our professionals. To ensure high-quality clinical care, enduring investments

in the quality of professionals is crucial' (p. 4). This statement shows that employees are important to achieve MST's strategic goal of providing the best patient care. Many stakeholders agree with this claim. They mention that employees, especially the talented ones, are MST's most important assets, and that employees have a large influence on the organisation's performance and service offered to patients:

*'You cannot reach your strategic aims from top to bottom: you need talented people to reach what the organisation wants to achieve' – TM2.*

*'Our strategy is to be the best improvement hospital, and I think that to be the best, you will need the best people. Talents are those people' – HR2.*

Talent management's strategic importance to Medisch Spectrum Twente is clearly articulated in organisational documents. Talent management suits the strategic vision of MST to maximize the process around the patient's care, in order to reduce risks and damages:

*'Employees within MST continually work to improve care, reduce risks and damage to the patient.' – Strategic Agenda, p. 4.*

Another strategic objective of MST is to keep on innovating and to enforce professional leadership within the organisation through implementing Evidence Based Practice within wards. In order to achieve this, projects like the Best Practice Units (BPU) are set up to select talented employees who can accomplish innovations on their wards. The Strategic Agenda explicitly expresses a need to focus on talent in the future:

*'The healthcare-related developments offer employees a choice and specialization- and development opportunities. In order to recruit and retain the right employees, a talent strategy is needed.' – Strategic Agenda, p. 20.*

*'We now have to cope with a lot of changes and renewals within the organisation. To be able to succeed in these changes, you will need talented people that carry important projects' – HR1.*

It is stressed in the Strategic Agenda (n.d.) that talent management helps achieve the ambitions of MST to be a good employer. Stakeholders refer to this as well. It is stressed that since one of MST's strategic objectives is to care for their employees, talent should be managed well:

*'We want to be a good employer to our people, and then talent management is something you can facilitate for them' – HR2.*

MST's aim to be a good employer leads to a valued position for the HR department within MST. They are perceived as important by organisational members and are also involved in strategic decision making.

### **External trends**

In the coming years, MST experiences some trends and developments in their environment. First, patients currently are more empowered. They share experiences about the service within hospitals with others on a large scale via the Internet and other media. Based on this information, people make a measured



decision on where they want to be treated. This means that MST should be able to receive positive word-of-mouth in order to attract more patients. Talented employees could improve the patient's experience within the hospital:

*'Our employees are decisive for good, safe and hospitable care. They daily make sure that patients get the care they need.'* – Strategic Agenda, p. 20.

A second trend is the ageing population within Twente, MST's focus area. It is expected that between 2014 and 2040, the number of people above 70 will rise with 70%. This has two implications for the health demand in the region. On one side, people will work longer, so occupational diseases will rise. Also, due to medical developments, deadly diseases now become chronically, which means that there will be more comorbidity patients, patients with more than one chronic disease. This makes healthcare more complex. Talented employees can help MST handle these complex situations within the hospital:

*'The future trends in healthcare rise demands for the knowledge and competences of the health professionals.'* – Strategic Agenda, p. 6.

*The demands for care changes: people become older, have more chronic conditions. Simultaneously, they are more assertive and want to keep control over their own health and care.'* – Zorgberoepen 2030, p. 14.

Ultimately, both the document analysis and interviews show that talent management provides a valuable contribution to MST's strategic goals. It is mentioned that it will help improve patient care, being a good employer and keep on innovating. What's more, talent management helps MST cope with recent trends in the industry like the growing complexity of patient care and the empowerment of patients. These trends call for talented people who can deal with this.

#### **4.1.3. Internal fit with current HR system**

The internal fit of talent management is clearly visible in relation to certain HR initiatives currently implemented within MST. The strategic personnel planning, strategic educational plan and the leadership program all show common grounds with talent management. The strategic personnel planning helps all wards within MST to indicate what the supply and demand for labour will be in the coming years and where shortages are expected. This personnel planning helps an organisation to deal with environmental changes like the retirement of baby boomers, and thus serves the same purpose in this as the talent program. One element of the strategic personnel planning as adopted within MST is the completion of a HR3P matrix by the line manager, which can serve as a possible talent identification tool as well. Talent management elaborates on strategic personnel planning, as it describes how employees identified as talents within the strategic personnel planning could be facilitated within the organisation.

Stakeholders refer to other fitting HR practices currently adopted by MST as well. Top managers, line managers and employees commonly mentioned that the Best Practice Units, Orange and Yellow Belt projects were used on the ward in relation to talent:

*'I think we already do a lot of things that fall inside 'talent management'. Examples are the Best Practice Units, Orange and Yellow Belt projects.'* – TM2.

So, there is a mentioned internal fit between current HR initiatives and talent management. Some initiatives are already present within MST that appeal to talented employees, like the BPU and lean belt projects. These initiatives will be discussed in more depth when discussing the development of talent in a following section.

#### **4.1.4. Cultural fit**

According to organisational documents, MST has a culture of collaboration (Goals MST, n.d.) and learning (Strategic Education Plan, n.d.). MST offers employees 'a safe environment where learning and development is part of the day-to-day work' (Strategic Education Plan, n.d., p. 19). It is stressed as well that both learning from each other and with each other is valued.

Some stakeholders experience MST's culture differently. It is mentioned that personal development is not an issue among employees right now, and that this leads to a lack of vision and motivation among talents to work on their career:

*'It currently is not natural for employees to have a clear vision on their personal development plan'* – HR2.

*'Developing yourself is not yet seen as a beautiful thing within the organisation'* – TM1.

Stakeholders concern for the equality standards that are preserved in MST. They mention that most organisational members criticize people who try to stand out. They also experience that distinctions between employees are perceived as negative within the organisation:

*'If you stand out from the crowd, sometimes they just want to pull you back instead of supporting your development.'* – HR1.

*'People here are usually not comfortable with making distinctions between people'* – HR2.

*'Within the ward, there are a lot of people who just want to do their job and leave it like that. But then sometimes they do not understand why someone else then gets more opportunities'* – LM1.

This equality is shown as well by a certain quote from a line manager. When asked about the current way of developing talent, s/he mentions that employees who received less training that year get advantage when they sign up for schooling or training. This shows that some line managers want to offer the same training level to every employee, something that conflicts with talent management assumptions:

*'When we have to select people for a training or program, we first pick people who have had no training yet that year'* – LM1.

When asked about this matter, employees had different perceptions on the equality between employees. A lot of employees could recall that a colleague got to do an extra training or project, but the co-workers

were all very supportive in this stance. Others mention that they have mixed feelings about offering more opportunities to some employees:

*'I do not feel like people were jealous or unsupportive about the chances offered to him/her.'* – EM4.

*'It is really double: on one side you just want that everyone is threatened the same, but on the other hand you also want to give room to talent to develop themselves.'* – EM5.

Stakeholders mention more concerns regarding the organisational culture within MST. They stress that some managers hesitate to develop their employees. This is attributed to a fear by managers that employees will prove to be better than themselves and thus outgrow them at some point in time:

*'For talent management to succeed, you will need managers who are not afraid to be overtaken by talent. That is not always the case within MST'* – TM1.

To conclude, the findings from the document analysis and the interviews were rather contrary regarding cultural fit. Though documents mention that learning and development of talents are highly valued, stakeholders mention this to be an underexposed subject during MST's day-to-day activities. This is partly attributed to the fact that equality is valued a lot, but also by a fear from managers to be overtaken by talent.

## **4.2. The quality of a talent program**

To represent the findings from the documents and interviews on what is required for a high-quality talent program, the theoretical framework is followed. This means that we will start with the inflow of talent, then the development and finally the retention. It will be displayed what currently is done within MST concerning these topics, as well as what stakeholders think is required to improve or added in the future.

### **4.2.1. Recruitment of talent**

In order to handle the recruitment and selection activities, the departments make use of 'MST@Work', a HR office that is responsible for the total vacancy procedure (Recruitment and Selection procedure, n.d.). Recruitment now happens based on available vacancies. When a vacancy becomes available, it is first determined whether there is a relocation candidate who would fit the profile. A relocation candidate is someone who is no longer able to fulfil his or her original job within MST. When there is no relocation candidate suitable for the vacancy, the vacancy becomes available for existing employees to apply via intranet. When the internal vacancy yields no suitable candidates, the vacancy becomes available for external job searchers.

Some stakeholders raise their concerns about the effect of this procedure for the talent on their ward. They state that it limits them to find the best employee for a certain vacancy. Relocation candidates and existing employees now have more rights in the vacancy process. This disables managers to get the best person on the job:

*'It would be easier for me to attract talent if I could select external jobseekers. I know some people from outside the organisation who would be perfect here, but I have to prioritize internal members, which is too bad sometimes' – LM4.*

*'I always believe in the best person at the best place. Therefore I want to place vacancies that are open for everyone to apply, so relocation-, internal- and external applicants' – TM1.*

Recruitment currently happens on an ad-hoc, reactive basis. Since there is little known about who the current talents are, there is also no policy on how many talents need to be recruited. This is related to the lack of succession planning described earlier:

*'When a vacancy becomes available we will recruit, but there is no plan on how many external people we will recruit.' – LM3.*

MST@Work uses a website for their external vacancies, [www.werkenbijmst.nl](http://www.werkenbijmst.nl). This website has recently been updated to make it more user friendly and appealing for job seekers. One of the aims of MST in 2015 is to professionalize the recruitment and selection procedure (Framework letter, 2015). Interviewed stakeholders mention that the new website helps to make MST more attractive for external talents. Additionally, they believe that there is still room for improvement. They think that the website could make it clearer what development opportunities MST offers to employees:

*'It is important that people hear that there are development and career opportunities within MST' – LM3.*

### **Conclusion**

Conclusively, the recruitment procedure could be more open, according to stakeholders. Now, relocation candidates are in favour above suitable internal and external candidates. What is more, no concrete future plans are known concerning recruitment quota. Though, stakeholders mention that the recruitment media are sufficient to attract the right external talents when needed.

#### **4.2.2. Selection of talent**

From the interviews with top management and line managers, it was shown that these stakeholders have a clear image of what constitutes talent and who these talents are among their subordinates. A top manager mentions:

*'I know within my own group who could become line manager or business manager within a certain time period' – TM1.*

These talents are identified through a range of ways, differing among top- and line managers. In the following sections, some elements of the identification mentioned by stakeholders will be lined out.

### **Subjectivity**

Some stakeholders believe that the most effective way for them to identify talented employees is through their personal judgment on people. They therefore stress that they do not value instruments to do this. They rather use their senses and feelings to assess an employee's talent:

*'I am not a fan of instruments, I identify based on feelings. I do not need assessments, I observe people and have to feel confident about them.'* – TM1.

*'Identifying talent is very personal; I wouldn't need an instrument for that. I can determine someone's potential by observing someone's attitude and behaviour.'* – LM2.

MST has no formal guidelines or procedures on how to identify talent or what constitutes talent. Therefore, a lot of subjectivity exists when determining if someone is a talent. Many stakeholders worry about this subjectivity. They claim that an employee who has a good bond with a line manager has more chance to be named talent. Some stakeholders also see that though some people are talented, they are not identified as such because their line manager pays no attention to talent management:

*'The identification of talents happens subjectively now. So someone who has a better bond with the line manager could be more likely to be identified as a talent.'* – HR2.

*'On other wards, I see that people are kept small. They are very talented, but their line manager does not give them the appreciation or opportunities they deserve. I find that very hard to see.'* – EM6.

Because of this, some stakeholders stress that certain instruments will help and improve the selection of talented employees.

Stakeholders had diverse opinions on what constitutes a talent within MST. The most mentioned traits are graphically displayed in Appendix 6. Some of the most mentioned traits referred to born features like ambition and studious, while others where developable like intelligence and know-how.

To conclude, it was found that current talent selection is dominated by subjectivity. Though some people trust in their personal judgement, many stakeholders express a need for objective methods.

### ***Annual Appraisal***

From 2015 on, MST adopts a new annual appraisal methodology. It now focuses on a review of the last year and a lookout to the future. The review of last year concerns work relations, work environment, the employee's functioning and the line manager's functioning. The lookout to next years focuses on an employee's development wishes and other demands from the employee. Stakeholders from top management, line management en HR emphasize that the appraisal methodology has improved a lot. They stress that now a more explicit focus lies on employee's competences and talents. This enables them to identify which employees are talented:

*'The new appraisal system directs more to competences of employees, and enables them to constitute a personal development plan'* – HR3

*'Within the annual appraisal you can ask an employee what his/her talents are and whether they think these are well utilised in their current functionalities.'* – TM1.

However, there is still some room for improvement on the annual appraisals. Some line managers still think that it is not concrete enough. They think that more commitments should be spoken out during the

appraisal, both from manager to employee as vice versa. They would like to set these expectations and then be able to check them in the next appraisal:

*'We could make it more concrete. Now we do not explicitly set expectations for the coming year. So we could explicitly state someone's aims and goals for the next year and then evaluate these objectives the next time.'* – LM3.

So, a new way of doing annual appraisals is currently introduced within MST. This methodology focuses more on competences and thus enables a possible future focus on employees' talents. Though, expectations made in these appraisals are welcomed to be tracked more in the future.

### *Competency profiles*

In order to remove the before mentioned subjectivity within the identification process for talents, some stakeholders wish to have a list of competences to assess employees on. They mention that it would aim them to make more fundamental judgements about their employees' performance and potential:

*'As an organisation we should have a clearer view on talent. What constitutes a talent within MST and what competences does such a person have?'* – TM2.

*'If you have ten managers who need to assess an employee, there will be some who have a negative opinion and some with a positive opinion. I myself also tend to appraise someone more positive when he or she acts close to my own way of doing things. But someone with a different perspective could be even more talented. Therefore we need criteria and competences to make these opinions more fundamental and objective.'* – HR3.

*'I have my own ruler to which I assess employees, but another line manager could have a completely different opinion on what is important. You should actually make that concrete for the whole organisation.'* – LM2.

Stakeholders have some ideas on how to determine the competency profiles for talented employees. Some think that a competency profile could be derived from MST's core values 'passion, attention decisiveness'. Others think that competences should be set based on what all managers find important. Most stakeholders do not think that a uniform competency profile could be set for the whole organisation. They rather have some basic competences for all employees, added by some function- or department-specific competences:

*'If you would ask all managers what they characterize as talent, you could find some common denominators where most managers agree upon.'* – HR1.

*'I think that they should comfort to our core value of passion, attention and decisiveness. But I also think that it could differ for distinct departments or functions. So you could have some basic organisational-wide competences, but also specific competences for specific functions.'* – HR3.

One line manager mentions that it could be a useful aim to get training on the competences and expectations associated with MST's vision and mission. S/he states that when a new vision is announced, it is not clear what this expects from employees. Explicitly knowing these expectations could help him/her to assess an employee's performance and potential:

*'I would like to have training when MST carries out a new mission or vision. Now you have the core values passion, attention and decisiveness, but you do not get any guidance on what these expect from our employees. I would like to have some grips on this.'* – LM3.

In the Strategic Education Plan (n.d.), it is acknowledged what is expected from employees based on the three core values. These expectations are outlined in Appendix 7. This provides an aim for managers to recognize an employee who fulfils passion, decisiveness and attention. These expectations could be a possible starting point for a competency profile for talents within MST.

So, competency profiles are mentioned as very welcome as future aims in talent selection. These profiles are mentioned to be compiled from the core values of the organisation or based on a shared understanding by managers of talent. Competency profile are mentioned to have a generic organisational dimension, as well as a job-specific dimension.

### ***360 degree feedback***

There were no documents found on 360 degree feedback within MST. Multiple line managers did mention that they would like to have input on an employee's functioning from multiple sources in the future. Line managers also under scribe that the new annual appraisal form as described above gives room for feedback from more than only the supervisor:

*'I think the new appraisal technique facilitates input from colleagues as well.'* – LM5.

Despite the fact that there is not a policy on 360-degree feedback within MST (yet), some line managers already use some form of it. Line managers mention that it is hard for them to judge the performance of employees rightfully. This is largely due to their distance from the work floor, which disables them to monitor the on-the-job performance of employees on a regular basis. One line manager who indicated using multiple sources of input did this by actively asking feedback from patients and colleagues of the person in question. They specifically used this information to assess an employee's performance and potential. An employee from another department mentioned that it is stimulated to give a compliment to a colleague regularly in a collective meeting. The line manager attends these meetings as well, so s/he then hears this positive feedback.

*'As I am not able to see everyone's day-to-day performance regularly, I like to ask colleagues what they think of someone as well. I also ask patients how they experienced the people working on the department when they return home. This gives useful input on how people behave towards clients.'* – LM1.

*'We have collective meetings everyday where we get the possibility to give a compliment to a colleague. The line manager is usually present at these meetings, so s/he hear this feedback then.'* – EM5.

There is however some resistance towards 360 degree feedback. Some line managers say that they feel that employees are hesitant to criticize one another. Though they are used to express themselves on the performance of their supervisor, they are careful to speak out about each other:

*'People usually are very careful when they have to judge each other. It is generally accepted that they can give feedback to me, but they are really careful with feedback to each other.'* – LM1.

So, due to the distance between line managers and the work floor, 360 degrees feedback is highly anticipated in the future. Some managers already collect feedback from multiple sources, but employees are still somewhat hesitant to evaluate each other.

#### *Visibility of talent*

One concern many stakeholders point out is that it is not known organisation-wide where the talented employees are. Though managers all stated that they knew who their talented employees were, this information usually stays on the department. Therefore, managers had no idea who the talents were on other departments or groups. One business manager pointed out how ironic it is that the whole organisation is informed by relocation candidates, but not about the talents on every department. Another concern related to this is that if information on who is talented and why stays in a manager's head, overview is lost when he or she leaves the organisation. Therefore, some line managers think that this information should be reported. In that way, a new manager is quickly aware of the performance and potential of every employee:

*'If you would ask, line managers would say that there is talent at their department. But the talented people are not commonly known to other people within the organisation'* – HR2.

*'We know exactly who our relocation candidates are, but our talented employees are not visible within the organisation. That is the world upside down'* – TM2.

*'Who the talents are usually stays within the head of the line manager. This means that when the line manager quits, that overview is lost as well'* – HR1.

Stakeholders would also like to have an organisation-wide overview of who the talented employees are and where they are working at the moment. Many stakeholders emphasize the value of a so-called talent pool that is known throughout the organisation. In this way they can also consider these talents when they have a vacancy or new project:

*'We should actually have some kind of map of the organisation, which shows where the talents are and where vacancies and projects are available for them'* – HR2.

So currently, talent is not made visible on an organisation-wide scale. Therefore, some known talent pool or talent map would be welcome.



### *Pivotal positions*

Stakeholders find it very hard to identify the pivotal positions within MST. All stakeholders mentioned that the most important positions within MST are those that have a direct effect on the quality of patient care. Consequently, this will thus involve medical staff like nurses, doctors and internists:

*'I think talent is most important around the patient's bed. Everything you can improve there will have a direct effect on how a patient feels about their stay here.'* – EM2.

Many people also point out that the management positions within MST are strategically important, but that those are certainly not the only functions where talent should be present. Some stakeholders get the idea that this is usually thought within MST. Consequently, it is perceived that hierarchical development is more valued, while talent can also specialize professionally, according to them:

*'All too often you it is thought that managers are the most important. But you also need talents within departments. People who are specialized in certain fields and can work things out.'* – LM1.

What is more, a lot of non-medical staff underlined the strategic value of supporting functions within MST like financial or business analyst employees. This is largely due to the fact that it is hard to get the best people for these positions right now. MST has to compete with commercial organisation for these talents and without the option to offer a financial incentive this gets very hard. MST can attract them by offering great working conditions:

*'Talented financial people can choose between working in a commercial organisation and earn a lot of money, or work here. We can offer them freedom and a good work-life balance. I hope that enough future talent will be attracted by that.'* – HR1.

To conclude, pivotal positions are likely to be found in the direct care around the patient, in management positions and in supporting functions. The first two are pivotal due to their effect on patient care and thus organisational goals, while the latter are pivotal because it is hard to recruit talents for these positions.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, the selection of talent within MST is characterized by subjectivity. It is dependent on person and place whether someone is labelled as talented. Stakeholders mention that this can be made more objective through the development of competency profiles and the usage of 360 degrees feedback, using more than one source of assessment on someone's qualities. What is more, the annual appraisals could express more concrete expectations between employees and line manager concerning talent development. Through a talent pool, talents become more visible within the organisation, as stakeholders mention that that is currently lacking. Finally, pivotal positions for which it is most evident to identify talented employees are mostly found in the direct patient process.

#### 4.2.3. Development of talent

MST highly articulates its focus on development and education of employees in organisational documents. The hospital wishes to be the best improvement hospital (Strategic Agenda, 2015), and displays itself as a teaching hospital.

The interviewed stakeholders are very satisfied about the schooling and training offered through the Medical School Twente and the human resource department. However, some stakeholders are afraid that it not clear to everyone in the organisation that already a lot is done to develop high potentials and talent. From interviews with employees, this concern was confirmed. Although employees acknowledge the wide training possibilities within MST, they do not recognize it as a talent effort:

*'Of course MST offers a lot on schooling and training, and there are projects that we can participate in. But I do not think that that is really for talents. It is not explicitly mentioned that someone gets to do a training or project because he or she is talented.'* – EM2.

Some managers stress that the training and schooling within MST is currently rather inflexible. Managers need to indicate what training and schooling their employees will do, a year upfront. This means that when they see an interesting training, they have to wait till next year to include it in the budget. Managers would like to see that at least a part of the development budget becomes flexible for these short-term opportunities:

*'When I see a nice training in February which is held in June, I cannot offer that to my employees, because the budget is already determined. It would be better if you have a part of the budget that you can spend without justification a year upfront.'* – TM3.

All stakeholders mentioned that they did something to develop the talents on their department. Though, this currently happens based on an ad hoc, sporadic level. This is mostly attributed to the before mentioned subjectivity with regard to talent. There were both negative and positive mentions of talent development within MST. Some managers offer a lot of opportunities and give space to employees for personal development. However, some managers pay no attention to talent and therefore do not facilitate talent development:

*'There was one business manager that had a clear view on his high potentials and gave these people space to develop themselves. So when the opportunity arose, you could see that these people stepped forward and were prepared to climb a step up. But this really depended on the effort of that specific business manager'* – HR1.

*'On some departments, the manager generates no resources to develop high potentials. So these people are just kept small.'* – EM6.

Conclusively, talent development is also very subjective and dependent on ward and person within the organisation. This leads to variances in succession planning, resources and opportunities to develop. Development budget is also very fixed, as it needs to be determined one year in advance.

### *Projects*

Most line managers try to challenge their talents through different projects. One of the projects in which talents can participate is the 'Best Practice Unit' (BPU). The BPU is a project that focuses on employee-driven innovations. Two nurses from one department participate in the project, where they get different lessons on innovation, evidence based practice and more (Best practice unit, n.d.). These talents then use a Evidence Based Practice approach to find a fitting solution for a problem in patient care. Managers and employees are very content about the BPU project, as it develops both the nurses and the department as a whole. Additionally, it gives nurses the opportunity to specialize in their work:

*'The BPU really gives an opportunity to people who want to do more than their normal tasks. These nurses then become specialized in a certain aspect of nursing care. You can see that they make the rest of the team enthusiastic and we really did something with the insights derived from the project.'* - LM2.

Another project offered to high potentials are the orange and yellow belt. These training project are derived from the lean six sigma methodology. This methodology focuses on the maximization of customer value through either reducing costs or time or increasing customer satisfaction. Different line managers facilitate their employees to participate in a lean training. After that training, these employees get the opportunity to suggest improvements, just like in the BPU project. Though managers are very happy about these projects and the results they accomplish, some top managers say that it is still seen as something extra. Since improving the work processes is not part of the daily job of employees yet, it is neglected when workload rises:

*'People now see such projects as something extra, next to their work. But they should actually see it as part of their work to keep on innovating the patient care. Once they do this, it gets much more priority.'* - TM3.

Finally, all interviewed line managers made use of work groups. These are different groups with all their own area of expertise. So one group focuses on the new hospital, one on infection prevention and so on. These work groups give employees the opportunity to become an expert on a certain field. A nurse appointed as specialist leads every work group. This specialist then learns to get involved in decision-making and to direct his or her colleagues.

On some departments, the work groups are part of a whole system. A chairman, who reports to the specialist, leads the work groups here. The specialists on this department even join meetings to speak on behalf of the line manager on certain subjects. In this way, the line managers place more responsibility on a lower level, so that they do not have to focus on the operational level so much. In this way, they can control the work groups through their meetings with the specialists, but they do not have to worry about it daily:

*'We introduced this system because departments were merged together and the workload would be too much. It was a real big win for us. The department improves through the work groups and you just see people grow when they have the opportunity to be either chairman or specialist.'* - LM5.

*'You see that the employees within work groups are very enthusiastic about it and really put effort in that task.'* – EM5.

So, projects are now used to challenge employees with extra work. The most clear examples are the BPU project, an evidence-based practice to improve patient care, and work groups, where nursing staff takes care of specific themes like the new hospital. These projects are mentioned to make employees enthusiastic and let them gain leadership and responsibility skills.

### *Job Rotation*

Multiple stakeholders acknowledge the value of job rotation for the development of talents. It is said that a few years ago, MST intended to implement job rotation among line managers. However, none of the stakeholders could recall that job rotation happens right now. Some of them mentioned that sometimes employees work on a different department because of capacity problems. Though, it is not used as a means of employee development:

*'In 1997 it was stated that every line manager should be working on a department for five years, and would then rotate with other line managers.'* – EM3.

*'I think that it is valuable to learn within different departments, but that is not really done right now.'* – LM5.

A possible reason why job rotation is not structurally used right now is because of conservatism of business managers, line managers and employees. A line manager mentions that s/he experiences that business managers want to preserve their own team. Employees associate leaving the department with feelings of insecurity, which limit them to grasp new opportunities:

*'I think that business managers want to keep their own good line managers. It is also experienced as a risk for employees: you do not know where you will end up. Not everyone sees this risk as an opportunity, more people are afraid to take this step.'* – LM5.

Stakeholders already mentioned that the organisational culture within MST is not directed to personal development and talent. This is shown as well in regard to job rotation. It has become evident through claims by multiple stakeholders that employees within MST generally avoid risk and like to stay in their current position and department.

*'I have seen nurses who came to work here with fresh ideas and ambitions. But after some years, they were still on the same department. That is actually what our culture does with people.'* – TM2.

The transition towards the new hospital contributes to this as well. It was mentioned that employees are hesitant to indicate that they would like to try working on another department. They are afraid that if they speak out that desire, the line manager will think that they are not satisfied with their current tasks, and will let them go if needed in the new hospital:

*'People do not have certainty now because we are moving towards the new hospital. So they think that if they keep holding on to their current position that they will survive the transition. Aspirations to develop are not spoken out frequently, because people are afraid that it will be seen as a sign of discontent.'* – HR4.

Some line managers admit that they do not stimulate employees to go to other departments when they have the potential to do so. Those line managers stimulate job rotation only when the employee in question does not enjoy working on the current department anymore. Other line managers, however, are more realistic and know that some people go search for more challenge on other departments. Therefore, s/he wants to now early about these aspirations, so that s/he can be of help for that employee:

*'I do not direct people to go to different departments right now. I do it only when I see that someone is not in place at our department and is not happy.'* – LM3.

*'Historically, people wanted to keep it quiet when they were looking for a new job. But I stimulate this now. I want to know if people want a new opportunity, so I can be of help for them to succeed in this.'* – LM5.

Job rotation does exist for new nurses within MST. They get the opportunity to do a traineeship, in which they work on different departments for a couple of months. Stakeholders emphasize the effect of such a traineeship on the attitude of those nurses, who are more open-minded and flexible:

*'You can just see that when a nurse has done the trainee programme, that s/he has a much broader view of what department s/he wants to work on. These people are also more used to work on their own development and career.'* – TM2.

So, job rotation is mentioned to be welcome within the organisation. However, very little is done right now to stimulate it. Managers mention that they do not want to let their best people go, while employees experience feelings of uncertainty regarding the new hospital. However, trainees with job rotation experience are more development-oriented.

### ***Mentoring***

Most interviewed stakeholders emphasize that mentoring could be a valuable development option for talents. One employee recalled that s/he came to work at MST right after university, so without any experience on working within an organisation. The colleague that was his/her mentor provided him/her weekly feedback on his/her functioning and helped to improve the employee's performance. Other line managers also make use of mentors, by appointing an experienced nurse to a new employee, so that the latter will hitch on faster. Stakeholders state that mentoring is pleasant for both the mentor and the young employee. Therefore, in general stakeholders think that it will be a nice way to develop high potentials. Some HR professionals and managers suggested that talented employees could be appointed to a mentor line manager to see whether they are capable to become line manager in the future:

*'When I came here, I had no idea how to best behave within this organisation. So my mentor gave me feedback everyday and sat down with me to discuss how I could improve some things.'* – EM7.

*'I think mentoring is an enjoyable way to develop talent. When you connect a line manager with a high potential, this relation will be fun for both of them.'* – HR1.

One line manager did not see the added value of connecting old with young employees. Rather s/he stated that old could learn as much from young as young could learn from older employees:

*'Why should we assume that older employees know better? Maybe they can even learn from younger employees.'* – LM1.

So, mentoring has happened on an ad hoc basis and reached positive experience from both the mentored and the mentor. However, no structural plan involving mentoring is present.

### ***Supporting staff***

During multiple interviews, it was mentioned that there are differences between departments based on development opportunities. Many stakeholders note that although medical employees get all the resources and opportunities to train and develop themselves, supporting staff gets forgotten.

Stakeholders think that to improve talent management, you need to develop the people who will support your talents too. They state that the different development options mentioned above should be made available more for non-medical employees as well:

*'We call ourselves an educational hospital, which is true, but only when you look at medical and nursing staff. Supporting staff can be talented as well and should have the opportunity to develop themselves through traineeships etcetera.'* – HR3.

*'When you want to develop your talents, you should also develop the supporting staff who facilitates that. When you are talented in a supporting department you get less opportunities.'* – HR2.

So, supporting staff is granted less development options and opportunities than the medical employees within MST. Stakeholders mention that they would like to see a change in this.

### ***Conclusion***

All in all, there are already a lot of development possibilities present within MST. Most of these are however not explicitly related to talent development. Also, these development options are offered subjectively, so it is dependent on the line manager who receives certain training. Stakeholders currently are most enthusiastic about the projects available to employees. Nursing staff gets the opportunity to contribute to improvements in patient care through the evidence based Best Practice Unit project, where patient care is also improved through lean belt projects. These projects trigger and challenge nurses, while simultaneously improving organisational performance. Therefore, stakeholders would value these projects to be part of the future talent development program.

On most wards, work groups empower employees to think about strategic themes and gain leadership skills. These work groups also save time for line managers, which will ultimately improve the implementation of HR practices.

Job rotation was mentioned as a long-awaited dream within MST. Though stakeholders acknowledge its value for talent development, it is not undertaken from both the line manager as the employees themselves for reasons as self-preservation and fear of change.

Many stakeholders mentioned that they would value mentorship in the talent programme as well. They feel like it is specifically valuable for junior employees to kick-start their career. It is assumed that both the mentor as the mentored can benefit from this relationship.

Finally, one drawback of the current development possibilities within MST was mentioned. This is that MST wishes to be a teaching hospital to its employees, but the development options are limited for supporting staff. It was noted that talents in HR, marketing and the financial department, among others, should be stimulated as well.

#### **4.2.4. Retention of talent**

MST currently uses exit interviews (Framework Letter, 2015). These interviews provide input on what they do well and where they could improve. Though this information is valuable to prevent future talents from leaving the organisation, the current exit interviews are not used as an instrument to retain a leaving talent.

*'When someone leaves the department it is like no one wants to discuss or talk about it.'* – EM3.

Luckily, most stakeholders state that turnover is not a problem for MST. People usually work within the organisation for a long period of time. Consequently, some stakeholders think that not enough is done to retain talent. When a high potential wants to leave, not much is done to keep this employee within MST, as overall turnover is still low.

*'Right now there is not much attention paid to retaining talent, because turnover is not an issue here. But I think that if you don't challenge employees enough, they will be searching for other organisations.'* – LM2.

*'I have seen that a talented employee wanted to leave MST and we just let them go.'* – HR1.

As MST does not have much freedom to give financial incentives to talents, other solutions should be found. Many people think that providing challenging projects and tasks is very important to keep talent interested in MST:

*'If someone has successfully completed three projects, we should have a fourth one available for them. That is not always the case now.'* – TM2.

To conclude, it was shown that retaining talents is not at issue currently, as employee turnover in general is not a current problem within MST. However, some stakeholders mention that talent turnover might become a problem if the future talent development programme does not challenge the talents enough to stay within the organisation.

### **4.3. The decision to implement a talent program**

As was found in the theoretical framework, there can be a lot of factors influences a manager's decision to implement a talent program. From the document analysis, it was found that implementation of HR practices within MST is currently variable. This was one of the key reasons why the annual appraisal method is changed. Previously, some line managers did not perform appraisal interviews with every employee, while other only did it briefly (MST, 2009). The same was found with regard to talent development, which is dependent on what line manager an employee has. In the following sections, it will be outlined what stakeholders mention to be inhibitors of successful implementation concerning talent management. Further, it will be described what they think is needed to stimulate talent management implementation in the future.

#### **4.3.1. Line manager's responsibility for talent**

From the interviews, it became evident that all stakeholders think that line managers are at least partially responsible for the execution of the talent program:

*'Who else could identify who is talented within their department?' – HR1.*

*'It is just part of my work to care for the talents of my employees.' – LM1.*

However, most stakeholders also stress that employees have a responsibility in the talent process as well:

*'Employees should step up themselves as well; it should not be completely facilitated by the organisation. They have to care for their own career as well.' – TM2.*

*'If someone wants to take an extra step, they will do that anyway. If you would help these people too much, it becomes too easy. Let them come to you themselves and let them explain why their development should be facilitated by the organisation' – LM1.*

So, line managers feel responsible for identifying and developing their talented employees. On the other side, they expect employees to step up for this matter themselves as well.

#### **4.3.2. Factors inhibiting implementation**

##### *Lack of priority*

A lot of managers mention that there is no attention paid to talent formally. This means that top management does not stimulate it, nor does it explicitly promote it through the organisation. As a consequence, line managers say they prioritize other projects and programmes which are actively valued through top management communication. Due to their high workload, they mention that talent concerns are pushed aside by other tasks.

Exceptions to this were the line managers who designed the system with work group chairmen and specialists, as mentioned above. Due to this system there was more time available for these line managers to give attention to talent management.



Managers stress that they do not think that talent is not important to deal with. But with the new hospital and other developments, they feel that it is not a top-down priority. As an effect, talent management sometimes slips through on some departments:

*'I think that if top management formally states that it is important to focus on talent, it will be carried more within the organisation. But now there is no attention paid to talent management on a higher level. Therefore, line managers don't think it's a priority either.'* – HR2.

*'I think that it would help if top management speaks out about the value of talent management. I think that the whole organisation will give it more attention then.'* – LM3.

Stakeholders mention that the priority of talent for MST could be expressed through the job description for line managers. They state that the coaching and guidance of employees now is neglected due to time constraints. They attribute this to the fact that in the job description, more attention is paid to the planning and other tasks of line managers. They argue that when talent management and employee development become more dominant tasks in the job description, line managers will have no excuse not to pay attention to it:

*'People are busier with planning and arranging everything around patient care than they spend time to worry about how it goes with their employees. This is because the coaching and guidance of (talented) employees now is not an expressed priority in the job description. So when they lack time, line managers will easily drop these tasks.'* – LM2.

#### **HR assistance**

This lack of priority expressed from top management also affects the HR assistance on talent management. All managers say that they have a good relationship with their HR advisor. They stress that they can discuss anything with them and that they are well available for support. However, talent management is not part of the frequent meetings between line manager and HR advisor. Again, it is stressed that it is ironic that they do discuss the relocation candidates, but not the talent on a certain department:

*'It is not part of our bilateral meetings, while the relocation candidates are discussed in-depth. This is crazy now I think of it.'* – LM3.

A lot of line managers also mention that there is a lack of training involved in becoming a line manager. Some line managers state that they see some colleagues who are great in managing processes and other management tasks, but who are not great people managers. They do not have the skills to coach and motivate their employees. Therefore, some stakeholders think that more training on how to coach and retain talent would be welcome. Already some training on this is provided through the leadership program within MST, but line managers say that this programme is still too non-committal:

*'Many line managers grew into this position from being a good nurse. But to be a good line manager, you'll need other competences. So some line managers are very good at planning, but lack people skills. HR should guide them to develop these skills.'* – LM2.

#### *Time*

As mentioned before, most line managers suffer a great workload at the moment. This is due to the transition to the new hospital, which is accompanied by many projects in which line managers are involved. Many managers stress that since there is no formal path available for talents, they need to trail blaze this themselves. This inhibits them to get involved in this process. Some stakeholders say that they will make time for it if an employee really shows that s/he could do more than they do now. But the ones that were involved in developing talented employees in the past all stressed that a lot of time is wasted in this process. They largely attribute this to the fact that there are no predetermined programmes or tools on talent development yet. Therefore, they spend a lot of time now to find out what options there are and to get in touch with the right people.

*'Nothing is predetermined at this moment, so when an employee wants something, I just need to find out what the best road is to take. This usually means that I lose a lot of time searching for that road.'* – LM3.

This time limitation is dealt with on some departments using work groups, as mentioned above. On these departments, it was stressed that many employees have had a lean training, and specialists serve as information point for colleagues on questions unanswered by the line managers. A specialist notes that sometimes line managers assume that employees know about certain subjects, while the employees still have a lot of uncertainty, for example concerning the new hospital. Therefore the specialists take time to inform and explain people about why certain actions need to be taken. Some stakeholders mention that by making teams more autonomous, the line manager's workload drops. When the teams can handle the selection and development of talent themselves, it is argued that the line manager only needs to facilitate it. In this way, ideas and projects emerging bottom-up will immediately have support from the whole department.

*'Let us deal with it actually. I think that we have a good view on who is suitable to do a certain work group or project. And if that project or idea is then initiated by a group of employees, it just has support already. Then you can really get something done in the organisation.'* – EM8.

#### *Lack of clarity*

Another inhibitor of effective implementation mentioned by the interviewed line managers was the lack of clarity involved in the options for talents. Many stakeholders think that they are missing out on a lot of opportunities because they are not informed about these. Additionally, some line managers say that projects are now assigned to talents based on accordance between two managers. Some managers are only informed on the project when talents are assigned already. They suggest that when the whole organisation is centrally informed about the current projects, all talents could apply to these projects. In this way, the best person-job fit will likely be achieved:

*'Some projects are assigned to employees based on mutual accordance between managers. Then I hear about this project after that, but I would have had an even more suitable candidate for that project. It is just a pity that it goes like this.'* – LM2.

Managers also state that there should be more clarity from both the HR and medical school department on the training and development options. Stakeholders from both HR and medical school twente confirm this statement. They state that already a lot is done that could fall within talent management, but they do not express that enough to managers and employees:

*'Already a lot is done that falls beneath the umbrella that is talent management. But since we do not make this very clear, people don't recognize it as such. A lot of projects and training opportunities can be adjusted to talented employees.'* – TM2.

There also exists inconsistency between line managers. Stakeholders mention that if these managers are more in line with each other, it becomes more evident to employees what is expected of them. Multiple line managers and employees stress that they see that on some departments, there is no stimulation to develop talent. No resources are made free for this purpose and the line manager does not encourage people to step by their office if they have certain ambitions. Many people believe that to achieve a successful implementation, line managers have to communicate a concessive message to employees on talent development. They stress that the opportunities available to talented employees should not be dependent on the line manager:

*'I got a lot of time and freedom from my line manager to participate in the BPU project. But other line managers just said that people should do it in their own time. Eventually top management made a statement about this that hours should be made free for it, so then it was clear. But still a lot of things are dependent on who your line manager is.'* – EM8.

Also, employees mention a lack of clarity when it comes to distinctions made between employees. Some line managers already mentioned that not all employees understand why differences are made between talents and other people regarding training and projects offered. However, many stakeholders from the top management and employee layer understate that employees are open to this, as long as it is properly communicated why certain decisions are made. For example when a line manager clearly arguments why someone is offered more projects or when a top manager explains why in the past, a relatively young employee was promoted to be line manager:

*'I think that as long as it is clear to everyone why someone deserves more training or projects, the team will be okay with it.'* – EM1.

*'Recently, I promoted a young nurse to become line manager. S/he was younger than most people s/he directs now. At first people found that hard, especially because a younger person evaluates them now. But I just explained why it was the best choice, according to me, and people began to understand it and are used to it now.'* – TM1.

### *Conclusion*

From interviews with stakeholders, four inhibitors for implementation can be distinguished. For starters, there is no priority given within MST to talent development. As a result, talent efforts are pushed back through other development that receive top management priority. This lack of priority is also present in the job description for line managers, resulting in them spending more time on other affairs like planning.

As a result of this lack of prioritization for talent management, talent is not a priority for HR assistants as well. In their regular meetings with line managers, more attention is said to be paid to relocation candidates than to employees showing a high performance. This lack of HR assistance and stimulation in the talent process inhibits implementation as well.

Another inhibitor is the lack of time line managers currently mention to have. Due to the new hospital being opened in 2016, a lot of developments and projects are present that need attention. This, in combination to the lack of priority, means that not much time is spent on talent development and identification, mention stakeholders.

The final inhibitor is a lack of clarity on the options for talent within the organisation. Stakeholders mention that it is not clear what projects there are for talents, and how employees are assigned to them. This leads to the before-mentioned subjectivity in talent development. This was also noted with regard to how much line managers facilitate for talent development. Sometimes top management needed to make a statement about this to prevent the differences between managers.

#### **4.3.3. Factors stimulating implementation**

##### *Data*

When managers were asked what would make it easier for them to involve in talent management, the first mention was to have data on hand. Especially line managers state that when they want to achieve a holistic picture about an employee, they have to collect information from different sources. There are diverse databases that store information about an employee's education, past experience and completed training programmes. They would like to see that this information would be bundled. In this way, they will have all relevant information in one place before the annual appraisal, for example:

*'Maybe HR can provide all information on employees together. So that I know immediately what someone has done earlier, what education they had, what their results are this year. It just helps to get a better picture of someone.'* – LM1.

##### *Central point for talent*

It was mentioned above that managers waste a lot of time to find out the possibilities for their talented employees. In order to deal with this more efficiently, they propose that HR could provide more assistance. Many managers stress that their job would be made easier if they and their employees had some sort of information centre on talent management. This could be compared with a career counsellor. Someone who is easy to approach and who knows the best ways within MST to develop your talent. When this is available, managers can forward the high potentials towards this point to orientate on their

possibilities within MST. Employees also emphasize this option. They think that it will give talented employees opportunities, even if their manager pays no attention to talent at the moment. They could just go to the information centre themselves and do a competency test, for example:

*'I think that it would really help if there was someone that both the employees and me trust to go to for help and guidance. That if an employee expresses to me that s/he wants to do more, that I could just send them to that central point to get information and to talk about ambitions.'* – LM5.

However, there already exist such career counsellors within MST. They are open to guide employees who have the ambition to do more challenging work within MST. Though, the counsellors and many other stakeholders believe that going to a career counsellor is experienced negatively within MST. As mentioned before, it is seen as a sign of discontent about your present job. Therefore, employees are hesitant to search for help there:

*'I think that people are afraid to go to the counsellor, especially now with the new hospital coming up. They don't want to show that their current job might not be enough for them or that they are unhappy about it.'* – HR4.

#### **Clear career paths**

As mentioned before, line managers need to set out a path for their talents now. They stressed that this takes a lot of their time and effort in order to get the path right. Therefore, many HR professionals, top- and line managers believe that career paths could stimulate talent development within MST. These career paths could be designed by HR and medical school twente and could serve as a guide for both managers and employees. A line manager imagined that it could be that there are certain packages made. So when he has an employee with a talent for leadership, he could use package A for his/her career development, while for an employee with specialist talent package B would apply. HR professionals also understate that career paths make the direction clear for all parties involved in the talent process. Career paths are also mentioned as a means to attract and retain talented employees to MST. Some stakeholders, however, caution that career paths are not uniform, and employees should be able to deviate from them if needed:

*'I would like to see that if I have a talent with certain ambitions, I could get a certain package from the shelf that explains all possibilities available for that person and how to get there. And then when I have a talent with other ambitions, I just get another package and apply that one.'* – LM5.

*'Career paths give direction and motivate people to work here, but they don't apply to everyone. So when it is needed, employees should still be able to choose a different path to achieve their career goals.'* – TM2.

#### **Conclusion**

There were also some factors that stakeholders mention as likely stimulators for the future talent programme. The first is the provision of data to make it easier for line managers to assess employees' performance and potential. Data could be a bundle of information concerning past education, training and experience.

Additionally, the emergence of a central point for talent would stimulate line managers as it solves two inhibitors, namely time and HR assistance. Managers can direct their talents to this information point to set out a talent development path.

Finally, clear career paths could contribute to effective implementation of talent management. Managers and employees now waste a lot of time to find out the best career path for a high potential employee. When HR makes career paths more known and visible, this saves time in the process.

#### **4.4. The quality of implementation**

Stakeholders were asked to think about their expectations for talent management within MST. What should it achieve for the organisation and employees and how could these results be operationalized? It was found that stakeholders are very aligned concerning their perceptions and expectations. The following insights were provided by their responds.

##### *Organisational performance*

According to many stakeholders, a talent programme should have a direct effect on the patient care within MST. They state that talent management can lead to innovations improving the patient care and less mistakes made by employees. Hence, stakeholders expect an improvement in patient satisfaction as a result of talent management.

Stakeholders believe that talent management accomplishes a person-job fit. When an employee works on the most appropriate job, their productivity will rise, which is economically interesting for MST. They also expect talent management to reinforce MST's image of being a teaching and development hospital:

*'I think that talent management would make the organisation more professional in our patient care. But it also shows to the outside what MST offers to talent.'* – HR2.

*'If people are happy and challenged in their work, it improves their employability and will likely decrease absenteeism. These are both mutual benefits for the employee and the organisation.'* – EM6.

##### *Employee satisfaction*

Stakeholders find it important that a talent programme will increase employee satisfaction. They expect that the extra attention and possibilities offered to talents will make this group even more enthusiastic to work for MST. Additionally, this will mean that fewer talents leave the organisation, which reduces the costs of recruiting new talents.

Though talent satisfaction should be increased most by a talent programme, stakeholders stress that the satisfaction of other employees should not drop as a result of the programme. They mention that this group should not feel like they are undervalued or have no opportunities within MST. Improvements in employee satisfaction can be indicated by the results of the staff satisfaction survey and turnover:

*'I think that the survey results would improve as a result. That talents see that there is room for them to flourish within MST, but that the other employees do not feel neglected.'* – HR4.

*'I expect that talent management will lead to all employees being happy in their work because they are challenged enough by it.'* – EM1.

#### *Talent pool*

Stakeholders expect that talent management will ensure a talent pool within MST. Most stakeholders stress this pool to include around 10% of the whole organisation. They further stress that the people inside the pool should be known within the organisation, especially among top managers.

Stakeholders expect that it will be transparent to all employees why someone is allowed in the talent pool. The competences and behaviour associated with a talent should be well known among all employees to improve understanding and perceived justice. Additionally, stakeholders stress that it should be clear to all organisational members what happens with talented employees. That it is clear what possibilities there are for them and how these could be achieved:

*'It should become clear what an employee needs to do or be to become a talent, and then what options they have after that. We should challenge these people.'* – HR3.

*'It stimulates employees when they see that it is possible to grow within MST.'* – TM1.

#### *Succession planning*

Stakeholders mention that succession planning is lacking within MST. Many state that talent management should develop talents internally on to line- and top management positions. One top manager states that certainly not all managers need to come from inside the organisation, but that now too many are recruited externally. Whether MST succeeds in this can be measured by the percentage of managers internally developed over the years.

Stakeholders also mention that a talent programme should keep its promises in regard to succession planning. They state that if a talent for example completes training in order to fulfil a leadership position, a leadership position should be timely available for them. It should not be the case that a talent ends its training and no suitable position is available within a certain period of time. This could be measured through the percentage of talents that got a suitable position within 5 years after completing the programme, for example:

*'You could measure how many people became business manager after completing the business management training path'* – TM2.

#### *Conclusion*

The expectations and perceptions different stakeholders have about a future talent program are rather congruent. Most stakeholders wish to see that the talent programme will contribute to organisational performance, consequently improve patient care. At the same time, they want the programme to increase employee satisfaction within MST. As deliverables, they expect that the programme will lead to an organisational talent pool, as well as solutions for future succession planning.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Summary of findings

Stage	Finding	Quote
<b>Decision to introduce talent management</b>	Talent management will influence organisational performance.	<i>'Enabling your talented employees will influence the patient care.'</i>
	Talent management will strengthen the strategic position of MST.	<i>'To improve our strategic position, we need talents.'</i>
	Talent management will challenge and thus retain employees.	<i>'There is a lot of unused employee potential now.'</i>
	Talent management will enable succession planning within MST	<i>'We have to recruit externally now, because we have no view of our talents.'</i>
	Talent management will help keep knowledge inside the organisation.	<i>'There are a lot of external consultants now. When they leave, their knowledge leaves.'</i>
	Talent management will help achieve organisational objectives like high quality healthcare, innovation, being a good employer and professional leadership.	<i>'In order to attract and retain the right employees, we need a talent strategy.'</i>
	Talent management will enable MST to deal with trends like empowered patients and an ageing population.	<i>The future trends in healthcare rise demands for the knowledge and competences of the health professionals.'</i>
	Talent management fits well with different HR instruments currently implemented.	<i>'We already do a lot that falls under 'talent management' like the BPU and lean projects.'</i>
	Talent management does not fit well with present organisational culture within MST.	<i>'If you stand out from the crowd, sometimes they want to pull you back.'</i>
<b>Quality of the talent programme – Recruitment and selection.</b>	MST's current recruitment policy does not facilitate the best person-job fit.	<i>'I would like to place vacancies which are open for everyone to apply, so relocation- internal and external applicants.'</i>
	New website for recruitment makes MST more attractive. Development options should be clearly mentioned.	<i>'We have our new website which is very attractive. It is important to show what development</i>



		<i>opportunities there are within MST.'</i>
	Talent identification happens subjectively now within MST.	<i>'I identify based on feelings and observations.'</i>
	The new annual appraisal methodology helps put focus on employee's competences and talent.	<i>'The new appraisal system directs more to competences and personal development.'</i>
	There should be made more concrete expectations in the annual appraisal.	<i>'We could explicitly state someone's goals for the new year and then evaluate these the next time.'</i>
	Competency profiles are a welcome aim to make more fundamental judgements about employees' performance and potential.	<i>'I have my own ruler to which I assess employees, but another manager could have a whole other idea. You should make that concrete for the whole organisation.'</i>
	Competency profiles could be based on MST's core values or on common grounds from managers. Some of the competences should be organisation-wide, others specific to the departments/function.	<i>'I think that when you ask all managers what constitutes talent according to them, you will find some common denominators.'</i>
	360 degrees feedback will help managers get a more holistic picture of their employees.	<i>'I don't see how they do their day-to-day job, so I would like to ask patients and colleagues how they think about someone.'</i>
	Sometimes employees are hesitant to give feedback to colleagues.	<i>'They are used to judge my functioning, but they are careful when they have to judge each other.'</i>
	It is not known organisation-wide who and where the talents are.	<i>'Managers know for their own group who is talented. But other people in the organisation don't know who these are.'</i>
	Stakeholders would value a known talent pool for the organisation, for future projects and vacancies	<i>'We should actually have a map of the organisation, which shows where the talents are and where vacancies and projects are available for them.'</i>
	Most stakeholders think that talent is most important within the primary process around patient's care.	<i>'Everything you can improve around the patient's bed has a direct effect on patient satisfaction.'</i>
	It is hard for a hospital to compete for	<i>'A talented ICT employee can choose</i>

	talented financial and technical employees with commercial organisations. Offering a good work-life balance can attract these talents.	<i>to work here, or in a commercial organisation where s/he can make a lot of money. We really have to promote the social value and work-life balance of working in a hospital.'</i>
<b>Quality of the talent programme – Talent development.</b>	Stakeholders are generally satisfied with the training and development options available within MST.	<i>'MST offers a lot of schooling and training and there are projects we can participate in.'</i>
	Opportunities offered to talents now depend on how much attention a line manager pays to talent development.	<i>'On most departments, line managers make room for talent to develop. But on some departments, people are kept small.'</i>
	Best practice units, lean belt projects and work groups are valued ways to give talents more responsibilities and improve the whole department.	<i>'BPU gives people the change to do more than their normal task. These people enthusiast the whole department and we really did something with the insights derived from the project.'</i>
	Job rotation is mentioned a valuable talent development option within MST, but it is hardly used right now.	<i>'I think that it is valuable to learn within different departments, but only trainees do that now.'</i>
	Job rotation is not used successfully; because employees feel insecure leaving their department and managers don't promote it.	<i>'I do not direct people to go to different departments, I only do it when I see that someone is not in place or happy at our department.'</i>
	Some stakeholders think that mentoring is a nice way to develop talents.	<i>'When I came here, my mentor gave me feedback everyday and sat down with me to improve my functioning.'</i>
	Supporting staff is sometimes forgotten when it comes to training and development opportunities.	<i>'We call ourselves an educational hospital, which is only true when you look at medical staff.'</i>
<b>Quality of talent programme – retaining talent.</b>	Turnover is not a problem at the moment within MST.	<i>'Turnover is not a problem within MST, employees stay within the organisation for a long period of time, usually.'</i>
<b>The decision to implement a talent program</b>	Stakeholders agree that talent management should be a shared responsibility from both employees and	<i>'Employees should step up themselves as well, it shouldn't all be made to easy for them.'</i>

	line managers.	
	Talent management is not an explicit priority within MST right now. This means that it is neglected when there are time constraints.	<i>'Training and coaching talented employees is not a priority in line managers' job description. Therefore, they drop it when they lack time.'</i>
	There is no structural consultation between HR and line managers on how to identify and coach talents.	<i>'Some line managers lack people skills. HR should guide them to develop and coach talents.'</i>
	A lot of time is wasted because there is no predetermined plan to deal with talent.	<i>'When an employee wants something, I need to find out what the best road to take is. This means that I lose a lot of time.'</i>
	Some departments handle the time constraints through work groups, giving more responsibility to employees.	<i>'Let us [employees] deal with operational tasks. I think we have a good view on who is suitable to do a certain work group or project.'</i>
	Line managers are not always clearly informed about the options available for talents within MST.	<i>'Some projects are assigned to employees based on mutual accordance between two managers, while I might have had a better person for the job.'</i>
	There appears to be inconsistencies between line managers in the room and opportunities given to talents.	<i>'I got a lot of time from my line manager to participate in the BPU project, while other managers said employees should do it in their own time.'</i>
	Employees value clarity on why someone is offered more training and projects.	<i>'I think that as long as it is clear to everyone why someone deserves more training or projects, the team is okay with it.'</i>
	If HR could supply more data on all employees, managers can make a better evaluation of someone's talents.	<i>'HR could provide all information on employees bundled, so that I know immediately what someone has done earlier, what education they had and what their results are this year.'</i>
	It would help line managers if they could send talented employees to a central information point for the possibilities for them.	<i>'It would help if there was someone who I can direct talented employees to. Someone who they trust, and knows the ways and possibilities'</i>

		<i>within MST.'</i>
	Clear career paths will guide the talent development options for line managers.	<i>'I would like that if I have a talent with specific ambitions, I could get a certain package of the shelf that explains all possibilities available for that person and how to get there.'</i>
<b>Quality of implementation – Expectations and needs stakeholders have from the talent programme.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisational performance improvement.</li> <li>- Innovations in the organisational processes.</li> <li>- Less complaints and mistakes made.</li> <li>- Employee satisfaction rises.</li> <li>- A talent pool is formed and known within the organisation.</li> <li>- Talent management ensures succession planning.</li> </ul>	

## 5.2. Talent management design and implementation in healthcare

Talent management has become a more prominent HR instrument due to demographic (Garssen, 2011) and competitive developments (Michaels et al., 2001). When executed successfully, talent management contributes to job performance, satisfaction and turnover (Groves, 2007; Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2009), as well as organisational performance, change and innovation (Lawler, 2008). Enabling talent is specifically important in health care organisations, where employees play a critical part in organisational success (Farley, 2005).

In order to execute a high quality talent program, the entire implementation process needs to be considered (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). This means that perceptions and preferences of different HR stakeholders need to be considered in order to align the intended, actual and perceived talent program (Nishii et al., 2008). Such an alignment improves organisational effectiveness (Kase et al., 2009), successful HR innovations (Bondarouk et al., 2009) and even patient satisfaction (Baluch et al., 2013). Gaps between HR stakeholders might cause undesirable behaviour, resistance and scepticism (Orlikowski & Gash, 2004).

The implementation process consists of respectively the decision to introduce a talent program, the quality of the talent program, the decision to implement the talent program and the quality of talent program implementation (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). This multi-stage, multi-actor process complicates the implementation of a talent program, as HR stakeholders can have varying perceptions on talent management (Klopper-Kes, 2011; Stahl et al., 2012). Therefore, this paper identifies the requirements needed to complete the entire implementation process, considering all stakeholder groups involved.

### **5.2.1. The decision to introduce a talent program.**

There were multiple reasons found for a healthcare organization to engage in talent management. Within a healthcare organization, employees have a direct effect on the quality of the service provided to patients. Therefore, it is stressed that talented employees will improve an organisation's strategic position. Furthermore, succession planning was lacking in the organization under study. This led to too little hierarchical growth possibilities, according to stakeholders. Developing talented employees will keep knowledge inside the organization and makes the organization less dependent on external consultants.

From theory, it was found that the level of strategic, internal and cultural fit with talent management influences whether an organization is likely to adopt such a program. The healthcare organisation's strategic fit with talent management was made evident. First of all, the HR department was considered important, which contributes to strategic fit (Wei & Lau, 2005). Talent management will help achieve the organizational objectives like high quality patient care, innovation, being a good employer and enforce professional leadership. What is more, talent management helps healthcare organisations deal with the increasing complexity of care and the empowerment of patients, which makes them more critical to where they want treatment. This strategic fit is argued to lead to high performance (Huselid, 2005). The fact that managers emphasize the contribution of talent management to organisational objectives indicates a likely commitment by managers to invest and allocate resources to talent management (Collins & Collins, 2007).

The internal fit of talent management was found, since MST currently has some practices that can become part of the talent program, like the BPU and lean projects. The currently implemented 'strategic personnel planning' instrument makes use of a HR3P matrix. Nevertheless, this instrument does not indicate what should happen with employees once they are placed in the 'talent' box of this methodology. Talent management could build further on the matrices developed within the strategic personnel planning. So for talent identification, the two instruments have an interactive relationship (Delery & Doty, 1996). The talent identification through the HR3P matrix based on someone's potential and performance provides helpful additional insights to the other talent identification methods within the talent programme.

MST's culture is currently not ready for the engagement with talent. Many stakeholders have stressed that the workforce does not focus on personal development and that equality is highly valued, both among employees and line managers. There were some mixed perceptions about whether jealousy and aversion appear towards 'talents'. This might indicate that negative tension between employees, as identified by Clark (1992) and Gelens et al. (2013) can happen when talent management is introduced. It was also mentioned that some managers are scared that their talented employees are catching them up. All in all, these obstacles need to be considered when a healthcare organization wants to implement talent management. As was mentioned by Thunnissen (2015), a lack of cultural fit can inhibit the success of the talent program. To make the cultural shift more gradual, it can be suggested to first focus on developing talents of all people in pivotal positions, before distinguishing between talented and other employees occupying the same or similar functions.

Conclusively, most stakeholders emphasize the strategic importance of talent management and its value concerning future developments. They also stress that some of MST's current efforts are already aimed at talented employees, which would make the introduction of a more extensive talent program more evident. One great obstacle to the introduction is the organisational culture within MST: personal development and inequality between employees are not valued right now. Encouraging these values could decrease resistance to the talent program (del Val & Fuentes, 2003) and thus improve the program's success within the organisation (Thunnissen, 2015). Additionally, the approach taken when introducing the talent program can contribute a lot. As was mentioned, stakeholders have a common ground in that they all want what's best for the patients. Consequently, employees who are in the direct process around the patient are considered pivotal. The best way to introduce a talent program that will create capacity is by emphasizing that it will improve the talents of the people in these pivotal positions, and thereby directly improve patient care.

### **5.2.2. A high quality talent program**

Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013) stress that a high quality talent program is more likely to contribute to organisational objectives. When HR stakeholders were asked about how talent should be identified, developed and retained, most of them mentioned the same welcome future instruments and points for improvements.

#### *Identification of talent*

MST has shifted to an electronic environment for their recruitment and selection activities. Stakeholders are very satisfied with the recruitment website for its user-friendliness and modern appeal. The recruitment process could be improved, however. Currently, relocation candidates have an advantage over suitable internal and external candidates. Consequentially, MST does not always have the opportunity to select the most talented candidate in order to achieve the best person-job fit. Stakeholders acknowledge and regret this. What is more, recruitment within MST is now reactive, driven by vacancies. Consistent with talent management, a more proactive, long-term plan for future talent recruitment needs to be developed (Capelli, 2008). This should be in line with the existing strategic personnel planning and a possible future succession planning.

The identification of talent happens subjective right now, based on feelings and instinct by managers. Consistent with Makela et al. (2010), stakeholders experience that this subjectivity biases proper talent identification. Therefore, they propose, in line with Meyers et al. (2013), that 360 degrees feedback and competency profiles would help make a more considered choice on who is talented within the organisation. These competency profiles should be a combination of uniform competences as well as variable competences based on the specific function and department. Additionally, both 360 degrees feedback and competency profiles could provide input and handles for the annual appraisal; stakeholder's current most frequently used talent identification method. More input and information on employees is welcome, since line managers are unable to directly monitor employees in their day-to-day activities. The new annual appraisal methodology within MST gives more room for competences and personal development, which is very anticipated by managers. Though, there could be more concrete expectations

and results spoken out during these appraisals, managers mention. Talent reviewing happens as part of the strategic personnel planning within MST, through the completion of a HR3P model following Evers (1998). Stakeholders like the overview provided by this model, yet find that there is no follow up on what to do with people once they are positioned in the talent box.

Consistent with Greenwood (2002) and Thunnissen (2015), multiple stakeholders were asked what would constitute a talented employee within MST. In Appendix 6 it can be seen that most of the generic traits found in literature are valid in healthcare as well. Most dominant are the learning ability, developmental ability and motivation. Further, it was confirmed that within a hospital, talent is perceived a combination of nurtured and natured traits (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). Conclusively, talent within hospitals is developable, yet only to people with certain born traits like intelligence and ambition.

Once talented employees are identified as such, stakeholders would like that these people would be made known throughout the organisation. This is currently not done on an organisation-wide base. Creating and promulgating a talent pool will improve succession planning within MST (Collings & Mellahi, 2014). Additionally, principals will have easier tasks allocating projects when they know who is capable to complete challenging work.

Some pivotal positions can be distinguished within MST's workforce as well. In addition to the management positions, most stakeholders acknowledge that the employees within the primary process around a patient's bed have a critical influence on the perceived quality of patient care within MST, so that talent is needed there. This is consistent with Boundreau and Ramstad (2005), who stress that pivotal positions have a direct influence on organisational performance. Additionally, employees in these positions were rather different in their performance and effort, which suits with the performance variability of pivotal positions (Becker et al., 2009). Furthermore, financial and technological staff was under scribed as a critical position, whether these are hard to recruit for a healthcare organisation. This confirms Crandell's (2011) claim that pivotal positions are those where successors are limited. In general, MST's stakeholders believe that talent is best utilized when they either develop hierarchical or specialize in a certain nursing or medical field.

#### *Development of talent*

Stakeholders were quite satisfied with the development and training opportunities available to MST's medical and nursing staff. This indicates that MST acknowledges the advantages of developed employees on motivation (Menefee & Murphy, 2004) and retention (Pfeffer, 1995). Talented employees are given the opportunity to specialize in a certain field and gain experience in leadership through the Best Practice Units, lean belt projects and work groups. All these projects empower employees to think about improvements on the patient care process. Therefore, these projects are highly anticipated means to develop talent to a management or specialized position, both identified as being pivotal.

Job rotation is a welcome addition to talent development instruments according to HR stakeholders. They mentioned that, consistent with scientific evidence, job rotation will help talent gain more varying work experience (Seibert et al., 2001) and make them more familiar with the whole



organisation (Jutaronda et al., 2006). Though, job rotation is currently inhibited since managers do not stimulate it and employees are rather anxious to leave their current department. This is consistent with Analoui (1995), who found that personal interests can inhibit successful implementation. Mentoring is considered a good talent development initiative as well, through its mutual benefits for both the mentored and mentor (Scott, 2005). Though, also this method is not structurally utilized right now.

Within MST, one employee group is currently underexposed when it comes to talent development. While nursing and medical staff can participate in numerous work groups and projects, the supporting staff is slightly forgotten when it comes to these options. As MST has the ambition to be a good employer, all staff should have the opportunities and space to develop talent.

Talent retention is currently not a dominant priority within MST, as turnover is rather low. Stakeholders find it more important to make sure that the talented employees are not caught up by organisational culture but preserve an open attitude with a focus on personal development.

### **5.2.3. The decision to implement the talent program**

Line management's critical position in the implementation of a talent program is widely acknowledged by stakeholders. Currently, some line managers do not fully engage in talent development. Some stakeholders mention that line managers are afraid that talent will catch up with them in the future, a challenge which was identified by Bhattacharyya (2015). Additionally, consistent with findings by Stahl et al. (2012) and Guthridge et al. (2006), line managers were hesitant towards job rotation by their employees, as a fear of losing performance on their own department. A lack of line management's involvement in talent management forms a real barrier (Schuler et al., 2011), which is experienced by HR stakeholders within MST. Some line managers give no room or attention to talent development, which causes variability between departments on resources and opportunities available for talented employees.

The five dominant constraints for line managers to implement HR are a lack of motivation, time, competences, support from HR and clarity on the policy (Bos-Nehles, 2010). Four of these, namely time, support, competences and clarity, were present among MST's line managers. The most mentioned constraint was time, consistent with Brewster and Larsen (2000). Now that MST is occupied by the transition to the new hospital, line managers face time constraints. Currently, talent management is not explicitly prioritized in either line managers' job description or in top management communication. Therefore, it is neglected when there is a lack of time. Some departments solve this constraint through work groups. By empowering employees to deal with certain change processes and focus areas, the line manager has more time to focus on their people management tasks. Additionally, managers stress that the provision of more data on employees' education and results saves them time to make an evaluation of employees.

Consistent with Renwick (2000), it was found that some line managers lack people skills needed for talent management. These managers were busier with planning and arranging all projects and processes, rather than concerning about their people. Stakeholders welcome more training and coaching for these managers on how to manage their talented employees to keep them committed and motivated.



In general, managers felt that they had a good relationship with their HR advisor, which is a stimulator for good implementation (Garavan et al., 1993). Despite this, talent management is not a regular topic during meetings between managers and HR advisors. This lack of support from HR on talent management might be the effect of the lack of priority given to it from top management. Managers mention that implementation could be improved through a central information point for talent management. This would be an office or person with knowledge on all possibilities and career paths suitable for the ambitions of talented employees. Managers can then direct talents to that central point to make sure that their potential is fully developed. This support from HR will facilitate their implementation of the talent programme (Bond & Wise, 2003).

Finally, the lack of clarity on talent management is an inhibitor of successful implementation. Managers stress that currently, it is not clear what talent development opportunities and career paths are available within MST. Finding these out takes a lot of time and effort for managers. Furthermore, variances between line managers appear because it is not clear if time or money should be provided when employees participate in a certain project. Statements made by top management help clear this ambiguity. Additionally, employees feel like there sometimes is a lack of clarity on why someone is considered a talent. Clarity from both the top- and line managers on this issue would help them deal with differences and thus prevents perceived inequality, which helps implementation.

#### **5.2.4. The quality of implementation**

As was mentioned in the section above, there were some constraints limiting the implementation of talent efforts among line managers. Consequently, some line managers utilized and offered all possibilities to develop talented employees, while other line managers allocated no room or resources to this cause. This finding is consistent with Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013), who described variability in implementation quality between line managers.

Contrary to former findings by Davies et al. (2007) and Klopper-Kes et al. (2009), there were no significant differences in perceptions between medical and non-medical staff concerning talent management. The same counts for differences between top managers and employees (Thunnissen et al., 2013). When asked about what they expect from talent management within MST, almost all stakeholders mention that organizational performance and employee satisfaction are the main focal points a talent program should improve. This could be attributed to the fact that employees value the main organizational goals: improving patient care and being a good employer. This results in shared values between managers, HR professionals and employees, since they all consider patient care most important in their work. This congruence and common ground is a starting point for successful implementation (Klopper-Kes, 2011; Bos-Nehles & Bondarouk, 2012).

Key performance indicators to measure the improved organizational performance means that patient care should be innovated and mistakes should be reduced. Additionally, this should be reflected in reviews and referrals from patients. An enforced employee satisfaction is reflected through the employee satisfaction survey. Consequently, stakeholders stress that all employees should be satisfied with the

talent program, not just the talented employees. This means that there should be no feelings of distributive injustice or undervalue among employees. Furthermore, stakeholders expect that MST will have a generally known talent pool and an ensured succession planning for management positions through the talent program.

In order to achieve a high quality implementation, a uniform expectancy about desired behaviour should exist among employees. Conclusively, the future talent program should show strong system strength, so be distinctive, consistent and concessive (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). This means that it should be visible and understandable to employees when they are considered talented, and what happens when they are. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) further state that the relevance of the program should be made clear. Consistency means that the opportunities provided by the talent program are not dependent on time, place or manager involved. Finally, consensus relates to whether HR professionals, top- and line managers have shared perceptions on the talent program and send coherent messages on it to employees. Consequently, extra attention should be paid to the distinctiveness, consistency and consensus of the program when communicating and implementing it through the organisation. In this way, employees clearly know what is expected of them from the talent program (Cunha & Cunha, 2009).

### **5.3. Recommendations for MST**

There are a number of matters MST needs to take in mind when designing and implementing the future talent program. These are as follows during the introductory and designing stages:

- MST should strive for a future organisational culture where personal development and excelling in your job is encouraged and valued.
- To make the cultural shift more gradual, it is wise to first focus on developing the talents from people currently functioning in pivotal positions, before distinguishing between people in the same functions.
- The strategic value and relevance of the talent program should be clearly communicated to HR stakeholders.
- When introducing the talent program, it should be emphasized that it will support talents of employees in the direct patient process. Thus, that the talent program will contribute to patient care.
- Stimulate job rotation through emphasis on the positive effects for the organisation instead of on possible negative effects for the department. Ensure line managers that they will get talented employees in return.
- More focus should be on finding the best person-job fit in recruitment, sometimes choosing an internal candidate above a relocation candidate.
- Make the selection of talents more objective through the use of competency profiles and 360 degrees feedback.
- Make the annual appraisals more concrete, by setting clear expectations and measurements for the coming year and checking progress regularly.

- A pool of talent should be known organisational-wide. This helps to allocate the best talents to projects, and improves succession planning as well.
- Keep giving talents the opportunity to develop through the BPU, lean projects and work groups. This helps them achieve leadership competences and provides improvements to departments.
- Mentors should be available to guide talent to a new position or specialization.
- More development possibilities such as traineeships and lean projects should become available to supporting staff, so that MST becomes a teaching hospital for the entire organisation.
- An example of such development possibilities is to offer a traineeship for the supporting departments like marketing, HR and finance.

The following recommendations should be taken into account when the talent program needs to be implemented:

- The indicated time constraint should be dealt with through the prioritizing of talent management from top management, empowering employees to support their managers through work groups and by providing more data on employees' education, working experience etc., so that the manager has more information at hand for the assessment of someone's talent.
- Training should be provided to managers on how to develop people skills. Furthermore, they should be coached in motivating and supporting their employees.
- Discussing high potentials and their development should become a structural part of the bilateral meetings between manager and HR advisor.
- A central information point could become available to employees to address when they want to develop themselves. This will provide more information on career paths and schooling opportunities within MST.
- More clarity should be provided on the possible career paths and development opportunities within MST.
- More clarity from managers to employees on why someone is considered a talent or gets more opportunities helps employees accept talent management.
- All HR stakeholders value talent management's contribution to organisational performance and employee satisfaction. Therefore, the program should consider these expectations as most important.
- Implementation of the program should be consistent: no dependency or variability on time or manager should appear.
- Consensus should be expressed between top managers, line managers and HR professionals on the talent program during implementation.

## **5.5. Implications**

### **5.5.1. Academic contribution**

This paper contributes to the academic field of talent management in various ways. First of all, this is the first study exploring the requirements for talent management in the health care environment. Hereby, this

paper answers the call from Thunissen et al. (2013), to broaden insights on talent management. This paper counterbalances the current dominant talent management papers that focus on private organisations in the American context (Powell et al., 2012). Consequently, this paper broadens the spectrum of academic knowledge on talent management, and therefore contributes to get a holistic understanding of talent management and its various applications in varying organisations. This helps to fill the knowledge gap concerning talent management in the non-profit sector in the Netherlands.

Up to now, literature on the implementation of talent management was scarce, possibly due to the novelty of the subject. This paper is the first to provide recommendations and insights on how to stimulate both the decision to implement and the quality of implementation. Previously, some inhibitors of talent management implementation were found (Stahl et al., 2012), but there were no specific recommendations on how to overcome these.

This paper shows the importance to consider multiple HR stakeholders to get a clear picture of the requirements needed for talent management design and implementation. As different stakeholders are responsible for the different phases of the implementation process (Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2010), it is important to understand their perceptions and expectation concerning talent management.

It was found that cultural fit plays an important part in the design and implementation of a talent program in healthcare. This implies that the culture of an organisation is a dominant factor to talent management success. Another key finding was that different stakeholders have shared expectations about talent management within healthcare. This implies that a focus on these shared expectations can benefit the talent program's success.

Finally, this paper provides knowledge on stimulators and inhibitors of talent management implementation. This is a new addition to existing knowledge.

### **5.5.2. Practical contribution**

This paper is the first one to provide recommendations on talent management to healthcare organisations. Talent management is important to these organisations, as employees have a great effect on the quality of their services (Farley, 2005).

It is also valuable for healthcare organisations to consider the different implementation phases and their involved stakeholders. For example, it is implied in this paper that possible implementation inhibitors can best be considered already during the design phase in order to minimize them.

As this paper includes requirements from the whole implementation process and multiple stakeholders, the requirements will improve the effectiveness of the talent program (Nishii & Wright, 2008). As a result, the talent program will achieve the valuable employee behaviour (Khilji & Wang, 2006) and therefore contribute to organisational strategy and performance (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). So, when the requirements found in this paper are fulfilled, it will enable the organisation to realize a high-quality talent program.

Though this study is conducted and applied to the healthcare environment, it can be valuable for other organisations as well. The implementation process steps are present in any organisation, so this paper can provide useful insights in how to deal with the different phases and stakeholders involved in the process.

### **5.6. Limitations and future research**

Though this study was conducted with as much care as possible, we recognize that it will not include all variables and requirements for talent management in healthcare. First of all, the population studied is fully located in a single country, so caution must be paid when generalizing results to other countries with possibly differing cultures. However, it is a welcome addition to academic knowledge to investigate talent management in a single country organisation. Future researchers are encouraged to study whether the found requirements hold in different cultures as well.

Further, not all healthcare organisations will have the same assumptions and policies as MST. There currently exists a rise of private healthcare organisations, which might have different cultures and contexts than a hospital. But, MST has proven to be a representative case study for healthcare organisations, considering that it fulfils all typical traits of a healthcare organisation (Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

It is sometimes stated that it is hard to generalize from a case study, but insights from a case study can place existing knowledge in a new light, acting as a black swan (Eisner, 1998). We do invite future researchers to test the requirements in other healthcare organisations as well. A further limitation is that the sample excluded some departments and stakeholders. But, as the sample was carefully selected for its diversity, the sample should give a holistic view of the entire organisation. A single person conducted the interviews. This means that information might have been missed during the interviews. This is however anticipated on through the recording of the interviews.

For further future research, we recommend to validate and improve the requirements found in this paper over other cases. This can be in different healthcare organisations, but it can also be tested whether these requirements hold in non-healthcare organisations. Future research is also recommended on the differences between requirements found for the healthcare organisations, compared to requirements for talent management in profit organisations.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper offers a new addition to existing knowledge on talent management, by applying it to the healthcare sector. It was studied what is required to design and implement a talent program within healthcare organisations, following the implementation process phases (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2010).

For the introduction of the talent program, it is important that the healthcare organisation emphasizes the strategic value and relevance a talent program offers to the organisation. It helps achieve organisational objectives like improved patient care and ensures succession planning. The existing strategic and internal fit between the organisation and talent management also needs to be stressed, as these will enable talent

management introduction within an organisation. Finally, it is required to make the organisational culture more fitted to the talent program through the realization of a cultural shift, towards personal development. To stimulate introduction of the talent program, it is required to emphasize that the program will increase performance in pivotal positions concerning patient care.

It was confirmed that in healthcare, talent is generally defined as a combination of born and acquired traits. It is required to develop a further understanding of what a talent is within a specific healthcare organisation. For the recruitment process, more focus is required on achieving the best person-job fit. It was further concluded that to achieve a high-quality talent program design, objectivity in the talent identification process is required. This is achieved through the use of competency profiles. Furthermore, annual appraisals and 360 degrees feedback give required input on employees' potential and performance, since line managers in healthcare are rather distant from the work process. To develop the identified talents, it is recommended to use projects and work groups, in order to specialize and empower them. It was concluded that both mentorship and job rotation help broaden the knowledge of talents. Yet job rotation is still inhibited by some line managers because of preservation of their own team. It was also found that supporting staff within healthcare organisations receives less opportunities and support to develop their high potentials. It is therefore required to stimulate job rotation and development opportunities for supporting staff.

It was confirmed that line managers have constraints that will affect their implementation of the talent program. The most common are a lack of time, skills, HR support and clarity. It was found that to manage the time constraint, it is required to prioritize talent management top-down, to empower employees to carry responsibility for some projects and to offer more data and input to managers on their employees. For the lack of people skills some managers in healthcare have, it is required to provide coaching and training on these skills. The lack of HR support on talent management can be improved by offering a central information point where talents can go to for information on career paths and development possibilities. Additionally, it is required to make talent an agenda point for meetings between managers and HR advisors. To overcome the lack of clarity, it is required to make career paths clearly visible and show opportunities for talents, as well as to give a sound explanation as to why someone is talented.

Contrary to existing literature, it was found that different stakeholders share the most profound expectations on talent management. These expectations are that a talent programme will improve organisational performance as well as employee satisfaction. This common ground is a welcome starting point to stimulate desired behaviour among all HR stakeholders. To make sure all stakeholders stay on the same page concerning talent management, it is found that the program should communicate distinctiveness, consistency and consensus.

All requirements needed to design and implement a talent program in healthcare organisations are graphically displayed in figure 4.

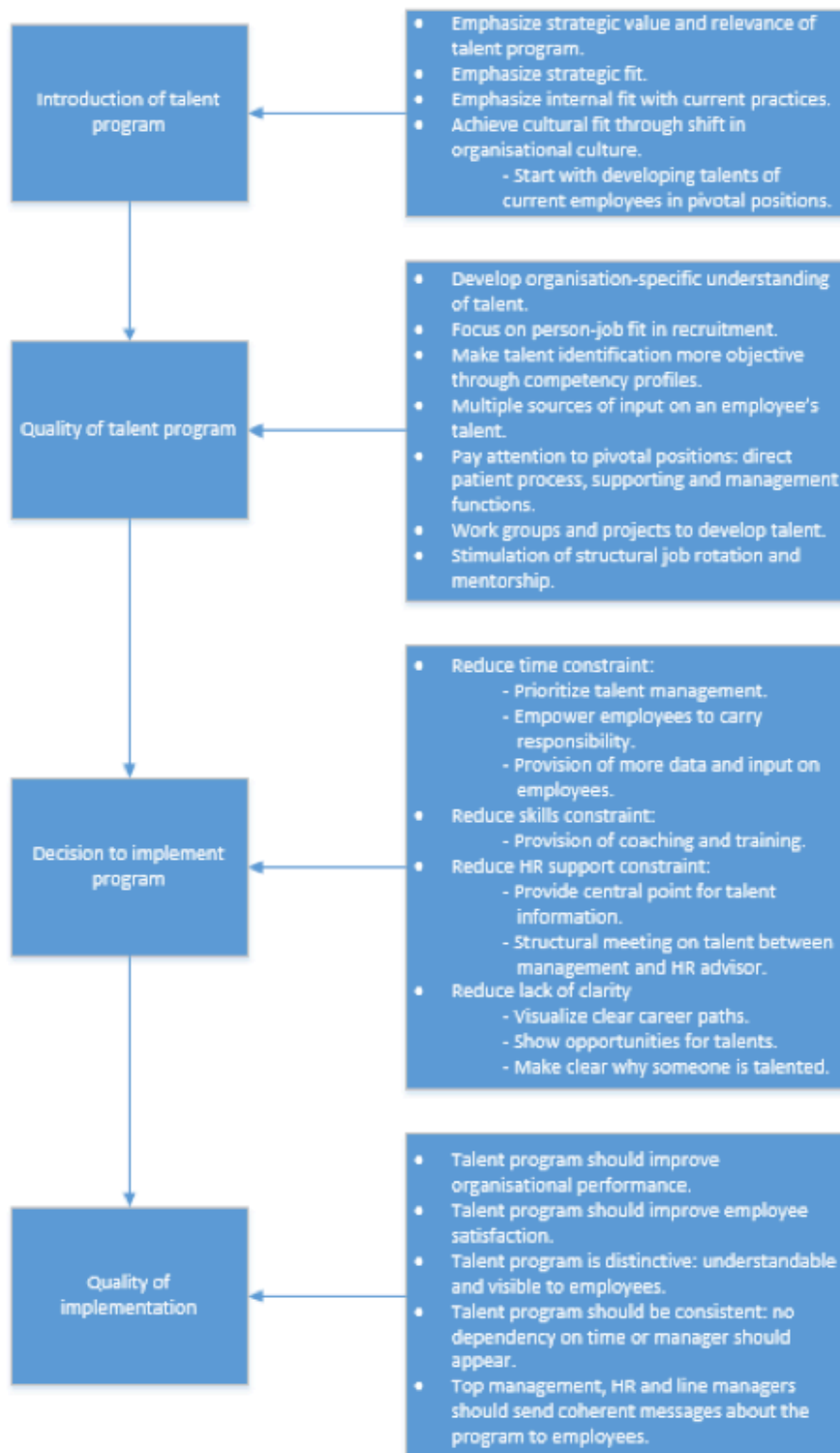


Figure 4: Summary of requirements needed per phase.

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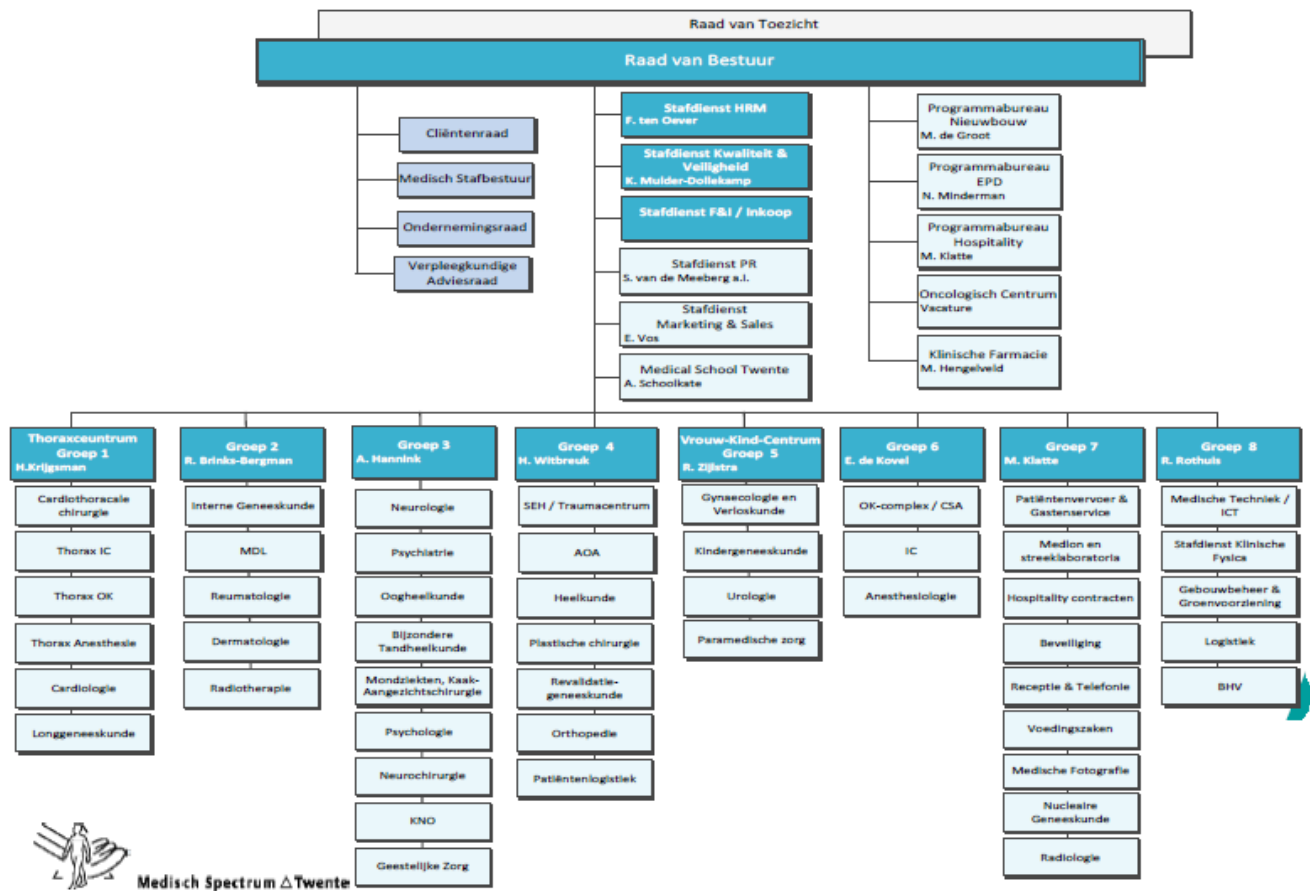
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Organisational chart MST



### Appendix 2: Interview framework top management

#### Introduction

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What is your function within MST?
- 3) How long have you been working in this function?

#### Introduction talent management

- 4) What constitutes a talented employee according to you?
- 5) Why should MST have a talent program?
- 6) What is the strategic value of a talent program for MST?
- 7) How does a talent program fit with MST?
  - a. How does it fit its organisational strategy?
  - b. How does it fit its culture?
  - c. How does it fit to other HR instruments currently implemented?

#### Instruments talent program

- 8) Can you explain an example of an employee who you identified as a talent?

- a. How did you identify it?
  - b. What happened with this person?
  - c. What could have been improved in this process?
- 9) Which instruments currently available to talented employees are good?
- 10) Which instruments could be improved?
- 11) What is your vision on how MST should deal with talent?
  - a. How should MST identify talent?
  - b. How should MST attract talent?
  - c. How should MST develop talent?
  - d. How should MST retain talent?
  - e. In which parts of the organisation is talent most important?
- 12) What do you miss within MST in relation to talent management?

### **Implementation talent management**

- 13) How could the implementation of talent management be stimulated within MST?
- 14) How could the implementation of talent management be made easier for line managers?
- 15) What results should a talent program for MST achieve?

## **Appendix 3: Interview framework HR management**

### **Introduction**

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What is your function within MST?
- 3) How long have you been working in this function?

### **Introduction talent management**

- 4) What constitutes a talented employee according to you?
- 5) Why should MST have a talent program?
- 6) What is the strategic value of a talent program for MST?
- 7) How does a talent program fit with MST?
  - a. How does it fit its organisational strategy?
  - b. How does it fit its culture?
  - c. How does it fit to other HR instruments currently implemented?

### **Instruments talent program**

- 8) Can you explain an example of an employee who you identified as a talent?
  - a. How did you identify it?
  - b. What happened with this person?
  - c. What could have been improved in this process?
- 9) Which instruments currently available to talented employees are good?
- 10) Which instruments could be improved?
- 11) What is your vision on how MST should deal with talent?
  - a. How should MST identify talent?
  - b. How should MST attract talent?

- c. How should MST develop talent?
  - d. How should MST retain talent?
  - e. In which parts of the organisation is talent most important?
- 12) What do you miss within MST in relation to talent management?

### **Implementation talent management**

- 13) Who should be responsible for the execution of a talent program within MST?
- 14) To what extent can a line manager deal with talent?
- a. To what extent do they have the time to do so?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
  - b. To what extent do they have the competences to do so?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
  - c. To what extent do they have the right guidance by HR?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
  - d. To what extent do they have the proper motivation to do so?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
- 15) How could the identification of talent be made easier for line managers?
- 16) How could the attraction of talent be made easier for line managers?
- 17) How could the development of talent be made easier for line managers?
- 18) How could the retaining of talent be made easier for line managers?
- 19) What results should a talent program achieve within MST?

## **Appendix 4: Interview framework line management**

### **Introduction**

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What is your function within MST?
- 3) How long have you been working in this function?

### **Introduction talent management**

- 4) What constitutes a talented employee according to you?
- 5) Why should MST have a talent program?
- 6) What is the strategic value of a talent program for MST?
- 7) How does a talent program fit with MST?
  - a. How does it fit its organisational strategy?
  - b. How does it fit its culture?
  - c. How does it fit to other HR instruments currently implemented?

### **Instruments talent program**

- 8) Can you explain an example of an employee who you identified as a talent?
  - a. How did you identify it?
  - b. What happened with this person?
  - c. What could have been improved in this process?
- 9) Which instruments currently available to talented employees are good?

- 10) Which instruments could be improved?
- 11) What is your vision on how MST should deal with talent?
  - a. How should MST identify talent?
  - b. How should MST attract talent?
  - c. How should MST develop talent?
  - d. How should MST retain talent?
  - e. In which parts of the organisation is talent most important?
- 12) What do you miss within MST in relation to talent management?

### **Implementation talent management**

- 13) Who should be responsible for the execution of a talent program within MST?
- 14) To what extent can you deal with talent?
  - a. To what extent do you have the time to do so?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
  - b. To what extent do you have the competences to do so?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
  - c. To what extent do you have the right guidance by HR?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
  - d. To what extent do you have the proper motivation to do so?
    - i. How could the organisation improve this?
- 15) How could the identification of talent be made easier for you?
- 16) How could the attraction of talent be made easier for you?
- 17) How could the development of talent be made easier for you?
- 18) How could the retaining of talent be made easier for you?
- 19) What results should a talent program achieve within MST?

## **Appendix 5: Interview framework employees**

### **Introduction**

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What is your function within MST?
- 3) How long have you been working in this function?

### **Introduction talent management**

- 4) What constitutes a talented employee according to you?
- 5) Why should MST have a talent program?
- 6) What is the strategic value of a talent program for MST?
- 7) How does a talent program fit with MST?
  - a. How does it fit its organisational strategy?
  - b. How does it fit its culture?
  - c. How does it fit to other HR instruments currently implemented?

### **Instruments talent program**

- 8) How is attention paid to talent on your department?

- ## Implementation talent program

- ## Appendix 6: Traits of talents according to stakeholders.



## Appendix 7: Expectations basic values MST

<b>Passion</b>	<b>Attention</b>	<b>Decisiveness</b>
You're a talent in what you do.	You greet colleagues and show interest in each other and in the patients.	You act fast.
You enjoy your work and this radiates out.	Your eyes and ears are open to others.	You are clear.
You are proud of your job and MST	You listen to the patient's wishes and take these serious.	You are self confident.
You do this job because you want to contribute to patient's care.	You collaborate.	You are responsible and do not hide behind others.
	You act consciously.	You are pro-active.
	You do not think that someone else will take care of a problem.	You can give and accept feedback.
	You stay curious.	