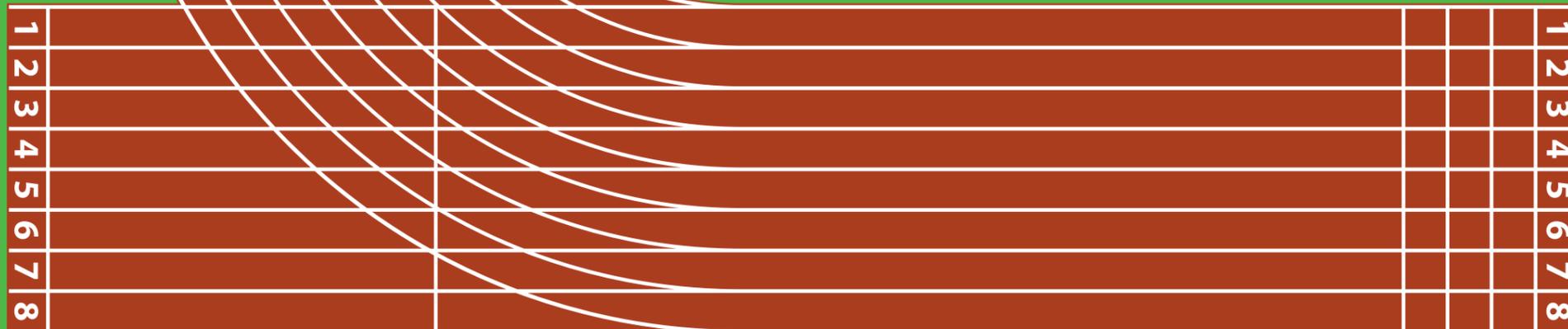


MANAGING EMPLOYEES LIKE INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES

By Giulia Bonapace, CEO, The Technancial Company



Every successful company has vital key ingredients which contribute to high performance continuity. For The Technancial Company (TTC), it's HR-focused management. We mustn't ultimately forget that competitive advantage comes from people, not products or patents.

As in all competitive arenas – sports or otherwise – rivalry and severe competition are common and ours is no different. A large part of company life is spent “beating the competition”. To strive for better results on a daily basis is paramount in achieving this. In other words, one has no time to rest on one's laurels. Hard 24/7 work, in a complex market is our norm.

In our scenario, to corner such a demanding market, a company's major challenge is the “ad-personam” (individualised) management of exceptionally talented people. This must

be combined with effective courses of action, allowing each person to cooperate and collectively work towards a common goal. Each individual must feel a part of a group and the group must become a team. Any success is a collective success.

The approach we have adopted for TTC is termed “Strengths-Based management”. It puts the focus on the individual's innate strengths. The idea is that each and every one works 90 percent to their strengths and 10 percent to what they are trying to develop. Each one becomes unique, and therefore merits and receives special consideration in every aspect of his or her professional and private life. This strong individualisation leads to self-improvement and self-esteem, which several studies, over time, have proven to be the first motivational factor/engine of great people.

In this “optimal performance zone”, a more steady level of performance is possible, due to the low levels of anxiety and stress. Competition is directed outward. Only rivalry is permitted

internally, and only in the etymological meaning of the word, i.e. “the opportunity to drain any single drop from all the sources of knowledge” provided by the company, with the specific purpose of constantly bettering himself/herself and earning his/her spot in such an elite team. As a consequence, negative thoughts and hostility generated by being a negative environment vanish.

The workplace acts like a facilitator for the maximal expression of the talent and there is a constant awareness of what exactly each person, as an “individual athlete”, brings to the team.

Particular attention is paid to the general atmosphere of the office. Knowledge sharing and relationships are fostered and “genuine”, as well as reciprocal help and solid support. All of this often leads to the controversial analogy of the workplace like a family. Families have different rules, different traditions and different styles. Not all are perfect. Today, TTC can assert that it benefits of a family like work environment

in terms of transparency, mutual respect, and communication. The culture of “having each other's back” is a true company value.

The outcome is a strong sense of belonging, a feeling of camaraderie, and therefore a nurturing and supportive company identity, that runs much deeper during turbulent times. Same as in Olympian sport, when training loads increase, competitions approach and therefore pressure climbs, individual athletes join forces.

But taking a family approach means, above all, establishing a foundation of trust and loyalty. In TTC, work flexibility is authorised, people are encouraged to speak-up and their perspectives are heard, personality and opinions clashes are handled with an open mindset.

With a trusted culture, though the greatest organisational teams can make financial results go through the roof, every goal becomes attainable.

