

WHAT DO EXPERTS EXPECT FROM HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Knowing how to attract highly qualified employees known as experts is of critical importance to many organizations in the new knowledge economy. The aim of this exploratory empirical study is to examine experts' expectations in regard to organizational and job related factors. After defining what is an expert, we review academic research on what attracts employees and how this applies to experts. Our data come from a large organization in the high technology sector. Results show that, in many ways, the expectations of experts differ from those of less qualified employees. For instance, when they consider a potential employer, financial rewards linked to performance are more significant to experts than to other employees whereas unusual perks (e.g., lounge) and work-life balance are less significant.

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INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the industrialized world, the knowledge-based economy is on the increase. This particular form of economy is mainly based on the intellectual capital of an organization. This is not a new idea. In 1776, the economist Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, did not only include material wealth in his definition of fixed capital but equally included the value of experience useful to all members of an organization. Further, he considered education and training to be key examples of human investment. Nowadays, businesses are increasingly relying on intellectual capital rather than physical capital as a source of value creation. In numerous sectors of activities, we are witnessing a truly « intellectual revolution » which confers a strategic dimension upon immaterial assets. These assets, which are of an intellectual nature, constitute rare, key resources capable of differentiation which can create a lasting competitive advantage if the conditions are right.

Intellectual capital has been studied by many academic research scientists (Bontis, 1998, 1999, 2003; Edvinsson & Malone, 1997; Lev, 2001; Roos, Roos, Dragonetti & Edvinsson, 1997). It can be defined as a group of resources, some of them having an external component (e.g., brands, patents, reputation and consumer satisfaction levels) whereas others being more internal to an organization (e.g., strategic competence of a company's employees). Highly qualified employees known as experts are at the tipping point between external and internal resources. Knowing how to attract such personnel is thus of critical importance to a business (Deloitte, 2008; Peretti, 2008).

Attracting experts is even more important in the high technology industry sector which is essentially an innovative sector. The productivity and competitiveness in this sector rest mostly on the creativity of its personnel (Iles, Chuai & Preece, 2010). Competition appears to boil down to the differential in knowledge between business competitors in the sector (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Thus, experts constitute a key resource for businesses that want to survive and grow. It is strategically important for top-managers as

well as operational managers, to concentrate on this target group of employees and understand what expectations they might have in regard to the organization and the job itself.

The main objective of this article is to examine the expectations of experts in regard to organizational and job related factors and to offer suggestions to HR managers as to how best to deal with this strategic resource. Specifically, we want to answer the following research question: what do experts want in terms of human resources practices and to what extent do these expectations differ from those of less qualified employees? Our paper is structured as follow: First, we define the concept of expert. Eventhough the term “expert” is very often used in professional settings, the scientific literature does not offer a clear definition of that concept. Second, we review the relevant academic literature on attraction. Specifically, we present a summary of case literature focusing on the notion of expectations as well as the perception of employees themselves on the subject of what makes a good employer. Third, we present the data and methodology used in this exploratory empirical study, this section being followed by our results. Last, we draw conclusions that are of both scientific and managerial importance.

LITTERATURE REVIEW

What is an Expert?

Experts are a strategic resource. As an integral part of the human capital of any organization, experts have a very direct impact on performance, first because of their skills (Becker, Huselid, Pickus & Spratt, 1997) and second because they constitute a particularly volatile resource, courted for a price and actively pursued by « head-hunters ». An expert whose talent is either not formally recognized by the company or whose talent is under appreciated, can attract interest from and be lured away by a market competitor. This can result in the loss of a key resource and cause recruitment difficulties in finding a replacement for the particular resource skill-set of the departing employee. Poor management of experts in a company actually has two negative consequences – firstly, the impact it has upon competitive edge and market position; and secondly the impact it has upon reputation in the employment market. Being able to identify talent, attracting and retaining the expertise of key personnel is a crucial human capital management issue in terms of HR function.

Identifying experts in a business is not an easy task. A recent study (Abraham, Saulquin & Soparnot, 2011) identified the key characteristics of an expert. As detailed in Table 1, an expert can be defined along three main characteristics: knowledge, significant role in decision making and experience.

Table 1: Expert Definitions from the Academic Literature

Bouchez (2006) Knowledge	Roquepio (1997) Role in decision-making	Trépos (1996) Experience
Defined an expert in terms of actions based upon knowledge Transforms and creates knowledge, manipulates concepts and ideas.	Defined an expert in terms of role played in decision- making process Contributes towards ‘informed view and balanced judgement’, provides knowledge in order to facilitate decision-making process	Defined an expert in terms of experience and background Has experienced danger (experiti), has been confronted and had his knowledge tested (expertis)
Difference between expert who resolves complex problems and the creative expert who puts forward inventive and commercially viable propositions	Difference between scientific statement and and scientific expertise (existence of a decision-making process)	Expert distinguished by ability to deal with situations as a result of experience acquired in dealing with similarly difficult situations in the past

An Expert can be defined along three main characteristics: knowledge, significant role in decision making and experience.

An expert possesses knowledge above and beyond the norm. According to Bouchez (2006), an expert doesn’t just apply knowledge. He or she is first and foremost a creator of knowledge. The expert employee doesn’t just deal with information but has a genuine ability to manipulate ideas and concepts. In

this respect, an expert possesses a level of competence over and above the norm. In the majority of large companies, competence (knowledge, know-how and life skills) is measured by specially adapted criteria (employment and competency reference systems) on scales of several levels (for example five levels). An expert is at the very top of this scale of measurement. Further, in terms of being a creator of knowledge, the expert carries with him a certain reputation which situates him or her on a second scale, namely prestige. This recognizes that an employee can be specifically sought out on the basis of his ability, have his ability recognized by others, enjoy a reputation because of his ability and be revered as a result.

An expert also occupies a special role in the decision-making process of an organization (Roquepio, 1997). In order to appreciate this particular characteristic, the scientific expert is the one which perhaps most readily comes to mind. The scientific expert is consulted during the decision-making process in order to bring the full weight of his knowledge (recognized and accepted as being scientifically sound) to assist the decision-making process. His role in this instance is to provide knowledge not make decisions. He helps create an 'informed view and balanced judgment' on various aspects of a given problem. In a business, an expert might have a different role, in as much as the expertise sought may be more technical than scientific and in as much as the salaried expert is contractually bound to a company. Personnel considered to be experts are paid to provide advice, wherever possible based on knowledge established scientifically; or alternately to provide an opinion based on personal conviction, the conviction itself being the product of the expert's own experience and competence.

Last, the career projectory of an expert, and thus his or her experience, is in general particular. As Trépos (1996) indicates, the Latin origin of the term expert suggests "experience", or in other words, a certain testing or endurance. An expert is therefore someone who has experienced situations, who has confronted the dual dangers of ignorance and error. As a result, he is deemed capable of objectivity, not like someone swayed by passion or ideology. In trying to describe the factors shaping the career path of an expert, the following are good markers: 1) a career path distinguished by problems which have been successfully overcome and which have resulted in the acquisition of experience as a result; 2) a current work reputation which is further proof of his ability to deploy his know-how and considerable problem-solving skills; and 3) a positive future since reputation is acquired and there is an expectation of further success in the future.

In summary, an expert is a person who is imbued with competence at the highest level of the scale of intellectual knowledge within a business, which reflects a capacity to adapt knowledge to any given situation which is new, complex and unexpected. Secondly, an expert is someone who has particular legitimacy and carries particular weight, both within the organization and outside it in terms of either peer or trademark recognition and who often has a large social network and a well-earned reputation as a result. The position of the expert is all the more strategic within an organization because he or she occupies a central role either as an advisor or as a decision-maker. Success in the past and particularly the prospect of future success is an indicator of the value an expert represents. It is therefore crucial for a business to know how to manage this particular category of personnel as much to prevent them from being poached by the opposition as to retain them for the business.

Human resource practices have evolved significantly over the past few decades. In today's world, it's less about means and more about the ability to understand the expectations of employees within a particular field. Since the contribution an expert can make is contingent to and depends on a particular business, its working environment and style of management, it is essential to develop an understanding of the expectations an expert might have both in relation to the wider organization generally and to his or her immediate work environment and job in particular. However, to our knowledge, there is no literature on this precise subject. Thus, we reviewed literature on expectations at large. The following section presents a summary of that literature.

Which Factors Attract Employees?

More than three decades ago, a seminal study conducted by Jurgensen (1978) examined employment characteristic preferences such as the type of business, employment security, work colleagues, career development, management, pay, working conditions and working hours etc. Further, these characteristics were studied by demographic variables such as gender, age, level of qualification and marital status. In brief, results show that gender matters in regard to preferences. Research has also explored relationships between employment characteristics and recruitment (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005; Rynes & Barber, 1990; Turban, 2001). However, none of these studies made any distinction between different categories of employee. The « fit » between the workplace culture and a candidate's individual personality can also have an impact and influence upon the attraction of personnel (Judge & Cable, 1997; Sheridan, 1992; Van Vianen, 2000).

In regard to practices related to HR, our review of previous research indicates that two key groups of factors emerge in relation to discussion about what attract employees: organizational practices (ex: work-life balance policies) and job related practices (ex: pay). Review of previous academic literature suggests that explicative variables related to job characteristics are more important in terms of attraction, recruitment and retention.

The literature reveals that six factors have a significant impact on attraction (Carless & Imber, 2007). These factors not only relate to the content of the job itself but also deal with issues peripheral to the employment. They relate specifically to HR practices, tools or groups of tools or practices.

The first factor is the nature of the work itself (the job one is doing). The quality of the job for which they are recruited (or are currently doing) is of paramount importance to them. The job itself needs to be professionally stimulating and interesting. Individuals in this sector seek work that is interesting, provides the opportunity to use previous experience accrued and also the opportunity to stretch themselves and so acquire more experience. They particularly appreciate varied and challenging work.

A second important factor has to do with the immediate work environment. Working as part of a team either physically or virtually, or project-based work requires the employee to belong to at least one if not several social networks, including links with close or more distant colleagues or teams. A pleasant work place and working environment stimulates the work ethic. In relation to this specific category of employee – the expert, in addition to workplace environment, the intellectual quality of the team in which he or she works is also important. This factor and the previous concern the job itself and what it can bring to an employee.

The third factor is global compensation (direct and indirect as well as extrinsic and intrinsic compensation). As the other following factors, it relates more generally to the organization as a whole and what it can offer an employee. Global compensation includes compensation in all possible contexts such as benefits, immediate or deferred salary enhancement, career advancement or status and reputation involved in current or future posts (pay and career). Reward linked to performance is a practice which needs to be prioritised in the fight for talent (Sturman, Trevor, Boudreau & Gerhart, 2003).

The fourth factor is corporate image or reputation. Studies show that employees are attracted to well-known businesses, with a good reputation and an unblemished ethical background where values similar to their own prevail (Judge & Cable, 1997). A fifth organizational factor is location. A pleasant town or work complex, the quality of the surroundings for both the employee and his family, availability of public transport and access to motorway routes, proximity to family are equally factors which help attract and retain an employee.

Finally, the sixth factor relates to health and welfare or, in other words, an individual's search for wellbeing, physical and mental health and a work life balance. Some companies are keen to invest in the health and wellbeing of their employees by offering sports facilities and activities, and other personal services, corporate concierges, massage or personal training. Included in this sixth factor is the need a business may feel to monitor workloads for their staff to achieve a good home life -work balance.

More recently, characteristics such as corporate image and company ethics, workplace culture, and social responsibility have emerge as important considerations. In support, results from Tsai and Yang (2010) indicate that corporate image - covering product, service and company ethics- has an impact upon attraction and recruitment of potential candidates. A good fit between a company's ethics and an individual's values also has a positive effect upon recruitment (Coldwell, Billsberry, Van Meurs & Marsh, 2007). Prospective employees have increasingly been attracted by the social dimension and social responsibility policies of a company (Corrigall, 2008; Thibodeaux & Jose, 1999) particularly those who demonstrate respect for work-family balance (Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010). Base on both the social identity theory and the signal theory, Greening and Turban (2000) suggested that personnel, especially the most talented, are particularly proud to be associated with companies which demonstrate a proven track record of social responsibility. The theory of social identity is bound up with the image an employee might have of himself or herself and how this is influenced by the image and reputation of the employer (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994).

On the topic of talent management, Mirallès (2007) emphasizes the need for HR practices to have strong connections between four different functions – scouting (the whole range of practices involved in recruitment of the very best candidates), casting (ability to create a good team and thus demonstrate the enjoyment to be found in working as a group), coaching (which encompasses all personal development techniques such as individual career development, and methodologies which promote team bonding, participation and motivation) and cocooning (which relates to resource retention and protection). Our study focuses on the first function or scouting. To our knowledge, there is no empirical study on what experts want, on from the opposite perspective, what can an organization offer to an expert to attract him or her.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data

Our data come from a survey conducted amongst employees of a worldwide business in the high technology sector. To be more specific, our sample was made up of all new employees hired between April 2009 and September 2010 in one North American office of the company. Data collection was carried out electronically using the SurveyMonkey website, a secure site frequently used by North American university researchers. Within the first six months of starting their new job, each new employee was invited via an email to complete a questionnaire. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and provision was made for the employees to complete the survey during work hours. The questionnaire included a section on individual characteristics and another on employee expectations in terms of organizational and job characteristics sought in a prospective employer. Employees were divided into three groups to facilitate the administration of the survey. Group 1 included employees hired between April and September 2009 and surveyed in October 2009; Group 2 included employees hired between October 2009 and March 2010 and surveyed in April 2010; and Group 3 included employees hired between April and September 2010 and surveyed in October 2010. In order to maximize our response rate, a reminder email was sent two weeks after the first introductory email. In addition, a research assistant was on site for few days at the start of the survey to encourage participation and to answer questions.

In total, 353 employees participated in our study. Group 1 included 181 participants out of a total of 246 new employees (73.57 % response rate). Group 2 comprised 90 participants out of a total of 114 new employees (78.95 % response rate). Finally, group 3 comprised 82 participants out of a total of 96 new employees (85.42 % response rate). Our overall response rate is thus of 77.41 % (353 / 456). This is a particularly high response rate for this type of survey.

Measures

Our independent variable has to do with being an expert or not. The company where we conducted our survey divides its employees into five different levels of ability and contribution: 1) Works under supervision; 2) Is Autonomous; 3) Has problem solving ability; 4) Can innovate; and 5) Has demonstrated leadership. An employee at the «works under supervision» level will have a good knowledge of his professional subject. His work needs to be supervised by someone more experienced, because he is basically working at apprentice level. In terms of competence he or she will be able to use functional tools of a basic nature or understand simple processes depending on the task involved. Such an employee has to respect the existence of constraints. An employee, who demonstrates «autonomy» has a good understanding of his role, behaves in a professionally responsible way and is fully functional in this work. There is regular supervision of his work. In terms of competence he has an efficient working knowledge of the majority of the tools used or is able to understand concepts and processes involved in the work of his team as well as their impact upon other teams, depending on the task involved. He is able to respond to a well defined request. An employee with «problem solving ability» is an individual who is able to solve complex problems or issues, take important decisions and share his knowledge. He has to report to a senior colleague on strategic matters. At this level of competence, he is able to make maximum use of tools and processes, depending on the task involved and is able to suggest improvements. He is able to anticipate problems and offer solutions. An employee who is considered to be at the «innovation» level has a track record of innovation, of creative thinking and is able to introduce concrete steps to encourage the successful development of his team. He shares his own expertise and sets his own targets. In terms of his ability he develops strategies as well as tools or processes depending on the particular case. He is involved in the creative process and puts forward ideas. The last employee category is defined as «leadership» level. An employee finding himself in this category has a significant influence in his field and is considered to be a role model. He represents his division and carries out his leadership role efficiently. In terms of his ability, he has a track record of leadership and ability to inspire a team. He is able to inspire and engage his particular division.

The HR department placed each surveyed employee in one of the above five categories. We have used this categorization to create our variable model in relation to experts. We believe that the categories of «innovation» and «leadership» best describe the concept of an expert. In total, 37 participants had been placed in these two categories. In addition, as discussed above, experts also have in general a very high level of education. We thus added this variable to our categorization. In summary, a participant who was classified by the company in the innovation or leadership category and who had a university qualification (minimum three years of study at university) was classified as an expert (Coding = 1) whereas all other employees were classified as non experts (Coding = 0). Out of a total of 353 participating employees, 22 (6.23 %) were coded as experts. The fact that there are so few in this category is coherent with the existing academic research suggesting that there is a very small proportion of employees in any given business who fall into the expert category.

Our dependent variables are the expectations in regard to organizational and job related factors. Our questionnaire included 68 items. Table 2 details each item. As one can notice, there is no item relating to location, a key factor pointed out in the literature. This factor was not important for the organization we worked with. Specifically, participants were asked to answer the following question: «To what degree are the following factors important to you when applying for a job with a prospective employer?».

Participants were asked to use a 6 point Likert scale where 1 represents « not important at all » and 6 represents « extremely important ». In order to check the latent structure of the characteristics under study, we conducted factor analysis. Since it was possible that our factors were correlated, our exploratory factor analysis was undertaken as recommended by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2005) using direct oblimin rotation. Sixteen factors, each having an eigen value > 1, emerged from this first rotation. Given this large number of factors, we decided to retain only those with an eigen value = > 2. This gave us five factors.

Table 2: Matrix of Structural Factors after Rotation*

	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
Snacks paid by the employer (fruits, baegels, etc)	0.715	0.031	0.039	0.155	0.235
On-site game/fov librairie	0.709	0.201	-0.045	0.162	0.161
On-site lounge	0.697	0.210	0.107	0.120	0.135
Employer subsidized cafeteria	0.672	0.044	0.191	0.103	0.172
Diversified social activities	0.666	0.178	0.162	0.028	0.041
Ergonomic services	0.636	0.122	0.239	0.197	0.281
On-sit medical clinic	0.630	0.034	0.200	0.124	-0.076
Concierge services	0.607	0.150	0.149	0.127	0.103
On-site library	0.600	0.213	0.085	0.174	0.182
On-sit gym	0.591	0.035	0.174	0.155	-0.107
On-site daycare	0.587	0.150	0.107	-0.014	-0.005
Language courses paid by the employer	0.574	0.087	0.227	0.057	-0.055
Work processes & practices oriented toward quality	0.089	0.738	0.141	0.108	0.186
Frequent communication with employees	0.227	0.719	0.277	0.056	-0.040
Work environment that promotes creativity	0.124	0.689	0.121	0.054	0.262
Colleagues who excel in their work	-0.021	0.685	0.195	0.191	0.040
Good interactions with colleagues	0.139	0.676	0.224	0.093	-0.109
Transparent communication with employees	0.104	0.672	0.187	0.075	0.175
Supportive colleagues	0.246	0.632	0.313	0.091	-0.153
Easv going and fun work environment	0.211	0.631	0.128	-0.002	0.126
Innovative work environment	0.212	0.622	0.111	0.097	0.282
Good interaction with management	0.140	0.574	0.239	0.246	0.127
Opportunity to take initiatives daily	0.067	0.530	0.249	0.184	0.026
Numerous hours of training per year	0.335	0.163	0.710	0.051	0.071
Numerous training opportunities per year	0.341	0.202	0.702	0.087	0.135
Professional experience that helps my career	-0.029	0.168	0.684	0.204	0.150
Ongoing support on skills development	0.277	0.399	0.668	0.075	0.038
Good career development opportunities	0.079	0.275	0.666	0.133	0.037
Job that acts as a springboard for a future job	0.063	0.062	0.646	0.227	0.071
Opportunity to develop my technical skills	0.182	0.260	0.635	0.042	0.168
Opportunity to develop my non-technical skills	0.252	0.292	0.591	0.087	-0.124
Reimbursement of training courses	0.374	0.164	0.583	0.166	0.215
Opportunity to receive one on one coaching	0.340	0.317	0.565	0.121	0.046
Culture that promotes learning	0.104	0.338	0.550	0.090	0.081
Individual performance-based bonus	0.120	0.079	0.092	0.761	0.112
Stock option plan	0.303	0.049	0.149	0.665	-0.161
Performance-based wage adjustment	-0.054	0.126	0.274	0.659	0.163
Stock purchase plan	0.330	0.069	0.118	0.653	-0.155
Team performance-based bonus	0.310	0.237	0.009	0.614	-0.039
Competency-based wage adjustment	-0.004	0.137	0.250	0.606	0.205
Organizational profit-sharing-based bonus	0.281	0.239	0.077	0.601	0.043
Work schedule that permits me to have a decent private life	0.189	0.099	0.114	-0.004	0.729
Work environment that helps me to balance work and life	0.239	0.149	0.117	0.044	0.617
Work environment that respects me	0.051	0.310	0.221	0.091	0.601

* Extraction method: Analysis by main component. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser standardization

Then, we carried out a second factor analysis specifically extracting five factors from the original total of 68 items. This was conducted using a varimax rotation since this method produces very similar results to direct oblimin rotation but is able to extract uncorrelated factors. Items with a score below 0.50 were withdrawn from the sample – 19 items in total. We then carried out a third factor analysis using varimax rotation on the 52 remaining items – with extraction of the 5 factors. Results revealed that five items scored > 0.40 on more than one factor. These items were removed. A fourth factor analysis using varimax rotation was carried out on the 47 remaining items and the results enabled us to remove three items with scores less than 0.50.

The results of the final factor analysis carried out on the remaining 44 items are presented in Table 2. We carried out factor analysis of the main components using varimax rotation. The Bartlett test for sphericity (score of 0.00), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) validity measuring tool score of 0.906 indicate a very satisfactory result overall. Results from Table 2 suggest the five following categories of expectations : 1- Unusual perks (12 items), 2- Dynamic work environment (11 items), 3- Development and career (11 items), 4- Incentive compensation (7 items), and 5- Work-life balance (3 items).

We calculated the alpha coefficients for each of these five factors. Results were as follows: Unusual perks – benefits and workplace environment factors $\alpha = 0.901$; Dynamic work environment $\alpha = 0.904$; Development and career $\alpha = 0.910$; Incentive compensation $\alpha = 0.835$; Work-life balance $\alpha = 0.784$. The high rate of alphas scored indicates that all these factors demonstrate an excellent level of internal consistency. In order to carry out our statistical analysis we applied the factorial score to each participant for each category of expectation. The factorial scores were standardized and indicated an average of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. For instance, individuals with a negative factorial score in the area of unusual perks showed a lower than average level of expectation in comparison to other participants. Similarly, participants with a positive score had a higher than average level of expectation in comparison to the rest of the group.

The five factors which came out of our factor analysis are coherent with this existing body of research reviewed earlier which proposes a six factor model (our five factors plus location).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What matters most for experts? Do these expectations differ between experts and non experts? These are the two questions we tried to address in this study. Table 3 presents the means by factor for each category of employees as well as the results from T-Test in regard to the five factors under study.

As mentioned above, we used factorial standardized scores. Thus, all scores have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. To decode our results, one can use the following two cases: individuals with a positive factorial score for the factor “Dynamic work environment” show a higher than average level of expectation in comparison to other participants whereas individuals with a negative score have a lower than average level of expectation in comparison to the rest of the group. Considering this, our results indicate, from most important to least, experts’ expectations are : incentive compensation, dynamic work environment, development and career, work-life balance and unusual perks. Respectively, non experts show the following ranking but with less variance among factors: unusual perks, work-life balance, development and career, dynamic work environment and incentive compensation. This ranking appears to be the contrary of the one for experts.

A series of T-Test was conducted to verify if experts’ expectations are statistically different than those of non experts. Results from Table 3 indicate that the expectations of experts in relation to unusual perks ($M = -0.441$) are lower than expectations of non experts (0.017). There is a statistically significant difference between the two means ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, the expectations that experts have in regard to

work-life balance (-0.333) are also lower than those of non experts (0.016). The T-test is statistically significant ($p < 0.1$). On the contrary, results show that experts have higher expectations in regard to incentive compensation (0.428) linked to performance than non experts (-0.024). This mean difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Finally, results from Table 3 show no significant difference between the expectations of experts and those of non experts in relation to the desire for a dynamic work environment ($p > 0.1$) as well development and career ($P > 0.1$). The means on these two last factors are not statistically different.

Table 3: Means and T-test Results for the Expectations of Experts and Non Experts

	Experts	Other employees
Unusual perks – benefits, facilities and workplace environment T-Test	-0.441	0.017 -2.100 **
Dynamic work environment T-Test	0.153	-0.007 0.727
Development and career T-Test	-0.258	0.012 -1.225
Incentive compensation linked to performance T-Test	0.428	-0.024 2.070 **
Work-life balance T-Test	-0.333	0.016 -1.590 *

n = 22 experts, 328 other employees and 3 values removed.
* = < 0.10 and ** = 0.05 (one-tailed t-tests)

These results are innovative and interesting in several ways. They show that experts are attracted by organisations that offer compensation packages that reflect performance and contributions to the organisation. This result is in line with the view that experts have a greater appreciation of their market value and feel that this above-average value should be rewarded. Furthermore, this result is also in line with Vroom’s Expectancy theory. Experts know that their efforts lead to performance. Hence, they expect to be rewarded for their performance. Consequently, organisations wishing to attract experts more readily will need to offer them global compensation that encompasses not only a competitive based pay but also a mix of incentive-pay practices such as individual performance based-bonus, different type of stock plans, competency based pay, etc.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The aim of this study was to examine experts’ expectations in regard to organizational and job related factors. Using data from a sample of employees of a large worldwide business in the high technology sector, results show that experts focus more on incentive compensation and focus less on unusual perks and work-life balance when applying for a job with a prospective employer. Furthermore, their expectations differ from those of non experts. The latter category of employees focus more on unusual perk, work-life balance and development and career when considering a prospective employer.

This study encompasses some limitations. The fact that there are few experts in any given organization is a problem. In order to conduct research related specifically to experts, it is difficult to obtain a large sample of experts. As a result, the statistical power is limited given the limited degrees of freedom. Another limitation concerns the use of cross-sectional data. They are restricted to a specific point in time and do not permit to study the relationships among variables over time. We suggest that future work be carried out on larger samples of experts. In addition such research could also attempt to actually measure the value of an expert. This would be a most worthwhile exercise particularly since our results

demonstrate that what an expert prizes above all other factors, and also what is more important to him than to other category of employee, is financial recognition of their talent, so it would be interesting indeed to find out the approximate value they represent for organizations. Researchers would need to put forward a business operations model to help companies make decisions on compensation packages for experts. This is something the corporate management sector should seriously consider.

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