

How Darwin and X-Men can help you find a job in the sport industry?

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September 2020

Introduction

Is your genetic code the source of your career opportunities? The biggest obstacle to evolution (personal, professional) is fear. Fear of change in particular. Would the global economic performance be blocked by a simple neurological signal from our reptilian brain? Would the instinct of survival have inhibited the desire to leave one's comfort zone? Should we wonder how to leave the comfort zone in order to evolve in our lives? In our careers? But how to perform without evolution?

Simply thanks to what you already are: mutants!

Darwin has spent years of his life about the question of evolution. As evolution is mutation, we could ask ourselves how evolution has led us to competition. As competition is often associated to sports and to recruitment processes, we can logically ask: how the origin of recruitment process of the sports industry has been affected by evolution?

Epigenetics and ecosystem analysis will be the answer.

The sports industry has become even more competitive due to the sanitary crises of COVID-19. We will conclude this article with reflections,

tips and tools that will guide you through your job research.

X-Men strategy for the sport industry?

The word "mutant" usually suggests science-fiction movies: people with strong abilities and powers like in the X-men movies. But mutations are normal. They are the origin of the diversity of any living organism. We are all mutants. Mutation leads to changes in behaviour or physical traits.

So, mutation = evolution. But mutations are random. They are accidents. So "mathematically," - accidents = evolution. Following Darwin's theory, we base our analysis on the fact that any organism evolves by better adapting to its environment, that helps it to survive. According to Darwin, these changes allow an organism to better adapt to its environment, which will help it to survive and have more progeny. Darwin is often victim of his own research. With time, people translated his theory by "*The natural selection is the "selection" of the "strongest" organisms.*" This open discussion about the signification of "strongest," is it about muscles or about performances? His real theory postulates that it's about the "fittest" organism, which means: the organism who has a relative adaptive advantage within a given environment. In the economy or during a recruitment process, this is called a competitive advantage.

Companies want to find the candidate who "fit the best" in their open position. As the answer is directly linked to the environment (= ecosystem), the company has a direct impact on the answer. How to evaluate each company's

ecosystem? And how then to evaluate the competition between candidates in this specific ecosystem? According to this notable quote “*everybody is a genius. but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid!*” we can assume that the next trends in Human Resources will be to evaluate each “fish” according to its own ecosystem, and not the opposite.

Is sports the origin of competition in the recruitment process?

As the market is not exactly ready for this human resource disruption, let us first understand the sports industry market (where do we come from), in order to better understand where we are going.

The theory of natural selection could have been based on sports history. Origins of sports are based on hunting (kill to survive) and territory wars (evolve to lead). Somehow, competition has always been a tool for evolution, not only for sport competition or candidate recruitments.

Sport, wrote Jean Giraudoux, is the only way to preserve in man the qualities of the primitive man. It ensures the passage from the past stone era to the future stone era, from prehistory to post-history, sports provide some of the strongest virtues of the soul (energy, boldness, patience) to the body.

Sports, career and transmission of acquired characteristics

What about our ability to transmit acquired characteristics in our ecosystem? What is the impact on

our career? Would epigenetics be one of the key success factors in our career? Just as the worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* would have an attraction for a smell acquired by the experience of over 40 generations, could a candidate inherit a professional performance thanks to their ancestors? And what about sporting performances?

Epigenetics show that our behavior has an influence on the expression of our genes and rejects the determinism of conventional genetics. Joël de Rosnay describes this “Symphony of the living” as a double responsibility. Everyone can decide to put in place concrete actions to protect themselves from chronic diseases, live, and age in better health... collective awareness allows, by analogy, to influence the functioning of society and enterprise.

And if you can have influence on the economy, businesses and people, it means that you can have influence on jobs. A new world is opening up to analyze career opportunities!

Research has already proven that sports activities have an epigenetic impact: it changes the expression of our genes. “It is widely believed that physical activity improves health status, quality of life and longevity, but the mechanisms involved in this link remain unclear.” Professor Carl Johan Sundberg, team leader at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, has partly solved this mystery. In a study published in the journal *Epigenetics*, the researcher and his team prove that regular physical exercise has an effect at the epigenetic level, in the nucleus of muscle cells.

Could we learn one day that managers could improve their leadership through epigenetics? The next revolution in Human Resources could come from epigenetics, in addition to the Darwinian understanding of the ecosystem in order to be able to “fit” perfectly with the business we want to work for.

How to get a job when nobody recruits?

The sports industry has been particularly affected by the Covid-19 health crisis. For the past 6 months no sporting event has been held “traditionally” and we do not know how long this status quo will last. Many companies have frozen recruitment until the end of 2020. So, how to get hired anyway?

Companies need to continue their development if they want to survive, which means that you have 3 opportunities:

- Replacement of maternity/paternity leave. It might be for a short period, but you will have the opportunity to be noticed by managers of the company, develop your network and be on top of the list when recruitment processes will start again.
- Companies cannot hire you, but they can pay you. They continue to pay invoices even if they have stopped signing contracts. If you become a supplier instead of an employee, you could start working for the company. Instead of paying additional salaries (which they are not allowed to do), they will pay an invoice (which is not frozen).
- High market volatility is driving companies to be cautious. If you are applying to small/medium companies, coming with the guarantee that you will pay your

salary (and taxes) will lead to the reduction in the objection to your hiring (sponsor supports for a position of sponsorship manager for example).

Another thing to do is to change your approach to the market. This change targets and considers small and medium-sized enterprises. Are you used to targeting big federations or big companies? Consider smaller enterprises. They are more flexible than large companies and have been able to react faster. Perhaps even some of them were forward-thinking and benefited from the crisis. They might have now a strong growth rate.

A competitive market for the candidates = new job opportunities

Our history is full of success stories. Innovation comes from people who can see opportunities, even in times of crises. The sports industry is no different. The next few years could be the golden years. The current economic context forces disruptive innovation. For example, the French start-up Syllabs writes articles. The robot editor can write 36'000 articles in 4 hours. It could be used for comments and articles about worldwide sport competition.

In 2020, sports event companies have to face an unusual situation. It is not possible to organize events, and for the small numbers of events allowed, fans cannot be here to support the athletes. Innovation need to be strong enough to be able to reload the fan community. Athletes are also involved in this process. For example, Roger Federer launched « Tennis at home challenge » - a swiss buzz which has been appreciated by the community. Companies have also decided to focus on a « human

centered » strategies. We can forecast that Community Managers, Fan Engagement Supervisors and Sport Data Analysts are going to be key job positions to fulfil in the next decades. Job trends are strongly oriented on the digital. Technology, yes, but not only. Companies have understood that if they want to keep their key employees (and attract star profile), they need to be focused on their employee values. The sports industry is strongly an industry of values. Sports has a strong visibility on the market (through athletes, events, advertising ...) and will certainly be one of the first to massively represent the jobs of tomorrow: Gender Equity Managers or Sustainable Supervisors, for example. Strong visibility means strong responsibilities.

The sports industry is launching the new trends. Let us build the jobs of tomorrow, map new career opportunities, be impactful, be a mutant, and build your own evolution.

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