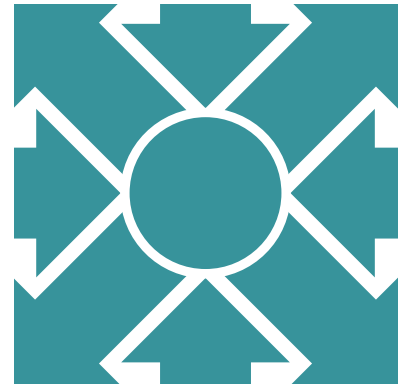


SEARCH



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To mark its six successful years of presence in Switzerland, last October the Alexander Hughes Group organized an event centred on its core values: Passion – Commitment- Daring

To illustrate one of its most significant missions, the recruitment of exceptional talents, the Alexander Hughes team invited Mr. Yves Rossy, « FusionMan » as the guest speaker. Yves Rossy is the first man to fly under a single jet-powered wing (see pictures next pages). Exactly two weeks before his presentation to a large group of clients, friends and other invitees of Alexander Hughes, Yves Rossy succeeded in his attempt to be the first flying man to cross the English Channel.

Seen by some, Yves Rossy is a dreamer, by others, a fabulous engineer and pilot. In fact, he has this extraordinary capability to be both at the same time! And that is exactly why Alexander Hughes thought he was the right person to illustrate what an exceptional talent is.

Indeed, Yves Rossy was trained by and flew for the Swiss Air Force as a fighter pilot for many years. He then joined the Swiss International Air Lines where he has been active for almost twenty years as pilot and is now an Airbus captain. Yet, his solid and rigorous training did not cancel out the possibility of one day making his dream come true.

By combining the knowledge gained through these experiences to his dream of free flying, and his imagination, hard work and perseverance, Yves Rossy managed the unthinkable: to develop an individual jet-powered wing, allowing him to be (almost) as free as a bird!

In Yves Rossy's accomplishments, we see all the elements of an exceptional talent: solid education and training, an ability to think out of the box, and the capacity to obstinately pursue one main goal. With these kinds of qualities, any obstacle becomes a challenge and a source of reflection towards better solutions!

This attitude is certainly one of the elements that constitute an exceptional talent!

In this issue of SEARCH, Dr. Xavier Comtesse, Head of AVENIR Suisse, also talks to us about his vision of exceptional talents, and you will have the pleasure of seeing some pictures of our fantastic evening with Yves Rossy. Enjoy!

Richard Aeschmann

Business manager, Alexander Hughes Switzerland

High potentials: building your company's future management team

Most large international companies have developed high potential programmes over the last few years to better meet impending challenges for tomorrow's markets. Many come as a result of a desire to better manage mergers, acquisitions, restructuring, promotion, downsizing, or retirement. The goal of these programmes are often similar: to find high quality individuals, future leaders of tomorrow, who will be able to help a company keep their competitive edge in the global economy; something that remains true even in today's shifting economic market.

Yet there is often confusion about the best way to practically go about recruiting these individuals or what should be taken into consideration when developing high potential programmes.

► What makes recruiting high potential individuals so difficult?

It may seem easy enough at first; recruitment managers are given instructions to look for high performing individuals relatively early in their careers, but late enough to have demonstrated their talent, vision and approach. But the reality is that normal recruitment processes do not go far enough in adapting their strategies to the particularities of this very often solicited population.

To attract the best of possible candidates, recruitment managers must be flexible enough to step outside of the usual recruitment framework concerning: atypical profiles, remuneration structures, recruitment cycles and processes. They must be able to anticipate potential resignations and ensure

that the recruited candidate becomes integrated into the management teams at all levels.

► What defines a typical high potential profile?

High potential profiles often describe men and women who have a superior understanding of their field, the capacity to broaden their responsibilities, and a high level of ambition and tenacity. Their superior team management skills and strategic outlook stand out in a team. They also have excellent adaptability, often representing the opportunity to internationalise and culturally diversify a company's work force as well as encourage fresh-thinking between key players.

► What do they expect?

As high potential programmes are becoming increasingly recognized as a necessary and

valuable component of a company's strategic HR strategy, it follows that these individuals are highly sought-after and not always easy to attract. Although expectations clearly vary from person to person, here are a few tips that can help to guide the process.

These individuals often want to see a scheduled evolution within 2 to 3 years, with attractive functions of real importance upon arrival and an immediate vision of the next step. They also look for a clearly-defined position in the company's succession plans and as a player in the ongoing development of corporate strategy.

► Tips to keep in mind

During the screening phase, determine how the presentation of your company will be ●●



••• customised to each candidate. Involve the company's top executives in the interview phase and ensure the coherence of the different arguments used by all individuals contributing to the recruitment process.

During the recruitment phase, tailor-make any candidate offer, avoiding proposals that are too far off from his or her expecta-

tions. Act quickly, maintaining frequent contact with candidates throughout the process. The entire recruitment process should be rapid, not exceeding more than 3 weeks from beginning to end.

Once the best candidate has been identified and recruited, identify the candidate's "mentor" right away and look into developing an official high potential

recruitment program for your company, providing new and former recruits an opportunity to mix. Lastly, review your company's integration procedures. Ensure that the recruited candidate has an intense integration cycle, allowing them to become operationally functional within a few weeks. ■

Yves Rossy "FusionMan"

[BIOGRAPHY]

Born on August 27, 1959 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Yves Rossy is the first man to fly under a single jet-powered wing.

Last May 14, 2008, he was released from a plane at an altitude of 8,000 feet. He completed a circuit in just over 5 minutes which saw him fly over the Swiss Chablais and neighboring mountains.

Fusion of technology, body and mind: Yves Rossy represents the intensely close relationship between the development of technology, a body honed to perfection which he uses to steer his craft, and a mind attuned to split-second coordination of light parameters. The only instruments available to



Yves Rossy are a throttle and an audible altimeter. Otherwise, he flies like a bird, using only his body to change direction.

Retired from the Swiss Air Force, he is currently a Swiss International Airlines pilot and devotes all his free time to his passion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Xavier Comtesse

Head of Avenir Suisse

INTERVIEW WITH

FIRST OF ALL, MANY THANKS MR. COMTESSE FOR ACCEPTING TO PARTICIPATE TO THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF SEARCH ON THE RECRUITING OF EXCEPTIONAL TALENTS. COULD YOU DESCRIBE TO US, IN FEW WORDS, WHAT THE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS OF AVENIR SUISSE ARE?

With great pleasure! Avenir Suisse is a 'think tank' based on the Anglo-Saxon models. It was founded in 1999, by some fifteen major Swiss companies, such as ABB, Novartis to name only a few ; today it is no less than 80 major companies which contribute to the functioning of the structure.

Our objective is not to lobby any kind any group of influence, but to be a source of new and innovative ideas. We are working at changing the paradigm of our society, by inducing new thinking processes from the actors of the economy. We are extremely careful not to present ourselves as a group of people who are in the 'know', but to the contrary, we like to

set-up the agenda which leads the active forces of the country to themselves induce the changes needed to perform better. We have a down-top approach, and not the contrary.

HOW DOES AVENIR SUISSE, IN EVERY DAY LIFE, FUNCTION TO REACH THESE OBJECTIVES?

We constantly organize conferences, seminars, presentations and reflexion-circles in direct contact with our targeted public. We like to have the best talents and resources put directly into contact with the people that will eventually implement the changes in the everyday economy. We think that civil society, through its input, will lead the political world to adopt the necessary changes. We know, of course, that this process is relatively slow, but we are convinced that in the end it leads to a durable and solid change.

IN SWITZERLAND, GENERALLY SPEAKING, IT IS NOT APPRECIATED THAT TOP MANAGERS BECOME TOO VISIBLE OR ARE BEING PUT FORWARD ON THE SCENE. HOW DO YOU COPE WITH THIS CULTURAL ASPECT, WHEN YOU ASK THEM TO PRESENT THEIR POINT OF VIEW OR SUCCESS STORIES?

For some years now, we have been working hard with universities and high schools to change that perception. A deeper insight into the business world was needed from their side, and we have managed to demonstrate that our best and exceptional talents in business need to serve as examples to be followed. And it worked fairly well! In fact, it is now considered that there is a French-speaking Switzerland model in that sense, which will need to be implemented in the rest of the country! ...



XAVIER COMTESSE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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... YOU JUST MENTIONED THE WORDS 'EXCEPTIONAL TALENTS'. IN YOUR POSITION, YOU ARE WELL-PLACED TO SEE QUITE A NUMBER OF THEM IN ACTION AND TO INTERACT WITH THEM. AT ALEXANDER HUGHES, IT IS OUR PERMANENT QUEST TO FIND THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL CANDIDATES FOR OUR CLIENTS AND THEY ARE OFTEN DESCRIBED AS 'EXCEPTIONAL TALENTS'. WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DEFINITION OF THIS TYPE OF PROFILE?

For me, an exceptional talent is clearly articulated around the following two major separate aspects: the first part is clearly made of the professional capabilities of an individual, his acquired competencies, his knowledge and the ability to adequately and positively use and combine them. In a dash of humour, I started describing this facet of the exceptionally talented leaders as the 'Manager 1.0', the second one being the 'Manager 2.0'. Under 'Manager 2.0', I include all these intangible elements that are composed by the natural social behaviour, the sociability, the ability to see what & when nobody else sees or understands, this ability to never give up, tenacity a.o. It has now become a concept!

But in the end, I strongly believe that the most exceptional talents have a broad experience of life. They have seen things, learned a lot about human beings, about the world itself. They understand the limits of theory and are able to take full advantage of opportunities they identify and understand, often before others do.

And this is the difficulty: whereas professional capabilities, knowledge and technique can be learned and refreshed at anytime, the behavioural factor cannot. Of course, it can be influenced by training, discussion and coaching, but the essence of it just has to be there.

And I believe that is where, among other things, a talented executive search professional can make a major contribution to its client's development: finding these people with combined the elements described here above.

MR. COMTESSE, MANY THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND CONTRIBUTION. WE WISH AVENIR SUISSE AND YOURSELF FULL SUCCESS IN YOUR ENDEAVOURS.

XAVIER COMTESSE :
"WE ARE WORKING
AT CHANGING THE PARADIGM
OF OUR SOCIETY..."

ALEXANDER HUGHES EUROPEAN NEWSLETTER

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