

# TOPGRADING

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## 3 Abbreviations

A-player	The 10% most talented people in each salary league. (Smart, 1999)
B-player	Below the top 10%, the next 25% most talented people in each salary league. (Smart, 1999)
C-player	All talented people below the top 35% in each salary league. (Smart, 1999)
CEO	Chief Executing Officer
CIDS	Chronological In-Depth Structured
HR	Human Resource
HRD	Human Resource Department
HRM	Human Resource Management
TOPGRADING	Mr. Smart defines 'Topgrading' as a process to remove subsequently the B- and C-players so that eventually your team consists of A-player team members. (Smart, 1999)

## **4 Abstract**

This paper deals with the issue 'Human Resource Management'. What do you have to do in order to have a powerful team that puts your ideas and the company's vision into practice?

I will divide this paper into two parts: First, developing yourself and second, developing your team. Each part will discuss what you can do and where the limitations are.

This paper is based on the book 'Topgrading' of Mr. Bradford D. Smart, Ph.D. Whenever possible, I will describe my own experience, my attempts to improve myself or my team, and the results of these efforts.

## 5 Introduction

The book 'Topgrading' by Bradford D. Smart, Ph.D. has one main idea: a company should be completely staffed by A-players. That does not necessarily mean that a company should always employ the most expensive people, but that it has staff from the 10% most talented people at a certain salary league on board.

If your company is active in the highest business league (e.g. a company like IBM, ALCA TEL or DAIMLER-CHRYSLER), then you are playing in the highest salary league and will need to hire the most expensive people. If your company is a smaller one, then it is not necessary to hire the most expensive people. In this case you want to spend a certain amount of money for a job-position and you will hire from the 10% most talented people at this salary league.

You will be successful in hiring people if you follow the information given in my course document for course 1109. The hiring process is not part of this paper.

Smart's main idea is that a CEO monitors his direct subordinates (e.g. senior managers) to determine whether they are all A-players. The CEO instructs them to do the same with their subordinates, down to the lowest level. Finally, the group leader will monitor all his team members to determine if they are A-players. If one superior detects that the subordinates are not A-players (anymore) then the superior must react and:

1. Lower the salary until the person becomes an A-player in the new salary league.
2. Replace the person and put her/him in a position where she/he acts like an A-player.
3. Fire the B- or C-player, if the first 2 opportunities did not solve the problem.

When I read this the first time, I thought this would be easy to put into practice. The final target is so simple and clear. If you follow the above listed three steps, you will have a strong company, which is unbeatable and stays ahead of your competitors.

When I thought more about it, I found some critical aspects: the first one is point '3'. It is tremendously difficult in Germany to fire people. It is more or less impossible. You can not fire them unless they have really harmed your company. If they are only working less competently than their colleagues, then you can not get rid of them. I also know of examples where a company offered some money to these people if they would leave the company on their own. They rejected the offer because these people would have had to work harder in a potential new company (at least in the first 6 months in a new company (qualifying period)). From this experience I am convinced that the point 'firing' C-players is maybe possible in the USA and not possible in Germany.

However, I regard points '2' and '1' as possible. If you can not fire a person, then you can reduce her/his salary until she/he is an A-player in this salary league. From my point of view this is possible, but it is *unpopular*. I know some department leaders and even senior managers who don't decrease a person's salary because they fear this person will become less motivated and because they fear the confrontation with the subordinate. These managers should study Mr. Smart's book 'Topgrading'. After reading this book I feel that leading managers have the duty to care about their staffing. They are responsible for determining whether all their employees are A-players. If they detect that not all their employees are A-players, they are responsible for doing everything possible to overcome

this unsatisfactory situation. I am convinced that this is not done in my company so I would like to figure out what should and what can be done.

## **6 Topgrading Yourself**

If you are a manager and you accept being responsible for your team performance, then you first have to start with yourself. Check if you are an A-player and what you can do in order to become and to remain one.

### **6.1 Topgrading Yourself: The Possible**

#### **6.1.1 Life Balance**

In Smart's opinion, the most important point is to keep your life in balance. You have to be content with your life. Smart suggests to check if you are content with the following different life dimensions: 'career success', 'wellness', 'relationships', 'giving something back', 'financial independence', 'spiritual grounding', 'recreation', and 'pleasure /hobbies'. He really means 'verify'. Answer for yourself each point with 'content' or 'not content'. I believe that you can perform as an A-player if you can honestly answer most of the points with 'content'.

I compared successful managers with others. From my point of view the difference is that successful people appear convincing because they appear calm and self-confident. You can only be an ideal to your colleagues if you are content with your life. The point is *not* that you must be like 'average' people, e.g. you don't have to be married in order to having your life in balance. If you are alone but you have hobbies that replace a family, then you are content and you have a good base for being an A-player manager.

I agree with Mr. Smart's proposal to repeat regularly the life-balance review.

#### **6.1.2 Get Rid Of Your Achilles' Heels**

If you want to be an A-player then you have to develop yourself continuously. Don't believe that you will maintain the position of an A-player in your company without improving yourself. Hopefully your company grows. If your company does so, then the salary league in which it plays increases. If the salary league of your company increases, then your salary increases, too. For this increased salary other people are available on the market and with them other talents. If you want to be in this higher league as an A-player, then you have to develop yourself *before* your company enters the new league.

### **Self-Assessment**

First, you have to make a self-assessment. You have to know about your strengths and weaknesses. The question is whether you should work on improving your strengths or getting rid of your weaknesses. I attended a personal development program in our company for so called 'high-potentials'. One main aspect was to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the 'high-potentials' in order to improve their strengths at later stages.

The main idea was that getting rid of someone's weakness is wasting time and that improving someone's strengths is the only way to benefit the company. Mr. Smart contradicts this opinion. He tells us in his book 'Topgrading' that 90% of one's time should be spent on getting rid of weaknesses and 10% of one's time should be spent on improving strengths. I follow a similar approach since more than one year with good results.

However, I think that everybody must take the decision for her/himself. After you know your weaknesses and strengths you can decide what you need to develop, so first start with a self-assessment. You can use several methods in doing the self-assessment. You can ask your Human Resource Department for some support, you can ask your colleagues to fill out a survey that you defined, or you can trigger a 360-degree survey. It's up to you to find out your weaknesses and strengths and to find the best way of doing it.

### **Get Rid Of Your Achilles' Heels**

I believe more in developing the weaknesses, because I want to develop myself in the direction of 'general management'. In my opinion everybody has so called 'Achilles' heels'. I have some: one is that I get angry and annoyed very easily. I remember a meeting together with department leaders and senior managers in which a project leader aggressively attacked one of my subordinates. I became very excited and answered very loudly and aggressively. One department leader told me later that strength lies in being calm and cool. The point is that I learnt one of my weaknesses in a very painful situation, but I learnt it! From this point onwards I controlled my reactions in every meeting. So I learnt to get rid of one of my Achilles' heels, although our development program told me that it is wasting time to work on my weaknesses.

In my opinion the difference is the following: at a technical level it is better to increase strengths and live with some weaknesses. At management level you should have no Achilles' heels, and that means no serious weaknesses. You should have an average level of competencies in all areas.

### **6.1.3 You Need To Have Control Over Your Life**

You can only be an A-player in your company if you have control over your life.

#### **Financial Independence**

One example is to be financially independent. Consider the situation that the job demands in your company increased due to the increased market position of your company. If you are not able to be an A-player anymore, then you should either be satisfied with a lower salary or you should be able to change your job. Both opportunities are possible only if you did not live beyond your means. If you have control over your financial situation then you are flexible to adapt your job position in a way that you can be an A-player throughout your life.

A former colleague of mine decided that he could not (or would not) stand the pressures in his job anymore. He decided to become independent and founded a one-person company. He became an entrepreneur. This was possible only because he had controlled his finance during the years he was employed.

### **Don't Hide Your Weaknesses**

Smart points out that an A-player does not hide her/his weaknesses in job-interviews. If you want to be an A-player then you should know that you can only be an A-player if you fit the job demands. If you hide some of your weaknesses during a job-interview, in order to get the job, then you run the high risk of getting a job which does not fit your qualification. In such a case you are no longer an A-player. Therefore A-players don't hide weaknesses in order to get a job. They try to overcome shortcomings or they admit honestly them.

I am happy that I followed this strategy some time ago when I applied for a new job in another company. I wanted to get a new job in which I could earn more money. I was still employed and did not need the new job. I was also aware of the risk that I could fail in the new job or decline from being an A-player to a B-player. For these reasons I decided to tell my strengths *and* weaknesses. Finally I did not get the job due to the lack of experience. This lack of experience maybe would have resulted in becoming a B-player in the other company. So I kept my A-player status due to the fact that I did not hide weaknesses during a job interview.

### **A-players Don't Play Alone**

One point that Mr. Smart did not mention is that A-players know that they need assistance. They need the collaboration of subordinates and their superiors. For this reason, A-players tell their bosses their needs. From my own experience I can tell you that people more often get support from their superior if they demand the support. Colleagues who expect support but don't ask for it seldom get support. It is a pity, but it is my experience.

### **A-players Don't Accept All Job-Opportunities**

Smart suggests that A-players only accept job-opportunities in which they can perform like A-players.

In my opinion this is hypothetical or at least bound to certain aspects.

First of all, how can a person know that she/he will be able to perform in another job as an A-player? I suggest that you inform yourself very well about the job demands for a potential new job. You should interview several people who worked in this job in order to get as much information as possible.

Second, you are only able to reject some job opportunities if you are financially independent.

Third but not least, you are only able to reject job opportunities if you are content in your life (see the point 'life-balance'). If you are not satisfied with your career then you will automatically tend to take a job-opportunity, which looks like a job improvement (e.g. higher salary), even if you did not inform yourself very well about the new job demands.



Taking all these points and my experience into account, I think that most people in middle management take over a job without knowing whether or not they can perform as A-players. In today's business you will not get many opportunities in one company if you reject to take over a higher job position. Most probably you will not be asked a second time. Knowing this, most people will take over any jobs that they get offered. An increasing salary is for many people a high motivator to take over jobs, even if they later decline from being an A-player to a B-player.

My message is: if you want to be an A-player for your company then you should regularly verify that you still act as an A-player. You should also deeply investigate if a job opportunity fits you so that you can continue acting as an A-player.

### **Be Proactive**

I have very good experience with being pro-active, something that is not explicitly mentioned in Smart's book.

If you are an A-player and you want to remain one, then you should know what the future demands are and you should prepare yourself for them. Once I looked for a new job opportunity in my company. I found a field in which I wanted to be active. I interviewed some people working in this job in order to get information about what was necessary to be perfect in this job. I asked several people about the job demands, contact persons and relationships. After a while a senior manager proposed me for such a job to our CEO. Our CEO was surprised to hear my name and was sceptical about the proposal, because I was young and not familiar with this job. I talked to our senior manager and he agreed that I could talk directly to our CEO. Our CEO agreed to a private talk between him and me concerning the new job. It was right in the moment when I called him, so I had no time to prepare for the interview. Fortunately, I had prepared the whole story months earlier. I knew what the job required. I knew all the WEB-sites on which I would find information. I knew all the relationships and contact persons necessary for doing the job. Yes, he was right, I was not familiar with the business area, but I was familiar with the job demands. This was my big advantage. I knew the job demands, I knew the tools and procedures, and I knew that I could handle it, so I was able to convince him and I got the job. This was only possible because I was pro-active in advance and because I controlled the process.

### **Look For A Mentor**

Smart states that A-players hire A-players because they can learn from each other. That means that A-players develop if other A-players are around them. They can compare behaviours and they can share experiences. A-players try to learn from other A-players.

If you have any chance of doing so, then try to find a good friend or a mentor who helps you to develop and who helps you to find out your weaknesses and who helps you to overcome your shortcomings. Try to work together with other A-players.

## 6.2 Topgrading Yourself: The Issues

In the previous chapter I tried to show you what you can and what you should do in order to develop yourself to remain or to become an A-player. I am convinced that many of these points can be done but I also see some restrictions for which I don't see a solution.

First, I would like to discuss the point 'financial independence'. I regard it as unrealistic to achieve a status of financial independence in the normal working life. I think that even senior managers or CEOs are not financially independent, although they earn a lot of money per year. The lower the job position is, the lower is the money a person earns and the higher is the financial dependence this person has.

Second, I am convinced that you can not develop yourself without external help from a certain point of development onwards. External helps (i.e. training firms) are very expensive. For this reason I focused on looking for mentors in my company. I looked for people in my company from whom I could learn. I looked for other A-players working in higher salary leagues and I tried to learn from them.

## 7 Topgrading Your Team

This chapter deals with the subject of improving your team performance. Smart's main idea is that you have to restructure your team in a way that the team consists only of A-players. Smart suggests that it is therefore the responsibility of all superiors to remove subsequently B- and C-players. In this context the word 'remove' means that you:

1. Decrease the salary of B- and C-players until the performance is that of an A-player.
2. Help the B- and C-player develop into an A-player.
3. Eventually fire the B- and C-players who could not become A-players in the league required of them.

If you ask yourself why you should do so, here are the answers.

First, your company wants to continue growing.

Second, your A-players might become bored if they have to work together with B- and C-players without seeing that these people were replaced by A-players. Why should A-players give their best if other people don't need to do so? Don't underestimate this problem. It's a big problem in companies in Germany. Superiors have big problems in motivating their employees due to big differences in performance but small differences in salary. It is very difficult to motivate employees in Germany, because it is almost impossible to fire a person once you have employed him/her. Even fired people are not in danger of getting poor. The social welfare system in Germany is so overwhelming that I know people who do everything in order *not* to be employed. For this reason it is essential that companies try to keep their A-players as A-players.

From my point of view, companies should try to build up A-player teams, B-players teams and C-players teams. If companies do so they avoid that working together with low-performing colleagues tires high-performing people. The B-player teams could get jobs where the job demands are less and therefore the B-player team members can get

lower salaries. If you build up A-player teams you have another advantage. The A-players can learn from each other, which is not possible if A-players have to work (only) with B- and C-players. If you want to help a B-player to develop then you can bring her/him into an A-player team and monitor if she/he becomes an A-player. If not, move her/him back.

## **7.1 Topgrading Your Team: The Possible**

I assume that you are a manager and that you understand that you have to care about your team performance. I assume that you are willing to topgrade your team. I assume that you are taking the challenge to remove subsequently B- and C-players. I assume that you understand to hire A-players in a higher salary league if you see that your former A-players will not be A-players in the higher salary league as well. This chapter shall help you to:

- Find out the strengths and weaknesses of people.
- Coach your subordinates.

### **7.1.1 Chronological In-Depth Structured (CIDS)**

Mr. Bradford Smart, Ph.D. created (or defined) a special interviewing method which enables the interviewer to find out whether a candidate fits to a job or not. If this interviewing method is applicable for hiring people, then you can suggest that it is also applicable for putting your staff on appropriate jobs where they can perform as A-players.

This interview is based on the so-called 'Chronological In-Depth Structured' method. The idea is that you get detailed information from the candidate about the following.

#### **School and College Time**

Ask about the *school and college time*. What were the influencing moments and persons? What kind of hobbies did the interviewed person prefer? Did the interviewed person show leadership tendencies?

#### **Work History Forms**

Ask about the candidate's full-time activities, even if these activities were for one employer. Gather this information on a so-called work-history form with one form for one activity. This *work-history form* summarises all the important information, e.g. starting and end salary, responsibilities, challenges, drawbacks and learnings.

#### **Competencies**

Finally you interview the candidate about her/his competencies. Mr. Smart proposes to check up to 50 competencies, depending on the job position you want to staff. For the completeness of this paper I list here the 50 competencies Mr. Smart proposes.

**Table 1: CIDS Competencies (part one)**

(Smart, 1999)

<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Management</b>
Intelligence	Integrity	First Impression	Selecting A-players
Analysis Skill	Initiative	Popularity	Coaching / Teaching
Judgement / Decision Making	Organisation / Planing	Listening	Goal Setting
Conceptual Ability	Excellence	Customer Focus	Empowerment
Creativity	Independence	Team Player	Performance Management
Strategic Skills	Stress Management	Assertiveness	Removing C-players
Pragmatism	Self-Awareness	Communications -Oral	Team Builder
Risk Taking	Adaptability	Communications -Written	Diversity
Leading Edge		Political Savvy	Running Meetings
Education		Negotiations	
Experience		Persuasion	
“Track Record”			

**Table 2: CIDS Competencies (part two)**

(Smart, 1999)

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Motivational</b>
Vision	Energy
Change Leadership	Enthusiasm
Inspiring “Follower-ship”	Ambition
Conflict Management	Compatibility of Needs
	Balance in Life
	Tenacity

What is the idea behind this? Mr. Smart proposes that you define in advance what competencies are necessary for the job. Select the needed competencies and define for the selected ones how important they are (i.e. very important (1) or average (4)). During the interview with the candidate or the subordinate rate her/his competencies in the

separate fields. Make a list for each needed competency with the needed value in one column and the interviewed person's value in the next column. After several interviews you have a better overview about which candidate is best suited to the position than without this structured in-depth interview.

### **I believe in CIDS interviews**

When I first saw this large list I was really impressed. Unfortunately I was also frustrated because I never met a person who did such a structured interview with me and because I do not know anybody who did this with her/his subordinates.

I wonder why this was and is the case. I think that nobody around me knows about this technique. Another point could be that it needs a lot of preparation from the interviewer's side. In my opinion, today's hiring process is still more often based on the college results than on the job demands. I am convinced that a company, seeking the best candidate for a specific job, can get good hiring results (good people staying onboard over a long time) when the company applies CIDS based interviews. The advantage, from my point of view, is that the company must know *who* they are looking for *before* they start the interview. I am not sure that this is always the case. Can you clearly and unambiguously specify the job demands applicable for your job? Do you think it is easy to specify a job demand? I don't think so.

While studying this course, I was forced to look for a person to staff a new task in my team. So I started defining the job demands. I interviewed several people who were familiar with this job and with the staff member who was previously responsible for the job. After I had a clear picture about the job demands I evaluated my team members (I had known them for years) and selected one. He was pleased to take over the job and started without any training or preparation. The progress was terribly slow. It turned out that he struggled over problems which no other person had found difficult before, neither the person formerly responsible nor other colleagues now active in similar jobs. Even worse, he found no contact person. It was hard for me to establish a network for him. The job demands, which I specified before, did not match what he needed at this time. The job demands were totally different from what I expected. As a consequence, the colleague selected was not able to fulfil the job without my intensive help. I checked whether the colleague was worse than I expected (B- or C-player) or if I had defined the job incorrectly and therefore selected the wrong person. It very soon obvious to me that I had defined the job demands incorrectly (at least at the beginning) and I redefined the job. I searched for a colleague for support. After I brought both together, the progress increased. After the first problems were solved I could remove the second colleague and the one first selected was able to work alone. The learning is that my job description was only partly correct. If I had foreseen the real job demands then I probably would have selected another colleague at the beginning.

The learning is that responsible A-player superiors know that they should spend enough time on defining the job demands in order to be able, later on, to conduct a CIDS based interview. Well defined job demands enable managers to get the correct results out of the competency check.

### 7.1.2 Coaching

In this chapter, I would like to discuss how you could coach your team. Coaching is a one-to-one talk to:

- Inform your coachee about her/his weaknesses and strengths.
- Agree on an improvement plan for the coachee between the coachee and the coach.
- Control the improvement of the coachee.

I believe that CIDS based coaching can improve the team performance a lot.

#### 7.1.2.1 General Coaching Rules

Please have a look at the following list. If you follow it then you are a good coach in your team.

- Start the coaching interview by mentioning aspects of your subordinate that you appreciate.
- The coach should better ask than criticise the coachee.
- Be prepared with good data. Data must be specific and new.
- Be objective.
- Find the correct time to conduct the coaching interview.
- The coach could think about contributing the coachee's activities for a whole day.
- Check, if the coachee's short-term performance could lead to her/his long-term ambitions.
- Visualise to the coachee the coachee's life with and without improvement.

A successful coach must know that a person's change takes place in the following 7 steps:

- Awareness.
- Acceptance.
- Commitment.
- Program for development.
- Reinforcement.
- Monitoring the process.
- Conclusion.

In my opinion, choachees should write their own development plans. This is better than the coach making it for him/her. If the coachee wants to develop, then it is her/his wish to define a plan how she/he can develop.

#### **My Experience**

Unfortunately I don't have any experience with coaching. In my company it is unusual to make development plans and it is unusual to coach subordinates. This was never understandable for me but it is the truth. My company follows the rule that everybody is responsible for her/himself. As a consequence, my company doesn't actively support people in becoming A-players. If subordinates perform extraordinarily well, they will be sent to some management courses. This philosophy is a kind of awarding system but it's not the intention to upgrade the staff continuously.

### 7.1.2.2 Knowing Your Team

If I am an A-player manager then I have to seek to build up an A-player team. I asked myself how I could do so. What would be the next concrete steps I would have to take?

First of all I should have a CIDS-based interview with all my subordinates in order to get all the available information about their working life background, their hobbies, their leadership experience and their long-term expectations. This would take some time, but to be honest, I do not regard time as the problem. I think that I am too shy to start such an in-depth interview after working for some years with these colleagues. How would I start such an interview? I could start with words like “I recently attended a very good course and I learnt that CIDS based interviews help the company to improve its performance. For this reason I would like to start with gathering information about you.” It sounds feasible but I think that I don’t have enough courage for doing it so strictly. Another way would be to use coffee breaks to interview the subordinates and take notes after these interviews in order to compile *work-history-forms* and *competency-sheets* for the subordinates.

However, although I am hesitant to perform this task, I regard it as essential if I want to improve the performance of my team. Unfortunately I don’t have a mentor or another A-player around me who has experience with such practices, but this should not be a reason for a good manager not to start with something new of which she/he is convinced.

### 7.1.2.3 Defining The Job Demands

As a next step, I will start to define the competencies for the jobs in which my team is busy. I regard this as very difficult and, as I wrote before, I didn’t have a good experience with my first exercise. However, I am convinced that my performance in defining the job demands will increase if I exercise this several times. Additionally, I think that my superior is also responsible for knowing the job demands. For this reason I think that my superior will compare my job definitions with his points of view. I hope that his points of view and my survey will enhance our picture of the jobs we are each doing.

### 7.1.2.4 Placing Team Members

My third step will be to check if all tasks in my team are staffed with people who are able to perform as A-players in that position. I will also check if the salary ranges of my A-players are sufficient for my company to be successful in its business league.

Let’s start with placing the team members. I regard it as possible to evaluate if colleagues match the job demands (competencies). If this is not the case then I will be faced with some restrictions. I can not change all responsibilities in my group at once. If it really turns out that some changes are necessary then I will do them one at a time. In difficult cases I will ask my superior for his permission to take action. I assume that taking my

superior into account demonstrates to him my intention to improve my team's performance and it tells him that I expect the same from him.

### **Coaching Team Members**

If I don't want to change responsibilities in my team, but I detect some team members are not performing as A-players, then I will talk with them about coaching. Since I will have a clear picture about the job demands and about the subordinates' strengths and weaknesses, I don't see a problem in specifying the behaviours which the subordinate must improve, in order to become an A-player in the required salary league. I regard it as my duty to inform the subordinates about what I expect from them. A- or B-players will detect the lack between expectations and their performance and they will create a development plan for themselves. I don't expect this from C-players. I think that I will support C-players in defining a development plan together with them. I will guide them to find out what kind of support B- and C-players need in order to become A-players. Do they need courses? Do they need to restructure their work? Do they need some technical training in order to have fewer failures and hence gain time?

I would like to stress my point: I regard it as my duty to care about the performance of my team and to take care that my team is staffed only with A-players. If I will not be able to remove C-players (e.g. my superior rejects this option) then I regard it as my duty to do everything possible to achieve the goal of having a team consisting only of A-players. I know that this has not been done in my company until now and that I will be the first one who tries it. It is a strange feeling to stand in front of such a challenging task.

## **7.2 Topgrading Your Team: The Issues**

Despite all that I have said above, I still worry about the following issues.

### **C-players are not able to perform as A-players in the needed salary league**

If C-players don't improve even if I put much effort into coaching them, what shall I do? In my company it is not possible to fire them! It is also not possible to move them to other groups because people are doing a certain job and this can not be done in other groups so they must stay.

### **You don't get new people if you fire a person**

If you once give away a person to another group then you show that you can do the same work with fewer people. You don't get a new person (B- or A-player) but you are left with fewer people.

### **What to do with unmotivated subordinates?**

Is it possible to motivate people? In one of my invitations to a training course for team leaders it was stated "... how you can motivate your team members." The course was



very theoretical and it was *not* applicable to a country in which employees don't run a risk of being fired because the social system will feed them after they are fired. Another course took away any illusions because the trainer informed us that motivation must come from inside a person. It is not possible to motivate a person over a longer time with external motivators. I fully agree with this statement. It's my experience. I tried to motivate a colleague by giving him a task that was related to his private hobbies. From that point of view I expected high motivation and high engagement from him. Unfortunately this was not the case. He did not stay longer at work and he still preferred reading WEB-sites than working on his task. He told me that he is not interested in money and that he can live with less. Of course such a person is harmful for the whole team. Of course my team can only outperform if the team gets rid of colleagues with such low levels of motivation. If you face such a situation then I advise you to get support from your superior. It is not just your duty to care about team performance and to staff your team with A-players. It's also the duty of your superior.

## **8 Final statement**

My final message is that topgrading must be the target of each company. The awareness of the importance of this must come from the top to down. The CEO must encourage the topgrading process by instructing her/his senior managers. They must lead their department leaders and so on. It would be difficult to start this process from the bottom and work up to the top.

If a company intends topgrading its staff then it must be clear that reorganisation, firing and expensive training can be the result. The benefit is clear: if a company does not care about having the most talented people in a salary league on board then the company can not be as successful as competitors who follow these ideas might be.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **9 Bibliography**

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