



Human Capital Talks

Skills steering requires judicious HR work



Interview with David López, CaixaBank SA, Spain


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Rapidly evolving artificial intelligence poses entirely new challenges for society and the workforce. Organizations must therefore create spaces for top experts to explore these new opportunities, while at the same time finding a way to make effective personnel policy. Deloitte has sought dialog with HR managers to discuss future company deployment options within this structure. Our series of Human Capital Trends Talks complements the extensive Human Capital Trends Report which surveyed 14,000 company representatives worldwide from over 95 countries for the Deloitte survey “Human Capital Trends 2024”.

Skills steering requires judicious HR work

To orchestrate the talent management of the total workforce around skills, CaixaBank has advanced a comprehensive project that plots all 250 roles at the bank into a skills grid. The roles are embedded into an extensive skills ecosystem that allows not only for developing personnel and staff with an eye to essential expertise going forward, but also improves the organization’s position on the recruitment market. Using this as a basis, the opportunities provided by artificial intelligence will be applied to predict the data profiles which will increasingly be in demand in the future. All of this requires judicious and comprehensive HR work in equal measures.

This conversation was held between David López, HR Director at CaixaBank, and Joan Pere Salom, Partner at Deloitte.

A portrait of David López, a man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly. The portrait is set against a background of concentric green circles.

David López
HR Director at CaixaBank



Joan Pere Salom
Partner at Deloitte



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Joan Pere Salom

Today we are going to talk about some of the transformational challenges facing our clients and which are on the table of the major organizations in the country. I would first like to ask you about purpose. This year you announced an investment of more than 940 million euros in social welfare initiatives, which form part of your purpose and set you apart. How do you convey this purpose, culture, and understanding of what a bank is to the daily activities of your people?

David López

I would say that as a bank, we are quite different from the others. We are the clear leaders of the Spanish financial market with over 20 million clients, and our stakeholder structure features a large percentage of retailers.

This year we have reached a significant figure of over 4.8 billion in profit. The fact that 940 million of it goes to the foundation clearly sets us apart, since there is no other national foundation contributing as much to society.

Moreover, our network of branch offices covers 2,230 municipalities throughout the country, practically 95% of the nation, and the remaining 5% we serve with small offices and mobile branches, highlighting CaixaBank's commitment to combatting financial exclusion.

We make an effort to offer specialized services and quality consulting, and seek to instill in our people's DNA the social commitment that distinguishes us from other entities.

Joan Pere Salom

Bankia and CaixaBank merged into a single entity in 2021. Can you tell us about the merger process and its ongoing effects? How, for instance, was the transition handled for the employees coming from Bankia?

David López

I have seen many post-merger integrations. They all merge business and clients, but what really matters is the cultural intake of teams, people, and ways of working.

Bankia personnel was first provided with a buddy and cultural exchange sessions so they would learn the values. We are now working on a more widespread process of cultural transformation that incorporates the best attributes of the two merged companies within this new context of overall transformation.

Clearly indicating the results of incorporating attributes is CaixaBank's success with the program "Plant your project", which gives employees the opportunity to present initiatives and projects.

Joan Pere Salom

The concept of human performance is becoming a priority at many companies, which are giving equal priority to profit and personnel targets in order to achieve sustained and sustainable profitability. This is about the welfare of the people, their career, health, skills and training so that they will be employable for life. How do you manage human performance at CaixaBank?

David López

This question comes at just the right time. We have just launched a global brand campaign under the notion of "Near the people for everything that matters".

Our concept of human performance includes both employees and stakeholders. We consider two vectors: firstly the client vector, generating quality as well as trust and customer service, and secondly the employee, who ultimately looks after the client. If these two vectors are managed, the profit and loss account will take care of itself.

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Joan Pere Salom

Your strategic plan sets an ambitious goal of being the best bank for internal and external talent to work for, which is linked to the remuneration of executives. How has it helped? And how is it going?

David López

We are working on our brand perception, evaluating how we transmit our value proposal, and whether we can move the market to see how we are positioned and how we approach different stakeholders. This requires great effort to make sure the promises you make are kept when it comes to attracting talent.

To this end we have drawn up a Master Plan of five elements: culture and leadership, new ways of working, a development model for the bank's capabilities, employee experience in all of the above, and how technology helps us drive each block.

Furthermore, there must be an HR function spreading all this to the different areas via the HRBPs, because the dissemination and support to make this custom and practice requires major effort.

Joan Pere Salom

You mention diversity, AI, skills... How do you focus the generational diversity?

David López

Personnel's young talent section will clearly have to incorporate new profiles from the world of data, analytics, modeling,...to provide a breath of fresh air, and new ways of thinking and doing. We have several open programs for attracting young talent, such as WONNOW, New Graduates, Dualiza, to mention a few, which are designed to support and train the new generations and in turn bolster talent retention.

As to the more senior profiles, there is a mentoring component that encourages potent processes of reflection when combined with junior profiles.

Joan Pere Salom

CaixaBank has placed emphasis on a program called "Development by Skills". From the perspective of identifying employee strong points and their employability, what can you tell us about it?

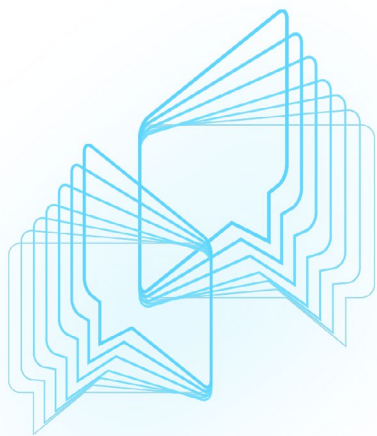
David López

This is the most cross-cutting and complex project at the entire bank. We began this program in November 2021, and worked on it all of 2022 and 2023 to get where we are.

First, we drew up the architecture of the roles at the bank, assigning the skills needed to perform each role. Once the 250 roles had been described, we assigned a role to each person and have, in recent months, evaluated each person with regard to their skills.

Using their own self-assessment, the managers' and HR calibration, we can map the entire entity, identifying gaps in the performance of each person so that they can be upskilled or reskilled through easier processes. We are now developing the ecosystem for these roles.

Behind all of this lies an opportunity to apply new technologies, AI and data management systems. We will have a lot of employee-associated data to work with. We are working on an ecosystem to develop each role, under the supposition that it goes beyond attending courses, and that it must be an interactive community.



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David Lopez, CaixaBank SA, Spain

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Joan Pere Salom

The fact that you've started with the steering committee and have gone through the process yourself shows how seriously you're taking it. What is the role of personnel in this disruptive process incorporating generative AI and other technologies into the work world?

David López

We are all asking this question because it is relevant. We are in an exploratory phase at CaixaBank. There is an area of transformation and innovation that brings together the data that will be needed to generate the structure of AI.

We are loading bank information onto the Cloud and doing conceptual testing, and seeing how Copilot and ChatGPT can help. We are sensible and want to provide tutoring for each area in this development process. We still have a long way to go with AI use because we deal with many clients and have reams of data, which will ultimately enable us to generate considerable added value for our clients.

We play a dual role in the HR department. On one hand, we must stoke manager interest in the capabilities of AI, and provide use cases that apply to their field. Apart from raising awareness, we must apply all this with the personnel in order to model behavior.

This will help make people aware that AI is a tool for optimizing time and work, thereby increasing quality.

Joan Pere Salom

Your passion comes from your time in the land banks. From a corporate point of view; Are you obsessed with everything trickling down?

David López

That is the main obsession. Headquarters has the ability to generate ideas that then possibly don't spread further. We must fixate on all our initiatives reaching end clients and employees, because if it hasn't been deployed, it hasn't happened.

Another obsession must be addressed from a territorial point of view: They must help end clients make things happen, and help those who serve clients make an impact on them. The position of office manager is most important, since they serve clients every day and manage the teams that serve these clients.

Joan Pere Salom

Three years ago we received a pertinent message from you: "As consultants it is right for you to tell me what must be done, but what I need is for you to help me understand how to do it and help me implement it." What demands are made on the operations manager as a leader and professional?

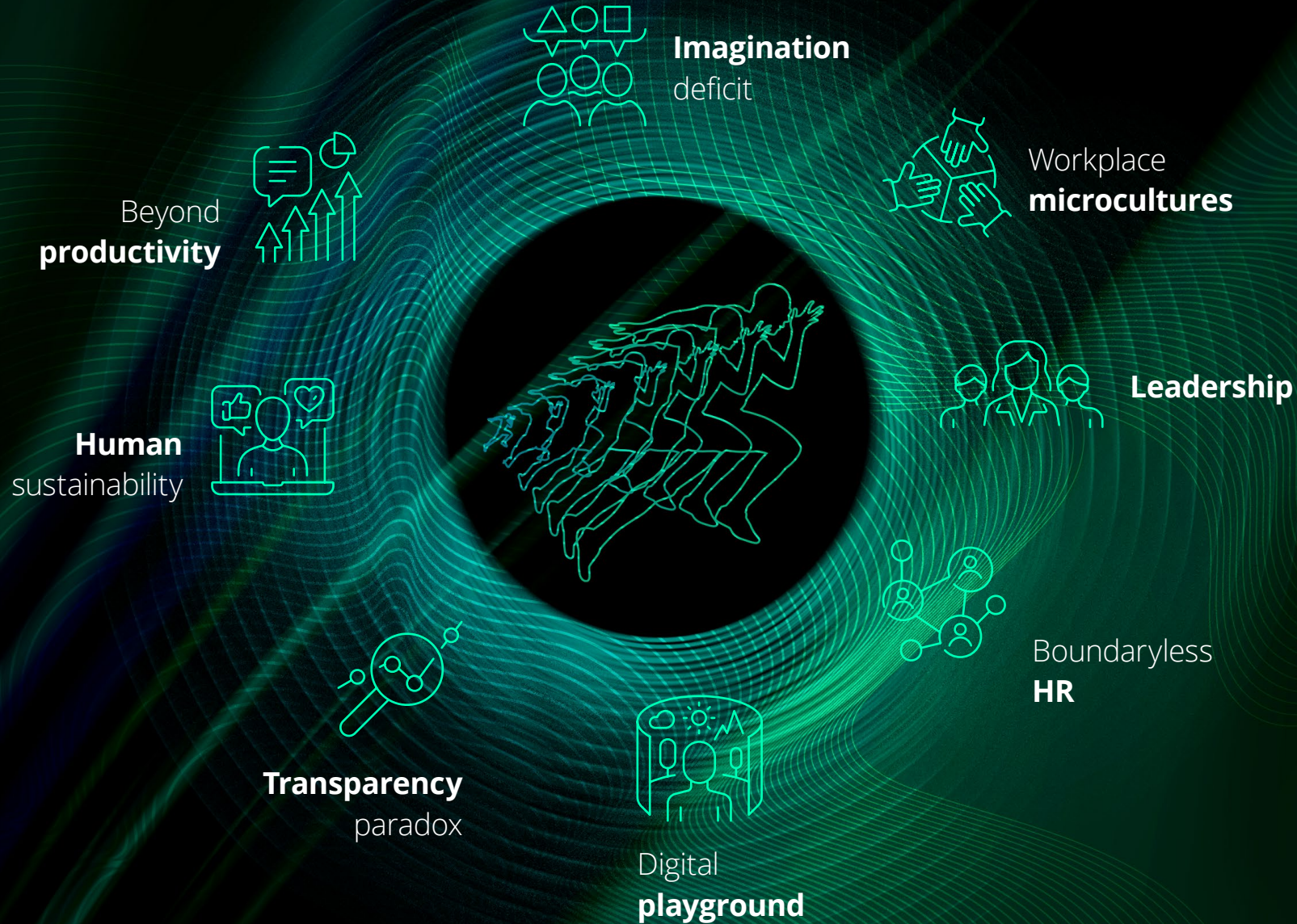
David López

I would ask two things of a good leader and operations manager: competent handling of systematic and business dynamics at the office, and management of the personnel they are in charge of.

A leader can only provide impetus to their team if they:

- know how to motivate people to be part of the greater scheme of things,
- are someone amenable and human who understands people and can listen,
- are able to communicate. Leaders who communicate well wield influence when addressing their teams.
- Manage people meritocratically and recognize a job well done,
- know how to delegate and give autonomy, thus creating spaces for growth and empowerment,
- manage motivation individually; each person is different and needs to be heard as an individual.
- Allow others to put forward ideas and be innovative. Both senior and young talent should be able to offer an opinion and make a contribution whether it stems from experience or youth.

Human performance in a boundaryless world



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