

LIVE YOUR TALENT

Danielle Schiphorst has been a familiar face at CRM Partners from the start: as Emiel's wife, but most of all as an important factor behind our unique culture. We talked with her about how to discover your talents and what it means to be an authentic and passionate person.

Danielle studied Organizational Psychology at the Radboud University in Nijmegen and grew out to become the leading specialist in Authenticity and Work Engagement (Being Passionate) – in The Netherlands.

I heard you've just started a new project over the summer: BeOrigin?

"Yes, I did! Entrepreneurship is in my blood, so after 14 years of Humanage it was time to start something new. With BeOrigin I want to return to the core of authenticity, to where it starts: in childhood.

I believe that every person has a unique talent, something you're extremely good

at and what comes natural to you. The road to finding out what that talent is, is the one I call Personal Leadership: you need to get to know yourself to the very bottom. That talent is something that lies deep within yourself and if you look close enough you can already spot it at a very young age. I've watched so many young professionals struggle with their passions

and talents after they've started working. The average amount of people between 25 and 35 years old with a burn-out is sky high. A big cause of that is that they are trained to do what they're asked to do. When you ask them what they want and why, they have no clue.

That's where the coaching and the training comes in and we start to fix what's broken. I'm convinced that it can be otherwise. It's better to prevent than to cure! Therefore my mission with BeOrigin is to bring the principles of talent discovering to education. Nowadays, when

TRANSPARENT CORE VALUES
ARE EXTREMELY CONTAGIOUS

you have a conversation with the teacher of your child, he or she will most likely zoom in on the subjects and competences where your child didn't perform great at. The next step will probably be to make up a plan to improve those crucial points, neglecting your daughter's great ability to draw or the fact that your son is amazing at making sure all the kids



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in the class are involved in soccer. We're all trying to turn a 4 into a 6, while instead you can also focus on turning an 8 into a 10. When you look at competence management in an average company, the focus on the negative is still the most common way to look at an employee. I want to change this mindset for the better."

What does it mean to be passionate?

"I'm researching the origin and development of passion and being passionate since 2008. In organization psychology being passionate is divided in two main components: the individual and the organization. The individual component is subdivided in elements of personal leadership that are changeable and not changeable: skills on the one hand, personal characteristics on the other hand. For example, introversion and extraversion are personal characteristics that are hard to change. As are drive and motivation. Copingstyle on the other hand, is an element you can work on. When you look at

CRM Partners you can say that the drive of the people in the organization is very high and that we're working on ownership and copingstyle."

What is the role of the organization in authenticity?

"The management of CRM Partners has a strong focus on goals, values, meaning and experience as pillars of authenticity. These are elements that are of very high influence on being passionate. The fact that the core values of the organization – Ambition, Open and Honest, Joy and Together - have been appointed in the early stages of the company is of great value to the overall authenticity and passion of CRM Partners. CRM Partners distinguishes itself by these strong values. It's very uncommon in organizations to see that the core values are not how the management wants the people to be, but that the core values live inside of the people. It means that there's a high transparency, that the core values are visible to everyone. And that works

extremely contagiously for new employees and customers."

How do you see CRM Partners facilitating personal growth?

"We provide every employee with a personal leadership course: PL1, PL2 and the most recent PL3. Every employee returns back home with a personal plan to achieve their personal goals. Our advice is to always take little steps towards these usually big goals. The biggest obstacle for people to move towards a goal is that they think they need to get there right away. By taking little steps it's easier to get there, even if it takes a little more time. Reverting to coping style: the responsibility for personal growth lies with the people themselves. To keep track of the progression it is suggested to start a peer group. There was a time where we tried to facilitate this, but we found out that the employees saw it as an obligation and that didn't do any good. Colleagues can now initiate peer groups themselves and we will facilitate in that."

How do we become aware of our talents and passions?

"When you are aware of your talents from a very young age, you will have more confidence, self-esteem and focus. The goal is to figure out what activities, moments, experiences and things give you energy. You need to occupy yourself with questions such as: "Who am I? For what do I get up in the morning? What gives me energy? What takes up a lot of energy? What makes me happy?" Those are questions to get in contact with yourself. You're environment – your friends, your partner, your family, but also your colleagues have a big influence on you discovering your unique talent. My advice is to collect as much feedback from your environment as possible, so you will be able to find your true talent. If you lose the connection with who you are, if you are derived from your personal strength, you need to ask yourself the questions stated earlier. Passion and talent are very strongly related. You can start small: look at your hobbies and passions. A passion for – for example - fixing cars, can tell so

much about you. You like to work with your hands, you're studiously and you might be very solution-oriented. So, when you take a closer look at your hobby, you can find elements that are unique about you and that you're extremely good at. Those are elements you can translate and put to use in a work environment."

How do you see CRM Partners engaging in talent management?

"Compared to other companies CRM Partners definitely is a leader when it comes to talent management. I think CRM Partners owes much of its success to the ideology and culture. For example, you can see it in the way you celebrated the 10-year anniversary together. It's in the way people act around each other at such a party, the impact of Tjerk de Ridder with his show 'Trekhaak Gezocht' and the beautiful cards everyone wrote for the partners. But I can also see it in the way the people at CRM Partners fill in their evaluation forms about the personal leadership training sessions. There is so much more depth and reflection

than the usual 'I had a great time.' You can feel the way the organization looks at people that the focus on talent is integrated in the people themselves. And because these people aren't replicable, the success of the organization isn't replicable."

How do you think the culture of CRM Partners will evolve looking at the growth of the organization?

In 2009 we conducted a zero measurement of passion to have a close look at the pillars of passion and authenticity. We've built a program based on these results. And with the growth in mind, we (Peter Stulp, Hellen, Marcel & Judith) are very much on top of things. We're looking at all the tools and means we've used in the past years and translate that to the demands of a bigger group of colleagues. We look at the tools with a new and supreme conscious. We're not changing them fundamentally, because they appear to be very much appreciated and effective, but we try to implement nuances. And still, we're learning: it's a process of trial and error, so we evaluate and adjust when needed."

And to conclude: Danielle, what is your authentic talent?

"I was lucky enough to find my talent at the very young age of 15. I'm an introvert girl by heart, so when I was younger I was always observing and analyzing people and situations. My intuition was very much developed and I was always very aware of what was going on in my environment. From there I went on to study Psychology, and because of the entrepreneurship in my blood, the organization side of it. I truly believe that – and that will sound way more spiritual than aimed for – I'm on earth to give my added value from my intuition. I live my talent. I work extremely hard which can cause me to be very tired at the end of the day, but it has never been too much for me. What I do gives me energy because it is so close to my heart."

