

## EMPLOYEES UPSKILLING IN THE DIGITAL ERA FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES

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**Abstract.** *Logists play a key role in the chain of value formation of the international pharmaceutical corporation Roche, which is constantly engaged in improving the skills of its workers, forming T-shaped employees using the E<sup>3</sup> methodology.*

The first challenge awaiting new joiners in a company is the lack of enterprise knowledge to understand value chain creation and the inability to operate effectively without mentorship and support. This is due to the university's approach to training highly qualified employees in a particular specialization, such as logistics. Modern knowledge in logistics doesn't allow working effectively without cross-functional skills.

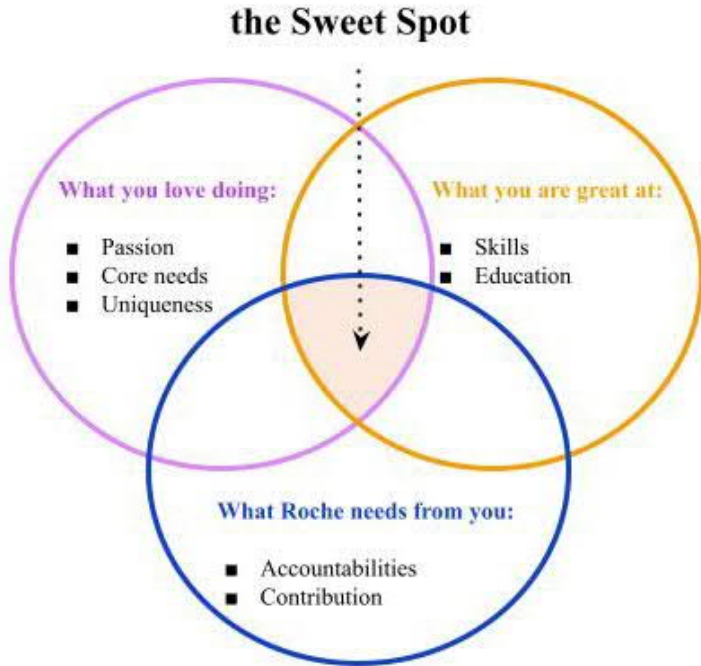
At F. Hoffmann-La Roche, one of the TOP 10 pharmaceutical companies in the world [1], with total revenues in 2022 over 63 billion Swiss francs, employees are key to achieving this level of success, and people development is one of the company's core values.

The "T-shaped" representation comes from the idea that an individual can possess deep skills in a few areas as well as a broader range of shallower skills [2]. This can also be described as cross-functional: a person who has all the competencies required to perform a job without depending on others.

A T-shaped employee is someone who has a wide variety of experience and skills in very different disparate knowledge areas (marked "-"), and at the same time, a couple of areas with very deep knowledge and expertise (marked "I"). The industry is moving towards a "T-shaped" model, but universities are slow to change their curricula.

The need to understand the many facets of a business is an expert's job, and a T-shaped professional also has the communication skills needed to work effectively with other colleagues rather than simply presenting an expert point of view that matches their experience and competencies. This is an important feature of collaboration that is vital to finding better solutions to current situations and making decisions. This concept was implemented at Roche by creating a special department responsible for colleagues development. Before an employee begins to build a model of his T-shaped

development, he goes to the personal development portal and collects information to find his “Sweet Spot” (Fig. 1).



*Fig. 1 - Roche approach to development - Reflect, Define, Understand*

Based on “Sweet spot” analyses, an employee creates a personal development plan that contains two parts: the first part focuses on employee assessment of the present; the second part focuses on concrete next steps and actions. The first step is self-assessment of skills. T-shape development is about building a diverse skill set while having valuable specialization. The vertical bar on the letter T represents the depth of related skills and expertise in a single field, whereas the horizontal bar is the ability to collaborate across disciplines with experts in other areas and to apply knowledge in areas of expertise other than one's own. The employee writes down all technical, soft skills and business knowledge, and then rates each of them on a scale of 1 to 5, where:

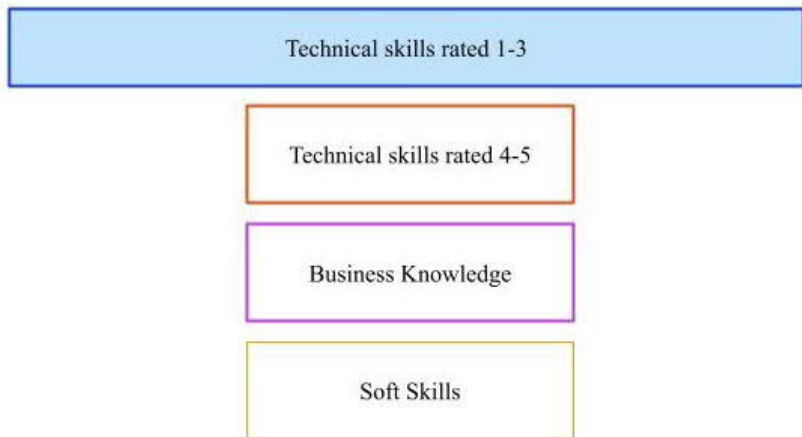
1. Beginner. The employee started learning, but doesn't know how to do anything yet.
2. Advanced beginner. An employee can do some things on his own, but he will still need a lot of recommendations and formulas.

3. Competent. An employee who has gone through the introductory material and now understands where to apply the various rules he has learned.

4. Experienced. An employee can do things that most people can't even think of. He's not perfect, and he still has to think about what to do in certain situations. But he's really good.

5. Expert. He acts primarily based on intuition, and to an outside observer his actions seem like magic.

Employees fulfill T-shaped skills layout using self-evaluation. Soft skills and Business knowledge have been represented as part of the vertical bar. Those are major aspects of core specialization of the expert. Looking forward, using an optimal balance between individual needs, talents and expectations, the employee builds his "To-Be" T-shapes (Fig. 2).



*Fig. 2 - Roche T-shaped Development Plan*

One of the key concepts that has emerged to exploit social and experiential learning, and to leverage the effective elements of structured training, is the E<sup>3</sup> or 70:20:10 reference model. This approach helps to integrate the main aspects of development: structured education, social learning through interaction with others, and experiential learning.

By applying E<sup>3</sup> thinking, professionals can move beyond learning outside of work. The importance of 70:20:10 is not about the numbers, but about thinking more about the destination (improving productivity) rather than the journey (learning). Achieving this shift requires new skills and attitudes (Fig. 3).

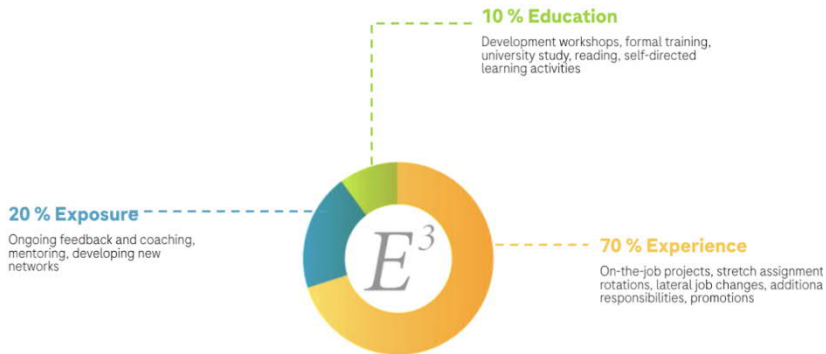


Fig. 3 - Roche  $E^3$ : Experience, Exposure, and Education model

$E^3$  was implemented at Roche by creating an Opportunity Marketplace where employees can practice their skills by applying for 10-25% contribution to other projects and programs over a short period of time (3-6 months).

### Conclusion

The introduction of the T-shaped employee system in combination with the  $E^3$  model allowed Roche to create its own pool of highly qualified specialists and respond to a rapidly changing market. Using this approach in the higher education system will help prepare competitive graduates who will be in demand in the international labor market.

### References

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