



# Evergreens of excellence

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excellence

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – At the end of 2007, the *Journal of Management History* published a special issue on the topic of excellence, titled *Our Dreams of Excellence*. In this issue, Guest Editor Dahlgaard-Park stated that research into excellence had taken a high flight in recent years despite the fact that there was no unanimity yet about a definition of or the factors that lead to sustained excellence. Agreement on the notion of excellence is all the more important as economic times have changed considerably since the special issue was published. However, according to Mintzberg the activities that managers perform have basically not changed over time. If this is true, it could be hypothesized that the factors that create excellence also change little over time. The purpose of this research is to examine these factors and compare them through time to establish whether they are “evergreens of excellence”. These evergreens are defined as characteristics that are always important for creating and maintaining an excellent organization, and that managers always have to take into account when devising actions to lead their organization to excellence and superior results.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Research studies into excellence, conducted before and after 1995, were compared to evaluate whether factors of excellence stayed the same over time.

**Findings** – The research results show that nearly 90 percent of the factors that create excellence found in studies done in and before 1995 are also found in studies done after 1995. Although the attention given to certain characteristics of factors may shift from time to time, on the whole the factors found do seem to qualify as “evergreens of excellence”, factors that are always important for creating and maintaining a high performance organization.

**Research limitations/implications** – The research results should not be seen as offering a recipe that, if followed, will produce a successful organization. Rather they provide design exemplars for practitioners which have to be translated to a particular situation in place and time.

**Originality/value** – Contradictory findings in the literature raise questions about the validity of the outcomes of the excellence studies which have become increasingly popular these past decades. The results of this study for the first time provide factors of excellence which stay valid over time.

**Keywords** Organizational development, Excellence, High performance organizations, Evergreens, Sustainability, Performance management

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

At the end of 2007, the *Journal of Management History* published a special issue on the topic of excellence, titled “Our dreams of excellence.” In this issue, guest editor Dahlgaard-Park (2007) stated in her editorial that research into excellence had taken a high flight in recent years despite the fact that there was no unanimity yet about the definition of excellence, let alone about the factors that influence sustained excellence. Dahlgaard-Park (2007, p. 306) did propose a definition of the notion of excellence in the context of quality management, referring to it as “upgrading the level of organizational management to a level of excellence, which is necessary to provide excellent results, i.e. products and services which delight the customers.” She ended her editorial by expressing the hope that the content of the special issue would provide readers with building blocks for future excellence. The articles in the special issue then looked at excellence from different perspectives. For instance, Zink (2007) tried to come up with a



new definition for excellence, based on a review of the historical development of the total quality movement. Dahlgaard-Park and Dahlgaard (2007) then proposed, on the basis of a review of eight excellence frameworks, a new model called the 4P model that depicted the factors for sustainable excellence. And Komashie *et al.* (2007) identified the different factors for creating excellence in different sectors, in this case the healthcare and manufacturing industries.

However, looking at all the articles in the special issue, it became clear that also among these authors there was no agreement on which factors create sustained performance. This agreement is all the more important as the times have changed considerably since the special issue was published. In 2007 the credit crisis hit, causing the most severe recession since the 1930s (Colvin, 2009). A wave of trends and developments, such as globalization (Lawrence, 2002; Bakker *et al.*, 2004; Starbuck, 2005; Schuster and Copeland, 2006; Sirkin *et al.*, 2008; Ramamurti and Singh, 2009), new technology (Sadler, 2002; Malone, 2003; Light, 2005), ascension of Asian markets and especially India and China (Backman and Butler, 2007; Nath, 2008; Nobrega and Sinha, 2008), environmental issues (Rosen, 2000) and demographic shifts (Rosen, 2000; Martin, 2002), was sweeping the business world and reshaped the global business economy. Several authors have described the changed business environment quite aptly. One such a description stated that there are five major “strands of revolution” emerging:

- (1) There is the strategic revolution in which competitors do no longer play to the rules of the game but create their own market place.
- (2) There is a shift of power revolution in which power goes from shareholders to managers, from the West to the rest of the world, from producers to consumers, and from the unskilled to the skilled.
- (3) In the knowledge revolution, having ideas is far more important than having capital.
- (4) In the organizational structure revolution, traditional organizational boundaries are blurring and even collapsing, giving way to more “fluid” structures.
- (5) Finally, because of the freedom revolution, employees are no longer at the mercy of an all-powerful employer.

Instead they can move their “human capital” around to workplaces they like. Another succinct description of the business environment is this:

This is an era marked with rapid and spastic change. The problems of organizations are increasingly complex. There are too many ironies, polarities, dichotomies, dualities, ambivalences, paradoxes, confusions, contradictions, contraries, and messes for any organization to understand and deal with. One can pick up a paper any day of the week and find indications of this inordinate complexity. Traditional information sources and management techniques have become less effective or obsolete. Linear information, linear thinking and incremental strategies are no match for the turbulence of today’s business climate.

A third striking description is the following:

In the new era for management there will be turbulence, dangers and problems. The business financial structure has changed drastically. Managers must have an increasing awareness of

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the society they serve. Inspiration and leadership are needed to introduce effective laws in an orderly fashion. The price of failure is likely to be the disappearance of free forms of business. As our laws and economic conditions have changed, so has the type of person who manages our commercial institutions. Independent actions of any one man without consideration of the long-term effects on society are becoming less and less frequent.

Reading these descriptions one can be forgiven to think these are all about our current times. The first description was recent, from the 2009 book *The Death of Modern Management* by Jo Owen (2009, pp. 17-20). The second description however originated from Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, from their book *Leaders* published in 1985 (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, pp. 8-10). And the last description was coined by Carl Golgart in his article *Changing Times In Management*, dating from 1970! Every manager thinks that the times he is living in are unique and that the things he needs to do to achieve excellence are special, but is this really true? In his book *Managing* (Mintzberg, 2009), Mintzberg quotes in the section “Managing in times of less change than you think” (Mintzberg, 2009, pp. 13-14). Hales (2001, p. 54):

For all the fashionable management hype about leadership, it is unfashionable management that is being practiced and its fundamental characteristics have not changed.

Mintzberg continues by stating:

Managers deal with different issues as time moves forward, but not with different managing. The job does not change. Despite the great fuss we make about change, the fact is that basic aspects of human behavior – and what could be more basic than managing and leading? – remain rather stable.

In fact Mintzberg finds, when comparing his study into managerial work from the 1970s (Mintzberg, 1973) with his study of the 1990s (Mintzberg, 2009), that there are basically no differences between the activities of managers in those two time periods. Managers may be using new tools but their core managerial work activities remained the same.

### **Developing the research question**

Mintzberg is not alone in his observation. For example, Tengblad (2000, pp. 38) states:

Managerial work appears to be a relatively stable and evolutionary phenomenon. The many striking similarities between the work behaviors of Swedish CEOs during the forties and those of the nineties indicate the importance of traditions rather than modern technology or fashions in management for deciding the where, when, how, and why of their work.

In a later study, comparing managerial activities of Swedish CEOs in the first decade of this century with those of American CEOs as studied by Mintzberg (1973), Tengblad (2006) concludes that there are differences such as a larger workload, a contact pattern more oriented towards subordinates in group-settings, a greater emphasis on giving information, and less preoccupation with administrative work. According to Tengblad (2006) these different results can be attributed (with caution) to the impact of the management discourse about leadership and corporate culture, and to factors such as organizational structure and geographical dispersion of companies. However, Tengblad also remarks that there were significant similarities between the two studies which indicate that “claims of the emergence of a radically different managerial work are much exaggerated. Instead the empirical data shows that new work practices

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are combined with older practices, both in complex and context-specific ways.” Hales, in a number of empirical studies of middle managers (Hales and Tamangani, 1996; Hales, 1999; Hales and Mustapha, 2000), finds that only small changes in managerial work had taken place over the years as managers were basically still responsible for the results of their organizational units and their focus was therefore on monitoring and managing performance. Watson (2001) also claims that managerial behavior is of a relatively stable nature. Tolmie *et al.* (2003), in their study of the use of new concepts such as the “virtual organization” and “virtual teamwork” by managers in a major UK retail bank, find that “whilst there is recognizable change in the work of such managers at the level of content and resources, there is no fundamental change in the interactional competences involved.” They conclude that even with changing organizational objectives, requirements and roles, the primary resources that managers and employees use to deal with these changes are not so much new “virtual” ones but rather the old, trusted ones.

It does not mean, however, that there are no contrary findings in the literature. Many authors started to proclaim from the 1980s onwards that organizations would significantly change and as a result managerial practices to achieve excellence would also have to be adapted (Drucker, 1988; Handy, 1989; Kanter, 1989; Peters, 1989; Morgan, 1993). And indeed, later researchers did find changes. For example, Worrall and Cooper (2004) found, in their study into the changing nature of managerial work in the UK and the impact of different forms of organizational change on managers’ perceptions of the organizations they work in, that some forms of change (notably redundancy and delayering) have had particularly damaging effects on managers’ experiences in the workplace and on their behaviors within and beyond their organizations. Clarke (1998) described the changing role of middle managers because of the reorganizing, rationalization and change management programs sweeping through modern-day organizations. Quinn *et al.* (2000) listed “pressing problems in modern organizations that keep us up at night” and proclaimed the need for new managerial styles to cope with these problems. Cartwright and Boyes (2000) report on a survey describing the impact of organizational change and labor market trends on managers’ experience of working life, work and health outcomes, and the impact of long working hours in Britain. And these changes are affecting every industry, as Johns and Teare (1995) illustrated when remarking that the structural changes within the hospitality and education sectors demand new managerial skills.

The contradictory findings in the literature raise questions about the validity of the outcomes of studies into excellence which have become increasingly popular these past decades. In the wake of the landmark book *In Search of Excellence* (Peters and Waterman, 1982) and the bestsellers *Built to Last* (Collins and Porras, 1994) and *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001), there has been a strong interest among academics and managers in identifying the factors of high performance (O’Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000; Hess and Kazanjian, 2006; Porras *et al.*, 2007; Thoenig and Waldman, 2007; Gottfredson and Schaubert, 2008; Simons, 2008; Tappin and Cave, 2008; Spear, 2009). The attention has been specifically on the resources of the firm which can create sustainable success because, as Pitelis and Teece (2009) noticed, “it is now widely recognized that intra-firm factors are more important in explaining firm profitability than industry-level factors.” In this respect, the research into factors that create excellence has been driven by developments in the resource-based view of the firm

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(Lockett *et al.*, 2009) and the theory of dynamic capabilities (Peteraf and Barney, 2003; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2009; Teece, 2009). However, when reviewing the articles and books written on excellence, it is conspicuous that – although many authors claim universal validity of their findings – many different factors which potentially create excellence are found. Which types of factors are found seems to depend on the angle of research, the personal views and interests of the researchers, or the time period the research was conducted in. This ties in with the contradictory findings on the changing nature of organizations, managerial work and excellence frameworks, but it makes it difficult to distinguish an overall set of factors which describe excellence in general and through time. It is therefore imperative that a clear excellence framework is constructed so that generalization can take place (Pearson *et al.*, 2008). The aim of this article therefore is to establish, using a descriptive literature review, whether the factors that create excellence, as found in the literature, are constant over time, i.e. have been valid in the past decades and therefore may be assumed to be predictive for the future (Schmidt *et al.*, 1985). In this respect, excellence is defined in such a way that it builds on the definition given by Dahlgaard-Park (2007) but goes one step further: achieving excellence leads to a high performance organization (HPO), which is an organization that achieves financial and non-financial results that are better than those of its peer group over a period of time of at least five years (de Waal and Frijns, 2009; de Waal, 2012). The research question dealt with in this paper was thus formulated as follows: what are the characteristics which have over time a positive relation with the achievement of excellence and high performance organizations? These factors can be regarded as “evergreens of excellence”, characteristics that are always important for creating and maintaining an excellent organization, and that managers always have to take into account when devising actions to lead their organizations to excellence and superior results. As such, the results of this research can be seen as creating management theory because they originate from research based on design science, which has as a mission “to develop knowledge that the professionals of the discipline in question can use to design solutions for their field problems” (van Aken, 2005, p. 20). The results of this study can also guide academics in their further studies into the mechanisms behind the high performance factors, i.e. what causes the factors and what can influence them in a positive way. This research helps to satisfy Tengblad’s (2006) call to researchers to forge stronger links between theory development and empirical investigation.

The article is structured as follows. The next section described the two phases of the research – the descriptive literature review and the comparison of studies conducted in/before and after 1995. After this, first the results of the descriptive literature review and then the results of the comparison are described and discussed. The paper ends with a short discussion on the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research.

### **Description of the research**

The research approach consisted of two phases, a descriptive literature review and the subsequent comparison of studies conducted in/before and after 1995. Phase 1, the descriptive literature review, started with a selection of studies into high performance and excellence. The criteria for including studies in the research were:

- The study aimed specifically at identifying characteristics of excellence or best practices in certain aspects (such as processes, human resources, or technology) which are explicitly linked to achieving high performance.
- The study consisted of either a survey with a sufficient large number of respondents so that its results could be generalized, or of in-depth case studies of several companies so that the results were at least valid for more than one organization. The study preferably covered more than one industry and more than one country. Multiple industries, sectors and countries provide a broader base of knowledge.
- The study employed triangulation by using more than one research method (for example, a questionnaire and interviews).
- The written documentation contained an account and justification of the research method, research approach and selection of the research population, an explanation of the (statistical) analysis used, and retraceable conclusions and results. This way the quality of the research method could be assessed.

For the literature search, the business source premier, Emerald and Science Direct databases were reviewed, and Google was also used to find relevant sources. The following search words were used: high performance, excellence, high performing organizations, high performance managers, high performance workforce, accountable organization, adaptive enterprise, agile corporation, agile virtual enterprise, democratic enterprise, flexible organization, high-performance work system, high reliability organization, intelligent enterprise, real-time enterprise, resilient organization, responsive organization, robust organization, and sustainable organization. In addition, books were reviewed, most of these from the business and management fields. The literature search was conducted in 2007. Based on the four search criteria, the literature search yielded 290 studies that satisfied the criteria completely or partly. Three categories of studies were distinguished:

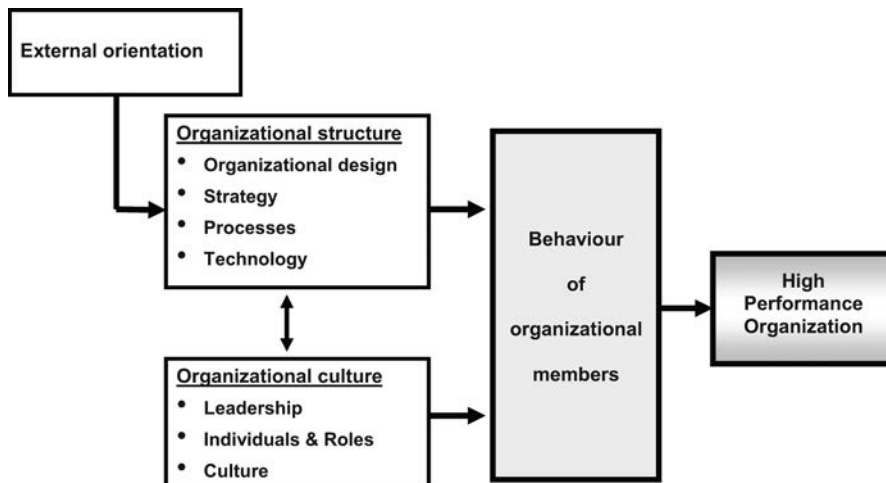
- (1) A study which satisfied all four criteria. These studies formed the basis for the identification of characteristics. A total of 105 category A studies were found.
- (2) A study which satisfied criteria 1 and 2 but not criterion 3 and criterion 4 only partly. The research approach seemed thorough but there was no detailed description and justification of the method used. These studies formed additional input for the identification of characteristics. A total of 66 category B studies were found.
- (3) A study which basically satisfied criteria 1 and 2 but criteria 3 and 4 not at all, so there was no basis for generalizing the study findings. These studies were used as reference for characteristics identified in category A and B studies. A total of 119 category C studies were found.

The 290 studies were summarized by three researchers. The type of the study was decided by one researcher who made the summary of that particular study. The type was subsequently reviewed and approved by one of the other two researchers. In the summary, the study's research methods, research population, and the main findings were described.



To order the characteristics of excellence, the framework of Kotter and Heskett (1992) was combined with that of Scott Morton (2003). The Kotter and Heskett framework defines four factors which influence the behavior of people in organizations: organizational culture; organizational structure, consisting of formal structure, systems, processes and policies; leadership of the organization; and external orientation, consisting of competitors, and public and legislative organizations. Scott Morton's framework enlarges the external environment factor by adding customers, suppliers and partners, and broadens the framework by putting individuals and roles into it and by specifically adding strategy, organizational design and technology to the organizational structure factor. The factors in the resulting framework (Figure 1) together influence the degree in which organizational members exhibit performance-driven behavior which in turn designates whether the organization is an HPO (de Waal, 2004).

The method used to identify the characteristics of excellence was as follows. For each of the 290 literature sources, the elements that the author(s) of the study indicated as being important for becoming a HPO, were identified. These elements were transferred to a matrix in which they were classified under one of the factors of the framework. Because authors used different terminologies in their studies, the elements were grouped into categories within each factor. Subsequently, a matrix was constructed per factor in which each category constituted a characteristic. For the first 90 studies, this process was repeated by an external academic. The results of this academic review were discussed during a half day session to reach consensus on whether the characteristics had been categorized correctly. This consensus was reached immediately for 95 percent of the categorized studies, consensus on an additional 3 percent was reached quickly after clarifying some questions and mistakes, and on the remaining 2 percent consensus was reached after discussion. After this, the "weighted importance" was calculated for each of the characteristics, i.e. how many



Source: Based on Kotter and Heskett (1992), Scott Morton (2003) and Waal (2004)

Figure 1. Ordering framework with the eight factors influencing high performance

times it occurred in the various study types. To weigh the characteristics, each characteristic from study category A got 6 points, categories B and C got respectively 3 and 1 points. There were 105 category A studies, 66 category B studies and 119 category C studies which gave a maximum score for a characteristic of  $(105 \times 6) + (66 \times 3) + (119 \times 1) = 947$  points. The total number of points was calculated for each characteristic and then divided by 947, to give the weighted percentage of the characteristic. Finally, the characteristics which had a weighted importance of at least 6 percent were named as the characteristics that potentially make up a HPO. The reference list with details about the 290 studies used in the review and the matrixes with the detailed scores have been documented in a white paper[1]. The research approach thus satisfied the “criteria for good science” as given by Srnka and Koeszegi (2007): the data collection was performed in a systematic way, there was a structured procedure and documentation of the data analysis, and there were multiple person involvement and quality checks.

Phase 2 aimed at answering the important question whether the characteristics of a HPO, that were found in Phase 1, stayed the same over time. To verify whether there were differences, the 290 studies were divided into two groups: studies performed in or before 1995[2] and studies conducted after 1995. The year 1995 was taken as a dividing point because there is general consensus that around that period the “new economy” commenced. Globalization took flight in the second part of the 1990s, fostered by rapid developments in information and communication technology. At the same time, workforces became better educated and more articulate. Consequently, the speed of business increased quite dramatically while the competitive landscape became fiercer and employees more demanding, increasing the demands on management. To illustrate this: from 1972 to 1995 the growth rate of output per hour (a measure of labor productivity) in the US had only averaged around one percent per year. However, during the shift to the “new economy” growth became much faster: 2.65 percent from 1995-1999 (Wikipedia, 2010). In the literature review, 36 studies were conducted in and before 1995 and 254 studies after 1995. This large difference in number of studies can be explained by the “new economy” itself, as after 1995 it may have become more difficult to achieve excellence. Hence the increased interest of practitioners and academics in excellence. Another reason for this interest may have been the publication of the books by Collins and Porras (1994) and Collins (2001) which triggered a plethora of books and research studies on the same subject matter. For the characteristics, the weighted importance was calculated for each time period. The results of this calculation are given in the Appendix. In Table I the characteristics which score at least a 6 percent weighted importance in the studies after 1995 are listed. Table I shows there is a coverage of 89 percent: almost ninety percent of the characteristics found in the studies done in/before 1995 can also be found in the studies performed after 1995. Although the attention given to certain characteristics of factors may shift from time to time, on the whole the factors found in both time periods do seem to qualify as “evergreens of excellence”, factors that are always important for creating and maintaining an HPO.

### Discussion

The research question dealt with in this paper was formulated as follows: What are the characteristics which have over time a positive relation with the achievement of



	Weighted importance (%)		Evergreens of excellence
	Studies after 1995	Studies in/before 1995	
<i>Design characteristics</i>			
Stimulate cross-functional and cross-organizational collaboration	21.1	6.4	<b>249</b>
Simplify and flatten the organization by reducing boundaries and barriers between and around units	18.7	0.6	
Foster organization-wide information, knowledge and best practices sharing	9.2	3.2	
Constantly realign the organizational structure with changing internal and external circumstances	6.3	–	
<i>Strategy characteristics</i>			
Balance long-term focus and short-term focus	16.1	3.8	
Define a strong vision that excites and challenges	14.8	17.9	
Align strategy, goals and objectives with the demands of the external environment and build robust, resilient and adaptive plans to achieve these	10.4	–	
Set clear, ambitious, measurable and achievable goals	9.9	17.9	
Adopt the strategy that will set the company apart	9.9	2.6	
Create clarity and a common understanding of the organization's direction and strategy	9.0	0.6	
Keep growing the core business	7.6	1.9	
Focus on bottom-line profit and cash-flow as well as top-line growth	7.2	6.4	
<i>Process characteristics</i>			
Design a good and fair reward, promotion and incentive structure	36.5	5.1	
Continuously simplify and improve all the organization's processes	25.2	7.7	
Measure what matters	23.9	1.9	
Continuously innovate products, processes and services	22.5	16.0	
Create highly interactive internal communication	22.1	19.2	
Strive for continuous process optimization	18.1	9.0	
Strive to be a best practice organization	17.6	16.0	
Report to every organizational member financial and non-financial information needed to drive improvement	17.0	13.5	
Deploy resources effectively	9.9	8.3	
<i>Technology characteristics</i>			
Implement flexible ICT systems throughout the organization	6.3	7.7	
Apply user-friendly ICT tools to increase usage	6.2	3.8	
Constantly identify and exploit new technologies to gain competitive advantage	6.2	3.8	
<i>Leadership characteristics</i>			
Maintain and strengthen trust relationships with people at all levels	30.8	10.9	Comparison of the factors and characteristics of excellence found in the literature in/before 1995 and after 1995
Live with integrity and lead by example	29.6	4.5	
		(continued)	

	Weighted importance (%)	
	Studies after 1995	Studies in/before 1995
Develop effective, focused and strong leadership	18.6	15.4
Grow leaders from within	15.7	11.5
Apply decisive action-focused decision making	15.4	1.9
Inspire people to accomplish extraordinary results	11.8	7.7
Be confidently humble	11.5	9.6
Stimulate change and improvement	10.9	7.7
Allow experiments and mistakes	10.7	5.8
Be committed to the organization for the long haul	10.0	3.8
Hold people responsible for results and be decisive toward non-performers	9.8	–
Coach and facilitate	9.6	7.7
Stretch yourselves and your people	9.4	13.5
Assemble a diverse and complementary management team and workforce	8.7	0.6
<i>Individuals and roles characteristics</i>		
Create a learning organization	42.6	17.3
Attract exceptional people with a can-do attitude who fit the culture	20.8	7.7
Develop people to be resilient and flexible	13.0	1.3
Engage and involve the workforce	11.1	19.9
Create a safe and secure workplace	10.9	7.7
Master the core competencies and be an innovator in them	8.1	9.6
Align employee behavior and values with company values and direction	7.3	–
<i>Culture characteristics</i>		
Empower people and give them freedom to decide and act	43.1	27.6
Develop and maintain a performance-driven culture	15.7	7.7
Establish strong and meaningful core values	13.8	4.5
Create a culture of transparency, openness and trust	10.4	12.2
Create a shared identity and a sense of community	6.1	6.4
<i>External orientation characteristics</i>		
Continuously strive to enhance customer value creation	40.5	16.7
Maintain good and long-term relationships with all stakeholders	26.0	7.7
Monitor the environment consequently and respond adequately	22.6	9.6
Grow through partnerships and be part of a value creating network	11.8	–
Choose to compete and compare with the best in the market place	11.6	16.0
Only enter new business that complement the company's strengths	7.2	–
Develop a global mindset	6.1	3.8
Number of characteristics found in studies from both time periods:	53 of 57	
Matching percentage:	89	

Table I.

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excellence and high performance of organizations? The descriptive literature review yielded 53 characteristics, categorized under eight factors, which potentially have the most impact on high performance. Together they can be designated as an HPO Framework. Such a HPO Framework could be the organizational model that organizations are looking for to achieve economic, environmental and social sustainability (Freeman and Zollo, 2009). The studies examined in the research by definition look at what organizations did in the past, and therefore cannot guarantee that these characteristics will also be valid for the dynamic future (Morton, 2003). However, by comparing the characteristics found in studies done in/before and after 1995, we can at least get a sense for the longitudinal relevance of the characteristics. Even though “results achieved in the past are no guarantee for future performance” and Table I cannot be a prediction of the future, the results of the comparison do give a strong indication that the characteristics that are found both in studies conducted before and after 1995 are important over time and therefore will be relevant, in one form or another, for the future. The results of this research therefore have to be seen, not as instructions or recipes to follow, but as design exemplars (van Aken, 2005) which have to be translated by practitioners to their specific situation in place and time by designing a specific variant of the exemplar. The practical implication of this study is that now the HPO characteristics are known, management can start working dedicatedly on improving these particular characteristics, as this gives the organization the biggest chance of becoming a high performance organization. The theoretical implication is that now longitudinal research into characteristics of excellence has been done for the first time and these characteristics are known, academics can focus on research topics such as how these characteristics should be applied in different contexts.

There are several limitations to this literature review. Despite an extensive literature search potentially valuable studies might have been overlooked. In this respect, there is also the usual problem that only published studies were taken into account which creates a potential bias as unpublished studies may contain different outcomes (Ashworth *et al.*, 1992). This problem has been reduced somewhat as several working papers have also been included. Another potential bias is the presence of subjectivity in the study retrieval process which can occur in the choice of literature sources included (Ashworth *et al.*, 1992). This problem has been alleviated by “casting the net” as wide as possible during the literature selection process. In regard to the issue of generalization of the research findings, we have to take note of Lukka and Kasanen’s (1995) remark that “all attempts to make empirical generalizations are inevitably inductive by nature” and thus “we can never be sure whether our reasoning preserves truth or not, as is possible in the case of induction.” Also, Martin *et al.* (1983) state that for generalization companies fundamentally have to be quite similar. Although many institutions worldwide are growing similar in the way they are managed, it still cannot be stated with certainty that they are similar in nature. Further research should focus on the “how” now that the “what” is known. The HPO Framework stipulates “what” is important over time to become and stay successful but it does not indicate “how” organizations can improve the “evergreens”. So future research should concentrate on identifying, collecting and describing “best ideas” of organizations which have achieved success in some or possibly all of the “evergreens”.

**Notes**

1. The white paper can be downloaded from [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=931873](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=931873)
2. The publication dates of some of the literature sources reviewed is later than 1995 (mostly 1996 or 1997) but the research described in the source was conducted in or before 1995.

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### Further reading

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Appendix. Characteristics of excellence found in the literature in/before and after 1995

This appendix categorizes each of the 290 studies used in the HPO research in one of two time periods: in/before 1995, and after 1995. For each characteristic, the studies are listed per category (A, B or C), and the weighted importance percentage is given per time period. The weighted importance was calculated as follows. When a characteristic was found in study category A it got 6 points, categories B and C got respectively 3 and 1 points. For the studies performed in/before 1995 there were 22 category A studies, 5 category B studies and 9 category C studies which gave a maximum score for a characteristic found in studies in/before 1995 of  $(22 \times 6) + (5 \times 3) + (9 \times 1) = 156$  points. The total number of points was calculated for each characteristic and then divided by 156, to give the weighted percentage of the characteristic for the time period in/before 1995. Similarly, the weighted importance of characteristics found in studies after 1995 was calculated, based on a total of 83 category A, 61 category B and 110 category C studies, giving 791 points  $[(83 \times 6) + 61 \times 3 + 110 \times 1]$ . The titles of the 290 studies can be looked up, by their number, in Appendix 2 of the white paper which can be downloaded from [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=931873](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=931873)

	After 1995			In/Before 1995		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
<b>Design characteristics</b>						
Stimulate cross-functional and cross-organizational collaboration	15, 15 <sup>a</sup> , 19, 22, 22, 22, 24, 30, 33, 34,	42, 47, 50, 51, 51, 53, 139, 263, 263,	64, 64, 66, 71, 80, 86, 149, 154, 186,	16	55	280
				Weighted %		Weighted %
				21.1		6.4

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			Im/Before 1995		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
	122, 125, 129, 132, 132, 137, 158, 165, 234, 234	266	195, 195, 205, 216, 224, 224, 273, 277			
Simplify and flatten the organization by reducing boundaries and barriers between and around units	5, 5, 18, 18, 22, 22, 26, 27, 31, 34, 34, 97, 132, 135, 137, 234, 241, 255	51, 53, 54, 59, 60, 60, 61, 167, 170, 258, 265	77, 78, 78, 87, 225, 227, 286	18.7	217	0.6
Foster organization-wide information, knowledge and best practices sharing	6, 10, 17, 22, 25, 26, 34, 122, 129	44, 50, 50, 61, 145	79, 79, 195	9.2	55	83, 118
Constantly realign the organizational with changing internal and external circumstances	5, 22, 23, 33, 34, 127	42, 51, 61, 146, 260, 261	81, 82, 87, 149, 198, 289	6.3		
Create a sense of ownership and entrepreneurial feel by establishing an integrated network of small decentralized units	2, 136, 166	59, 268	62, 71, 79, 87, 192, 204, 204	3.9	55, 55, 55, 57, 118, 57	10.3

(continued)

Figure A1.

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	Weighted %	A	B	C	Weighted %
Create an infrastructure that supports the strategy and the value drivers	24	42, 44, 262, 262	81, 86, 185, 187, 197, 199, 219, 277	3.3			83, 100	1.3
Stimulate support functions to be integrated business partners	22, 96, 119, 241	44	65, 75	2.9	96			3.8
Implement a dynamic organizational design to enhance flexibility	3, 34, 127		85, 87, 157, 192, 216	2.4				
Establish a consistent responsibility structure with clear roles and accountabilities		48, 59, 61, 144	62, 77, 77, 77, 77, 77, 80, 85, 205	2.2				
Think in matrixes	22		201	0.9		55		1.9
Manage a virtual organization		172		0.3				
<b>Strategy characteristics</b>								
Balance long-term focus and short-term focus	4, 6, 19, 19, 20, 21, 31, 35, 119, 162, 232, 232, 236, 241	42, 48, 54, 59, 61, 61, 98, 145, 175, 181, 264	63, 66, 79, 149, 191, 196, 207, 275, 277, 285	16.1	4			3.8

(continued)

	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
Define a strong vision that excites and challenges	4, 4, 17, 19, 19, 22, 22, 23, 28, 28, 101, 105, 122, 241	38, 45, 47, 47, 141, 169, 169, 172, 173, 175, 259, 262	62, 64, 70, 76, 152, 154, 191, 193, 194, 195, 214, 215, 215, 218, 220, 221, 222, 224, 229, 230, 272	14.8	4, 4, 101, 105	4, 55	110	17.9
Align strategy, goals and objectives with the demands of the external environment and build robust, resilient and adaptive plans to achieve these	11, 31, 33, 34, 34, 36, 132, 164	43, 55, 60, 146, 261, 267, 267, 267, 270	65, 70, 73, 74, 74, 76, 81, 100, 149, 184, 216	10.4		55	100	
Set clear, ambitious, measurable and achievable goals	2, 4, 13, 15, 18, 18, 27, 31, 103, 107, 232, 232, 241, 245	59, 59, 173, 187	64, 76, 86, 86, 191, 282	9.9	4, 13, 103, 107	55	111	17.9
Adopt the strategy that will set the company apart	5, 22, 24, 36, 109, 158, 163, 232	38, 47, 47, 140, 172, 181, 181, 182, 268	80, 81, 91, 99, 100, 150, 152, 186, 217, 221, 226, 231, 278, 280	9.9	109		99, 100, 217, 278, 280	2.6

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
Create clarity and a common understanding of the organization's direction and strategy	15, 15, 22, 34, 35, 132, 132, 132, 245, 245	46, 47, 56, 60, 167	65, 65, 65, 67, 76, 76, 84, 88, 116, 116, 157, 197, 198, 199, 202, 204, 209, 223, 227, 272, 273, 284, 289			278	0.6
Keep growing the core business	34, 36, 240, 240, 246, 246	49, 49, 57, 174, 174, 178	79, 80, 191, 203, 207, 207, 207, 226, 290		57		1.9
Focus on bottom-line profit and cash-flow as well as top-line growth	19, 22, 36, 105, 123, 136, 235, 235	57, 177, 178, 179, 186	86, 199, 280, 286	105	57	280	6.4
Focus on a limited number of key priorities	15, 26, 36, 136	54, 59, 60, 262, 264, 269	64, 64, 76, 115, 149, 187, 202				7.1
Have a ruthless focus on value	22, 36, 123, 232	42, 48, 60	77, 77, 218, 227				3.9
Regularly alter and renew the organization	33, 34, 34	43, 60, 174, 181	115, 148, 226, 287				3.6

(continued)

Figure A1.



	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %	
Have an integrated set of strategy, structure and systems	20, 128, 232	50, 173	62, 209, 216, 229, 281, 284, 284				3.3	
Develop strategy and goals bottom-up using input of people at all organizational levels	5, 15, 15, 241	144	209, 227				3.1	
<b>Process characteristics</b>								
Design a good and fair reward, promotion and incentive structure	2, 6, 8, 15, 15, 18, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 30, 30, 31, 34, 34, 35, 112, 119, 119, 122, 126, 126, 127, 129, 129, 129, 129, 137, 233, 234, 234, 234, 241, 252, 253	41, 47, 50, 51, 51, 54, 59, 61, 142, 142, 144, 180	64, 64, 64, 64, 64, 65, 65, 66, 66, 70, 73, 73, 75, 78, 79, 85, 86, 86, 88, 149, 149, 216, 228, 279, 287				14	36.5
						83, 217	5.1	

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	Weighted %	A	B	C	Weighted %
Continuously simplify and improve all the organization's processes	6, 15, 18, 20, 20, 20, 20, 22, 22, 22, 22, 22, 25, 26, 26, 31, 34, 34, 125, 125, 125, 125, 137	37, 37, 37, 40, 43, 45, 48, 51, 51, 59, 61, 145, 167, 167	61, 62, 63, 72, 72, 86, 118, 192, 192, 194, 195, 286, 287	25.2	93, 105			7.7
Measure what matters	2, 8, 12, 15, 28, 28, 31, 31, 125, 125, 127, 165, 232, 232, 234	42, 46, 47, 47, 51, 51, 51, 51, 51, 51, 56, 56, 59, 61, 167, 175, 258, 258, 264, 267	64, 64, 66, 66, 69, 73, 73, 73, 73, 74, 74, 74, 74, 74, 76, 79, 84, 85, 86, 148, 154, 184, 184, 184, 186, 197, 200, 202, 206, 208, 225, 228, 271, 275, 282, 284	23.9		55		1.9
Continuously innovate products, processes and services	5, 6, 10, 15, 20, 20, 114, 114, 123, 124, 235, 235, 238, 242, 242, 249, 251, 253	39, 42, 42, 44, 50, 50, 51, 52, 53, 53, 53, 54, 54, 54, 59, 59, 60, 60, 61, 145,	69, 73, 73, 86, 89, 148, 187, 191, 202, 202, 226, 273, 272, 272, 273, 285, 286	22.5	13, 93, 105, 105		217	16.0

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
Create highly interactive internal communication	15, 18, 28, 31, 34, 158, 158, 166, 166, 166, 232, 234, 234, 234, 234, 241, 241, 242, 252	171, 175 46, 51, 59, 60, 139, 144, 145, 173, 173, 266	65, 66, 70, 70, 73, 80, 149, 154, 155, 155, 155, 202, 207, 209, 212, 213, 215, 216, 271, 277, 281, 287, 287	103, 107, 107, 117	55	83, 83, 110	19.2
Strive for continuous process optimization	5, 8, 11, 22, 24, 114, 119, 119, 119, 125, 125, 125, 125, 125, 127, 164, 237, 237	42, 59, 146, 146, 167, 180, 258, 258	71, 87, 151, 151, 171, 197, 197, 197, 216, 277, 282	95, 107		83, 280	9.0
Strive to be a best practice organization	21, 34, 114, 123, 125, 125, 125, 137, 137, 165, 232, 241	38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 47, 50, 50, 51, 53, 54, 140, 144, 145, 175, 258, 267	61, 67, 68, 70, 70, 71, 72, 73, 80, 85, 87, 89, 153, 161, 230, 285	96, 96, 103, 103		83	16.0
Report to every organizational member	6, 6, 11, 18, 20, 23,	37, 40, 41, 44, 46,	62, 68, 69, 72, 78,	16, 96	55, 55	83, 217,	13.5

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
financial and non-financial information needed to drive improvement	31, 31, 125, 160, 162, 232, 232, 254	46, 48, 48, 51, 59, 60, 61, 145, 170, 172	82, 196, 216, 229, 272, 279			217	
Deploy resources effectively	2, 2, 35, 36, 123, 257, 257	37, 37, 50, 50, 51, 97, 144, 145, 168, 179	68, 76, 82, 86, 86, 86, 151, 216, 289	93, 120		217	8.3
Coordinate across units	2, 96, 127, 244, 246, 257	41, 51	62, 216, 271, 275, 281		108	83	2.6
Create processes that support action	1, 232	56, 61, 167, 169, 174, 174, 267	63, 73, 80, 157, 183, 199, 200, 207, 215, 216, 227	96, 256			7.7
Make sure the work is meaningful		47, 142, 144	84, 191, 271, 272, 272				1.5
Let all processes reflect the values	28	45					1.0
Create an attractive earnings potential without significant personal risk		47	211				0.4

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995								
	A	B	C	A	B	C						
Become a real-time enterprise, by engaging in real-time opportunity detection		40					Weighted Importance %				Weighted Importance %	
								0.3				
<b>Technology characteristics</b>												
Implement flexible ICT systems throughout the organization	8, 18, 31, 35, 36, 166	47, 50, 51, 53	61, 62					6.3	16, 16			7.7
Apply user-friendly ICT tools to increase usage	35, 35, 166, 233	42, 44, 60, 60, 145, 258, 258, 259, 266						6.2	16			3.8
Constantly identify and exploit new technologies to gain competitive advantage	10, 34, 34, 114, 114, 233	37, 42, 167	72, 186, 187, 211					6.2	96			3.8
Become a pioneer at applying the chosen technologies	12, 17, 34, 35, 232, 243, 251		186, 211, 211					4.8				
<b>Leadership characteristics</b>												

(continued)

Evergreens of excellence

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
Maintain and strengthen trust relationships with people on all levels	6, 6, 11, 11, 12, 12, 12, 18, 20, 30, 30, 33, 34, 35, 35, 134, 134, 158, 158, 160, 162, 243, 243	41, 45, 46, 47, 47, 54, 58, 59, 60, 60, 61, 61, 140, 142, 143, 143, 143, 143, 144, 147, 173, 173, 173, 175, 266	63, 64, 65, 65, 65, 70, 70, 72, 76, 84, 84, 90, 90, 110, 149, 149, 150, 152, 161, 188, 191, 200, 205, 208, 209, 212, 215, 222, 222, 225, 271	30.8	13, 101	55	217, 278	10.9
Live with integrity and lead by example	6, 6, 11, 18, 21, 22, 23, 23, 24, 28, 30, 32, 34, 162, 162, 162, 162, 249	41, 45, 47, 50, 51, 51, 51, 54, 59, 59, 59, 61, 61, 61, 140, 141, 143, 143, 145, 145, 145, 147, 147, 173, 175, 175	66, 68, 68, 69, 69, 76, 82, 82, 90, 90, 90, 90, 90, 90, 90, 141, 143, 143, 145, 155, 192, 193, 193, 195, 196, 196, 203, 207, 212, 218, 222, 222, 222, 222, 222, 224, 226, 231, 272,	29.6	107	217		4.5

(continued)

Figure A1.



	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
Develop effective, focused and strong leadership	7, 12, 18, 18, 18, 18, 20, 24, 24, 31, 34, 164, 165, 166	42, 46, 46, 47, 47, 51, 59, 61, 61, 139, 139, 140, 172, 259, 259	272, 272, 284 84, 85, 115, 184, 187, 187, 188, 193, 196, 199, 216, 219, 222, 222, 222, 231, 275, 281	18.6	16, 16, 102, 104			15.4
Grow leaders from within	4, 11, 31, 34, 114, 122, 126, 129, 132, 162, 166, 232, 234, 253	47, 50, 50, 54, 59, 59, 175, 258	64, 65, 65, 65, 66, 66, 75, 76, 86, 88, 195, 207, 222, 226, 288, 289	15.7	13, 96, 117			11.5
Apply decisive action-focused decisionmaking	11, 12, 18, 18, 19, 22, 24, 31, 36, 137, 158, 158, 232	40, 42, 56, 56, 61, 61, 97, 138, 175	65, 66, 76, 79, 87, 90, 90, 149, 152, 153, 154, 196, 207, 209, 209, 212, 279	15.4	55			1.9
Inspire people to accomplish extraordinary results	11, 12, 22, 26, 30, 32, 34, 134, 135,	42, 45, 50, 167, 265	64, 65, 70, 70, 70, 71, 76, 84, 87, 89,	11.8	101, 101			7.7

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
	232		90, 149, 150, 185, 204, 205, 220, 224			
Be confidently humble	6, 11, 12, 18, 136, 160, 162, 164, 234	39, 51, 59, 61, 143, 143, 167, 175, 178	65, 90, 90, 90, 149, 149, 150, 186, 193, 222	103, 107	55	9.6
Stimulate change and improvement	3, 4, 5, 11, 20, 22, 35, 241	38, 46, 51, 140, 172, 175, 180, 265	62, 65, 68, 84, 87, 87, 87, 171, 171, 209, 209, 224, 229, 273	103, 107		7.7
Allow experiments and mistakes	4, 6, 6, 18, 24, 165, 232, 246	35, 50, 53, 56, 56, 61, 143, 147	70, 72, 76, 76, 76, 79, 86, 90, 90, 149, 222, 283, 285		55, 55, 57	5.8
Be committed to the organization for the long haul	11, 19, 19, 19, 19, 20, 22, 113	39, 51, 175, 258, 259	67, 70, 226, 288	96		3.8
Hold people responsible for results and be decisive toward non-performers	1, 8, 15, 19, 125, 164, 165, 232, 245	42, 140, 170, 173	64, 64, 65, 65, 66, 66, 69, 70, 73, 77,			9.8

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
			78, 86, 90, 90, 149, 149, 149, 154, 154, 156, 191, 205, 207, 210, 216, 216, 222			
Coach and facilitate	1, 6, 6, 8, 15, 15, 18, 21, 22	59	65, 65, 65, 73, 76, 84, 88, 171, 188, 188, 195, 224, 272	101	55, 55	7.7
Stretch yourselves and your people	8, 11, 11, 18, 21, 22, 30, 30, 34, 36, 130	59	64, 64, 90, 110, 222	101, 101, 101	55	13.5
Assemble a diverse and complementary management team and workforce	6, 9, 11, 18, 19, 131	42, 45, 47, 50, 59, 167	66, 72, 72, 75, 76, 90, 183, 203, 204, 204, 213, 218, 222, 224, 289			118 0.6
Have a long-term orientation	5, 18, 18, 34	38, 42				
Hands-on management	125, 162	97, 108, 259				
Balance managerial power with the role		50, 172	87, 87, 274	92, 92		7.7

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
of an active board						
Build a high degree of strategic consensus among the top team	132	59, 128, 175	184			
Owner of shares	247			109		
Substitute inspirational leadership for formal structure		51				3.8
<b>Individuals and roles characteristics</b>						
Create a learning organization	5, 6, 10, 15, 19,	41, 43, 47, 50, 53,	63, 64, 68, 73, 73,	42.6	4, 14, 55	17.3
	20, 21, 21, 22, 22,	54, 56, 60, 60, 61,	73, 76, 76, 76, 78,			
	25, 30, 34, 34, 35,	61, 61, 61, 142,	84, 85, 87, 88, 90,			
	114, 114, 114, 114,	172, 175, 258, 246,	151, 161, 197, 206,			
	117, 119, 119, 119,	270	209, 215, 230, 271,			
	119, 122, 122, 122,		271, 273, 273, 277,			
	125, 125, 126, 129,		288			
	129, 132, 160, 232,					

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
	234, 234, 241, 241, 252, 253						
Attract exceptional people with a can-do attitude who fit the culture	6, 9, 11, 12, 18, 18, 18, 21, 24, 122, 123, 165, 232, 232, 234, 252	41, 47, 50, 54, 59, 59, 60, 142, 174, 176, 178, 258	65, 66, 66, 70, 75, 85, 86, 86, 88, 149, 150, 184, 187, 188, 197, 198, 199, 216, 216, 219, 219, 223, 271, 275, 279, 282, 288	4, 13			7.7
Develop people to be resilient and flexible	8, 11, 15, 20, 30, 31, 33, 103, 128, 128, 233, 255, 255	139, 141, 180	154, 154, 156, 158, 158, 158, 158, 158, 199, 208, 208, 209, 213, 213, 213, 216			118, 280	1.3
Engage and involve the workforce	1, 9, 22, 22, 28, 29, 126, 129, 233, 245	37, 44, 46, 61, 141, 142, 146	64, 80, 154, 200, 202, 206, 284	14, 117, 117, 117	55, 57	100	19.9
Create a safe and secure workplace	17, 17, 19, 19, 30,	266, 266	155, 271	13, 117			7.7

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
	30, 30, 34, 119, 119, 130, 234, 255						
Master the core competencies and be an innovator in them	12, 19, 19, 121, 137, 163	41, 42, 42, 59, 144, 146, 258, 269	64, 84, 223, 230	13, 13	97		9.6
Align employee behavior and values with company values and direction	20, 20, 28, 29, 250, 250	54, 59, 139, 167	69, 69, 84, 84, 84, 88, 219, 272, 272				7.3
Create a work environment that is challenging, satisfying and fun	21, 34, 234	145, 169, 181, 266, 270	64, 66, 66, 68, 69, 75, 77, 78, 84, 85, 86, 150, 154, 193, 195, 206, 231, 271, 271, 272				
Foster self-discipline of people	1, 1, 12, 24	167	187, 194		55		1.9
Treat individuals as investors actively building and deploying their human capital	29, 29, 133	59, 144, 144, 258	66, 73, 76, 148, 155				3.7
Inspire individual creativity, initiative	162	59, 60, 167, 172,	79, 149, 150, 171,		55, 55,		5.8

(continued)

Figure A1.



	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	
and entrepreneurship		177	187		97		
Strive for peer respect	16		64, 70		55		
Master deal-making and partnering skills		61					
<b>Culture characteristics</b>							
Empower people and give them freedom to decide and act	1, 1, 2, 2, 6, 12, 12, 15, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29, 29, 31, 31, 34, 35, 114, 114, 122, 125, 128, 132, 135, 136, 158, 162, 164, 165, 234, 234, 234, 237, 244, 245, 245, 248, 252, 252, 253, 254	43, 45, 53, 54, 59, 59, 59, 60, 61, 145, 175, 175, 263, 270	71, 76, 78, 77, 78, 79, 88, 90, 115, 149, 156, 156, 184, 192, 213, 215, 220, 272, 272, 272, 272, 277, 289		4, 14, 55, 97, 96, 113, 113	118	27.6

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
Develop and maintain a performance-driven culture	15, 24, 24, 34, 35, 125, 132, 134, 163, 244, 255	39, 41, 48, 54, 54, 54, 59, 60, 60, 139, 145, 145, 182	65, 65, 68, 69, 70, 70, 72, 86, 149, 152, 154, 154, 154, 155, 205, 212, 277, 279, 289	117, 117			7.7
Establish strong and meaningful core values	1, 2, 19, 23, 28, 34, 35, 35, 132, 134, 236, 236, 244	38, 41, 53, 54, 59, 59, 60	62, 65, 66, 70, 75, 76, 188, 191, 221, 281	4		278	4.5
Create a culture of transparency, openness and trust	1, 2, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 117, 158, 165, 241	60, 61	72, 76, 156, 191, 196, 199, 220, 228, 271, 281	16, 256	55, 55	217	12.2
Create a shared identity and a sense of community	6, 17, 19, 19, 31, 166, 245	61, 262	70, 70, 272		55, 57	111	6.4
Understand the role of culture	11, 11, 119, 128, 236, 243		88, 115, 116, 150, 151				
Develop an adaptive culture to achieve	8, 8, 160	38, 175	71, 71, 87, 87, 87, 87				

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	
long-term success			87, 91, 216, 220, 220, 225, 228, 232, 289, 289				
<b>External orientation characteristics</b>							
Continuously strive to enhance customer value creation	2, 6, 9, 10, 19, 19, 20, 20, 21, 21, 22, 32, 32, 34, 36, 36, 125, 125, 125, 125, 132, 137, 162, 163, 165, 243, 251, 253	50, 50, 50, 51, 51, 51, 51, 51, 51, 53, 54, 54, 54, 59, 59, 59, 60, 60, 61, 61, 140, 146, 146, 167, 175, 179, 188, 189, 261, 262, 266, 268, 269, 269, 269	62, 64, 64, 66, 66, 68, 69, 73, 73, 73, 76, 80, 85, 86, 86, 87, 171, 200, 202, 202, 206, 212, 215, 215, 218, 219, 222, 225, 230, 271, 275, 277, 281, 284, 285	13, 13, 96	97	118, 217, 278, 278, 280	16.7
Maintain good and long-term relationships with all stakeholders	11, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 20, 20, 28, 28, 123, 135, 162, 162,	38, 38, 39, 39, 50, 50, 50, 53, 54, 169, 174, 175, 175, 175,	63, 67, 87, 184, 187, 197, 197, 206, 219, 226, 226, 231,	7	98	217, 278, 278	7.7

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995				
	A	B	C	Weighted %	A	B	C	Weighted %
	166, 235, 241, 246, 249, 253, 254, 254	175, 181, 188, 188, 191, 269	231					
Monitor the environment consequently and respond adequately	6, 11, 11, 15, 20, 20, 20, 26, 31, 31, 132, 132, 134, 135, 135, 136, 137, 166, 251, 251	38, 38, 42, 43, 44, 44, 51, 60, 61, 145, 146, 146, 146, 172, 177	62, 64, 74, 76, 76, 76, 87, 87, 89, 89, 199, 219, 220, 289	22.6	94, 94	57		9.6
Grow through partnerships and be part of a value creating network	22, 26, 27, 33, 34, 125, 125, 125, 166, 255	42, 42, 50, 51, 51, 53, 60, 61, 61, 172, 258, 258, 259, 269	76, 78, 151, 151, 202, 205, 224, 273, 275, 289	11.8				
Choose to compete and compare with the best in the market place	2, 18, 20, 20, 36, 36, 135, 162, 251	47, 47, 50, 50, 50, 56, 59, 59, 140	70, 70, 71, 76, 76, 85, 197, 210, 210, 210, 285	11.6	13, 13, 13, 95	217		16.0
Only enter new business that complement the company's strengths	22, 34, 34, 34, 35, 36, 163, 233	146, 174, 177, 178	86, 86, 194, 204, 211, 227, 227, 227	7.2				
Develop a global mindset	11, 22, 114, 158,	50, 53, 60, 146, 172	204, 224, 258	6.1	13			3.8

(continued)

Figure A1.

	After 1995			In/Before 1995			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	Weighted Importance %
233							
Establish a small market focus in regard to product, technology and application	125, 125, 244	169, 178	153, 153, 153, 188, 276, 276, 276	13			3.8
Emphasize organic growth over acquisitions	36, 240	146, 181	153, 194, 198, 204, 289	13			3.8
Have a good image and reputation	123, 134	169	191	106		278	4.5

Note: <sup>a</sup>A research study can appear more than once for one characteristic when the researchers found in their studies several elements, which were deemed by the author of this article to be not separate elements but to belong under one characteristic

Figure A1.

**About the author**

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