

DNLA @ Catalysts:
Introducing and Rolling out DNLA to a Multi-National IT Company Via Telepresence“

It was more than two years ago when we first got in touch with “Catalysts” through partners in our network. “One of Austria’s best employers?” that looked interesting enough and like the perfect match for us! So, end of the story, after some exchange and also a trip to Austria, Catalyst’s MD Dr. Christoph Steindl was well interested in trying our approach and convinced that the company and all employees could benefit from it.

Before rolling the whole concept and project out fully-fledged, however, Dr. Steindl decided that he wanted a “trial” and a pilot case first. That was a wish we were more than happy to fulfill. So Dr. Steindl picked an employee, a person he knew well, and whose opinion he trusted to 100% and asked him to please participate in the DNLA analysis. This employee got an access code, logged on to our online-platform, and answered a series of simple questions.

Equipped with the results calculated from these responses, based on our “Benchmarking with the Best” approach and on parameters we choose to match the participant’s position and job role, we came together with the participant and Dr. Steindl, and presented the DNLA-results as part of a structured debriefing session. In this short session we not only explained about the background of DNLA and the measurement, but explained the content and the results of the analysis and, most important of all, developed an individual “action plan” with tailor-made suggestions for improvement, based both on the objective analysis-data and on the personal exchange during the debriefing-session. Priorities and timeframes were set, to ensure the transfer of the suggestions for improvement into practice.

Apparently, our performance with the DNLA analysis and the consulting-service based on it must not have been that bad, because Catalysts was interested in going the next steps with us and with the DNLA-approach.

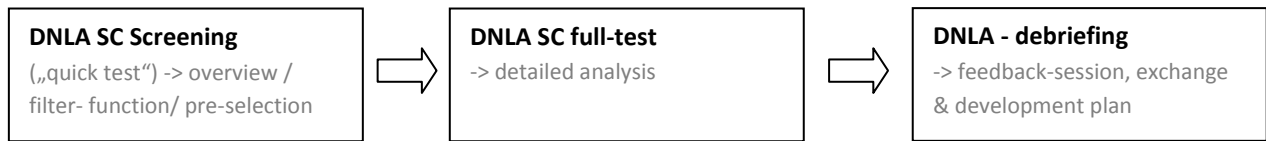
In order to start with the DNLA-journey and in order to be able to take on board all of their team, however, Catalysts wanted to make sure that we could offer some specific solutions and framework-conditions for the DNLA project.

It was clear for all of us that participation in the DNLA-project would have to be on a voluntary basis. We and Catalysts had to manage to convince people that here was a chance, an opportunity, and something they all could profit from, and no “test” or “assessment” which they would have to fear.

Also, the whole project had to be “smooth” and easy to carry out. I.e., Catalysts wanted all service and debriefings to be done online, which was also new territory for us. The whole process simply had to be lean, easy and smooth. But that must not be achieved at the expense of the effectivity of the process – a tangible effect and a sustainable development and growth, that was what had to be achieved.

We were happy to take the challenge – and today we can say, we did quite well!

What we designed, was, in short, a three-step-process:



DNLA SC Screening – a quick test that took only a few minutes and that produced a first, general estimate, was followed by a full DNLA Social Competence analysis (the online-questionnaire) and data evaluation.

All participants received result documents and a personal DNLA SC-report, including a “Certificate”, showing only the participant’s strengths.

Starting with those where the Catalysts-leaders thought that action and help was most urgently needed, and then successively moving along the priority list, we arranged very effective individual debriefing sessions of 60 minutes, where we gave them orientation and feedback on their results, and where we found out why they stood where they stood at the moment.

Together with the participants and their internal mentors or coaches who also were directly involved in the feedback process, we designed and agreed an individual action plan for each participants, laying down actions steps in up to two fields of improvement and determining clear individual development targets and time frames.

What was also new territory for us was that we included the Catalysts-colleagues in Cluj (Romania) in the process. To make it possible for them to also participate in the DNLA process, we even developed some of the DNLA online-questionnaires in Romanian so that the participants could do the “test” in their mother tongue.

The debriefing for the colleagues in Cluj – as for all Catalysts-participants – was done online, and in this case in English.

But neither the language barrier nor the geographical or cultural distance (if there was any) turned out to be a problem in this project. Rather to the contrary:

“You [the consultants who provided the DNLA-feedback] have been outstanding and it has been a pleasure both listening and talking to you. We have asked all our debriefed team members about what they thought afterwards and the feedback was 100% positive! You have proved a very high degree of professionalism and honestly I think that us as being beginners didn't know how to fully access the immense resources which you put at our disposal, but hopefully we have gained enough knowledge to do a better job next time. I did not know what to expect in the beginning, as it was the first time participating in such debriefings, but it most certainly pleasantly surprised me. I think these tests very wittingly discover and bring to surface underlying areas of improvement which is very, very difficult to do otherwise. Did they produce the desired results? Sure. You have been nothing short of awesome and it was an enlightening process for both me, Andreea and I'm sure I'm not making any mistakes by saying that it was so for my colleagues as well.”

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What was interesting for us providers of DNLA-based HR services was how favorable it was to work with people in the IT-industry. While one could have expected that it would be difficult to work with technology-oriented (not to say a bit “nerdy”) people – all the IT developers and programmers – quite the opposite turned out to be true: The participants in general were very open, they welcomed this new, innovative HR approach and they also openly and constructively contributed to the DNLA-debriefings.

So, what we as service providers learned from the cooperation with Catalysts and from the various projects there is, that the IT industry is a very good environment for innovative, science-based HR-approaches and that the people there are also imaginative and creative and open to go new ways in Human Resources Development. This may be due to the mentality in these companies, and it may also be the result from the fierce battle for talent in the IT industry, which has been going on for decades already, and which heightened the awareness in the IT industry for the value of the individual and of the employees, their talents and motivations.