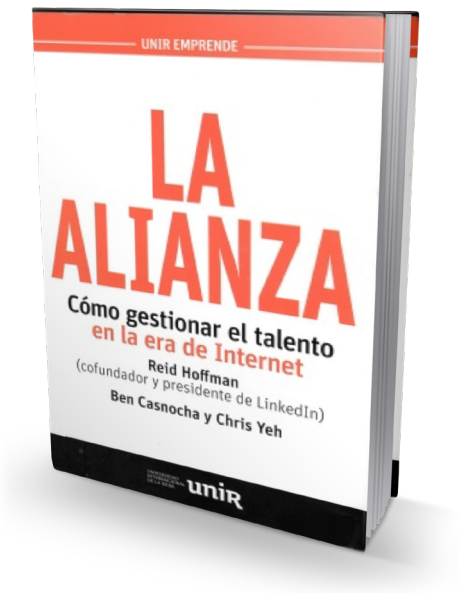
BOOK REVIEW

Translated version

ALLIANCE BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN THE NEW ERA OF THE INTERNET

LA ALIANZA. Cómo gestionar el talento en la era de internet.

Reid Hoffman, Ben Casnocha, y Chris Yeh. Logroño: Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, S.A. (UNIR Editorial), 2016. 171p.



By

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"La alianza. Cómo gestionar el talento en la era de Internet" (2016) is the Spanish translation of the book, *"The Alliance. Managing talent in the networked age"* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2014). Written by Reid Hoffman, Ben Casnocha, and Chris Yeh, the book revolves around the idea that the traditional model of employment for life, while appropriate for periods of stability, is rigid in the era of networking. Reid Hoffman is the co-founder and CEO of LinkedIn and partner of Greylock Partners. Ben Casnocha is a writer and entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, who was director of personnel at LinkedIn and Greylock Partners, and also a coauthor of books with Reid Hoffman, such as *El mejor negocio eres tú: Adáptate al futuro, invierte en ti mismo e impulsa tu carrera*, a New York Times bestseller. Chris Yeh is the vice-president of marketing for PBworks and co-founder and partner of Wasabi Ventures. What all three authors have in common is their dedication to the world of technology and innovation.

In this 171-page book, which comprises eight chapters and three appendices, the authors consider the traditional model of employment to be in recession all over the world. They believe that both managers and employees should create a new relationship framework in which promises can be made and maintained. The book aims to promote this endeavor and contribute to the construction of prosperous companies and successful professional careers. Based on this reading, we believe that the last cycle of economic crisis may be to blame for the loss of validity of the existing life-long work model, although employees continue to prefer stability in their jobs. As per assignments conducted on job satisfaction, we have found that stability is a factor that influences the satisfaction of workers.

The terms "employee" and "employer", or "employee" and "manager" are widely but appropriately used throughout this book. The alliance (Chapter One) is the agreement, with explicit conditions, mutually beneficial for both parties (manager and employee) to work on building successful, prosperous and professional companies. As stated in Chapter Four, this alliance is ethical, and not legal. The authors of the book, who come from an environment in which labor alliances are consolidated (i.e., the business fabric of Silicon Valley start-ups where companies experience an economic growth in early years), say that for organizations to survive and grow in a changing

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and innovative environment, they must adapt to the needs of the business ecosystem. Under this premise, talent is the most valuable resource and the most successful companies are those that use alliances to hire, manage, and maintain entrepreneurial and talented teams. Thus, this book covers stories of different situations experienced by employees and managers, alike, with specific attention to cases at the company LinkedIn.

Chapter Two deals with the period of service, which is "a way of choreographing the progressive commitments that shape the alliance" (page 33). It distinguishes between "rotating" and "transformative" service periods. The "rotating" service is usually one to three years long- during which employees joining a company automatically access each service. The "transformative" service periods are usually two to five years long, and are determined by specific objectives. "Foundational" service periods are longer still, and during this period, parties assume a permanent relationship. In any of these cases, the employment relationship must be bidirectional and the benefits to employers and employees must be clarified. Regardless of the service duration, the purpose of the service periods is to build trust by means of sincere conversations and to voluntarily seek longevity of the relationship.

In Chapter Three, the authors talk about how to align an employee's goals and values with those of the company. The necessary level of alignment may vary depending on the type of service period. For the rotating services, the overlap between the company's interests and those of employees is modest, while in the transformative phase, the overlap is substantial and in the foundational service periods, the overlap is almost complete. These findings are clearly indicated in the graphs on Page 64. Typically, the company's values are clear and, at first, immovable, while employees' values are less explicit.

We believe that the first three chapters reflect the substantial parts of the book. To implement the system (Chapter Four), it is necessary to establish periodic controls to assess development during the period of service from both parties' perspectives, at regular intervals or when discussing specific objectives. The key to a successful conversation about a period of service lies in acting systematically, consistently, and transparently.

Chapter Five deals with the collection of information about networks. The greatest utility networks offer is connecting the organization with external information sources. Employees' contact networking acts as a source and filter of new data. Above all, online information makes it easier to select talent. To implement information gathering plans (Chapter Six), one should: a) select highly connected people, b) teach employees to collect sensitive information through social networks or by talking, c) develop programs and policies that help employees build their individual networks; d) have employees share their learnings with the organization.

The authors dedicate the last two chapters of the book to the networks of former employees. "Creating a network of former employees costs little and is the next natural step for maintaining a relationship of trust, investment and mutual benefit" (page 120). However, these networks bring more benefits for the former employees and less for the company. The company can offer its former employees facilities for rehiring, provide discounts on products, invitations to events and official recognition for selected employees. Profitable relationships with talented former employees who have worked there before must endure, and although lifetime employment disappears, alliances come into place forever.

In short, we believe that this is an interesting topic and, a broad debate. It is true that employment disappears for life, but not due to the employee's decision, as they usually aim for stability in the company hiring them. While this "idyllic" relationship between employers and employees would improve the working environment, which is fairly important for the proper functioning of companies, it is not prevalent in most companies. Perhaps some organizations are more inclined toward implementing this system than others, especially those in the sectors of technology, innovation, and networks, among others. The organization must adapt to the environment, so that it can serve the market in the best possible way. Thus, the proposal of the book is more appropriate to implement, especially in high-tech contexts, where a breakthrough or specific innovation is sought, with technicians entering and leaving at different stages of the process. The organization will then be characterized by its flexibility and adaptability to the specific needs at the time.

La Alianza aims to provide a framework that changes the functioning of companies and, ultimately, the economy in general (page 142). This statement is too broad and may need some development. The book is interspersed with names and situations that bring realism to the discourse, although there is a lack of emphasis on the description of departments of the company that are most involved in these actions. We believe that the human resources department is responsible for establishing contact between employers and employees, so a team of specialized staff will be highly useful for establishing an environment of trust and transparency in an organization.