

SYNERGISTIC TALENT ALLIANCES

Balancing Internal Growth with
Strategic Partnerships

Insights from:

FREDERIEKE VAN DEN BELT

Global Talent Director
at Perfetti Van Melle



In this interview, we sat down with Frederieke van den Belt, Global Talent Director at Perfetti Van Melle. Perfetti Van Melle is a privately held company and one of the world's largest manufacturers and distributors of confectionery and chewing gum, with a presence in over 150 countries. Employing more than 18,000 people and operating 39 companies worldwide, Perfetti Van Melle boasts a truly global reach, spanning the Asia Pacific Region, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas.

Together with Frederieke, we explored the theme of synergistic alliances in talent acquisition. With her extensive experience and passion for talent management, Frederieke shared her insights on evolving towards more collaborative partnerships in the field.

ABOUT FREDERIEKE VAN DEN BELT

Frederieke is an accomplished HR leader with over 20 years of experience in global talent management and leadership consulting. After beginning her career in Strategy Consulting in South America, she returned to the Netherlands, where she spent 10 years at Shell in various strategic HR roles, followed by another decade at Korn Ferry, specialising in talent and leadership consultancy. Her experience with large international companies aligns with her passion for a global scope and dynamic environments. For the past two years, Frederieke has served as Global Talent Director at Perfetti Van Melle, where she oversees talent and leadership development for 18,000 employees worldwide.





What does your role at Perfetti Van Melle entail, and how do you approach talent management on a global scale?

As Global Talent Director at Perfetti Van Melle, I am responsible for overseeing all aspects of talent management, leadership development and learning programs for our global workforce. This starts with a globally aligned talent architecture and framework to ensure a shared understanding of the talent language, leadership behaviours and profiles as well as the necessary (functional) skills, desired traits, and growth career paths across the organisation. My focus is on ensuring that our talent strategy supports the company's Strategy, supported by clear purpose-driven values, a solid and aligned Employer Value Proposition (EVP), and shared Employer Brand. I oversee the entire talent cycle—from selection and onboarding to engagement, development, retention, and offboarding.

What unique challenges do you face in talent acquisition at Perfetti Van Melle?

As a family-owned business, Perfetti Van Melle takes pride in its unique culture. Traditionally, we have operated with a decentralised model, enabling us to respond swiftly to local needs. In recent years, we have been increasingly focused on proactively identifying broader trends and opportunities to strengthen our organisation. While external recruitment has often played a role in addressing immediate needs, we are now placing a greater emphasis on internal talent development as part of our long-term strategy, encouraging internal promotions and career growth.

Our operating model has evolved to include central functions across commerce, supply chain, finance, HR, and more, reflecting a more integrated approach. The recent acquisition of the gum business from Mondelez in 2023 has further supported this shift, enabling us to build on our global capabilities.

A key initiative for my team has been the "Fit for Future" approach, aimed at upskilling our internal talent pool to meet emerging needs. We prioritise internal mobility, focusing on developing transferable skills based on evolving market trends. Our policy is to recruit internally wherever possible, supporting our team members' growth and progression. External recruitment is considered primarily when there is a need for specific expertise that is not available internally or when additional readiness is required for a particular role.



How do you balance internal talent development with the need to bring in external expertise, and how do you select the right partner for external support?

Our core policy continues to prioritise internal talent wherever possible. However, there are occasions when we look externally to bring in specific skills or leadership capabilities that complement our existing strengths. When we do hire externally, we focus on finding individuals with specialised skill sets that align with our long-term objectives.

We collaborate with a carefully selected group of external partners who understand our unique, family-driven culture and can identify candidates who are adaptable and can excel in this environment. We value agencies that recognise the importance of strong relationships over rigid processes, ensuring candidates not only have the right skills but are also a good fit for our collaborative, relationship-focused workplace. For us, an open, fair, and trust-based partnership is one that supports future growth and success.

Our relationships with external partners are built on ongoing dialogue, helping us stay informed about industry trends and potential talent. This approach enables us to have partners who can identify and engage with key talents who may be a fit for us when the right opportunity arises, even if there is no immediate vacancy. We have also explored innovative approaches to talent management. For example, we experimented with an open resourcing model that encouraged rotational moves across companies—a shared talent pool, if you will. While this model has significant potential, it presents legal challenges that we are still navigating. Nonetheless, we continue to look for ways to support career paths that allow for flexibility and growth across different organisations, which could be an exciting prospect for the future.

What's your view on the next 2 years?

I believe that internal mobility and upskilling will play an increasingly significant role as we progress. It's not only about bringing in the right external talent; it's equally important to develop and nurture skills within our organisation to ensure we are well-prepared for the future. This involves creating a more agile and flexible structure, where employees are recognised not just for their hard work, but also for their adaptability and potential for leadership. Furthermore, strengthening our relationships with external partners will help us maintain a competitive edge in the talent market.

Thank you, Frederieke, for sharing your key insights on global talent management and talent acquisition at Perfetti Van Melle.

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