

Klaas Knot: Talent is worth its weight in gold

Speech by Mr Klaas Knot, President of De Nederlandsche Bank, at the "Talent to the Top" event, organised by De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam, 26 May 2025.

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Good morning!

Welcome to our beautifully renovated building. And welcome to our new auditorium, right next to our former gold vault. The perfect place to talk about talent. Because at DNB, we know exactly what talent is worth.

Originally, a talentum was a unit of weight for gold.

In ancient Rome, that meant 3.2 kilos. Until recently - before our gold reserves were moved to Zeist - we had over 6,000 talents stored here:

200,000 kilos of gold in bars and coins. The sleeping capital of the Netherlands.

Fortunately, DNB still has more than 2,000 talents in-house: our living capital. Talents that should not be left to gather dust behind heavy doors, but that should be given the opportunity to increase in value.

Employees and managers who must be able to grow and thrive, so that all of them - each in their own way - can contribute to an organisation at the very heart of society.

To make that possible, to ensure that every talent is seen and nurtured, we invest in building a diverse organisation at DNB.

Because we believe - we are certain - that we can only safeguard financial stability and promote sustainable prosperity if we connect with the society we serve. A society that is becoming ever more complex, international, and colourful. That's why we strive for a workforce that reflects the richness and diversity of our society.

At DNB, diversity goes beyond gender, age, and cultural background. It also includes physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, beliefs, educational background, or life path.

And at DNB, it's certainly not just about appearances, but above all about substance: diversity sharpens our thinking, deepens our conversations, and strengthens our decision-making.

Because the complex challenges we face every day - climate risks, the digital transformation, and geopolitical tensions - demand a rainbow of opinions, insights, and perspectives.

That's why we are aiming for full gender balance in our workforce by 2028, including in management.

Currently, more than 41% of our employees and 43% of our managers are women.

We are still on the journey, but we are making progress every year. Regarding cultural diversity, we follow the updated definitions of the Dutch Statistical Office.

Our goal is for 26% of our staff and leadership to come from a bicultural background. We've already reached that percentage on the work floor, but in management there is still progress to be made.

How are we tackling that?

By embedding our ambitions in our everyday work in many ways, through various activities and programmes, into our way of working, into our daily practice.

One of those programmes is the Cross Mentoring programme from Talent to the Top. You all know what this programme entails, because most of you are participating. As a mentor or as a mentee.

Just as cross-pollination is essential to maintain biodiversity – the undervalued work of thousands of bees from thousands of different species - your mentorship is essential for the diversity of our organisations.

In a thousand different ways. As a mentee, because it gives you inspiration and feedback, knowledge and skills, and access to new networks. That's what makes the difference between lying asleep and being alive, between standing still and growing.

As a mentor, your participation is important because it gives you deeper insight into the challenges faced by women and employees with a bicultural background. That's what makes the difference between participating and leading, between being a manager and being a role model - for your mentee and within your own organisation.

What I especially appreciate about this mentorship programme is the cross-company element: it broadens the cross-pollination. Because your participation contributes not only to the development of individual talents, but also to the growth and diversity of all participating organisations.

One of the key principles for renovating our building was - alongside sustainability - that we wanted to open our doors to society.

Literally.

The Cross Mentoring program from Talent to the Top opens doors to other sectors and organisations. Together, we increase our value. For our people and for our society.

Because every talent is worth its weight in gold.