

Tips for getting the right people on-board in your organisation

David Hanlon, December 2013

Getting the basics right

We all know the costs of getting the wrong person for the job. These are loss of productivity, stress and disruptions. In dollar terms it is estimated that the average cost of a poor employment choice is at least 30 percent of salary. For senior management positions, the cost is far greater than this.

Chemistry, character, competency

How many people do you let go for poor technical performance versus poor behaviour or attitude? The fact is most dismissals are the latter.

We dismiss people who have a poor attitude to their work, their team or their superiors. This attitude is what we generally refer to as their **Character** attributes. For many organisations, their entire selection process is based on the principles developed by the [Character First](#) organisation.

Character First, now part of Strata Leadership, developed 49 character attributes. When employing staff, interview questions are carefully crafted around 2-3 essential character attributes for that position.

**Hire for Character,
Train for Skill**

The basis of character however can be undermined by **Chemistry**. That is, there is a personality clash with leaders or others in the team. They just can't get along with others even though they are technically very good at their job. To help tease this aspect out, if possible, have the potential employee spend an hour or so with the team they have to work with and review the results. This is not always possible, especially when employing remotely, so we need to be clever and design questions around tension with others.

Unfortunately so much time is spent defining what **Competencies** are required for the position, when the truth is of the dozen or more candidates for the job, most could perform the tasks being asked. However, will these competencies alone give us an A+ member of our team?

Jack Welch¹

In his book "Winning," the former General Electric CEO provides some great insights into employing staff. What might seem counter intuitive he strongly warns against following your gut. "Follow your gut when evaluating deals, and be wary of it when hiring people". Instinct he says, often "makes us 'fall in love' with a candidate too quickly." It's easy to be seduced by the right name schools, impressive CV experience, and a candidate who has all the right answers in an interview.

¹ Jack and Suzy Welch (2005), Winning

The three must-haves

Welch starts with three acid tests: for integrity, intelligence and maturity.

Integrity. "People with integrity tell the truth and they keep their word. They take responsibility for past actions, admit mistakes, and fix them."

Intelligence. They have "a strong dose of intellectual curiosity, with a breadth of knowledge to work with or lead other smart people in today's complex world."

Maturity. This is a sense that the person "can withstand the heat, handle stress and setbacks, and alternatively, when those wonderful moments arrive, enjoy success with equal parts of joy and humility."

**"Ability can take you
to the top, but it takes
Character to keep you
there"**

~ Zig Ziglar

The should-haves – 4 Es + P

1. Positive Energy. Do they thrive on action and relish change? Do they start the day with enthusiasm and usually end it that way.
2. Ability to Energise others. Positive energy is the ability to get other people revved up. People who energise can inspire their team to take on the impossible – and enjoy the hell out of doing it. Doing so takes a strong knowledge about your business and strong persuasion skills.
3. Edge. The ability to make yes or no decisions.
4. Execute. The ability to get the job done.

Passion. People who are passionate about work also tend to be passionate about other things in their life.

For a more detailed summary go to Jack's [LinkedIn](#) page.

As Steve Jobs once said, "I noticed that the dynamic range between what an average person could accomplish and what the best person could accomplish was 50 or 100 to 1. Given that, you're well advised to go after the cream of the cream. ...A small team of A+ players can run circles around a giant team of B and C players."

Are your interview techniques designed to get the A+ team?

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