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The Crucial Steps To Ensure The People You Hire Can Deliver

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By KAREN GATELY

How often have you or other members of your leadership team hired people into your organisation who have then failed to perform to an acceptable standard? Reflect for a moment on the detrimental impacts on your time, energy, resources and team of people failing to deliver on the promises they make through the hiring process to their job well.

Adopting a planned, considered and disciplined approach is fundamental to your ability to accurately predict the likelihood of someone being successful in their role and your organisation. Leveraging a variety of assessment techniques to validate your observations and build a full picture of the candidate's potential throughout the process is key to predicting success.

As widely referenced research by US Professors Frank Schmidt and John Hunter reveals unstructured interviews have a predictive validity of just 38%. The strongest predictors of performance they report are structured interviews and testing.

The study analysed 85 years of research to identify the most effective methods for hiring people who will excel in their roles, as well as the least effective.

It's important to note that while structured interviews and testing ranked highly, the validity ratings of each were 54% and 51% respectively. Suggesting a blend of strategies is necessary to achieve the level of predictive validity needed to enable effective decision making.

It's essential that you leverage each step in your recruitment process to assess both what people are capable of and how they are likely to go about achieving what they need to. Assess also the depth of each candidates desire to do the job and alignment of the opportunity you have on offer with their career aspirations.

Assess capability

Look for evidence that candidates can apply their knowledge, skills and experience within the context of the role you are hiring for. Avoid the common error of presuming because someone has attained a level of qualification or seniority that they are capable of effectively leveraging their experience to perform well for your organisation.

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Explore the extent to which candidates understand the core objectives, responsibilities and complexities of the role. Test also their willingness to confront the challenges in the role and have the resilience to drive change if required. Contemplate the extent to which the candidate will be able to respond to irregularities, breakdowns and other unanticipated events.

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Assess culture fit

Cultural fit is the extent to which a person's approach to doing their job and being a member of your team is aligned with the values of your business. While it can be tempting to hire the person with the most experience or impressive technical qualifications, your choice should never be at the expense of recruiting people who are likely to behave in the ways you need them to.

Time and again I observe leaders make the fatal mistake of prioritising the skills and qualifications of a candidate whilst ignoring the clear signals of culture misfit; I am yet to see these decisions turn out well.

Without exception they have struggled to leverage the person's full potential and, often, have found themselves managing the undesirable consequences of unsuccessful behaviours.

The simple reality is the extent to which someone is aligned with the culture of your organisation profoundly impacts whether they will ultimately be a successful member of the team; it needs to be an important priority in any recruitment process.

While recruitment is not an exact science and can better be described as an art, there are steps you can take to ensure you hire the right people.

It is crucial that you consider the candidate's fit with your business and team throughout the process. **Examples** of the ways in which you can do this include these.

1. Read between the lines and listen for attitude; whether reading a candidate's CV, conducting an interview or completing a reference check.
2. Assess priorities, philosophies, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and motivations. Consider how these reflect on the likely approach they will take to their work and dealing with others. How will this fit with the way you want things to be done in your business?
3. Observe interactions before, during and after interviews and other face to face interactions. Notice shifts in behaviour or expressions of attitude towards individuals and groups. For example, how does the candidate respond to and interact with people they perceive to be senior, peer or junior to them?
4. Assessment tools – use them well. There are many insightful tests now available that can assist you to accurately assess candidates. It is important to remember that these tools are indicative not predictive and should be used for guidance as opposed to a standalone decision-making tool. For example, use information gleaned in reports to design interview questions and to guide conversations with referees.

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