THE RESOURCE

HR INSIGHTS

Magazine

from the eyes of industry leaders

EDUCATION   VS.   EXPERIENCE

THE BEST CANDIDATES
Aren't Always the Ones with
THE BEST DEGREES

From The CEO

THE RESOURCE

At The Resource we are passionate about our story and the stories of evolution our clients have to tell.

We like to say we are revolutionizing the way companies handle their greatest assets, their people. In practically every company in the US, the 80/20 rule still stands. You can *easily* identify your key employees, the cream of the crop. So often though, employees outside the top performing 20 percent get looked at as underperforming, when *really* it's just that they are in the wrong position.

The hiring landscape is continually changing, as CEO, I felt that in my own company. Companies needed a hiring system that is a standalone predictor of future performance.

The Core Hiring System reveals the kind of position a person is designed for based on their core unchanging nature, and then matches them to a position within a company where they *will be* a top performer. By optimizing the talent you have, and positioning you to only hire the right people, we are showing companies the effect of having a top performer in every seat.

We dig in with our clients to understand each position based on specific revenue generating tasks to create a Job Blueprint. Then we use The Core assessment to go beyond a person's skill, experience or even attitude and look at how they are hardwired to perform the tasks the position requires. We work alongside you to ensure that you only consider future top performers.

Our mission is a top performer in every seat, in every company.

From the CEO to the leadership team to the entry level position, a person doing what they are naturally designed to do has the power to rewrite the story; the story of your company, the story of your life.

Best Regards,

Kathy Hartung

Kathy Hartung, CEO

FEATURES ►►

DEPARTMENTS ►►

EDUCATION VS. EXPERIENCE

HR INSIGHTS

from the eyes of industry leaders

EDUCATION

Beginner   Average   Skilled   S

THE BEST
CANDIDATES
Aren't Always the Ones with
THE BEST
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BY IRA S. WOLFE

Every organization wants to hire top performers on a consistent basis. Unfortunately, most companies don't often succeed at doing so. In fact, many of them fail miserably at it—thanks in part to credential creep, the act of raising minimum job requirements in the hope of hiring "more qualified" employees. Ironically, credential creep often leads to the opposite result, especially when companies focus on education-related credentials.

For example, requiring an executive assistant or a construction supervisor to have a bachelor's degree strangles the flow of qualified candidates and increases time-to-fill dramatically. In theory, raising the bar isn't a bad idea. But education alone is a poor predictor of job success. In other words, "higher education" isn't always "better education."

Many managers define the "perfect" applicant according to arbitrarily set minimum experience and education levels and unreliable personality stereotypes. Most of the organizations that adopt this approach are just flinging ideas and efforts against the wall and hoping something sticks. Then they wonder why so many seemingly "superstar" candidates prove to be less impressive as employees.

Here's a typical scenario: Bob starts working at his company straight out of high school and earns a two-year associate's degree along the way. He does a great job at first, but three years later he is struggling to keep up. His company hires a second person to do the same job: Julia, who, like Bob, has three years of work experience but also has a four-year bachelor's degree. She exceeds everyone's expectations and knocks the job out of the park. When another position opens up, managers decide that the difference between Bob's performance and Julia's performance must be her four-year college degree. So when Harry shows up with 10 years of experience but only a high school diploma and a handful of college credits, his application lands in the "unqualified" folder.

What evidence supports the assumption that 10 years of experience isn't more predictive of an employee's success than a degree? What other factors (professional and personal) might affect the performance of someone in Bob's situation? HR professionals and managers rarely have reliable data to back up the hiring decisions they make. Therefore, when choosing whether to pass on or pursue a candidate, anyone who bases that decision on conventional hiring practices would achieve similar results by flipping a coin. And yet this scenario is repeated thousands of times in organizations ranging from small local businesses to large global enterprises: whenever a new employee exceeds expectations, his or her experience, education, and personality profile becomes the new standard for all future hires.

Fortunately, there are ways to use education and experience more reliably—namely, as markers of success and job fit. The key is to ask investigative-type interview questions that focus on a candidate's education and previous experience.

EDUCATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

· What influenced you to pursue that field?

· How much effort did you put in as a student?

· What courses did your degree program require?

· What electives and general courses did you take?

· In what extracurricular experiences did you participate?

· If your education was interrupted, what did you do in the interim?

EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

· How relevant is your previous experience to this position?

· How varied is your experience? How transferable is it to other settings?

· How dynamic were your previous job environments? *(This question is an especially important one for startups and innovation-focused companies to ask.)*

· How different was the first day of your most recent job compared to your last day there?

· What additional experiences (both professional and personal) might contribute to your success or failure?

Don't fall into the trap of setting application rules, over-emphasizing academic credentials, or focusing on other factors that, according to the evidence, don't necessarily correlate to success in the workplace. Rather, spend time and energy creating solid job profiles. By determining the appropriately balanced mix of education, experiences, and character traits needed for each position, an organization will have better luck finding the best candidates for those roles—and will set them up to succeed. ■

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HOW TO HIRE
REMOTE
EMPLOYEES

BY ASHLEY WILSON

Hiring people who live far away from the office may seem like a questionable choice. After all, management isn't able to watch their progress or build personal connections with them in the way it can with in-house employees. The benefits of hiring remote talent, however, more than outweigh the drawbacks. Most notably, hiring only locals who must commute to the office every day limits companies to a geographically defined candidate pool. But technology enables organizations to employ the best talent in the *world*.

Some companies try to use the same hiring process for remote employees that they use for local hires. This is rarely effective, because the two talent pools differ wildly in many areas. In order to engage well with remote workers, organizations must make adjustments to their usual recruiting strategies.
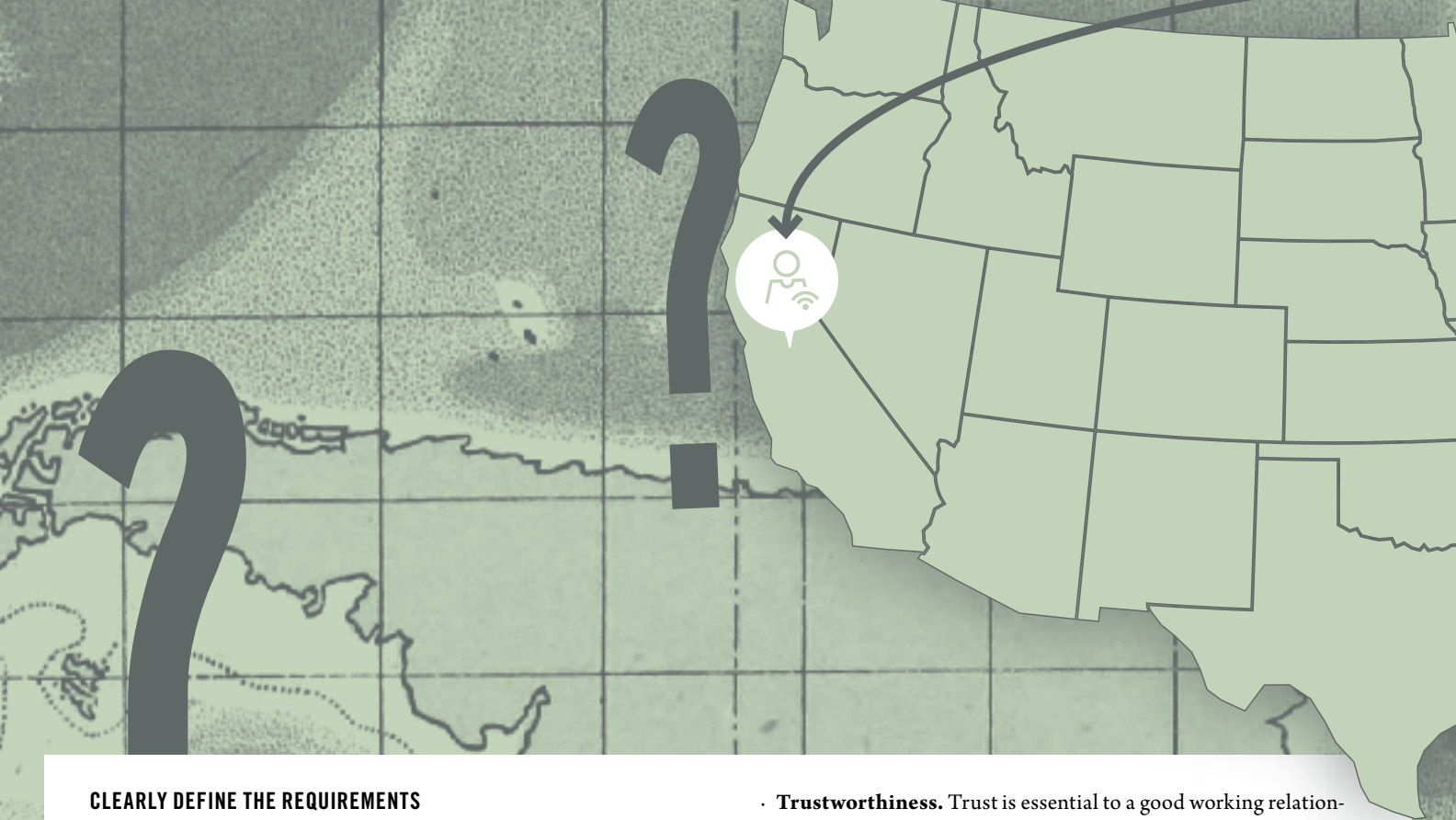
CLEARLY DEFINE THE REQUIREMENTS

Before taking on the challenge of hiring someone who may be located as far away as the other side of the world, hiring managers should determine exactly what skills and qualifications are required for a position, as well as the traits and characteristics of someone who would be the ideal fit for the company. After all, many people would like to work from home, but not all of them are well suited for it. Although a remote worker must have the same sense of dedication as an in-house employee, he or she must also have other specific traits.

- **Communication skills.** Because working offsite requires employees to keep in touch with their peers and superiors, a remote worker must be able to express his or her thoughts clearly in any medium—whether it's e-mail, chat, phone, video, or something else. If language barriers make communication difficult or if the candidate has a tendency to be unresponsive, find someone else.

- **Self-motivation.** The ideal remote employee is someone who can follow directions well but is also capable of pursuing objectives independently and with minimal supervision. Remote workers must possess the motivation to meet deadlines and avoid personal distraction during work hours. The best virtual employee is self-disciplined and willing to take the initiative.

- **Ability to cooperate.** Remote hires should also see themselves as team members and be comfortable working within a group. They should be willing to ask for or provide support to others as needed.

- **Technical knowledge.** All new hires must be able to adapt well to the organization's tools and systems and should be quick to grasp new applications so they can become productive as soon as possible. Remote employees should also know how to configure software and hardware to ensure stable connections with their colleagues, managers, and clients.

- **Trustworthiness.** Trust is essential to a good working relationship. An unscrupulous person might steal company data or intellectual property, and negligence could expose an organization and its customers to cyber criminals or malware.

To avoid hiring the wrong person, keep these guidelines in mind both when creating job listings and when vetting applicants. As with any hire, look for character recommendations and testimonials from reputable and qualified sources.

LOOK IN THE RIGHT PLACES

Because hiring remotely gives a company access to a global talent pool, it can greatly expand the number of candidates for a position. But finding qualified candidates who are the right fit requires specific search strategies. It's safe to assume that people who are adept at working from home are also adept at using the Internet, so that's where companies should focus their searches for remote employees.

Social media is one of the most powerful tools for conducting such searches: major social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and particularly LinkedIn have millions of users who might be well-suited to remote work or have broad audiences with which they can share posted job opportunities. Companies can also use their own social profiles to target audiences directly. A post advertising an open remote-work position should clearly describe the skills and characteristics that the position requires and include links to the company's application portal and information about policies and procedures for onboarding remote employees.

INTERVIEW THOROUGHLY

Because visual cues such as facial expressions and body language can reveal a great deal about a candidate, a face-to-face interview should be part of the hiring process. When the time or costs involved make it impractical to have someone drive or fly to the office for an in-person interview, a video chat is the next best thing.

During any interview, keep in mind that even the most highly qualified and experienced people may not be the best fit for remote work. (Someone who needs a lot of social interaction, for example, may struggle to be productive in a relatively isolated environment.) The interview should cover topics that shed light on a candidate's ability to be a good worker—and especially to be a good remote worker.

· Challenges that the candidate has faced and how he or she overcame them

· Professional and personal accomplishments

· Experience working independently

· Experience working in virtual environments

· What tools and applications the candidate has used

· Time-management skills

· Ability to communicate and collaborate with different coworkers and in different situations

Good candidates have not only the right skills but also the right character. To get a sense of how people function with minimal supervision, ask about their organizational abilities and find out how they keep themselves motivated to meet deadlines and maintain focus. Be sure to discuss with candidates the specifics of the actual work environment, too. Do they feel isolated or anxious when working by themselves over a long day? How do they handle pressure, deal with problems, and manage to stay focused day after day? Also, be sure to learn how long they intend to work remotely and whether they eventually plan to return to onsite office work.

Before hiring remote employees, ensure that the resources they will need are ready to go. Without access to the tools that the rest of the company is using, remote employees won't be able to hit the ground running and will find it more difficult to coordinate their efforts and information with the rest of their teams

PUT CANDIDATES TO THE TEST

Ideally, organizations hire people who possess the skills needed for the position. Administering online skills-assessment tests during the interview process can help hiring managers get a good sense of a candidate's skill levels. Sometimes, though, it may be preferable to prioritize choosing someone who's a great fit for the company culture or has excellent character, even if he or she doesn't quite have the desired skillset. After all, it's always possible to provide a new hire with the training and resources he or she needs through outlets such as online learning and mentorship programs. And whether an organization decides to hire someone who's fully skilled or someone who needs more training, having clear expectations about skill requirements and development can save everyone (the new hire, his or her team, and the organization) from some uncomfortable situations.

CONCLUSION

The challenges associated with hiring remote employees can be addressed through careful planning—and the extra effort can definitely pay off for employers. With good talent being harder and harder to find, companies are increasingly realizing that remote hiring gives them an opportunity to find great employees by drawing from a worldwide pool. By paying attention to the required skills and work conditions that are particular to remote employees, companies can ensure that their offsite workers are as successful as their onsite ones. ■

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CEOs Are Finally

FOCUSING

on TALENT and CULTURE

BY MICHELLE M. SMITH

AFTER YEARS (DECADES!) OF HR trying to convince senior executives that their employees were invaluable assets (and often most responsible for the organization's success), the lightbulbs finally began to go off over many leaders' heads during the Great Recession. At that time, they witnessed firsthand the actions of dedicated and engaged employees who made numerous heroic "saves" in response to the unrelenting threats that the financial crisis posed to the markets. One positive result of the recession was that leaders began to think that perhaps there *was* something to the often cited—and often ignored—statement "Our employees are our most valuable assets."

Even though the recession has ended, the momentum of this train of thought has continued to build. Thanks to more and better research and an accelerated interest in talent management by groups that CEOs can't ignore (namely, investors and boards of directors), talent and culture now top many CEOs' priority lists. The question of how to attract and retain skilled talent and create a company culture that will help them thrive is no longer relegated to the back burner but is instead now positioned squarely at the heart of strategy discussions—and for good reason.

THE VALUE OF A HIGH PERFORMER

A recent report by Indeed Insights confirms what the recognition and incentive industry has known for years: high-performing employees outperform average performers and provide their organizations with significant competitive advantages. At Bain & Company, for example, high performers are four times as productive as average performers. At General Electric that multiplier is 10, at Apple it's 25, and at Google it's a whopping 300.[1] With these figures in mind, it's hard to imagine how organizations can remain competitive in any market without the benefit of substantial numbers of high performers.

A GROWING INTEREST IN TALENT

CEB Analytics reports that institutional investors are beginning to request information from public companies about workforce performance and have petitioned the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to adopt rules requiring public companies to disclose human capital metrics.[2] The 2017–2018 edition of CEB's annual report "Top Insights for the World's Leading Executives" highlights this trend in investors' growing interest in culture: in 2016, the "percentage of companies discussing talent during earnings calls" hit the 61% mark.[3] Although some investors have been making these inquiries of CEOs for years, until recently they were largely in the minority. But now they are increasingly finding themselves surrounded by like-minded colleagues, many of whom are serving on corporate boards of directors.

More and more CEOs, too, are recognizing the importance of talent. The business threat posed by not having the skilled talent necessary to compete is driving much of CEOs' increased interest in that area, according to the 2017 edition of PwC's annual CEO survey, with 77% of CEOs expressing concern about "availability of key skills."[4]

START WITH PURPOSE

Whether it's called a vision, a mission, or a purpose, every company must have some unifying declaration of its goals. Employees of organizations with a defined purpose that is regularly and openly discussed by the senior leadership team stay three times longer than employees of organizations that lack a clearly articulated vision;[5] similarly, EY research finds that "89% of clients believe a purpose-driven company will deliver the highest quality products/services."[6] Now that CEOs are giving talent issues their full attention, it's time for the leaders to look at the incontrovertible logic and math—and focus on attracting and developing high performers. ∎

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How HR Can Decrease Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

BY JESSICA MILLER-MERRELL

Over the past few months, several high-profile cases have increased public awareness of the fact that sexual harassment is widespread in the workplace and that it often goes underreported because victims fear backlash for speaking up. A 2016 study by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) found that "anywhere from 25% to 85% of women report having experienced sexual harassment in the workplace" (with the higher rate from respondents who were presented with a clear definition and examples of sexual harassment).[1] Clearly, it's time for business leaders and the public to address this issue and call for change.

The EEOC offers this definition of sexual harassment:

> Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.[2]

Even with such a clear definition in place, however, sexual harassment in the workplace persists—and is increasing: a recent EEOC study found year-over-year growth in the rates of incidents reported to that agency between 2013 and 2016.[3]

Thanks in part to EEOC efforts to shine a spotlight on sexual harassment, many employers are working harder to drive it from the workplace. There's a strong financial incentive for them to take this course: employee lawsuits are expensive, and a single public allegation of sexual harassment can severely hurt a company's brand and bottom line.

Because people really do "vote" with their dollars, bad PR can make a company's earnings plummet and drive its customers away. A bad reputation can also make people less interested in applying for open jobs at an organization. (For example, following last year's widespread coverage of Uber's poor treatment of its women employees, the company has lost many employees, applicants, and customers.) Fortunately, companies can avoid these problems by taking steps to decrease sexual harassment in the workplace.

TRAIN STAFF

Every single person working for your company should go through training on identifying and avoiding sexual harassment. Anyone on the payroll—whether a supervisor, an entry-level employee, or a part-timer—should know what "hostile work environment" means and how to handle sexual harassment when it happens (the usual recommendation is to contact HR immediately). All employees should also learn how to avoid "casual" harassment that is often laughed off as a joke but, according to the EEOC, still counts as sexual harassment and puts organizations at risk for lawsuits.

AUDIT HR POLICIES

What is your company's policy on sexual harassment? If you can't answer that question in one or two sentences, the policy isn't clear and memorable enough. The EEOC can help organizations find the language they need to create policies on sexual harassment and define procedures for addressing it if and when it takes place.

EMPLOYEE FOCUS GROUPS

Consider building focus groups consisting of both management and employees from different departments. By encouraging open conversations, a company can find out if its employees are clear on what entails sexual harassment and how to respond to it. After all, just because HR has a full understanding of sexual harassment doesn't mean that everyone else in the company does. Q&A time during these sessions can go a long way toward building communication bridges among all employees, so let participants' questions guide the discussion.

SURVEY EMPLOYEES

Like a focus group, a survey can give HR a better understanding of what employees think of current policies and ideas for how to adapt its training for a particular audience. Ask employees to submit comments—anonymously—about sexual harassment policies and concerns in your organization. (It is important to stipulate that if a survey response contains an allegation of harassment, HR must follow up on it.) If an employee makes good, executable recommendations for addressing sexual harassment, implement them!

EVALUATE

Be aware of the male-to-female ratios in different departments and at different levels (supervisors, managers, employees, etc.) in the organization. By understanding the company landscape, HR can change its recruiting efforts to create parity. (Even though women make up the bulk of sexual harassment victims, men can be victims too, so be sure to pay attention to their concerns as well.)

PUSH BACK

Sexual harassment happens because it's tolerated and because the perpetrators often don't face consequences for their actions. If companies see sexual harassment, they need to call it out. By making it clear that such behavior will not be tolerated under any circumstances, organizations can create safer and more productive workplaces that benefit employees, managers, customers, and the company as a whole. ■

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The Millennial Move into Management

BY LORENA MARTINEZ

In recent years, the C-suite has increasingly voiced concerns about managing Millennial employees. Executives are worried about high levels of Millennial turnover and the related disruption to the continuity of organizations' business plans. Some consider such turnover an active threat to a company's future, especially because in the current business environment many industries require people to do more with less.

A recent study by Gallup found that when it comes to promotions and career advancement, Millennials are more ambitious than other generations and often will change jobs in order to achieve promotions faster.[1] In response, many executives try to address Millennial flight by offering more career opportunities to keep young talent in their organizations until they are ready to become leaders.

But now that a good number of those Millennials are in managerial positions, they aren't necessarily happy in those roles. Research by Great Place to Work has found that as Millennials move up the corporate ladder, their desire to stay in their organizations decreases.[2] How can this be? Why is it that one of their key goals—a promotion—proves to be a disappointment once they achieve it? Something in the nature of current leadership roles isn't clicking with Millennials' expectations about what being a leader is like.

First, Millennials often receive pressure from their managers to lead according to a set of values they do not believe in and to evaluate their people using management approaches that don't resonate with them. Examples of this include encouraging presenteeism versus fostering flexibility, hoarding information versus leading with transparency, excluding employees versus involving them, and treating interactions with employees as transactions versus treating them as opportunities to build stronger relationships.

Millennial managers also question the level of fairness in their organizations, particularly when promotions are awarded. Over the last decade, many companies have transitioned from promoting based on the employee's tenure (that is, the amount of time he or she has been with the organization) to promoting based on the employee's skills and qualifications. But whereas the duration of an employee's tenure at an organization can be measured objectively, the quality of employees' skills and qualifications are assessed subjectively.

Lastly, Millennials frequently complain that, in order to prove that they deserve a promotion, they are expected to fulfill managerial role functions before actually being awarded the title of manager. When a Millennial finally receives a promotion to a management position, he or she has often been doing that job for some time. Consequently, the "new" manager feels disappointment about the role—and about the organization.

According to researchers at the Brookings Institution, "it is estimated that by 2025 [Millennials] will make up as much as 75% of the workforce."[3] As more and more Millennials grow into managerial roles, organizations will need to rethink the structure and nature of these roles. Transparency and the ability to have tough conversations will be critical to companies' efforts to sustain their business plans with a stable leadership team and will enable them to create a stronger perception of fairness within their organizations.

As Millennials increasingly move into management, they face new, daunting challenges that their predecessors didn't have to address. One is figuring out how to navigate the massive transformation of the nature of work—a shift that has already begun—because of increased automation and reliance on technology. In this environment Millennial leaders will be valued especially for the strong people-management skills (such as the ability to lead with transparency, an emphasis on inclusivity, and a focus on relationships) that their generation prioritizes. ■

Lorena Martinez is a New York–based consultant at Great Place to Work (www.greatplacetowork.com), the global authority on high-trust, high-performance workplace cultures.

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LESSONS ON LEADERSHIP

BY CECILE ALPER-LEROUX

In order to be effective directors and managers, leaders must be able to evolve and adapt. This ability is especially critical in today's fast-changing workplace, as more and more companies move toward project-based teamwork involving both full-time and non-permanent workers, employees increasingly perform tasks on a mobile "anywhere" basis, and more organizations adopt policies that promote inclusivity and recognize each employee's self-defined uniqueness as an asset. Clearly, today's businesses are not the businesses of our grandparents.

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, companies were often run with military precision. During World War II, the U.S. Air Force recruited 10 high-ranking management theorists to enhance its operations. When the war ended, Ford Motor Company snapped them up and inserted the military's "org charts" into Ford's structure, creating divisions, departments, and jobs based on a person's specific expertise.[1] As one might imagine, leaders of these businesses shared some characteristics with military generals—but they commanded their organizations from the boardroom, rather than from the war room.

This new arrangement ensured that work was efficiently doled out, supervised, and completed. As American companies quickly rose to the top of their markets, other companies throughout the industrialized world soon adopted similar structures themselves. The status quo remained largely unchanged for several decades. And then the Internet arrived and dramatically accelerated the democratization of decision making and the spread of widespread communication.

In spite of these changes, though, the military model still has much to offer to the business world. For a clearer understanding of these connections, I spoke with Lieutenant General George Flynn, who retired after a distinguished 38-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps and now puts his expertise in leadership and management to work as a regent at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies and as a consultant for numerous corporations.

Flynn's succinct description of the Marine Corps' style of leadership—"Officers eat last"—inspired the title of Simon Sinek's bestselling book *Leaders Eat Last*. During my conversation with him, Flynn explained the title:

> It's really pretty simple: if you treat your team as the most important resource in your organization, they become committed to you and the purpose of the organization. It shows your respect and the fact that you care so much about them that they deserve only the best. And that includes eating first, beginning with the most junior officer and ending with the most senior officer.

This leadership philosophy seems at odds with today's corporate guidance. Few CEOs know the names of employees other than their direct reports. Many of them eat with other senior executives in a separate part of the company cafeteria and have large offices away from the rest of their employees. Certainly, this is not an "officers eat last" approach but one that separates people based on their perceived value and contributions to the success of the organization. Some

companies, however, are shifting this approach, and their CEOs are forgoing private offices for shared office space—a move that significantly strengthens trusted relationships with employees.

Flynn observed that younger employees tend to demand more from their leaders than their older colleagues do. "They want to know the 'why' before they buy into the project," he explained. "When they believe in the value of what needs to be done, they're very giving of their time and effort. They'll go the extra mile if they understand the purpose behind the tasks and believe in that purpose." Without this understanding, Millennials are more likely to search for new employment. To keep those employees, leaders must make sure they have meaningful work that leads to the development of new skills.

How can today's business leaders—particularly those at the helm of large, far-flung organizations—ensure full buy-in from the "troops"? The key is for leaders to demonstrate valued leadership during "defining moments." Examples of such moments include when a manager has to address a mistake or make a difficult decision. His or her actions in those situations can have far-reaching repercussions, Flynn says, and "word of mouth quickly spreads to form an opinion about the leader."

The employee–leader relationship can shape perceptions and actions in ways that affect the entire organization. Flynn points out:

> In my experience, I've come across three levels of leadership. The first is when people follow you because you've been given the authority to control them. The second is they follow you because they trust you and will, therefore, take risks for you. The third level is they follow you because they believe in you and your mission. At that level, they'll make personal sacrifices for you. Down deep, all people want to be part of something bigger than themselves.

When people feel that they are part of something important led by a leader they believe in, work becomes much more than just work. It becomes part of their purpose and identity. Knowing that their "leaders eat last" because of their dedication to the team can inspire any employee and spur him or her to excellence. ∎

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5 WAYS
TO TEAR DOWN
DEPARTMENT SILOS

BY MICHAEL HABERMAN

Silos and turf wars can cost an organization precious time and money—even more so when departments are at odds with one another and lack the proper tools to adapt to a fast-paced, ever-changing workplace. Such refusal or inability to collaborate delays output and leaves employees feeling isolated by a departmental identity that doesn't fit into the company's larger mission. In order to experience sustained success, a company must adopt a unified mission that permeates the entire organization. Many experts agree that the process of breaking down silos must start at the top, and eliminating communication barriers is just one critical (as well as challenging and time-consuming) part of that process. In order to effectively and efficiently unify its entire workforce, an organization should take these five steps.

CRAFT A COMPANY VISION

Building a dynamic company culture is even more important than providing one-off perks, especially in a company that employs a large Millennial workforce. Distance is not an insurmountable obstacle to this process: even a company with multiple offices and a large number of remote workers can achieve unity when it has a vision that all employees can share and to which they can all contribute in meaningful ways. Indeed, employee buy-in to shared identity and values can quash past departmental differences by encouraging employees to think of themselves as part of the organization first and as members of a department second.

CREATE BETTER COMMUNICATION

One of the best ways companies can engage and empower their employees is by decreasing inefficiencies through better, smarter communication strategies. Implementing the use of a cloud contact center, for example, not only makes employees' lives easier but also increases operations optimization by providing a more efficient means for customers to reach the organization. Such gains in overall efficiency will result in a more positive and streamlined work environment. Call routing, virtual receptionists, voice verification, and emergency notifications are just some of the other applications that can improve company-wide communication strategies.

PAIR MENTORS AND MENTEES

Departments that tend to isolate themselves practice stagnant thinking and have an "us versus them" mentality. But by pairing a new employee with a seasoned mentor from another department, an organization can strengthen relationships across various departments. Through this relationship, the mentee gains a broader perspective of the company's values and access to an expert (other than a boss or a colleague) to go to with questions or for advice; at the same time, the mentor (and, by extension, the organization) gains valuable insight into the younger employee's needs and motivations. By exchanging ideas across departments, both mentee and mentor develop an understanding of the struggles and priorities inside a department other than their own.

USE COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

A siloed workforce doesn't tend to communicate well and (perhaps most frustratingly) performs repeat work. However, a company can avoid these problems by streamlining its communication, file management, and storage systems—particularly by implementing cloud-based collaborative solutions such as Office 365, Slack, Asana, or Google Drive to help departments work together more efficiently. Because such applications tend to be fairly low cost (or even free), they don't have a huge impact on an organization's bottom line.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS TOGETHER

Unfortunately the business world is full of misguided department leaders who try to make themselves look better to the detriment of other departments. To combat this toxic game of competition, encourage department heads to share their key achievements with the entire organization—and to publicly thank the members of other departments who contributed to the success of those projects. These thanks could appear in a forum for sharing success stories, such as a newsletter, an e-mail announcement, posts to social media, or even a special event (such as a surprise lunch) to celebrate a department achievements. Through these efforts, companies should aim to highlight and celebrate as many departments as possible throughout the year.

A company has different departments to handle different aspects of the business, and each group usually has its particular area of expertise. But "specialization" shouldn't be synonymous with "isolation." By implementing strategies that facilitate cross-department communication and cooperation, a company can demolish the departmental silos that so often prevent the organizational unity that can lead to success. ■

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REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS:

Questions Recruiters Should Ask

BY SHARLYN LAUBY

TODAY'S CANDIDATES ARE RESEARCHING ORGANIZATIONS before they ever apply for job openings, and "76% of [them] conduct their own job search research across multiple channels."[1] All of these "background checks" make some companies nervous. But instead of viewing them as a negative, organizations should use candidates' interest as an opportunity to make sure that candidates can find the information they want about their businesses and the jobs they offer.

For example, an organization can give candidates a "sneak peek" inside the company by using a realistic job preview in its recruiting marketing strategy. No one is perfect, though: every company has some negatives, and no organization likes to put its bad side on display. But this strategy lets a company give candidates a glimpse of what it's like to work there—and a chance to opt out if they don't like what they see. Being fully informed is a good thing for both parties, so this is a good arrangement for everyone involved.

For realistic job previews to function as intended, though, they need to meet certain requirements. Here are five questions that recruiters should ask themselves when deciding whether to implement these types of previews.

- **"Is the realistic job preview about the company or about the work (or about both)?"** Realistic job previews can address multiple issues, including (among others) the company culture, the work itself, and how the work gets accomplished. Recruiters need to be intentional about what they're trying to communicate.

- **"What do we want candidates to know?"** "Everything" is not the correct response to this question. A realistic job preview isn't a substitute for orientation, onboarding, or training. Recruiters need to identify the tasks or responsibilities that they want candidates to know about the job.

- **"When is the best time to share our information with candidates?"** After identifying what they want candidates to know, recruiters need to consider *when* is the best time to share this

information (e.g., before someone applies for a position, during screening interviews, during in-depth interviews).

- **"Who is the best person to share our information with candidates?"** Information can come from HR or the hiring manager (or possibly both). If the company does collaborative hiring, maybe it should come from a future colleague. Or, if it's something that the organization wants every candidate to see, it could be posted on the company's career website.

- **"What are candidates looking for?"** It's one thing to give candidates a realistic job preview. But organizations also need to get a response from the candidates. Therefore the hiring team needs to agree on the best way to evaluate candidates' reactions.

Realistic job previews can take many forms. For example, an organization could post a video of one of its department meetings, which would give candidates a sense of what topics that group discusses and works on. Onsite job shadowing for a day is another option that can give candidates an in-person experience of the workplace and a chance to meet possible colleagues. When onsite visits aren't feasible, virtual reality technology can enable candidates to walk around workplaces as if they were actually in them.

Realistic job previews allow companies to share important aspects of their jobs and the company culture with candidates (ideally, before they apply for anything). Providing information to candidates up front helps make sure that there are no surprises later in the hiring process. ■

Sharlyn Lauby is the author of HR Bartender (www.hrbartender.com), a friendly place to discuss workplace issues. When not tending bar, she is president of ITM Group Inc., which specializes in training solutions to help clients retain and engage talent. She can be contacted on Twitter at @HRBartender.

1. Madeline Laurano and Kevin W. Grossman. 2015. "2015 Talent Board North American Candidate Experience Research Report." Talent Board website, www.thetalentboard.org/cande-awards/.

POINT-SYSTEM ATTENDANCE POLICY

BY STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES, INC

QUESTION:

We have an attendance policy for our nonexempt employees that gives points for each occurrence of absence. People have learned to "game" the system, either by missing multiple days in a row (which counts as one occurrence) or by always missing Mondays or Fridays. How can we modify our policy so that employees can't take advantage of the system?

ANSWER:

Reevaluate your policy. Regular employee attendance is desirable because it has a direct impact on a business's productivity and success. But sometimes a policy doesn't always work as intended. Ask the following questions about your organization's attendance policy:

· What is its purpose?

· What should it accomplish?

· How specific is it?

· Does it cover the most common infractions (e.g., tardiness, early leave, excused absence, unexcused absence, no call/no show)?

In some cases a vague policy can give your organization flexibility—but it also can leave you in a lurch if someone takes advantage of it. Making a specific policy will help you manage expectations in the long run. But don't make it so specific that it leaves you with no wiggle room to deal with the unexpected exception or reprimand.

Require a doctor's note. When an employee misses multiple days and wants the days to count as only one occurrence, require a doctor's letter that addresses the illness (the employee's or that of his or her family member). Without such a letter, count each day missed as a separate occurrence. (Note: Don't forget about FMLA requirements, if applicable.)

Add specific disciplinary language. Make sure your policy's verbiage leaves some room for disciplinary action for attendance issues outside of the point system. Consider including some passage such as this one: "When an employee exhibits a pattern of absences (consistently missing a specific day of the week or the day before or after holidays or scheduled vacations), the performance is unacceptable. The Company can, at its sole discretion, address these absences outside of the point policy as performance discipline." This sort of statement may help the company dissuade people from taking advantage of the program.

An attendance policy should be strict enough to allow the employer to discipline those employees whose absences cause problems. At the same time, though, it should be flexible enough that the employer does not have to terminate good employees who are absent infrequently. ■

Strategic Human Resources Inc. is a national full-service HR management firm based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Its president and founder, Robin Throckmorton, can be reached at Robin@strategichrinc.com.

YOUR COMPETITORS ARE STEALING FROM YOU

BY MIKE MCKERNS

IN DECEMBER 2017 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the national unemployment rate was an astonishing 4.1%.[1] This low rate means that many companies have unfilled openings because there simply aren't enough people looking for jobs. More likely, though, they're struggling to fill open positions because the types of people those companies want or need to hire are already employed by their competitors.

In the current employment market, whether your competitors sell the same products or services that you provide is irrelevant. The important thing is that they're competing with you for talent. If they're hiring the people you need, that action has the same negative financial impact on your business as cutting into your customer base.

After all, you need good people to make your company run. If you can't continue to produce and distribute your products or services because you don't have enough employees, your business is in danger of failing. In this situation, what can you do?

There's actually only one viable option: to make your company more attractive than those that are competing for your talent. Essentially, *you need to steal your competitors' talent.* (That sounds a bit ruthless, but it's not called a "war for talent" for nothing!)

The key is to offer more attractive options. Start by looking at issues such as pay, working environment, perks, and schedule flexibility—all areas that can make or break a candidate's interest in an organization. Find answers to the following questions: Why did our top performers accept the jobs with us? Why do those employees choose to stay with us? What advantages (real or perceived) do our top talent competitors have over us? Let that information guide you in crafting your own incentives.

Unfortunately, this isn't a problem that has a quick fix but one that requires commitment to a long-term strategy. If you want to win the talent war, 2018 needs to be the year you step up your hiring game. ∎

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1.   U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2017. "The Employment Situation." BLS website, www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf.

A "SOUPER" MEAL FOR WINTER

Now that winter is in full swing, we are in prime comfort-food season—and few foods are as comforting as a bowl of carrot soup. Between the short days, the cold temperatures, the post-holiday blues, and the lack of fresh local produce in the market, there are plenty of reasons to turn to this easy-peasy one-pot meal that uses ingredients most people usually have on hand and can be on the table in half an hour. Pair it with some cheese and bread or a green salad, and you've got a complete meal!

Nutrition Facts
Amount per Serving

Calories:	191cal
Fat:	5g
Dietary fiber:	9g
Sugars:	14g
Protein:	3.6g

CARROT SOUP

YIELD: 6 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:
2 Tb olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
3 cloves of garlic, chopped
1 2-in piece of ginger, peeled and minced
2lbs carrots, peeled and chopped
1 medium russet potato, peeled and chopped
1 quart of water
½ tsp ground cumin
2 tsp salt

DIRECTIONS:

1.   Heat the oil in a soup pot. Saute the onion, garlic, and ginger for about five minutes, stirring frequently.
2.   Add the carrots, potato, water, and cumin to the pot. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer until the carrots and potato are soft, about 20 minutes.
3.   Puree the soup, either with a regular blender or with an immersion blender.
4.   Salt to taste.

NOTES:

• This simple soup is delicious as is, but if you want to change things up a bit top each bowl with a dollop of plain yogurt or sour cream, minced fresh parsley or fresh thyme, or roasted and chopped nuts.
• This soup freezes beautifully, so make a double batch and sock some away in the freezer for a day when you don't want to do any cooking at all! ∎

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THE RES○URCE

Staffing • Professional Recruitment • Organizational Development

SOLVING PEOPLE PROBLEMS SOLVES BUSINESS PROBLEMS

OUR VISION

The driving force behind everything we do is people. We believe everyone has a place where they can naturally thrive in work and in life. Every individual has their own capabilities and goals, so we seek to help people find fulfillment wherever they are. We view change as necessary and positive. It is our goal to build opportunities for our people and clients as we continue pushing forward and to have fun while doing it.

OUR STRATEGY

Every seat in an organization matters. By utilizing our CORE assessment to reveal the true, unchanging nature of every individual, we can ensure that employees are placed in a position where they will naturally perform at their highest level. We seek to individualize our services to meet the needs of both candidates and clients. We stay on top of trends and anticipate demand, creating solutions in a proactive, not reactive way. These strategies allow us to bring a revolutionary approach to Leadership Development, Permanent Recruitment and Staffing.

CORE VALUES

Teamwork • Customer Focus • Innovation • Love What You Do

WHO WE ARE
& WHAT WE DO

We love what we do. Our passion is to serve others and our community, whether by finding people jobs, coaching them into better careers or helping feed the hungry. It is important for us to do the right thing, every time. We want every person to be their best, so we measure success as a win for client, candidate and company. With over 35 years of experience in the staffing industry, we are uniquely equipped to provide real people solutions for the business world.

STAFFING SOLUTIONS

Hiring doesn't have to be a guessing game. We specialize in staffing for Light Industrial and Clerical/ Professional and ensure each candidate is naturally qualified to do the job required.

PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

Your people are one of your biggest investments. We take the risk out of the hiring process by getting to the CORE of the candidates.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Resource offers a variety of consulting solutions utilizing our CORE Assessment to help you optimize your workforce.

"

OUR MISSION IS TO WORK ALONGSIDE YOU TO PUT A TOP PERFORMER IN EVERY SEAT IN YOUR COMPANY.

"

KATHY HARTUNG
CEO, THE RESOURCE

**Contact Us.
See How Solving People Problems
Will Solve Your Business Problems.**