



Are You Hiring Right?

The success of your business in today's market comes down to one simple word: People. People are your greatest asset.

They are the face of your company. They are your competitive advantage. Employee expense is one of the highest operational expenses you will have, so why not "build it" so you have the highest return? People will make or break your company. They are your product. Are you getting your money's worth from the salaries you pay? Or are you simply filling positions?

A great amount of thought and planning needs to go into every hire because they are your company through their actions, style, demeanor, attitude and efficiencies.

Don't Hire More of the Same

So where do we go wrong? There is a tendency to continually hire more of the same. That is cloning and recreating the same errors with the same type of individual over and over again. It seems safer and with less drama, yet no improvement is created.

Know exactly what you are looking for before you ever place an ad or communicate an opening. Take time to write down specific attributes and characteristics needed for a successful new hire. Really think about who "fits" in your organization. And if "new and different" doesn't quite feel like a "fit" but is right for what you need to succeed, invest the time, patience and energy to help that person integrate. Sometimes a new face with different styles and levels of ambition is exactly what your existing team needs to get fired up.

Set Employees Up for Success

All your representatives need to support and represent the culture of your company. Which means your company needs to have a culture, a sense of belonging, common goals, and unified purpose or direction. A new employee needs to understand and appreciate your culture – what your company stands for, its mission and its purpose. All of this comes with training and an organized curriculum for employee development. Education and training is rated No. 2 behind income for employee retention.

From the first day an employee enters your workplace you need to celebrate him, support him, help him and guide him, for he will define what the customer sees as service. A well-planned and executed orientation program needs to be shared with all new employees where they meet senior officers, develop new skills and know exactly where to go for resources and support. In so doing it shortens their learning curve and increases productivity. It minimizes errors and therefore significantly improves job satisfaction and retention. Communication throughout the company is improved.

Provide your new employee with an agenda so they know exactly what is to be expected in the first two weeks of their employment. Assign a mentor or "go to" person for them to have as support. You are developing your future leaders and future business opportunities. If indeed salary costs are your biggest expense, spend those dollars wisely. Seek new styles and skills in your hires. Develop them. Ensure their success and acceptance from your other team members. Get the return you need on your investment.



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Cautionary Tale

I often think of a new hire at the Northern California bank I was consulting for. She came into the organization with spunk, talent and enthusiasm, and yet struggled.

Here's why:

The culture she came to was set in its ways. Management had been so excited about her selling aptitude and appetite they had shared that excitement with many of the existing employees she would be joining. When she arrived, the existing team shunned her and made fun of her whenever she sold products (which they failed to do). They felt intimidated by her strengths and their weaknesses. Rather than learn from her, they made her life miserable by either making fun of her correct behavior or ignoring her in any social setting.

Her manager failed to help her be accepted by this "old thinking" team and left her to her own defenses. Watching this was very hard as I could see a terrific new hire struggling to be accepted.

Remember, if you don't train and prepare your new hires, your existing team will. And perhaps not in the right way! In an attempt to be accepted, the new employee stopped doing the very thing she was hired to do – sell. Sadly, after three months of frustration and isolation she quit. We can all see the errors in this story.

In summary, your people are your company. Know just what skills, personality and strengths you are looking for. Hire for attitude – train for skills! Choose wisely and prepare them for success in both education and integration. They are your greatest asset and will make or break your company.

Here's wishing you success...

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