

Recruiting and Retaining Teams

Expert knowledge means success



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Note: This publication has not been updated since it was last published. Some of the hyperlinks may have changed and may need updating. In addition, some of the information in this publication may be out of date.

Introduction

As anyone who has been involved in the recruitment process will know, finding the right person to fit a particular vacancy requires skill and patience. It is an accepted fact that people are the most important resource of any successful business and it is vital that adequate time, effort and funds are dedicated to their recruitment, particularly at a senior level.

In general, small business owners and managers can be quite hopeless when it comes to recruitment. Unless you're the exception to the rule – and if you're honest with yourself – the chances are that when you set out to recruit someone for your organisation, the end result isn't what you expected. Getting the right mix of eligibility (the hard skills to do the job) and suitability (the skills to "fit in", plus character and attitude) may be very difficult.

Eligible and Suitable

If you get someone who's eligible and suitable, you're very lucky. But experience shows that they get bored, and move on to new pastures and challenges elsewhere.

On the other hand, someone that's eligible but unsuitable is a bad fit so far as you're concerned – maybe you should be honest and go for suitability first and eligibility second.

The worst thing you can do is to recruit someone (or retain them, if they're already part of your team) if they're not eligible and they're unsuitable. Then you're really in trouble – you've got someone who's a misfit.

Maybe the best thing you could do is to look for someone who's suitable but not eligible – often "eligibility" can be learned. Then you've got yourself a surprise fit.

When you're interviewing, try to do these things:

- Ask the right questions based upon the job analysis and person specification;
- Don't ask "closed" questions that require only a "yes" or "no" answer. Instead, ask questions that require the candidate to provide an answer in depth;
- Try to develop a systematic scoring method that enables you to make proper and reliable discriminations between candidates;
- Make your selection of the right candidate based on complete data – keep notes of what is discussed and let the candidate do most of the talking;
- Focus on the candidate's good points and don't rely too much on the negative ones – you may have a "surprise fit" person sitting right in front of you;
- Be aware of your natural biases – by being aware, you'll make a better selection (remember things such as: (1) we tend to like people who are most like us; (2) "attractive" applicants tend to encourage job offers rather more than "unattractive" applicants and (3) disabled people get fewer job offers than other people);
- Don't be over-influenced by what is called the "contrast effect" – after seeing one applicant who's absolutely the wrong person, there's an inclination to give the next candidate a much better rating.



WorkSet – a new system for assigning and monitoring jobs

Building effective teams isn't just about recruitment. Team building also has a lot to do with how people perceive their jobs and how others perceive them.

Someone who's done a lot of work in this area is Dr. R. Meredith BelBin - one of the world's leading gurus on team building – he has recently developed the BelBin WorkSet – a new system for assigning and monitoring jobs... read below about how effective the system is and what it could do for your Team.

The limitations of current procedures for setting up jobs are becoming increasingly recognised. The need for a new approach has come about due to a realisation that the concept of a "Job" is undergoing a profound change. The "Job" and its ally "the Job Specification", with its notion of a fixed work content, have been described as presenting *"....rigid solutions to an elastic problem. Jobs discourage accountability because they reward people not for getting the necessary work done but for 'doing their job'. Jobs are no longer socially adaptive. That is why they are going the way of the dinosaur"*⁷

The Job Specification is a formula for rigidity. It can become obsolete almost as soon as it is completed. It can lead to wage inflation where "my responsibility has been increased" or, if argument is rejected, over-manning "we'll have to recruit someone to do the extra work".

WorkSet differs from other systems in two ways: it uses colour to denote different aspects of the job and it operates as a two-way form of communication. The Manager sets up the job in four colours and receives information about how the job is being handled in a total of seven colours. That colour extension occurs because the Jobholder sees a different picture from that likely to strike the Manager when the job is set up. A unique system of recording makes the information easy to handle. As information is fed back jobs are realigned and career development opportunities open up as part of the process. A job is a continuous, developing, moving thing.

WorkSet has been tested in three countries and has been adopted for pilot trials by leading organizations in the private and public sector in the UK. A key person in operating the system is the Facilitator. Training courses for Facilitators are available. A computer application will provide an instant analysis of the working culture as it operates in practice rather than in supposition.

The Benefits of WorkSet

For the manager, WorkSet offers feedback on:

- How employees utilise their time;
- How far they are focused on the work assigned to them;
- To what extent idle time exists or time is being spent unproductively;

- Whether the "job" has changed, almost imperceptibly, causing changes in working practices;
- Whether the Jobholder shows signs of bending the job boundaries in ways that imply suitability for other work.

For the employee, WorkSet offers:

- Greater freedom in terms of how the job is interpreted;
- The opportunity to extend or change the frontiers of the job and thereby to assist in personal career development;
- An invitation to engage in new initiatives in a context in which enterprise can be identified and recognised.

For the trainer, WorkSet offers:

- A chance to develop an important new skill as a Facilitator;
- An opportunity to forge closer links with Line Management.

For Management as a whole, WorkSet offers:

- A means of gaining an instant picture of the culture of the workplace;
- An opportunity to detect cultural changes at an early date;
- A database for examining fits and misfits in the job;
- Leads on promising people whose talents and capacities are under-utilized in their current positions.

For further details, contact BelBin Associates at: 3-4 Bennell Court, West Street, Comberton, Cambridge, UK, CB3 7DS, England, Tel: +44 (0) 1223-264975, www.belbin.com/

Making a successful appointment

Making a successful appointment happen requires analysis of the vacancy, an accurate description of the job being offered and the ideal candidate required. Because, we are entirely independent, we can provide a valuable insight into your business and identify problems and opportunities that are not apparent to those directly involved.

Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

References:

¹ From Jobshift, William Bridges, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1994

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Publication issued or updated on:
19 January 2012

Ref: I25

