



Want to hire **WINNERS?**

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“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”

– Phil Jackson

The most important piece of your business is not the products or services you offer, it’s not the client experience, or the technological advancements you’ve implemented.

It’s the people.

All successful businesses need talent and the search for top performing individuals within every industry, role, or responsibility has never been greater.

You and your organization must have the ability and skillset to attract, acquire, and activate top performing individuals to take you from where you are today to where you want to be.

This all starts with aligning your organization on what competencies and characteristics are required to be successful in your various roles.

Some positions might require exceptional communication, others might need organization skills, technical abilities, or perhaps strategic problem-solving. No matter what the role, it is in your best interest to define these abilities as your “non-negotiables.”

You, your employees, talent acquisition manager, and entire Executive Team should all be aligned with these competencies, in addition to, who you are as an organization, the value you provide, and why your organization could be a fantastic opportunity for the right candidate.

If you are struggling, I’d suggest you take the time to consider the qualities for both your

existing top performers and previous under-performers. This will help you solidify the common traits you’re looking to identify (and the ones you will stay away from) and give you the foundation necessary to attract top talent.

As you do this, I’d encourage you to think about attitude. This can be an overlooked characteristic of top performers. Does this person display the right attitude to be successful on the team?

Are they demonstrating a positive attitude, showing signs of optimism, enthusiasm, and resilience?

“Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.” – Zig Ziglar

There have been plenty of highly skilled and talented individuals with a counterproductive attitude about their roles and responsibilities. They simply won’t work out.

As a manager, I can recall an interview process with two candidates. One displayed a natural ability to communicate, was engaging, and clearly demonstrated the core competencies we were looking for in a new rep.

The yellow flag came with how he conveyed some of their previous work history.

Every example pointed towards an “I’ve always been successful” attitude, showing little humility and respect

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“Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.” – Lou Holtz

toward his past employees, managers, and personal development process.

The second candidate was a much younger gal with less experience and proven competencies for the role.

She did, however, display desire to learn, an optimistic view on previous struggles, and an overall positive view on being aware she lacked formal training.

The majority of the influencers in the hiring decision wanted to go with the first candidate. I, however, went with the unpopular decision and hired the gal with less experience.

It was so unpopular, that a position became open in a different region to bring the guy with more natural skill sets into the organization.

Well, after some initial success, he didn’t end of working out and left the company.

The gal, who experienced much less success out of the gate, was a sponge. She learned from everyone around her, she practiced her craft relentlessly, she took feedback as an opportunity to grow and develop.

She went on to become a top performing individual and was promoted multiple times throughout

her career accomplishing some remarkable milestones.

“You don’t hire for skills; you hire for attitude. You can always teach skills.” – Herb Kelleher

Therefore, it’s in your best interest to incorporate attitude as part of your process and share this with your entire organization.

Keep in mind, your current employees can often be your biggest network for bringing the next super star onto the team, so highlighting these critical elements for an ideal candidate is essential.

Your team can now keep an eye out for potential new hires and be prepared to share your company’s story and communicate the desired skillsets to be successful.

Now, you shouldn’t just rely on this word-of-mouth effort, so it’s important to be visible in the community to attract talent.

It’s tough for candidates to find or be interested in your organization if they don’t even know you exist. Social media gives companies the chance to increase brand awareness and highlight opportunities, but it is only a small piece of the puzzle.

I’m a firm believer in the concept that “people do business with people they know, like, and trust” (credit: Andrew Carnegie). I also believe this is true when candidates are looking to advance their careers within or outside of their current company.

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“Hiring people is an art, not a science, and resumes can’t tell you whether someone will fit into a company’s culture.” – Howard Schultz

So, be visible by building credibility and trust through every interaction within the community.

This is where having a skilled talent acquisition leader is so important. They are often the face of your organization and how they communicate and present themselves will have a dramatic impact on the level of interest with potential candidates.

If you are the hiring manager, then continuously elevating your ability to connect with people can pay dividends for your business.

The primary goal of attracting top talent is to develop a robust pipeline of qualified candidates, moving ideal applicants through the process.

Consider, for example, encouraging possible recruits to speak with a current employee, get exposed to a job shadow, and connecting them with a senior executive or manager.

These are all ways to establish credibility, build excitement, and clearly demonstrate the value of your business and opportunity.

“The secret of my success is that we have gone to exceptional lengths to hire the best people in the world.” – Steve Jobs

Hint, hint, if you are a candidate, I’d highly encourage you to request these same opportunities to further explore this potential direction for your career.

Your exposure to the company’s culture and current staff will assist you in determining whether you can envision yourself being successful in the role and organization. It’s a great way for you to increase the likelihood of making an informed decision.

“The recruitment process should be a two-way conversation. Candidates should be interviewing the company just as much as the company is interviewing them.” – Liz Ryan

Now, this article wasn’t written to discuss the value of interviewing, but that is the next important step in the process after you’ve successfully built a robust pipeline of qualified applicants.

I worked closely with an executive once who had been plagued with turnover.

The company had no problem with the number of applicants and was even outpacing their hiring forecasts; however, they were experiencing extremely poor retention which negatively impacted morale and performance.

After months of frustration and tens of thousands of dollars wasted, the decision was made to have the executive sit in 100% of the 1st interviews after the initial phone screening.

What did they find?

They found that there was a gap in alignment with what was believed to be a high caliber, high potential candidate and the interview process itself.

The line managers were unaware of the “non-negotiable” skillsets and lacked proficiency in how to identify these abilities through the interview process.

Regardless, it just wasn’t feasible to have this senior leader continue to be so heavily involved in the process.

“Your human talent is your most important talent.”
– **Carla Harris**

It did, however, allow the organization to shine a brighter light on a clear path to improvement.

The experience led to intensive work on coaching and developing the folks responsible for attracting, interviewing, and hiring their employees.

It led to better communication and awareness for the entire company. It led to better alignment amongst the team and a stronger focus on how to collectively augment the approach to accomplish the intended results.

Eventually, this also led to better progress on producing quality employee onboarding resources and expanded training programs to foster a culture of growth for each new teammate.

They’ve since implemented leadership coaching to continuously align each employee with the mission, vision, and values of the organization. And, of course, with the core attitudes and competencies they are looking for in their next outstanding applicant.

The results were remarkable. Turnover went down and performance went up.

More importantly, they were cultivating a culture where everybody was involved and could contribute to the solution which gave a big boost to overall morale.

So, whether you are a hiring manager, department head, or executive I’d encourage you to dedicate time to evaluating these critical areas of the business.

And by continuously monitoring your effectiveness, you can ensure your team is equipped and confident to bring on the best people to accelerate your growth for many years to come.

“If I were running a company today, I would have one priority above all others; to acquire as many of the best people as I could, because the single biggest constraint on the success of my organization is the ability to get and to hang on to enough of the right people.” – **Jim Collins**