

THREE CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO WORK IN HIGH PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTS

BY BILL HOGG

This is the third article in our series of articles that looks at Building a High Performance Work Environment. The full series will be available for download as a white paper once it is completed.

In our last article, we discussed [three ways to support people in high performance environments](#). But first you need to find the right people that will excel in your company's work environment.

As previously discussed in the context of establishing a culture of leadership in the article [5 Steps to create a culture of leadership](#), your organization is only as good as the talent you recruit. No matter how well defined your vision may be or how well the vision is communicated internally, you still need to have the right people in roles that are suited for their personality, skills, and abilities.

Finding the right people to work in your company starts with well-defined recruitment expectations and the right process to back them up. You can't hire the right people if you don't understand the type of people that are a good fit for your culture.

Here are three critical elements that leaders need to ensure are built into the recruitment process:

1. The right character

Good character and the right attitude is the first priority in your hiring quest, but something too often overlooked. Too much emphasis is placed on matching skills to the position that needs to be filled. To find the right person that will fit within your organizational culture you need to put character before competence -- or attitude before aptitude.

In most cases, people are hired for competence, but fired for character. It doesn't matter how skilled a certain individual is if they do not exhibit the right character. A poor attitude and the wrong fit within the culture of your organization will have a negative impact on the performance of that person and poison others as well.

This is why it is so important to find the culture fit first and then focus on qualifications. A person that is the right cultural fit and has the right mindset can often be taught missing skills through training after they are hired.

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2. The right behaviours

A willingness to learn, go above and beyond, make the right decisions, and do what is in the company's best interests are all desired behaviours that companies need to look for when hiring.

People that exhibit the right behaviours have a positive impact on high performance work environments. As part of the recruitment process leaders need to look for people that have the character to go above and beyond what is expected -- and past behaviour is always the best indicator of future behaviour.

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Remember, that as a leader, it is your job to influence behaviour by inspiring your team. Inspired individuals will be more dedicated to achieving your vision and meeting expectations. People that display the right behaviours will also help to improve overall morale and collaboration within their department and throughout the organization.

3. The right skills

Seeking out the right skill set should come after you have identified candidates with the right character and behaviour. Missing skills can be taught. Of course, there is a certain level of knowledge, capacity and skills that a candidate must possess based on the job function, but training can be used to make up for gaps if the character is right.

Placing too much emphasis on finding a person with the right skills before you assess their fit in terms of character and behaviour often leads to a poor fit culturally -- and eventually cost more in the long term through poor performance, lost opportunity, negative impact on the balance of the team and having to start the hiring process over again when that person doesn't work out.

Revisit your current hiring practice and review the criteria that you use. Always hire for character, and then check for competence. If your company experiences a high turnover rate, then this may be a good indication that you are not placing enough emphasis on finding people that exhibit the right cultural fit.

When the people with the right character, behaviour and skills are hired, your team will achieve a common vision more effectively. An efficient and cohesive team will always deliver a better result than a collection of people who may have better individual skills.

See the full set of articles in our High Performance Work Environment series by visiting www.BillHogg.ca/resources/articles/.

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Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.

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