

Hiring the Right People

Many organizations have the wrong employees in the wrong jobs and then leaders wonder why their employees are not performing; that's the fault of leadership. Many organizations struggle with making the transition to a service culture because they have placed employees in the wrong jobs or they simply hired the wrong people the first time. Many companies make desperate hiring decisions just to fill positions with warm bodies. That hiring practice will come back and haunt them. If leaders want a service culture, they must get away from the idea of hiring out of desperation and make a more diligent effort to hire properly the first time.

Some turnover is going to occur in a transition to a service culture. However, I find that sometimes turnover is healthy. There are some people who don't like change or don't want to work in a service culture and they shouldn't be there. Not everybody is created or wired to want to serve customers and if they are not, it doesn't make them bad people, they just shouldn't be working in your culture.

I would encourage every organization to telephone interview prospective employees for their first interview, especially if the employee will be on the telephone on a frequent basis. Any employee who answers and communicates by telephone in your organization is your ambassador. Obviously, there are some jobs that are much more "ambassador-like" on the telephone such as call centers or salespeople, but I think telephone interviews are crucial for many positions. If you don't like a prospective employee's telephone voice, chances are the customer is not going to like it either (the internal or external customer).

I have been preaching for twenty-five or more years, "Hire the smile and train the skill," because you cannot train people to smile. I would encourage those who have the potential to recruit new employees to carry business cards with them wherever they go. If they are at a restaurant and have a great server, they should hand that server a business card and say, "I'd like to interview you for a job." They should be a constant recruiter. Steal employees from other businesses if they are great. It's all legal and it's all fair game. In these situations you get to see employees in their real work world. You get the best interview possible because you have the chance to actually see them in action, which is not an opportunity normally available to you.

Before you hire, I would highly recommend pre-employment testing of each final candidate. I am not suggesting you test every employee who applies, but only the ones you have narrowed down as finalists.

On my Web site, which is www.BradWorthley.com, I have a customer service pre-employment test, a sales pre-employment test, and a leadership pre-

employment test. These three incredible tests allow you to look inside employees' heads and see about seventeen of their personality characteristics such as agreeableness, assertiveness, emotional stability, empathy, extroversion, integrity, orderliness, work drive, team work, and other critical areas. These tests will provide you with many of the things that may not come out during an interview. Some people interview well but you might not find out as much as you really need to know to make the best hiring decision. The pre-employment tests not only evaluate the personality characteristics of each person, they also do something very unique—they measure the prospective employee's cognitive skills, which are more about how smart the person is. The tests look at numeric reasoning, verbal reasoning, and abstract reasoning. They also provide suggested second interview questions based on the applicant's weaknesses, which is very helpful when trying to narrow down your final selection.

It's almost crazy to not invest a few dollars on employees you'd like to have work for you for fifteen or twenty years. It's especially important to get the right people the first time which is even more critical.