

HIRING

The Manager's Most Important Decision

Of all the situations that confront a manager, the most important decision to be acted on involves recruitment. The addition of an employee to your workforce is a long-term commitment. Similar to many other circumstances in life, it often is much easier to get into the relationship than it is to undo the arrangement at a later juncture. For this reason, appropriate time, resources and thoughtful consideration need to be dedicated to the recruitment process, in order to optimize your investment.

Let's suppose that there are only two types of managers; those who are insecure and those who are confident. How might these different managers approach a hiring situation and what legacy impact would that have on their organizations?

The recruitment process begins by defining the requirements of the position and the development of a comprehensive Job Description. Complementing the Job Description, a profile detailing the attributes of the ideal candidate also should be crafted. If there are particular characteristics that warrant emphasis, for instance punctuality with the young cohort known as Generation Y, these should be highlighted. Finally, formulating a series of behavioural-based interview questions will encapsulate the requirements of both the position and the profile (see: [Behavioural Interviewing and Recruitment](#)).

A slate of candidates can be identified based on a review of the resumes that were received. If high quality candidates are not evident from the resumes and interviews, it is imperative that the manager resists the temptation to compromise the position.

Far too often, however, managers may try to truncate the hiring process. There are a variety of reasons that might compel the manager to do this. For instance, the manager may be under significant pressure to fill the vacancy, as quickly as possible. Or, the manager may fear losing the salary allocation. Or, service levels will not be fulfilled. Or, it really isn't that important and it's not a perfect world, anyway.

But compromising the recruitment process is not an acceptable resolution. Instead, the manager should re-initiate the process, until the right candidate is surfaced. In some instances, broader and different advertising approaches might need to be considered. This will become evermore critical as the competition for labour intensifies due to the changing demographics and the shrinking labour force (see: [The Growing Shortage](#)).



The Insecure Manager

Insecure managers have nagging doubts regarding their competencies. Although the insecure manager might be proficient at certain tasks, there resides an implicit acknowledgment that there are deficiencies with many more. The insecure manager lives in fear that the deficiencies will be exposed and that they will be declared a fraud.

An insecure manager, naturally, will feel threatened by strong, competent employees who may challenge the status quo or be overly enthusiastic about inventing innovative ways to improve business functions. Such a manager will be inclined, perhaps unconsciously, to recruit weaker employees who will not be seen as a threat to them.

Over time, the insecure manager assembles an operating unit that is populated by sub-optimum performers who collectively are not capable of resolving business challenges. In these circumstances, even competent employees will give up when confronted by this impenetrable inertia and debilitating ennui.

Now apply this predisposition and the resulting behaviour to the organizational level. If the organization is comprised of insecure, weak managers, then it follows that they will recruit a workforce that mirrors their profile. This commits the organization to a relentless downward spiral. It, quite literally, will be an unimpeded *race to the bottom*.

The Confident Manager

Confident managers, conversely, have assessed and recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses. They also will have identified their blind-spots. Confident managers recruit employees who will offset the manager's weaknesses and cover their blind-spots. They are not threatened by employees who have ideas and vitality.

Confident managers welcome the synergy that blossoms from divergent thinking and healthy conflict. They value competency and collaborative problem solving approaches to business challenges. They assemble an operating unit that is energetic, trusting and vibrant. They recruit action-oriented employees, not excuse-makers.

These managers also have a keen eye to the future. Their recruitment strategy extends beyond merely today's needs. Having spent time considering emergent trends, the confident manager is deliberately recruiting for tomorrow's environment. Finally, the confident manager is purposely recruiting and grooming their possible successor.

Applied to the organizational level, a cluster of confident, strong managers collectively will have orchestrated an outstanding roster of competent, high potential employees. This is a high-performance organization that creates a competitive advantage, now and in the future.

It is insecurity or confidence that guides the manager's hiring process and predilections. The results are self-evident, for both the operating unit and the organization's legacy.



Bill Fields, President bfields@diamondmanagementinstitute.com 905-820-8308

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