HIRE TOO FAST and / or FIRE TOO SLOW

Like A Bach Piano Contest?

by

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Ever been to a Bach piano contest? The judges sit on one side of a non-see-through curtain and the contestants are escorted to the piano on the other side, without introduction, to play a previously selected Bach Fugue. The judges do not know the name, gender, age, etc. of the pianist, and since they cannot see the performance they are not influenced by what they see, which would emotionally affect their adjudication.

Now, I am not suggesting that employers choose from unseen candidates but I am proposing that the selection criteria be based on the future (what you can't see), not the past (what you can see).

At a time when the candidate pool seems to be a plethora of available talent, beware; there may be furtive reasons as to why anyone is job seeking, even with high unemployment. Don't let your guard down when an applicant's explanation for being unemployed is...'my previous employer cut back'. There is an old adage, real talent isn't let go, even in tough times. Besides, in a turn-around, they may bail and return to their previous employer or geographic location.

No, hiring at any time under any conditions should be a methodical process to get the right fit, for the right reasons (what you can't see), for both employer and employee.

The risk is great when employers recruit new hires. The rule of thumb is: hiring the wrong person costs the company as much as three times the annual salary. This does not include additional soft costs, i.e. lost opportunity, lost business, potential customers and the noticeable loss of momentum.

I am empathetic to an employer who has an empty chair. It causes a burden on others to perform the work vacated by the departed employee or

maybe the work doesn't get done at all. The natural tendency is to get someone, anyone, hired as fast as we can to get that empty chair filled and the work caught up.

Have you ever interviewed a prospective candidate whose resume passed muster by the office manager or whatever HR that's in place, and had the candidate interviewed by others in the company and then had the conversation in the room go something like;

"I liked him, did you like him? Yeah, I liked him too".

The candidate was hired, only to find out that the new hire requires basic training for skills and abilities you thought existed based upon the resume. Or, worse yet, this candidate had hidden character issues or a personal agenda that impeded job performance and created internal discord. It is well known that the majority of applicants falsify their resume. Nevertheless, you don't fire the person because of the time and trouble it takes to find another. You rationalize, it's hard to find a good one, so you put up with unsatisfactory performance until the employee is so uncomfortable they look for another job or you can't take it anymore, i.e. **fire too slow**. This hiring decision was based upon the resume of "feelings and consensus" (what you can see), not based on a match to **Behavioral Characteristics** that fit specific job performance (what you can't see).

One small business owner shared this experience: "When I hired Sharon, my wife asked me, 'how well do you know her?' Two years later, I spent $150,000.00 in legal fees and a month in court. I will never forget my wife's question."

The experts in this discipline know that employers make **three basic mistakes** in hiring; first, employees are typically hired for what they know and then fired for who they are. Next, the hiring process is too fast and termination too slow, and the gravest error, a hiring decision based on the resume, or previous experience (what you can see). Previous experience is a weak value to predict future performance or contribution.

So, what are the preeminent factors for hiring decisions? **Behavioral Characteristics**, i.e. who they are as a person, what is their passion, how do they choose, how do they interrelate with others (what you can't see)?

We all know the infamous legend regarding the initial hiring at EDS by Ross Perot; when he was looking for department managers, he hired teachers. Even though they knew nothing of data systems, most were successful at their job and are consequently millionaires today.

One business owner getting the final search down to two or three finalists invites each one to dinner. This owner has prearranged with the restaurant to get the candidates order wrong, i.e. regardless of how the meat is ordered, it is delivered to the table cooked the opposite way.

If the candidate complains, the owner knows that this candidate is assertive and may be too pushy in the long run. However, if the candidate says nothing, the owner asks him, 'how is your meal?' If the candidate says, 'its okay', it exposes this person as too accepting or too easy. The owner may ask, 'Didn't you order well-done?' If the prospective hire answers with, 'I did, usually I would say something, but I am here because of your company's opportunity, not because of the food'; the candidate shows to be discerning, knowing the priorities at hand, and knows how to conduct himself aptly according to the situation.

Although I advocate the use of processes a lot more involved than looking for the 'right' response to a bad meal, the candidates with appropriate character traits will learn a new job amazingly fast.

Like EDS, not everyone has the required qualities to be a good manager, because it requires qualities that have nothing to do with management experience.

Hire a person who possesses the innate character for leading or managing others and the employer will have made a good hire. The same holds true if a company is hiring sales staff, engineers, financial, receptionists, nurses, or any position in any industry.

Each position has a different array of character trait requirements to fully perform the job expectations (what you can't see). It takes time, but cost less in the long run. The multiple testing formats that should be utilized reveal accurately how a person will perform on the job.

There are fundamentally 25 different 'Behavioral Characteristics' that once known will precisely prognosticate how a person will perform on the job. The results have nothing to do with intelligence, knowledge, experience, personality or education.

However, a final assessment report has everything to do with how they are as people, how they unconsciously execute and make choices.

- ✓ Stimulation: Driving Force, i.e. sense of self, principles, group interest
- ✓ Reason: Method of arranging data and information for decision making
- ✓ Execution: Single-handed / team work, repetitive / variety
- ✓ Interrelate: Provoking / obliging

There is not right or wrong 'Behavioral Characteristics', just partiality, like preferring coffee or tea. **Each type of work has its own 5 to 7 key characteristics** crucial to a successful performance profile.

When a candidate for an employer whose natural characteristics for Stimulation, Reason, Execution and Interrelation fit those essential for a specific job category and company culture, we know we have a good fit.

As a benefit to employers, Human Resource services that are outsourced to a non-recruiter compared to the 'head-hunter', provides protection against the assessment source being 'incentivized' to campaign for any one candidate. Recruiting firms most often operate in the mode of 'throwing things against the wall to see what sticks'.

Although there are many reputable recruiting firms that at least 'screen' applicants to match the employers needs, it remains resume based (what you can see).

Candidates who pass through a proper vetting process provide an assessment report that reveals the candidates true 'Behavioral Characteristics' (what you can't see). The employer then makes the final decision in the hiring / selection process (possibly from more than one qualified candidate).
Once the candidate is chosen by the employer, **the employer should not be the one making the employment offer.**

This action should be performed by the outsourced services firm, or even the company's attorney, to protect the employer from potential problems that can arise from the "job offer" meeting, i.e. misinterpretation of employment conditions, compensation, personnel policies, benefits, etc.

In closing I would like to bring to mind that, many companies fail to operate effectively because the wrong people are on the team. Mediocre people work for people of excellence. A 'ten' hires a 'nine'. The 'nine' who works for the 'ten' hires an 'eight', who hires a 'seven' and so forth.

Show me a company full of 'tens' and I will show you a growing company. A team of 'tens' are acquired by **'Hiring Slow and Firing Fast'!**