

Your Business Success is in the Hands of Your Employees

By Valerie G. Cardenas

Getting the right people on the job is mission critical for all companies. Employees, whether staff or management, can make or break an organization.

Companies frequently call on my business consulting services to help with employee and hiring issues, and I'm never surprised when I hear that request. One thing I've learned in my years in business and as a business consultant is that hiring and managing employees is right up there with productivity systems, sales and marketing as driving factors for profits.

There's really no mystery to choosing the right person for the job, but there are some methods of going about it that, while well understood by some, are inconsistently applied at best. I've had people tell me that they hire based on "gut-reactions" to people; others go for the consensus, hiring-by-committee approach. And, while I know that almost any approach, these included, can work some of the time, in business, I encourage clients to seek out approaches that can *better "their hand" with new positions and further enhance results over time.*

I always tell my clients that a successful hiring process includes

1. Hiring process
2. Policy and procedures
3. Orientation
4. Training and development
5. Management/leadership that will retain the employee.

Strategic Hiring for Success

Strategic Essentials uses a predictive index that gives us a very good idea of how someone will perform in specific work situations. And once we have this analysis, we go several steps further. We look at the personality and expectations of the potential manager and teammates to make sure we're setting up new hires to be successful – for themselves and for the company. This information can be used to coach all parties on development needs, playing to the individual's strengths and how to offset what may be perceived as challenges.

The right hiring, development and management practices can have a tremendous impact on your overall organization. But the best way to explain this would be with real-world examples, so here are a few examples from Strategic Essentials files.

Case Brief: Good Employees Mean Vacation Time

A family-run distribution company came to Strategic Essentials with what they saw as an insurmountable problem. They could not take a vacation or more than one day away from their 70-hour workweeks without jeopardizing their production.

In addition to business consulting, they specifically needed to find someone – that perfect someone – who could be comfortable in a warehouse setting, work with out-dated computer systems (at least at first), learn thousands of products, be ready to shoulder increasing responsibility, and be highly detailed.

This one hire was the lynchpin for further expansion and development. We found this individual by screening through numerous people, many of whom seemed competent. We needed exactly the right person, and we found that person. The difference for the company was profound. The leadership is now taking vacations, and the staff is capable of keeping the company running successfully in their absence.

Case Brief: Too Much Business

A business came to me with what seems at first glance to be an enviable problem: too much business. They had basic needs such as manageable systems and structure. But even more, they had few staff guidelines, no job descriptions, along with poor attitudes and job performance from staff.

Their hiring challenge went past bringing people into the door. It encompassed bringing the RIGHT people in, and then motivating them and giving them performance guidelines. Job satisfaction and productivity amongst their staff was critically low.

Through a mix of consulting and organizational development, this client developed standards, hiring practices, management techniques, and accountability. This focus and combination was what this firm needed to shift their organizational culture and their results!

Case Brief: Disruptive Staff in a Non-Profit Corporation

Non-profit corporations attract employees with a passion for their cause. This is a good thing, but for one non-profit that came to us, that same passion was holding them back and burning out some of their key staff. One employee was also particularly disruptive.

Our first task with this group was to work with the leadership on management skills and handling disruptive situations in the workplace. Our goal was to improve workplace satisfaction. Because their non-profit guidelines made it almost impossible to let the disruptive staff member go, we worked on effective leadership.

And we worked on understanding what to look for while hiring for new positions to lessen the potential of similar challenges in the future. It takes more than a passion for a cause to be effective for the cause.

Hiring coupled with managing well affects every aspect of a company, from productivity, to workplace satisfaction, to worry-free vacations for top management. It is just one piece – but a very important one – for business success.