

Performance Perspectives

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Helping Your Best Employees Grow

In our previous issue, we discussed how providing a positive experience for your employees is the best way in which to increase retention within your team, your department, or your company. In this article, we're going to address a specific way you can provide that experience, and it involves giving your best employees the proper amount of attention.

This is important for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, it's human nature to not pay enough attention to your best employees and top performers. Why is that? Because they're usually self-motivated go-getters who need no prompting or anyone looking over their shoulder. As a result, managers don't feel the need to interact with them as much, or to "check up on them," if you will. This gives the manager more flexibility and more freedom to tackle other issues. After all, there never seems to be enough time to get things done.

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Are You Helping Your Best Employees Become Successful?

Job Benchmarking and Candidate Assessments – What's the Deal?

The use of job benchmarking and job candidate assessments has grown in recent years. What are they, and why should you care?

Job benchmarking is the process of characterizing what behavioral style, motivators, and talents a job calls for. Job benchmarking allows us to "let the job talk", and identify what the ideal candidate looks like. Candidate assessment is the flip side of the job benchmark. The candidate assessment

looks at the behavioral style, motivators, and talents of an individual. There is a third component that links the other two – the gap analysis – that makes clear those areas where the candidate is not a good fit for a job. Viewed another way, the gap analysis shows where the job is not a good fit for a candidate.

Why use assessments? Studies show that a good fit between a candidate and a job is a key factor in job satisfaction, productivity, and retention. Nobody likes getting turned down for a job, but ultimately making sure a person is a good fit for a job is a win-win proposition.

From an employer's perspective the cost of employee turnover is calculated at between three and five times the person's annual salary. It is a hidden cost of doing business, and one that is easily avoided.

From an employee's perspective, if you are in the right job, you will be happier, less stressed and more productive.

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If you have a select number of employees who are high achievers, people who need a minimum of supervision, it only makes sense to leave them be and let them do their jobs, right? To a certain degree, that's correct, but if that philosophy is taken too far, it can prove disastrous in terms of retention.

The 20-60-20 rule

For superstar employees, a positive experience with the company includes the opportunity for professional growth.

If they don't believe that they're growing in their current position and that they're working toward something bigger and better, then they're going to think about leaving. Even if they like everything else about their job – including their boss – feeling as though there's nowhere to grow will prompt them to begin contemplating whether or not the grass is really greener on the other side.



With that in mind, here's a practical strategy for solving two problems at once. Let's say that your team or department adheres to the standard 20-60-20 rule, meaning that 20% of your employees are superstars, 60% are competent but not spectacular, and another 20% are bringing up the rear. Instead of spending precious time and energy attempting to motivate the bottom 20%, cut them loose and upgrade their positions by replacing them with star candidates.

By doing that, you've already increased the overall quality of your team. In addition, you've created extra time for yourself, since you don't have to devote it to your underachievers. You can now take that time and put it to better use. For example, you can focus on your top 20% and discover what their professional needs and career goals are.

Involve yourself now

Continued on next column –

This may sound a bit simplistic, but the best way in which to do this is by asking them. Not in casual conversation, of course, but behind closed doors during a formal meeting.

It shouldn't be an intensive, pressure-packed meeting, though. It should be one that fully engages employees and makes them feel comfortable enough to broach topics they might not bring up themselves.

Below is a loose blueprint for how you should conduct this meeting.



- Ask what their expectations are for their employment with the company. This type of open-ended question may prompt a response you didn't expect, but that's information you need to know.
- Ask what their career goals and objectives are.
- Ask what the company can do in order to help them achieve their goals.
- Begin to formulate a concrete plan based upon their responses to the above questions.
- Plan to meet on a consistent basis in the future in order to gauge progress and set additional goals.

Star employees think about their career ambitions all the time. It's in their nature. So if that's the case, then it makes sense to be part of their thought process and to be involved in their plans for the future. If you don't make sure that your company is involved now, you increase the chances that it won't be involved down the road.

For more information contact Performance 2000, Inc. at 619-660-5716.

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The secret of joy in work is contained in one word - excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.

– Pearl S. Buck

If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right.

– Henry Ford

Continued from page one – *Benchmarking*

If you are in the wrong job, your performance won't be as good, and you will end up leaving the job, or being asked to leave.

The engine behind this whole process is the assessment tool. Most assessment tools have an origin in human development theory, but the good ones have been validated in the real world and have an amazing degree of accuracy and utility.



An assessment is:

- ✓ A great source of insight into a person's behavioral style, motivators, and talents
- ✓ An excellent way to "let the job talk"
- ✓ A useful tool to coach an individual, or to assist an individual in guiding and directing their own personal development
- ✓ An integral part of candidate screening and a complement to a resume, work references, and job interview

An assessment is NOT:

- ✓ An IQ test
- ✓ A test of job-related skills and knowledge
- ✓ The only criteria used in determining the fit between a candidate and a job
- ✓ A substitute for a resume, work references, and job interview

Assessments are great tools. However, like all tools, they are only as effective as the people using them. In looking at assessment tools as either an employer or employee, work with someone who knows how to use and interpret the assessment in an effective way. If your reaction to an assessment is "NO way!" and not "Aha!" seek a second opinion. Ask your spouse, co-worker, peers, etc... read your assessment and get their opinion. You may be surprised!

Our perceptions of our self are often different than how others perceive us.

Adapted with permission from author David E. Smith, Performance Dynamics Systems.



Web Site Of The Month

[U.S. State & Local Gateway](http://www.usa.gov)

This site contains tons of links to state and local government sites.

You can browse through current government issues, go to the reference room to learn more about different subjects, or click on the link that takes you to the Federal Web Locator.

It also has information for US Citizens, Businesses, Non-Profits, Government, and US Visitors.

www.usa.gov



'Aldermanisms' Words of Wisdom

By Robert Alderman



One of the biggest mistakes you can make is to delude yourself into believing your competitors will continue to make mistakes and you will not.

Fix the small problem now, today. Tomorrow it may be a BIG problem that can't be fixed.

A great leader spends many hours getting information from his people. His greatness stems from not only getting the information but from using it to implement positive change.

Your title is nothing more than words. Your actions truly define what the title really means. A title does not create respect, your actions do.

Don't wait for an excuse; it's OK to feel absolutely fantastic right at this very moment.

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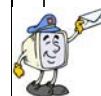
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Robert's Report – by Robert Alderman

The Unforgivable Sin

Day after day I speak with HR managers, sales managers, even presidents and CEO's. They have one common failing. When I ask them how many jobs the person has had in the past five or ten years the person I am speaking to, more times than not, will say, "Oh just a minute, let me look." If they do not know that answer then have failed to really take their hiring responsibilities seriously.

The past job experience can be spun to make the applicant much more than they are. They embellish, embellish and embellish. In other words most resumes have some questionable veracity. I describe the resume as the world's greatest work of fiction. BUT, the time frames and job history are difficult to manipulate. Check each past job to verify that these are truths you are seeing. The dates are real. A resume that does not give specific months along with years is a big red flag.

Ask yourself this question: if a person has had four or five jobs in ten years then what is it about the job you are offering that is so perfect for a person with short staying power?

Why will they display loyalty and top performance when their history clearly depicts the opposite?

Do not get seduced in the interview. This is not a popularity contest, it is bottom line business.

The three most important things you can do to enhance the use of a resume is:

- 1. Scrutinize**
- 2. Scrutinize**
- 3. Scrutinize**

Are you ever guilty of making the UNFORGIVEABLE SIN?

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