

White Paper

The value of high performers to your organisation

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Making the most of your current resource | 2 |
| What you should think about when recruiting | 3 |
| Advertising for a position | 3 |
| Interviewing | 3 |
| What about the candidates? | 4 |
| Identifying your top performers and recruiting them | 4 |
| Assisting you to identify and recruit high performers | 5 |



Introduction

As we are all well aware, the face of the business world is changing rapidly. There are not only new technologies to help (and hinder) us on what seems like a daily basis, but the economy is also currently playing a large role. High performers are desirable in any business but in the current climate they are a necessity.

A high performer is someone who can work smarter and faster, and take on greater responsibility and grow in strength when faced with challenges. It is fair to say that one superior person is worth as much to your organisation as a handful of mediocre people. But who are these high performers?

Making the most of your current resource

Whether looking for a candidate to fill a current role, or a candidate to embark upon a new position, you should not forget internal transfers. Organisations need to take advantage of their existing employees and be continually looking for ways of advancing this valuable resource. On average twenty per cent of open, non-entry-level jobs should be filled this way, rather than recruiting externally. Not only does this make the process more cost effective, it also ensures your organisation is offering a development programme and retaining its best performers rather than allowing them to take their knowledge elsewhere.

It is true that underperforming organisations lose good people, but it is also true that employees tend to leave managers, not jobs. It is therefore crucial to continually develop your managers and leaders.

When looking to promote from within your organisation it is important to capture the traits of your top performers and use these to create a benchmarking profile of the crucial roles at a higher level. Look at what makes these people high performers. Research has shown that typically certain characteristics exist in top performers; these are:

- Thinking style - learning, reasoning, problem solving
- Energy level - initiative, work ethic, drive, restlessness
- Assertiveness - achievement oriented, competitive
- Manageability - co-operative
- Independence - potential to accomplish tasks with minimal supervision
- Accommodating scales - willingness to change and deal with others
- Occupational interests - such as influencing and persuading

Once you have this in place, you can assess people further down your organisation, to discover whether they have the traits to be successful in these roles, and see what development they may require and where they should be heading. This will enable you to map out a succession planning strategy. Also, you may not have even considered certain individuals as they haven't shown what they are capable of.

It is a point to note that high performers tend to attract quality colleagues and promote a culture of best practice, 'like attracts like'. With strong development and mentoring programmes and a transparent performance evaluation process you will be able to identify your top performers and ensure they remain part of your organisation. Be sure to reward your top performers for their achievements, whether their role is in sales, customer service, IT or management. Line managers should create an environment where performance objectives are agreed, and in this way the person stays productive and motivated.

What should you think about when recruiting?

When looking to recruit a new member of staff, the starting point should be to look at your current team and decide who your top performers are. You should then look into their common traits, what makes them successful, and work to recruit people who have similar traits and abilities.

In the past many organisations have based their recruitment selection process around specific qualifications and experience. Of course there are roles which necessitate these specifics, but when it is not necessary this can exclude many people from applying who could undertake the role very successfully. Performance is about results, not about skills or qualifications. Although you need people who are competent at the role, to progress you must have people who are motivated to do the work.

Advertising for a position

To attract the best people for the role, over your competition, make sure that your advertisement is not limiting, boring or unattractive to top performers. If the job description is boring it can look the same as every other job and put off the top performers who are looking for a varied, challenging role. Job descriptions must emphasise what the person will do, learn, and become. As part of this, it is important to clearly describe the impact the person can make. This way you are not limiting candidates on past skills but giving them an opportunity to progress and learn new skills.

From a marketing standpoint, don't use internal, non-descriptive titles as these can put off high performers who may not have the time or the need to decipher your job title when there are others available to them.

Interviewing

The first step to consider when looking at your interview process is: are the people who interview for new staff trained in interviewing techniques?

It is imperative to ensure that the people interviewing have all the necessary information about the available job – it is impossible to make a decision on the right person for the position if you do not fully understand the job role.

Once you have the correct interviewers for the role, the key is to remain objective. Remember, first impressions do not tell you whether the candidate will excel in the role. Don't be swayed by what you see – some candidates are excellent at interview techniques and are able to present very well; others are less able to perform in interview, but this doesn't necessarily mean the good interviewee will be the best employee. Some top performers can be nervous during interview and this can result in poor eye contact, shaky answers and an overall lack of self-confidence. Does this mean that they wouldn't be good at the job? It is important to ensure that your organisation is recruiting top performers, not good interviewees.

If you use technical interviewers to recruit new staff they are very able to validate technical competency, but can ignore other critical core skills like working with others, planning, budgeting, and meeting deadlines. The result of this may be a solid team; but it could be a team which lacks motivation and is unable to fulfil the complete role.

A study by John Hunter of Michigan State University and Frank Schmidt of the University of Iowa indicated that the typical employment interview is only 57% effective in predicting subsequent success - or 7% better than flipping a coin!

Also, the difference in performance between an average employee and an outstanding employee is typically between 17% and 40%.

You should ensure that you have a structured interview process in place. The first key element of a well-structured and successful interview process is preparation. Once you have prepared your interview plan you will have a set of standard questions and you should use this framework to ensure that you cover the same ground with all of the candidates, and are able to objectively assess the information they provide against the selection criteria.

Managers need to differentiate between 'talents', which cannot be transferred from one person to another, and 'skills' and 'knowledge' which can. If managers can identify where a person's talents lie, then develop his or her skills, knowledge and experience, building on those talents to create consistently excellent performance.

What about the candidates?

Most superior performers are looking for the right career move, not a job. These people are looking for challenges, opportunities and the ability to progress within an organisation. To think that all career decisions are centred around remuneration is a false assumption.

The best candidates don't typically have the exact mix of skills, experience and education described in the job description. They are able to make up for this with traits that can't easily be filtered – potential, self-motivation, leadership, tenacity and vision. Therefore, if a company advertises and filters totally on skills, the best candidates can be wrongly excluded from consideration.

Identifying your top performers and recruiting them

To consistently recruit top performers the recruitment manager needs strong recruiting skills. These include the ability to create interesting job descriptions and develop an interviewing process based on job-matching, not just key criteria. Each candidate should be considered for their own merits – ensure that you are not too quick to judge average presentation skills as average ability.

Ensure that you ask all candidates the same questions. If a candidate is chatty and comfortable within the interview it is easy to get distracted and base your judgement on their personable qualities. These will not predict high performance.

Write compelling and interesting job adverts – remember that top people look for jobs based on the challenges and opportunities available.

Base your advertising around how the best people look for new jobs. They don't have as much time as passive candidates and are more likely to use the internet to enable them to find you quickly. Use the homepage of your website to prominently feature career opportunities. It is likely that top people will enter a few keywords into a search engine and bypass career boards altogether. Therefore, the usability of your website

is crucial – all information should be available instantly. Most career sites make it too difficult for good people with little time to explore career opportunities.

Assisting you to identify and recruit high performers

One of the challenges for organisations is identifying these high performers. Although we have a good idea, it can be very subjective. A more objective way of determining high performers is to use a 'total person' psychometric assessment.

The Profile XT™ is an accurate and reliable assessment which provides a picture of the 'total person' that can be used in any business role. The Profile XT performs two key functions:

- **First** - it provides information on the individual in three categories:
 - Thinking Styles – Can the person cope with the mental demands?
 - Behavioural Traits – Will the person be competent in the job environment?
 - Occupational Interests – Is the person motivated by the work?
- **Second** - using a 'Job Match Pattern', it identifies how well an individual matches the needs of a specific role and where development is needed.

Using this objective process, the Profile XT™ will enhance your current recruitment and development process to:

- help you identify people who will meet the demands of the job
- reduce the risk of employing average or below average performers
- recruit and develop engaged, motivated and productive people – improving job satisfaction and staff retention. This will inevitably lead to improved productivity, customer satisfaction and increased profitability
- improve sales revenue, KPI's and success factors in the organisation
- reduce staff turnover, recruitment fees, advertising costs and the associated management time.

For further information about Profile XT™ and how it can support your organisation and your objectives visit www.tlsa.co.uk, email profiles@tlsa.co.uk, or call 0845 600 1556.

And finally, bear in mind that a recruitment technique which is often used is 'hiring on gut reaction'.

Statistics prove that 63% of all hiring decisions are made during the first 4.3 minutes of an interview.

Source: SRHM Study