

The Defining Mark

Barrier Free Business Development Ideas

This issue: Sales DNA (Looking for the fit)

I recently had opportunity to organize and facilitate a sales panel which discussed the availability, (or shortage), of sales talent in light of several recent studies which identified the sales position as the most difficult to fill, not only locally but on a global stage.

In order to address this question from a variety of viewpoints the panel included an instructor from the local college's business department; a recruiter focussing on the high-tech industry; a former sales trainer who currently consults with companies during the hiring process; and an executive with local company which has recently grown through each of the stages from start-up to major player in the market place.

Surprisingly, even though there was a diverse set of viewpoints reflected on the panel, the opinions and suggestions were very similar.

The single biggest influencer in hiring success for both the company and candidate was the concept of 'fit'. While this may seem obvious, the degree of turnover in companies, combined with the consistent need to improve the production of current 'under performers', implies that there is still work to do.

During the discussion, this concept of 'fit' was reflected in four key areas which can be addressed by both the company and candidate for greater long-term success.

The first two areas, experience and skill, are the most common and possibly the only areas of inspection during many of the hiring processes. While these areas are vital, both could be transferred from comparable positions or developed over time if not available at the time of hire.

The second two areas, corporate climate and candidate DNA, are either overlooked completely or not given the weighting necessary on the employment scale. They could be considered opposite sides of the same coin.

When considering the corporate climate, many firms list what they need in a candidate instead of what a candidate needs in order to succeed in the role. A list of key responsibilities such as: 'able to close gobs of business; maintain huge margins; eliminate client turnover; develop stellar image within the community' aren't enough to ensure that your eventual hire is a superstar.

Are you aware of the selling styles which best fit your product's maturity and position in the market? If so, are these considered during the hiring process? What are the current team dynamics in the company? How will the candidate impact this dynamic?

The candidate DNA plays an important part in the process since individual candidates have both a natural selling style and preferred selling environment. Expecting the results of a 'top-producer' with a mismatch in conditions is a common cause for disappointment.

Clear and concise expectations outlined in a job description will lay the ground work for identifying the right people for the right roles. Incorporating an awareness of the corporate climate and candidate DNA into the process through assessment tools can increase the compatibility and eventual success for all involved.



Jim Carty, CSP

*We can't all,
and some of us don't.
That's all there is to it.
- Eeyore (A.A. Milne)*

*Know yourself. Don't accept
your dog's admiration as
conclusive evidence that you
are wonderful.
- Ann Landers*

Action Plan:

- Review your recruiting and hiring process
- Develop clear concise job descriptions
- Implement an assessment process to identify candidate DNA
- Contact AltiMark to assist with any aspect of the process