

Finding the right fit for your business

Hiring someone to work in the business you've built can take a lot of faith in a person you've only spent a short time with. But there are things you can do ensure they're a good fit, writes **Karen Gately**

HOW OFTEN have you or other members of your leadership team hired people who have then failed to perform in their roles to an acceptable standard?

Reflect for a moment on the detrimental impacts on your time, energy, resources and team of a new employee failing to deliver on the promises they made during the hiring process that they could do the job well.

Adopting a planned, considered and disciplined approach is fundamental to your ability to accurately predict the likelihood of someone being successful in their role and your organisation. Leveraging a variety of assessment techniques to validate your observations and build a full picture of the candidate's potential throughout the process is key to predicting success.

As widely referenced research by US

Professors Frank Schmidt and John Hunter reveals, unstructured interviews have a predictive validity of just 38%. They report that the strongest predictors of performance

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are structured interviews and testing.

The study analysed 85 years of research to identify the most effective methods for hiring people who will excel in their roles, as well as the least effective. It's important to note that while structured interviews and testing

ranked highly, the validity ratings of each were 54% and 51%, respectively. This suggests a blend of strategies is necessary in order to achieve the level of predictive validity needed to enable effective decision-making.

It's essential that you leverage each step in your hiring process to assess both what people are capable of and how they are likely to go about achieving what they need to. Assess also the depth of each candidate's desire to do the job, and the alignment of the opportunity you're offering with their career aspirations.

Assess capability

Look for evidence that candidates have the ability to apply their knowledge, skills and experience within the context of the role you are hiring for. Avoid the common error of presuming that because someone has attained a certain qualification or level of seniority they are capable of effectively leveraging their experience to perform well in your organisation.

Explore the extent to which candidates understand the core objectives, responsibilities and complexities of the role. Test also their willingness to confront the challenges of the role and have the resilience to drive change if required. Contemplate the extent to which the candidate will be able to respond

to irregularities, breakdowns and other unanticipated events.

Assess culture fit

Cultural fit is the extent to which a person's approach to doing their job and being a



member of your team is aligned with the values of your business. While it can be tempting to hire the person with the most experience or most impressive technical qualifications, your choice should never be at the expense of recruiting people who are likely to behave in the ways you need them to.

Time and again I see leaders making the fatal mistake of prioritising the skills and qualifications of a candidate while ignoring the clear signals of culture misfit. I am yet to see these decisions turn out well. Without exception they have struggled to leverage the person's full potential and, more often than not, have found themselves managing the undesirable consequences of unsuccessful behaviours.

The simple reality is that the extent to which someone is aligned with the culture of your organisation profoundly impacts on whether or not they will ultimately be a successful member of the team. It needs to be an important priority in any recruitment process.

Not an exact science

While recruitment is not an exact science and can better be described as an art, there are steps you can take to ensure you hire the right people. It is crucial that you consider the candidate's fit with your business and team throughout the process. Here are some examples of how you can do this:

1. Read between the lines and listen for attitude, whether reading a CV, conducting an interview or doing a reference check.
2. Assess priorities, philosophies, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and motivations. Consider how these reflect the likely approach they will take to their work and dealing with others. How will this fit with the way you want things to be done in your business?
3. Observe interactions before, during and after interviews and other face-to-face interactions. Notice shifts in behaviour or expressions of attitude towards individuals and groups. For example, how does the

candidate respond to and interact with people they perceive to be senior, their peer or junior to them?

4. Use assessment tools effectively. There are many insightful tests now available that can assist you in accurately assessing candidates. It is important to remember that these tools are indicative, not predictive, and should be used for guidance rather than as standalone decision-making tools. For example, use information gleaned in reports to design interview questions and guide conversations with referees. **MPA**

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