Building Your Company's Culture Hire by Hire

A three-year study of 5,247 hiring managers from a wide range of industries and businesses found that 46% of newly-hired employees will fail within their first year and a half of work.

"The typical interview process fixates on ensuring that new hires are technically competent," Leadership IQ CEO Mark Murphy explained. The problem the study found is that technical skills (same as job skills or industry experience) are not a sufficient measure of one's ability to do a job. What's more is that while technical competence gets all the focus in the interview, it ends up being one of the last reasons people lose their job. That means, job skills are why people get hired – but when it comes down to losing employees, their ability to actually do that job – or not – plays a very small part!

So what is it that causes most people to lose their job? The survey points to areas rarely focused on in interviews: coachability, emotional intelligence, motivation and temperament [See Fig. 1].

"Highly perceptive and psychologically-savvy interviewers can assess employees' likely performance on all these issues," explained Murphy. "But the majority of managers lack both the training to accurately read and assess candidates, and the confidence to act even when their assessments are correct."

For the purposes of this article, we're going to focus on the areas of coach-ability, emotional intelligence, motivation and temperament as we study them as part of our "Define and Align" Job Vector Talent Matching System. We're also going to provide you with some of the questions we give our clients to help them further screen and interview the candidates for positions that they seek to fill.

Fig.1 Top Areas of Failure According to Leadership IQ

- **26% - Coachability:** Ability to accept and implement feedback.
- **23% - Emotional IQ:** Ability to understand & manage one's own emotions.
- **17% - Motivation:** Drive to achieve one's full potential.
- **15% - Temperament:** Attitude & personality as suited to the job.
- **11% - Technical Competence:** Functional skills required for the job.

To get an understanding of a person's coach-ability, we measure their self awareness on a scale of 1 to 10. That serves as an axis to measure the positive or negative feelings one has regarding ones' self. This tells us a) how this person feels about themselves and b) how willing they are to take feedback to improve. For example, a person who scores a positive 9 tends to be self-centered and dislike criticism of any kind. Obviously this person is not going to be coachable. However, if that person has a negative bias they see their own undeveloped potential and are motivated to improve; clearly a very coachable candidate.

So, how do we put our assessment findings in context and go further beneath the surface? We use questions in our interview process such as:

☑ "Share with me a time you faced a great deal of personal criticism from others. How did you handle it? Did you modify or change your position in the face of this criticism?"

☑ "Would you consider yourself able to have a productive relationship with someone whose point of view is different from yours? If so, give me a specific example of a situation where this occurred, the difference in view and exactly how you went about sustaining the relationship?"

☑ "Describe some teams in which you have participated. What made the good teams good? What made others less effective?"

As the interviewer, you should be looking for answers which indicate a good sense of self - worth but a willingness and desire to improve. Watch out for candidates whose answers indicate an overbearing ego, self-depreciation, or an unwillingness to achieve personal growth.

We look at emotional intelligence in a broader sense of emotional control and maturity, and how a person gets along with other people. We call these interpersonal skills in our assessments. Those professionals who score high in this area can forge business relationships in an open and trust-based fashion. They're able to do this across a diverse group of people with varying backgrounds, ages, experiences and education levels. Their success is based in large part upon their outstanding communication skills; they're considerate, easy to understand and never appear to have a "hidden agenda."

In order to verify the assessment score regarding a candidate's interpersonal skills, we follow up in the interview process with questions such as:

☑ What is the most stressful or difficult situation where you had to maintain your composure? What did you do to maintain composure? How do you think you did? If you had it to do over what would you do the same? Differently?

☑ What is your single, biggest communication strength? Your biggest flaw? How do you overcome it?

☑ Give me an example of a situation when a personal relationship you had or developed was helpful in a business situation. How did you cultivate that relationship without appearing to be patronizing?

You want to look for answers which indicate an ability to approach situations from another person's perspective. Also ask questions that reveal a candidate's ability to get along with people from all walks of life.

Motivators

The next area we look at is in the area of a person's Interest, Attitudes and Values. Together, these areas are our key reasons for making decisions, and choosing life direction, perhaps more simply put our motivators. We define motivation according to an individual's values.

There are six core Values:

Theoretic   *Social*

Economic   *Political*

Aesthetic   *Regulatory*

What this means is that a career rewards one, or a combination of these Values. The ideal candidate will share those same Values as existing high performers and will therefore be motivated to do the job. Top salespeople, for example, have a high Economic score. That is, they value money. As the major function of a sales position is to earn money for the organization, this is clearly a good fit. A person with a high Economic score will not find the motivation they need in a career that does not require that Value. A social worker for example, must have a high Social score; however, the career is not a financially rewarding one. Someone with a high Social score will find the job very rewarding. Someone with a high Economic score will not.

Providing context for these findings can be accomplished in the interview phase by asking the following questions:

☑ Would you consider yourself to be a bottom line, practical thinker or are you more theoretical or philosophical? Why do you say that?

☑ Where would you like to be, financially, in 5 years? 10 years? Why?

☑ What do you consider to be "a lot of money?"

You should look for answers which indicate not just someone who likes money, or "things." Most people would like a new car, a vacation, etc. A high Economic score is indicated by someone who values money; someone who's interested in working to save, invest, and earn money.

Working Behaviors

A candidate's temperament is what we call their Style Insight. There are essentially four style insights as we define them; Driver, Expressive, Steady and Analytical. Our assessments measure many aspects of an individual to identify their Style, which can be for example, 100% Expressive, but more often the Style Insights mesh, where one is highest but the other three are still present. Here are some definitions and characteristics to look for when you interview a candidate. Try and decide which ones would be a good fit in your organization:

Driver

Fast-paced speech

Impatient

Strong personality

Direct

Expressive

Friendly & talkative

Impulsive

Uses many hand gestures

Shows much emotion

Analytical

Speaks slowly

Asks many questions about facts & data

Deliberates

Skeptical

Steady

Patient

Easy-going

Unemotional voice

Reserved

When looking for a good fit no single Style is a "deal-breaker." As a manager though, you may need to know that a Pacer, for example, will have to ramp up their Doer Style in certain situations. An individual's style is important and we teach sales professionals to recognize and if need be, modify their own Style when the situation demands it. A Talker, for example, should learn how to just "get to the point" if they're dealing with a Doer prospect.

These parallels between what we study in our assessments and what the Leadership IQ study reveals, bring up an interesting final point. We have noticed that a full 95% of the thousands of top performing people we've assessed have one significant characteristic in common – Personal Accountability. That is, the measure of a person's capacity to be answerable for their own actions. Professionals who possess this characteristic don't try to blame anyone or anything when it comes to not making a sale. Moreover, they will learn from their mistakes and refuse to let mistakes get in the way of achieving objectives and goals.

Here are some questions you can ask to determine if someone has a high level of Personal Accountability:

☑ What is the worst decision you ever made in your life? What made it the worst? What do you know now that if you knew it then would have helped you to avoid making that decision?

☑ Give an example of a situation where others had made an error or mistake and you had to take the blame for their actions. How did you feel about doing that?

☑ Describe the most proactive thing you have ever done – something that required no outside stimulation for you to initiate and complete.

You're looking for answers which convey a sense of ownership, an inability to shift blame or take undue credit. A salesperson with high Personal Accountability will also exhibit a belief structure where mistakes are something to learn from. What's more, no matter how debilitating a mistake seems, it should not prevent them from pushing forward.

"Hiring failures can be prevented," Leadership IQ's Murphy concluded. "If managers focus more of their interviewing energy on candidates' coachability, emotional intelligence, motivation and temperament, they will see vast improvements in their hiring success. Technical competence remains the most popular subject of interviews because it's easy to assess. But while technical competence is easy to assess, it's a lousy predictor of whether a newly-hired employee will succeed or fail."

Furthermore, our own research and experience in sales has shown us that dependence on technical skills or job skills or industry experience as the deciding factor in the hiring process is, for lack of a better word, lazy. It's an attempt to plug and play people in a role and it doesn't work. Just because someone has done the work doesn't mean they have the right tools to succeed at it.

Define and Align

The questions above are meant to be basic strategies in which to get to the heart of the hiring decision. Many firms, especially those whose market values are tied to the brain power of their workforce, need and seek, a closer look "under the hood" of potential employee's. In our opinion, smart companies that are trying to build value in their company through the strength of its people should always go a step further.

The Newport Job Vector Talent Matching System allows you as an executive to "Define and Align". This means that a core group of subject matter experts that are performing well inside your company now can help you identify what are the correct working ability to survive and thrive within your company's unique environment. While understanding a candidate's level of self esteem and his or her interpersonal skills is a basic factor which should be understood in advance, a more comprehensive approach is needed.

Shown here is a multidimensional RAD model that when applied as a tool provides direction to defining and building a culture which can execute on strategic objectives.
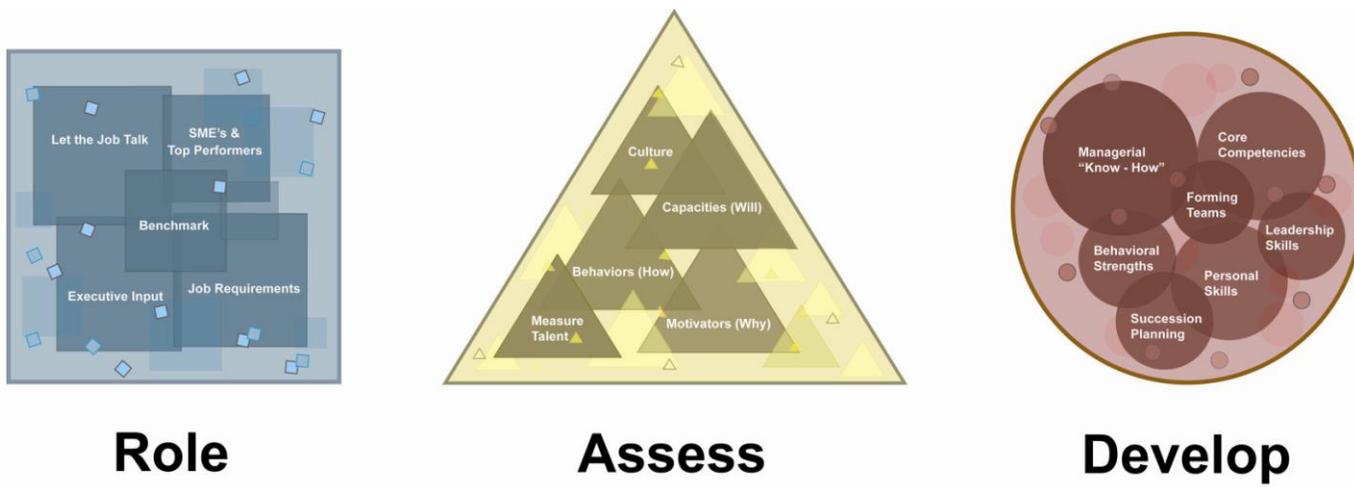
In a follow up article we will explain how the RAD model can be used to build on a winning culture.

-30-

For follow up or to comment on this article, please contact:

Tim Maloney	Telephone:	(905) 332-4809
Newport Group Inc.	Direct:	(905) 331-7303
3017 St Clair Ave,	Cell:	(416) 254-6955
Suite 118	Email:	tmaloney@newportgroup.ca
Burlington, ON		
L7N 3P5		