The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Employment: Successful Leaders — They May Not Be Who You Think They Are

By Felix Kugel

October 08, 2013



The Employment section did not involve the reporting or the editorial staff of The Moscow Times.



Felix Kugel
Vice-president & Managing Director
ManpowerGroup Russia & CIS

What factors contribute most to accelerated leadership performance? The answers to that question are of vital importance to a company's success — perhaps more now than ever. Indeed, to succeed in today's challenging economy, organizations need employees who can function at full throttle. And to ensure they have the right leaders to get the job done, companies must not only identify the factors that lead to accelerated performance, but also assess whether current and prospective leaders need a plan for developing the factors that lead to accelerated performance.

A recent ManpowerGroup study of close to nearly 900 senior leaders and Human Resource professionals revealed surprising insights into just what factors lead most frequently to on-the-job success. Respondents overwhelmingly pointed not to employees' technical skills, expertise or experience, but to other, very different qualities: organizational culture and motivational fit, as well as savvy, appropriate interpersonal skills. For example, the number of respondents who felt that "organizational culture/motivational fit" contributes most to accelerated performance was more than 2 ½ times greater than those who pointed to "technical skills" or "relevant experience" as the most significant factor.

In other words, it's not what leaders know, but how they fit in the culture, are motivated by opportunities within the organization, and interact with those around them that result in high performance.

Pinpointing, Assessing and Developing the Right Stuff

These insights have critical implications for an organization's overall talent management strategy — most importantly for how to assess and develop high-potential leaders. While it's possible to assess current and prospective employees for all factors cited in the ManpowerGroup survey, two factors — cultural and motivational fit — involve innate

characteristics that can be difficult to coach or develop. How, then, should organizations proceed?

Organizations should consider these three steps to ensure high performance:

Pinpoint

Analyze the basic elements of their organizational culture. Before determining whether individuals have the appropriate cultural and motivational fit, companies must first determine the key attributes of their own values, such as whether the organization prizes innovation or has a rigid chain of command. They also need to pinpoint the types of opportunities available throughout the organization. For example, a company in a highly regulated industry that requires strict procedures to be followed wouldn't be a good fit for an individual who thrives in an atmosphere of ambiguity.

Assess

Assess employees for organizational culture/motivational fit and interpersonal behavioral skills. Organizations should identify a pool of high-potential leaders, both at a junior and senior level, using past performance as a starting point. Then they can assess these individuals to determine, for example, those whose values are aligned with the corporate culture and who would be most likely to enjoy high levels of job satisfaction working in leadership roles within the organization.

In some cases, companies need to assess existing leaders for how they align with the organization's current culture. If, however, the business is contemplating a change in strategy, the organization might assess individuals for their compatibility with a future environment. In these cases, it's likely the company also will need to assess talent from outside the organization.

Develop

Create a program to develop those leaders who make the cut. Once the most promising leaders have been identified, companies can take the next step: using assessment results to help individuals improve their interpersonal skills. That can include learning how to do everything from planning and delegating to building trust. Probably the best way to address gaps in interpersonal savvy is through coaching sessions during which people focus on appropriate behavior in specific business situations. In addition, leaders can be given job assignments aimed at addressing a broader range of interpersonal behaviors, or attend workshops to learn a discrete set of skills.

The Right Leaders, Right Now

Ultimately, companies that fail to address these issues risk losing valuable talent. Why? ManpowerGroup has conducted comprehensive global benchmarking research into the drivers of workforce engagement. This research reveals that when employees sense there's a disconnect between leaders and the organizational culture, or that management behavior is not supporting organizational values, they often become disenchanted, thereby lowering organizational performance. What's more, without the right leaders suited to move

the organization forward, the company is likely to lose momentum and its competitive edge.

Perhaps most important, in today's uncertain times, companies urgently need the ability to adapt their culture quickly, to create an agile organization able to turn on a dime. Without the appropriate leaders in place, organizations may find they're unable to perform up to stakeholder expectations and move forward as rapidly as is necessary. On the other hand, those enterprises with the right leaders who fit the organizational culture — motivated by opportunities in the company and effectively interacting with peers and subordinates — stand a good chance of meeting the challenges of the current economy and thriving when conditions improve.

The Employment section did not involve the reporting or the editorial staff of The Moscow Times.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/10/08/employment-successful-leaders-they-may-not-be-who-you-think-they-are-a28400