

E-News

Contents

- **Four “Can’t Miss” Ways to Hire Underachievers!!!!**
- **Business Literacy Spells \$UCCE\$\$**

Four “Can’t Miss” Ways to Hire Underachievers!!!! by *Monica Le Grand Trudell, Vice President*

The research is in. There is no question that the success of your company is inextricably linked to the quantity (depth) and quality (competence) of your people. Yet, very few companies take the time and make the investment in *aligning their people strategy with their business strategy*. So, sales managers are replaced, new ad campaigns are launched, training programs are begun -- all with very little impact. Why? The answer is quite simple...the underachievers outnumber the high achievers...and the former group is gaining strength. Here are the four most common practices that we see within companies that keep performance down and underachievement flourishing!

Practice 1- Hiring F A S T

A person leaves and the position will be vacant in two weeks. Panic sets in. There is all this work to do and soon there will be one less person available to do the work! **Let’s get someone in right away!** Great idea in theory. In practice, however, there is an old saying that usually proves to be true “Hire in haste, repent in leisure.” All too often in my experience as a business owner and in working with many businesses in the past 12 years, fast hires result in more cost and disruption in the long run than taking a little more time up front to actively seek a pool of qualified candidates to select from. By a pool, I mean at least three. Whether it is a frontline position, sales position, technical, administrative or management position, it doesn’t matter. Unless you have at least three candidates to choose from, you have no choice at all.



Now, I don’t mean that you needlessly drag your feet on hiring. With concerted effort, I have found it possible to develop a list of three within 30 days, even in tight labor markets. The key to be able to do that lies in eliminating the next practice.

Practice 2- Not knowing what you’re looking for!



Almost all companies have job descriptions of some kind. That’s great. Normally, job descriptions only talk about “WHAT” needs to be done. However, success in any job whether it is frontline, mid-manager or senior level is made up of 3 kinds of capabilities or competencies. Let’s call them *Thinking, Relating and Working* factors. We can think of these vital factors as ingredients in each and every job. The *amounts and mix* of these ingredients vary by job and are what determines under, average and high **potential** performance in a particular job function. For example, a technical manager may require Thinking factors of in-depth problem solving, technical acumen and innovation, whereas a customer service job may require more Relating factors like influencing and persuading, negotiation, informal communication and written communications. After you hire an individual, other factors such as the work itself, the relationship with his/her supervisor and myriad of other things determine performance and longevity. The real point is if you do not have a clue as to what factors drive **HIGH** performance in a position, those other things won’t matter much.

Practice 3- Rely Heavily on Resumes and Interviews

A large, national background checking company reports that as many as 33% of resumes have false or erroneous information contained in them. A study done at Michigan State University found that interviews were only able to validate to job success with a 14% success rate, about the same success rate as random selection. Now, Human Resource specialists in hiring may develop a higher degree of skill at eliciting pertinent information from candidates...MAYBE. What about all of you occasional interviewers out there? Yes, you. You that only need to hire someone once or twice a year. How proficient do you think you are at interviewing? Today, there are many companies that specialize in coaching and helping *jobseekers practice interviewing*. Do you think you can overcome that disadvantage? In a minute, we’ll share an alternative method you can use to help level the playing field.

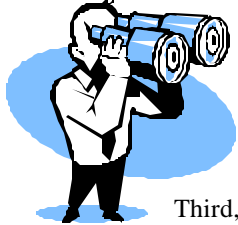


Practice 4- Lack of Clear Expectations for the Job

Recently, a colleague of mine told me the story about a friend of his named Joe, who was being courted by a large, public company for a very high level position. In the process, Joe asked to meet with the President of this company. In that meeting, Joe specifically asked the President what results would be expected of him in the first 6 months if he came on board. The President said, “Oh, not very much. If you can get some of the administrative issues ironed out that would be enough.” Can you imagine? Needless to say, Joe, who is a very talented individual, passed on this opportunity.

This is not unusual! Bright, talented individuals want to work someplace where they can apply their talents and intellect, not accept a position and be put on autopilot! When great candidates ask about your expectations of them, what are your responses? Are you willing to stretch them? Challenge them? Set High Performance standards and work with them to achieve them? If so, you are in the minority of companies that are doing things right!

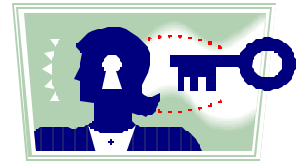
So, what can you do to overcome these 4 practices that lead to extreme mediocrity?



First, your number one job is to be a talent scout for your organization. Always be looking for people that could bring more depth and breadth to your company, not just when there is a vacancy.

Next, understand the skills and competencies that **DRIVE** high performance in every position in your company. It's the *difference* that makes the *difference* between average and excellent.

Third, knowing those attributes, utilize valid assessments to assist you in uncovering the true strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, rather than relying solely on what they have been coached to say!



Finally, write down your expectations for each position in the company. Start with the most important functions in your company, usually the sales and production positions. Do the incumbents in those positions completely understand your expectations? That would be a great place to try out your new expectations!

At Peak Performance Associates, we have helped many companies develop effective hiring practices to align their people strategy with their business strategy. If you would like more information, call Monica Trudell (608-835-9288 or monicat@peakperform.net) and schedule a no cost assessment of your existing hiring practices!

Business Literacy Spells **SUCCESS!** by Dan Trudell, President

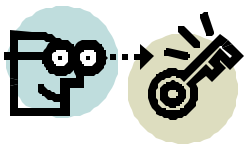
Imagine for a moment that you are the proud owner of an NFL football team. You have a beautiful new stadium and training facility, excellent coaches and you are able to attract and sign top-notch players from all of the finest college football programs in the country. These people are the best players and coaches, and everyone tries hard. In practice, they work hard on their own particular set of skills with their own coach. They are all smart and talented. Yet, even with all this organization has going for it, the team always finishes with about 8 wins and 8 losses each year...about average! Why don't they do better?

Oh, I forgot to mention the one unique “quirk” about this team. No one really understands the rules of football very well. While each **individual** is outstanding, they can't seem to put it all together as a team to succeed against the other teams they compete with. No wonder they don't seem to be able to achieve better results.

You may think this is an exaggerated example and it is! However, in the vast majority of businesses, there is more truth than fiction in this scenario. What do I mean? Let me explain.

Often, companies we work with have great facilities, excellent managers and they work hard at attracting top quality, high potential talent to their organization. Everyone works hard, no “slackers,” and really tries to do the best in their area of responsibility.

I suggest that the reason both the football team and the example company have only mediocre performance is that both have a lack of what I call “literacy,” in the first case it is “football literacy” and in the second case it is “**business literacy.**”



Business literacy is, in my opinion, a fundamental requirement for high performance in today's leaner organizations. In today's environment, it is no longer sufficient that all you need to be is great within your specific area of responsibility. You must master a broader understanding of how the business you work in operates, how money flows through the organization AND how you and your department contributes to that result!

I wonder how many of the people in your company could give you a reasonably accurate description of how your organization functions. Do they understand how money flows and is used within the company? Do they understand what they can do within their area of responsibility to improve revenue, reduce expenses or increase throughput if you are a manufacturer or increase capacity utilization if you are a service company?

More importantly, do you understand these key factors?

Successful companies around the world realize that to rise above “average performance” requires that everyone in the company become capable of making intelligent decisions everyday within their zone of influence. Strong “business literacy” enables all of your people to make those local decisions that are truly in the best interest of the company. Companies like Siemens, Motorola, Cooper Tire and many others are achieving improved business results by developing business literacy at ALL levels in the organization.

For more information on how to develop high business literacy levels in your company, contact Dan Trudell at 608-835-9288 or dant@peakperform.net.

Schedule of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 12-13, 2003	Decision Base Competitive Business Simulation	Madison, WI
June TBD	Decision Base Competitive Business Simulation	Cleveland, OH
Sept. 25-26	Decision Base Competitive Business Simulation	Madison, WI
September 2003	Growth Showcase	Madison, WI

If you would like information on the Decision Base simulations please contact us at monicat@peakperform.net.

Peak Performance Associates aligns the people strategy with the business strategy to accelerate growth!

PEAK PERFORMANCE ASSOCIATES

PO Box 193,
Oregon, WI 53575
608-835-9288
608-835-9794 fax

485-30 Concord Downs Path
Aurora, OH 44202
(330) 562-2308
(330) 562-2908 fax

www.peakperform.net

© Peak Performance Associates, Inc. 2003

Thank you for subscribing to the PPA E-News – a publication of Peak Performance Associates, Inc. If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please send an email to monicat@peakperform.net. Please include “Remove” in the subject line.