

Achieving Results

A Black Diamond Associates Publication

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How to Find the Right Fit

I went to the eye doctor this week. The exam was comprehensive. In addition to verifying my eyes' health, through a series of trial and error – “Is one better or two? Is the first better or the second?” – the doctor determined which prescription was best for me. The goal was to find the right contacts to compensate for my vision deficiency.

Organizations also seek to find the right talent to compensate for their deficiencies. People, like eyewear, come in different styles with different talents, skills, and motivations. As with a new pair of glasses, the key to employee performance is finding the right fit. However, trial and error is an impractical alternative. When a company makes a hiring (or promotion or reassignment) mistake, the direct and indirect costs are significant. It is estimated that employee turnover costs one to three times the position's salary, when you consider the cost of recruiting, training, impact on other employees' productivity and impact on customer relationships. On the other hand, finding the right fit is priceless for both the employee and the organization.

Placed in the right environment, a person will thrive and produce extraordinary results. When the fit is wrong, the results are disappointing at best and usually quite costly.



“If you are not fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm.

~Vince Lombardi



Black Diamond
A s s o c i a t e s

We are often called upon to help develop an employee who is struggling in their current position. The process always has one of two possible outcomes: a more productive employee or a vacancy. Our goal is to determine whether the individual has the talents, skills, style and motivation to succeed in the role. If yes, we help the individual overcome the obstacles to their success. If the person is not well suited to the position, they typically choose to leave - a choice that benefits them and the company.

If you or your organization could benefit from properly aligning the talent in your organization with the job that needs to be done, give Black Diamond a call. We are certified professionals who can address your talent management needs.

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What can your organization do to improve the person/position fit?

There are eight steps to success.

- Clarify the role
- Determine what it takes to succeed
- Attract the right candidate
- Screen for experience and education
- Assess for talents, skills, style and motivators
- Compare the person to the position
- Interview to determine fit
- Check references to confirm

Clarify the key accountabilities of the position. Job descriptions often describe the tasks to be accomplished instead of the objectives to be achieved. Having clarity about why the position exists in terms of accountabilities is the first step to finding the right fit.

Next, determine what it takes for superior performance in the job. In addition to education and experience, identify the skills, talents, and behavior style that would lead to success in the role. If the job could talk, what would it say it needs?

Then, consider how the job rewards the individual. Does it provide opportunity to analyze, systematize, learn and discover? Does it offer the opportunity to help others? Is it a position where there is independence and self-direction? Is there a reward for efficiency or pay-for-performance compensation? Is there a benefit of personal growth and ability to obtain balance in all aspects of life? Is the position based on systems, beliefs and principles for success? Understanding what the job rewards is a prerequisite to recognizing if the person will be motivated to achieve.

Based on the results of the previous steps, **create a position description** that articulates the attributes, style and motivators you seek. Attract the ideal candidate by creating a job posting that describes the environment and criteria for success.

Screen the applicants based on the experience and education presented in their resume. This basic step eliminates unqualified candidates. However, it does not guarantee a good fit. Additional screening using assessments, interviews and reference checks is essential.

Assessments are objective tools that provide insight to candidates that is not possible by only reviewing their subjective resumes. In addition to a second level of screening, assessments offer insight to the candidate's style, motivators, talents and skills. With

this understanding, you can **compare them to what the job requires**. You can also improve the effectiveness of the interviews and reference checks to validate the candidate's fit. This insight can prove to be invaluable.

Interviews are a two-way conversation to determine person/position fit. A formal interviewing process that is behavior and values-based with pre-determined objectives is key. Too often interviewers simply attempt to determine if they like the individual and the result is a likeable person who is a bad fit for the position.

For new hires, interviews should focus on the individual's fit to the position and fit within the organization's culture. For cultural fit, screen the candidates based on your organization's core values. Knowing what behaviors reflect your core values, you can conduct behavioral interviews to assess a fit. Involve people who will be working with the new hire but make sure they are trained to conduct the interview and provide meaningful feedback.

Finally, **check references to validate what was learned** in the previous steps. Often, employers or professional references will only provide facts of employment, but personal references may provide additional insight. Asking questions to verify job-related information is a step that should not be omitted.

Too often employers skip some these steps when it comes to promotions and reassignments. For some reason, because the organization is familiar with the employee's performance, in the name of professional development, they make an assumption that a good employee will perform well in any environment. As a result, sometimes a great employee is moved from a position where they thrive to one where there is a bad fit and they are set up for failure. The solution is to treat promotions and internal reassignments as you would a new hire and evaluate the employee to determine compatibility with the new position.

These steps involve time and expense, but the investment is minimal when compared to the cost of a bad hire. "Be slow to hire and quick to fire" is priceless advice. Unfortunately, too many times companies work to make the square peg fit the round hole.

On the other hand, the benefit of hiring an employee whose style, talents and motivation are a complement to the position will produce positive results. Spending time to understand what your organization needs and finding the right person with the right fit will pay back over and over again.