

What is the Cost of a Mediocre Hire and How to Avoid them in 2019!

In today's hiring environment it is more difficult than ever to find talent that helps you raise the performance bar on both sales and profits. All too often we find out we have an average employee otherwise known as a "mediocre" employee. One who does enough to get by, but never raises the bar, sales or profits and, over the long run, will drive those down rather than up. Even more important, if you get enough mediocre employees you will have a mediocre company. Let's suggest why this happens and how you can avoid it!

Mediocre employees get hired for the following reasons:

- ✓ **Not knowing the requirements of the job.** Job descriptions often look backward not forward. They do not include an analysis of who the current top performers are and why. They even ignore the easily found data on poor performers. If you can identify the gaps between top and bottom performers, the "smart" hiring manager can then decide if they are acceptable. A differential study of your top and bottom performers, especially in sales, is like a football coach looking at game films of wins and defeats. You will learn more looking at a loss and making needed adjustments every time!!!
- ✓ **Hire fast and fire slow.** The longer we let mediocrity exist, the more it gets entrenched. Slowing the hiring process down with a focus on a deeper probe makes sense. In the long run, it is better to hire slow and fire fast.
- ✓ **We miss the hidden keys to success.** Interviewing is like sailing in the North Atlantic between the icebergs. All you can see is 15 percent of the candidate and iceberg. What sinks the ship is beneath the surface and hidden even from the skilled interviewer.



- ✓ **Lack of a good pre-employment assessment.** A good pre-employment assessment lets you lift the iceberg out of the water and reveal keys to success like cognitive ability/agility, key behaviors essential to the job and interests that the candidate just likes to do.
- ✓ **Gut feel hiring.** Due to hiring in our own image, professionally-written resumes and highly-skilled interviewees, the deck is, in many cases, stacked against the busy hiring manager. A good pre-employment assessment will give you the gap analysis you need to know, interview questions to probe those areas and allow you to ask and listen intently to their answers.

If you consider the cost of a mediocre hire in sales or sales management, it means lost revenue and lost market share that have taken years to build and which, can be lost quickly. As a former VP (vice president) of Sales, I am, at times, asked to look at a candidate's profile and to help interpret results. The first question I ask myself is would I like to compete with this candidate?

Would he or she be a threat to me in a competitive situation or would I be able to beat them consistently in my field? If I respect or even fear them as a competitor, then I want them on my team. Are they a hunter or farmer in

the sales world? Are they a door opener or the more service-focused type who maintains rather than grows? Are they similar in profile to my best, mediocre or under performers?

I speak from my own experience that when I made a bad hire, I always tried to fix it, asked other sales people to help fix it or asked training/HR (human resources)/OD (organizational development) to help fix my mistake. The last thing I ever wanted to do was go to the CEO and confess my hiring mistake. It is the nature and flaw of many great managers that they believe they can fix them and that everyone can be fixed. In reality, I have limited time, money and energy to fix/train them.

A good profile will in an unbiased, objective way help me make a better hire.

Lastly, top performers want to work with top performers. It's why great sports dynasties can last decades or more. In football, they want to play for the Patriots or the college bluebloods. In baseball, they want to play for the Yankees, Red Sox or Dodgers.

Cream rises to the top. While we cannot all be Google or Apple, within your sector, you can be the Coke or Pepsi of your industry with top people. You need the best to get there and to stay there. Hire slow and fire fast helps you get there faster!

As you plan for 2019 and beyond and want to ensure you surround yourself with the talent you need, give the hiring process a look. If you are looking for a better way to ensure you avoid a mediocre hire, or worse, give us a call and we will set up a pilot of our job match profile, so you can see the difference between your top and bottom performers. **N**

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