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RECRUITING FOR INNOVATION

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In today's economy, innovation is one of the most important factors for an organisation's success. In fact, it is one thing CEOs are very focused on right now.

Having innovation during times of economic difficulty, especially when competitors may struggle to stay relevant, can mean the difference between significant growth and gain in market share, or cutbacks.

So, if you want your organisation to be more innovative, you need to invest in the right people.

Finding innovators takes more work

Identifying and attracting innovators does take extra work. But the reward, when you do find them, is that they will end up being some of your most valuable employees.

Innovators tend to have high energy, a unique way of approaching problems and the uncanny ability to produce an abundance of ideas.

Innovators question authority and assumptions. They do things differently. They think differently. They are able to connect ideas in strange and unexpected ways that are unexpected and very valuable to the company.

And there can be drawbacks

Although innovators are most often associated with positive characteristics, they can be idealistic, nonconforming, and confrontational, which may predispose them to butting heads with their manager.

Good managers are not necessarily naturally innovative and innovators aren't typically good managers, which is why they need each other!

Also, working with innovators often slows things down when questions are asked that generate a lot of discussion. Research shows that a team of people that are diverse in some way take longer to arrive at a conclusion than a team that is 'homogenous'. But the end result is much better because of all the different ideas and ways of seeing things that are discussed.

Develop a focus on innovation in your business and ensure everyone is working towards better business practices and improving business efficiency and



Focus on the factors for success

Some people believe that what made a company successful up to this point will continue to make it successful in the future. However, sticking with the status quo may have been fine previously, but in today's business environment, it is no longer a good excuse.

To change quickly in today's business world, you need to hire innovators — and innovators, by definition, question the status quo.

Define an innovator

What constitutes an innovative personality? Psychologists from Hogan Assessments compared 360 feedback data with personality data. Peers, direct managers, and clients were more likely to identify an individual who had the following characteristics as innovative:

- Ambitious and driven by accomplishment
- Imaginative
- Extroverted
- Charming
- Risk-taking and excitement-seeking
- Dramatic and attention-seeking
- Overly self-confident

Hire people with different perspectives

Look for employees who understand your vision and align with your culture, but aren't necessarily the same as you.

Look for those that may have different perspectives, diverse backgrounds, passions and capabilities.

Having employees with an alternative set of ideas and problem solving approaches will most likely generate innovative approaches.

Voicing a different opinion is not a sign that innovators are not 'team players'.

Recruiting for innovation

So go ahead and keep asking job candidates all those impractical questions: "What's your favourite movie?" "What's your favourite book?" "If you could be an animal which one would you be?"

But ... listen to the answers a little more closely. And when you hear an answer you've never heard before, pay close attention. You just may have found yourself an innovator.