



# HIRE FOR UNIQUE ABILITY

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A Case Study In Hiring Practices

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# HIRE FOR UNIQUE ABILITY, A CASE STUDY IN HIRING PRACTICES

*John Aardvark was looking for a new operations manager. He seemed to be always looking for a new operations manager. He would continue to hire people who he thought were terrific, but after about three months he would realize he made a mistake and after six, start the whole process over again.*

Does the above sound about right in what has happened in your own hiring operations? If so, you might want to start thinking about formalizing your hiring operation using some proven methodology of finding the right person to fill the jobs in your company.

Let's take a look at a simple method of hiring the right person. We've found that when this system is adopted you'll find that you hire the right person more often and that means making hiring mistakes goes down.

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## First, Start with Fit

*John realized that he needed some help in finding the right person. He brought in an organizational development person who taught him a new way of looking at his hiring process. First, he learned to become very specific about what he needed in his operation manager and then he learned of some powerful techniques to help him improve his chances of getting the right person.*

When hiring a new person you want to make sure that they are going to fit into your company. This is what I call fit factors. You will want to list the traits that are important for everyone in your company and specifically what they will need to do for this job. In John's situation he listed the traits he wanted everyone in his firm to have.

- Be Customer Centered
- Be Honest
- Take personal responsibility
- Always work for a win/win solutions
- Respect others who are different than you

In addition, the following environmental factors are important for the operations managers' job:

- Have the ability to lead the team
- Listen well to ideas of the people who report to him
- Be strong and impactful with the people he reports to

Without the ability to the above things, John's operation manager doesn't have a good chance of being successful. Before John can even think about moving on to the next part of the hiring process, he needs to make sure all of his candidates fit well into his firm. If his new hire doesn't fit, the firm will reject the new manager and John will spend an inordinate amount of time trying to get the company to accept the style of the new manager.



## Next – Will Do Factors

The second area John needs to fill are the will do factors. These are the activities that are necessary to do a good job. The will do traits that John is looking for are:

- An ability to look at details and make sure operations are being done by the numbers.
- A willingness to try new ideas when presented, but not necessarily come up with new systems of operation.
- A strong want to have things done in a systematic program by people who report to him.
- A willingness to spend to manage his own book of clients.

If John's new manager is not willing to do these activities, it's probable that the manager will be unsuccessful in the job. Because John's firm requires a great deal of detail, it's crucial that the operations manager loves detail and lives to implement systems.

*John realizes that he has set up will do traits that are very different from his. He also knows that there is a potential for conflict between he and his operations manager. He will want to make sure that he explains this conflict to his new manager. Both he and the operations manager must learn to treat each other with respect and celebrate their respective differences as strengths for the company.*

When you hire the right person for the job and their motivation and enjoyment in work is different than yours, you have a good chance to starting off with inbred conflicts. Some conflict is good. It rounds out your management team. It helps you have a company that deals with different areas using each other's strength.

At the same time, there are some challenges with having people in your firm who think and act differently than you. You're going to need to respect different skills and learn to appreciate differences. A balanced team that is high functioning shows respect. One that has low respect creates tragic consequences. You get to choose which you're going to have.



## The easy part – Can Do Factors

The final area John needs to look at when hiring is the can do portion of his hiring program. These are the cognitive areas or actual skill sets his new manager needs. In John's case, he decided these are the important can do traits he needed:

- Someone who had great skills with computers.
- Someone who had set up systems in firms similar to John's.
- Someone who had client service experience.
- Someone who had successfully managed other employees.

As you can see from the above list these are activities that you can determine in a subjective manner whether your candidate can or cannot do what's necessary for the job.

Can do traits are the easiest to test for, so as a result, they often are the first things you look at in hiring and the things you place the most concentration on when bringing new people into your firm. Don't be like most hiring managers. Make sure you hire with the right technical skills. At the same time put your major focus on fit factors and will do activities to hire successfully.

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You will likely do your initial screening based on can do factors. This is fine as long as you understand if there isn't a good fit you just can't hire them, no matter how brilliant they are. Firm's that hire the brilliant jerk always pay in lost productivity, higher levels of turnover and bruised feelings.

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## A review of the three hiring factors

Here are three easy definitions for you to consider in your hiring process:

- **Fit Factors** – What does it take for people to fit in at your firm?
- **Will Do Factors** – Is your candidate willing to do activities that will make them successful?
- **Can Do Factors** – Has the candidate exhibited technical skills that will allow them to be successful in their job?

In some cases we look at fit factors as right-brain activities, can do factors as left-brain activities and will do factors as whole brain activities. All three are important and all three must be dealt with if we are to successfully bring the best people we can into our company.

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## Find the right hiring aid

*John had written down what he wanted for people to join his company and he wanted some extra help in finding the right method to help him decide if the person he was looking for could actually do the job successfully. He was concerned about the amount of time he was spending and the cost of the testing to get the right person.*

John's problem of getting the right person was his real cost. Even if he had to spend an extra couple of hours of his time and spend a few hundred dollars on testing instruments he would be way ahead if he could improve his rate of hiring successes. Just think about how much money you spend bringing a new person on board and what the opportunity cost as well as the actual monetary cost you incur when you pick the wrong person.

**Will do Instruments** – The Kolbe Index can help you find out how much energy that a potential client has for a particular job. We also use the DISC profile for looking at preferred ways of dealing with work issues. Some people like the Predictive Index and still others use Myers/Briggs. All will help you figure out whether your potential hire will enthusiastically do activities that are likely to help with their success.

**Fit Factor Instruments** – Fit is all around values. First, we recommend that you are clear on what you know makes successful people fit in with your firm. I like to see you know what your values are, how have they been communicated in your firm and how are they integrated in the hiring process. I suggest using the Value Metrics process for discovering your values and then seeing how key employees fit in with your belief system.

Remember, fit is really around what you think is important as the owner of your firm. If you work for someone else, you need to know what they value. As long as the owner and employees have similar values there is often at least a good fit.

We find that fit is where you must start to successfully hire. It's also where you must stop when there isn't a good fit. It doesn't matter how much skill a potential team member has. Without a good fit, there is no hiring success.

**Can Do Factor Instruments**- These will be tests such as arithmetic tests, typing tests, IQ tests and other skill based tests you may decide to use in order to determine whether your potential hire has the skills needed to do the job you have open.

All the tests mentioned above can be found on the Internet. Finding someone who can help you learn and implement hiring aids will allow you to get a higher level of value from them. Each tool adds another piece to the puzzle.

## Conclusion

First, understand that having a standardized method of hiring people will help in bringing the right person on board. Second, make sure that you concentrate on fit factors, then will do issues and finally can do factors. This is the order that will give you the highest probability of successfully bringing the right person into your organization.

Learn to use instruments that can help you understand your potential hires better. But, make sure you are on the right side of the law and bring in your labor attorney before you start down the road of using hiring tools to assist you in this process.

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Hiring is not a process that is easy to do nor easy to be successful at. Most people just don't spend enough time and effort in finding the right person. Every time you lose someone that didn't fit in ask yourself whether spending more time upfront might have served you better.

I know from personal experience that when you spend enough time hiring the right person, you'll spend less time training and managing them. Isn't this what you really want?

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