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BUILDING BREAKAWAY PERFORMANCE

Two Stories

by Ally Deibert

An Ordinary Story

Ordinary Hiring

It became normal to hire for education and experience. Smartness mattered more than goodness. Personality superseded character. Employers hired ideas about people rather than people. They didn't know the person.

Not understanding the weak correlation between talking and behavior, employers talked to job candidates in an attempt to predict their behavior on jobs.

Teamwork and morale decreased. Performance and profits suffered. This was accepted as normal. Hiring managers were doing their best with the tools they had available to them.

A character analysis of deep-seated traits like honesty and openness—excellent pre-hire predictors of an individual's on the job behavior—was not considered.

Ordinary Performance Management

Once yearly, managers were required to tell their direct reports how they were doing. This "performance review" was universally disliked. It created discussion mostly from the manager to the direct report. This discouraged open two-way communication. Additionally, the manager was responsible for

information, details, and opinions he couldn't know since the direct report implicitly knew his job and work more thoroughly than his manager.

Avoiding performance reviews altogether was another option. Employees were not acknowledged for their contributions and their work. Sometimes bonuses or salary increases were distributed without an explanation to the recipient.

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A self-review followed by managerial input would have been more effective. Also, a performance review content consisting of identified company values would have been even more productive. Carried further, this could become a tool to create a value-driven company culture. Add self-initiated goals and monthly management support for goal accomplishments, and the energy for a positive and even revolutionary change can begin.

An Extraordinary Story

Extraordinary Hiring

A small firm was doing normally when they decided to grow. The senior management team began assessing

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candidates' core values and approach to life (character traits). They believed trust was a major factor in the company's future success. "Others hire people with the best heads or minds," the company chairman said. "We hire people with the best hearts." Management characterized the company as an egoless team culture built on personal character.

In addition to reduced staff conflicts, other benefits of the company's positive and productive culture included decreased employee turnover, low absenteeism, and fewer mental health problems, leading to lower expenses for management, insurance, recruitment and training.

Extraordinary Performance Management

Managing their staff through a self-management performance review process and self-initiated goal setting, all staff within the company were trained to be personally responsible for their jobs. Managers were able to get more done with less people.

Hiring managers learned more about how job candidates would perform before they hired them. They identified desirable character traits and detected undesirable ones. Next, an analysis of this information was translated into job-related behaviors that expressed how the job candidate would perform if hired. Managers realized they were hiring people, not just educations and prior experiences. The hiring manager did not have to hold his or her breath while they waited to see what happened during the new employee's first few weeks on the job. There were no surprises.

Within 15 years, the company had become the world's largest company of its kind. Eventually, it was sold to a large international bank. The family had no regrets; everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience and profited enormously from the sale.

Explore the extraordinary.