

Traits you Should look for When Hiring Leaders

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The reason why organisations fail can be traced to the leadership within the organisation. In Africa, for example, most institutions struggle to bring in leadership based on merit. Patronage is a key factor when hiring in most African businesses. In this article, I will highlight some of the processes you need to hire the best people.

First here are the processes you need to have:

1. Develop the right job profiles based on objective information. The profile needs to reflect what you need from a successful person going into that role. Never use generic job profiles when hiring your executive team.
2. Use better selection methods such as psychometric tests and assessment centres. If you look at the top companies globally, they all use psychometric tests and assessments centres for leadership selection. Once you have finished shortlisting candidates based on strict criteria, do not interview candidates who have not gone through psychometric tests. It is a complete waste of your resources to interview candidates who for example have no cognitive ability for the role they are going into. Remember general mental ability is the biggest and most efficient predictor of job performance. Over and above this check for personality defects. There are brilliant individuals, who are technically gifted to have a horrible personality that will destroy your organisation.
3. Do not bend your selection criteria to accommodate candidates who do not meet the criteria. Once you start this process you set a precedent.
4. Be fair and transparent in your hiring process so that you gain the confidence of the market. That confidence will help you attract the best candidates for roles in your organisation.
5. If in doubt do not hire. The danger with hiring is that its easy to do but very difficult to terminate non-performers in most instances.
6. During the interview let the candidates that all they are giving as answers especially where factual information is required, you will verify that information through reference checks.
7. Never do reference checks based on the people listed by the candidate on the CV. It is likely those people will overlook the negatives in the candidate. There are various other ways of doing reference checks.

When hiring avoids hiring people with the following traits, especially for leadership roles:

1. Self-centred individuals – such individuals are likely to be corrupt and will make decisions in their self-interest. They are also likely to start to bring in close friends and colleagues from outside the organisation to build their power base.
2. People who think they have all the others to all problems. Collaborative individuals are likely not to have all the others. Anyone who through your objective assessments present themselves as

having all the answers to your problems will give you problems in the long run.

3. Avoid taking people who over-promise. It is likely, such individuals may not deliver. Go for people who are practical and realistic.
4. Avoid hiring overly aggressive people. Such people may have seriously personality defects. Remember personality is a permanent disposition and it hardly changes over an individual's lifetime. Once they are in your organisation you are stuck with them for good.
5. Avoid people who agree with anything a superior says. They are likely to let problems go unreported as long as a superior is involved. You want to hire people we can exercise independent thinking.
6. Do not hire people who desperate to please people. They are likely to tell you to want to hear even if things are going in the wrong way. You should hire people who can acknowledge shortcomings early before bigger damage is done to your business.

The above guidelines will assist you when hiring leaders but remember the list is not exhaustive.

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