

Does Your Company Have a Great Employee Profile?

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“We know he’s a good performer. We just want to make sure he’s got the right personality for our organization.”

“Her performance is fine; she’s just not a good fit for our organization.”

“He’s not a team player.”

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard these words from Presidents, Vice Presidents, Managers, Supervisors, and HR Managers from all types of organizations. I usually hear them when a company asks me to interview and assess an executive or manager before they make a hiring or promotion decision. Or, I hear them when a company asks me to work with someone who’s having difficulties in performing his or her job. Finally, I hear them when a company asks me to provide support to the person after they’ve made the decision to terminate him or her. Nine times out of ten, when executives or managers have problems in an organization, it’s a matter of fit rather than performance. What is fit and why is it so important?

Job-Fit vs. Culture-Fit

Most managers recruit, hire, and retain for “job-fit.” They identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to do the job. They then work to recruit, hire, and retain employees who best fit the job requirements. This approach guarantees that you will recruit, hire, and retain someone who CAN do the job. This approach does NOT guarantee that you will recruit, hire, and retain someone who WANTS to do the job for your company. To accomplish this goal, managers need to recruit, hire, and retain for “culture-fit.” Jobs drive WHAT is done in an organization. Culture drives HOW things are done in an organization.

More often than not, employers ask employees to leave because of HOW they do their jobs rather than what they do (or don’t do) in their jobs. On the flip side, employees often leave organizations less because of what they have to do (or don’t do) in their jobs and more because of HOW they have to do their jobs. So

how can managers recruit, hire, and retain for “culture-fit?” They can start by getting to know their great employees.

Great Employee Profile

Most managers find it easier to describe their ideal customer than they do their ideal employee. For example, most managers can easily tell you where their great customers come from, what attracts them to the company, and what keeps them coming back? Surprisingly, many managers do not have a clue about the answers to these same questions as they relate to their top employees. The answers to these questions and more can help managers use their resources more efficiently to attract, hire, and keep great employees.

So, what can you and other managers do to create your organization’s “Great Employee Profile”? How can you and other managers use that information to recruit, hire, and retain for “culture-fit” as well as “job-fit?”

First, think about the top 10-15% of people in your organization. They are the ones that you’d go into a tailspin if they resigned tomorrow. These are your great employees. Now, think about these people and answer the following questions.

1. Where were these employees prior to coming to work for you?
2. How did they come to contact your company (e.g., job posting, recruiter, referral, etc.)?
3. What attracted them most to the company and/or to the job?
4. What hobbies and/or activities are they involved in outside of work?
5. What kinds of publications (e.g., newspapers, magazines, trade publications, etc.) do they read?
6. What radio stations do they most frequently listen to?
7. What websites do they most frequently visit?
8. What characteristics and traits do they share or have in common?
9. What are two or three core values or beliefs that they all share or have in common?

10. What things do they like most/least about their current job and your company?
11. What makes them want to keep working for you and your company?
12. What would make them consider leaving their current job or your company?

If you don't know your great employees' answers to these questions, you should. Ask your great employees these questions and more so that you can find, hire, and keep more employees just like them.

Finding Employees Using Your Great Employee Profile

The answers to questions 1-7 give you potentially new and valuable information about where you and your organization should be recruiting. As the old saying goes, birds of a feather flock together. The answers to questions 1-7 help you identify people who "hang out" in the same places that your top employees do. You want to recruit people who read the same stuff (e.g., newspapers, magazines, etc.) that your top employees do. Likewise, you want to recruit people who listen to the same radio stations as your top employees do. Similarly, you want to recruit people who visit the same websites as your top employees do.

Hiring Employees Using Your Great Employee Profile

The answers to questions 8-9 give you information that helps you better focus your interviewing and screening efforts. If all your top employees are very analytical, you need to ask applicants about analytical skills in the interview. Or, you want to assess applicants' analytical skills during the hiring process using other tools such as tests. The same goes for other characteristics such as extroversion, organized, or competitive. Clearly define those qualities and characteristics that your top employees share and then assess applicants standing in those areas during the interview or with other hiring tools.

You need to also examine the values that your top employees share. If your top employees are all perfectionists, then you need to do what you can to get an idea about an applicant's level of perfectionism. Or, if all your top employees value teamwork or service, you need to determine if applicants have these same values.

Keeping Great Employees Using Your Great Employee Profile

The answers to questions 10-12 provide a good recipe for keeping great employees. Basically, you want to provide your great employees with opportunities to do more of what they like and less of what they don't like. If your top employees like interacting with people, make sure they have plenty of opportunities to interact with people. If your top employees dislike dealing with paperwork, find ways to minimize the paperwork they have to do. Giving them an assistant, making the forms they must complete shorter, or decreasing the number of forms they must complete are just a few examples of things that can be done to minimize the paperwork requirements of any job. The same principle applies with respect to what your top employees like most and least about working for your company.

Benefits of a Great Employee Profile

Having a clear and complete Great Employee Profile helps managers decrease the time they spend on recruitment, hiring, and retention. More important, it helps managers increase the quality of the people they attract, find, and keep. The more managers know about their great employees, the more effective and efficient they can be in allocating their time, effort and resources on people strategies that work.

Remember that how someone does their job is often as important, if not more so, than what they do. A Great Employee Profile guarantees that you will recruit, hire, and retain someone who can do the job AND who wants to do the job in your organization. Isn't that what all managers want? Start creating your Great Employee Profile today.

About the Author

Joan Brannick, PhD, SPHR is President of Brannick HR Connections (BHRC). She is an organizational psychologist that consults, writes, and speaks on recruiting, hiring, engagement, and leadership trends and best practices. She is the co-author of Finding and Keeping Great Employees, a Fortune Magazine "Best Business Book." Her insights have appeared in many business and HR publications including Fortune Magazine, HR Magazine, and the Wall Street Journal. For more information about BHRC's services, call (813) 672-0500 or visit www.BrannickHRConnections.com.