



The Big “P”, the one quality you can’t compromise on

There are lots of characteristics that you look for in a manager and indeed these vary depending on what you want them to manage. At MBA we use a sophisticated set of psychometric assessments to help in understanding just how a person is ‘wired up’ and what they want from a job. This Job Matching helps you to make sure not just that a candidate *Can* do a job (the c.v., experience and competency testing also does that) but also that they *Will* do the job and that it sufficiently satisfies what the psychologists call their ‘fundamental life interests’ so that they *continue* to do the job.

This understanding of just how a person is put together is key to being successful in recruiting and retaining top performers to your company but you need to know what you are looking for. Often we ask a client what it is that they want and when we end the discovery phase we find that they actually want something that does not exist or maybe exists in 0.01% of the population – super humans! Alternatively they misinterpret what the *Job* requires.

Take decisiveness for instance, someone who is a ‘10’ on the decisiveness scale is the sort that trades on the stock exchange floor, give them 5% of the information and they stop you, they’ve made up their mind and already acted. People in these sort of roles need to be that way or the market has moved on and they would never compete. But imagine we need a manager for a nuclear power plant, they need to be a ‘1’ !! “..tell me again”...”hang on I need to refer back to another document”....”we need more information”, a person wired up to be a 10 will kill us all! Both of these individuals may be equally intelligent and hardworking and there may be other characteristics that they share, they may both indeed have science degrees. It’s not education or experience, it’s about who they are, something that a c.v. and work experience will not tell you. This is also something that is very hard if not impossible to get by interview alone, people who are applying for jobs are trying to be what they think you want them to be.

Fundamental life interest is about what an individual needs to be happy. A charity worker or a nurse is likely to be orientated to and get a buzz from people service, they are ‘wired up’ to help people. If you recruit a debt collector though you do not want someone who is the same. A debt collector who is high on the people service scales may be able to do the job, they can modify their behaviour but all the time they will

be stressed and not happy, at some point they'll leave you. Again the stock market is a good indicator, highly paid highly intelligent people leave jobs at investment banks not for money, not for praise but because the job does not give them what they truly need to be happy, they earn enough money in a short period of time to go off and do what they want. I see it on shopfloors all the time, if the job is boring, the environment poor and managers are poor leaders then paying operatives more just increases the level of absenteeism. People work for more than money, they'll tell you that is why they are leaving but it is rare that money is the only reason, people leave managers not companies.

Over the years we have built up a wealth of experience about what makes successful people within the jobs in our sector but there is one characteristic that they all share and that is "the big P". successful people all have a **Passion** for what they do. Doesn't matter if it's debt collecting or nursing, commodities trading or power plant management, window manufacturing or sales, Passion is the one thing that must be there.

Being passionate doesn't mean being extrovert, it doesn't mean being temperamental or hard to work with, it does mean that you care about what you do, how you do it and the results. Passionate people are great to work with and it's infectious. Passionate people go the extra mile in whatever they do, sales, manufacturing whatever and it is a characteristic of every successful person. There is not a successful person in any field, business, sports, the arts or anything you care to mention who is not passionate about what they do. Success does not happen by accident.

So what if the passion is not there? Chances are that the person is not doing something that fulfils their life interest however the question you have to ask yourself is "can I live with that in my managers?" Someone who exhibits the right behaviour but is yet to get the right results is worth training developing and helping, someone who's behaviour is wrong is likely to be a problem, even if in the short term the results are there. Just like Passion then the wrong behaviour is also infectious.

So passion is the one characteristic that all successful managers share. Like everything in life though excess is a bad thing - **If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins.** Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790) US statesman, diplomat, inventor. An excess of anything is likely to make you feel bad!

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