

## Who are your people? Management Magic 6

Whenever I visit relatives in the south, a frequent question of a new acquaintance is “Who’re his people?” This shortcut is a guide to this person, his history, status in the community, etc. In the workplace “Who’re your people?” is all about who you keep around you: what’s the quality, capability, integrity, and credibility of your team?

In the book, Good to Great, Jim Collins recommends getting the right people ‘on the bus.’ And he suggests this means bringing on smart talented people to help you run the business, then letting those people do their work of making the business sustainable. We know keeping smart capable people on your team will get the work done, ensure success, and make life easier for you.

How do you make sure your people are the right people for your company? Basic hiring guidelines can be found in other Mindspring articles (See Editor Lori Long’s articles) All are good rules to follow. But the very best hiring managers make mistakes: a record of 50% success is actually pretty good. And if half your hires are solid successes and you correct any mistakes quickly, then you, too, are outstanding.

Some major hiring mistakes:

- Hubris: You develop an attitude of ‘I know what’s needed and I’ll make the decision. I can spot a good hire.’
- References: Too many companies do poor or no reference checking. Remember, the most likable people are often experts in camouflaging their faults.
- Mistake phobia: You want the new hire to be a success so ignore the early warning signs.....and wait until the problems become major issues and you are forced to take action.
- Family: We create a ‘halo’ effect around family members who in another company would never be a candidate for the jobs they hold in your company.

So what to do?

Hubris: Get Help! Include 3 or 4 colleagues in the interviews and the hiring decision. Use someone from outside the organization such as your accountant, or other trusted advisor.

References: Have references thoroughly checked by someone other than you, a colleague or a third party. Make sure all reference questions are open ended questions....’In this job Joe will need to do.....tell me about a time when you observed him doing.....what were the specific results? etc. Open ended questions will ferret out if the candidate really can do what he says and will provide insights into his style. Get help!

Mistake phobia: Take a long clear look in the mirror. Yep! You can make a mistake! And when you have made a hiring misstake, as quickly as possible remove the individual from your

company (Definitely get some help on this). Continuing to employ a poor performer, a complainer, a .....? costs far more than a salary. The cost in employee morale and credibility for your business is enormous.

Family: If you must employ family, and many of us must, place the family member in the least critical position possible. Give it some time before you give this employee any more responsibility. Your brother-in-law may be a great golf partner, but if he can't manage a team without shouting ....time to choose. And frequently it's better to have a great brother-in-law golf partner than a lousy manager in your business.

The basics of hiring mistakes:

First: Admit you've made a mistake

Second: Get some help, a colleagues, your accountant, a third party.

Third: Protect your company by making sure all your employees are the right employees 'on your bus'.

Fourth: Grow and enjoy your success.

Of course, it is more difficult than these easy steps would imply, but the starting point is to realize you may need to improve your hiring processes and let some current employees go find a better 'bus' for themselves. And free you up to get more of the 'right people on your bus'.

It's Always About People