



EffortlessHR October 2008 Employer's Advantage Newsletter



FYI – For Your Information - "Are You a Manager or an Ogre?"

Employee retention is one of the key issues facing businesses of all sizes. We know that turnover is expensive - two and a half times an employee's annual salary - more for a managerial level employee. Many think money is the key motivator, but it isn't. People leave their managers, not their companies. Do you conduct yourself in a professional manner or do you:

1. Intimidate your employees - yell at people, throw tantrums in meetings, belittle people
2. Take credit for what others do, never accept blame when things go wrong
3. Micromanage, distrust people
4. Betray confidences, gossip and spread rumors
5. Constantly criticize, fail to praise your employee's good work
6. Withhold important information or resources for the success of the project, job, etc.
7. Play favorites, inconsistently enforce policies and procedures
8. Act superior - do not ask for other's opinions or suggestions
9. Set unreasonable deadlines
10. Have poor communication skills, i.e. use humor inappropriately, swear, etc.

If you've answered "yes" to any of the above, it's time to take stock of your behavior and resolve to make changes to more effectively manage your employees.

You can:

- Seek professional assistance if you have anger management issues.
- Take a leadership training seminar or class to learn appropriate managerial behaviors
- Live by the *golden rule* "Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You!"

Don't let negative behavior drive your valuable employees out of the company!

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FROM JIM SIRBASKU'S DESK

Get Your Scary Thrills at the Movies!

October is the month of witches and ogres, of apparitions and goblins, of delving into nightmarish scenarios.

As far as nightmares go, nothing is scarier to a CEO than hiring someone who appears to be perfect for the job, and then finding out quickly that he or she is not only NOT perfect, but a train wreck. And this can happen anytime – not just in the witching month. Just a glance at what scary hires can do to a company:

- **Scary hires drive up turnover.**

There are all sorts of causes for high turnover, but one big culprit is stress. In fact, 40 percent of all job turnover is due to stress. And guess what causes stress? It happens most when the person on the job does not fit with his environment.

Consider the individuals in your own company who seem to thrive on multitasking, live for answering emails and phone calls simultaneously, and juggling with finesse two people talking to them at once. As long as they are in control, they are fine. They fit their jobs. To someone who likes to work alone in silence, these kind of fast-lane jobs would be like a giant, scary roller-coaster ride. And what if the workers who love a fast pace had to fill out endless paperwork? In a word, stress. And what does stress lead to? Turnover. The rule: **Make sure the person, the job and the company culture are meant for each other.**

- **Scary hires blunt production.**

You know the woman with the great resume and references who just went to work in Accounts Payable even though she applied for another job? Your organization hired her because the other job was closed, and they did not want someone of her competence to get away. But guess what? Since she started her job, her department has not met a deadline and repetitive stress injury complaints are up about 20 percent. She doesn't understand the work, she refuses to listen to employees, and she seems totally clueless about the company. All of this is at odds with her resume. That's because the people who hired her forgot the rule: **Know the job candidate well before you hire her. Know her better than she knows herself.**

- **Scary hires are expensive.**

If your CEO was a bad fit and is leaving, remember these figures: Two decades ago, Xerox estimated that it cost them \$1 million to \$1.5 million to replace a top executive. Estimates of replacing the average employee range from \$3,000 to \$15,000. It depends on the job, of course, but figure in the costs of recruiting, interviewing, travel and training. These are all replacement costs, as well as lost time on the job, either when it was vacant or when someone had to let other tasks go to train the new employee.

What about other costs? Organizations spend billions on workers compensation claims. As experts note, vastly more money goes to existing claims than to preventing the problems in the first place. What if someone in your organization was in charge of making sure all equipment fit the job and the workers, that

everything was working correctly, and that all workers knew how to use the equipment efficiently and safely? These all sound like easy fixes, but someone in your company has to keep his eye on the detail.

There is also the overwhelming cost of unhappy workers giving your customers poor service. They can deprive the company of thousands of dollars in future business.

Remember the rule: **The people you thought would advance your company and help it grow can actually cost it millions. This is the opposite of growth.**

So what can an organization do to prevent the trick-or-treat nature of blind, scary hiring? Many solutions are available. For one thing, there is more public information than ever before about candidates on social networking sites, and employers can make good use of this information. These sites can tell us about everything from communication skills to what the job candidate thinks is appropriate information to reveal about himself.

The best organizations use a number of different tools to make important hiring decisions, from good recruiting to informed job interviews to selection based on more than just a gut instinct to an attractive resume. They do not overlook the importance of assessments in supplying information they could not get otherwise about how well the employee would be suited to the job, other employees, and the company culture.

So, enjoy the scary and festive nature of October if that's your style. But remember that fear of the unknown is something best enjoyed at the movies. In real life, you want to know what your organization faces. The workers you hire and train today can minimize the uncertainties of tomorrow.

10 Scary Hiring Practices (Avoid these like a black cat!)

1. Recruiting people who are just like you
2. Picking the first candidate who walks in the door because you dislike job interviews
3. Asking questions about marital status, number of children, religion, race
4. Failing to check references and other information on resume or application
5. Talking too much and failing to listen
6. Posing questions that require only yes/no answers
7. Hiring based on your comfort zone rather than candidate's qualifications
8. Searching in too small of a pond
9. Delay in hiring after you find the best candidate
10. Offering job based only on gut instincts

Strategies For Winning

Death Valley *

Cut Your Sales Cycle by Half

Would you like to save time, shorten your sales cycle, and close a larger percentage of first-time appointments? This sales technique requires no time or effort to implement, and it will dramatically improve your success rate.

First, let us take you back to a sales meeting from your past. You met a prospective customer for the first time on a Tuesday, and absolutely everything went as planned. You effectively engaged the prospect; everything clicked personally; your discovery process uncovered her needs clearly; and you discussed an outline solution that excited her. All in all, the call could not have gone better. You agreed with your enthusiastic future customer that you would summarize the discussion in a proposal within days, and call to follow up a few days later. Sounds like a perfect meeting, doesn't it? Sounds like you got another sale!

You returned to the office, the clock now ticking. Since you didn't have a busy week, you started on the proposal on Wednesday, and you mailed it on Thursday. No point calling Friday – she would not have had a chance to absorb the proposal yet, so you decided to wait until the next week.

The next Tuesday, you left your first voice mail. Several voice mails followed in the next few days. By Friday, now some 10 days since your meeting, you breached the voice-mail defenses and actually got your prospect live. She had a "chance to glance through it but not really give it the attention it deserves" (you know she hasn't even looked at it yet but that's OK) and requested that you call early next week to follow up again.

Monday would look too desperate so you waited until Tuesday to call again. Another week went by. You finally got her on the phone again, and this time your once enthusiastic prospect sounded anything but enthusiastic. Nowhere near as excited as when she suggested that you prepare the proposal! This time she told you she'd "*get back to you*" and as time passed by, your prospect slipped away, never to be heard from again.

What happened? You fell into the biggest trap in sales. You wandered unwittingly into Death Valley – that dry zone that stretches from the first contact to proposal follow-up. All around are the bleaching bones of the countless millions of salespeople who preceded you. Another thin-on-the-ground opportunity bites the dust.

The conventional wisdom in selling suggests that this is an unavoidable consequence of selling – one of the elements in the "numbers game" that you just have to learn to swallow. *Not true!*

A Simple Solution

Make one simple change to your sales call right now and you can fix this problem forever. Every single time you meet a prospect, make the next appointment before you leave. That's it – simple but highly effective. Suppose it's your first appointment and you have agreed to prepare

a proposal. Don't leave without looking for an appointment to meet with the prospect again to bring the proposal back in to talk to through, within days if possible.

There are a couple of possible responses when you try to set the next appointment for a few days later.

1. The Prospect Agrees - You are already winning. For a start, you've qualified the prospect's interest. If he is prepared to meet you again, his interest looks genuine and you have immediately hacked a few weeks off your sales cycle. Also, your positive initial meeting won't have time to slip his mind. When you next meet, he remembers why he was so enthusiastic about what you had to say, how you planned to meet his pressing requirements, and why he asked you to prepare a proposal. What salesperson would not close more of those deals than the Death Valley specials above?

2. The Prospect Declines - "You know, the rest of my week is just completely full." You suggest early the following week, but "next week is even worse." She suggests that you "simply mail in your proposal." It seems now as though she does not want to solve the problem you recently discovered. Maybe you haven't uncovered her real issues and proposed a satisfactory solution. Or perhaps she is not the decision-maker. Or she doesn't have the budget. But even this is good news, because now you have information you did not previously have. If you feel you have got the right person, right requirements, and an existing budget, then you can flip back into the discovery process and try to recover. If you've got the wrong person, then you can probe for the right one and start over. If it's simply a hopeless case, then slap yourself on the back – you just saved yourself the time, energy and effort, and the disappointment of eventually watching another one bite the dust! Now you can spend your time on more worthy prospects.

You gain information, clarity and time when you ask for the next appointment during the current appointment. Implement this simple change to your sales process right away and soar over your competitors' bones in Death Valley.

*** From the book *40 Strategies For Winning In Business* by Bud Haney and Jim Sirbasku. © S&H Publishing Co., 5205 Lake Shore Drive, Waco, Texas 76710-1732. All rights reserved. Contact S&H Publishing Co., (254) 751-1644, for reprint permission.**

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Your Office?

Do you sometimes wonder why two employees who both seemed promising when they were hired do their jobs so differently now? When you hired them, you might have thought of them as twins, since they appeared to be identical in their career aspirations, their training and their experience. But since the two came on board, they are like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Let's call them J and H. You could not be happier with J, as he performs with consistent excellence each day. As a manager, he is responsible for keeping his team focused and productive. His meetings always have an agenda. They begin and end on time. He keeps his door open to employees – which could mean that he is socializing instead of working. But that is not the case. He always meets his project deadlines, and so do those he supervises. He eagerly learns

new skills and arranges appropriate training for his direct reports. His work sets the standard you want everyone to meet.

H came into your organization at the same time and has similar responsibilities to J. But you've heard frequent reports of uncompleted projects, and your investigation shows you that virtually every time, they are H's projects. Meanwhile, the accounting department is frequently clamoring for paperwork that he has not completed. He says he does not have it, but you wonder how he could know. His desk is a mess, covered by piles of paper. This apparently does not matter, because you can never find H there anyway. He manages to disappear whenever you are hunting for him.

Perhaps H has other problems and would not do well at any job in your organization. But it could be that his poor performance is just a matter of not fitting well into the job. Had you used ProfileXT® job match patterns when hiring J and H, and paid attention to their scores, you likely would not have hired H. Or perhaps you would have found a more suitable position for him in some other part of the business.

ProfileXT uses job patterns to determine the fit of a candidate for a job. These patterns are designed to reflect the characteristics of those who have proved effective in the job.

Here is what the ProfileXT® Job Match Pattern does:

- Provides you with the scores of workers who are already top performers in their jobs, so you know the pattern of the employees who are most and least successful in a particular position.
- Allows you to establish a benchmark score across a scale of competencies.
- Allows you to match the test-taker's score on each scale item to a Job Match Pattern of scores for a specific position. The further the score falls outside of the pattern (high or low), the greater the negative impact on the Job Match percentage.
- Lets you find more candidates for J's job who perform like J.
- Helps you find a more appropriate position for H.

If you are tired of wondering why you have both Jekylls and Hydes in the office, end the guesswork. Call Profiles International at (254) 751-1644.

