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## The Business of Finding Talent in Today's challenging Environment

A February 2016 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found nearly two-thirds of respondents identified difficulty recruiting for open positions (www.shrm.org). Recruiters in the healthcare, social assistance and Manufacturing sectors report rates far above that average with values exceeding 70%. A key area of discussion, this election season, is the issue of job growth. Let's say for discussion sake we were to accelerate the growth of jobs through some sort of stimulus effort, would we be able to fill those jobs given the current processes and practices deployed? I wonder whether we could!

Let's step back and ponder this a bit. Imagine the waste and the lost business opportunity existing when 66-80% of the time a hiring need is identified, it goes unfilled for some significant period of time. Consider the resources invested to define the need, submit proposal and requisition for Management approval, Human Resource compliance review, technical effort to post the position on public and websites, and recruiting effort needed to search available talent, only to find a shortage of options.

There's been much published on the issue of skills shortages affecting this issue. The education system is trying to respond but there's a significant lag time associated with "growing" talent via that method. There's also the issue whether current educational systems are equipped and able to onboard enough interested parties to fill the diversity of required skills, i.e. those seeking Trades, STEM, Medical, and other specific industry requirements. There are also many reports describing the "disenfranchised" job seekers who've become frustrated with the process and left the market. Perhaps through some creative and collaborative efforts a solution might be possible.

A recently published article discussed a creative CEO's response to the critical shortage of 10,000 job openings in the Cybersecurity segment. His thoughts are to rethink the talent sourcing process. He spoke of altering the requirements of the job, or the position design itself, or reordering the business, to create solutions. He mentioned a need to focus on hiring those that meet the required base critical thinking skills. Once hired individuals would be mentored or developed to gain the technical skills needed. I find his approach creative and perhaps a bridge to solve both the skills gap and improve the rates of employment. For more on his thoughts see http://www.denverpost.com/2016/10/19/tech-industry-ponders-how-to-fill-colorados-10000-cybersecurity-job-openings/ .

Leadership isn't about bringing people together to do what they did yesterday. Leadership is about bringing together talent to view the business creatively, finding new solutions to systemic and historical issues impeding progress. I believe the issue of talent shortage is one solved using a variety of options. No one option will solve all the nuances of this complex issue but solve we must if we are to create the future we seek.
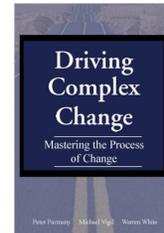
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If you're in a Leadership role and you find yourself struggling to create effective solutions to complex issues, consider reaching out to the Management Consultancy professionals at ASIL, Inc. The ASIL team is comprised of experienced Management professionals well versed in developing teams capable of excelling in collaboratively creating the future now.

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Contributed by Warren White

Inclusive Decision-Making

Today's business landscape often calls for decisions to be made in the blink of an eye to meet demands and expectations of customers and partners. Often, these decisions involve only the people who are influenced by that decision. When this occurs a number of influential perspectives are lost. Many times people forego meeting with teams and make decisions with fewer minds in order to facilitate rapid implementation of change.

Rapid decision making from this perspective is a critical asset to achieving performance expectations. The decision making process can be undermined by those trying to get to a decision instead of trying to get to the right decision. This rush often leaves out the perspectives of crucial team members when their perspectives could influence the decision for the better. With this in mind, inclusive decision-making can become a powerful asset for determining decisions if the company can utilize its employees productively.

Unfortunately, decisions in business are often solidified too quickly and become a burden to change or upend. This leaves companies trying to work through the decision or completely overhaul the decision process to come to a better outcome. In either case, resources are wasted in addition to losing time and capital. Furthermore, competition can take advantage of poor decisions to increase their position while your company is trying to handle problematic decisions that were ill formed.

Is every decision one that should be made with fifty people? Probably not. But, adding a few people to the group determining the decision allows you to cover your bases by limiting blind spots based on the various perspectives in the room. However, there is a careful balance that should be maintained. Too many people can disrupt decision-making for the worse. Too few people and blind spots can leave a company crippled in the future. The best way to evaluate this group size is to determine the decision and the people needed to effectively answer any questions on the issue and who have some level of involvement with the decision.

Making astute decisions for your company is a process that can be overlooked while trying to achieve the breakneck speeds of operation demanded by today's business environment. Having a group of people who can effectively evaluate the potential upsides and issues with decisions is critical to be able to make decisions fast and have those decisions benefit the company. It is tempting to bypass the discussion and disregard the participation of others in the decision, but they will be your most valuable assets. Utilize your team to make tough choices, but make sure to balance too many people against too few when considering the perspectives needed for a particular decision.

Do you always need to consult with others to make a decision? No you don't, but many times, these decisions contain hidden variables that only appear when certain perspectives up front. Using inclusive decision-making to

account for what you can't and it will enhance your company and your employees in the process. If you are interested in exploring how your company can improve decision-making by altering it with an approach structured around inclusion and participation, contact ASIL to learn more.

Contributed by Joe Pazmany

DID YOU HEAR...

Destructive Gossip

Recently, a company nearly reached the brink of destruction in a flurry of scandal. The legal team swooped in and started swinging, taking out the major offenders but also cutting off 25% of the company's clients at the same time. Just before it spiraled completely out of control, a savvy board member spotted the exact problem and halted it. The culprit? A vicious round of gossip about the executive team followed by a lawsuit based on that gossip.

Gossip reaches as high as C-level management and as low as the mail room in nearly every company. It can seem harmless and inconsequential and even fun or interesting at times, but its roots can be deep and insidious. Perhaps you have seen a beneficial program cut because of gossip, or a contract lost or a person fired. Perhaps that person was you.

What can you do to protect yourself and your business against gossip? Education is the key. Gossip is so ingrained in our culture that we can miss gossip even when it is right in front of our faces. Gossip is defined as light conversation about sensational or private matters. The danger is the viral nature of this destructive and often untrue communication.

Here are a few pointers to recognize and control gossip.

1. Look for a broad generality. "All the people around here are lazy," or "The marketing people are cold and calculating." This might seem to be obviously untrue upon inspection, but it can easily wend its way into conversations and become a stuck idea about the group. In the example above (a real one) about the marketing people, the result was that many people in the company avoided the "marketing people". This resulted in poor communications between sales and marketing, and a problem when it came to messaging the product. Not a good result. Pay attention whenever someone lays out a "truism" about an entire group. It's almost guaranteed to be a falsehood.

2. Check for negativity. Very often, negative statements are largely or partially untrue, particularly if the statement is about a person's character or skills. These "opinions" which have no basis in fact can be very damaging. Call others on it when they throw them around as truth. E.g. "Tim is like a porcupine. Don't give him any new ideas. He just bristles." Not only is this likely false, but it creates problems for Tim. If you pass it along, you are an accomplice to wrecking Tim's relationships.

3. Look for "frequent liars". "Frequent liars" are those who are routinely gossiping about others. Avoid them. Politely excuse yourself from the conversation. Why? Because **if they are gossiping to YOU about others, they will gossip to others about YOU as readily.** Don't get caught in the trap. Keep the conversation light and positive if you simply can't get away.

4. Inspect long-standing conflicts. In any long-standing argument or conflict, there is certain to be a degree of gossip behind it. Get the two arguing parties in a room and ask them this question: "What negative things have you heard about the other person?" Get them to list out everything. Ask them who said these things. Often, the same person is giving negative information to both sides! As soon as they both see what is happening, the conflict vanishes. Make sure you get a few names of people who were stirring up the conflict and work with those people to reduce their gossip level. This is fantastically useful in team building.

Not all those who gossip have bad intentions. It is easy to get caught in a web of gossip in almost any workplace. Little by little, start educating others about the dangers of gossip and you will make your business and your life a little easier.

Have an organizational challenge? Contact ASIL, Inc. for a consultation and a path to resolution.

Adapted from: Jill Chiappe - Coachability

Contributed by Michael Singleton

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