



Live Your Strengths

Welcome to the May 2010 edition of *Live Your Strengths*, the monthly e-newsletter from In Search of Excellence.

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The Mystery of Cultural Fit

Have you ever worked for an organization where you felt you just didn't 'fit'? You seemed to meet all the requirements for the skills and experience required to do your job, but for some reason, you felt like the proverbial square peg in a round hole?

If you have had this experience, it's likely that you were not a good fit with the organization's culture. This elusive concept of organizational culture can be difficult to pin down, but it is essential for an employee to really feel like they belong to an organization.

Without a good cultural fit, employees can often feel frustrated, develop poor morale and productivity, and eventually leave the organization. On the other side, an employer who hires someone who is not a good fit is often left just as puzzled, wondering where they went wrong in the hiring process when this person looked so good on their resume or in an interview.

The cost of making a bad hiring decision is high. Most experts estimate the cost to be between 1.3 to 2 times the amount of the employee's salary. These costs include recruitment expenses, training costs, lost productivity, and potentially loss of sales if the person is *really* not suited for the job.

So how do you find employees that will flourish in your organization's culture? As an employer or manager, the first step is to do an honest assessment of some of the key elements of your own culture (I will provide some questions below to get you started).

Next, be as honest as possible with potential job candidates (both in your job postings and interviews) about the kind of person who will fit best in your work environment. You can also ask some behaviorally-based interview questions to assess how the candidate would react in specific situations on the job. Listen for clues that will tell you if this is the kind

of person you want to have working as part of your team and representing your business.

When it comes to cultural fit, neither the organization nor the employee is right or wrong. It is just a matter of finding a work environment and an employee whose values, personalities, and beliefs will mesh. It is similar to the dating process: not every couple is going to be right for each other and the extent to which the relationship will be successful will depend on how well the couple complements each other when it comes to these important intangible qualities.

Are you ready to assess your organizational culture? Join me in this month's *Live Your Strengths* Challenge to get started!

Ready, Aim, Hire!

As we approach the busy summer season, you may be looking for a little help in your own hiring process. Here are a few ways we can help:

- Helping you to identify your hiring needs to create effective job descriptions and accurate performance benchmarks
- Providing very cost-effective assessment tools to help you measure a job candidate's abilities, interests, and personality. This information can then be compared to the benchmarks you have created to assess the suitability of the candidate
- Teaching you how to orient and train new employees to create the best opportunities for their success in your organization

To learn how to take advantage of these services, please contact Denise at 519-923-9968 or denise@insearchofexcellence.ca

***Live Your Strengths* Monthly Challenge: Assessing Your Organization's Culture**

Although the concept of cultural fit is a very intangible concept, there are some questions to help you begin to understand and articulate the culture in your organization.

- What are the core values of your business that you would want any new employee to understand and adhere to?
- What do you like best about the atmosphere/environment in your business?
- What do you feel sets your business apart from your competition in the products or services you offer?
- What is the pace of work in your business – are you and your clients fairly laid back or is it a fast-paced environment? How much overtime (if any) is expected?
- How much of the time are you there to supervise? Will new employees need to be fairly autonomous?
- What kind of person would not succeed in this work environment?

- Do your employees tend to interact socially outside of work?
- Are external education and training opportunities available/subsidized?
- How 'family-friendly' is your business – will you be understanding of workers who need occasional time away to deal with family issues? Or is the work schedule such that there is not room for this type of flexibility?

Could you use some guidance with this challenge? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session to make 2010 your best year yet!

Cheers,
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"Creating the Path to Your Potential"

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