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We've all hit some rough spots, made a bad decision, or hired the wrong person. The key question is, "What did I learn from the not-so-great decision?" This month, we have a few lessons to share because when the more we learn from our decisions and experiences, the more we grow professionally and personally!

Have a fabulous summer - and don't forget to take some time to step back and reflect on the first half of the year. What's working well for you? What lessons have you learned?

Kristin

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#### **3 HIRING STRATEGIES SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS USE** by Joseph Sherren

Last week, I was talking to a business owner who said that hiring the right people continues to be one of his greatest challenges. In my experience, most businesses wait too long to fill a vacancy, then hire too quickly. After realizing a mistake had been made, they take too long to terminate.

The latest research says that the cost to terminate and replace an employee is their annual salary plus 1.5 times their annual salary (not counting lost productivity).

I have empathy, because that is one of the mistakes I have often made. We all want to be compassionate and give staff every benefit of the doubt, hoping things will turn around, but it seldom does. I learned this as a young entrepreneur and later as a corporate manager.

I believe hiring is even harder now for a couple of reasons:

- You cannot rely on resumes! Think about it. Do you believe a potential employee is going to say in their resume if they failed, did not get along with others, or were fired from a past position? As well, most resumes are now written by professional writers or adopted from one downloaded from the internet.
- Reference checks don't work anymore because of the potential legal liability of giving a negative review of a past employee. Most previous employers will only provide name, dates, and position title.

So what can you do to mitigate the risk of a bad hire? Unfortunately, you can never be 100% sure. However, here are three strategies that many successful organizations use, especially when hiring for senior positions:

1. **Conduct a scientifically validated skills assessment.** There are a number of

instruments that can help with this. One is the [PXT](#), an assessment used for selection, on-boarding, development, managing, and succession planning. It measures how well an individual fits a specific role in your organization based on historical job modeling.

Another one is from Talex. [Their MXP](#) compares an applicant's strengths and weaknesses to an achievement pattern predetermined by your organization. It identifies the characteristics most required in that position and compares the applicant's results to that success profile.

2. **Use a psychological assessment** that will determine the best fit into the culture of your organization. One I use is the [LSI \(Life Styles Inventory\)](#) from Human Synergistics. It measures the thinking style of the individual and how this thinking translates into everyday behaviors. It provides detailed information about the applicant's strengths and development needs, including the quality of their work relationships.
3. **Use behavioral interviewing techniques.** While a resume will tell you what an individual did yesterday – behavioral interviewing demonstrates how a potential hire has performed in the past and their decision-making tactics. Examples of this type of questioning would be: "Tell us about a time you had to carry out a company policy that you did not agree with." Or, "If you found yourself in a personality conflict with another employee, how would you resolve it?"

Organizations that have adopted these strategies are able to conduct more effective recruiting and significantly lower attrition rates. The added benefit of implementing these strategies is a faster, less expensive hiring process. Ray Kroc, Founder of McDonald's, once said: You are only as good as the people you hire.

My question for managers: What is your process to ensure you have the right people, doing the right things, and behaving the right way to ensure a cultural fit with long-term success in your organization?

## **LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM ROUGH SPOTS, BUMPS, AND BLACK HOLES**

I was having a rather deep conversation with a client discussing leadership styles when I asked a fairly provocative question: "Have you ever hit a 'rough spot' in your leadership journey?"

You see, I think all leaders hit "rough spots" from time to time - either things aren't going well in the office OR at home. In my multi-decade career, I experienced not only a rough spot, but a black hole, where my personal life was none-to-pretty. I believe those issues exuded onto my business life. Frankly, I wasn't that great of a leader during that time frame. There are many things I did and said that I wish I could rewind the tape and take a mulligan. But it just doesn't work that way. It is what it is, and you move on, hopefully learning some painful lessons.

For the past several years, I've been curious to know if I am crazy or if this is a trend - that other leaders have similarly hit a rough spot or black hole. So when I am chatting with a leader and it feels particularly appropriate, I'll pop the provocative question.

In this most recent case, my client initially looked at me sideways, and when I explained my theory, he reflected for a good minute or so. He said, "Yeah, although I don't really tell people because it was a painful time. But I DO take the lessons learned from that time and desperately try NOT to be that person again."

I have heard some semblance of this answer over the last several years asking over a dozen successful executives. Guess adversity makes you a stronger leader!

## HOW TO FACILITATE AUDIENCE Q&A DURING A PANEL DISCUSSION

At some point during a panel discussion, the panel moderator will turn to the audience and ask for questions. Most folks call this "Audience Q&A" where the moderator takes questions from the audience via text, question card, open microphone, or Oprah-style, depending on the event.

To facilitate a meaningful Q&A session, a powerful panel moderator will:

- **Describe the Process.** Share the process you will use to solicit questions. Then follow the process. Don't deviate for anybody.
- **Review the Ground Rules.** For example, "Please stand, state your name and organization, the name of the panelist you are directing the question to, your one sentence question and a few sentences to clarify your question if necessary...and panelists, please speak to the audience when answering all the questions. Now, what questions do you have?"
- **Repeat the Question.** Repeat, restate or summarize the question for the entire audience to hear and for it to be picked up on any recordings being made. Reframe tangential questions to be more on topic.
- **Prompt a Panelist.** When the question is for anyone on the panel, restate the question and then direct the question to a panelist who:
  - Is signaling to you
  - You feel would best answer it
  - Has not responded as much.
- **Hot Potato the Question.** If a panelist is not being asked questions by the audience, you can say, "John, that was a great answer. Mary, do you feel the same way?"
- **Queue.** If a large number of people raise their hands at the start of the Q&A session, start with the first person who raised a hand and establish a "queue" or lineup that lets the audience know who will go next.
  - *Follow the Queue.* Once you establish the order, doggedly follow it. If you have a hard time remembering the order, write it down or enlist someone to help you keep track.
  - *Add to the Queue.* While a panelist is answering a question, you may see someone new raising their hand. You can point to the person and nod, signaling that the person will be next in the queue.
  - *Call on the Questioner.* Call on them by name if you know them or can read their nametags. Otherwise, use some defining, flattering feature: "The lovely lady in the bright red jacket, please give us your question in one sentence."
- **Work the Room.** Make sure that the questions are spread among different members within the audience. Try to hear from everyone who has a question before you return to someone for a second turn. You can even offer that you are looking for new faces to chime in before you let a repeat questioner back in the queue.
- **Prevent Speeches.** You and your microphone runners should NEVER let go of the microphone.
- **Last Two Questions.** Warn the audience when the session is drawing to a close and that you have time for one or two more questions. Take the last few questions and then move to the next segment on your agenda, typically, the ending activities.

When a panel moderator lays out the process and follows the ground rules, the Q&A will be the highlight of the panel discussion!

## **FROM THE BOOKSHELF: THE ONLY NEGOTIATING GUIDE YOU'LL EVER NEED: 101 WAYS TO WIN EVERY TIME IN ANY SITUATION by Peter Stark**

Every day, we "negotiate" on matters large and small. Considering that we were selling our house in AZ and buying another one literally five minutes away, I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered Peter Stark just updated his classic book, "The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need: 101 Ways to Win Every Time in Any Situation." Timing is everything, and so I devoured the book one Sunday afternoon...and I keep going back to it for reference during the buying/selling process! Beyond that one transaction, here's why I love this book:

1. **Philosophy.** The underlying philosophy toward negotiation is to look for the win-win (remember Stephen Covey?). What's a win-win outcome? "When each party obtains something of greater value in exchange for something on which he or she places a lower value...each of them may have wished for more, but at least they are both satisfied and will be willing to negotiate again later."
2. **Counterparts and not "Opponents".** Words do matter. "How you view those you negotiate with has a lot to do with your ability to achieve successful outcomes...Approaching those you negotiate with as counterparts makes you feel a personal obligation to create success for both sides and tends to result in win-win solutions."
3. **Look to the Future.** He says, "As a negotiator, you have an obligation to help your counterparts in negotiations come out winners. Why? Because very few negotiations are one-time affairs...and you have the opportunity to build a relationship that will benefit you and strengthen your ability to negotiate all life's outcomes."
4. **Options.** He encourages you to think through the options. "The more options you have, the more likely it is that you will be able to generate a win-win outcome."
5. **Planning.** You don't just stroll into a negotiation. It starts with intense planning and intentionality.
6. There are **101 specific tactics** that make all of this negotiation verbiage come to life. He provides the tactic, an example, some suggestions on how to negotiate the transaction and how to counter that opening gambit. I can envision going over this section multiple times!
7. There are **two assessments** in the book that you can take online as well: How good a negotiator you are AND understanding your own behavioral style as a negotiator.
8. The **content and stories** are fresh and relevant. If I didn't know any better, I would have thought this was a brand-new book on negotiation!  
You can't go wrong buying this book to help you be a more effective negotiator!

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