

The “Caring for People” Principle: A Key Leadership Recruitment Metric

Posted On Aug 31, Posted by [Paul Croteau](#) Category [Talent Management](#)

Recruiters and organizations alike are more and more frequently turning to online computerized assessments to help identify the strengths and areas of challenge for their potential new employees.

These are very valuable tools and I applaud their efforts for implementing these systems.

Online assessment tools typically assess self-management potential, motivational structure, organizational fit, people orientation, leadership style, learning needs, communication style, approach to conflict and emotional intelligence. One of the benefits of these assessments is that candidate strengths and areas of challenge can be easily compared and contrasted ensuring a thorough discussion during the selection process.

Senior business leaders have always expected that they will be experts in strategic planning/implementation and superior in the management of routine and crisis decision making. In addition, leaders must effectively manage the financial well being of their organizations. For businesses, this means ensuring a suitable profit and, for not-for-profits, it means balancing the budget with no deficits.

You'll notice that there was no mention of people or interpersonal relationships in the last few paragraphs. That's because the people element of organizational success is only now getting the attention it deserves. Today's organizations recognize that their leaders must balance traditional business technical skills with good people skills.

One of my key assessment tools, the “Merit Profile”, provides a measure called “caring for people”. I can attest not only to the benefit of measuring this leadership element, but also to its accuracy in assisting us to determine the best candidate for a leadership role. With teamwork being so important in today's organizations, the concept of developing meaningful relationships both internally and externally is critical to success. This is why “caring for people” plays an important role in identifying those leaders who think in terms of team unity.

Using this assessment tool I can determine candidate strengths in terms of developing confidence in team members, how a leader will develop/coach others and how they will create a healthy interdependence within their organization. I can determine how each leadership candidate will build up the confidence of individual team members and how they will use praise to stimulate personal, professional and character growth.

The “caring for people” principle also measures how a leader will connect with other people,

whether they easily understand and accept the views of others and whether or not they can manage conflict in a positive and effective way. It also suggests how well an individual understands themselves and their personality blind spots. It identifies whether they will be open, honest and trustworthy.

This measurement also assists in the overall evaluation of a candidate’s general personal attitude toward people. This helps us to reflect on whether or not a candidate will easily misjudge others, misread verbal communication, make false assumptions and/or develop a harmful perception of their team members.

Leaders at any level of an organization, especially in senior executive roles, need to be highly self-aware, open to constructive feedback and have good people skills. Those who do not possess these skills are known to “derail” their career by being fired, demoted and/or forced to take early retirement.

Two of the most common career “derailers”, as identified by the well-known American Centre for Creative Leadership, are problems with interpersonal relationships and the failure to build a strong team.

Firstly, individuals who lack people skills typically demonstrate behaviour that is insensitive, manipulative, demanding and authoritarian. In addition, they are often aloof and self-isolating. This all leads to poor interpersonal relationships.

Secondly, individuals who derail and show a low “caring for people” score typically fail to build and lead their teams. They don’t select the right staff and can’t effectively manage their teams. Overall, they demonstrate poor leadership skills and frequently fail to follow through with tasks and thus fail to meet business objectives.

Selecting the right individual with the right skills for your leadership role will have a significant impact on your organization’s success. Thus, participating in an effective recruitment process supplemented by accurate candidate assessments and professional interpretation is worth every ounce of your investment.

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