

Going for growth?

Valuing people is the key...

There are many pressures on managers today to achieve 'growth', in order for the country to recover from the economic chaos. Managers' initial thoughts go to things – fiscal, monetary, economic and infrastructure. We know the statistics, costs, ROI – but largely about what has happened, not what could happen. However, it is people who will have the most impact on growth. What we do know about employees is that they cost a lot. What we don't know is their value on the balance sheet.

People will bring about that 'growth' by their energy, commitment, drive, motivation, enthusiasm, engagement, innovation and underlying qualities that are often ignored at times of selection, promotion and succession planning, at every level in the business process.

School leavers are encouraged to collect certificates, senior executives must have good 'track records', all must have appropriate experience, and appear well scrubbed at interviews. Clearly these factors play a part in identifying those well placed to fulfil a role. Junior posts represent significant financial decisions when assessed with the hidden costs of recruitment, employment and dismissal. For senior posts, the sums become eye-watering when pensions and severance terms are involved. Why do managers take much greater care and time when making a minor investment in, say, a drinks machine? Is it because undrinkable coffee will get fingers pointed? Whereas the costs for unsatisfactory employees are written off with a dismissive 'that person was wrong for the job'. If the selection criteria are incomplete, then outcomes are more likely to be unsatisfactory.

Since the 1920s we have been familiar with personality typing giving broad indicators of an individual's likely behaviours, with generic reports making

many assumptions, which are often insufficient for today's complex and demanding working environments.

Some 20 years ago a prestigious Max Planck Institute in Germany was briefed to identify those qualities essential for success in the workplace. After six years' fundamental research and refinement by experts in business, management, leadership, human resources, coaching et al, an instrument to assess 'social competence at work' benchmarks was created: Discovery of Natural Latent Abilities (DNLA). Owned by GMP mbH, DNLA has been applied across Europe and beyond, with over 600 corporate users of DNLA Social Competence with supplementary assessments for management, sales potential, high performing teams and industry specific roles. Why is this different? The concept assesses social competences in the working environment – where too much of a factor can be as detrimental as too little – to provide positive outcomes for all concerned.

Some 42 factors are available, grouped under Achievement Dynamics, Interpersonal Relationships, Will to Succeed, Stress Capacity, Leadership, Consensus, Cooperation and Entrepreneurial Mentality. This information indicates where factors can be in conflict with each other or the demands of the job role, and provides the self-awareness essential for fulfilling personal ambitions and business objectives.

Greater attention is needed in preparing people throughout their working lives so that they can offer the range of skills needed in today's world. This requires balancing the hard demonstrable skills with those more subtle underlying soft skills, best developed in parallel, so 'employability' is focused on taking advantage of opportunities in the challenging labour

market. This cannot be achieved by a few days' work experience nor 'sort this out for yourself' advice, but by carefully considered coaching/development programmes.

Anodos Discovery is the GMP Partner for the UK and Republic of Ireland. Its network of accredited consultants serves organisations that need to raise their workforce performance. Topics include boardroom dynamics, leadership, succession planning, employee engagement and selection of executives, managers, graduates and apprentices.

The quality and depth of research, combining HR expertise, ensures that DNLA assesses issues important for today. Results are 'benchmarked' to match clients' needs for identifying the best candidates. The online questionnaires are analysed using a regularly updated database maintained to comply with current data legislation.

DNLA is used successfully by many leading organisations, is rigorously reviewed for reliability and validity, and accredited for quality of application. Growth requires employees to add value by achieving their positive potential – and self-awareness is a good place to start.

DNLA[®]



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