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## Hiring Top-Quality Team Players: An Executive Recruiter Discovers 'A New Way to Know'

In the face of rapidly changing economic, demographic, and competitive pressures, a top-of-mind issue facing organizations today is finding, identifying and retaining high-performance employees. These changes increase the risks and costs associated with hiring failures, and the fact that many areas of business still experience undesired employee turnover suggests that there is a missing link in the hiring process. Could it be that standard evaluation tools and methods put too much emphasis on individual skills and characteristics, and not enough on how people 'team' together?

A statement that encapsulates how we currently treat the hiring and teaming process comes from Peter Senge. He's an American scientist, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management, and author of the book *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. He said, "Business and human endeavours are systems...we tend to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system, and wonder why our deepest problems never get solved."

As an executive recruiter, I have seen what happens when a company makes a bad hire. The call goes out for someone with experience, drive, and the right fit for the job and for company culture. Screening, reference checking, and various assessments are applied, and sincere efforts to interview in a disciplined fashion are made. Unfortunately, mistakes still happen, and everyone—the recruiter, the client, and the chosen candidate—feels the pain.

One of my candidates discovered this when she was hired for a senior-level management position. She did very well in her interview and her references were first-rate, but less than two months later she had become very frustrated. Despite the match between her skills and the job description, she found it impossible to make headway within the company. The situation didn't improve and eventually she resigned. In a debrief, she explained that while she had tried everything within her power to work with the various teams, they remained isolated. The chronic problems of silos within the company made it impossible for her to be truly effective.

To put the problem in stark perspective, ill-fitting

hires cost money—lots of it. A study by the Society for HR Management estimates that the cost of a poor hire for intermediate positions could be \$20,000; senior management, \$100,000; and sales representatives at \$300,000. Those are significant numbers, but if we look beyond HR's transactional cost measures and consider the other ramifications of hiring failures, such as lost business relationships, delayed or failed strategic initiatives, and the undesired exit of highly-valued employees, the 'collateral damage' from a bad hire can be staggering.

My goal, therefore, was to find a way to improve the executive search process in a way that was fair and objective. Like any trusted business advisor, our mission has always been to ensure that each of our clients and candidates should have the highest level of satisfaction during our process and with the results of our service. During my search for a better way to select candidates I met Dr. Janice Presser, co-creator of Role-Based Assessment™ (RBA) and its related Coherent Human Infrastructure (CHI) management concepts. I was intrigued with her approach, and came to the conclusion that Role-Based Assessment is a breakthrough web-based talent evaluation tool that can offer profound benefits to business in hiring, and in integrating and managing, talent.

RBA was designed to predict the quality of a person's behaviour when working with others to benefit their group, overcome a challenge, or achieve a common goal. Dr. Presser and her colleagues worked for over 25 years on the research, development and testing of RBA. They created a new technology that is not derived from personality traits testing, engagement or strengths surveys, or any of the other familiar tools or methods.

RBA produces three measures that are critical to the success of an individual on a team. They are:

- **Coherence**, which is expressed as a positive orientation to team collaboration
- **Role**, which reveals a person's affinity for certain kinds of organizational participation; and
- **Teaming Characteristics**, which allow fine discrimination of a person's 'fit' to job responsibilities, team mission, and corporate culture.

What makes RBA truly revolutionary is the usefulness of the information that arises at the intersection of these three metrics. RBA reports are designed to let you know who will fit into a job, on a team, or within an organization with the least risk. In other words, RBA and CHI provide unbiased† decision support that enables any organization to ‘get the right people on the bus,’ and also to ‘get them in the right seats.’

Coherent Human Infrastructure methods provide guidance in matching the Roles on a team with the mission of the team, in analyzing and repairing team performance problems, and in understanding of the connection between a person’s ‘Role’ and their sense of service to the team. As a source of knowledge, the theoretical and practical foundations of Coherent Human Infrastructure (CHI) management concepts have far-reaching implications. As described by Dr. Presser:

*A Coherent Human Infrastructure is a pervasive state of positive interaction and productive synergy within and between teams, departments, and divisions of an organization. It emerges when the organization succeeds in adopting and deploying the fundamental principles that are derived from RBA metrics.*

So who can benefit from incorporating RBA into their processes?

For companies seeking to improve ‘Quality of Hire’, the benefits of RBA begin with the creation of job descriptions that are aligned with the Role (or Roles) that are a best-fit to the job responsibilities. Such a job description will strongly attract persons with the desired Role, and will actually repel those who have a Role that is a non-fit. This means that instead of interviewing numerous ‘not-quite-right’ candidates, the company will meet with a handful of candidates who not only have the right skills and experience, but who also have excellent ‘Role-fit’ and are great team-players.

Managers can use RBA reports to gain a new level of understanding of the members of their team. This information provides insight into their potential for lasting success. RBA results can be aggregated in team impact reports that help managers select, manage and develop individuals who form the team. Raising Coherence levels and creating right mix of Roles will improve team synergy, raise performance levels, and reduce the time spent in hands-on team management.

Another benefit is succession planning support - something many companies are focusing on as the Baby Boom generation is reaching retirement age. Companies often aren’t prepared for the loss of key employees, but RBA’s metrics can improve the understanding of available talent potential. This enables the organization to look broadly and creatively at how to distribute internal resources to achieve the best person-to-job fit and develop a clear strategic understanding of their future roles.

At TeamQuest, we have found RBA to be an invaluable tool. As part of our team-building toolkit, RBA has helped our clients build higher quality teams, and it has helped ameliorate ‘people problems’ (such as high turnover) that have not been significantly impacted by traditional talent measures such as skills, experience, career path and personality testing.

† *“Personality Tests in Jeopardy: An Evaluation of the Seventh Circuit’s Decision in Karraker v. Rent-A-Center and its Implications on the Future Use of Personality Tests in Preemployment Screening”* (University of Pennsylvania Journal of Labor and Employment Law, Fall 2006):

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