



Don't assess your talent, just take them down the pub....

...unless you are prepared to do something with the results!

Tiffany Bowles, Head of Consulting at HDA

“Please can you help us identify our ‘talent’? We need to know who to mark for development.”

People who need to assess their talent often ask us the same question, whether they are assessing for development or succession, re-deployment or recruitment. Of course, we can do that. We have a whole toolbox of assessment products, behavioural experts, skills and experience to provide as much detail as you like on your employees. Assessment professionals can tell you what your staff are great at, need development in and how good their leadership skills are. You'll be paying for high quality information, derived from fair and robust assessment methodology.

Or you can just take them all down the pub. Have a few drinks and decide who you think is the most fun. It is as good a random method as any to pick someone as a potential high achiever and it will be more enjoyable, cheaper and more engaging than, yet again, embarking on a programme that doesn't provide either the business or the individual with the reward you're looking for.

As HR professionals know, an unscientific process or gut feel about someone's cultural fit won't help you know who could do better in their current or future role. It won't help you to understand what specific tweaks you need to make to ensure a smooth, efficient fit between employee and organisation, and it won't give you an action plan to follow, ensuring the ideals you started out with are followed through with logic and conviction.

More often than not it feels as though there is too much focus on the acquisition of the assessment results as the end point in itself, resulting in a premature loss of energy, motivation or resources. Conducting fair and relevant best practice assessment is essential but knowing what you're going to do with the results is just as important.

You are better off starting with the end point, taking a holistic and systemic view of assessment to do a proper job from the beginning. Think about the

example of succession. You want to identify those leaders of the future who have the potential to be the next directors. Once you've done that you want to ensure they get there. Where are your efforts and budgets focused? Primarily, it will be on the identification of potential, but ensuring they get there is even more important. Why? Because without appropriate nurturing along a proper planned process the talent you've invested so much in identifying might leave, not want the role, or not blossom (as is often the case). Assessment like that is simply a needless waste of time and resources.

When you embark on a strategy that will identify your talent you will need to consider the following key areas. What is the cost to the business if it is ignored? How many employees can the budget support? Do we want to take an individualistic or group approach to development?

Organisations often start small with the individuals and then weave the process into an academy, but the questions don't stop there. Whether or not you should tell employees they are earmarked for extra development or fast-tracking (you should). Whether the process should be structured or ad hoc (structured). Whether the process should be run by invitation or be open to all (open). How to measure success and ROI (what are you looking for?).

Ask yourself these questions when you apply best practice principles to any assessment and development programme. Many companies have had very pleasant surprises by avoiding unnecessarily narrow expectations. Stepping back and following a structured process will help to keep the results in perspective, and encourage some positive action towards achieving your organisation's objective along with the employees' goals. If you don't, and just assess on an intermittent and individual basis, or assess without a plan, you really might be better off down the pub!

For further information please visit www.hda.co.uk or call +44 (0) 20 7484 5065



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