

STRATEGY # 3: MAKE YOUR PEOPLE YOUR BRAND

PART 2

Early in my career I thought that a strong brand was the most important thing an organization could have. Many people think of a brand in terms of a product or logo, but I soon discovered that in reality, your *people* are your brand. No matter how good your products and services are, you can't achieve true excellence unless you attract great people, develop great people, and keep great people.

2. Don't settle for a clone. When filling a position, don't look for a replica of the person who's leaving; different times often call for different skills and experiences, even if the job title remains the same. Evaluate the climate, as well as your existing team, to see what talents are most needed now, and focus on finding someone who can supply them. Every job opening is an opportunity to redefine the role.

3. Look for good people in unlikely places. Sometimes you can find the best hires in the places you least expect to. So don't just look in the obvious places, and don't reject candidates out of hand simply because they don't square with the standard profile for that job. If they have the competency to perform well and the leadership ability to inspire others, don't hold their unconventional backgrounds against them. In fact, you never know what gifts they might be bringing with them.

4. Involve the team in the selection process. How many times have you been shocked by an announcement about a new hire? Have you ever wondered why no one consulted with you before so-and-so was promoted to a certain position? It's amazing how often executives make such vital decisions without involving the rest of the team. Great leaders give selected team members the chance to evaluate or interview the candidates. Think that's a waste of time? Think again. Other people on your team might ask the candidates questions you haven't thought of. Their conversations will veer in different directions and draw out different information. When everyone is finished, you'll have a more complete portrait of the candidates. Also, since everyone on your team will have to work with the new hire, you'll have a better chance of choosing a good fit. Not only that, but the transition will be smoother because the person being hired will be familiar with the team. The strategy of involving a wide range of employees in the hiring process has been adopted with great success by numerous organizations in a wide variety of industries.

5. Select by talent, not by resume. When you read a resume, always keep in mind who wrote it. An estimated 40 percent of resumes are said to contain exaggerations in such areas as educational background and previous job titles, responsibilities, accomplishments. Think of them as advertisements, not objective reports. At Walt Disney World, I rejected a candidate because his resume said he had a college degree, which turned out not to be so. I would have hired him without the degree because he had excellent experience and the right set of talents. But not only had he fabricated his education, he had also tried to cover up his lie. When we told him that our background check could not verify that he'd received a degree, instead of owning up, he claimed it was a clerical error.

“Our similarities bring us to a common ground; our differences allow us to be fascinated by each other.”

Tom Robbins

“We don't need to share the same opinions as others, but we need to be respectful.”

Swift Taylor

“Each day comes to me with both hands full of possibilities.”

Helen Keller