

I have been in the staffing industry for 20 years. During that time, perhaps the most frequent question my clients have when hiring is, "How do I know this person will bring value?" It's a valid question, and in this economy, it is a vital one. Now, more than ever, employers are being forced to evaluate the value of each employee in their organization.

Employers are now moving beyond "cutting the fat" from their organizations and questioning what each of their employees brings to the table. It's a new economy, and everyone has to have a value proposition. The individuals that prove and increase their value during this downturn will be the employees that stay gainfully employed and create a better future for themselves when things start to improve.

So, what characteristics truly bring value to an employer? What truly separates an "A" player from a "B or C" player? How does a corporation evaluate their employee base, and what are the deciding factors when choosing to keep, lay off, or replace existing employees? The bottom line is that it comes down to value.

Value is essentially related to worth, material or immaterial. So, what brings value to your company or department? Right now, stop and think of your top performer. What makes you feel that this person has relative worth and that you are getting a *fair exchange* for your investment in that employee?

Generally, each company will have their own criteria and priorities when it comes to determining the value of their employee base, but in my daily interactions with clients, I have noticed several target impact areas that define the value of an employee for most organizations.

Performance/ Productivity - Impact the bottom line

When companies are looking at their team, performance and productivity are most likely at the top of the list. Niel Ducoff in his book No-Compromise Leadership discusses the importance of looking at critical numbers and how "critical numbers eliminate the abstract interpretation of what work needs to be done." In addition, he believes that every employee possesses the ability to influence profitability in some manner. This ability to influence profitability increases an employee's value.

Motivation/Influence/Attitude - Impact others

Malcom Gladwell in his book The Tipping Point discusses the differences between those who influence and those who connect/network. They add value to the company in a unique way. They possess leadership abilities and are able to rally the troops when needed to make things happen. They can keep teams together.

New Ideas/Thinking about Solutions -Impact through creativity

Creativity is about the development of new ideas and new solutions that can impact the way things are done in a business on multiple levels.

Since change is a daily occurrence in growing and evolving companies, creative people bring more to the table and provide new solutions to their customers. Increasingly, companies are looking for problem solvers that provide creative solutions.



Systems - Impacting structure and efficiency

In his book, Operations Management: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management, Michael Lewis examines the work of Frederick Taylor. Frederick Taylor, at the turn of the century, changed how companies looked at work organization, task definition, and job measurement. Taylor's goal was to increase organizational productivity with a systematic process.

Today, companies continue to evaluate how they can efficiently utilize processes to streamline their ability to meet company goals. Employees that can aid in the identification and implementation of better systems will add to the bottom line value of the company.

Habits - Impact through consistency

"A" players have and continue to develop effective habits. In Brian Tracy's book, Focal Point, these habits are defined

as: punctuality, time management, self-discipline, concentration, and goal completion. Habits can be developed through practice, and employers look to those who continue to focus on and develop their good habits. Employees who have a proven success record with established processes, systems, and work ethic increase the return on their employer's investment.

Emotional Equity - Impact through commitment

Rules for Renegades by Christine Comaford-Lynch breaks down emotional equity like this:



Companies like to know that employees have an emotional stake in their employment commitment. Employers want to know that their employees are in it for the long haul. Emotional equity provides the fortitude to "stick with it" in good, bad, and challenging times.

One of the hardest things that I have to do in my role as manager here at Delta Dallas is let people go. It is never an easy task, but when decisions are made based on the criteria above, I know I am making a decision that will support our short and long-term goals. I know that a lot of my clients have faced this dilemma in recent months, and honestly, there is no easy way to tell someone you are taking away their source of income.

In this economy, however, it is more important than ever to make sure that the money invested in your employees is money well-spent. In order to flourish during these times, you need team members with emotional commitment that bring true value to your organization. Only then will you have the foundation you will need to build upon as the economic recovery ensues. See you on the other side!



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