

„How do I get high-potential people?” - Hunters ask

by Laura Ion

21<sup>st</sup> Century; time to look for rhyme in business area and make music play! If people are willing to accept challenge, they get the chance to redesign themselves, and redesigning is the best opportunity for self awareness, seeing that we, human beings, work as a whole, never as singular parts of this whole.

This is the key point to remember when looking for *high-potential people*: look at them as they are a whole! No matter if we talk about executive searching, mid or high level managers searching or entry level people searching, there is always one concern: “How do I know I get the right *high-potential person*?”

There are a couple of aspects of what *high-potential* means, that must always be under observation and assessment, when recruiting talents:

1. Emotional Intelligence- that ability of mastering self and mastering others. Self awareness and social awareness are the vectors of this function;
2. Leadership behavior- that “follow me!” attitude, an inspiring role model who attracts people like a magnet and move them from good to great;
3. Curiosity- the desire to learn about yourself and the world around you, to forget and learn again. This is what makes you smarter and adaptable, and adaptation is the privilege of intelligent people;
4. Discipline- “*the bridge between goals and accomplishments*”;
5. Determination- the force that moves the mountains no matter what;
6. Engagement- genuine commitment, fully understanding and total acceptance;

As recruiters, searching for talents, following the traits mentioned above, helps in establishing the difference between *high-performers* and *high-potentials*.

In an ideal world, where a *high-potential* person is high at *self selling*, the only job left to a recruiter is to assess the characteristics mentioned above, and the assessment is easily facilitated by the ability of the candidate to sell his own capacities and talent. In reality, things are different. In my opinion, when looking for *high-potential* people, we encounter 4 types of situations:

1. High Potential and High at Self Selling- Ideal candidate;
2. High Potential and Low at Self Selling- Shy candidate;
3. Low Potential and High at Self Selling- Fake candidate;
4. Low Potential and Low at Self Selling- Wrong candidate.

Pinpointing the characteristics of a *high-potential* can be difficult, especially for the first two situations underlined above. When looking for high-potentials, organizations should follow a designed *competency model* based on an aggregation of desired traits and behaviors associated with the idea of what *success* means for that organization.

During the recruiting process, at the interview stage, but not limited to this only, there are a couple of tools able to get the candidate to the ground, to specificity by challenging deletions, distortions and generalizations, chunking the language down and becoming more specific. Asking for reference is a

very good idea too.

Here is my advice to talent hunters: before going to hunting, always remember to articulate high-potential roles and career pathways. Next to the strategy designed to get the best human asset, make sure you have the smartest question to ask.

The results you get as a high-potential hunter, are a consequence of your ability to foresee, metaphorically speaking, the eagle *flying* when it is *sitting*.

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