**Does your on-boarding process for new Leaders and Managers result in long term relationships, or continual turnover?**

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**Heads-up!! There is a labor shortage that is not going away anytime soon!!** Baby boomers are aging and retiring and will soon be leaving the work force in increasing numbers. Further, with the low birthrate in the United States, fewer people will enter the workforce in a given year. With the tightening of the immigration laws, where are the bodies that will be needed for organizations going to come from? Giving the limited number of new employees that there may be by 2025, it behooves every business and organizational leader to become very intentional not only about the people they hire, but also how they go about supporting and preserving the needed talent to accomplish its mission.

I’m currently working with a group that has gone through some significant changes in the last year, including a high turnover of top leaders. This resulted in a disruption to their mission and goals for the year, and so they reached out to me for some guidance in “righting the ship”.

Initially, the CEO was in denial that any problem in the hiring process really existed, until I pointed out that two of the new managers, after six months on the job, still seemed unclear as to where the “ship” is heading. So, of course neither have been able to offer innovative solutions – which are incredibly important these days. The Leader had expected that by hiring quality people, her organizational problems would magically be solved.

As organizations grow and respond to faster-paced business methods, simultaneous to adapting to our changing times, the leaders of the ship need to be crystal clear on the strategic pathway – albeit open to moderate adaptive changes in course as new information or issues arise. But it’s at the on-boarding process where a successful work relationship will begin. In researching the process and methods being currently used to onboard new leaders, it seems that there are several methods, most of which are detrimental to longevity of the hire.

First, there is an unwritten assumption by many CEO’s and Executive Directors that by hiring the best and brightest – that the new hires just “know what to do”. Taking the new hire out to lunch the first day, along with introductions to key people are pretty much the standard. Once given a tour of the premises, set up with new passwords, many organizations consider the onboarding process to be completed. “Now go forth and make us some money!”

However, when you look at the expectations of this level of managers, the real onboarding should start long before. The first interview is not too early!! The initial interview is the ideal time to set out a clear expectation of job duties and what is to be accomplished.

**Job Description** and key duties outlined should be not only precise and accurate, but also current. Most jobs have changed significantly since the Great Recession, and oftentimes the proffered job description includes responsibilities that in fact were (or should be) held by someone else. Many organizations rely on the job description that HR has filed away for many years, which are clearly outdated and no longer express the actual expectations. (The job description should be closely reviewed before the job is even posted.) Lack of clear job responsibilities can result in almost immediate confusion for the new hire as to the best pathway for success. The confusion slows down innovative and creative thought processes, and thus expectations for the new hire are unreasonable, if not unobtainable. Everybody is disappointed and everyone loses. Disengagement has commenced.

The next biggest obstacle for the new hire is integration into the existing political structure of the organization. In a well-functioning, healthy culture, the new hire will be gladly and openly welcomed by the team. In the healthy environment, the onboarding process is very detailed, with the goal being to get the new person “up to speed” as quickly as possible. This means not just introduction to the team, but adequate time to get to know other teammates, and requires the commitment of time by all team members. There are many activities that can be incorporated to allow the integration of the new person to happen naturally – rather than forced.

However, it seems these truly **healthy cultures** hardly exist. If the Leader has not already engaged each member of the leadership team, there may be petty, unspoken jealousies of the new hire, and suspicion as to why this particular person was chosen for the job. Was someone already on the team passed over? (The **engagement of a management team** is a topic all to its own and will be left for another day.) New hires are quick to feel underlying tension that can exist in an unhealthy culture. This too, leads to confusion – confusion as to the REAL mission, confusion as to where to place loyalties, and at this early stage, a new hire can already be on the road to derailment. “Why did I accept this position?”

I was recently working with a person who has been hired into a great organization, focused on social issues. As the new V.P of HR, she had many ideas on how to strengthen the organization which, due to significant growth, had outgrown its management structure. However, her ideas were treated as attempt to overturn the current structure. Unfortunately, the current management structure could not sustain the strategy, and now faced with a leader who refused to even listen to new ideas, my client sees that many of her ideas will only be launched into the circular file. After only six months, this bright rising star is already looking for the next opportunity. What a loss!

So, time for reflection. Which of your management team has one eye on the door? Is there a member who remains quiet during team meetings? Are you getting real buy-in to decisions and strategies or do you get only noncommittal acquiescence to new ideas? (This is a huge red flag!) Look at your onboarding process first and if truly that process seems appropriate – continue down the timeline to see where this person started to derail. This can be reversed up to a point and with the coming **Labor Shortage**, your organization needs to maintain and support all your talent.

**New Level Advisors** focuses on leaders and teams to keep everyone moving in the same direction. Our goal is to have everyone happy to be at their jobs each and every day, and putting forth new and innovative ideas. How can we help?? Connect with us at : [www.newleveladvisorsllc.com](http://www.newleveladvisorsllc.com)