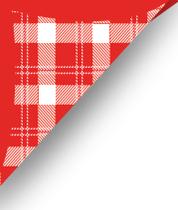




NOW HIRING

HOW TO HIRE A-PLAYERS



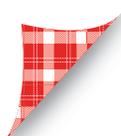
INTRODUCTION

Great people are at the center of all great achievements.

If there is one truth in the world of business, platitudes and buzz words aside, it's that people are the key to success. Hitting our number, making our goals, and getting to the next level are only possible if the people doing the work are good; really good.



Finding, hiring and retaining great people, or "A" players, is no small feat. It's the most difficult challenge for businesses and sales organizations alike. Sales organizations with a strong hiring process and talent identification approach have a huge advantage over those that don't.



Too often, hiring talent is an after thought. Obsessed with the number and the existing team, few sales organizations pay much attention to hiring. When they need more talent, they chuck their needs over to HR and wait. This is a silly approach, one that will leave your sales team at a continual disadvantage.

This ebook is designed to help you identify and vet the best of the best. The “A” players. This eBook is NOT going to help find or source sales people. HR and recruiters are best suited for that. What this ebook will do is to help you weed through the crap and sales people’s song and dance in order to identify the best sales people. The sales people that will crush it in your sales organization.



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WHO'S THIS FOR?

This ebook is for sales organizations and sales leaders who:



Suffer from the 80/20 rule. (80% of your sales is coming from 20% of your sales people)



Wish all the other sales people were like “Jennifer and Ken, your top performers



Don't have a defined, documented process for hiring sales people



Haven't had the best luck hiring “A” players



Have high turn-over



Want to improve the overall quality of their sales team



Think their sales team is leaving money on the table and opportunities are being missed



Feel the Sales Cycle is too long

HOW WE SCREW UP HIRING

Getting the hiring process right is not easy. It takes time, discipline and a sound process. Without these things hiring is like shooting darts. You're aiming at the center, but rarely do you hit the bullseye. Bad hires can be traced to 4 mistakes.

4

REASONS BEHIND HIRING MISTAKES:

SOURCE: WHO? A METHOD FOR HIRING
GEOFF SMART AND RAND STREET

1

Manager is unclear about what is needed in a job

2

Manager has a week flow of candidates

3

Manager does not trust thier ability to pick out the right candidate from a group of similar looking candidates

4

Managers lose candidates they really want to join their team

THE PROBLEM?

"THE RESUME IS NOTHING MORE THAN A RECORD OF A PERSON'S CAREER WITH ALL OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS EMBELLISHED, AND ALL THE FAILURES REMOVED."

This quote can't be anymore true. Resumes are shiny objects designed to confuse us and wow us with slight of hand. They keep us from getting to the real candidate. You can't hire an "A" player from a resume. You have to create a process that counters the resume; that ferrets out the failures and puts accomplishments in their appropriate place.



KNOW WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.

The most important step in hiring “A” players is knowing what you are looking for. You have to know what the person in the role will do every day to be successful. This is NOT to be confused with knowing what skills are required.



You have to know the day to day activities of the position. What will the person have to do every day to be successful? What specific actions will they have to perform? Is it a lot of prospecting? Do they have to read financial documents regularly? Do they have to engage with CEO's or facility managers? Do they have to create proposals? Is there a lot of travel? Does the job require lots of writing? Do they have to plan events? What are the day to day activities required to be wildly successful in the role? To hire “A” players these have to be ferreted out and documented.

I talk about the importance of knowing what it takes to do the job in this post Hiring a Superstar is Useless. Knowing what it takes to do the job ensures you are hiring the right person. Hiring a superstar into the wrong role won't work. Imagine hiring Tom Brady, a superstar, to be an offensive tackle.

TO PROPERLY OUTLINE THE ROLE, BREAK IT INTO 3 AREAS:

GOALS

◀ 01

ENVIRONMENT

◀ 02

EFFORT

◀ 03



GOALS:

List **EXACTLY** what the role has to accomplish. Be very clear and concise. Don't stick to the high-level goals. Be specific. Get them all on the table. At the end of the day what are you expecting from this role? What will success look like? How will it be measured? What are you looking to achieve?



ENVIRONMENT

Outline the working environment. Again, be specific. Is it fast-paced? Is it political or open? Is there a lot of supervision or is it a free-for-all? Is it a grind or are the skids greased? Does it require attention to detail? Does it require lots of baby sitting? What type of environment exists? Not everyone thrives in the same environment.



EFFORT

What's it going to take to be successful? What exactly does the person have to do to make it? Is there lots of calling? Is there a lot of writing? Is there lots of travel? Do they have to write their own RFP's? Do they have to be good with Excel? Do they have to know how to read a financial statement? Do they have to motivate and lead a matrix organization? What effort is required to be successful?



What do they have to do? Not everyone is good at everything.

Before you even think about hiring someone, walk a mile in the shoes of the position. Be absolutely clear about what someone in that position does day to day, week to week, month to month to be successful. Finding a superstar is awesome! However, they WILL fail if they aren't in the right role. You don't want to hire a superstar quarterback, when you need an offensive lineman.

DON'T HIRE THE RIGHT PERSON INTO THE WRONG ROLE.



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Now that you know what the job takes, you have to know what type of skills, doing the work requires. This is where you focus on the candidate, NOT the role. This is where hard and soft skills come in. This is where the importance of understanding the capabilities of the candidate is required. This is where you focus on the skills and experience a particular person has.

TO BE GOOD YOU HAVE TO...



Create a list of the specific skills and traits the candidate has to have be proficient. What does the person performing the role have to be really good at to kill it? Once you do this, rank them. Rank the skills from most important to least important.



Take the time to get granular. Alignment is critical here. This is the biggest point of failure. If this is missed, the hiring process can fall apart.



To get alignment, identify the critical parts of the role, as seen in figure 1, then list the skills and talents required to complete. The more aligned, the more specific the better.

SKILLS MAPPING TEMPLATE

XYZ COMPANY HUNTER

ROLE REQUIREMENTS	SKILL(s) REQUIRED
<i>Cold Calling</i>	successful cold calling, perseverance, proven track record of creating success cold calling campaigns, cold calling process, strong researching skills, thick skin, persuasion, competitive
<i>Prospecting</i>	research, creativity, existing relationships, high energy, networking skills, strong communication
<i>"C" Level Selling</i>	strong and extensive business acumen, good financial background and understanding, strategic planning and understanding
<i>10K and Financial Plan Analysis</i>	



THE MUST HAVES "A" PLAYER TRAITS

Outside of the skills and traits required of the role, there are three universal must haves. These traits should be non-negotiable. If a player DOESN'T have them, regardless of the position, they aren't an "A" player.

ANALYSIS

Analysis is critical because sales is about problem solving. Problem solving requires the ability to take in lots of information, massage it, assess it, filter it, and craft perspectives, understandings, hypotheses, and assumptions. Great sales people must be able to assess what is happening in an account, understand the motives of the buyers, identify unseen opportunities, avoid pitfalls, and more. All of this requires strong analytical skills. Without good analytical skills, sales people are like leaves in the wind. They will be blown all over the place.



CREATIVE

Once the analysis is done, solutions have to be developed and this is where creativity comes in. When given the same information most people will come to the same conclusions and offer similar solutions. The creative sales person offers



different solutions. The creative sales person offers solutions others don't see. They fix problems with creative, outside the box solutions that bring added-value. Creative sales people differentiate themselves based on their solutions, approaches, and execution. They bring more benefit and value. Without creativity fewer doors are opened, less opportunities are found, problems linger longer, the competition is better positioned and selling is harder. Creative sales people make the selling process much easier.

DETERMINATION

At the end of the day sales is hard. It's like climbing a mountain, running a marathon, doing the last rep in a workout. You're going to want to quit. Selling will push you to give up. It will challenge your confidence, your sense of self, your stamina, and your will. You will question whether or not you can get it done. You will want to quit. You will feel it's hopeless and that's where determination kicks in. The best sales people don't quit. They don't give up. They don't let hopelessness settle in. The best sales people are driven by the challenge, the unconquerable and the thrill of doing things others couldn't. In sales there is no success without drive, without the determination to get to the top of the mountain, finishing the marathon, getting the last rep done.



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DON'T OMIT THESE MUST HAVES:

A sales person who is poor at analyzing will miss opportunities. They will not understand the root of the problems, they will misdiagnose. Sales people with poor analysis skills will have smaller pipelines, take longer to close deals and have a terrible win/loss ratio.



Sales reps who aren't creative will have a lower win/loss ratio, will compete on price, have a smaller pipeline and won't retain their customers as long.

Sales reps who don't have determination will lose more deals, turn over more often, and will be less reliable in the end.

Without these 3 traits nothing else matters. It doesn't matter how well you listen, if you can't do anything with what you heard. It doesn't matter how engaging you are if you have nothing creative to offer once you've engaged the client.



It doesn't matter how honest and trusting you're clients see you if you quit because they don't buy anything in the first 3 months. It doesn't matter how well you can communicate if there is no substance to the communication. It doesn't matter how well you can focus on "needs" if you focus on the wrong needs because of poor analysis. These three traits enable every other trait or skill your can hire for.

CORRELATION SUCKS!!!

There are, without a doubt, some things that don't matter. Hiring the right person means getting someone with the skills that cause success, not the skills that correlate to it. We have been trained for years to focus on years of experience, past positions or roles, etc.



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HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

Great opportunity to work for a global market leader! Looking for a highly driven, successful sales and business development professional who is a pure hunter and knows how to build a business or territory from the ground up!

Looking for someone who is ambitious, high energy and driven to succeed. Must have an outstanding track record of selling products or services to sophisticated clients and have a lot of relationship management experience.

Must have at least 10 years business experience and have consistently been a top earner in your industry.

MUST have a college degree.



SUCCESSFUL SALES AND BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL?

Really? Selling what? What does it take to sell your product? What does a successful sales person have to do to make it? What is the day in the life of this position?

BUILD A BUSINESS TERRITORY FROM THE GROUND UP?

Great! But, what type of product - mature or new? What type of market nascent or crowded, unique or commoditized?



What type of business territory is this person supposed to build from the ground up? The skills it takes to build a territory in a new, nascent market are VERY different than those required in a crowded, mature market. What type of capital support does the position have? Will this person have to be scrappy and grow it with few resources, or does she have the backing of a large, financially secure company? These questions matter.

HIGH ENERGY?

What? A cool, calm, deliberate person can't succeed in this position? Is there a reason? Is this requirement really critical to success or does it just correlate? OR, is it a cultural thing. It's OK to want a high energy person, but know why high-energy matters to success and why you would cull the non-high energy person.

TRACK RECORD

This is an interesting one. YES, past performance matters and it CAN be a predictor of future success, but it's not a do all say all. Track record selling WHAT types of products and services? In what industries, to what types of buyers with what types of support, with what types of sales processes with what types of competition in what types of markets? Experience and track record are dangerous hiring traps. Just because someone has met quota for the past 10 years, doesn't mean they will for you.

I've seen it happen OVER and OVER. The cat with the impeccable "track record" is hired and falls on his face. Dig into track record, get what you can out of it, but DON'T make it a requirement.



MUST HAVE 10 YEARS BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

You're kidding, right? Come on. I know people with 5 years experience that will kick the shit out of someone with 20 years experience. Requiring a certain number of years experience is just being lazy. What we are really doing when we ask for a certain number of years experience is making assumptions of what we "think" someone with that many years of experience can accomplish. Don't be lazy, spell out exactly what "x number of years experience" is code for and ask for it.

"MUST HAVE A COLLEGE DEGREE"

Ok...

Mark Zuckerberg,

Bill Gates,

Barry Diller,

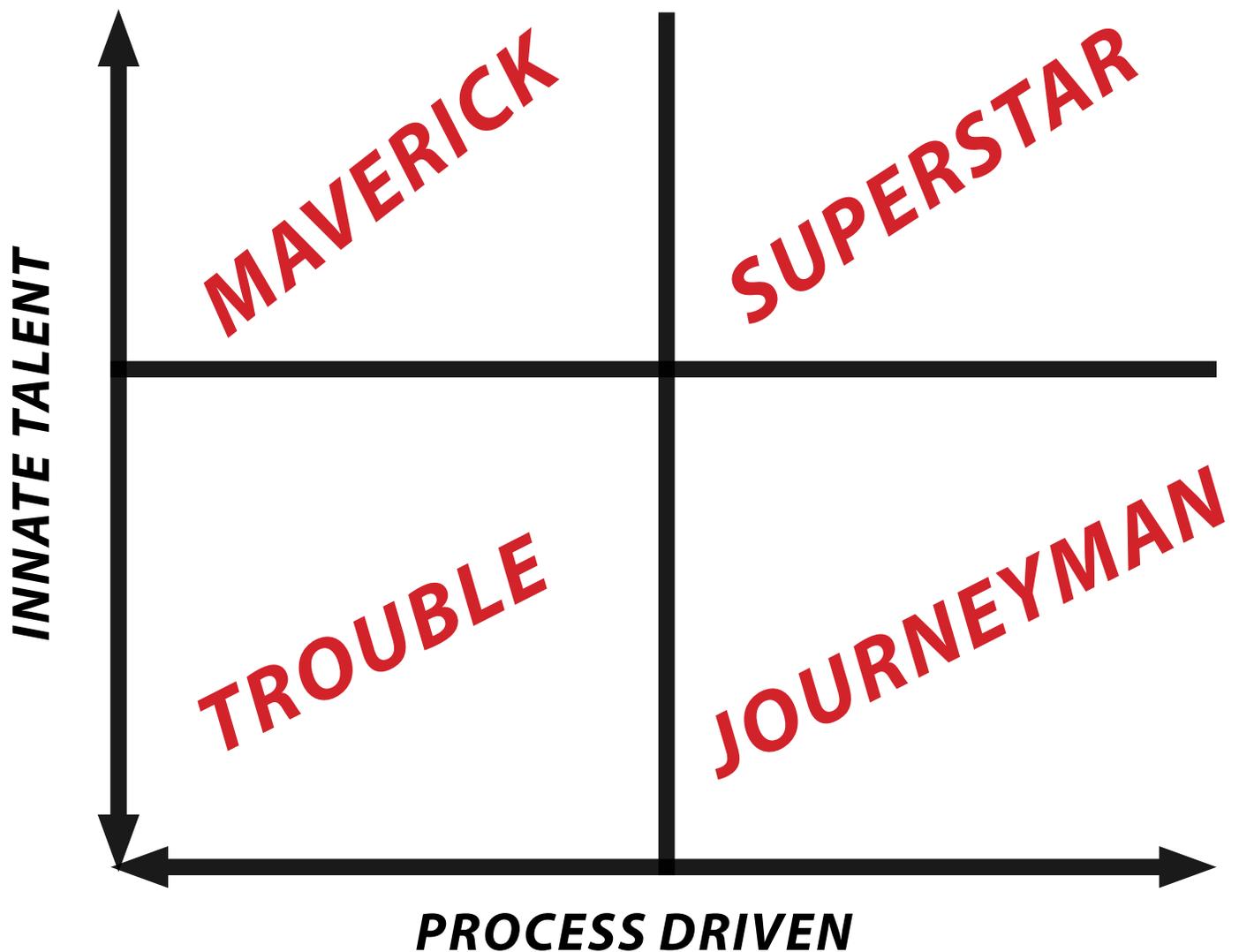
David Geffen,

Jerry Yang and more need not apply.

There isn't much more to say about this. A college degree in no way is the cause of "A" players. At best it correlates and correlations suck when it comes to hiring. Let it go!

Know what type of sales person you are looking for. Be clear about the role you are hiring for and the skills required to be successful. Not all sales people are alike.

SALESPERSON MATRIX



Source: Mark Suster: <http://www.bothsidesofthetable.com>



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"A" PLAYERS ARE ALWAYS "A" PLAYERS

Knowing what the role requires and knowing the skills required to be good in the role get you half way. But winning in the hiring game comes down to being able to determine if the candidates can actually do what they say. Cutting through the B.S. is the hardest part of the hiring process.

Sales people sell, that's what they do. This makes them fantastic interviewers and self-promoters.

INTERVIEW LIKE THE HONEY BADGER

The interview is more than a formality. Think of the interview as reconnaissance. Think of it as business analysis. The purpose of the interview is to validate your assumptions. A resume provides just enough information for us to assume what type of employee this person will be. The interview is where the validation happens. If you want to get "A" players, get good at the interview.

I'm a fairly affable guy, but after a few bad hires early in my career, I learned that the only person who loses for being nice during the interview is the interviewer. There is no screwing around if you want to get to the truth in an interview. You have to interview like a honey badger.



SUCCESS CREATORS

The purpose of an interview is to get to the heart of HOW someone creates their own success. Right? We are hiring people to do a job. Therefore, we need people who are



deliberate in creating their own success. If someone can't explain how they deliberately create success for themselves, they won't create success for your organization.

Successful people are successful in other areas of their lives. Most people manage their own lives like they manage their job. Those who are successful in the work place can often be found excelling or leading in other parts of their life. They are the ones who lead their HOA board, or teach part time or started a non-profit, or sit on non-profit boards, or they led the fundraiser to bring a new park to the community. Successful people succeed outside of the work place as well as on the job.

Use the interview to get to the heart of who someone really is, not who they tell you they are. The people who are most likely to succeed will have a bazillion stories and examples to lean on.



KEY OBSERVATIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW:

1 *Look for proof outside of workplace*

2 *Look for self created processes and approaches (Intellectual Property)*

3 *Find motivation*

4 *Look for failures*

5 *Identify patterns and behaviors that can be predictive*



TOPGRADING

One of the best approaches to interviewing I've seen comes from Geoff Smart and Randy Street's book "Who?" In it they describe what they call Topgrading. Topgrading is designed to identify patterns and behaviors in a candidate's career that can be predictive.

Topgrading requires you chronologically walk through a candidate's career, asking the same questions about each role.

TOPGRADING QUESTIONS:

What were you hired to do?

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

What were some low points during that job?

Who were the people you worked with?

TOPGRADING QUESTIONS:

- 1 What was your boss's name?
- 2 What was it like working with him/her?
- 3 What will he/she tell me were your biggest strengths and areas for improvement?
- 4 How would you rate the team/territory/accounts you inherited on an A,B,C scale?
- 5 What changes did you make/what did you do with what you inherited?
- 6 Did you hire anybody/implement any changes? How would you rate the team/territory/account when you left on an A,B,C, scale?
- 7 Why did you leave that job?

In addition to the Topgrading questions, get personal. Ask "Topgrading" questions regarding personal accomplishments:



PERSONAL TOPGRADING QUESTIONS

1. What personal accomplishment are you most proud of?
2. What were your goals when you began that endeavor?
3. What were the low points?
4. Who was most impacted (besides yourself) ? What would they say about your effort?
5. How are you different today because of your accomplishment?
6. Have you achieved an accomplishment in another area or as a result of your success?
7. Do you still do it? Why or why not?



SCORING

Once you've done all of this and you've gone through the interviews, score the candidates.

Don't score them against each other, but score them against the role and skill requirements. Score the candidate A,B,C.

In addition to mapping skills with role requirements, there are few must haves. No matter what type of sales, no matter what industry, no matter



what, don't hire a sales person that doesn't have DRIVE, isn't CREATIVE and have a strong ability to ASSESS a situation. They are NOT "A" players if they lack the "must haves".

Correlation sucks. Don't hire on based on correlating data. Get to the cause. Years of experience, past success, degrees all correlate to success they are NOT the cause of it. Follow the Topgrading interview process it works. Ask the same questions for every position they've had over the past 10 years/or their career. Expect it to be a 2-3 hours. Don't take a shortcut.

Get personal, remember, "A" players are "A" players everywhere in their life. Look for examples of success in their life when no one is watching.

Interview like a honey badger. The only person who loses for being affable and nice is you. Hiring is the most important activity you can do to ensure success, don't mess it up because you don't want candidates to be uncomfortable. Build a scorecard. Score every candidate as C, B, A across each of the hiring criteria and only hire the candidate who has almost all "A"s. If you no one scores mostly "A"s start over. As a leader, it's your job to hire "A" players. If you aren't hiring "A" players, you aren't an "A" player manager.

REMEMBER:

"An A Player is a candidate who has at least a 90% chance of achieving a set of outcomes only 10% of possible candidates could achieve."

IT TAKES WORK TO FIND "A" PLAYERS



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SOURCES

Who?

A Method for Hiring

Geoff Smart and Randy Street

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Both Sides of the Table Blog

Mark Suster

15 years of my shitty hires and hiring mistakes



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