

PERSONNEL EVALUATION

Archie J. Clapp

A friend of mine is an industrial psychologist. As nearly as I can determine, he is well paid to tell large companies how to keep from putting "square peg" personnel into "round hole" jobs and how to get optimum productivity from each employee.

It occurred to me that some of his high-priced advice might be adaptable to other businesses. The whole idea is to determine what turns on each individual and what turns him off, and then use the right approach when dealing with him. This knowledge can help single out workers who have the potential to move up to more responsible jobs.

What you need to do is figure out whether your people fit into the following categories, then try the suggested techniques to get peak performance:

(1) The Attention Seeker. This one will bury you with suggestions, and argue for hours to get his ideas across to you. He may even slow down his production if he isn't the center of attention.

What to do: Praise will keep the attention seeker doing his best job. Compliments help, especially those heard by his associates. He may have management potential, but must learn to give his workers credit when they earn it.

(2) The Security Seeker. This one is cautious about his money, his opinions and his job. He plans his day in advance, often seeks advice and never makes waves.

What to do: Constant reassurance from you that he is secure will help him do his best job. Train him thoroughly for every new job he handles. He usually does not have the self confidence for a new management position.

(3) The Approval Seeker. This worker wants to be admired by everyone. He's usually very careful about what he says, not wanting to hurt anyone else's feelings. He is always anxious to help another worker, and sometimes sacrifices his own duties in the process.

What to do: Watch carefully how you talk to this worker. A rough "chewing out" could destroy his effectiveness for a month. A friendly approach will get the best results, but one brusque mannerism in your speech will make him worry about whether he's offended you. He usually does not have the potential for management. He would never want to give an unpopular assignment, and he'd be reluctant to crack down even when necessary. He might make a good instructor.

(4) The Perfectionist. This one will keep at a job until it's done. He will come through under pressure, no matter what personal sacrifice he has to make. Delays and slipshod workmanship irritate him. He feeds on his own accomplishments and thinks that no one else can do the job half as well.

What to do: Challenge him with tough jobs. Give him freedom to do the job in his own way whenever possible. Compliment him on his thoroughness and he'll go all out to do his next task even better. This one can become a good manager; however, he must learn to delegate to get results from people.

(5) The Responsibility Lover. This worker likes to run things his own way. He likes to feel indispensable, and likes to think that the wheels couldn't turn without his contributions. Sometimes he may even make decisions that he doesn't have the authority to make, instead of bringing the problem to you.

What to do: Give him the responsibility he wants. But draw the lines of authority clearly, telling him exactly the limits of his functions. If you don't, he might step on your toes every chance he gets. He is definitely good management material, but watch his tendency to bite off more than he can chew. Give him more responsibility, bit by bit.

Remember, these are general types only. According to my friend, one individual can - and usually does - fall into more than one category. Therefore, be sure you don't simply pigeonhole anyone. Merely use these categories as a guide. ("Link Magazine", April 1978)

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