



CHRONICLE

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Article Special points of interest:

- Set priorities
- Don't compromise
- Think long-term

BUILDING YOUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

In our business we have built senior management teams with established, public Fortune 500 companies as well as venture-backed startups. At times we have been asked to find an account executive before the Vice President of Sales has been appointed, or to find a CFO before the CEO is in place. Some organizations consider one person to do both sales and marketing and others have dreams of a controller becoming the president. We are experiencing lean times but sometimes short-term decisions like these are more costly than you think.



Before we take on a search, our due diligence includes researching the company background, meeting the current decision makers and evaluating their requests. Trying to find a sales force before the Vice President of Sales is in place is definitely putting the cart before the horse. Most often the VP of Sales has a network of contacts, methodology and past associations and infrastructure from which to build a team. He/she can usually fill in his own sales force with people that he knows well or can find his team through his many contacts in the industry. We often suggest that a search should be done for the VP of Sales first and then allow that person to take the ownership of building the team.

Some companies going through organizational changes may try to hire a CFO before the new CEO has been appointed. The relationship between the CEO and CFO is a critical makeup of an organization and it is imperative that they have a good, trusting rapport from

the start. This relationship has been highlighted by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act which now holds both of these officers fully accountable. A savvy CFO potential is often reluctant to take a job at a company where the CEO is not yet in place. Therefore, we advise our clients to hire the CEO first and involve him in the process to find a CFO.

Lastly, in the mistaken idea to save time and money some companies may try to hire one person to be the VP of Sales and Marketing, two jobs with very different requirements. In the long run it is better to hire a person with experience in leading a sales organization and another person whose main focus would be the marketing and positioning of the company in order to obtain the results the company is seeking.

We believe in our clients and want to represent them well for the long term. The only way to do

this with honesty and effectiveness is to offer them sound advice for building a long-term executive team.

ASLON Reputation

Our reputation is built on our ability to see a search through from the initial meeting with our client to the assimilation of the finalist into the position. We operate under very strict standards of ethics and methodology to identify the right person to fit the culture and vision of our client. Our integrity-based mission is simply knowing and choosing what is right as we search for leaders. This mentality is also reflected in the type of leaders we find for our clients. This means leaders that are passionate, have a strong value system and an incredibly high IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional quotient).

How to entice investors

Start-up organizations are often founded by technical people who have great ideas and developmental skills but are lacking in the business management side of the equation. They are able to get funding/grants from local agencies to begin the production of their idea but need additional funding to build infrastructure, prove their business mode and sell their product. Many make the mistake of adding operations and technical people to their staff which incur additional costs in wages but does little to entice the capital investment firms across the nation. An organization that is building a management team will have a hard time raising additional money without a knowledgeable and connected CEO. Once the start-up has hired a CEO and executing a quality business plan, they are viewed more favorably as a serious organization by the capitalists who are more willing to invest. This is even more obvious in today's economy where the investors are extremely conservative with their money and need the assurance of a competent leader before they will open their check books.



Focus on "we" not "me"

The interview went nowhere...

Being a retained search firm does not mean that we only work for the client. Every candidate we speak to can turn into a potential client and we treat them with the same respect and courtesy that we would give to any of our clients. Initially, we will screen them to find out their qualifications and desires and then we will consult with them before they are interviewed with our client. Some of the reasons why a candidate is not considered include:

- Lack of clarity around their motivations
- Failure to make eye contact with interviewer
- Being late for the interview
- Inappropriate appearance
- Preoccupation with money
- Badmouthing past employers
- Lack of flexibility
- Failure to ask insightful questions about the opportunity
- Too aggressive or "I" focused
- Lack of energy, drive and passion
- Inability to communicate clearly
- Lack of definitive career planning or goals
- Lack of confidence and self awareness

Excerpts taken from **National Business Employment Weekly**

The "Counter offer"

As many as one-third to one-half of a company's chosen candidates are lost to counter offers. They are becoming increasingly prevalent in nearly every segment of business and companies that are recruiting executives are forced to deal with this competition in many situations. Some companies are proactive and have set up teams to develop counteroffer strategies to convince people to stay. Great employees may have 2-3 companies pursuing them while their current company is trying to stop them from leaving. Companies know that hiring a new employee is much more expensive than offering a counteroffer to the current one.

To avoid losing a valued employee, companies will try to keep them by offering more money, benefits, responsibilities or addressing issues that may cause dissatisfaction. However, these offers usually have strings attached and leave questions about loyalty and convictions.

If an employee has made a decision to pursue another opportunity but is thinking about staying because of the counter offer, several concerns should be addressed. Where did the money come from? Was it the next raise - just early? Will the future at this organization be limited now that they know you might not be counted on for the long term.

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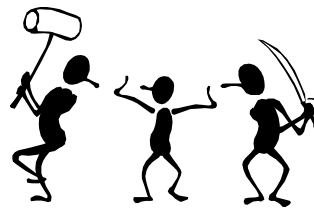
Emotional Intelligence, Part II

Strategies for enhancing a leadership team’s ability to adapt using emotional intelligence can make all the difference. Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense and use emotions to more effectively manage ourselves and influence positive outcomes in our relationships with others. In an interview with Daniel Goleman on Leading Resonant Teams, he lists the following four aspects of emotional intelligence:

“self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.” Every organization has a leader whose influence can shape the culture of the company. Each team has a leader who is responsible for the culture of the team and

how it interacts with the organization. In order to be effective for the team, the leader must make each member aware of these aspects by setting an example, observing the behavior of others and helping people improve. It is a proven fact that emotions play an integral part of life and can effect concentration, motivation and job progression. By noticing when someone is “out of sorts” and taking the time to sit down and discuss the problem in the beginning, the team develops a sense of “self-awareness” and can get back on track to complete the project. They keep a sense of empathy and at the same time, are aware of how they are regarded by the rest of the organization. “A leader can set the norm

that the team needs to manage its collective relationships with the rest of an organization.” Franklin D. Roosevelt once said “It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead - and find no one there.” Keeping focused on your emotions and the emotions of your team will insure that your team and organization is motivated to follow your lead.



The best CEOs have a high EQ in addition to a high IQ.

How does your emotional intelligence rate?

Yes/No

- _____ 1. Do you understand both your strengths and weaknesses?
- _____ 2. Can you be depended on to take care of every detail?
- _____ 3. Are you comfortable with change and open to novel ideas?
- _____ 4. Are you motivated by the satisfaction of meeting your own standards of excellence?
- _____ 5. Do you stay optimistic when things go wrong?
- _____ 6. Can you see things from another person’s point of view and sense what matters most to him/her?
- _____ 7. Do you let clients’ needs determine how you serve them?
- _____ 8. Do you enjoy helping colleagues develop their skills?
- _____ 9. Can you read office politics accurately?
- _____ 10. Are you able to find “win/win” solutions in negotiations and conflicts?
- _____ 11. Are you the kind of person other people want on a team?
- _____ 12. Are you usually persuasive?

If you answered “yes” to six or more and if people who know you well would agree, then you have a high degree of emotional intelligence.

Source: *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, NY, 1998

The “Counter offer” Continued from page 2

Will you have to threaten to quit in order to get the next raise?

The bottom line is to make the offer to the candidate as competitive as possible.

If the candidate gets a counter offer, explain the pitfalls and the reasons why this new opportunity was enticing enough to consider in the first place. The candidate should look at both opportunities as if unemployed and decide which has the most potential.

“It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and find no one there.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Mark Jaros was formerly the Director of Operations for Saint-Gobain in New Hampshire where his last assignment entailed the construction of a manufacturing facility in New Jersey to incorporate a Japanese technology process. Prior to that, Mark spearheaded a greenfield manufacturing facility while living in Thailand for Avery-Dennison.

Our mission is to be the leading integrity-based retained search firm focused on identifying, assessing and delivering world class leaders.

**Interview with Tim Smith on a recent search completion**

Chronicle: We understand that you recently completed a search for the Director of Operations at Tredegar Film Products. What caused them to hire The ASLON Group?

TS: I guess I have to go back a ways to answer that question. Several years ago I was hired by Weatherchem here in the Cleveland area to find their President. One of the finalists who did not take the position was John Kourouglos. We developed a great relationship and kept in touch over the years. John eventually ended up as the General Manager at Tredegar where he was hired to be a change leader and create a more diverse and progressive culture. John was aware of my past search successes in the manufacturing industry and felt that The ASLON Group would be best equipped to find the person that would help transition them to this new culture.

Chronicle: Why did they want to change their culture?

TS: Well, Tredegar Film Products, which is a subsidiary of Tredegar Corporation, is an \$800M manufacturer of plastic films and aluminum extrusions. The plastic films business manufactures disposable personal hygiene, packaging, medical, industrial and agricultural products. In the past, much of their efforts were centered on one large client. They wanted to grow by developing new customers throughout the world. To do so they recognized the need to become more externally focused. They had grown to have manufacturing plants worldwide and wanted to change their culture to embrace this growth. John felt they needed to find people that would bring new ideas and to encourage this change throughout the company. Because of the positive challenges abroad for the films business, Tredegar anticipated much internal and external growth. Their global commercialization, strategic acquisitions and organic growth were continuing to make them a high impact player in the marketplace, but to remain competitive their internal culture needed to fast forward.

Chronicle: So how did you go about conducting this search?

TS: First we learned all we could about the current status of the plastic film industry and who the real players were within the space. Once we put together a list of companies, we identified people at each one with titles of Director, Manager or Vice President of Operations. We then phone screened them to find out their current responsibilities, if they had multiple plant oversight or if they had any international experience. We also involved them in the opportunity to ascertain their interest in the position. Because of the need for the cultural change, we also asked if they had participated in any plant expansions or experienced major company growth during their careers. An important ingredient was assessing the candidate's ability to be sensitive to their environment and have the ability to influence change. We narrowed our list down through phone interviews until we had highly qualified and interested candidates to interview in person and then present to Tredegar. During our process we also interviewed internal candidates to confirm the need to go outside the current culture.

Chronicle: How did you finally complete the process?

TS: Once Tredegar decided on a finalist, we maintained constant contact with the client and the candidate to make sure the offer was acceptable. Our tenacity pays off here because both parties are vulnerable and care is needed to maintain confidence and open, honest communication during all points of the process.

Chronicle: Now that the search is over, what is your next project?

TS: Actually, we never consider a search completely over. Part of our process is to assist in the assimilation of the candidate into the new role. Since we have maintained very close contact with the client and many of the candidate's new peers, we have gained a feeling for their personalities, the current culture and their expectations. We advise the candidate of our knowledge and follow up on a regular basis to assess his/her progress. Therefore, our job never really ends – but the level of involvement changes. We view each completion as a potential new business opportunity for the future and do everything we can to make sure all parties are satisfied with the results.