

Identifying and Placing Superstars

How do you select superstar performers?

Companies seeking superstar employees need to perform their due diligence before initiating the hiring process. Most business leaders assume that the superstar they need must come from outside the company rather than from within. This is not always the case. Following these five steps will ensure that you identify and place superstars appropriately in order to maximize their potential and productivity.

1. **Star performers shine brightly.** The first step in hiring a superstar is to identify those already in your company who have potential. Seeking external superstars before identifying potential stars internally can cheat the organization of the talent already available. Many employees are not placed into jobs that fit their strengths, preferences, skills and abilities. If an employee is inappropriately placed, she will never exceed expectations. Many superstars exist within companies but are never recognized because they were placed poorly in the beginning. Meanwhile, external stars shine brightly, causing managers to overlook the cost of hiring as it compares with the cost of training and promoting internally.

2. **Impulsive desire should not detract from real need.** An appropriate question to keep in mind when searching for superstars is, "Does the organization need this person?" This is the question most commonly asked when purchasing high-cost items with a budget in mind. What will your needs be in a year? What will they be in five years?

3. **Think practically.** Try to imagine the superstar working in your organization. Do you see someone coming in and developing solid relationships, meeting with team leaders, hearing concerns and asking a lot of questions? Or do you see your superstar trying to wave a magic wand to make all problems disappear? Know that it will take months, if not years, to get your superstar up and running to his full potential. Understand that no man or woman works alone, and if high performance depends on understanding the organization, your superstar needs time to develop that insight.

4. **Assessments are investments.** This correlates with number one on our list. Now is the time to focus on understanding and improving the hiring process. If you are so eager to get this new star on board that you circumvent your own selection process, you are taking the same risk as a tightrope walker who does not use a net—and you are making a risky investment, too. Be thorough and well-educated about each possibility before making the offer. Be fair, be consistent and be legal.

5. **Consider the potential outcomes.** If you do decide an external superstar is a perfect fit for your organization, be conscious of the message you give your internal stars. It's best not to imply that this new employee has been hired to correct or improve all of the problems currently inhibiting the business. Rumors are unavoidable when new employees arrive, even in the healthiest of work cultures. Keep in mind that experienced employees may feel threatened by the new person. Business leaders should make the new person's arrival a normal event, keep details of the compensation package private and tell the "star" that he is working among many other stars.

Identifying and placing superstars requires due diligence and thorough consideration of all of the available options. Be practical and thoughtful with your hiring or promotional practices to ensure that everyone is impacted positively, and that employees have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.