I want to hire employees with good skills but passion is something I value even more. How do I spot passion in a potential new hire?

**Passion is the engine** of highly productive employees. These employees can learn to accomplish almost anything. They’re drivers. You can ask employees to talk about their work or your organization and you can see their enthusiasm. However, passion is evidenced by behaviors, outcomes, and productivity. It comes later or doesn’t come at all. If you are personally passionate about your work, you will guess which employees are likely to be passionate also. This is because their values match your own. Spend time exploring work values during interviews, and discuss your organization’s services along with their meaning to the employee. Does the employee see his or her life’s purpose as a chosen occupation, and is that aligned with the missing and goals of your organization? There is a saying: “You can buy merit, but you can’t buy passion.” However, you can get pretty close.

I am not an organized person. I forget things, lose things, and have a messy desk. I am good at what I do, however, I need to hire an assistant. How do I hire someone whom I won’t drive crazy?

**It sounds like you** are a creative spirit but could use some skills and coaching in how to organize yourself and delegate properly. After hiring an assistant, you are at risk for leaping between the extremes of refusing to delegate tasks to delegating wildly and hastily. Plan to talk with an EAO consultant before you hire an assistant, as there may be things you can do to help yourself with being disorganized. The employee you hire will be the most important person in your business life. Assuming you don’t make dramatic changes, he or she will have to be very good at running behind, scooping up the pieces, and making sure initiative get implemented. This person has to cheerfully accept this responsibility and, often, may have to practically read your mind. This is okay if the employee you hire loves this role. Some do. Making some key changes now will set the stage for a gratifying relationship with your new hire.

My employee is at home recuperating from a back injury. I stay in touch by phone to communicate.

**Yes, suggest that he** contact the EAO. Last year, a research study now at the National Institutes of Health examined 94 other studies in an attempt to discover what contributes to positive return-to-work results following a worker’s injury. More than half such injuries were back
I have two employees who don’t get along. It’s starting to create friction within the department. I don’t want battle lines to be drawn among the others. This is my last shot to end the problem, but how and when do I involve the EAO?

I’m confused why an employee that has a six-figure income, is an Ivy League graduate with multiple books, inventions, and reportedly a high IQ isn’t able to make a self-referral to the EAO for a personal problem. Can you help me understand this?

Many people associate high intelligence and notable accomplishments with less likelihood that denial could interfere with the ability to recognize and resolve personal problems. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Mental health treatment professionals and especially those with extensive experience in addiction recovery have observed that these things can interfere with a decision to accept help. Intellectualizing to avoid treatment is particularly challenging to confront bright people with personal problems. What moves people to change is pain or perceived pain of some sort. The more tangible or intangible resources available to the troubled person, the more opportunity exists to avoid or postpone this point of decision. This is what makes intervention a useful tool to help ill persons in denial, and it is why a supervisory referral to the EAO has a high possibility of success, even for the most advantaged employee.

Personality conflicts can lead to quarrelsome relationships. They typically do not respond to classic attempts at problem-solving and negotiating like other workplace conflicts. Ending the quarrelsome pattern requires self-discipline and resolve because it has typically become habitual. The warring parties must believe management is determined to take action if the two employees do not. That’s your most important role if the pattern of behavior you are describing is long term and you unwittingly enabled it by counseling, threatening, and not following through. These problematic dyads often follow a progressive path: mini-crisis, counseling or pleading by supervisors, periods of calm, and a repeating cycle. Make employees aware that change is nonnegotiable and that you are committed to an administrative or disciplinary solution to help the employees change if they don’t make progress. You can consult the EAO and the employees can utilize EAO services to help improve their relationship.

NOTES

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