



Know Your Players Going Into 2011

Business teams are no different than sports teams. All the players come with varying strengths and weaknesses. If the individual goals are aligned with the team or organization goals, you will be far more likely to have a winning team!

Some sports teams are better than others at measuring employee performance and developing precise measures that look at every aspect of performing key activities on and off the field. When we look a little deeper, we find that these best practices are often several levels above those found in the average corporate environment.

Identify and Prioritize Critical Success Factors

By prioritizing its talent management plan to recruit and develop the best talent, a team can end up with the best statistics in the league. More often than not, the result is a productive winning season.

Prioritizing the list of open positions allows hiring managers and the human resource team to focus on the most important roles first. As the economy turns, think about your organization and which positions hold the key to building the business. It's important to prioritize because it can be a challenge to focus, acquire and develop the best talent in every single business area or job at the same time. If an organization treats all positions equally, it is opening the firm to mediocrity. Every business has its top performance drivers, so it must prioritize around them.

Sometimes You Need to Make a Trade

Sports teams swap talent frequently as needed. They are looking for the best players with specific attributes to round out the team.

Many talent managers are reluctant to deal with underperforming talent or acknowledge that some people are no longer a proper fit with the current needs of the organization. Every organization should be looking to have the right people in the right roles. By developing a job benchmark for each position, the organization will be better able to ensure it has the best players in every key position.

The job benchmarking process is a logical opportunity to re-align each position with the most up to date strategic business initiatives. An effective benchmarking



process calls for assembling a team of subject matter experts to collaborate on defining the ideal competencies for the job.

It's About Performance

Performance has nothing to do with age or education. Sports teams look for individuals who know how to perform.

Hiring managers and human resource professionals tend to create a laundry list of criteria when hiring. Education or specific experience of an individual may not always result in the best hire. If the organization has already created a job benchmark, it can assess the talent's behaviors, motivators and attributes against that benchmark which is telling what the ROLE needs for success. This process helps predict what kind of player is going to show up for work.

If a star performer has the necessary behaviors, motivators and attributes to do the job but falls short in a few specific *skill* areas there are opportunities to coach the individual to develop the needed skills and close the gaps.

Superstars Are Important but So Are Team Players

Sports teams focus on their superstars and key positions. However, General Managers know they must also rely on those players supporting those superstars and key positions to have a great team. They also rely on a strong bench to provide backup support and build for the future.

When an organization fails to prioritize and treats everyone the same, it misses the opportunity for superstars to shine and stay with the organization. But it does a bigger disservice to the other individuals in the organization when it doesn't value the role each one plays in helping the company prosper.

One way to plan for a strong bench is to have a succession plan for each key role. There may be some individuals that aren't quite ready to step into a key role but the company wants to keep them if they are superstars. If the company knows what motivates each of its superstars it will be able to keep them by providing them with a development plan that keeps their interest while the manager help them get ready for the next step in their career.

Build and Define Your Performance Culture



Most sports teams have been winners as well as losers. They are all focused on being the best. Sports are all about performance, if you don't perform, tickets won't be sold and salaries won't get paid.

Many organizations are focused on equal treatment for all. Once you know what motivates your people to show up at the office and work for you, you'll know how to reward them. For example companies use money to motivate and keep their people. Believe it or not, everyone isn't interested in money as a motivator. Those who aren't will be grateful for it, but they won't stay because of it. If primarily motivated by money, employees are rewarded in a way that is meaningful to them and they will stay for the long term and perform at their peak; however, other factors may be more important motivators.

Read how Steve Chapman, President of The Gladiators Professional Hockey team has been implementing some of these techniques.

The Gwinnett Gladiators Professional Hockey Team (ECHL) is part of the Atlanta Thrashers (NHL) system. The Gladiators have been in the Atlanta market for 8 years, since relocating from Alabama. Below are excerpts from an interview between Steve Chapman, President of the Gwinnett Gladiators and Bill Gelderman, Managing Partner at Strategic Human Insights, LLC.

Gelderman: It's been close to three years since we began assessing talent in the Gladiators organization. What was the first indicator telling you that assessments should be an important part of your selection process?

Chapman: When we first assessed all the existing staff, I was amazed by your ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of staffers we had observed for months or years. The process brought clarity to issues we had struggled to identify and define.

Gelderman: From your perspective, what was the biggest take away from that experience?

Chapman: I'd say there were several. The first, and maybe the most important, was the understanding that we could now identify the characteristics and motivations we need in our new hires. By focusing on those, we've eliminated much of the guesswork from the selection process. Secondly, we were able to better understand our existing staffers and improve our ability to communicate, manage and develop them, both personally and professionally. Lastly, there is now a far greater confidence in both our process and our expectations of new hires.



Like most traditional businesses, in the world of professional sports, nothing happens unless somebody sells something. In our case, tickets and advertising pay the bills and salaries. We need people who can multi-task, but first and foremost they must be able to present our brand and sell.

Gelderman: What has changed, or what have you learned, as a result of implementing the use of assessments in your selection process?

Chapman: I no longer rely as heavily on work history or education. While those may play a part, they are not an indicator of future success in our roles. Also, I've come to have a greater appreciation of your favorite saying – "What you see isn't always what you get." That could not be more true. The assessments are not the only measure we use, but we have found them invaluable in helping us understand who we are talking too and they've kept us out of some major minefields.

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The use of consistent, validated and work related assessment tools can dramatically improve your odds, reduce your costs and increase your company's productivity.

Please contact us to learn more and experience the power of assessments first hand with a complimentary assessment.

Please visit the Gladiators website at www.gwinnettgladiators.com or better yet, get out to the Gwinnett Arena on Sugarloaf Pkwy, Duluth, GA and see a game. It's a great night out for the whole family.

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