

# STUDY YOUR TEAM

How to make sure your leaders are right for you

In last month's column, we offered three suggestions to form the foundation for a leadership team: Clearly define your value. Clearly define your role as CEO. Clearly define the purpose of your team.

Until you understand the value your organization provides to stakeholders, the role you need to play within your team and the value your team will deliver within your organization, it will be virtually impossible to ensure you have the right people to lead with you.

Once you have clarity in these three critical areas, it becomes an easier (but never easy) job to fill the roles on your team. One simple way to think about selecting leaders is to focus on doing and being.

Doing is the ability and proven track record to accomplish what the role requires. Both are critical if one is to serve on a leadership team. It's not enough to have ability. If one is to be a leader, there must be a track record that

instills confidence and trust from peers and other employees who must believe in that leader. And, of course, when hiring an outside resource for your team, one must take great pains to ensure that you have thoroughly vetted the claims made regarding past performance.

Study leadership roles. Have you identified the competencies necessary to perform each role within your team? For example, what is the role of your CFO? In addition to financial acumen, does she need to be the point person for the investment community because that's not your area of strength? It is imperative that you think about the complement of strengths on your team and not just the strengths of team members in isolation.

What about HR? Do your employees need more of a relational HR leader rather than one that prefers to focus on HR transactions? Do you need an HR leader that prefers to be a face of the leadership team and interact with employees or one that is in his office poring over the latest compensation and benefit options?

In addition to the competencies for each role, you need to think about the competencies that your team as a whole needs to possess. These may be found in one person or multiple team members.

Think about questions. Are there people on your team who naturally ask the following types of questions?

**1.** Where are we going next? What are the latest, most relevant trends in our industry? How are customer needs changing? How do customers describe our value? What is the strategy?

How will the strategy cascade throughout the organization?

**2.** How will this initiative get done? What's the timeline for getting it done? How much will this cost? Who will be affected? Who will do it?

**3.** How will these initiatives be communicated? How do we use these initiatives to develop our people? What are our greatest strengths? How do they differentiate us?

You'll notice that these questions are a blend of strategy and tactics, tools and people. A well-rounded team will have people who have a natural preference for being advocates for the critical domains of your business.

What happens when you don't have the ideal complement of team members? Look at your succession plan to identify your next generation of leaders. Find the leaders who can serve your senior leadership team by filling in the gaps. This creates an opportunity to see them grapple with both strategic and tactical organizational issues.

Ability and track record are critical for your fellow leaders. Ensuring that you have a good match for both the role of the individual and the strengths needed for your team are essential for building a high-functioning team. <<

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