

HIRING DECISIONS: ADVANTAGE OR SELF-IMPOSED LIABILITY?

By Mason Duchatschek

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Mason Duchatschek
masonduke@aol.com

AMO Employer Services <http://www.amo-es.com>

It's almost cliché to claim that employees are a competitive advantage. Unfortunately, with many companies, that claim is more fiction than fact.

It's been my observation that many of the challenges viewed as new and/or growing problems by employers, are in fact, old problems that were left unchecked or unnoticed.

In my opinion, during recent years, the robust nature of the economy brought success to company leaders despite their decisions and actions. Employers became enamored with their success and eased up on what should have been a relentless pursuit of continuous improvement. Not long ago I learned of a study regarding employee productivity that revealed average employees operate at about 60% of their potential. That's like paying for eight-hour workdays and allowing employees go home a little after lunch.

It goes without saying that different people have different degrees of capability. The first challenge employers have is to separate the most capable individuals from the least capable. The second challenge is to separate those individuals who perform closest to their capabilities from those who don't. If the average employee operates at about 60% of their potential, for every employee who performs at 90%, there is one who is performing at 30%.

I believe that employers who fail to legally gather all the relevant, job-related information they can about an applicant before they make an offer are playing Russian roulette without checking all the chambers of the weapon first.

Simply put, employers who fail to utilize pre-employment testing, background checks, reference checks, drug tests, trial periods, and interviews are not maximizing their probability of success. Hiring capable instead of incapable individuals and 90% performers rather than 30% performers unnecessarily becomes a matter of chance.

By implementing this one simple strategy of utilizing all available resources to hire the best and avoid the rest, employers can choose to create true advantages rather than self-imposed liabilities.

(c) 2003 Mason Duchatschek. Duchatschek is co-author of "Sales Utopia" and president of AMO-Employer Services, Inc. (www.amo-es.com). He can be reached at 1-800-245-0445, or by email at masonduke@aol.com.

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