

How to identify a 'strategic star' in your organization

In the event industry, I am often getting phone calls to recommend places to find high quality staff, and specifically, staff who can think and act strategically. Unfortunately, these people (like in any industry) are few and far between. So what does one do, when you are running a company, and you need a plan to get strategic people?

I liked the way one of my old employers did it, in grooming future leaders, many of which today occupy positions of authority in many of the industry's well known companies (Forrester, Palladium, Shared Insights, IBC, Cambridge Health Tech, Pulver, etc) and think that this should be a model for all.

My advice is always take the long view and grown your own people, if you can afford it. Doing this usually creates a bond which withstands the ups and downs of the business. So how do you identify staff that might qualify as 'strategic stars' of the future?

Here are my five characteristics of success. The person must be:

1) Energized

Someone who may have to handle monotonous tasks in their current position, but does them, with pleasure, and can usually found in an upbeat pleasant mood. Frequently 'drives' the team forward.

2) Flexible

Someone who can change speeds at the 'drop of a hat' and is a good multitasker.

3) Customer Focused

Since a company with no customers is no company, you should be looking for someone who deals with customers professionally, and sees the connection between what their work, and the customer.

4) Takes Initiative

In my career, it's been rare for staff to come and ask for more assignments, or come to me unasked with improvements or new projects, but I certainly remember when it happens. Does projects without being asked.

5) Happy

Is this person a 'smiler', great to be around? You're off to a great start!

Given these five characteristics, it may make sense to mentor these employees and start increasing the strategic nature of their projects. You'll be glad you did!

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