

## Member's Quarterly

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### Feature

# Recruiting a Leader

*Have you really got what it takes?*

**Y**ou need to find a leader for a position that is becoming vacant in the next six months. There is a succession plan in place, but this has identified a handful of internal possibilities and the corporate culture is to find the best, internal or not. You are not looking for a good leader. You are looking for a **great** leader. So what *do* you actually look for in a great leader?

Part of the answer to that question lies in looking at it from an opposite perspective — what you don't want to look for. A common mistake for a leader is to look for someone who is "just like me." After all, the leader has had success and it is natural to think that someone with a similar background, personality, attitude and work style would also be successful. In reality however, when building a leadership team, diversity is paramount. This is not meant to say that you automatically rule out someone who is similar, as long as you can show that the person can adapt to changing situations.

It is also important not to judge a book by its cover. This includes physical appearance, background and personal beliefs. As long as someone's personal values (and there is a difference between values and beliefs) are in line with the organization's, there should be no problem.

As an example, you may have an introvert who personally values having a couple of close friends, contrasted with the extrovert who needs to be around lots of people most of the time. Both the introvert and the extrovert can align themselves with a corporate value that supports strong working relationships and teamwork. However, in another example, if someone wanted to contribute to an organization simply by showing up and getting the job done but the company puts a strong value on learning and change, there is likely to be a misalignment. It doesn't make the individual a bad person, just not a good fit for that organization.

There are some universal traits that I believe need to be focused on, no matter what the culture or values, and it all has to do with credibility. There are five things a leader needs to do to establish and maintain credibility. The key to all five is consistency – not just once in a while.

1. Show up on time.
2. Finish what you start.
3. Do what you say you are going to do.
4. Say "please" and "thank you".
5. Always tell the truth.

Keep in mind that people will say they do all five, so in an interview, you need to ask questions about these behaviours and listen carefully to your candidate's responses. For starters, did they show up to the interview on time and did they come prepared base on previous discussions?

These five traits will carry a leader through a lot of ups and downs. By the way, how are you doing on these traits?

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