

BLS -200 - September 2025

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Topic: The importance of having “the right people on the bus” in a fast-paced world

Introduction:

In businesses, offices, malls, schools, churches, factories to name a few organizations there are a few common denominators. According to me I think that among these denominators the human resource factor is central and most vital component in these industries. As AI makes strides in these industries, sometimes creeping and then at times pouncing in the everchanging fast paced technologically driven world we live in, I believe the human contribution cannot be minimized.

Recruitment process

Being part of a management team having to recruit new employees has shown me the importance of being able to discern character. Candidates can perform amazing in an interview and seem the right fit thanks to our modern world of technology that gives answers at the press of a button. These candidates could also be very skilled and knowledgeable in their respective fields. I have however learnt that character trumps skill when it comes to hiring. To put it in another way as quoted by the founder member of Kingdom Ministries of Christ, Pastor Eddie O’Neill; “Your character carries your gifting”. This once again speaks to who a person is at its core before the what he is able to do. Skills can be taught to a person who is both teachable and submissive. However, character flaws cannot be unlearned as easily as skills can be taught.

Mr John Pilkington an educational consultant once told me that when sitting on a panel during the recruitment process he does not ask questions he observes the reaction to questions and the behaviour when answering. According to him he learns more about the candidate this way than through the often too well formulated

pre-generated answers. He also listens to what is not said and looks at little gestures that indicate being relaxed or uncomfortable when answering certain questions. All of this becomes very important when recruiting new people who have to come on board to be part of working towards attaining a vision.

Blessers vs builders

We get blessers vs builders, to steal a phrase from the current principal of Global Leadership Academy in Jeffrey's Bay. Blessers are the ones only there for a season using your organisation as a stepping stone versus your builders who are all in and catches the heartbeat and understands the why opposed to only the what. Blessers might be highly skilled and competent, but because they do not always understand or are willing to learn to understand might work against your WHY, because they are pushing their own agenda. They might also not be willing to change course. Jim Collins in Good to Great says that a strong team can adapt to any challenge even if the direction changes. Builders are the ones who believe in the vision and share in the core principles and are willing to go far and beyond what is expected to further the mission. They are the ones who see the bigger picture and who are not easily distracted but remains focussed on what needs to be done, all the while not losing sight of the WHY. This makes it easier for them to be on board even if the direction changes, because what is central like the value system and the mandate does not change.

In his book, Leaders eat last, Simon Sinek raises the point that it's not just about skill but about chemistry and values alignment. He says "better to have someone who fits the culture and can grow into the role; than someone highly skilled who damages trust".¹ He also says, "The leader's job is to protect the Circle of Safety and remove threats to it – even if that threat is a high-performing individual who does not share the group's values."²

1 Simon Sinek, Leader eat last: Why some teams pull together and others don't (New York: Portfolio/Penguin,2014), 79.

2. Ibid., 73 -75

This speaks to the fact that a highly skilled person who is not all in can do more damage to the organization than a person less skilled that has the heart of the team. Thus, sharing values, believing in the purpose of the organization and being able to build trust outweighs being skilled, but toxic at the same time. According to Simon Sinek having the right people include those who look out for each other, prioritize the team over self – interest and contributes to a sense of belonging and psychological safety. This speaks to having the right people in your organization compared to those who act selfishly and would undermine the circle of safety irrespective of having great skills and being able to perform. An organization would be more hurt and set back by those undermining the circle of safety where there is a culture of team members feeling secure and supported.

What the right people needs and who they are?

When we look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs we see that it corresponds with Sinek's circle of safety as both shows that psychological and physical safety is foundational for humans to thrive. Once safety and belonging are in place people feel valued and empowered and meaningful contribution. Having the wrong people on the bus undermines safety as focus is on self-protection or job-security rather than on teamwork and building the organization. On the other hand, the right people support each other to work towards achieving a common goal. So, Maslow's theory shows that when lower needs are met people can achieve their full potential and this depend on who is on the team. ³

In his book, *The Advantage*, Patrick Lencione speaks to the concept that the right people are not just competent but have the ability to build trust, align values and can work towards a common goal. "He argues that organizational success depends on building a cohesive leadership team that trusts one another, aligns around shared

3. Abraham H Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed(New York, Harper & Row 1987). 15 - 31

values, and focuses on collective results – echoing the principle of getting the right people on the bus”⁴ So Collins, Sinek, Maslow and Lencione are of the idea that the people you hire plays an integral part in the health of your business. Having the wrong people can cause irreparable damage to a business. Having the right people on the other hand, creates a healthy atmosphere where people can reach their full potential while aligning with the rest of the team to ensure maximum growth for the organization.

So, in conclusion what I deduct from them is, that people that align with your values, have character and the ability to build trust to name a few are the right people to have on your bus. They are all of the mindset that who is on the team is more important than what the team does. This I can attest to as I have first hand experienced that the person with excellent skill set is not always the right person for the organization because values do not align with those of the organization. Harm is done when this happens as core values must always be defended where you want it to be transferred you now have to justify it. Much grace and wisdom is needed in the recruitment process to ensure you have the right people on the bus, the ones that runs with the vision and have the well-being and growth of the organization prioritized.

4. Patrick Lencione, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-bass, 2012),27 - 45

Bibliography

1. Abraham H Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed (New York, Harper & Row 1987).
2. Collins, Jim. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Other's Don't*. New York: Harper Business, 2001
3. Patrick Lencione, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-bass, 2012)
4. Simon Sinek, *Leader Eat Last: Why some teams pull together and others don't* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin,2014).

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