

## What does it mean to Hire for Fit

Written by Gregg Patberg  
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Would you build a long-term personal relationship or marry someone based on their knowledge and skills? Of course not! But that is what most senior managers do when they hire a new employee. What is more important is to find people that have the right fit ... this is the single greatest factor for building successful long-term relationships, including long-term successful employment relationships.

So what is fit? In the simplest of terms ... it is the innate characteristics that make-up the personality of the parties involved. Whether the parties are husband-wife, boyfriend-girlfriend or employer-employee, it requires that the innate characteristics or personalities, of the parties involved, 'fit' together.

### Innate Characteristics

What do we mean when we talk about innate characteristics or personality? Innate characteristics are the thoughts, values, and habits that determine how they think, what motivates them and how they relate/communicate with others. These can be called innate characteristics because how they do these things makes up their very core ... the most fundamental things about them. A very important point is that these innate characteristics are unlikely to change.

Since people have these innate characteristics that make-up their personality, matching their personality to that of a company will provide a greater probability for long-term success. This doesn't mean that as a senior manager making a hiring decision that you should ignore a prospective employee's knowledge and skills. One should ensure that the new employee meets a certain level of competency in these areas. Unfortunately, most executives spend too much time on these areas and not enough time on determining if the candidate's innate characteristics are in-line with the company's personality.

### HP's Example

Lets take a fairly recent example of a hiring failure based on a lack of fit. Remember when Carly Fiorina took over the helm of Hewlett-Packard. Was HP a successful company? Yes. Was Carly Fiorina a successful executive? Yes. On paper, this relationship should have worked out ... but

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it didn't. Why? Ms. Fiorina had the necessary skills and knowledge to do the job, but her innate characteristics/personality, or 'fit', was not the right one for HP.

You see HP had a distinct corporate culture or personality. The company is very successful because it is dedicated to its core fundamental characteristics. These core fundamental characteristics make-up the company's personality. This personality is ingrained in the fabric of the people that work at the company. Unfortunately in this case, Ms. Fiorina's innate characteristics were not a match for HP's core fundamental characteristics ... so a separation ensued.

If this personality is ingrained the fabric of the employees, doesn't it make sense to hire people that have a personality that fits in with the core personality of the company. Absolutely, it does!

### Hire for Fit

I would venture to say, when hiring, most senior managers spend 80% of their interviewing time on knowledge and skills with the rest of the time on fit and, of course, small talk. The unfortunate part about this is that research suggests that 2/3 of the determinate for having long-term success with a new employee is based on how well they 'fit', leaving the remaining 1/3 to knowledge and skills. As one can see from this formula the chance of hiring a new employee with long-term success is in the neighborhood of 35-40%. However, when these senior managers spend 80% of their time determining if the new employee's innate characteristics are in-line with the company's personality then the probability for long-term success is closer to 70% plus. As an executive hiring a new employee, which scenario would you like to have?

As a thought, we all know friends or colleagues that have gotten a divorce. How many times have you heard from one, or both, parties that they thought they could change the other person? This can be similar to what happens when a senior manager hires a new employee. It is so important to remember that the core of the new person, their innate characteristics, are not going to change after they are hired. Too many times executives make the mistake of thinking that an innate characteristic is a skill or knowledge.

You see, skills and/or knowledge can be learned or developed. But can people really change their personality or innate characteristics? In a perfect world the answer is yes, but since we are living in the real world ... one shouldn't expect a new employees to change their personality.

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The bottom line is clear ... spend the vast majority of your time determining if a prospective employee 'fits' with your organization or you will once again be going through the hiring process ... and much sooner than you would like.

***For more information about the services provided by HiringForFit.com, please give us a call at 1-812-618-4747 or [CLICK HERE](#) to send an email and we will call you.***