

We ask for Performance, so why do we get something else?

One of the intriguing dilemmas facing corporate executives today is the lack of ownership by so many within their organizations. Executives are looking for people that will focus upon the results and outcomes to deliver the results that are forecasted. Too often, they find that politics and a “pass the buck mentality” are the norm. Why?

Research being conducted by Target Training International, Ltd. (TTI) has discovered the reason behind this disconnect between what corporations are looking for and what they are actually getting. The research is showing that the issue is critical and the probability is high that it is impacting your company in a very negative way.

So what is the issue? Corporations are looking for people that can deliver results. The research is using thousands of benchmarks of jobs and positions. The people benchmarking the traits are identifying the traits necessary for the job or position to be successful. This research shows that in five key jobs - Personal Accountability was picked over 80% of the time. The question now is ... what is Personal Accountability?

The technical definition of Personal Accountability is the ability to be responsible for the consequences of one’s own decisions and actions; taking responsibility for these decisions, and not shifting the focus to blame or poor performance somewhere else, or on others. This derives from an internal responsibility to one’s self to be accountable. This internal willingness to own up will tend to be exhibited outside in one’s actions.

Using proven and validated assessments, TTI has been maintaining a database of the characteristics for both high and low performers and the statistical significance of the overall population relative to these performance traits. The assessments calculate a numerical standard that is utilized to predict performance. Using the scoring system, allows for prediction of individual performance in over 80 personal attributes. Using Personal Accountability as an example, here are the standards relative to good and bad scores in this trait:

A person with a good score in this attribute will not try to make excuses for a bad decision and will normally make every effort to identify the cause of that bad decision. Their focus will be more on correcting the problem to ensure future success than on protecting themselves.

A low score in this area can indicate a person who is more concerned with appearance and image, than with *results and success*. They will seek to place blame for a bad decision on any factor which does not lie solely with them, for doing so would detract from their abilities in the public image. Although achieving goals and success can be important to this person, their self-image is often fragile and protecting it is much more important to the individual.

With the success traits identified by organizations, it should be easy to find people that would have this trait in their personal strengths – Right? As Lee Corso says, “*Not So Fast My Friend!*” There is a very important missing factor, the data is telling us that the overall population is closer to the “bad” scores than the “good” scores! In fact, the national norm ranges between a half to two points below the national norms of the other 80 attributes or personal traits.

Why is this important? The research is showing us that the general population has a low score on personal accountability. This means that most people are more concerned with appearances and image than substance and results. The ability to take matters into their own hands and get results on a consistent basis is not a strength in most individuals who are applying for jobs within your company.

Working with organizations over the past decade, we (InnerActive Consulting group) found that individuals willing to take responsibility for their results and the action steps to deliver those results has not been the standard or the norm. The average corporation citizen is lacking in this important performance factor.

The good news is that people can become aware of the action steps that will deliver consistent results. As the awareness level is raised, usually through training and development sessions, people begin to deliver positive and sustainable results. As they continue to provide higher levels of accomplishment, they feel better about themselves which leads to higher levels of personal self-esteem.

There are three things that organizations can do to improve the performance and results of their people. First, benchmark positions or jobs, let the job tell you what is pivotal to the job’s success. Second, use validated and proven assessments to give you objective data regarding the personal talents of your people. Finally, the third thing to provide to the people that are currently on the payroll and the people hired with lower scores in this important trait, is a comprehensive development process on personal accountability. These three steps will upgrade the quality of the most important asset within the company – the human capital. People can create appreciation in the corporate world faster than any other process, equipment or strategy.

Begin improving your selection process by using objective benchmarking and talent assessments. Then use the information to improve your performance system by utilizing targeted development to fine-tune the talent in your organization. Your returns on these investments can make a difference in creating shareholder value and wealth. Better people lead to immediate increases in productivity and profitability.

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