



5 Hiring Mantras: Part 4 of 5

For review, the first Kids First Hiring Mantra is hire the character, train the skill; #2 is we shall go short staffed before we go poorly staffed; #3 is hire and promote from within. Each of the Kids First Hiring Mantras came about one at a time under different circumstances but using a single problem-solving model. We experienced pain due to an employee who did not fit in; we stopped, reflected, identified why/how we went wrong and we captured a hiring principle—a 'Mantra'—to offer us guidance and discipline and to 'save us from ourselves' in the future.

Mantra #4: when in doubt, don't hire. In seminars across the USA and Australia, dozens of times I have asked the following series of questions:

- (1) "When faced with a gap in staffing, have you ever interviewed a candidate who had a stellar resume, deep and broad experience, and 'correctly' answered every question you asked; yet, despite this, after the interview, you had an uncomfortable feeling or gnawing sensation in your gut about that person?" Usually about half of the group will acknowledge they have been in that situation before.
- (2) "Of those who had their hands raised, how many went ahead and hired that person anyway?" Of that subgroup, about 80-100% will acknowledge they went ahead and hired anyway.
- (3) "Of those who hired anyway, how many later regretted their decision?" Of those who previously had their hand up, virtually

EVERY one again raised their hand with a groan or an acknowledging chuckle.

It is likely you have had your own similar experience. Why do we business people do this? For at least a couple of reasons. One, for most people, we tend to want to see the good in others. Two, probably the stronger reason is that our desire to fill the staffing gap is so great that we 'are willing' to risk the future long-term pain that will result from a cancerous employee to sooth our immediate short-term pain of being short-staffed. This tendency is the opposite of delaying gratification, the most important discipline for satisfaction in life according to the Stanford Marshmallow study. Read (www.sybervision.com/Discipline/marshmallow.htm)

What does **Mantra #4** mean to Kids First Leaders in real life? If, during the interview process, you have ANY doubts, any gnawing sensation about your candidate, any uncomfortable feelings that you cannot articulate or put your finger on, it is your responsibility to respond, "Thank you for your time...next candidate, please."

To learn more about how to refine your intuition, may I recommend two books, *Blink* and/or *Reading People*, both available at bookstores. Make it a great February!

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