



5 Hiring Mantras: Part 5 of 5

Review: Kids First Hiring Mantras: #1, hire the character, train the skill; #2, we shall go short staffed before we go poorly staffed; #3, hire and promote from within; #4, when in doubt, don't hire.

It no longer surprises me but still distresses me, how typical it is in our industry that those making the hiring decisions tend to repeat the same poor hiring practices over and over even though they 'should know better.' For example, countless times I have seen an intelligent and 'experienced' manager have blatant evidence available to him/her that a candidate has in the past displayed a pattern of poor integrity yet he/she hires that person anyway. In more rational moments, that same intelligent manager will verbalize to you that such a practice will inevitably bring pain upon the organization. WHY, WHY, WHY do people sabotage themselves? I don't know, but Kids First Sports Center is dedicated to stopping such foolishness. That is why we created our Five Hiring Mantras—to remind us that discipline plays the lion's role in successful hiring. In my considerable BOOT CAMP experience, I have come to the conclusion that most managers know 80-90%

of all they need to 'know' about hiring—what they lack is discipline!

Mantra #5: When you find you have made a poor hiring choice, act swiftly, remembering your goal is to do the greatest good for the greatest number. As you see, this mantra has nothing to do with hiring at all—it is about firing. Even if you are very good at identifying character and skill level, you may, upon occasion, find that you missed a 'read' on a candidate. When that happens, the first part of Mantra #5 reminds us to not let a bad situation drag on and this takes courage. The second part of Mantra #5 exists to give us courage through clarity of thought. Firing a person is painful—painful for the person; for those who may know and like the person; and, certainly for you, if you are like most people. This part of the mantra brings to consciousness the reality that a leader must from time to time knowingly make decisions that cause pain for another (the few) to do the right thing (the greater good). Some people struggle mightily with this line of thinking. I will go so far as to state that the inability to think and act in this manner is a great limiter for many in leadership positions. Such people are not bad people,

but they generally are poor leaders. The bottom line is get used to and live by Mantra #5 or you will bring pain upon yourself and your organization.

Before I close this series of five articles, may I add this related thought about hiring. For some time, I have pondered the addition of a sixth mantra. Certainly, one could argue that when one takes the five mantras as a whole, my sixth mantra is implied, therefore, unnecessary. Yet, I live in the real world and have found that redundancy, skillfully applied, not only has its place, it is wise, upon occasion. Regardless, here is my thought for Mantra #6: leopards don't change their spots. I just looked up that phrase in an online dictionary and found this idiom: leopards don't change their spots (leopards can't change their spots); people's personality traits, ways of doing things, etc., do not change. Think about it.

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