

## October 2008 HR-Xchange Summary:

### Interviewing: "Going With Your Gut" (What the heck does that mean?)

This month's HR-Xchange saw attendees eager and willing to talk about the topic. Attendance and participation was superb with many new faces willing to take a deep dive into the topic. Linda Wells presented the following questions for small group discussion.

Table discussion:

1a. When have you followed your gut instinct and it failed you?

1b. When have you not followed your gut and you regretted it?

2. Is the turn in the economy going to impact how we go about hiring; will you continue to invest in behavioral assessments, testing, or will you be relying more on your "gut instincts"?

Many were actively engaged with this topic as there seemed to be multiple experiences that people could draw from. Cited were examples of times when folks had relied on their gut to drive their hire and the new hire failed miserably, as well as times when they had relied on their gut and it worked out superbly. The same was true with using a more structured form of interviewing, such as behavior-based interviewing. Although many agreed that formal methods of selection provided some level of consistency with selection and definitely provided some robust tools to facilitate hiring, using them solely was not sufficient. Assessments, background checks, hiring manager input as well as the 'gut' were some of the elements that were needed in determining the right hire.

Given the large push in the wider HR community to move away from subjective hiring practices, such as using gut feeling, many of the attendees felt that using the 'gut' should not be discounted altogether and that it SHOULD also be considered.

Linda provided us with some very helpful practical and theoretical perspectives on the whole topic:

**"Assuming that you've been successful predicting winners in the past, Author, Pierre Mornell says, trust your gut." He says that chemistry is usually determined in the first few minutes of an interview. It's either good, bad or absent.**

**Mornell says that chemistry is important – but equally important is how you interpret the information you're receiving.**

**Chemistry is only part of the hiring process, and in a discrimination case, the employer is responsible for articulating credible business reasons for preferring one candidate over the other.**

#### **Some Facts:**

Employee turnover is a costly fact of life, particularly in today's economy.

Choose the wrong candidate and your organization could pay the price for months or even years to come. Turnover expenses can be avoided or reduced significantly by selecting the right applicant for the position in the first place.

"Hiring employees is like going to Las Vegas; - you never know if you're going to win. But good gamblers play the high probabilities. Interviewers should do the same thing."

**Traditional approaches to interviewing** – such as asking open-ended questions, relying on "gut instincts" and asking the basic who, what, why, when and where questions – typically don't garner all the

information needed to make a smart hiring decision, and responses to these questions are often vague, future-oriented and entirely subjective.

Very few people fail in their jobs because they can't do them technically. The soft skills are the hard ones. These skills are hard to detect because they don't show up in technical skills tests and they aren't reflected in special certifications.

Soft skills are usually best revealed in interviews. The face-to-face interviews allow you to get into the people and the facts they are presenting. You can see body language and observe reactions as you ask questions.

**So this "Gut Instinct" that we all experience - though it's difficult to explain where it comes from-- is based on our ability to recognize patterns and interpret cues.**

**Typically, the more experience people have in any particular field, the more they rely on intuition or their gut instincts, because intuition is a natural and direct outgrowth of experience.**

Finally, a resounding number of attendees vocalized that they would NOT be changing their hiring practices in light of the economic downturn and that they would continue to invest in both formal and informal methods of hiring. Many stated that whether the economy was doing well or not, that superior hiring practices should ALWAYS be put in place. It was recognized that different industries have very different hiring needs. For example, those in the health care and hospitality industries, where positions are mission critical, hiring practices have to be robust from the onset and to try to limit the 'revolving door'.

HR should have combination of factors that are part of their hiring practices and, while formal methods are very valuable, that neglecting that 'gut feeling' altogether would also be negligent. Instead, many of you agreed that getting a second opinion, when you have red flag gut feeling, would be good and that setting up another interview can allow for some further assessment as to the candidate's suitability.

We ended the meeting with shameless plugs, Erin Henry recommend a book that Ajay Goel, President of JangoMail uses: Topgrading for Sales: World-Class Methods to Interview, Hire, and Coach Top Sales Representatives (Hardcover) by Ph.D., Bradford D. Smart (Author), Greg Alexander (Author).

Many of you expressed lament with not having the September HR-Xchange discussion topic and that you would like to see it appear again on our schedule. Soooo as obliging as we are, we are going to talk about the Millennial generation for November's HR-Xchange!

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## November HR-Xchange

**Tuesday, November 18, 2008 @ 7:45am**

**"Preparing for the Next Generation of Talent"**  
Held at The Job Center, 1111 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd. Rm. C2/C3

Geeta Wilson, Chair, Community Relations, MVHRA

There are about 80 million of our next generation—i.e., “Millennials” born roughly between 1980-1995—who will be joining our workforce and who have a completely different set of experiences and expectations than any of their preceding generations. For Millennials, the decision to accept a position with your company will involve multiple factors. A good job will no longer be defined by monetary gain alone. This is a generation that is technologically ‘plugged in’; one that will create MySpace profiles, send instant messages, post photos of their family and friend, chat online with strangers, create blogs about their experiences and unreservedly share their opinions. This is a generation that demands transparency and authenticity...instantly.

This month’s forum will focus on how organizations can effectively shape their recruiting and retention practices to connect with Millennials in meaningful ways. The audience will be engaged and leave with ideas that can impact their organizations immediately. It will challenge you to strengthen and personalize your hiring processes and differentiate yourself among your competitors, while you secure the interest of this unique generation.

BRING A FRIEND - Let’s get as much intergenerational representation as possible. The HR-Xchange is set up expressly for you and depends heavily on being interactive and participatory! So, mark you calendars and get ready for some exciting discussion and join us as we take a deep dive into this much needed topic!

About the facilitator:

With over 12 years of experience, Geeta Wilson uses her communications, marketing, and management skills to help her clients develop recruitment and retention plans that shape employee engagement, reduce turnover, and control vacancy rates. A recognized speaker on human resource metrics and talent research, she is frequently invited to present at national meetings and conferences on the use of diagnostic tools in the recruitment process. Geeta applies her expertise to help organizations develop and diagnose their unique employment value proposition. As previous Executive Director, Talent Strategist with NAS Recruitment Communications, Geeta consults with organizations regarding best practices in the dynamic and evolving world of Human Capital and talent Management.

Geeta has a bachelor’s degree in public policy from the University of Teesside and an MBA from Andrews University. Currently, she serves as the Community Relations Chair for the Miami Valley Human Resources Association and is an active member of the HRI Research Advisory Board.

***Be sure to mark your calendars for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month for the HR-Xchange held from 7:45 – 9:00 a.m. (held at The Job Center, 1111 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd. Rm. C2/C3).***

Remember, you do not have to be an MVHRA member to attend the HR-Xchange. If you know of others who are interested in connecting to or attending the HR-Xchange, have them register at <http://mvhra.org/hr-xchange.php>

We hope to see you there!

Geeta

(Community Relations Chair)