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ChangeAbility
The Newsletter of KoenigCoaching
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Welcome!

You are reading ChangeAbility, a newsletter published by Business Coach Urs Koenig MBA, PhD.

ChangeAbility brings you actionable, hands-on tips and cool resources for starting or building your business on a bimonthly basis.

In each newsletter, you will also find threads of my passion for endurance sports. I will provide you with business lessons learned from the world of competitive sports.

I would love to hear from you. Each email will be responded to. Simply reply to this newsletter.

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I How to Find the Best People for Your Business

As you grow your business, you will find yourself sooner or later confronted with the task of needing to hire the best people.

Hiring is one of the most time consuming, yet most important responsibilities you have as a business owner.

You cannot spend too much time or effort on hiring wisely. This is because the alternative to hiring wisely is to manage toughly which is much more time consuming, costly, and emotionally draining.

1 Be Clear What/Who You Need

Be sure to identify exactly why you think you need to employ someone. Make sure that you have exhausted all other options: how about outsourcing the tasks to a contractor, saving money in payroll taxes and benefits? Maybe a new purchasing or inventory management system could do the trick?

Once you have decided that you need someone, write a detailed job description for the position. If you already have a job description: review it. How does the position need to change, so that it serves your company best?

Based on the job description, come up with a written list of characteristics, qualifications, skills, and experiences you want to see in a candidate. Review this list with your key employees and business partners. Make sure to include non-quantifiable, yet important criteria like 'I would feel comfortable to go for a coffee with this person'.

The idea is to have a clear mental picture of the ideal hire before you get into the job ad/interviewing game.

2 Don't Compromise

Recruiting IS exhausting for both sides! Often business owners end up hiring the wrong people because the search has been going on for too long and folks just want to get done with the process.

Don't ever compromise your recruiting efforts if you can possibly help it. Hold out to find the right person.

It does pay to wait! Wrong hires are very costly. According to Dr. Pierre Mornell, a psychiatrist, consultant and recruiting expert, the costs of replacing a bad hire are two and a half times the person's annual salary. To put that another way: hiring the wrong person earning \$40,000 will cost you \$100,000 and that is not including emotional costs. This is because of all the time and money you spend on advertising, selecting, and most importantly, training the new staff member.

Even, if several candidates don't work out: Hang in there. It is preferable not to hire at all than to hire the wrong candidate.

3 Widen Your Search

Visualize your ideal candidate for the job and ask yourself: Where does she hang out? What is he reading? Then advertise through those channels.

Maybe a customer is the ideal candidate, so make sure to advertise at your office building or in your stores. And of course, don't forget your own web site.

If you need part time help check out local high schools, colleges, churches and community centers and post your ad there.

Work your network: let a wide range of people know what you are looking for in a candidate: talk to friends, colleagues, professional associations, ex-employees and family members. Ask: "Who do you know who.....?"

Advertise in your local paper, trade journals, and on the relevant online job directories. You will reach a wide audience which is great. However, there is a price: your fax might jam from the number of resumes floating in. To combat that, filter out as many unsuitable candidates as possible by making sure your ad is VERY specific about requirements.

4 Interview with Clear Criteria in Mind

Be sure to work with a written list of 'must haves' and 'nice to haves' when interviewing your candidates.

I highly recommend rating each candidate on each of the criteria. If multiple people are interviewing, this is an absolute must. This might look something like this:

- self confidence 1 2 3 4 5
- technical skills 1 2 3 4 5
- Presentation Skills 1 2 3 4 5

It is very easy to get carried away with a particular issue with a candidate. Having a list of criteria which you rate people on ensures you are assessing everyone along the same criteria.

There are tons of books on how to interview and there are many opinions on how to do it best. Just one thing here: it's been shown over again that past behavior and action are the best predictors for future behavior. So rather than focusing on a lot of 'what would you do if' questions, focus on what the candidate actually achieved in the past. Seattle's very own Starbucks is an example of a large corporation which has adopted this rule very strictly in their interviewing process.

5 Know the Law

Know and understand the relevant law. You don't need to become an expert or shelve a lot of money, but you should consult with a lawyer before hiring your first employee to make sure everything is set up correctly. Get a sense for how employment law works:

- What actions or behavior are prohibited?
- What questions can you ask in an interview?
- How do you properly terminate someone?
- How do you deal with a harassment complaint?

The U.S. Department of Labor has an excellent 'e-law' site where you can get many of your employment law questions answered:
<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/>

II Back in the Racing Game: The Power of Positive Self-Talk

Now here is a confession: I love to compete. I love to measure myself against myself and others, and I love to be at the front of the pack!

This is why I have gotten back into cross country ski racing this winter. I competed in four races and finished either 1st or 2nd (for results see <http://www.mvsta.com/>), holding off quite a few youngsters. I had tons of fun doing it!

Being back in the racing game brought the power of positive self-talk back to me. When the going gets tough, when my lungs hurt, my legs burn like hell and my arms feel like they're just about to fall off and all I feel like doing is lying down RIGHT NOW - I start repeating my mantra. I do this in my native tongue, Swiss German, as this is the way I have practiced it thousand of times before.

"Take power off, go lightly, dance this hill". Sure the pain does not simply disappear. But the more I repeat: "Take power off, go lightly, dance this hill" I feel a shift happening. Rather than focusing on my pain ("this hurts, this is hard, how long until the end of that bloody hill"), I start focusing on a clean technique ('dancing' 'lightness') and efficient movements.

Repeating my mantra results in a shift in my thoughts and what I feel. It enables me to handle more than I could otherwise.

Positive self-talk is rooted in cognitive and behavioral psychology. It is widely used in sports psychology and business and executive coaching.

Ask yourself: What is your mantra? What positive and constructive self-talk can help you make an important shift in your business life?

IV Meet the Coach

For Seattle subscribers:

BUSINESS START UP WORKSHOP - 'THINKING OF BECOMING YOUR OWN BOSS?'

If you are thinking of, or are in the process of, starting your own business or if you want to learn how to run your business better, please join me for this three hour workshop: at Centerpoint, the Northwest's leading center for life and career renewal, based in downtown Seattle. For more information, please send me an email or check: www.centerpointonline.org

The workshop will be offered on:

- June 17th 2003 6:15pm.
- August 5th 2003 6:15pm.

The fee is \$54 for non-members and \$45 for Centerpoint Associate Members

+++++LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK+++++
Simply reply to this newsletter. I would love to hear from you.

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