



Has the recent pandemic made you consider the leadership of your company?

With the prospect of normality on the horizon, many companies will now be reflecting on how their leadership team dealt with 2020 and assessing where their strengths were demonstrated in coping with the crisis while also, perhaps, identifying some weaknesses that need urgent rectification.

This should not cause undue concern. All organisations from the largest corporates to small businesses have had varying degrees of success in getting through COVID-19 and in most cases it has been the quality and talent of the senior leadership that, more than any other factor, has affected the outcome.

It is a natural process, therefore, to ask yourself,

“Has the recent pandemic made you consider the leadership of your company?”

If the answer to this question is “yes”, then it may be time to bring in new talent for the team, or perhaps it is time to replace and replenish talent, whatever the situation, this is a decision that needs careful and detailed consideration.

In recognising that this is a common problem for many of our clients, and business in general, as we enter a hopefully more stable and prosperous 2021, we have put together some

information that you may find helpful.

A lot will change – So must leadership.

Boston Consulting Group – July 2020

C - level individuals need to be more than just someone who has spent time within a business. The new breed of top executives are multi-talented individuals who have both technical knowledge and soft skills to lead a business successfully.

This increased requirement for executive leaders to have enhanced soft skills, has resulted in a large number of senior executives recruited to be more business focused than just functionally orientated.

Successful Leadership is not only about decision making and communication skills but is also about collaborative ability, innovativeness, flexibility and the ability to cope with failure. Senior executives are not just working in silos, they are all providing strategic support to the CEO. They need to be team orientated, multi taskers who are forward thinking.

Recruiting at this level, whether a replacement or adding to the executive leadership team, requires input from all members of the executive team.

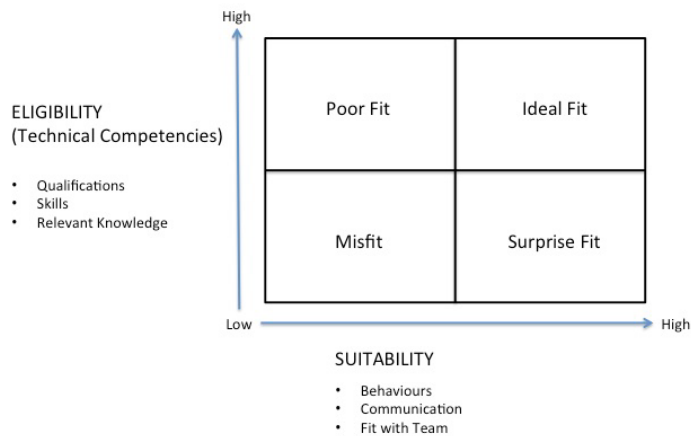
What new C-suite capabilities must be acquired to ensure growth and drive long- term value beyond the pandemic?

Accurately defining the individual sought, both in terms of skills and behaviours that will complement the vision of the business, will enhance the success of the recruitment.



When choosing who to put into a senior leadership role, candidate selection should be based on two factors, eligibility (technical competencies) and suitability (soft skills). Technical skills are much easier to assess than soft skills.

Eligibility versus Suitability



The predefinition of the role should enable screening of applicants on their technical competencies prior to interview, however assessing suitability and candidate's soft skills is best assessed through interview.

How do you use interviews to differentiate between top candidates?

Know the skills needed to enhance your team

Understand your culture

Have pre-defined interview framework

Traditional interview techniques may seem cumbersome, but an unstructured chat may not probe enough to provide a true picture of the individual.

Structured interviews need rigorous planning.

Understanding what you are seeking for the role will be key to this

planning. Structured interviews reduce recruitment bias as you can demonstrate consistency throughout the process.

Closely assess cultural fit, and ask questions designed to show how the candidate will react to specific challenges.

Behavioural questioning will examine examples of specific work examples.

- *“Tell me about a time in your previous role/ career when...”*
- *Can you demonstrate your impact on your previous role?*
- *What is the hardest decision you have had to make in career so far?*
- *What would you like to change at your current company - why?*
- *How do you manage change? – give examples*

Competency based questions will examine the experiences that demonstrate specific skills that are deemed essential for the role.

- *How do you manage conflict?*
- *How do you handle criticism from your boss / board / superior?*
- *Tell me about a time when you were part of a failure, what role did you play?*

Both these competency and behavioural questions are experiential, looking at past behaviours as an indicator of future abilities.

Competency based questioning will enable you to interview individuals who may not be at board level in their current company but have gained a breadth of experience, sometimes outside that role such as in third sector/voluntary service.

Situational based questioning will ask more hypothetical questions, which may indicate theoretical knowledge but may be

used to demonstrate how they can use skills gained in future roles.

- *Describe your management style.*
- *If you could fix a previous mistake in your career so far, what would you fix and why?*
- *Why do you believe you would be successful in this role?*
- *How will you improve our business?*
- *What would you like to change at your current company - why?*
- *What book would you say has influenced your leadership the most?*
- *What book would you recommend to someone wanting to become a future leader?*

And finally

- *What do you do to relax?*

This question is important; you need to ensure that you have someone who is not going to burn out.

Presentations – Make them relevant to the role, give a realistic amount of time to prepare, use live data if applicable, and ensure you have time for thorough questioning.

Financial ability assessments – the financial ability of senior management should be confirmed, not just assumed.

Candidates should be exposed to multiple stakeholders during the interview process, ideally in settings that give the team a chance to evaluate the individual's personality and leadership philosophy.

Value the candidates

You should research the professional background of your

candidates and be able to ask pertinent questions that reflect this. Do not just rely on the information provided to you from the candidate.

Research the professional background of your candidates and ask pertinent questions

Using generic questions is standard, but what you and all those who are recruiting should be doing is wrapping these questions in the research you have done into the candidate backgrounds.

An effective interview process will ensure that a candidate's skills align with the requirements for the role.

Protect your investment

An important but sometimes forgotten part of the recruitment process is securing and maintaining the individual within your business.

We will help you ensure that you have a comprehensive on-boarding programme. A new executive must be briefed on the existing culture and the key individuals and decision-making processes, as well as the organization's history, culture and traditions.

A lack of personal development opportunities is often cited as a reason for leaving executive roles. You recruit for motivation to learn new skills, so allowing executives to self-improve will help keep the talent you have worked hard to gain.

A good personal development regime will also enhance value in the business by underpinning investment in enhanced skills, succession planning and resilience.

How can we help?

At Pearson Drury we can help you at all stages of the executive recruitment process.

- Assist and collate the information to create the job and person specifications.
- Attract and locate suitable candidates, ensuring they are briefed on your culture, visions and ethos.
- Screen applicants against predefined criteria.
- Perform first round interviews.
- Help create suitable interview assessments for second round.
- Assist with second round interviews, if required.
- Maintain contact with all applicants throughout the process.

We are committed to:

Providing exceptional candidate care, with highly professional, sensitive and discreet candidate management.

Delivery of superior candidates committed to your business.

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