

In this issue, *Nicola James*, Managing Partner, Thomas Brooke International, explains why you should make the most of opportunities to bring new people in to your team

Making the most of it!

A lot of money and time is invested in education training every year in the coatings industry. Whether the subject area is research and development of new raw materials and formulations, sales training, coatings application training, technical education for non-technical people, management training, preparation for certification or something else, the chances are that you have probably been involved either as a trainer/educator or recipient of training/education in the last year, in some form.

The industry has many excellent education and training opportunities from a variety of sources: internal company programmes, industry associations, third party training, educational institutions and so forth.

And yet there is one vitally important area where little or no training is usually provided and in which people typically make decisions via an arbitrary series of interactions they would never consider using for a CapEx project or other important business investment.



Consider the following:

- It has significant impact on your total business performance
- It has significant impact on your team performance and morale
- Success can deliver multiple times ROI
- A bad decision can cost multiple times the initial investment
- You do it only once or a few times, a year
- It can take several months to a year from initiation of the project to conclusion
- It requires leadership but also consensus among multiple stakeholders in your organisation

- It is complex and requires both logical, left-brain analytical thinking and also exceptional communications and interpersonal skills
- It requires ongoing commitment and feedback but a good decision generally results in less time input after the fact and a poor decision generally creates a serious time drain

But

- It is probably not explicitly given much weight in your job responsibilities
- There is little training available internally in your company to help you
- Most people learn from their boss who doesn't know how to do it either
- Typical success rates in companies vary but studies indicate 30-40% failure is common; some studies suggest more than 50% failure is in fact closer to the truth

If you have read my previous columns, it will come as no surprise to you that I am talking about hiring.

The moral of this particular story is to **make the most of the opportunities you do have, even infrequently, to bring in new people on your team.**

Of all our coatings industry clients during 20+ years in the business, I can think of only one that had any kind of consistent internal training programme relating to hiring new employees, when we started working together. I'm talking here about training the employees how to hire, not training new hires after they start. That disconnect is the key thought behind much of what I've written here in *APCJ*, with the goal to inform and educate people who self-select on wanting to make the most of that all-important but often fuzzy 'people' dimension of the coatings industry.

Several of my earlier columns have touched on the kind of attributes to look for when hiring and what a good hiring process looks like in general; this month's perspective is what the most successful leaders and hiring managers we have worked with over the years actually do, consistently, that sets them apart from the rest. Although many factors can make

or break someone's decision to join a company, the relationship with the direct hiring manager is one of the top influences (as I am sure you have experienced from the other side of the desk at least once). You don't do it often but it makes a big difference to your organisation and your own professional life so you might as well make the most of it!

Effective managers come in many personality types. Some are charismatic. Others are more intellectual or data-driven. But I have never yet met a really good manager who was not also a good hiring manager. So let's look at five things good hiring managers do consistently:

1. Know what they really need and want, remain consistent and continually reinforce the message

Sounds obvious but is not often followed through. However, clarity of vision about the purpose of a position and the most important responsibilities associated with it is like a magnet that helps draw the right people. It is also a great way to save valuable time qualifying people for the position. Like an old-fashioned plumbline, a clear understanding of the purpose of the job will quickly separate the viable candidates from the rest. A ridiculous amount of very valuable senior managers' time is totally wasted every year on interviewing people who will never fit. HR will grow to fill the space available and internal job descriptions are usually such jargon that it is impossible for anyone to figure out what the position is really all about. So it is up to you as hiring manager to articulate the vision, purpose and responsibilities. By the way, if the job doesn't have an obvious vision or purpose, that should be a warning flag, right there!

Anyone truly worth hiring wants a purpose in their work beyond drawing a paycheck. The best hiring managers can articulate that. If your company doesn't have good job descriptions, go and look at a few on line – imagine you are looking for a similar position and look at the jobs posted. Get some ideas how other companies

