



The CEO files: Each month, CEO Europe shares its expertise and presents you an expert synopsis of a specific topic.

To Recruit a manager (1/2): Leave the beaten track !

You are the HR Manager, the General manager or the CEO of your company, a member of the Board of directors involved in recruitment? You are seeking a manager: you are confident the position has been clearly defined, your usual recruitment consultant has been hired for your search and you have sufficient time to follow attentively and personally each stage of the recruitment process. But are you sure you well evaluated all the stakes and established a reasonable time schedule? Are you in full control of time, cost and flexibility?

A/ Importance and urgency

From departmental manager to high level executive, they all can have a position with strategic importance at certain stages of the foreseeable development of the company. The replacement of a manager following a departure or retirement is a chance to restructure the organization to face new challenges and to seize opportunities.

Avoid the pitfall of the search for a duplicate. Seize the opportunity to redefine the position, determine the major risks the holder has to face, the essential actions that you expect him to take and the changes that he has to implement and follow through. Consider the strategy to apply: the reorganization of the supplier network, the establishment of partnerships with other market players, your decision to increase productivity and to decrease cost, the choice and the installation of a new information system, the launch of new products, the creation of a subsidiary abroad. The responsibilities and the actions to be led will naturally result from this.

Evaluate the "weight" of the position, in term of cost for the company, of the manager's future decisions (potential losses and profits). Once you have made this analysis, you will perhaps position the manager in question differently, probably on a higher level regarding responsibility, influence, wages, a CFO compared to a Project manager, a Marketing director versus a manager of a commercial subsidiary, a CFO compared to an IT director.

Also keep in mind that the responsibility, remuneration and hierarchical scales do not coincide inevitably. Make a clear distinction between these three aspects, as in the following examples.

- A high level engineer, in charge of the scientific contacts with the prospective customers of an industrial decontamination company, has no operational responsibility, but receives a higher remuneration as the Sales manager, who is his superior.
- At the same hierarchical level, the Directors of Human Resource, Purchase and Finance can have different levels of responsibility and remuneration whether they work for a wholesale company, a carrier or for a large cleaning company.

Last but not least: can you really wait for your new employee 6 months or more, or do you simply resign to this option in the absence of a faster procedure? Evaluate the risks, the effective or potential cost, the opportunities missed during this waiting period. At today's times of quasi-instantaneous

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communication, partnerships "put under roof" in a few weeks, the construction of a subsidiary factory at the other end of the world in 3 months, do you think it legitimate to wait for nearly one year to integrate a new executive, or even a manager?

If during the past century one could hire slowly and permanent, a general practitioner, nowadays the owner of a company must be able to very quickly find the specialist who meets his needs for today.

B/ Experience and competences

The diplomas, the probation period and the competences tests all aim at the same goal: to make sure that the candidate masters the trade and the technical know-how requested by the position in question. In the case of an experienced manager (from a project manager to a CEO or CFO), the diploma means nothing any more, on the contrary since a valuable candidate often exerted functions distant from his initial training. In addition, one can hardly guess which tests to use to check his capacity to react to unforeseen situations, external litigations and internal conflicts, new aspects of the job, or changes in legislation, among other things. One can hardly rely on a probation period, as long as it may last: the manager must be immediately operational and there must be no doubt about his abilities should a crisis endanger the company!

Experience being essential in such a case, one will be able to deduct a reliable analysis from the candidate's CV. His career track, the positions he occupied and especially the results he was able to produce make it possible to check the candidate's technical skills. The checking of his CV, the results he achieved for the companies he worked for, the evolution of the entities he was responsible for, the opinion of the references, customers, partners and administrators whom he worked along with, give an indepth view on the candidate's profile. For the majority of the growing companies, it is important to have a good understanding of international environments. This implies linguistic abilities, broadmindedness and cultural richness.

This is a delicate investigation, the interviews must be held in a climate of confidence, under the cover of confidentiality. Methodology must be scrupulous to avoid any misinterpretation. The company and its HR Manager may find it beneficial to associate a recruiter experienced in career validation in this process, if only to benefit from the objectivity of an external eye.

C/ Potential and integration

Stopped at this stage, the selection would only select applicants who were good! One extrapolates their effectiveness in the new position proposed, but objectively, one remains unaware of important aspects: which potential do they represent for the company that recruits them? What are their desires and their motivations? Do they show a particular interest in the company's industry sector, its culture and its identity, its persons in charge, its vision of development? Incidentally, one draws aside candidates who were not always successful, as if (in some limit) they did not learn from their errors ...

One thinks that a candidate who succeeded well in a similar position in another company, will meet the same success in the proposed position, and conversely. This is not always the case: the environment, the role of the other managers and their personality, the specificities of the company and its market, the implication or not of the owner, the board of directors, will contribute to his success, or on the contrary weaken his position and cause him to fail.

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The company must thus clarify the psychological type of profile it needs, for example a manager of compromise intended to consolidate teams of " free electrons " or a firm and inflexible manager whose mission will be "to break" baronies to prepare the arrival of a new managing team.

Tools are thus useful to approach these behavioral and cognitive aspects. In a less objective scenario, more difficult to approach, less obvious to the eyes of a large number of pragmatic owners, one can regret the use of non scientific techniques, not proven or straightforwardly out of purpose.

Why do some owners consult astrologists? How did we manage in France to give such an oversized importance to graphology whereas the personality traits it can reveal constitute only one minor criterion of the recruitment. What "gifts" are making the fortune of some "witchdoctors" and "seers"? When the irrational appears in recruitment, candidates can rightly doubt the interest of the position and the company...

Tests of logic and intelligence are sometimes used in recruitment, even for high level positions. The analysis of the successes and failures of executives, but also of the managers who surround them, makes two statements obvious: - intelligence is not enough for professional success, - those who succeed possess extremely various forms of intelligence, infinitely more complex than the ability to complete series of numbers, cards, symbols or words.

Many candidates finally win thanks to the recruiter's "sixth sense", or a feeling of complicity, a mutual understanding, their idea of the company, which they share with the owner who makes the final choice. It is probably also a part of this "intelligence" that accompanies success, but it is much less tangible.

We can understand why the recruiter needs some help to make a decision. Many psychologists have been working on this problem and they created computerized methods and tests, which will be studied in the second part of this article.

CEO Europe is specialized in the recruitment of top executives and has three essential specificities:

- *CEO Europe works in pre-recruitment, and has thus more than 6.200 certified candidates. The detailed profiles of these candidates are available and allow the recruiting companies to shorten the recruitment process of several months.*
- *CEO Europe works on a worldwide scale, with candidates available locally in more than one hundred countries!*
- *CEO Europe offers its customers unusual flexibility: task oriented assignments, transition management, part time or full time and permanent recruitment.*

The iCEO certification, completed in English, reach approximatively 25 % of the candidates applying at CEO Europe. it includes all the stages of validation of the experience and competences:

- *screening of the candidate files,*
- *qualification of the CV and the experience,*
- *validation of the capacity to evolve in a multi-cultural environment,*
- *checking of references,*
- *interviews by telephone and/or meeting with CEO Europe's partners,*
- *selection,*
- *ongoing updates of candidate files.*

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