

## When the Student is Ready (Part II)

Here's an opportunity to test your readiness for hiring highly talented people. No fair cheating or making excuses when you answer these questions. Just the straight scoop.

**How do you feel when a highly talented person applies for a position in your company?** You know the ones I'm talking about. They're the people whose résumés are organized, on point, and virtually jump off the stack of other résumés. Or, they're the candidates who show up prepared, appropriately dressed, and who ask good questions about your company and the job.

Do you dismiss them as being over-qualified for the job? Do you automatically assume you won't be able to meet their income requirements? Now be honest with yourself, do you sometimes feel uncomfortable, maybe even a little bit threatened, because of the demands they might place on you if you did hire them? Does the thought of hiring really talented people cause you to feel intimidated? Does that little voice in the back of your head start chirping, "There's no way you can hire that person. They're too educated (sophisticated, moneyed, experienced...you fill in the blank). If you brought them on board they'd end up running the place."?

Few business owners will admit they're intimidated by highly talented, take-charge people. It's far easier to make excuses about why they'd never work out. So, sometimes we have to go back to our past experiences in business—and sometimes in life—to get to the source of our uneasiness.

Have you had a past experience where someone you thought was very successful or talented made you feel inferior, either in business or in your youth? If so, could you be afraid of creating a similar situation in

your business by bringing a highly talented person on board?

What about your previous hiring experiences? Have you struggled with finding and hiring good people in the past? Or maybe you've hired good people, invested time and money in training them only to have them leave the company after a while and, dare I say it, start their own businesses.

Any of these scenarios is enough to shake the confidence of even the most trusting business owner. And once that trust is shaken it can be hard to get back. But, if you're committed to building a first-rate organization, you will need first-rate people.

The advice I always give my clients in this situation is to get back in the saddle and ride that horse again. And as you do that, ask yourself what lessons you learned from your last experience that will prepare you for this time around. Ask yourself what negative beliefs about your ability to work with highly talented people simply don't hold water anymore. And finally, it's important to be fair with yourself here. So, ask yourself whether the underlying reason a top performer didn't work out in your organization could be that they were simply the wrong person for the job.

A little self analysis will go a long way in helping you prepare to find and work with top performers.