

The 3 Most Deadly Hiring Mistakes.

Hiring an employee is a high risk/high reward proposition. Needless to say, emotions, urgency, and unconscious bias can hijack the process and lead to a regrettable hire. Here are three dangerous hiring mistakes and how to avoid them:

1. The Charisma Hire

You have a need. In walks somebody with personal magnetism and panache. You're charmed by the can-do personality, Churchillian powers of expression, and capacity to make heroic assumptions about growth. Where do I sign? Charisma is an ineffable quality that inspires devotion. It can be good, but charismatic people can also be dangerous because the attribute is more stylistic than substantive. It can blind us from asking tough questions about a person's background, experience, and qualifications, turning due diligence into negligence.

Lesson: Some of the most successful people are fairly humorless, boring, and don't have attention-getting personalities. They may not possess charismatic gifts, but they know how to perform. Deliberately focus on the uncharismatic candidates first.

2. The Resume Hire

Credentials are proxy indicators—a category of evidence that implies someone is qualified to do a particular job. It's easy to over-rely on a candidate's credentials and minimize other things.

Lesson: In almost any job, there are certain threshold skill requirements. If a person meets those, put the resume down and focus on the real differentiating factors: Does the candidate have a deep psychological need to create value and a deep ethical need to do the right thing?

3. The Buddy Hire

This mistake perpetuates a time-worn system of patronage, spoils, and trading of favors that leads companies to gravitate toward groupthink and repeat the same old mistakes.

Lesson: When it comes to the prospect of hiring friends, many leaders tend to relax or suspend their own hiring criteria. Don't do that. Remember, you're trying to hire the best person for the job. If you have a friend in the running, treat it like a potential conflict of interest. Make sure you panel interview the candidate and perhaps recuse yourself from the final decision.