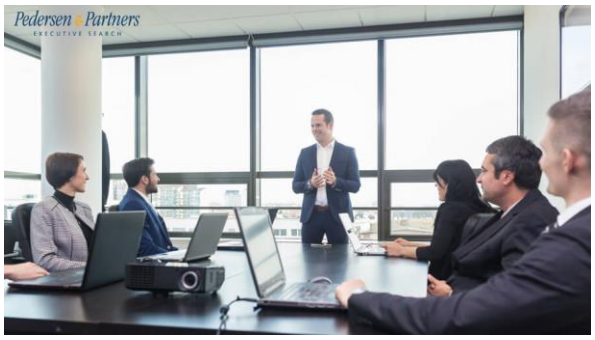
How to avoid losing a successful manager, “ЛІГА.net”

Kiev, Ukraine – Here in Ukraine, the talent pool of top managers is very small. Entrepreneurs run the risk of losing out on the best talent.



Alexander the Great died at the age of 32 – and by the time of his death, many of his soldiers and commanders considered him to be a living god. It is difficult to separate the myths from the facts of his life, but if I were given the honour and responsibility of forming a management team for a corporate leader with such an impeccable reputation, I would carry out this project without charging a fee. Why? Because it is impossible to put a monetary value on a good personal reputation. Fulfilling a mandate for such a client would significantly strengthen my own reputation, and this is priceless.

Key points of entrepreneurs and top managers

I have never met a businessman who would ask me directly: What is my reputation among Ukrainian top managers? Do charismatic, successful and effective leaders want to work with me? What about the people with whom I’ve already worked – what do they think about me, and what kind of feedback do they give?

Conversely, top managers regularly question me about the entrepreneurs who have shown interest in them. Why did their former employees leave? How persistent are they? Do they listen? Are they perceptive? Do they process information objectively or emotionally?

Goodwill is everything

If company owners knew how many talented managers refuse to consider them as potential employers due to bad reports about their companies or themselves, they would definitely give the matter more consideration.

It's common for managers to call me and try to find out what lies behind the flashy promises and claims. Strong charisma, the gift of persuasion, and hour-long conversations about mutually beneficial cooperation and "changing the world for the better" will not be enough to attract top leaders to the team. It's time to think beyond your financial capital – your goodwill capital is also vital for your success.

Don’t miss the boat

The challenge ahead is easy to understand but difficult to accomplish: a job with your company should be a desirable goal and career landmark for any successful executive.

There are plenty of articles and materials on employer branding and company goodwill in the labour market. It is worth emphasizing a few key points when building up the company's leadership capacity by creating an effective management team:

- The executive labour market is small, and everybody knows each other. As a company owner, you are deluding yourself if you do not think that multiple previous "unhappy marriages" are well-known or discussed.
- Nobody can expect to stay in the same team forever, and you can change the team composition for many reasons. But these reasons should be logical, clear and easily understood, both by you and the team members.
- Hiring a high-level manager is a very expensive commitment. If you realise that you've made a bad hiring decision, you must fulfil your obligations and pay their wages even if you immediately terminate the contract. It is easy for the risk to reputational damage to exceed the financial cost. Paying the financial obligations is simply the cost of having made a hiring mistake.
- In the aftermath of a bad hiring decision, you may wish to reconsider your future approach to executive search and hiring in the future.
- As a business owner, try to put yourself in the shoes of a potential executive candidate. Make a list of factors that could cast doubt on a company's image. Then be honest with yourself, and decide which of these factors could apply to your company.
- Don't assume that the executive labour market is big enough for you to pick and choose, rejecting idlers and dreamers until you find your perfect manager. In fact, the market is small, and it continues to tighten with each new executive search.

I am sure that you don't want to have to choose between the best of a bad bunch, so it's time to start thinking about your company's image – and of course, your own. Alexander the Great did not lose a single battle in fifteen years – it's time to start counting your own victories.

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