

SPOTTING JOB FIT PROBLEMS

What is job fit?

Job fit is the degree of congruence between an individual's strengths, needs, and wants in a particular job and work environment. When interests align, the employee and the organization experience a good job fit. Establishing job fit helps to identify and place top performers in suitable positions. By identifying innate personality traits, abilities, and behaviors, assessing for job fit determines if a person *can* do a job, *how* they will do a job, and if they will *enjoy* the position.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos stated in his shareholder letter, "The goal is to encourage folks to take a moment and think about what they really want. In the long-run, an employee staying somewhere they don't want to be isn't healthy for the employee or the company." Gallup research from 2012 has shown that companies with a ratio of 9.3 "engaged" employees (those who are emotionally connected with their jobs) for every one "disengaged" employee, saw 147 percent higher earnings per share on average, when compared with their competitors. Gallup estimated that active disengagement costs the United States \$450 to \$550 billion each year.

Establishing and hiring for job fit at the start of the employee lifecycle helps organizations ensure they don't become just another business contributing to the above figures. On an organizational level, it will become evident that employees with little or no job fit will eventually leave or be asked to leave. Turnover hurts more than a company's bank balance; it affects morale, company reputation, and productivity levels.

What are the factors in determining job fit?

There are multiple parts to an effective hiring process as well as establishing job fit: assessments, behavioral interviewing, and background checks. Employers must also identify the position and what is needed in the position, set clear guidelines and expectations and create a benchmark to identify the standard of top, middle, and bottom performers. Try the following:

- Identify commonalities (indicators) between what differentiates top performers from bottom performers.
- Look at a company's culture, since cultures differ across organizations.
- Use company-specific information.

Always looking for the perfect fit.

We try on clothes before we buy them because clothes that fit look better. We pay to get rings resized. We even look for fit in our relationships; most of us like to build

relationships with people who are compatible with us in some way. Since we take such care to find the perfect fit in other parts of our lives, shouldn't we take the same approach in hiring to make sure candidates fit open positions? Job fit is about more than just finding someone who has the necessary technical skills to do the job. A lack of technical skills is rarely the primary reason someone fails at a job. Job fit encompasses skills as well as a person's reasoning ability, behavioral traits, and interests.

Even when you identify an employee that may seem suitable for a particular job, interests and reasoning skills can change over time. This means another available job at your company could be the right move for an employee who no longer fits his or her current position.

It is not easy to identify employees who are up for a job change.

Managers oversee numerous employees and are often consumed with making sure everything gets done. Employees themselves often do not realize the problem is probably job-fit related. Although it can be hard, there are a few indicators to help you identify when it is time for an employee to make a job move:

The employee's performance quality has decreased drastically. If you notice that a formally stellar employee has been producing less quality work, it may be a sign that he or she needs a change. It is clear that the employee has the ability to be a star performer. Identify a job that will challenge him or her. Hopefully, the change of pace will be exactly what the employee needs to return to their previous level of engagement and work quality.

The employee has an updated skill set. Many employees go back to school, seek certifications to keep themselves marketable, or switch careers completely. Instead of losing your employees to other companies once they receive more education, identify open positions you have that will match their new skill sets.

The employee seems bored. If you have an employee who is still doing adequate work but seems bored, a job-fit problem probably exists. Boredom can be identified by an inability to pay attention in meetings, lack of new ideas, or a general loss of interest in company news. People prefer to be in jobs that excite and push them. Boredom is the first sign of a string of other problems, including disengagement and poor work quality. Stop the downward trend before it gets too bad by placing the employee in a new job that challenges them. **N**

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