

The hunt for the Will-o'-the-wisp Recruit

The hunt for the perfect recruit is the will-o'-the-wisp that Human Resource Managers have chased for decades. While recruiting, some managers place a special emphasis on experience, raw intelligence, or grit and determination, while others look for personality.

Ramiah Daniels • May 20, 2021, 13:30 IST



Even as full employment is the will-o'-the-wisp that politicians have been chasing for decades, so is the hunt for the perfect recruit. Will o' the Wisp is the name given to mysterious lights that were said to lead travellers from well-trodden paths onto treacherous marshes. Wirt Sikes in his book British Goblins writes of a Welsh Will o' the Wisp. A peasant, who is travelling home late in the evening, sees a bright light travelling before him. Looking closer, he sees that the light is a lantern held by a dusky little figure which he follows for several miles. Suddenly he finds himself standing on the edge of a great chasm with a roaring torrent of water rushing below him. At that moment the lantern carrier leaps across the fissure, raises the light over its head and lets out a malicious laugh, after which it blots out the light leaving the unfortunate man far from home, standing in pitch darkness at the edge of a precipice. This allegory may be equated to the hunt for a perfect recruit, wherein ever so often organizations run after the fancy bright lights... recruits with a quality experience, high intelligence, or splendidorous personalities. What we need to guard against, is that some of these may not be suitable for the organization's goals. They just may not be a perfect fit, and may lead your establishment's vision to the precipice!

So here we are back into another reboot, cresting this second Cov-Indian wave! Talk about being forced to learn resilience...sheesh! Nature - God's creation - was never made to be messed with, and I do wonder if we humans will ever learn a lesson through this.

The current lockdown gives us time to re-look into our workplaces and our watered-down teams. Which of us would not like to begin, post-reboot, with a team filled only with Jewels? But is this viable? Take a look around your workplace, and understand your key wealth creation prospect - your depleted teams. Let's face it, whether in the past, present, or future, recruiting only 'polished jewels' is akin to chasing the 'will-o'-the-wisp'. Rather, we are oft forced to rummage for the mud-encrusted ones available in the marketplace.

In today's scenario, manpower search has new challenges. Many industry professionals have deviated to other work options. Some of these may never want to return to their earlier jobs or industry. All this, thanks to Reverse Migration, Depressed Wages, Tougher Work Conditions, and Employment VUCA brought on by this pandemic. (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity)

Apart from this, numbers have dropped to half or less, of earlier manpower numbers. Even when things return to normal, it is doubtful whether these numbers will go higher than 75% of pre-covid-19 numbers. In this scenario, recruitment quality must improve.

The truth is that a perfect recruit is as elusive as the will-o'-the-wisp (a person or thing that is difficult or impossible to reach or catch) and as utopian a concept as can be.

Oft times, logic advises us to select for experience, intelligence, or determination. Talent, if mentioned at all, is an afterthought.

Conventional wisdom says that either Experience, Grit, Brainpower, or Willpower makes the difference.

Some managers place a special emphasis on experience, paying close attention to a candidate's work history and brands worked for. They see his past as a window to his future.

Other managers put their faith in raw intelligence. They say that as long as you are smart, most roles can be 'figured out'.

Yet other managers believe in the 'success is 10 percent inspiration, 90 percent perspiration' school of thought. Managers from this school believe that the technical part of most roles can be taught, whereas the desire to achieve, to persist in the face of obstacles, cannot. When selecting people, they look for past evidence of grit.

So, is the perfect recruit a misnomer? No doubt experience can teach valuable lessons; intelligence is a boon, and willpower - which great managers label a talent - is almost impossible to teach. What we fail to take into account is that there are so many other kinds of talents. The right talents, more than experience, more than brainpower, willpower, or grit, are the pre-requisites for excellence in all roles - talents such as a restaurant steward's ability to form opinions, empathy in order-takers, assertiveness in salespeople, or, in managers, the ability to individualize or bring people together.

Conventional wisdom assumes either that these behaviours can be trained after the person has been hired or that these characteristics are relatively unimportant to performance on the job. Both assumptions are a false hope that leads one on, just like the will-o'-the-wisp.

You cannot teach talent. You cannot teach someone to form strong opinions, to feel the emotions of others, to revel in confrontation, or to pick up on the subtle differences in how best to manage each person. You have to specifically select, for talents like these. Talents like these prove to be the driving force behind an individual's job performance.

It is not that experience, brainpower, grit, and willpower are unimportant. It is just that an employee's full complement of talents - what drives him/her, how he/she thinks, how he/she builds relationships - is more important.

In these compelling times, we are looking at rebooting with up to half the earlier numbers. Hence, we need to select only the mud-encrusted jewels that we can polish... then have them perform effectively, at twice the efficiency, once they are inducted and trained.

When you recruit, try looking for talent in an individual and then offer them an enhancing & nurturing environment. Then sit back and enjoy the show...

Ramiah Daniels, (Director, Hospitality Paradigm - a hospitality L&D and consulting company) is an alumnus of the Oberoi Centre for Learning & Development with over two decades of management expertise in the hospitality industry, including significant tenures with Oberoi Hotels, Leela Palaces & Resorts and Lalit Hotels.

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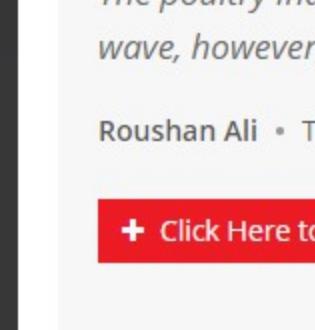


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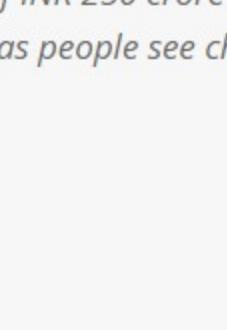
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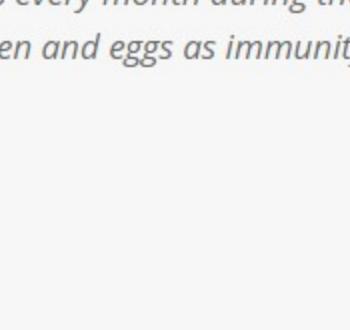
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ETHospitalityWorld • May 20, 2021, 17:31 IST

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We were better prepared this time around: Arindam Kunar

The VP-Operations of Fortune Park Hotels speaks about the second wave and what it meant for his chain of managed hotels.

Bikramjit Ray • ETHospitalityWorld • Updated: May 20, 2021, 16:58 IST

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Pullman & Novotel New Delhi appoints Pavan Kumar as DoSM

In his last role at Accor, he was responsible for developing and implementing the sales strategy for 51 multi-branded hotels of Accor in India and South Asia.

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20 mins to dish up: Quikish plans expansion

Quikish is operational in Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad and Mumbai and plans to launch in Pune, Goa, Chennai, Kolkata, Jaipur and Chandigarh by the end of the second quarter of 2021

Sakshi Singh • ETHospitalityWorld • May 20, 2021, 16:24 IST

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Oyo seeks USD 600 million loan amid virus surge

The high-profile startup, the first Indian unicorn to seek debt from foreign institutional investors, targets a loan with a five-year tenure

Bloomberg • Updated: May 21, 2021, 08:21 IST

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FAITH asks for GST rationalisation across tourism value chain

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Beyond Designs Bistro delivers 120 covid meal per day

While a single meal is priced at INR 249, when all three meals are ordered, the combined price is INR 669. Orders can be placed through Zomato, call or WhatsApp.

Sakshi Singh • ETHospitalityWorld • May 20, 2021, 10:31 IST

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Ande ka funda! Egg & chicken sales ride on Covid-19 wave in Telangana

The poultry industry had suffered a loss of INR 250 crore loss every month during the first wave of Covid-19 last year. In the second wave, however, consumption has spiked, as people see chicken and eggs as immunity boosters which would help fight Covid-19.

Roushan Ali • TNN • May 20, 2021, 09:30 IST

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Demand supply situation remains dynamic despite a fall in new infections in country

Hotel chains such as Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), Wyndham, Oyo and ITC Hotels said they are allocating more quarantine rooms in cities and states where demand has shot up.

Anumeha Chaturvedi • ET Bureau • May 20, 2021, 08:31 IST

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IIHM join hands with NGOs to set up oxygen support isolation centre in Kolkata

The IIHM family, which includes the students at large, have also been deeply affected by Covid-19.

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Accor to open Raffles in Palm Jumeirah

Set to open in the last quarter of 2021, Raffles the Palm Dubai will be the first ultra-luxury addition to Accor's existing diverse portfolio in Dubai.

ETHospitalityWorld • May 20, 2021, 13:11 IST

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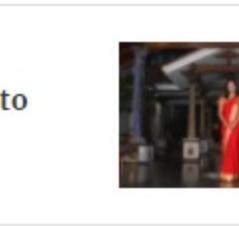


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