



THE COMPANY • THE CANDIDATE

Paul Pompeo

HIRING WITH A HIGHER PURPOSE

Employees are not just ‘assets,’ and the hiring process is more than a ‘transaction’

In more than one *LD+A* column we’ve touched on the “passive candidate”—the one not actively looking for a job or necessarily possessing a burning desire to make a change. Mary Lindenmuth, our recruiting director for engineering, design, operations and human resources, says that lighting is in effect at 100 percent employment. Therefore, many hiring managers and HR professionals come to us not to seek that person who is out of work, but that passive candidate who, as someone once referred to it, is “buried in their own excellence.” Since we’re in the midst of a candidate’s market, today’s passive candidate (to paraphrase a *Seinfeld* episode) has the most “hand.” (Google it if you’re not familiar with the episode.)

I recently spoke with Lisa Earle McLeod, author of the acclaimed *Selling with Noble Purpose (How to Drive Revenue and Do Work That Makes You Proud)*. McLeod is also the author of *Forget Perfect* (featured on NBC News) and *Triangle of Truth* (ranked #5 on *The Washington Post*’s list of Top Books for Leaders) and writes about how sales professionals are most effective when they’re not just about meeting a quota, but have a compelling reason for doing something—a “higher purpose,” as it were—as opposed to simply “closing the sale.” With that, hiring companies should:

- Communicate the company’s purpose.
- Screen to look for people who are excited by what your company does—not just the job they’ll be doing. The difference? I could be really excited about becoming the vice president of sales, but at the end of the day, if I am



not excited about what the company sells, this job is going to be a transaction for me.

- Establish a *relationship* instead of a *transaction*. If you’re hiring with noble purpose, you need to be looking at this person as not just asset who can do the job, but instead asking, “Is this a person I can commit to—they’re excited about what we do and I’m excited about them as a *person* joining us?”

Remember, if you treat your employees like a number, they will return the favor. If you regard your employees as merely an asset to drive your revenue,

they will regard you as nothing more than a paycheck. They will have no loyalty and will leave as soon as they’re offered a better paycheck. So the words you use as a manager to talk to your employees about their jobs are so important. And this starts in the interview process. Though we use a couple of examples with sales people here, developing a noble purpose for your company can apply to any employee.

THIS MATTERS

A KPMG study found that when the direct manager didn’t talk about the meaning and purpose of their work, their employees were twice as likely to look for other opportunities. And, when they’re looking for other opportunities, guess what? They’re usually doing it on your time. I’m reminded of a quote attributed often to Brad Sugars: “What if you train your employees and they leave? The better question is, what if you *don’t* train your employees and they *stay*?”

This tells us that sharing your company’s noble purpose is one of the biggest things you can do to improve employee retention, and the wonderful thing about it is that it’s *free*. One of Lisa’s clients is Bank of America. For their hiring/interview process, BofA could just say, “You’re here to sell mortgages and financial ser-

vices,” but instead it explains to potential employees that their goal is to improve their customer’s financial life.

Note to any cynical, old-school managers reading this who feel that this is just touchy-feely mumbo jumbo: The face of our industry’s job force is changing faster than you may realize. Many Baby Boomers have already moved into retirement or are going to shortly, with newer workers coming into the workforce at a rapid rate. Studies have shown that many Millennials are motivated much differently than previous generations of workers; having a purpose to their work is important to them and will help contribute to them staying longer with a

company. So if you somehow don’t get the value of developing your company’s noble purpose, don’t be surprised when

‘What if you train your employees and they leave? The better question is, what if you *don’t* train your employees and they stay?’

you find you have trouble attracting and retaining Millennial candidates. If you’re hiring with noble purpose, you’re telling

people that this job matters. And that starts from the very first interview.

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