

# VOICE

Institute  
of Internal  
Communication

ISSUE 4  
OCTOBER 2017

WHERE IC  
PROFESSIONALS  
COME TO TALK

## THE MEASURE PRINCIPLE

How to gather and analyse  
employee engagement data

## OPENING UP ON REDUNDANCIES

The right and wrong way to  
talk about a major restructure

THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE

# FOLLOW THE LEADER?

Is the head of your organisation  
showing the skills to earn your trust  
and drive the business forward?

+++++

## RESPECT!

Comms specialists  
nominate their  
greatest leaders

+ CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE // EY // RECRUITMENT // MINDFULNESS // OPINIONATED LEADERS

PERSPECTIVE

# DO YOU HIRE FOR PASSION OR EXPERIENCE?

Recruitment expert **Christopher Berry** believes more companies should revere passion as a key quality in their employees.

A candidate walks in, sharply dressed, a smile on his face and a firm handshake in tow. He sits across the table, listening intently as you talk about your company and the position for which he has applied. You ask him a series of technical and behavioural questions and he answers them one by one, showing a basic knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Throughout your exchange, he is reserved and articulate, but he does not offer more than enough to match what you have given. Compared to others you've interviewed, he is simply average.

At this point, you've made up your mind that he isn't the right fit. You finish your questions and prepare for the "Thank you. We'll be in touch" speech you perfected many interviews ago. Just as you're wrapping things up, he asks you an unassuming question about a specific, developing function of your company, which piques your interest. You answer his question only to find he has more, creating a volley of discussion points. You've noticed a change in him: a sparkle in his eye, a buzz to his words and an energy that wasn't there before. You realise he is passionate about this subject and how it ties into the role, so you talk for a while to learn more about him.

You conclude the interview and arrive at a decision: his technical skills are satisfactory, but he would require more training than other candidates. His behavioural responses weren't amazing, but he seems coachable. His experience is lacking, but his interest and engagement are evident. Do you offer him the job?

That is one of the important questions that many hiring leaders and decision-makers are faced with

**“Hiring solely for perfectly matched experience has a way of closing the door on the powerful unknown, dangerously prioritising being comfortable over being adventurous.”**

**CHRISTOPHER BERRY, SEVENSTEP**



## QUICK TIPS

**1 Invest in passion's potential ROI, and also in skills training to develop successful employees.**

**2 Evaluate your mission/vision/values to decide if and how passion will play a role in your employee value proposition and overall work culture.**

**3 Look beyond a hard-coded job description. You can't discover without embracing the unknown, breaking free of convention.**



on a daily basis. What takes precedence: passion or experience? Are we evaluating the person or the applicant? For me, and for my company, the answer is pretty clear: passion is and will likely always be the key criterion to hiring the right people.

So why are so many companies afraid to prioritise passion over experience in the hiring process?

Companies believe passion is less concrete and thus less valuable. Hiring only for experience is the norm at many companies. This approach is logically rooted in a proven track record, objective data and tangibility. It is safe, easy to measure and familiar. Passion is the opposite: abstract, unproven and volatile.

This preference for concretised rationale is defensible to a point, past which it must be recognised for what it is: a hindrance to progress. Decisions can't be made with logic alone; they require thoughts and feelings alike for the best outcome. When this combined judgment is applied, the outcome is often unexpected. This is where abstraction and volatility become innovation and growth. The exciting unknown is where we break from what was, to discover what could be.

Experience is the past. Passion is the future. So what about right now? This passionate and aspirational future requires investment in the present. Where trade-offs are made with experience, companies must put in the time, effort and money to develop the skills to make these people successful. Many companies are not set up to provide this level of support and guidance, leading to a necessary over-dependence on experience.

Hiring solely for perfectly matched experience has a way of closing the door on the powerful unknown, dangerously prioritising being comfortable over being adventurous. A simple action, like how you screen a candidate, can have a massive ripple effect in your organisation to hinder or unlock its potential. Passion must be pursued and nurtured. It is an integral part of an individual's success, driving them to go harder, faster and higher than ever before. It is an energy that is both innate and uncommon. And like all energy, it cannot be created, nor destroyed. When we come across those who have it, we have to recognise, seize and cultivate it.

Hire for passion and the rest will follow. **V**

*Christopher Berry is a recruiting professional at Sevenstep, a leading global provider of recruitment outsourcing. With delivery centres around the world, Sevenstep delivers a suite of talent solutions, including enterprise, project, blended, data analytics, employer branding and talent attraction.*