

PHL|HP Consulting Group

Building & Sustaining High Performing Organizations



A Message From Dr. Philip Levy, Founder & President

Curiosity Didn't Kill the Cat...

It is a readily acceptable tenet in business that it's "all about the people". That the most successful companies recruit, retain and develop the best employees and that it is the responsibility of leaders to inspire and meld them into a team with a shared vision and culture.

If it is truly "all about the people", then what should we look for in recruiting and promoting staff and how can we measure and nurture the development of these qualities?

To be successful, companies must foster innovation, creativity, passion and curiosity in their employees. The world is changing at such a rapid pace that if your employees are not curious they will be left behind in a matter of weeks, not years. They must not only change with the times, they must anticipate change and be a catalyst for strategic change and progress. This only happens when people feel safe in taking risks, knowing that they will be recognized for success and not blamed for failure. Remember, Michael Jordan only made 50% of his shots and the best baseball player only is successful 35% of the time, so we must accept that with success comes failure and avoid the "blame game."

Curious people are more likely to learn quickly, adapt to change, and foster an environment of innovation and creativity among their peers. How do they do this? By questioning more, exploring more, being better listeners, "thinking outside of the box" and being more inclusive. They are not afraid to take risks and they are role models for their peers to do the same. They tend to be more entrepreneurial and assume informal leadership. Why? Because they have less fear of failure, are more self-confident, are not threatened by the success of others and rather, are willing to share success with their peers, include others in their thinking, creating and innovation, and want to grow professionally and be surrounded by people who challenge them to excel. They want to grow, want to help their peers grow and push the company forward. They are also more valuable because they tend to learn more about the different components of the company, integrating what they see and strengthening the company in the process. They understand that their work is a component of the overall focus and mission of the company and they are curious about how what they are doing fits into the total company's activities. This results in a more team oriented focused approach to business. Barney Harford, CEO of Orbitz Worldwide, refers to these people as "T-shaped individuals---people who go deep in their area of expertise and also go really broad, with a curiosity about the overall organization and how their work fits into it."

How do we assess curiosity during the interview process? By speaking less, listening more, and asking questions that are broad and open ended. The focus is less on specific experience and more on how the individual thinks and problem solves. For example:

- Tell me about a conflict you experienced and how you analyzed your options and what your outcome was.
- If you were to repeat the situation, what would you do differently and why?
- Describe a situation in which your boss or a colleague disagreed with you and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a mistake you made, what you learned from it, and why you think you won't make it again.
- Tell me why you want to work at this company.
- What did you do to prepare for this interview?
- What do you know about our company and why do you feel that you'll be a good fit?
- What are you curious about?

What can you as a leader do to develop curiosity in your employees?

- Create an environment that is a safe haven for risk taking and rewards the risk takers.
- Encourage people to tell you what you need to hear, not what they think you want to hear.
- Praise effort and outcome publicly: "catch people being good" and use lots of "shout outs".
- Take ownership of failures.
- Don't micro manage.
- Empower and trust others, encouraging them to take calculated, well thought out risks, so long as they are correctable and not catastrophic.
- Allow people to explore, innovate, and suggest new ways of doing things.
- Support and facilitate professional growth at all levels.
- People want to be more than they thought they could be, but they need support to achieve this.
- Make everyone feel that what they are doing is important to you and the success of the company.
- Ensure that your compensation philosophy and plan is consistent with a corporate culture that breeds curiosity, risk taking, and innovation.
- Financial rewards should always be connected to the espoused corporate values and standards.
- Be a role model by being curious, taking risks, investing time and money in your professional growth, and letting people know when you fail and what you learned from it.

Curiosity didn't kill the cat, but a lack of curiosity can stifle an organization and lead to a slow death.

- Phil Levy

DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE ADDED
EXECUTIVE COACHING TO OUR MENU OF SERVICES?

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
PHL HP Consulting Group at:



Philip@PHLConsultingGroup.com

Suggestions? We want to hear from you!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

www.PHLConsultingGroup.com