

Maximizing Profits Through People
A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter -- 11-15-00

Dear fellow CEO:

Stop Alien Abductions Now!

No, I haven't gone goofy. Nor have I been reading "The Globe" or the "National Enquirer". I'm simply imploring you to act now to stop alien abductions. Do it fast because it's costing you a ton of money. And you can stop them. Let me explain.

Several weeks ago I was auditing a seminar given to one of our clients. The operations manager stated, "more than 15% of our entry level workers quit work unannounced their first week on the job. They just don't come back. Many, the first day. It's as if they're abducted by aliens. The space ship must be someplace above the rear entrance to our plant. All we hear is a giant whooshing sound. We never hear from these folks again. We spend in excess of a thousand dollars a head to get them in here, and no sooner than they arrive, POOF, they're gone."

Aliens indeed.

Why do these people mysteriously disappear, and what, if anything can be done to stop the disappearances?

Let me first address the why question and its' two answers. As you might imagine, the answer is best understood through an understanding of Predictive Index.

Many of our entry level jobs are by their nature High C jobs. They require that people follow a routine. They tend to center around process oriented work: going step by step, from beginning to end in a consistent fashion. Whether in the office, the plant or in the field: jobs like those described above, are High C jobs and are thus best done by High C people. As you likely all remember from your P. I. training, the C is a very difficult drive to work against. If a job is a High C job, it is very difficult for a Low C person to do it comfortably.

Thus, one likely reason for abductions is that a company is hiring Low C people for their High C jobs. They come to work and find the work just doesn't suit them. So they vanish. That happens, but it doesn't explain the situation here. This was a P. I. client who rigorously utilized the tool in the hiring process. High C people were being hired for High C jobs. If this company is hiring the right people, shouldn't they stay? Or, should this company look closer for the mother ship?

I don't think so. Let's look at the problem from another angle.

The communities we serve have an unemployment rate that averages 3%. A little higher in some places and lower in others, but by and large, the unemployment rate is miniscule. A High C worker starts looking for a work home. (Let's assume for the story this is a he, but the story works regardless of gender.) He just graduates High School, or is laid off from another job or leaves because he's just "had enough". Let's assume at the interview he's well groomed, un-pierced, and even wears a tie. Let's assume he's got a good work ethic as well as a series of positive recommendations. He visits the industrial park closest to where he lives and puts in applications to every operation in the park. Let's also assume he likes what he sees at your place and you move quickly and make him an offer he accepts. Within two weeks, he starts in your operation on a Monday morning.

Let's stop here for a minute. If he's as good as what I described above, how many other job offers will he receive during and after he accepts your offer? When he gets home from work on that first Monday, will there be any messages on his answering machine from other organizations asking if he'd reconsider their offer? Bet on it.

Let's go back to P. I. for a minute and discuss what High C's want in a job. They want a consistent, stable process oriented work environment where they are given time to learn that which they're expected to do in a process format. And they want work to feel like home. They want a sense of family when they come into work, where people care about them as people.

Now, let's circle back to alien abductions and this specific company's employment process. In this case, they took their new worker and put him with one of their hardest working people, "to get him started on the right foot". Inevitably, this would be a High A High D, Low B, Low C who worked hard, didn't talk and expected the new person to keep up and either "shape up, or ship out". No effort was made to develop a personal connection with the recruit. You come to work to work. The company found many recruits shipped out before they shaped up. Their first week. The working trainer says, "they just weren't going to cut it. We're better off without them." The company describes the shipping out as the old alien abduction thing.

Is there a lesson here?

If you have High C work, and hire High C workers, their first week is your most important week to build commitment. That's the time you have to create a sense of family.

Let's step back again. Imagine the perfect scenario of being brought to your new spouses' family at Thanksgiving dinner. Likely, you would be introduced to everyone. And if grandpa was the irascible sort, you'd be given a head's up by someone and told to keep your distance (grandpa was the likely trainer in the above scenario) until he got used to you. You'd be shown the restrooms, and ideally a friendly aunt or uncle would take you under their wing and help you feel comfortable.

As an employer, I'd suggest you want to create that "Thanksgiving atmosphere" the first week of work for the High C employee. Try to make sure your new employee gets introduced to as many members of his new family as possible. Walk him around the facility. Try to assign him a loyal company "buddy" to hang around with his first week on the job – to go to lunch, to ask questions of, to generally provide a lay of the land. To make him feel at home. Try to see that he gets training from another High C who won't leave out any steps. Create the confidence the High C worker needs.

All this is important because if you hire High C workers to do High C work, and then satisfy their needs when they get there, they'll be a whole lot less likely to become dissatisfied. And less likely to return those phone calls from your employer competitors. And less likely to be abducted by aliens. And that's money in the bank for your company.

Stopping alien abductions is just one good way to keep P. I. making money for your organization. One of many. Try not to think about people or people problems without putting them in the context of P. I. You'll be a more profitable and better operating company as a result.

Thanks for listening,



Robert S. Wilson, President
Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc.