



## Hiring & Recruiting Newsletter

### Hiring Change Leaders

"We're in an economy that has the potential to crush organizations if they aren't willing to change their strategies and the way they hire people to implement those strategies," says Jeremy Miller, a partner with LEAPJob, a sales recruiting firm. "Companies now have to change the way they hire and who they hire to succeed."

"Take, for example, a company that has to restructure its business to survive," explains Miller. "That new structure means that the company will need people with different skill sets to implement these new strategies. The difference isn't always in the recruiting process; it's in the planning side of things. For example, we have a client who had a very successful sales force over the years; however, when the economy took a downturn, so did their sales.

"It wasn't that the reps weren't doing their jobs," continues Miller. "In fact, the reps were really good. However, the system was starting to fail the reps, so the organization had to change the sales force design and the way they hire to keep up with the times."

The challenge was to hire someone to lead this change. While many of the incumbent reps were promotable, the new management was going to be in a state of flux, says Miller, and that called for a different skill set that most of these reps didn't have. The decision was made to hire someone from the outside who was experienced in going through an organizational change.

"Hiring in general has to be more strategic," says Miller. "It's a problem and an opportunity for employers at the same time. Not only do companies have to be more strategic in hiring, they also have to be diligent in documenting the requirements of the role and the change initiative. What competencies do the new hires need in order to successfully implement change?"

What used to work in a hot market – going to the competition and finding someone with a great Rolodex – won't work now, says Miller. "Now you have to look at the criteria of the project and use that to gauge how you hire these 'recession candidates,'" he says. "As you assess each candidate, you need to compare the candidate to the job analysis criteria. It's a hiring process that is built on due diligence."

"It's not a time to make compromises," adds Miller. "In this market, you need to find people who not only fit your strategic criteria, but who also have certain strengths such as adaptability and stress management. The skill set of leading a growth organization versus an organization in change is absolutely different. If a growth manager becomes a leader in a change organization, it doesn't often work. You need someone who can deal with change."

"These people have to be both smart and strategic," Miller adds. "They have to be able to see the big picture and all its moving parts and be able to make recommendations back to the executive team. They also need to have emotional intelligence and good communication skills – change is all about communicating with people and dealing with their emotions and fears at the same time. If it sounds like we are asking a lot... we are; these searches are very challenging. However, once you find the right person to lead change with your sales force, it's very rewarding."

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