

Skill set for success

By TRENTON HIGHTOWER

Individuals who excel in the workplace often appear to do so effortlessly. With very little direction from management, they set goals and plan how to achieve them.

Clients seek them out, customers appreciate their attention, and they influence their co-workers positively. On a scale of 1-5, they're the 6's.

How lucky can you get, right? Right?

To the untrained eye, these successful employees look like the luckiest people in the world. Their natural abilities have led them to the right arena, and life is good. Could it be, however, that there is something just a bit more scientific going on?

Good managers recruit good talent based on specific skill sets. By carefully identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each individual, the skilled manager matches staff members with the functions at which they will perform optimally.

At Frederick Community College/JTA Customized Training, we've identified a four-point skill set that serves as the common denominator for all who excel in our industry.

1. Coordinator

The most successful professionals

in our industry are detail-oriented with excellent follow-up skills. Coordinating a program in a one-stop shop format for busy employees and managers is a critical skill.

2. Program Developer

Every staff member needs to know how to organize a program from start to finish. Each team member builds a 60-90 minute Lunch & Learn workshop in order to have an insider's understanding of the programs we offer.

Experience in program development gives deeper credibility when negotiating with Human Resource managers — many of whom are experts in adult education and training.

3. Certified Instructor

Certifications in the Zig Ziglar modules or the Achieve Global programs make us better trainers and give us an advantage in hiring instructional staff. Again, such certifications lend greater credence and credibility when negotiating contract training with corporate clients.

4. Negotiator

FCC/JTA staff members have developed a toolbox of sales skills which they can use when presenting

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TRENTON HIGHTOWER

Curriculum vitae

Trenton Hightower is the associate vice president of FCC/JTA customized training at Frederick Community College. In addition, he has completed "Train the Trainer" courses in the following areas: Using the Malcolm Baldrige by Kodak, Dale Carnegie sales course, Xerox strategic planning process, systems curriculum and instructional development by OSU (certified), Ziglar Education Systems, and DDI certification. Mr. Hightower has a Bachelor's in communication/public relations and Master's in administration of higher education.

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programs to prospective clients.

Often, this is the area most spurned by professionals in our field. Few enjoy the prospect of selling education or training to clients, but it is an important point in the four-part skill set we need to succeed.

Now consider your business.

List the skills that the most successful professionals in your business have. Jot down your team members' names, and rank

where each is strong and weak.

Teach to the weaknesses, and match the strengths with the functions and duties that support your strategic goals. When it's time to recruit new staff, get a clear idea of where the missing links are in your team's skill set, and fill them in.

Identifying the qualities your top staff members have and trolling your talent pool for other employees with similar strengths will help you build a strong, performance-driven team.

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