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*Lorna has had a challenging last few months. Her team had been underperforming and when she hired an extremely well qualified replacement for one of her retiring team members, she had high hopes of the team turning things around. But after several months, things seemed only to be getting worse. She now had another vacancy to fill and was wondering what she could do differently to achieve different results.*

It's not uncommon for hiring managers like Lorna to be disappointed with their hiring decision. There can be many reasons for this, but one common oversight of hiring managers is not considering the vacant position in the context of the existing team. We're all familiar with the tendency of 'hiring people like me' and despite diversity initiatives and increased awareness of the hiring bias, it is still common to find teams composed of individuals who look at issues similarly, who have been the product of comparable educational backgrounds, and who have experiences with similar track records and approaches.

Creating a strong and effective team therefore starts with recruiting the right people, something that is often overlooked in the rush to fill a vacant position. The hiring process is an ideal moment to reflect on the composition of your team, and consider the variety and balance across all dimensions, from education and experience, to skills, perspective and personalities. Different people have different shapes, and you want to put these together to make a square.

So how can a hiring manager such as Lorna change their approach and use the hiring process to build a stronger and more successful team? The following steps are just some suggestions to help bring a team oriented focus to your recruitment, with the ultimate goal of not only hiring the right skills and experience, but also of complementing the skills and talents of your existing team members:

- Identify the skills and experience required for the position. Most positions have a baseline skill set that is required for success. Be careful not to be too specific in this area. You are aiming to broaden the educational and experience criteria to maximize variety in your talent pool.
- List the responsibilities of the position - especially as they relate to others in the team. Is this a leadership position? A decision maker? A support role? Follow this by considering how this position will interact with existing team members. Do you need a decision maker who makes carefully considered decisions to complement a current team member who may be decisive but sometime ill considered?
- Identify desirable characteristics that are missing from your team. Is your team strong on technical skills but lacking creativity? Or perhaps you have a lack of customer focused team members, or need someone who brings a big-picture perspective rather than attention to detail?
- Build this information into your recruitment campaign - from the advertising and job description right through the selection process.
- A focus on the organization's values and goals will ensure that your new hire, while bringing balance and alternative skills or perspective, has compatible values and is motivated by the same goals as

the other team members. This is a critical consideration for minimizing the potential for dysfunctional conflict, and will make leading your new and diverse team a little less challenging than it may otherwise be.

- Finally, consider involving other team members in the selection process. This can serve 2 purposes: Providing a preview of some of the interpersonal dynamics that develop, and engaging your team in the selection process so they have a better understanding, and hopefully more acceptance of your strategy to balance the team.

Building an 'A-Team' is every leader's dream. There are many strategies and approaches toward that goal, but it always starts with hiring the right shaped pieces (people) to complete the puzzle.