



BE STRONG

Strengths-based recruitment is being adopted by an increasing number of companies and can transform organisations, as Sally Bibb explains

It's a cliché but the success of an organisation depends on how good its people are. Organisations that introduce strengths-based recruitment do so because they want to improve their ability to recruit and retain great people. Some decide to do it because they have high attrition rates (and associated cost), others because they need to improve their performance in some way, and for others it's a combination of both.

Strengths-based recruitment (SBR) is being adopted by more and more organisations. And the return on investment, both in terms of numbers and qualitative benefits, is clear. However, most don't expect the transformational effects that go way beyond recruitment. Other benefits that organisations routinely experience when they implement SBR include:

Saving money, improved productivity

Think about how many people you know who are 'square pegs in round holes' or just can do the job rather than really loving it. The cost to performance and productivity of having many people like that can be huge.

A number of well-known and respected companies, including Starbucks, Morrisons, Saga and the AA, have pioneered the SBR approach and proved the value of hiring people based on their strengths (what they are good at, love doing and energises them) instead of just their competencies (what they can do).

In terms of the return on investment, SBR reduces cost. This can start to happen quickly – in some cases savings are seen within a few months of starting the project. Some results that top companies have benefited from include:

- 28% drop in staff turnover rates in 10 months
- 20% increase in monthly commission rates
- 12% increase in customer satisfaction
- 100% increase in staff engagement levels

Improved confidence in hiring decisions

The 'SBR effect' is not confined to financial savings. Hiring managers report that they are much more confident that they are choosing the right people for the job. They commonly report that they are taking on people that they previously wouldn't have done and not taking on those that they previously would have done. Why? Because they now know what great looks like and they have the skills to identify candidates that fit the bill and those that don't.



Opens the door to new talent

Identifying the 'DNA' of a person who is great at the job means that it's possible to attract people who previously wouldn't have thought of themselves in that particular role or organisation.

Examples are ex-servicemen applying for and being very successful in a sales role for a financial services company, a bricklayer doing really well in a call centre job and someone with no previous work experience being a brilliant recruit for a healthcare company.

Gives clear evidence as to whether a person will be great at the job

Most people don't know what their own strengths and motivators are. And organisations often lack understanding of what it takes to be great in a particular job. The most common approach to identifying what a person needs to be good at, in order to be a great hire, is the competency approach. This involves one or more people who know the job, getting together and listing the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed. This approach is flawed, however, because the result is an identikit description of an 'ideal' person who doesn't exist, and the descriptions are too vague and contain bland phrases like 'must be a good team-player, self-starter, influencer' and so on. They don't include the 'deep-down' motivators and strengths of great people in the job. The benefit of SBR is that it is based on the strengths and motivators that actual great performers have.

Transforms the culture as well as the business

All of the above benefits are what organisations hope for when adopting SBR. Most don't expect, and are amazed by, the transformation in the culture brought on by this new approach. Having people in jobs that they love (as opposed to just 'like' or even 'tolerate') can massively improve results and change the working atmosphere. It is like letting loose a positivity virus.

For more information on strengths-based recruitment, email sallybibb@engagingminds.co.uk