



Shadowmatch®

**IN SEARCH OF
SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE**

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By Pieter de Villiers

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Top performing people can provide as much as ten times more value to a company compared to poor performing people and as much as seven times more than average performing people. These top performers are the key drivers towards successful business. On a strategic business development level, highly talented people can, on their own as an individual, determine the destiny of an entire company. Successful business depends on top performing people on all levels of its operational functions. The problem being that this challenge is not always fully understood and the way in which employers approach this imperative of finding successful people normally doesn't provide against the need of most companies.

We first need to define a successful person. This is someone who performs a task in such a way that the outcome matches the expectation and regularly exceeds the expectation. A top performer is someone who continuously and even radically exceeds the expectation that is normally met by successful people.

The tough question is where to find these people. It seems to be very easy to find them because the majority of people can be successful and a higher than expected percentage of people can be top performers. The challenge is not so much finding them. The challenge is the fact that success is not determined by the person only. Success is somewhat more complex. Success in the workplace only materialises when the task at hand, the capabilities and preferences of the individual as well as the working environment match in such a way that the persons' talents, skills and potential can flourish. There are

three realities that must be in alignment in order for an individual to be successful and to possibly become a top performer. Firstly, the task or work that needs to be done, secondly, the context where the work is being done and thirdly, the make-up, skills, qualifications and behavioural preferences of the individual. If these aspects are not in harmony, even the most talented, skilled and capable person will not succeed. It is all a matter of matching the right people to the environment and the task. Although this might sound very simple to understand, it is very difficult to do. The following example will explain.

A specific sales person outperformed all sales staff nationally on car sales. The person was based in Johannesburg, selling a specific brand at a specific dealer. At a point in her career, she was head-hunted by the opposition. She was offered a very lucrative package and accepted it. She failed. To the extent that she voluntarily resigned to prevent a scenario of being dismissed for not making targets. Her previous employer heard about this and phoned her. She went back to her previous dealer and sold the most vehicles nationally as a single sales person for nine consecutive months from the date of re-employment. During extensive interviews, she could never tell what the problem was. Fact is, it didn't work. This was the problem, for some reason the context was not conducive to her way of working. She didn't like the set-up at the other dealer and she recognised this.

It must be understood that finding top performing people is fully reliant on matching people, expectations, tasks and the working environment towards a positive performance outcome.

A closer look at this challenge is necessary. A specific job / task can only be done by somebody properly qualified to do it. Qualifications can be defined as experience

and / or official academic qualifications empowering an individual to be successful in doing a specific job. Top performing people must be qualified to do the job. When an employee is recruited for a job, the necessary qualifications must be very clearly defined. The question to be answered is: What qualifications must the employee have that will theoretically ensure success in doing the job? A company might for example recruit a psychologist to counsel employees traumatised as a result of the work they do. Theoretically, any qualified psychologist will easily be able to do this.

But, let's say there are further aspects to this position. The company provides security services to business executives in Iraq. Their security agents are being shot at every day, they are constantly under attack, many die and many get seriously injured. The workplace is in the open where the psychologist will be rushed either to the scene of the incident or the hospital. This unique workplace redefines the situation. Not every psychologist will find it easy to do the job. We need to look at additional capabilities. What are they? The only reliable way to determine what these additional capabilities are is to find a few psychologists in Iraq, doing this work, enjoy doing it, are successful in doing it and has been doing it for at least a year and they still want to do it. Their behavioural skills, habits and attitudes should have some level of congruency. They might for instance all be very

altruistic, show an attitude of non aggressive involvement in the world around them, display extreme resilience and are predominantly team players with low levels of fear. If we want to recruit somebody for this job, it will be wise to recruit someone with the same behavioural strengths. The reason is obvious. The working conditions, task and expectations are all included in the behavioural skills and strengths of those who are already successful in that environment doing that specific job. In doing this properly, the propensity to successful placement of people have shown to be much higher than any other method known to us.

Conclusion.

Successful people are those who found a high level of harmony between their qualifications, behavioural preferences, the job to be done and the working environment or working conditions. People can, according to our research only become top performers if this tri-angular fit (Person, task and context) is very high.

Shadowmatch™ has been developed as a sophisticated computer based system to do this. In one specific workplace the staff turn-over came down from over 70% per year to less than 30% by following these recruitment principles and using Shadowmatch™ as the facilitation tool. For more information go to www.shadowmatch.co.za/about