

Cultural Suitability - “fitting a hand in a glove”

Within financial services and related businesses, CEO’s and HR Directors, aspire to identify culturally suitable “C”-Suite Executives candidates. ...Matching skills and competencies should be enough to ensure long standing success for the candidate and the organisation, or is it?

A quick Google search* brings about 11,400,000 results when defining cultural suitability, which proves it is a popular term. But what does it actually mean? Is it really *that* important to find a candidate who ‘fits’ your corporate ethos both professionally and culturally?



A reoccurring definition for cultural fit is: “the likelihood that a job candidate will be able to conform and adapt to the core values and collective behaviours that make up an organization.” That’s not a bad description, but does it fall short of defining the potential power of cultural fit when executed well, and it raises a concern. One should we not have to conform (i.e. imitate, follow, obey, adapt) rather; **when cultural fit is right for the candidate and the organisation, collective behaviours naturally occur** because core values and beliefs are already shared.

We espouse cultural fit should also incorporate diversity, uniqueness and allow mutual respect to be prevalent. It should be sought for the right reasons. Despite cultural fit being something which is strengthened by common values and behaviours, it’s also important to encourage uniqueness, letting people’s individual personalities, ideas and creativity emerge. Mutual and open respect between colleagues is paramount; and when this is actively demonstrated, team cohesion and the development of a strong and supportive culture is sure to follow. Being mindful of the political framework is necessary, especially for senior executives. Correct positioning of statements particularly at senior executive leadership meetings, or at board level is imperative.

The most accurate ways in which cultural fit can be anticipated when searching for the right candidate, is by using behavioural based interviewing, situational analysis and psychometric assessment and evaluation. This is particularly critical when hiring executives in key leadership roles, especially those whose behaviour will have influential consequences. There is no doubt it is a worthwhile investment of time and money in the search process, which delivers tangible long term benefits. Psychological profiling is a specialist field of expertise. When it is performed and interpreted by qualified professionals it can be relied upon as a valid and reliable source of prediction, as to how a candidate will be likely to perform in the key aspects of their future role, as well as how they are likely to synchronise with the cultural values of the organisation. It is never a guarantee as you are dealing with people, but it considerably increases the chances of success. For example research shows that **cognitive ability tests alone; are 116% more successful in predicting job performance** than an unstructured interview (Hunter & Hunter, 1984), but the key is to employ a holistic approach when it comes to executive search methodology.

Psychological Profiling is just one of the core specialties which boutique advisory firm Global Partnerships Executive Solutions have been tailoring for client needs since 2003. If you’re interested in learning more, please visit the website at www.globalpartnerships.com.au or phone +61 3 9502 0554 to arrange a confidential, obligation-free discussion on how Global Partnerships can help you identify **culturally suitable candidates, who become great leaders.**

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Reference

Hunter, John E. and R.F. Hunter, 1984, "Validity and utility of alternative predictors of job performance," Psychological Bulletin, 96, 72-98.