

## The Vicious Circle of Mediocrity

Category: Performance

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I have an idiosyncratic view of life in small to medium sized companies based on a lifetime of experience, and I think that there is a real employee culture problem out there. What I see with a number of the owners I work with is that when it comes down to the true essentials many owners are actually afraid of their employees.

This stems from a basic insecurity about employees leaving, and the implications are particularly disturbing. I believe that owners know, at some level, that they are poor at hiring and that they are better off holding on to what they have. This leads them, in turn, to put up with mediocrity and this is one of the most critical issues in business today.

I believe that this all starts with the owner's distaste for hiring. The subliminal thought process in the head of the owner runs along the following lines:

- I know that I have poor hiring skills;
- I know that the hiring effort will be time consuming;
- I know that the hiring effort will be expensive;
- When I hire somebody I am afraid they will be no better than the person I am replacing.

The inner self-knowledge of the small business owner or executive's inability to hire leads to a fear of employees leaving and this fear encourages managers to put up with mediocrity. They are afraid of getting rid of somebody because they know that then they'll have to go out and invest valuable time, money and other resources trying to find someone who may turn out to be no better than the person being replaced.

I see that thinking happening a lot, and I call it "***the fear of the unknown incompetent***". As a result small businesses are very poor at firing people. They put up with abuses that they should not put up with and fail to hold their employees accountable because they are worried that the employees will turn around, quit and leave the company in the lurch.

The whole dynamic of what goes on in a company can be changed if employees are held accountable. It is much easier to hold employees accountable if you know that you can replace them, and this becomes much easier if you have a reliable process that you use for hiring that improves your batting average.

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Success for most businesses in the new economy will rely upon developing better systems and on having the best employees for the price in the best position. This revolves around improving or replacing employees, and it is extraordinary how little real effort business owners put into the critical hiring dynamic.

It is essential to develop a Hiring Process Done properly you will improve your “batting average” while at the same time removing you from all but the most essential parts of the process.