

Is it a cultural fit?

The client was a medium sized manufacturer of furniture systems to institutional clients throughout North America. Business growth hovered around 20% year over year despite economic slowdown, necessitating expansion of facilities and straining systems and people resources. One of these people resources was Hector, a production floor team leader. Hector was knowledgeable and hardworking – when he chose to be. He also was unreliable in attendance, a bully on the production floor and quick to point fingers of blame when problems arose around order fulfillment.

Management was aware of both the contributions Hector was capable of and the disruptions in production and co-worker relations he inevitably created. While to an outsider the necessary action appeared obvious (i.e., performance discussion; goal setting; measurement; review), management vacillated between fear of losing production knowledge and relief over eliminating a “bad apple” in the organizational barrel.

The long-standing relationship between VRH and this manufacturing client afforded consultation with management on options and implications. Key in this discussion was the organizational culture management was trying to maintain as rapid growth and need for continuous change affected how they did business. Desired elements in this organizational culture were collaboration, communication and a team approach to solving problems. It became clear to management that Hector’s production knowledge did not outweigh the negative impact on culture within the organization brought about by his disruptive and unreliable behavior. Ultimately, necessary action was taken.

The simple but powerful matrix below proved useful in bringing management to the realization that vacillation was unproductive and costly. You will find this matrix equally useful in similar situations. By plotting the target individual’s performance against alignment with cultural values – as reflected in day-to-day behavior – you can identify appropriate actions to be taken.

PERFORMANCE	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach • Motivate • Educate • Clarify Expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train • Stretch Goals • Develop as Potential Successor
	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train • Educate • Job Placement
		Low	High

CULTURAL/VALUES ALIGNMENT

People are not inherently bad, but sometimes there is a poor alignment with organizational values and culture. The above matrix – and guidance available from our professional business psychologists – can aid you in formulating options and making decisions. *Decision assurance*. That’s the essence of what VRH has provided for over 70 years. Contact us at 414-259-9722 to build a relationship around your business needs.