

Skills not the only criterium in digital advertising

One of the major hurdles faced by advertising agencies, as in many other industries, is a skills shortage; therefore the pressing and growing need for qualified talent in all areas, from writing and design to development and technical skills.



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In many cases, this has led to a 'skills above all' criterion when searching for new staff - finding the right skills and experience is seen as sufficient, without trying to assess whether a prospective employee is a good match to the culture of the company.

"Planning for success requires more than simply ensuring each employee has the right functional skills for their particular role," says Georgina Barrick, CEO of search specialists Humanity Search & Select. "There is a certain, unique consciousness - generally set by the leadership - in every successful business, and what keeps it successful is attracting talent that shares that consciousness."

Successful leaders share CQ

Research has shown that consciousness - a term referring to a number of important behaviours, namely creativity, openness, trust, courage, self-awareness, confidence, intuition and instinct - has as much of an effect on the fortunes of a company as do the operational competencies of the staff. In fact, studies of the most and least successful businesses in both the USA and South Africa have revealed that the most successful leaders all share a similar consciousness quotient (CQ), which can be summed up as 'high-consciousness', whereas the least successful leaders are much more likely to exhibit 'low-consciousness' behaviours.

"When you consider the increasingly fast pace of modern business in general, and the expanding digital space in particular," says Barrick, "high-consciousness individuals become even more important. It's an environment where the creativity, intuition and confidence to 'go with your gut' and be proven right gives you the edge over low-consciousness competitors." This is the reason Humanity has incorporated tools to assess CQ when evaluating candidates, along with the standard assessments of qualifications, experience and psychometric testing.

Creative and good communicators

In the past three years, Humanity has enjoyed superb growth, and has been particularly successful in acquiring and keeping clients in the digital advertising sector. Barrick attributes this expansion to Humanity's unique CQ assessments. "I think a lot of South African advertising agencies are barking up the wrong tree when it comes to the digital space. High-CQ individuals are highly creative and great communicators - and they also tend to be quick learners. If agencies concentrate on populating all levels with high-CQ talent, it won't take long for those individuals to pick up any operational skills they are lacking. It's a much better recipe for success than simply selecting staff on the basis of their technical proficiency, without

considering whether they will enhance the consciousness of the organisation."

More and more traditional agencies have realised they need to move into the digital market fast, in order to meet their clients increasing demands. They are exploring expansion, acquisition or mergers accordingly. In their haste to compete, however, they may be missing an important principle - skills can be taught, but there is no substitute for high-CQ leadership in any business that intends to remain relevant to a constantly evolving market.

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