

PART 3

SEARCH
FOR A STAR

DAVE STENT continues our series on what you can do to make sure your next hire is the right hire

So far we have examined the benchmarking process for your role and a robust approach to how you select the right person. Here, we take a look at what you do in those important early days of your chosen individual starting in your organisation.

Appropriate psychometric profiling encourages the individual to identify personal action plans, keeping them motivated and sending them the message that the company is focused on its people and dedicated to improving their performance and of the company.

The successful induction and management of the new employee is a key responsibility of their line manager. So to support the manager in this task any psychometric profiling carried out on the new recruit should deliver:

- A management overview
- The individual's motivating factors
- Management strategies for coaching and developing
- Insights into the team and the team approach

The information obtained will enable the line managers in your organisation to induct the new employee efficiently, getting them up to speed and 'delivering the goods' quickly and effectively.

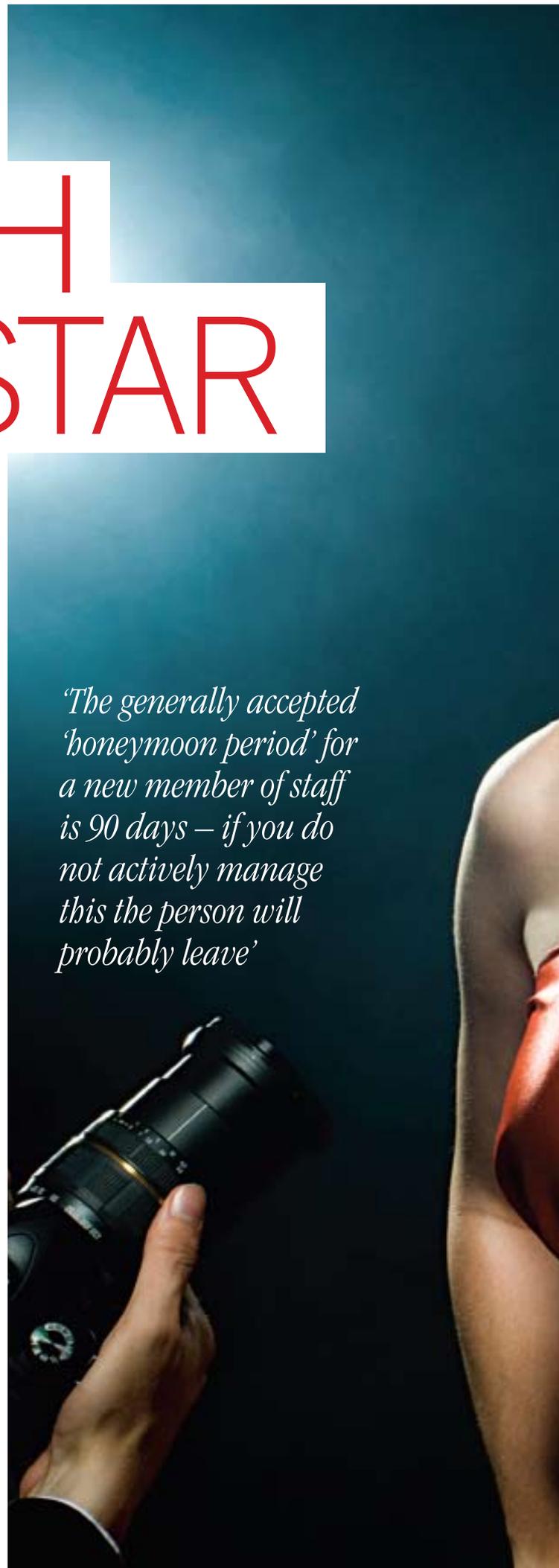
THE STARTING POINT

The generally accepted 'honeymoon period' for a new member of staff is 90 days - which is quite a long time, so if you do not actively manage this introduction the person will probably leave before it is completed - and it's usually the good ones that walk away fastest.

The first 90 days of an employee's tenure are critical. Inducting and welcoming the right person is not just about the skills, knowledge and experience match, but also the attitude/temperament match.

How often have you experienced taking on the new employee - the right fit from the skills, knowledge etc. for them to leave within the first 90 days because 'they just didn't fit in'? Was it that their way of doing things did not fit in with the organisation's way of doing things - or did the organisation simply fail to make sufficient effort to make them feel part of the team? ➤

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◀ The purpose of induction is to ensure the effective integration of the new employee into the organisation for the benefit of both parties. Research has shown that tailor-made induction programmes increase staff retention. A good induction programme contains the following elements:

- Physical orientation – describing the facilities
- Organisational orientation – showing how the employee fits into the team and how their role fits with the organisation’s strategy and goals
- Awareness of other functions within the organisation, and how the employee fits with them

- Meeting with key senior employees (either face-to-face or through the use of technology)
- Health and safety information – this is a legal requirement
- Explanation of terms and conditions
- Details of the organisation’s history, its products and services, its culture and values
- A clear outline of the job/role requirements.

An additional tip from a psychometric perspective is to give the line manager a list of simple ‘how to’ and ‘how not to’ advice on managing their new team member. This will give them a running start and increase the chances of that vital manager-employee relationship working.

This is not just about getting the task done – it is also about the individual and their approach to getting the task done. That approach is influenced strongly by their core temperament. It’s the psychometric profile that gives us a unique insight into that temperament and the behaviour patterns that support this.

Box 1 on the left gives a brief description of the typical sections you should see in any psychometric profile. The starting point for any line manager in understanding the individual is the ‘big picture’ management overview, which in itself provides a real insight into the new employee. Box 2 provides an example of such an overview. It is centred on the individual, reflecting their preferred ways of working. Here are some ways of managing this recruit:

BOX 1: MANAGING/COACHING TIPS FOR A NEW SALESPERSON’S DIRECT MANAGER

MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Use this report on a regular basis as a quick reminder of the newcomer’s profile – but be sure to study the other, fuller reports before giving feedback or making any decisions.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

Use this report to understand their inner needs in order to assess whether these are being met in their current job or if they would realistically be met in a different role.

STRATEGIES FOR COACHING AND DEVELOPING

Use this report for guidance on how to work with them effectively. If you have a copy of your own ‘do’s and don’ts’, comparing your expectations with theirs will be especially enlightening.

TEAM APPROACH

Use this report to understand how they work in a team. If they are currently on your team and you can compare this report with the Team Approach reports of other members of your team, this will add considerably to your understanding of your team’s current dynamics. If they are a new applicant for a place on your team, use this report to see how their style might affect those existing dynamics.

MOTIVATING STRATEGIES

- Challenge this individual often and give them responsibility and room for advancement
- Tie their rewards to their achievements
- Don’t try to control them too closely
- Keep things moving and get them to set their own deadlines
- Give them a variety of assignments and don’t load on too much routine
- Concentrate on the facts and logic of a situation
- Keep a professional, unemotional approach to a problem
- Make sure they know the rules without trying to control their every move.

COACHING GUIDELINES

- Allow them to shine, focus on the overview and bring it all back to their needs
- Cover a variety of topics in a relatively fast-paced manner, giving them some deadlines to meet
- Allow for some interaction with others as well as some time when concentration is required
- Provide details without going into overload.

Use of psychometric profiling, as an integrated part of an organisation’s performance management strategy, will ensure the ‘right’ people are in the ‘right’ jobs and are supported in delivering performance improvements. The psychometric system, as part of the performance management processes, will help create an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people’s performance.

However, it’s all well and good having the tools to manage your people better – it also means managers need to be as self-aware. For us to be effective as people managers we need to understand our own core

BOX 2: NEW EMPLOYEE PROFILE – MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Summary: this individual’s profile is typical of some managers and supervisors as well as of people who can do well in production or new business development roles. However, they may lack a diplomatic approach at times.

POTENTIAL ASSETS:

Very ambitious and results-orientated, they will not be distracted from their goals, will fight for success and accept responsibility for others. Restless and driving, they like to get things done quickly and can work under pressure. Basically logical, they will be inclined to weigh the pros and cons, making decisions on facts, rather than on emotions. They have an average amount of independence and compliance.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

They will be very discontented unless progressing towards their goals. They can be insensitive to others. They can be impatient and dislike routine work, but can adjust to some of it. They are basically more interested in working with ideas and methods than people. Depending upon the job function, more independence may be an asset.

temperament and how this affects our interaction with others. Good managers are adaptable in approach and able to adopt the most appropriate management style based on the situation and the person involved.

I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important it is that the capabilities managers need to lead and manage new people in this important early phase are clearly defined and understood.

A good psychometric system will not only give insights into the new employee, but will provide the manager with personal insights into their own preferred ways of working. It will enable the manager to adopt a suitable management style to reflect the new employee's needs, to fit in and match these to the needs of the organisation.

The psychometric system will enable the organisation to describe the behaviours managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively. Managers will be able to promote a sense of ownership and responsibility within the individuals in the team, and at team level as well.

So what can you do to 'get the best' from the new employee? Their motivation is largely down to you, so it helps to know what motivates them as individuals. Generally, there are four key motivators:

1. BELIEVING IN THE VALUE OF THEIR WORK

People perform better when they understand what to do and how to do it. But in order for them to perform to the best of their capabilities they also need to understand why it's important. Understanding why means at least knowing the step before and the step after the task. If the new employee knows where their work fits into the larger picture, and how it affects other people, it is a real motivator to work better and smarter. You need to explain to your new employee the value of their work.

2. FEELING VALUED AS A PERSON

Your new employee should feel valued as an individual. They need to know that what they are doing is important and that people will notice when they perform well – and when they don't. Giving the individual a sense of worth is a good motivator. People feel appreciated, supported, encouraged and valued. As a result, they feel better about the work they are doing. As a leader you can encourage, share knowledge and listen, to make the individual feel valued as person. And remember, a timely 'well done' is often the best motivator going.

3. BEING PART OF A TEAM

The feeling of support you can get from working as part of a team can be a very powerful motivator. A team that works well together achieves targets, personal goals and job satisfaction. As a leader you need to promote team building and development whenever possible to improve motivation levels. Getting the new employee embedded into the 'culture of the team' as soon as possible is vital.

4. A POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE CLIMATE

The climate can have a great impact on how you feel at work and on your performance. It's not just the physical

environment, but also the atmosphere within your team that will influence overall performance. You can make it more positive by the way you communicate and encourage your new employee to communicate with their new colleagues. Support positive interaction between team members and the new employee, promote a no-blame culture and see early mistakes as learning opportunities. Encourage existing members to help new employees to settle by encouraging them to develop and support the new employee wherever possible.

WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT AN EFFECTIVE INDUCTION?

In the absence of an effective induction programme, new employees get off to a bad start and may never really understand the organisation itself or their role in it. This may lead to:

- Poor integration into the team
- Low morale, particularly for the new employee, but also in the team

- Loss of productivity

- Failure to work to their highest potential.

In extreme cases, the new employee leaves, either through resignation or dismissal. Early leaving results in:

- Additional cost for recruiting a replacement
- Wasted time for the inducting manager
- Lowering of morale for the remaining staff
- Detriment to the leaver's employment record
- Having to repeat the learning curve of the leaver
- Damage to the company's reputation.

INTO THE DAY-TO-DAY

The usefulness of the psychometric reports described in Box 1 does not end after 90 days – they are invaluable in the day-to-day management and motivation of all employees and teams. In any thorough performance management process there will be a set of one-to-ones scheduled with each employee where line managers will review the individual's performance to date and discuss their future expectations, training needs etc.

Regardless of whether there is a formal induction programme co-ordinated by HR or a less formal programme run by managers, it is important to keep a checklist of the areas of induction training received, ideally countersigned by the individual. This helps to ensure all employees receive all the information they need. This checklist can also be a vital source of reference later – for example to check that an employee has been briefed on policies, or to produce evidence of training in the event of a health and safety inspection.

As the 90 days come to a close and the new employee is well on the way to being fully integrated into their role, team and company, the need is to ensure that the positive approach taken continues. The final article in our series, to be published in the March/April edition of *Winning Edge*, will explore this in more detail.

Contributor Dave Stent is a business partner of The Holst Group, distributor of the McQuaig Psychometric System. You can email him at davestent@mcquaig.co.uk. The first ten readers to contact Holst can claim a free self-development survey for one of their new employees. Call **0800 043 3950** or email info@holstgroup.co.uk quoting *Winning Edge*.