HR's Job Description Dilemma: Right Person, Wrong Role

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Do you ever meet someone and think, *wow, they aren't necessarily the right fit for the role I have open, but they really could bring a ton of value in a particular area of our business?* As managers, we are always looking for the perfect profile of a candidate - the right amount of experience, the right strengths, personality traits, and goals. And sometimes, in digging deep over the source of a few interviews, we find that someone fits another role – one that we haven't defined or created just yet. So here is the HR dilemma: for this other role, not defined or created, there is no budget or defined ROI just yet. For the role for which the candidate is interviewing, there is a definite job opening with budget and ROI. So, when you find yourself facing the right person for the wrong role...what to do? Let's face it, there are many great articles telling employees how to create new roles, ones that best suit their strengths and position them to succeed – and even how to get your manager on board with the new

role. So, it is not a foreign concept to create roles, but more often they happen with existing employees rather than with candidates. Every day here at Viventium, we think about the big picture and our strategic plan, and not unlike the rest of the growth companies we meet, we are trying to achieve two things at once: the necessary amount of growth and building for the future. Today, it seems, there are many people at a mid-level that could help execute the strategy – but at the same time, we need the doers. The ones that execute the plan. The hardest thing to find today is talent with the right experience level. According to the Harvard Business Review article 21st –Century Talent Spotting, 63% of CEO respondents said they were concerned about the future availability of key skills at all levels. In that same HBR article, the first step is all about hiring the right people and key indicators include the right kind of motivation, curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination. Qualities you may end up finding in the candidate you meet, but with skills and experience for a role, you weren't prepared to fill. So I will play devil's advocate here for a second. Suppose you took that "right person" and offered them a job in the wrong role. Now, in all fairness, they did an interview for the role, so the proper expectations are set and they fully know what they are signing up for. There is a possibility that for a short time (training, ramping, etc.) they would deliver and execute. And maybe, for a time that would work. The challenge is knowing how fleeting that short-term placebo effect would suffice. At some point, a conversation would happen where the engagement level of the employee and the ROI for the employer would be disjointed. So let's say – the same individual lit up over a particular aspect of the job when they interviewed. A majority of their results came from that one area. The passion and excitement over their achievement in that area were obvious. And that one particular thing was something that you needed but hadn't planned for. Rather than stay hypothetical, I will share some real-life examples where we created roles we were not ready to hire for this year. HR pros, get ready. Several months ago, we had an open position in finance. The role was, in a nut shell, a financial analyst role with the biggest need being financial modeling. An employee had referred a wonderful candidate who interviewed with our CFO. After the interview, our CFO went to our VP of Sales and said how much he liked the candidate – but that while he was a good candidate for finance, he would be even better in sales operations. The well-roundedness of this candidate was apparent, and since we are all in tune with each other's departmental needs, our CFO knew this guy would be perfect for our VP. We hired him in sales operations where he could use all his skills – financial, systems, processes, presentation – and contribute as a specialist. After seeing the success with our sales operations candidate, we believed wholeheartedly in matching skills and passion. So, when a smart, successful candidate walked in a few months later interviewing for a sales position, it didn't take long to realize that her passion was in training and development. She lit up every time she spoke about teaching, presenting and mentoring. Not only was she a top sales professional, but she inspired others. We decided to pivot in the interview process and have her run training for us as if we were new sales associates and WOW! As a growing organization, we are looking first and foremost for remarkable sales professionals, but we took a step back and thought – what if the first person that our new sales hires met was this woman. What impact would that have on their performance? This investment could take us even further long term than having one more sales associate waiting for her next role. Now we have a role model who leads our learning division. Now don't get me wrong;

not everyone gets to create their own role. We are talking about hard working, highly engaged, star quality candidates with a proven track record of success, the kind of people we know we would be better off with than without. You may ask – how has it worked out? So far, it's been amazing! These two people exhibit the qualities we knew they would. No surprises here! They are motivated, inspired, willing to put in the effort and to share ideas. Their ideas have been implemented and they are part of a much bigger goal than just an individual one. And they love their jobs! Obviously, it's not always feasible to create a new role, whether because of budget or other reasons. My best advice comes from the adage, "When in doubt, don't." The reality for me is that the right person in the wrong role will result in them being unhappy and you being disappointed, and it may be worth it to wait until the right role presents itself for that individual. But if you meet a game changer, spend a few minutes thinking about the company's strategy – and if it aligns, go for it!

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