



Topgrading Tips

January 2007

Additional Information

- New 1-Hour Video on Interviewing and Hiring
- Topgrading Shop
- Brad Smart Bio
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New Website!

- For the latest topgrading news, articles, tools, and services, click here or go to: www.SmartandAssoc.com

Why 75 Percent of Managers Promoted Fail

Last year I met with the #1 human resource executives of the world's largest 100 corporations and they confirmed what our research found: only one in four managers promoted turn out to be the expected high performer. Why do so many managers fail? Our business culture supports myths, and the topgraders instead embrace facts. Topgrading companies achieve 90% success promoting people.

Myth #1: People should be promoted because of their strengths.

Fact: Failures at executive levels are mostly due to people not overcoming their weak points.

Almost monthly I read drivel in leading business magazines about how success is achieved through relying on one's strengths, "because people won't overcome shortcomings anyway," they say. Nonsense.

Of 6,500 executives I've assessed or coached, 90% were mediocre in one or more jobs, and the reason was clear: their weak points dragged them down. The sales manager promoted to general manager

continued selling, while not learning enough to manage operations. When his plants faltered, so did he, and he was passed over for subsequent promotions. He was good at selling and continued to rely on it. Dumb!

Recommendation: Although you should hire individual contributors based on their strengths, only promote managers **after** they have overcome fatal flaws, serious weak points.

Myth #2: Bosses can judge subordinates' promotability.

Fact: Boss' promotion recommendations fail 75% of the time.

The 25% good recommendations occur when high performing bosses are recommending people to succeed them (a job they know). How likely is it that the Manager Financial Planning will know enough about marketing to recommend one of his financial planners for Marketing Analyst?

Recommendation: Use the topgrading approach. Have two managers conduct a tandem topgrading interview of the financial planner. This is the approach topgraders use to achieve 90% success promoting people.

Why People Don't Support Topgrading

This morning a client HR executive, widely respected for driving the topgrading vision in an 8,000 person division said to me:

?If people don't support topgrading they're a C player or they don't get it.?

She's right. So, she is the educator, cheerleader, and general emissary, constantly sensing skepticism and addressing it through one-on-one conversations, mini workshops for small groups, handing out topgrading handbooks, and encouraging the sharpest managers to use topgrading methods (so

that they experience the positive results and they help sell topgrading to laggards). The high performers are direct and up front with their concerns ? all they need is some more education. In the past skeptics had to wait for a topgrading workshop or read **Topgrading**, but it's easier to educate sharp managers these days. If you don't have the time my client has to personally educate people, just hand them the small topgrading handbook or suggest they watch the 1-hour topgrading video. But watch out! The C players are passive-aggressive, pretending to support topgrading but secretly trying to derail it. They fear topgrading will cause them to be replaced by a high performer. Hmm ? maybe they're not so dumb.

That's why all sharp managers must pay attention to excuses and confront them:

C player: ?I couldn't find a tandem partner so I interviewed her alone and want to offer her a job.?

You: ?Nope ? I'll choose a tandem pair (of high performers) to interview her."

C player: ?I'm desperate so I'll just hire this C player.?

You: ?Nope. Plan ahead next time and now do the full court press in recruitment, but no way will you hire a C player.?

Recommendation: When launching topgrading, ask high performers to help sell the changes by educating and positively challenging skeptics.

Topgrading Hiring ? Recent College Graduates

People ask if the same topgrading interview is the best approach for hiring recent college graduates. Yes! It seems most of our clients have experienced 66% attrition of campus hires, over a three-year period. You can cut college grad mis-hires in half by doing the following:

1. Build relationships with professors, so they

- recommend the top students.
2. Ask recruits who will be visiting you to complete the Topgrading Career History Form, providing details of part-time or summer jobs (in spaces where full-time job information is requested).
3. In the visit to your company, conduct tandem topgrading interviews. It will take 1 1/2 hours, not 4, and you'll get **far** more information than you will from round-robin behavioral interviews (which are OK, but just not enough).
4. Ask candidates to arrange reference calls with 3 or 4 bosses they've had. Yes, even though it was for summer jobs.

Is it too late to wish you Happy New Year? No ?
have a Happy, Topgraded New Year!

Brad

PS Email me any topics you'd like addressed in Topgrading Tips. And please, forward this issue to a couple of friends you think will appreciate it.

Announcement

www.SmartandAssoc.com has some new features:

1. A history of topgrading (?Hi, I'm Brad Smart. Let me take a minute??)
 2. Speech demo (short or long excerpts of me in front of groups)
 3. Revised licensing fees for all topgrading forms and the new 1-hour hiring video
 4. Typical topgrading program rollout plans
 5. New articles
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