

The Secret to Hiring the Right Person in Overseas Markets

One of the greatest risks in expanding a business overseas is finding the right people to do business with, whether it is finding new business partners or staffing up an office with locally sourced employees.

At the end of the day, all hiring decisions come down to “Gut Feel”. No matter how objective you try to be, something inside your head directs you towards one candidate above another.

Often we try to eliminate this sub-conscious gremlin that threatens our decision-making, by bringing in a Recruitment Agency. In some cases this can work, but more often than not, their decision-making and judgement is no better than yours. In overseas recruitment this can be a disaster.

Becoming aware of the Gut Feel Gremlin is the beginning of a major improvement in your selection success. If you reflect on your hiring failures and successes you will often find common threads, common factors that led to a good hire or a poor hire.

But the problem is typically, “how do I control my Gremlins”? When hiring people from different cultures, or for whom your native language is not their native language, the problems become even greater, and the success rates become even lower.

The key to success in any hiring or selection environment, indeed to almost any decision is to acknowledge your gut feel and most importantly – to “Educate” it.

Worldwide research has consistently shown that most hiring decisions are made in the first few minutes of the interview. That can happen, typically between 1.5 and 4 minutes into the meeting. That is a pure “gut feel” decision. It drives the direction of the remainder of the interview as the interviewer subconsciously seeks to justify that decision.

The success of these decisions is little more than 50%.

Educating the gut feel, means going further and using behavioural interviewing techniques to probe, not just the positive indicators, but also potentially negative traits in the candidate. Success lies in delaying your final decision until you have conducted a structured evaluation of all of the important selection criteria.

When dealing with someone from a different culture or different first language, the exercise is further complicated by our understanding of their background. The key influencers in people decisions are body language and their use of words and expressions. Cultural and linguistic gaps are a major source of error in selection decisions.



Often it may be something as simple as a handshake, a cultural reluctance to make eye contact with someone seen as senior, garlic, or gestures. On the language side it may be centred round semantics, sense of humour, or simply the absence of key words or expressions that you favour or catch onto.

In these situations, you need the assistance of a reliable objective measure and a solid benchmark against which to assess your candidates.

Benchmarks help to avoid comparing one candidate against another. If you don't have a clear standard established, you may end up picking the best of a bad lot, or completely misjudging the ideal candidate.

Objective measures means using reliable tests and assessments to measure your candidates and your own expectations. Such measures will have been validated in cross cultural studies to eliminate bias to ensure that they assess what they say they assess.

Psychometric assessments are known to enhance the success rates of selection processes by as much as 50%. Many assessment tools are available and validated in a number of different languages. They can help the interviewer to get behind the cultural and linguistic barriers and assess the “Real” candidate.

One such tool set; The McQuaig System™ has been validated and translated into many languages. Originally developed over 40 years ago in Canada through many years of rigorous assessment of candidates using psychologically based, behavioural interviews, it was soon translated and validated in French to handle the French speaking populations of Quebec to avoid the discrimination associated with poorly developed assessment tools.

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Today, The McQuaig System™ is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Mandarin, Thai and many other languages, including all of the major European languages.

The McQuaig System is easy to use. All of the assessments are available as paper based exercises, with the instructions provided in the language of the assessment to make it easy for the candidate to follow your instructions. An increasing number of these assessments are also available as online assessments.

These paper based assessments can be easily scored online and all reports are available for the interviewer in English or French, while the online interface is also available for candidates in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German, with more languages to become available later in the year.

The McQuaig System™ produces a broad range of reports on the individual from this simple and accurate assessment that will guide the hiring manager through the many pitfalls of picking the right people.

One extremely popular element of the report is the set of Structured Interview Questions that will enable the interviewer validate for themselves, what the report is telling them, by gathering examples from the candidate's employment history during the interview.

Another, increasing popular tool available within the system is The McQuaig Job Survey®. This tool allows a manager to identify in advance the traits they are looking for in the ideal candidate. By using this tool as a benchmark, you can use standardised interviews that help to eliminate many of the opportunities for personal bias or discrimination.

Also available within the system is The McQuaig Occupational Test (MOT). The MOT is a simple, timed test of a person's ability to think quickly. It measures verbal and numerical abilities along with reasoning and has been shown in studies to correlate with ability to

learn and with success in more senior roles or in customer facing roles.

An additional feature of this highly developed system is The McQuaig Self Development Report. The SDR is a report designed to provide developmental feedback to the individual in a useful and constructive format.

The SDR has been used in many developmental settings, either as a personal development tool, as a coaching tool in conjunction with the line manager or a corporate coach and as an induction aid to help get the new hire up to speed effectively, during those critical first 90 days when failure rates can be so high.

Using the full capability of The McQuaig System™ you can cover the full timeline and management of an employee from defining the job, through the recruitment & selection process in detail, in the new hire's day-to-day management and ultimately in their performance management and development and their promotion.



The McQuaig System™ is supported by our worldwide network of experts, with offices in Canada, Ireland, UK, US, Australia, India, New Zealand and with business partners in many other countries and regions.

Here in Ireland, THG Ireland has supported The McQuaig System™ for over 25 years and in that time has built up a world leading expertise in the application of psychometrics in business and has contributed significantly to the development of the system over that time.

For further information and a free trial call us now on 01 4433608 or email info@thgireland.ie.



THG Ireland

Human Resource Solutions for Changing Times

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