

Head Of Talent Reveals The Secret To A Perfect Hire

How do you know a candidate is perfect for your company? Are your own biases creating a monoculture? How important are gut feelings? Jake Kimber, Head of Talent at rapidly growing mobile games company Product Madness, reveals his own recipe for making the right hire.

Ignore The Gut Feeling

There's a study that shows people make their minds up about others within five seconds. That's it – a measly five seconds. The most important piece of advice when hiring is to turn off unconscious biases and go against your instant gut feeling. If you're thinking, 'I hired someone this age and it didn't work out, so all people this age must be the same', it becomes discriminatory and counterproductive.

You can tell when hiring managers are switching off and they've already decided – this cannot be the case. You need to go in with an open mind and remain as subjective and balanced as possible.

However, there are some instances where gut feeling is valuable - and that's when you think outside the box during a hiring process. If you have an instinct that someone previously working in analytics could be an excellent data scientist, that's a positive assumption. Good gut feelings can lead to diverse hires and provide the company with much-needed alternative perspectives.

Culture 'Add', Not Culture Fit

Companies talk about looking for candidates that will fit the culture but, really, they're often talking about hiring people like them. We need to look beyond that.

The aim should be a 'culture add'; you want to enhance and develop your culture, and it should certainly amount to more than a particular type of person. A company culture is made up of a myriad of factors, including shared values and attitudes. People with all sorts of backgrounds can share fundamental values and simultaneously provide unique insight due to their own experiences and backgrounds.

I spend a lot of my time recruiting for roles overseas; each country is different and to view someone through the context of your own society can be extremely

limiting. Instead, learn something about the candidate's culture as it will provide context and prevent any close-mindedness.

When interviewing multilingual candidates, it's essential to be mindful that the language you interview them in may not be their mother tongue. They may not know the industry-specific lingo in all languages but this has no reflection on their skillset.

You see in a lot of companies that people hire in their image and you can't move forward like this. If your company is from one demographic, how can you expand your market?

Don't Be Overly Prescriptive

When hiring, people are often overly prescriptive about what they're looking for. A manager will ask the recruitment team for a combination of factors that simply does not exist, such as an extremely precise skillset which is difficult to find - or non-existent. It is also much harder to attract people in a tiny pool, especially if your company is not well known.

Never stay narrow with your desires - think about other people that can work in the role as skills are always transferable. People are open to taking on new challenges.

Also, I always dissuade managers from requiring candidates to have a certain number of years' experience. Someone might make the same achievements in one year as someone else makes in five; the right person may not apply for a role on this technicality alone. Keep your options open.

Focusing On Global Talent

The secret to expanding a global company is to invest in local talent. Companies committed to setting down bases all round the world must add value to the area. The best decision a company can make is to discover young people and develop their careers.

While university is a rite of passage for many young people, internship schemes can be highly valuable, not just for the young person but for a business. Companies that go in to schools and colleges, raise awareness of job opportunities, and then nurture talent will attract gifted and hardworking people who will remain committed to the company.

Value And Retain Your Staff

It's not just about recruiting; it's also about retaining. You must ensure the incredible

people who helped you succeed want to stay at the company.

Companies offer incredible benefits to attract and maintain talent, and in this climate it is crucial to do the same in order to retain yours. Many companies offer beer Fridays and ping pong tables - but it's about more than that. You need to demonstrate you will go above and beyond to ensure your employees feel valued. Whether it's enabling them to move and work abroad, providing them with top counselling services, or subsidising their gym memberships, wellbeing must be a priority.

By having a people-first approach, companies can't go wrong; recruitment will rocket, people will thrive in the positive environment and the business will succeed. Investing in your employees' happiness is the best decision a company can make.



JAKE KIMBER

Head of Talent at Product Madness.

About Product Madness

Founded in 2007, Product Madness is one of the world's largest mobile game studios. With a global presence, it is today a top-grossing leader in social casino mobile games, entertaining players around the world with titles such as Heart of Vegas, Cashman Casino, Lightning Link and FaFaFa Gold. The company's flagship title, Heart of Vegas, has entertained players since launching in 2013. It remains a top-grossing game on Facebook's charts and continues to capture mobile markets around the globe. Product Madness is a subsidiary of Aristocrat Leisure Limited (ASX: ALL) a leading global gaming provider and games publisher, with more than 6,000 employees around the world.