

PIPELINE

PIPING SYSTEMS INC.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

SPRING 2018

How To Predict Employee Greatness

by Pauline Lally

It seems as though hiring is a “top of mind” topic in the news and online these days. With the economy improving, hiring managers are concerned that finding “A” players—or sometimes even “B” or “C”—is of the utmost importance to keep up with anticipated demand.

Related topics that seem to follow are the labels we’ve assigned to generations of workers: “Baby Boomers,” “Generation X,” “Generation Y, aka Millennials,” and “Generation Z,” which is the name often given to those born after 2000. I wonder what’s going to happen after Z, do we start all over with the letter A?

And then we get into the discussion about how Millennials don’t work as hard as the previous generations, and Generation Z doesn’t want to work at all, blah, blah, blah. Of course this seems to be written from the point of view of the “Baby Boomers,” who you would think were the hardest working generation of all time.

During my hiring experiences, I have found “A” players in every generation along with “Bs” and “Cs.” Once in a while, I think it would be awesome to lead a group of “A” players; but then I think of how tiring and chaotic that would be! We all need “Bs” to round out the work force.

PSI’s byline is “More than Just Piping.” By that we mean that we do more than install pipe. When we look to hire people, not only do we look at their qualifications, trade licenses and certifications, we ask them questions that help reveal their personality: “How would you handle this



Licenses and certifications are important, but this method is a much better tool at predicting whether or not an employee will last at Piping Systems, Inc.

situation?” “How do you handle conflict?” In my opinion, this is much more of an indication of their success in the workplace than counting up the licenses they have. Every once in a while, we forget this and we hire on expertise. Quite often, we end up being disappointed in that employee’s job performance.

Recently, we have subscribed to a service that allows us to send a questionnaire to applicants before we interview them. It’s called “PI” which is short for Predictive Index. The Predictive Index is a methodology for business leaders to unlock the power of their people through workforce assessments and management workshops. The Predictive Index predicts primary personality characteristics and cognitive ability so

you can predict workplace behaviors and on-the-job performance.

It is fool-proof? Of course not. Although I’m told that a test-taker would find it very difficult to “game” the test. In the cases where people did not work out, reviewing their PI sheds some light on some possible reasons.

PI is only one method we use to find skilled technicians and management staff to create a culture of safety, continuous improvement, reliability and trusting relationships—all qualities we look for in our team members. We are continuously asking our clients for feedback to root out practices that don’t conform to our culture.

That’s why when you hire PSI, you hire the best!



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Keep Your Energy High Throughout Your Workday

Maintaining your energy all day can be a challenge. Don't ignore physical or mental fatigue, but don't surrender to it, either. Try these tactics for recharging:

- **Move around.** Take a walk, even if it's just a quick stroll around your office. Getting your blood flowing speeds delivery of oxygen and nutrients to your body.
- **Take a deep breath.** Sit up straight to open your chest cavity and get more oxygen into your lungs. Here's an exercise: Breathe out through your mouth completely. Then inhale through your nose for four seconds. Hold it in for seven seconds, and then exhale for a count of eight seconds. Do this four times to refresh yourself.
- **Drink sufficient fluids.** Water, like air, delivers oxygen throughout your body. If you're dehydrated, you'll feel tired. Drink plenty of water or a low-calorie sports drink.
- **Eat a healthy snack.** Give yourself a pick-me-up with a healthy snack, but be sure to avoid salty or sweet snacks, as they cause dehydration and make your blood sugar crash.



Genetics May Control Your Coffee Intake

The amount of coffee you drink may be based on your genetic makeup. A study by an international team of researchers, written up in the journal *Scientific Reports*, identified a gene that regulates the expression of other genes connected to caffeine metabolism.

The gene, PDSS2, hampers cells' ability to break caffeine down, which causes it to remain in the body longer. Thus, people with the gene will feel the effects of caffeine longer, reducing their desire for more.

The scientists examined genetic data from two groups of people in Italy, and they asked participants to record how many cups of coffee they drank each day. People with a variation in their PDSS2 gene tended to drink less coffee than those without the variant. The study was replicated in a similar study carried out in the Netherlands.

So if someone ever tells you that you're drinking too much coffee, you can blame it on your genes.

What Makes Old Faithful Well... So Faithful?

Yellowstone Park's Old Faithful geyser erupts every 90 minutes, sending water and steam high into the air to the delight of spectators. According to the *Science Magazine* website, geophysicists have identified the origin of all that water.

Listening to natural vibrations (instead of relying on seismic waves produced by explosives that would damage the park's environment), the scientists discovered a region of porous rock 200 meters across and 50 meters deep slightly to the west of the geyser. The underground tank contains hundreds of millions of liters of water heated by magma, so there's no chance of Old Faithful running dry soon.

How To Manage Different Types Of Workers

To be effective as a manager, you have to be able to guide and motivate a diverse group of individuals. Here's a look at a few personality-types you might encounter amongst your workforce and tips for getting the most from them:

- **In charge.** These employees like to make decisions and run things. You should accommodate their strengths while staying on top of your overall goals. Let employees in this category take center stage on tasks that are appropriate to their skills and experience. Feed their desire to feel important while monitoring their progress.
- **Behind-the-scenes.** These workers tend to be quiet and cautious. They may have good ideas but won't push to make them heard. Build their confidence by asking their opinions, praising their ideas when appropriate, and reinforcing positive aspects of their personality, like their desire to avoid conflict.
- **Rebellious.** These employees want to challenge the status quo. They can be difficult, but if they have the best interests of your organization at heart, they'll be worth the trouble. Don't get into arguments with them. Reinforce the positive aspects of their personality without engaging the negative. Behaviors that don't get reinforced will usually fade with time.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Driverless Cars Coming To A Street Near You?

Drivers can't wait for self-driving cars, according to a survey by Bosch Mobility Solutions. Out of 1,000 U.S.-based new car buyers 18 years or older, 52% said they expect to own a self-driving vehicle within the next 10 years. Only 14% said they would never buy a self-driving car, and 14% were undecided.

Although 72% of survey participants signaled worries about lack of control in a vehicle they don't drive themselves, 61% said they believe self-driving cars could lead to a decrease in traffic accidents, and 55% highlighted more free time and less stress as a benefit to driverless cars.

How To Fix Your Team When Trouble Crops Up

Even the most successful teams hit an occasional rough patch. As a leader, it's your job to watch out for interpersonal conflicts that can derail their best efforts. Here's how to steer your team through the rough patches:

• **Observe the group at work.** You can't depend on meetings and memos

to assess the health of your team. Join them as they perform their mission so you can watch how they interact and work together. Naturally they'll be on their best behavior with "the boss" watching, but if you do it often enough and maintain a low profile, you'll see signs of trouble if they're present.

• **Talk to team members one on one.**

Seek your employees' input privately. Listen to their observations about how the team is functioning. You're not looking for tattletales, but you should ask for realistic information on how the team can work more effectively. (Confidentiality is crucial to trust and honesty, of course.)

• **Bring in outsiders as necessary.** Bring in a professional facilitator or trainer to help your team work through problems more quickly. Someone from outside your organization won't share your assumptions and your team members' preconceived notions of how their work should be done.



Scientists Developing Energy-Producing Clothes

Someday soon you may be able to charge your smartphone or Fitbit with a simple walk around the block, according to the *NBC News* website.

Scientists at the University of Texas at Dallas are working to develop fabrics using carbon nanotubes. The super small, hollow tubes are 10,000 times thinner than a human hair. When twisted into coils and stretched, they can produce a minuscule electrical current. One recent test of a tight shirt using the special yarn produced 16 millivolts every time the person wearing it inhaled—not enough to charge a smartphone, but enough, perhaps, to send health information to another location.



What is the world record for the most snowfall in a 24-hour period?

Trivial Matters

- 1) Ironically, the name of the author who penned the season-themed poems *A Winter Eden* and *Dust of Snow* was?
 - a. Robert Frost
 - b. William P. Snowdon
 - c. Lilian Winters
 - d. Ice T
- 2) What is the world record for the most snowfall in a 24-hour period?
 - a. 30 inches in Prince George, B.C.
 - b. 56 inches in Waterville, Maine
 - c. 76 inches in Silver Lake, Colorado
 - d. 110 inches in Rimouski, Quebec
- 3) In *North to Alaska* (1960), Sam leaves cold Nome, Alaska and sets out for Seattle so he can bring back what to his friend George?
 - a. a promising new medical treatment
 - b. George's fiancé
 - c. George's three grandchildren
 - d. a snow cone maker
- 4) What color snow fell over an area of 1,500-square-kilometers in Siberia on February 2, 2007?
 - a. Orange
 - b. Black
 - c. Pink
 - d. Gold
- 5) At Gemsstock ski resort, a portion of Gurschen glacier was covered in foil to protect it from melting. In what European country is the resort located?
 - a. Austria
 - b. Switzerland
 - c. Italy
 - d. Germany

Answers: 1.) a 2.) c 3.) b 4.) a 5.) b

Company Culture Takes Time To...Culture by Pauline Lally

If you Google “company culture” you will find more than 64 million results. This is a topic that is very interesting to me as well. Company culture encompasses the values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. In my view, company culture is best defined by someone from the outside who can pinpoint the values, beliefs and practices of people who make up the team at the company.

Culture can be *good* or *bad*. As a business owner, I have a jaded view of whether or not Piping Systems, Inc. has a good company culture. So, it was very interesting to me when an “outsider” recently commented that we definitely have *good* company culture. She was in the process of individually interviewing PSI’s upper management and mentioned how surprised she was that everyone was in lock step in terms of their responses to her questions.

Here is how we approach company culture: Culture begins with taking a stand and expressing the 4 Core Values:

1. First Things First: Safety

Safety creates security for our families, coworkers and clients. Our daily goal is to ensure everyone goes home safe.

2. Good Relationships Lead to Building Trust

We build trusting relationships by being fair, honest and respectful towards each other and to our clients. Sometimes that means doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

3. Continuous Improvement in Work Practices Leads to Quality and Excellence

We maintain a high level of quality by practicing continuous improvement—

consistently working towards a higher skill level for personal benefit. This also benefits our clients. We leave our surroundings, tools, client’s plant property and equipment, in better condition than when we found them.

4. Reliable Solutions Provider with High Expectations

By offering creative solutions to our clients’ problems we become dependable, consistent and trustworthy for our families, coworkers and our clients. We exceed expectations in all areas of our lives, including those of our clients and we take pride in a job well done.

Of course, this doesn’t just happen

overnight. PSI has been in business for more than 45 years. When new team members are hired, it is sometimes a shock for them to learn how strong our culture is. When one team member sticks his or her neck out and points out a safety violation to another team member, you know that the culture is strong.

We see this as a win-win: our employees not only receive a paycheck, but they benefit by the structure and the concern we have for their well-being. Plus, our clients win because they can count on the fact that the people who do the work care about the work being done safely and being done right the first time.



Jason Taylor, Vice President & Operations Manager is one member of PSI’s management team that was recently interviewed about company culture for a video segment.



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