

THE KENNA COMPANY

HELPING COMPANIES SELECT & ENGAGE HIGH IMPACT PERFORMERS

“Employers Ramp Up Hiring -

Job growth explodes in April”

This was *USATODAY.com*'s lead article headline on May 6, 2005. Sure some companies like IBM and Ford are still cutting jobs, but job growth is today's typical reality.

Here's another reality. Two out of three new employees will not be meeting expectations six to 12 months after being hired. Some times their sub-par performance will be tolerated; some times they will be fired.

Either way, productivity and morale suffer. It doesn't have to be that way. Consider this:

People are often selected for their 'hard skills' (what they know, have done, or are trained to do). People are usually fired for their 'soft skills' or a lack thereof. You know, they aren't a team player or their attitude is poor. A generation ago, 'soft skills' were seen as 'fluff'. Not now. Today's smart companies realize their importance.

And yet, 'soft skills' aren't easy to spot — through traditional interviews, anyway. Savvy candidates can 'talk the talk'—that doesn't mean they'll 'walk the walk'.

There is a better way to discern candidates' 'soft skills'. Our assessment tools measure candidates' soft skills and predict '**job fit**' - how well the candidate will align with the needs of the job. **Behavioral tools** reveal candidates' work habits such as preferences for pace, compliance with procedures and interaction with others. **Motivational tools** reveal the sense of meaning that candidates get from earning money, or helping others, or learning new skills. **Attribute assessments** provide glimpses into candidates' capacity to excel in certain roles based on their values, beliefs and 'soft skill' abilities.

Can't afford to invest in '*hiring smart*'? Consider the alternative. It's far more costly to make hiring mistakes and it's a real drain on productivity and morale.

Hire the best candidate for the job every time. You'll be glad you did—and so will your employees and customers.

Hiring mistakes are expensive and disruptive. Taking the time to hire smart will save you time and money in the future and make your department, company or firm much more productive.

Want to Hire Smart? Click [here](#) to find out about, and sign up for, the upcoming webinar: Hiring Smart.

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The Shoes On the Stairs

Tips for Tackling the Procrastination Problem

Procrastination builds guilt and stress. I call it the 'shoes on the stairs' factor. You know, you've left a pair of shoes on the stairs and then you step around them each time you climb the stairs. If you're like most of us, when spotting them—again—you think to yourself "*Next time I'll put them away*" or "*I wish s/he would put them away*". You tolerate and accommodate... and pay the price in lost productivity and peace of mind.

Many of us are plagued by procrastination:

- The difficult phone call we need to make but won't.
- The business plan we need to complete but haven't.
- The daily goals we've been meaning to set but don't.

When we could have, would have, should have, but haven't—we waste time, build stress, and lose respect—in our own eyes and in the eyes of others. Why do we procrastinate? Sometimes it's fear. Sometimes it's a lack of commitment. Sometimes we're too busy, which means we aren't clear it's really all that important. Sometimes we procrastinate on things we said "Yes" to when we really wanted to say "No".

Our behavioral styles influence what we procrastinate about and why. Unstructured people may delay starting a project because they're jumping from task to task. Highly detailed people may delay finishing a project because they keep finding one more detail to polish.

Whatever our styles, we can beat the procrastination problem. It is a matter of habit and choice. Our choice.

When you find yourself procrastinating on something, make a choice. Do it or drop it. Don't waffle. Stop pretending you'll do it 'one of these days'. Get on with it, get through it, get out of it, or get over it. You'll feel better, and work better. The choice is up to you.

By Joe McKenna © 2005 joe@kennacompany.com
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Are Your New Hires Oriented Or Disoriented?

You've found an ideal candidate for the job. Now what?

Some companies show new hires to their desks, give them a policy and procedures manual, and wish them luck. But who wants to work for, or invest in, or buy products from a company that runs on 'luck'? Some companies have formal orientation sessions that could put an insomniac to sleep. The information isn't relevant or the format isn't engaging. Is it feasible to offer great new hire orientation? YES! And here are three tips!

One - Decide why your new hires need an orientation. According to Webster's dictionary, "Orientation is a time to acquaint [new employees] with the current situation or environment." You want them to contribute to your organization's success, right? Then they need to know what success looks like in their job. They need to know the goals and roles, the ground rules and resources available to them. They need to know who does what, when and why. And they especially need to know how they fit into that picture—how they can contribute, and what's in it for them. Orientation, done well, is enlightening and engaging, it equips and enables new hires to do their best work—for their benefit and the benefit of the organization.

Two—Have all managers hold individual meetings with new hires—the first day, if possible. Ask and answer lots of questions. Discuss job responsibilities, the new hire's developmental plan, the manager's expectations. Explain how performance is evaluated.

Perhaps much of this was covered during the interview. Cover it again. Most candidates are nervous during interviews and may not remember important points.

The orientation meeting is also a good time to discuss the new hire's assessment reports completed during the interview process. These reports help the manager and employee get to know each other better and establish ground rules for working well together.

Too busy to conduct such a meeting? Deep down, you probably realize that the old phrase 'pay me now or pay me later' applies here. If you're too busy to help your new employees know what they need to do their jobs ... you're too busy. You hired them because you need them. You need them to succeed.

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Anxiety is caused by a lack of control, organization, preparation, and action.

David Kekich

Continued...

Three—Have new hires meet individually with each person they'll interact with regularly in their job—including peers inside or outside the department, clients, support staff, etc. The goal is simply to start to get to know these people and vice versa.

Have the new hire prepare for each discussion by building a list of questions to ask, or information to gather. (They will be making a first impression and must be prepared and organized.) And remind them not just to cover the task topics. Work styles and expectations are important as well. For example, here are some question the new hire can ask (after providing a little info about themselves—i.e. family, work background/experience and a short explanation of what they will be doing in their new job):

- How long have you been with the company?
How long in this position?
- What are your key responsibilities?
- What are some of your department's (team's) key accomplishments?
- What are some of your biggest obstacles?
- What are some ways I might be able to help?
- What type of correspondence do you want to be copied on?
- If I have questions that I need you to answer for me, would you prefer me to call, set an appointment, stop by or e-mail you?
- As I get started in my new job, what advice do you have for me?

What does your company do to help a new hire 'get off to a great start'? If you are in a position to review the organization's orientation process, great. What are you doing well now? How can it be better? If you aren't in a position to affect change on a company-wide basis, but you hire and manage employees realize that it doesn't have to be 'policy' to do the things suggested in this article.

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About The **KENNA** Company

Helping companies select and engage
high impact performers

We specialize in:

- Employee Selection
 - Providing benchmarking tools and services
 - Providing meaningful assessments and support for assessing job candidates' job fit
- Executive Coaching
- Team Building—Interventions, Retreats & Materials
- Interpersonal Communication Skills Training
- Various Leadership Training and Development Topics
- Customized 360° Feedback
- Customized Employee and Customer Satisfaction Surveys

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