

What to Look For in a Prospective Employee

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One of my favorite metaphors involves an engine and a transmission. If someone is cursed with a “big engine” but “no transmission” that person has the brains of **Einstein with a couch potato attitude**.

I often chuckle at the image, but realize it has an enduring ability to describe human differences, especially in business. But, let me change the image a little. Let's say the “engine” represents not only smarts but intuition. Then, let's call the transmission the force that enables us to act on what is known or highly suspect of being the truth. What does this say about successful business people?

Naturally, one needs brains to be successful. But there's some additional circuitry in there that helps separate the mere brainy from those in the top tax brackets. It's this thing called intuition. Maybe thought of as a “reality” filter, it is some cranial process that differentiates sunlight from the light bulb. It's the ability to let the gut talk to the brain without the gut taking control; to create an endless stream of sanity checks as each new piece of information is examined.

Some of these lucky folk are highly analytical. Some are not. Prior educational background is not too important. It's probably true one can hone the ability if properly trained. But, like basketball or tennis, some people are just better at it than others. So, for the most part, we're stuck with what we've got.

For that reason, what interests me more than intuition is the part of the “success” equation we can do something about: the transmission. How many of us have a great new product idea only to see it on store shelves twelve months later under someone else's label? *Why them and not us?*

It's the transmission!

What are the components of a strong transmission?

- . • Commitment – to the idea or concept.
- . • Follow through – in organizing and implementing.
- . • Guts – to take a risk
- . • Motivation – to be successful
- . • Unrelenting focus – on the needs of the business
- . • Willingness – to work hard

People with strong transmissions seem to get things done. They're results oriented. They don't get diverted and they don't give up easily. They work awfully hard and never stop thinking about their business. Sure it helps to have brains and intuition. But, if you consider what a strong transmission can accomplish, it's clear even a simple idea can be converted to a viable business.

What's better, a big engine or a strong transmission? A small engine coupled with a strong transmission will use the full capabilities of the engine. Not true the other way around. However, in the end, it goes without saying, if they don't work together, don't plan on going anywhere.