

It's Time to Ask IT Contractors to Step Up Their Game; StaffingScore Helps Businesses Evaluate Temporary IT Staff and Optimize Performance

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In the age of rapidly changing technology, the use of temporary IT resources to fuel critical projects is a strategic necessity for most organizations. There is no question that IT contractors are important and expensive resources. The excellent ones are worth gold and the ones who perform poorly, the “*underachievers*”, can wreak havoc on project schedules and budgets. IT projects have a high rate of failure; research indicates that only 39% of IT projects are regarded as successful (Standish Group).

un-der-a-chiev-er

noun

1. a person who fails to achieve his or her potential or does not perform as well or work as hard as he or she can,
 2. a person who performs below expectations.
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IT Project Managers may feel they have no real control over underachieving contractors. Once a contractor is trained and embedded in the project, managers are often held hostage to accept less than stellar work. Managers are balancing demanding schedules and tight budgets; there is a high sunk cost associated with replacing resources. The idea of starting over again with a new resource is daunting.

Selecting the best contract staff is the goal, but bad hires still happen in most project teams. Bad hires happen because interviews tend to focus primarily on technical skills and checking references is an outdated, ineffective process. There is also the problem of hiring contractors who have the skill required but they are under-motivated, or maybe they are discreetly juggling multiple clients at once (many IT contractors work remotely). According to Stephen Covey, the difference between poorly motivated and highly motivated employees is about 500% in productivity. Given the exceeding demand for IT contractors, how can hiring managers motivate contractors and increase commitment to better assure high performance in their project teams? For high performance organizations, there's a strong link between:

- (1) employees (perm and temp) who take ownership for their work,
- (2) creating a culture of accountability, and
- (3) clearly defining goals and providing routine feedback on performance.

Contractors who take ownership for their work are equally as invested in the outcome of the project, as the managers. Taking ownership means taking responsibility for the quality of the work delivered. Taking ownership indicates “I'm good at what I do and I stand behind it”.

Being accountable is being responsible for the results. Accountability is about follow-through and acknowledgement that action (or lack of action) affects delivery of goals. Being accountable indicates “you can trust me to do what I say I will do”.

Project Managers are experts in defining goals, creating schedules and specifying tasks but most fall short when it comes to providing performance feedback to contractors. Large companies are rapidly adopting the idea of “performance management” with permanent employees, believing that a laser focus on creating a high performing workforce is essential to assure successful results. Many firms have dropped annual performance

reviews in favor of more continuous oversight and feedback from managers, all meant to drive high performing teams. Feedback is important for both permanent and temporary staff; however, how does this work for IT contractors who rarely have formal performance evaluations and easily move from one assignment to the next independent of their quality of work? The best way it can work is if the hiring managers establish a process to periodically complete performance evaluations, the contractors are on board with the evaluation process as a pre-hire criteria and a contractor's work history follows them from assignment to assignment.

Think about an Uber driver, each client is provided an option to evaluate their service and the ratings are reviewed by Uber. Uber does not retain drivers with poor scores so drivers are motivated to deliver high standard services. Also, online evaluations motivate professionals and service providers to provide superior services. 92% of consumers now read online reviews and they value the opinions of others when making selections (BrightLocal 2015 Consumer Review Survey).

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- ✓ *Uber* assures their drivers make you happy by tracking performance.
 - ✓ Doctors rated on *Healthgrades* are motivated to provide excellent service.
 - ✓ Dentists now use *Google* and *Yelp* evaluations as strategic marketing tools.
 - ✓ The most in demand professors have high ratings on *RateMyProfessors*.
 - ✓ The best sellers on *Amazon* and *eBay* are rewarded based on customer feedback.
 - ✓ Home owners rely on *Angie's List* to vet service businesses.
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Since online evaluations are a norm for doctors, dentists, professors, home service providers and sellers, why have IT contractors been exempt from review? In the IT industry there has been a tacit belief that there is a liability associated with expressing a public opinion about the performance of a contractor. In reality liability is not a legitimate concern; if a doctor, dentist and professor can be reviewed online so can an IT contractor. Most states currently have enacted Anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) legislation designed to protect First Amendment Rights and prevent frivolous lawsuits. And a federal Anti-SLAPP Bill has been introduced into Congress to further protect victims of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation. Project Managers no longer want to accept the risk associated with hiring underachieving contractors. It's time that IT contractors step up their game; online ratings and routine performance evaluations are incentive for improvement. StaffingScore is a new staffing support tool that offers a professional Performance Evaluation System for contractors to motivate higher performance. Joining StaffingScore and completing performance evaluations is free. StaffingScore contractors can respond to performance evaluations for free.

StaffingScore members who are looking for temporary IT resources can review a target candidate's StaffingScore™ Report to identify contractors who have a history of high performance. StaffingScore™ Reports provide an overall performance score, a score for each key skill area reviewed (Technical Expertise, Time Management, Teamwork, Leadership), a comparison to peers with similar job responsibilities plus an opportunity to read individual evaluations. StaffingScore also highlights "ELITE" contractors who rank in the top 10% of their peers. Using StaffingScore, members can periodically provide feedback for the contractors they work with to help them stay on track during a project. It's a win-win for clients and contractors who are mutually committed to working in a high performing team. Contractors who join StaffingScore are demonstratively confident that they will excel in assignments. StaffingScore contractors take ownership for their work, are accountable for timelines and value performance feedback from members. If a contractor has not yet joined, Project Managers can request that the contractor join StaffingScore before they hire.

Login to www.StaffingScore.com to learn more and join a select group in the StaffingScore Beta Study. For general questions regarding StaffingScore, email BetaTest@StaffingScore.com.