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Applying Astrology to Recruitment & Selection Strategies: A case for Organisational Happiness & Business Excellence. Astrology as a Recruitment and Selection Tool: The Future of Organisational Happiness

Organizational Happiness offers insights into the necessities required for leaders of organizations to be able to attract, motivate, and retain employees who are perceiving work as much more than a salary. Work forms a major part of an individual's life however according to Pryce-Jones and Lindsay (2014), unhappy employees spend a miniscule 40% of their time on the job and this presents a major risk to an organization's productivity and profitability.

Lars Kure Juul (2018), discusses the use of the five elements of happiness, "PERMA" which are: experiencing Positive emotions (P), being Engaged with what you do (E), building strong Relationships (R), feeling that your life has Meaning beyond yourself (M), and having a sense of personal Achievement (A). Lars progresses PERMA to the next level. He discusses how it can be operationalized across organizations. "To be relevant in the twenty-first century," he says, "organizations must have clarity around their purpose." Employees within organizations must identify their strengths and work in those areas, which will lead to deep engagement. Building an organizational culture that promotes positive relationships and cultivates compassion is critical. In this way, achievement, or bottom-line results, becomes an outcome of organizational happiness, rather than the sole objective—a case in which the "means justify the end" rather than the other way around.

Today's dynamically competitive business environment, which mandates that companies become "distinct" has made it imperative that organizational happiness and by extension human resource management, become a strategic priority for any business. In the current race for profitability and high performance in the 21st century, an organisation's success is measured by its ability to create sustainable and inimitable forms or competitive advantage. Mulcahy, former CEO of Xerox, believes that employees are the competitive advantage of any organization.

As such, "happy" employees could represent an inimitable competitive advantage and this suggests that a key link to the organizational happiness function is the recruitment and selection framework of the organization. Some academics have cited employee recruitment, selection, placement and training as four of the hallmarks that must form part of an organisation's corporate strategy and organizational structure in order to ensure it remains relevant, viable and competitive.

The ability to synergise, balance and leverage both the exploration and exploitation of its employees' capabilities to influence organizational performance will ensure a company's sustained growth and development (D'Souza et al 2017). Ultimately, the performance of employees lies at the center of and provides an important value to businesses: its success depends on them/it. According to Fagoca (xxxx), happy employees perform better than unhappy employees. A lack of proper human resource planning and systems for evaluating and matching the competencies and potential of new candidates (as well as old employees in the process of being promoted or transferred to posts requiring new or improved skills) will negatively define and influence the operations of a company. Mismatched employee competencies to roles via internal recruitment can contribute to

unhappy low performing employees and redound to employee relations issues that reduce productive time and profitability. Additionally selecting the wrong candidate for a role also leads to a similar outcome particularly if the administrative aspect of recruitment is not managed well, in terms of probationary periods and formal performance reviews for new hires.

As such there is an established need to close the gaps in the recruitment strategy and this can only add value to an organization's competitive advantage. A CareerBuilder study reported by Lorenz (2012) identified that 69 percent of employers indicated that they were adversely affected having to incur costs such as advertising, employment testing and background checks, potential litigation, reduction of corporate knowledge, theft, lower productivity and morale, and lost customers through poor service. The financial impact of a bad hire is quantifiable and can adversely affect profitability. Further, "unengagement" or disengagement could be contagious and therefore hiring the right employee is more important and cost effective than trying to motivate the unsuitable hire.

At each stage of attracting, selecting, developing and retaining talent, there is an opportunity for organizations to strengthen the quality of their workforce (Papay and Kraft, 2016). Successful companies hire effective team members in addition to effective leadership. Therefore firms should use the best recruiting methods available. However current recruiting methods have resulted in bad hires and it can take months or years, after the probation period has expired, before the impact of substandard work is seen.

Current standard recruiting tools and methods include resumes, interviews, orientation and psychometric testing. However these tools and methods have various defects as the recruitment of bad hires continue to pervade the human resource function. Resumes often

contain errors or misrepresentations and most applicants know well enough to use a recognized format. Another recruitment tool most commonly used are interviews, used however in many cases they are conducted abjectly and many unsuitably qualified applicants might be able to present a good appearance and speak well at the interview. Post recruitment also presents a number of gaps such as poor integration and acclimation of new hires can result in a poor fit and subsequent low performance on the job. Personality profiles which are another recruitment tool are not completely accurate and according to Psychometric Success, (a company that assists applicants to prepare for job selection testing), personality profile tests can easily be outwitted. The company also offers a book for sale on their web site to teach people how to beat the personality profile test.

Current hiring models and best practices, represent challenges and in effect costs for all sizes of organisations. A new model that accounts for other variables, apart from a good resume or interview and the ability to pass a psychometric test, can assist organisations in fine tuning the recruitment and selection process to the benefit of their existing employee population, clients and bottom line. Organisations with competitive compensation packages are also experiencing high rates of attrition which further suggests that there are other factors which contribute to selection of the best fit.

It has been well documented by research that cognitive and job knowledge tests are two of the best predictors of job performance (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). While cognitive and job knowledge tests are proven predictors of job performance, they are not the only effective predictors of job performance available. Astrology, too, is a science of predictions; and is well known for finding out the behavioural pattern of people. Astrology

can be useful in the human resource practises of staffing, which involves recruitment and selection; and even in placement or training. A Human Resources Manager armed with a robust selection process that accurately measures the characteristics of applicants relative to future job performance and organisational fit is the industry gold standard. How far astrology can be used to predict and verify the suitability of a candidate for a specific job, which will ultimately ensure the company achieves its strategic goals, is the question.

Joel Peterson, chairman of JetBlue Airways argues that the need for effective hiring practices is compounded by the fact that hiring can impact a company substantially, from achieving company vision and values to the extent a company will become able to innovate, and adapt in a highly competitive marketplace (Peterson, 2013). Peterson stresses that nothing is more important than hiring.

The recruitment and selection process targets the selection of the required number of candidates for each position. Hence, astrological analysis can be a prerequisite for the recruitment and selection process as it helps define the strengths, skill set and employee competencies necessary for a particular position. Astrology can be defined as a system of horoscopes purporting to explain aspects of a person's personality and analyze future events in their life based on the positions of the sun, moon, and other celestial objects at the time of their birth (Bennett et al, 2007). The output of astrological analysis can be divided into three components – Individual specification and competencies, job description or content of the job and job specification or the competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) that are required to do the job. A candidate possessing the requisite job specifications is usually considered competent to do the job. Such a candidate is

called a minimally-qualified candidate. A thorough astrological analysis should lead to the identification of relevant work behaviors and relevant competencies for performing the work behaviors.

Large companies in India, China, Austria, Serbia as well as in other advanced markets are resorting to astrology as a tool to recruit senior level candidates with the best fit (Saha, 2016). No such approaches appear to exist locally in Trinidad and Tobago. Any effective and robust recruitment and selection process will clearly identify an organisation's needs, matching them with the right candidate, who will fit into the organization both on paper and in practice, ultimately growing the company's bottomline. With the incorporation of astrology, the success rate of selecting future top performers, as well as the overall employee engagement level across the entire organisation may be increased. This could be the blueprint for business success and determination of a new strategic recruitment model for modern organizations.

The writer has researched widely on the topic of the use of astrology for recruitment and selection and has found that little studies have been executed in the area. This may be attributable to Human Resource Managers' view of astrology, as a 'primitive' form of prediction although astrology is well known for its ability to predict the behavioural patterns of people. The researcher would commence the study by understanding the present recruitment and selection systems available and measuring the levels of employee happiness. This research for correlation between the two variables can provide more insight into whether happy employees were well selected and a best fit for their roles. Studies in this area could ascertain how Astrology can assist in decision making aspect of recruitment.

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