

CEOs get involved in lower-rung hiring

Trend Driven By Revenue Impact Of Mis-Hiring, Need To Ensure Talent Quality

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Mumbai: With companies laying significant stress on the quality of hires, CEOs are getting involved in hiring rank and file as well.

CEOs usually get involved when senior executives are hired. HR experts, however, say given the greater revenue implications of mis-hiring, CEOs are now spending more time even while hiring lower-rung employees.

Kamal Kararj, MD, Kelly Services & KellyOCG, India, said: "We have noticed this trend of CEOs getting involved with the rank-and-file kind of hiring in the last 7-8 months. It is quite visible in sectors like IT, BPO, FMCG and pharma. CEOs are actually coming to us and discussing the various aspects of hiring, which has become critical because of the direct linkage of revenues to the number of seats filled. The external envi-



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> CEOs are getting involved in rank-and-file hiring, especially in the IT, BPO, FMCG and pharma sectors

> In sectors like pharma, where quality is sacrosanct, especially in R&D and manufacturing, CEOs try to ensure the quality of hires even at the lower level

> Some hiring experts say it is the right approach as today's mid-management will take senior leadership roles in future

> Others believe CEOs risk building a culture of control and delegation is the right approach

ronment in particular is forcing CEOs to ensure the quality of hires, the scale of hiring, the pace of hiring as well as the price."

Pharma is one sector where quality is sacrosanct, especially in R&D and manufacturing. At Wockhardt, the chairman and MD get involved in hiring of managers up to 3-4 levels below the business heads. But in areas like R&D, quality and manufacturing,

which directly impact the quality of products and services, their involvement goes down to lower levels as well.

"We treat these functions differently because the levels of granularity and probity that are required here are of a much higher order and we bring a much sharper focus even at middle-level hiring as well in these areas," said Prem Singh, president, global human resources, Wockhardt.

With emphasis on quality of recruits, Singh said if the company hires a wrong person, the damage it does to the organization is far more than keeping the position vacant. "Another reason why the top management gets involved in the hiring process is to gauge the leadership and capability of the candidate to bring a differential value to the organization, and potential to grow to the higher levels," said Singh.

"It's the right thing for a CEO to do — to get involved in hiring the rank and file," said Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access India. "Mid-management is your future senior management and, therefore, quality is equally critical and sub-optimal hiring can happen when due attention is not paid. Most progressive companies, especially in FMCG and IT, are doing this already now."

The reason is that a lot of mis-hiring is taking place due to bad choices. "Companies

cannot take a chance on hiring anymore at any level as mis-hiring is very expensive," said Puri.

Gurprreet Siingh, GM & head, YSC India, however, believes if CEOs get involved in the lower-rung hiring process too, they risk building a culture of control. "Getting involved in rank-and-file hiring for a CEO is unusual. There are certain situations that require it: for example, when building a new team or for a startup, the CEO may be involved and more hands-on initially. However, typically a good leader would ensure explicit clarity about the kind of culture fit and competence that is required so that her direct reports and other managers down the line are able to make the right selection decisions. By doing this, a CEO ensures that she is delegating responsibility; also facilitating replication of skills and enabling culture-building," said Siingh.