



Stanford eCorner

Hire True Believers

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2475/Hire-True-Believers>

Those who are hungry to succeed and have robust internal drive to perform are also those most likely to be the most successful job candidates. Alec Ross, Senior Advisor for Innovation in the Office of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, believes that these qualities are more important than more frequently-consulted metrics of success, such as education, background, or grade point average.



Transcript

There are a lot of smart people, and there are certainly a lot of smart people in Silicon Valley. And one of the things that I've come to believe is that as people are building their teams, entirely too much emphasis is placed on sort of the conventional notion of what appropriate qualifications are. "Oh, this person has a Master's from this school. Let's hire him instead of the person who has a Master's from this school which isn't quite as good." "Oh, this person has 10 years experience, as opposed to this person's five years experience." I think that that is a wildly overrated measurement for how to build your team. Certainly as companies go from being big to being really big, I would argue that that's an appropriate time to really get very deep into the skill sets that you are trying to build. But if you're an early-stage company - looking out among this audience and seeing a lot of aspiring entrepreneurs, what I would counsel you to do is focus on hiring people who would run through a brick wall, who are true believers in the mission of the organization's product or service. Because even if somebody is not as smart as another applicant, even if somebody isn't necessarily as well qualified as another applicant, in my own experience, it's people who have the will and hunger to succeed that more likely than not are going to be the ones who end up becoming most successful. And I repeatedly see this happening. And what is interesting is that five years after the fact, everybody presumes that they are the smartest, most talented, most experienced people. But especially when you are building a business, the thing that I would most measure is not necessarily the amount of experience or even the IQ of the person who you are evaluating, but the level of passion that they are going to bring.