



5 Critical Mistakes

In Hiring Project Managers

In this day and age, failed projects cost industries anywhere from \$50B to \$150B every year. It is therefore imperative to hire the best project manager for your enterprise. Below is a list, of the five (5) most critical mistakes businesses make in hiring their project managers

Critical Mistake Number 1

- Relying too heavily on credentials

In a not too distant past Project Managers were judged on the body of their work and hired based on their successes and failures. Time was taken to ensure a cultural fit within the organization. However, in today's environment a great number of companies look to outside staffing agencies to fill their Project Manager needs. Unfortunately, these firms as well as many internal HR departments, use key words such as "PMP" to sort through applicants. This reliance on key words causes businesses to miss a number of stellar project managers.

Critical Mistake Number 2

- Not enough emphasis on communication skills

Most organizations have issues with communication that go well beyond just hiring project managers. Unfortunately, even the standards put forth by the Project Management Institute don't really address the critical need for communication skills. In today's environment it is critically important that you hire project managers with the ability to communicate, both orally and written. They need to have the ability to have "the crucial conversation" with team members and stakeholders alike. Of additional importance now is the ability to communicate across generational gaps, such as the Gen X and Gen Y crowd. Remember that communication is 60% body language, 30% tone, and 10% spoken word so your questions should focus on those key attributes.



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Critical Mistake Number 3

- *Not hiring leaders*

“Leaders do the right thing; managers do things right”. This is a simple, but profound, statement. Most organizations hire managers which is why project delivery is suffering across the board. You are entrusting multi-million dollar projects to project managers, without the expectation that they are leaders. In today’s corporate environ there is so much fear of reprisal that most project managers shy away from the leadership role. But, your goal as an organization should be to hire leaders and then support them. During the interview process you need to ascertain the leadership skills offered by the candidate.

Critical Mistake Number 4

- *Not enough focusing on an individual’s creativity/innovation*

When was the last time you questioned a perspective project manager on their creativity or innovation. The ability to apply creativity to today’s project issues is imperative. Solutions to project issues can come in a variety of ways, but only if you hire project managers with the ability to open themselves up to creative solutions. So, in your next project manager interview ask a question like “*your project has run into a severe roadblock, what would you do to keep the project moving forward.*” The answer will give you some insight into the project manager’s creative problem solving ability.

Critical Mistake Number 5

- *The really big one - not hiring results’ oriented project managers*

Too many times organizations pay little attention to the previous results of a perspective project manager, but rather asked questions like “*are you familiar with process X or process Y.*” This is a mistake. Most really good project managers focus on results, not on adhering always to the flavor of the day. The current focus on process is a crutch used by today’s organizations to alleviate staffing issues. The purpose of hiring qualified project managers is to attain results and meet the expectations of the organization. This means taking the time to question past results so you know what to expect going forward.