

What can Leicester City teach us about recruitment best practice?



Chris Bogh
Chief Technology Officer

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At this time last year, Leicester City were at the bottom of the Premier League. By a long way. They had been rooted to the bottom of the table for 11 of the 24 games. They were facing certain relegation. They remained in last place until the 11th of April 2015, spending a total of 19 games at the bottom of the table.

Then something remarkable happened: they started winning, and have hardly stopped since.

Leicester City are currently favourites to win the 2016 Premier League. One of the most interesting things about their remarkable change in fortunes, is that recruitment and management have been just as important to their success as the players on the field. Leicester have created a scalable model for sporting and business success based on two key principles: Quality of Hire and Company Culture.

Quality of Hire

On the 6th February 2016, Leicester convincingly beat title rivals Manchester City to become firm favourites for the Premier League title. The total cost of the Leicester City team: £22 million. Manchester City: more than 10 times more. Leicester have shown the world that 'Quality of Hire' is not relative to 'Cost of Hire'.

The Leicester recruitment system is also based on the maxim "past experience does not equal future performance". Most of their players

were released or unwanted. One of the star performers, Jaimie Vardy, was signed from a non-league team, having been dismissed or rejected by every other professional club in the country. Leicester have used their own judgement and recruitment expertise to create a team that has excelled.

Company Culture

The level of confidence at Leicester is at an all-time high. Every player is performing above themselves for their teammates. The manager, Claudio Ranieri fuels this confidence. Rather than chide his players he supports them.

On one occasion he incentivised his players by promising to buy them pizza if they won. His team won the game, based on their drive for a culinary treat. For them it was a break from the ultra-strict diet of professional athletes. Ranieri showed the world that incentives don't have to be financial. In fact, the best incentives aren't. He found something that his players wanted more than money and used that to inspire excellent performance.

Finally, Leicester have shown that Quality of Hire and the way the candidate fits into the Company Culture are closely linked. Attributes such as honesty, work rate, teamwork and determination to succeed, all contribute to the Quality of Hire. The best candidate on paper may not be the best candidate in practice if recruiters ignore how they will fit into the company and inspire positivity.