



People Make The Difference whitepaper

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Teams: true talent, true grit or both?

You likely have a talented team – their talents vary, of course, but they're all great at what they do and that's why you hired them. You've probably discovered that each individual in your team works differently too, and produces different end results – some better than others.

It's this discrepancy in results that shows who has talent alone and who pairs their talent with true grit.

You can call it what you like, courage, guts, stamina, tenacity or just plain grit, but Angela Duckworth – a leading academic in the psychological studies of achievement and performance – says that if teams want to succeed, grit is just as important as talent, if not more so.

Why is talent important?

Talent will always be important – we need people who are naturally good at doing a specific task because we know they'll always get the job done. However, hiring on talent alone can cause you a lot of problems down the road, especially when their talent isn't accompanied by a drive to work hard.

Unfortunately, there are too many talented people in the world who have never needed grit before because they've always managed to do a good enough job by just relying on their talent.

The question you, as a leader, need to ask yourself is whether you're happy with your team members performing their tasks 'good enough' or whether you're looking for people who will go above and beyond to achieve excellence.

How can I spot grit?

The problem with true grit is that it's hard to identify until it's actually being put into practice. This makes hiring new team members difficult, but the good news is that there are some things you can start to look for in the early days of hiring a new employee that indicate whether or not they have the grit you're looking for:

- Do they need instant gratification? When they complete a task, are they looking for immediate praise – either for their great work or just for getting the job done? Sometimes things don't immediately fall into place and they'll need to work longer and harder to get things to work – there might not ever be gratification! If they're not okay with that, they don't have grit.
- Are they consistent? Team members who have inconsistent results are usually just looking for the easy way out – whatever gets the job done! If they're not going the extra mile to make sure their work is constantly hitting a high standard, they don't have grit.
- Are they resilient? Do they give up whenever they hit a roadblock? There will be plenty of roadblocks along the way, especially when you're working in a team, but if that person isn't willing to take a step back, reflect and try again, they might not have that grit.
- Do they have endurance? Looking at how they approach the day can show you how they're likely to approach their career in general. Do they sprint it out at the beginning of the day only to fall flat at about 2pm? Or do they jog slowly through the day, getting tasks done efficiently and done well? If they're looking to go hard at the beginning and aren't willing to sustain their excellence, they might not have grit.

As Duckworth says – “our potential is one thing, what we do with it is quite another”.

If you're ready to start helping your team reach their potential and cultivate their grit, People Make The Difference can help you with training workshops, one-on-one coaching and Coach On Call services. To find out more, call us on 0412 333 415 or visit peoplemakethedifference.com.au.