ENSURING BEST-FITTING FACULTY HIRES

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Given a pool of technically competent applicants, marketing department faculty often hire the applicant who seemingly offers the best fit. We posit that this best fit is not an elusive concept; rather, it concerns the identifiable core values of the extant faculty. Once identified, these values can inform a customized survey for estimating the value congruence between potential hires and the extant faculty. In this vein, we first describe a way to identify these core values and their relative importance. Then we suggest how to develop a formal fit-assessment tool grounded in these values.

[Assessment of the] prevailing culture and individual values provides critical data that can be used to minimize risk to the realization of institutional priorities, policies, direction, and change. . . . Understanding [academic] organizational culture is central to strategic planning and is crucial to the successful implementation of policy and programs.

—Chermak 1990, p.25

The best tenure decisions are made by hiring, not tenure, committees. Most of our undesirable tenured faculty members should not have been hired in the first place.

—Nelson 1997, p.84

One difficult task that all academic departments face repeatedly is to select someone to fill a faculty vacancy. Although historical attrition rates suggest otherwise, department faculty hope that all new hires will stay for many productive years. In this era of modest academic budgets, business schools often cannot afford to replace departing faculty; when funds are available, marketing departments must not fumble their hiring opportunities.

The turnover costs associated with faculty mis-hiring are substantial. Although there are no formal estimates, Figure 1 lists the well-known costs associated with faculty turnover. The figure includes direct costs (such as the increased salary paid to a new faculty member when market rates exceed current pay levels) and indirect costs (which are difficult to quantify and include the loss of institutional memory and alumni loyalty). Each extant faculty’s goal is to hire applicants who will be long-term assets to their departments, thereby reducing the probability of repeatedly incurring such turnover costs.

If organizations are composed of similar people (Ostroff and Rothausen 1997) because such people are more productive and adapt more quickly to their work environment (Rusbult and Farrell 1983), and if workers seek organizations with congruent characteristics (Chatman 1989, 1991), then organizations that assess and match their new hires’ values to their current employees’ values should hire good-fitting employees. To make such hires, organizations such as university libraries (Hendrickson and Giesecke 1994), chemical companies (Parnell 1998), mid-sized businesses (Buchanan 1999), and Fortune 1000 companies (Laabs 1999), use personality tests to screen job applicants. However, these tests—either work-specific tests like the DNA test (a closed-ended, 136-item test that relates 14 different personality attributes to workplace success (Bates 1994)) and PRADCO Personal Profile (Buchanan 1999), or general personality inventories like the California Psychological Inventory and Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Parnell 1998)—are only moderate predictors of workplace success (Furnham 1997). To hire the best-fitting employees, organizations should augment standard interviews and personality tests with other formal tools that could assess the likely interplay between employees and their complex work environment (Bowen, Ledford and Nathan 1991).

Consistent with the growing interest in faculty recruiting and hiring (Iyer and Clark 1998; Ryan and Martinson 1996), and the desire to avoid the “shot in the dark” . . . difficulty in knowing whether the

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candidate’s chemistry would blend in with the chemistry of others in the department” (Sheehan 1999, p.150), we suggest one such formal tool for academic marketing departments. Our exposition proceeds as follows. After a brief overview of the relevant psychology and management literatures, we (1) posit the set of core work-related values within academic departments in universities/colleges, (2) trace how a subset of those values came to characterize the culture of one department, and (3) show how this department might develop a formal fit-assessment survey grounded in these core values.

Organizational Culture

Researchers may take one of three perspectives when studying organizational culture: the variable perspective, the cognitive perspective, or the holistic perspective (Sackmann 1991). Under the variable perspective, scholars study the tangible manifestations of culture, such as rituals, ceremonies, verbal behaviors and material artifacts. Under the cognitive perspective, scholars study what people think (i.e., values, norms, expectations, beliefs, or assumptions) rather than what people do. Under the holistic perspective, scholars study the “patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting that are acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols” (Sackmann 1991, p.18).

Although the holistic perspective can capture both the complexity and evolution of an organization’s culture, many scholars are deterred by its ethnographic data requirements and its focus on organizational idiosyncracies (i.e., it produces weakly generalizable results) (Sackmann 1991). As our goal is to develop an assessment tool for academic departments rather than to develop a general theory of academic organizations, the holistic perspective yields the richest data, and cultural studies of university faculty often use ethnographic data (e.g., Fetterman 1984; Freedman, et al. 1979; Harman 1989; Lewis 1994), we adopted it. Thus, we assume that culture is “holistic, historically determined, related to anthropological concepts, socially constructed, soft and difficult to change” (Hofstede et al. 1990, p.286), and organizational culture concerns the shared values and shared practices that affect organizational members (Hare and O’Neill 2000; Hofstede et al. 1990; Schein 1990). Once institutionalized, these values become a crucial component of organizational personality; organizations use these shared values to justify their practices (George 1992). Organizational practices—organizational “values, rituals, heroes, and symbols” (Hofstede et al. 1990)—are meaningful to employees and direct their behaviors.

Each organization’s culture is formed by the employees and environment of its past and present—in other words, its history. An organization’s founders establish the initial values, policies and procedures that institutionalize those values. Current organizational members interpret those initial values and develop practices that reveal the extent to which founders’ values have been institutionalized and internalized (Schein 1990).

By socializing new employees, organizations further align the values and personalities of their employees
(Cwyer and Friedrich 1998; Chatman 1991). Through their legends and myths, organizations indoctrinate their new members; through their rituals, organizations reveal their core values to new members (Hofstede et al. 1990). The more vigorously organizations try to influence their members—especially their new members—the more similarity between their values and their members’ values (Chatman 1991). Ultimately, the longest-tenured employees share many personal characteristics and are the most value-congruent (Kristof 1996; Meir, Melamed and Dinur 1995). Value congruence is related to job satisfaction, job tenure and intentions to stay with a job (Adkins, Ravlin and Meglino 1996; Chatman 1991; Furnham 1997; Meglino, Ravlin and Adkins 1989).

Because the subtle components of organizational culture are not self-evident, the method used to define organizational culture should be sensitive to deeply ingrained, but not always conscious, values and beliefs. Our proposed method, grounded in the holistic perspective, should satisfy this constraint.

Marketing Department Cultures

The culture of a marketing department has been defined similarly. Williams and Vreeland (1988) define it as “the composite of values, ideas, directives, comradeship [sic], orientation toward teaching, research, and service, and the general stated and unstated raison d’être for the department that guides the behavior of its members” (p.39).

The marketing literature discusses ways to build ideal departmental cultures. For example, after identifying its distinguishing attributes, a department could plan its ideal culture by deciding (1) the qualitative-quantitative mix of concepts in the curriculum, (2) the relative emphasis of various marketing mix variables in the curriculum, (3) the problem-solving skills that students need, (4) the value of student nurturing, (5) the desired research-teaching-service mix, (6) the quality and quantity of formal and informal faculty interactions, (7) the value of external consulting and professional contacts, and (8) the attributes of the department leader (Williams and Vreeland 1988). By following this approach, one department “achieved a national reputation for producing students of outstanding caliber . . . [who] appreciate the . . . assistance they receive from faculty members . . . [and] in turn support the financial efforts of the department upon graduation” (Williams and Vreeland 1988, p.42). Thus, the right culture can improve pedagogy, increase alumni support and bring external recognition.

Building the ideal departmental culture requires a commitment to one educational philosophy, competence to deliver an excellent education, and consistency “perpetuated by attracting, developing, and keeping the ‘right’ faculty” who support a shared vision (Chonko and Caballero 1991, p.20). Although “identifying desirable characteristics and implementing them . . . sounds easy, creating a strong culture is not so simplistic. . . . [just] changing the superficial trappings . . . cannot create the family-like bonding and unification of purpose that are needed” (Chonko and Caballero 1991, p.18).

Organizational Fit

Organizational fit was first conceived as the match between job requirements and employees’ knowledge, skills and abilities (Caston and Briato 1985). Later, organizational fit was re-conceived as the match between the norms and beliefs of organizations and their employees’ values, beliefs and personality traits (Chatman 1989; Saks and Ashforth 1997). Both conceptualizations suggest that employees fit an organization when their job-related attributes match their work environment (Ostroff and Rothauser 1997). Although the fit between employees and their organizations is never perfect, successful employees typically share the dominant characteristics of their organizations (Cable and Judge 1996).

Employee-organization fit is achieved through an attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) cycle (Kristof 1996). In the attraction phase, people seek organizations with congruent characteristics; in the selection phase, organizations hire people with needed competencies and congruent attributes (Cable and Judge 1996); in the attrition phase, employees who fail to achieve organizational congruence resign. Thus, “the people in one organization will be more similar to each other than to people in another organization” (Ostroff and Rothauser 1997, p.175), even in industries with similar firm structures, such as accounting (Chatman 1991; Miner, Crane and Vandenberg 1994).

Advantages of Good Fit

Marketers, psychologists and management experts contend that organizations dominated by good-fitting employees are more effective because such employees, relative to other employees, are more satisfied, more committed, more productive, have more positive attitudes toward their work and the ethical practices of their colleagues, and conflict less with co-workers (Cable and Judge 1996; Caldwell and O’Reilly 1990; Jehn, Chadwick and Thatcher 1997; King 1995; Posner 1992; Posner and Schmidt 1993; Saks and Ashforth 1997; Stum 1999; Weeks, Chonko and Kahle 1989; Werbel, James and DeCarlo 1996). Incongruent employees are often absent, frustrated, stressed, anxious, burned out and
physically ill (Furnham and Walsh 1990; Meir, Melamed and Dinur 1995), all which inhibit personal and organizational productivity. Because high congruence among employees enhances organizational productivity, faculty should hire applicants with similar values, beliefs, norms and personality traits, ceteris paribus. For example, compatibility with other department members is the third most important criteria for tenure (Mooney 1990) and is as important as any criterion used by AACSB-accredited accounting departments when hiring assistant professors (Iyer and Clark 1998); in addition, 35.1% of the 1,511 full-time faculty who responded to a recent national survey indicated that intradepartmental strains impinged on their academic work (Leatherman 2000).

Congruent values among marketing department faculty should produce more collegial and pedagogically engaged cultures. Such faculty are more likely to enthusiastically develop and embrace revised departmental missions that match new AACSB standards and the changing pedagogical landscape of the 21st century. Several pedagogical advantages of good-fitting departments include:

1) **Acceptance of more teaching-centric mission statements.** AACSB-accredited marketing departments use such statements to increase their productivity, quality and cohesion, which "includes improvement in teaching, intellectual activity, moral and energy . . . and less confusion and more consensus" (McDermott, Urban and O'Hallaron 1996, p.7). Departments that stress their pedagogical missions have faculty who value teaching, frequently discuss teaching (both formally, in colloquia, retreats, or curriculum review sessions, and informally), and make consensual decisions (Massy, Wilger and Colbeck 1994).

2) **Improved instruction via increased peer review and peer coaching of teaching.** Fear of being judged as inadequate by peers—the main reason faculty resist peer review—would be minimal in good-fitting departments (Atwood, Taylor and Hutchings 2000; Eisenbach and Curry 1999); thus, faculty would be more amenable to peer review and peer coaching of teaching.

3) **Reduce resistance to instructional reform.** Department cultures typically resist such change because they are "the most congenial arena for . . . traditional understandings of what is important in academic work and for the power of enduring disciplinary affiliation that is independent of the institution" (Edwards 1999, p.18). More collegial departments should be more committed to curriculum development, student assessment, and teaching in dramatically changed programs at both the undergraduate and MBA levels (Eastman and Allen 1999).

4) **More effective team teaching.** "Team teaching is a process designed to foster integration of business knowledge, rather than the sharing of teaching burdens [a.k.a. serial teaching]" (Stafford 1996, p.6). Because more value congruent faculty should have more compatible teaching philosophies, conflict in course design and implementation should be reduced.

5) **Better performing students.** Faculty at high schools with higher performing students (as measured by standardized tests) are less conflicted, more collegial, and more trusting of one another (Little 1982; Uline, Miller and Tschanner-Moran 1998; Wheelan and Tilin 1999). Better student outcomes follow when teachers have the latitude to work together (Wheelan and Tilin 1999).

**Caveat for Academic Departments**

Inter-employee homogeneity could extend to demographic variables. People who are "demographically similar to other organizational members enjoy important benefits that less similar individuals are less likely to receive" (Cable and Judge 1996, p.295). Demographic similarity to ones' co-workers strongly predicts work experiences and work outcomes because of the similar-attraction effect (Kirschmeyer 1995) (i.e., high attraction to similar others encourages frequent communication, high social integration and a desire for affiliation).

Given universities' diversity needs, faculties should resist demographic homogeneity (i.e., hiring faculty of similar age, race, gender, marital status, ethnicity, or background) while they seek hires with similar work-related values. (One way to encourage an adequately diverse faculty: start with a maximally diverse pool of job applicants.) Faculty generally prefer a more proactive stance (i.e., universities should help solve social problems and promote racial understanding (Milem and Astin 1993) and believe that increased institutional excellence springs from varied viewpoints (Brown and Miller 1998). A more demographically diverse faculty could enhance students' cognitive and affective development (Hurtado 1996; Milem and Astin 1993), create a diverse multicultural environment that can increase appreciation for a multicultural society, increase sensitivity to racial issues and reduce racial conflict on campus, introduce new teaching practices needed by an increasingly diverse student body (Hurtado 1996), serve as role models for an increasingly diverse student body (Brown and Miller 1998), and avoid discrimination claims.
Fortunately, studies of non-academics suggest that members of diverse workgroups can have congruent values. For such workgroups, age, gender and ethnicity are seemingly unrelated to value congruence (Posner 1992). A job applicant's beliefs about organizational fit are related to congruence between the applicant's values and the applicant's beliefs about the organization's values, but unrelated to demographic similarities between the applicant and organizational representatives (Cable and Judge 1996). In fact, greater value congruence in workgroups decreases the conflict caused by demographic diversity (e.g., age, sex, race) (Jehn, Chadwick and Thatcher 1997); thus, the more congruent the workgroup, the greater the manageable demographic diversity.

The Department-History Method

To hire the best replacement faculty, many psychologists and management experts might argue that faculty should replace their informal fit-assessment procedures with a formal value-congruence assessment procedure like the one proposed here. Faculty should assess the department-person fit, rather than the college-person or university-person fit, because departments (1) establish powerful norms, (2) are a primary loci of beliefs, interests and commitment, (3) are often centers for change, faculty identity, faculty culture, collegiality and professionalism, and (4) are primarily responsible for hiring decisions (Austin 1996; Bidwell and Yasumoto 1999; Edwards 1999; Ryan and Martinson 1996; Verrier 1992).

Qualitative research methods provide one way to uncover an organization's evolving set of rituals, heroes, and symbols (Hofstede et al. 1990). Methods such as depth interviews, critical-incident reports and observation are often used to uncover veiled information about post-secondary faculty (Miller and Stayton 1999; Verrier 1992). We posit that the effect of a department's history on its current practices is not self-evident. By tracing its history, a department may reveal the core values that motivate its current practices. (A formal audit is needed because organizational cultures are complex and occasionally inconsistent; for example, employees may be empowered yet the decision-making process is consensual across stakeholders (Bliss 1999).) Once these values are delineated, a department can use them to create a formal fit-assessment survey. As the extent literature suggests, more value congruent hires are more likely to succeed within a department.

Suggested Research Technology

To trace a department's history, we propose a method that employs a textual analysis tool like NUD*IST (Richards and Richards 1994). NUD*IST (Non-Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theory Building, http://www.taggaram.co.uk/nuDIST/index.html) is a software package used by qualitative researchers to identify patterns in responses to open-ended questions, or in focus groups (i.e., to locate the interrelationships in different peoples' answers) (Fleenor 1998). Researchers can use NUD*IST from either the theory down to the data or from the data up to the theory (Richards and Richards 1994); if the former, then researchers use the coding tools in NUD*IST to search the text for theory-supporting data. (Note: The method described here takes a theory down to the data approach.) Although other software programs, such as The Ethnograph, perform essentially the same task, NUD*IST has become "widely accepted in the academic world... because it can handle the in-depth analysis often found in academic research" (Fleenor 1998, p.548).

To use NUD*IST, researchers first import electronic versions of documents (e.g., interviews entered into a word processing program). Then, they use NUD*IST's text-search tools to auto-code these documents or to pose coding-pattern questions. Simply, NUD*IST locates words or strings of words in texts. Interrelationships among words can be coded and then illustrated via NUD*IST's diagram utility. Because it can import spreadsheet data, researchers can use NUD*IST for both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

To show the relationships among key notions, NUD*IST allows researchers to generate tree diagrams. Because researchers cannot label nodes and sub-nodes in these diagrams (i.e., only node numbers are printed), display graphics are NUD*IST's weakest feature (Fleenor 1998). To assist readers, we suggest that researchers re-create these diagrams in either a graphics package or a word processor.

Core Value Set

Because the proposed method takes a theory down to the data approach, the first step is to identify a department's core values. As with all organizations, we posit that successful academic hires must share their department's core values. Three earlier efforts suggest the possible set of work-related values for university faculty. From a study of secondary school faculty, Ostroff and Rothenase (1997) identified nine core values for educators: growth, innovation, autonomy, achievement, participation, cooperation, warmth, hierarchy and structure. Developed by the National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (1988) to model the antecedents of faculty satisfaction, motivation and effort, the Organizational Climate
Table 1
Workplace Beliefs Associated with Value Dimensions

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<tr>
<th>Value Dimension</th>
<th>Workplace Beliefs</th>
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| Growth          | ✓ Personal growth and development on job is emphasized  
|                 | ✓ Skill improvement is emphasized  
|                 | ✓ Self-improvement is desired  |
| Innovation      | ✓ Innovation and creativity in work is emphasized  
|                 | ✓ Change is readily accepted  
|                 | ✓ Willingness to make suggestions and try new ideas  |
| Autonomy        | ✓ Free to be own boss  
|                 | ✓ Free to plan and control own work  
|                 | ✓ Unconstrained exercising of academic freedom  |
| Achievement     | ✓ Work is desired and challenging  
|                 | ✓ Maximizing own potential at work is prevalent and desired  
|                 | ✓ High standards are set and are desired  
|                 | ✓ Continuous performance improvement is prevalent and desired  |
| Participation   | ✓ Active involvement in decision processes, activities, setting goals and setting policies  
|                 | ✓ Shared governance exists  |
| Cooperation     | ✓ Helping others with work and wanting others' help (i.e., mutual support) is prevalent and desired  
|                 | ✓ Open communication is prevalent and desired  |
| Warmth          | ✓ General feelings of good fellowship in work group  
|                 | ✓ Friendly, informal social groups are prevalent and desired  |

(Adapted from Table 1 of Ostroff and Rothausen (1997))

For Teaching and Learning Survey is grounded in a 31-factor model; the factors concerning organizational culture include teamwork, innovation, rationale for decisions, academic planning, governance, resource allocation, faculty and instructional development, satisfaction with teaching, and faculty involvement in educational policy and faculty development. From semi-structured interviews with 83 university faculty members, Deshler, Smith and Whitcomb (1984) identified eight value themes: commitment to the institution, unity/community, humanistic values, academic quality, academic freedom, educational opportunity, ethical values, and institutional identity. Relative to the latter two studies, the value set suggested by Ostroff and Rothausen (1997) is more recent, more parsimonious, and more clearly defined (see Figure 2); thus, we started from this value set.

Although universities are educational institutions, they are generally viewed as more similar to professional organizations than to secondary schools. Relative to other organizations, professional organizations have less bureaucratic management, derive leadership from professional competence, rely on personal motivation to fuel production, condone professional loyalty over organizational loyalty, assume work-related satisfaction derives primarily from professional achievement, assume its members excel when their role requirements match their motivational levels, and assume its members are socialized—indoctrinated about professional values, norms, ethical precepts, and codes—during their professional training (Miner, Crane and Vandenbarg 1994). Research on professional organizations suggests that five role prescriptions combine with individual motivations to produce successful workers and work environments. These prescriptions are (1) the desire to learn and to acquire knowledge, (2) the desire for independence, (3) the desire to acquire status, (4) the desire to help others, and (5) value-based identification with the profession (Miner, Crane and Vandenbarg 1994).

Thus, we posit that (1) the core intra-departmental work values are growth, autonomy, innovation, achievement, cooperation, participation and warmth, and (2) the department under study will have held these values in a consistent order of importance throughout its history. This seven-dimensional value set, which is the intersection of the sets for secondary schools and professional organizations, excludes two values suggested by Ostroff and Rothausen (1997): hierarchy (i.e., locus of authority in supervisory personnel) and structure (i.e., intra-organizational formality and constraint).
Seemingly, neither value characterizes academic departments. Although department chairs typically evaluate faculty for pay increases and tenure (McDermott, Urban and Wayland 1994), academic departments are democratic, non-hierarchical, and participatory entities run by non-threatening leaders who act as first-among-equals and manage by moral suasion (Eisen 1997; Gomes and Knowles 1999; Hubble and Homer 1997). Also, psychological climate in administrator-faculty relationships, which includes the posited values of autonomy and innovation (as well as cohesiveness, fairness, pressure and recognition), is little influenced by “the formal hierarchical structure of faculty-administrator dyads” (Pelton, Strutton and Rawwes 1994, p.54). Finally, authentic collegiality, the ideal manner for academic departments, is anathema to formality (Massy, Wilger and Colbeck 1994).

Although faculty dialogues about core values may suffice if time is short, if local expertise in qualitative research is limited, or if budget constraints preclude hiring external assessors (for departments without adequately trainable graduate students), such dialogues may suffer from group-think, domination by highly vocal faculty, and the like. In addition, cautious untenured faculty may resist full disclosure of (real or imaginary) discordant beliefs about departmental values. Thus, a faculty’s anonymous responses to depth interviews should provide the most candid and complete data for establishing its core values.

Faculty Profile

At the time of the interviews, all previous chairmen remained on staff. The tenures of the marketing faculty ranged from five to seventeen years; all nine faculty—three chairmen and six other faculty—were tenured. The oldest member of the marketing department, who was the first chairman of the joint marketing-and-business-law department, joined the faculty in 1985. We considered the first chairman to be the founder of the department and used his text as the founding story of the department.

All faculty are Caucasian; one is female. With one exception, all faculty are married; none have young children and five have adult children. The three chairmen hold doctorates from the same state university in the northwestern U.S.; the other faculty hold doctorates from major state universities. Other than Ph.D.-granting university, no other background questions were asked.

Results

The text search and re-interviews of several historically key faculty revealed a distinct ordering of the aforementioned seven dimensions. This faculty most valued collegiality or warmth. Collegiality was a stated goal of each department head. The text search revealed many references to the “good feeling” that permeates this department. Each faculty member mentioned this “good feeling” and the importance of “getting along” with everyone; the latter was especially important for new hires (i.e., no “boat rockers”). Many warmth-related comments concerned the department’s cooperative environment. This result is unsurprising because cooperation fits with warmth; after all, cooperative environments foster warmth towards co-workers. Furthermore, collegiality is the most important determinant in the decision to resign (Manger, Terje and Ole-Johan Eikeland 1990) and is positively correlated with faculty satisfaction, when satisfaction is “a climate en-
suring professional autonomy and activity commensurate with specialized expertise” (Pollicino 1996, p.2).

Autonomy is seemingly contrary to cooperation, yet this faculty prized autonomy highly. This faculty appreciated its unhindered academic freedom; only one faculty member failed to mention it. Academic freedom was often discussed in the context of “freedom in developing the courses” and “control over class material and course content.” By our framework, these concepts concern personal growth and skill development. For this faculty, growth is related to autonomy.

References about the “lack of department politics” were often proximate to references about academic freedom. Four faculty told stories about joining this department; all stories focused on their desire or need to flee negative departmental politics. These four stories suggest that the core work-related values of these faculty are autonomy, cooperation and warmth.

Faculty repeatedly mentioned mutual participation or true shared governance of the department. For this department, the one person, one vote system pertains; senior faculty never received preferential treatment. Within the text, mentions of shared governance were often proximate to mentions of cooperation and warmth; seemingly, participation is central to the cooperative work environment and warmth that is highly prized.

Perhaps unique to this department was the lack of desire to attain personal status; no faculty member mentioned this as a goal. Perhaps this surprising response was an artifact of asking open-ended questions geared to departmental history rather than personal motivations. Nonetheless, achievement was only mentioned in terms of aggregate success. Comments like “we are the largest department within the College,” “we have the most majors and are the fastest growing department,” and “we started the Ph.D. program and had its first graduate,” show that only group achievement is important. Self-interested behavior without regard for departmental good would be incongruent with the existing value set. Again, this is unsurprising because warmth, which is a collectivist value, is the most highly prized value.

Figure 3, the flow chart created from the NUDIST data, summarizes this department’s hierarchy of values and would inform the development of any formal fit-assessment survey. With this value profile, this faculty can develop either a questionnaire or set of scenarios to assess a job candidate’s value congruence (analogous to the structured ethical integrity interview described by Hollwitz and Pawlowski (1997)). For example, this faculty might pose these (and other) questions to job candidates:

1) How much do you value an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship—one that promotes open sharing of ideas and encourages frank debate? (warmth)
2) Is exercising academic freedom important to you? (autonomy)
3) Should faculty members be asked to work on projects meant only to advance their department? Is willingness to co-author papers with on-campus faculty and Ph.D. students important? (cooperation)
4) How much do you value shared governance within your academic department? (participation)
5) How much do you value personal achievement and recognition? (achievement; reverse scored)
6) How much do you value regular revision of the curriculum? How much do you value the opportunity to develop new courses? (innovation; reverse scored)
7) How much do you value opportunities for professional growth? (growth; reverse scored)

This faculty might then compute an overall department-candidate fit score by summing the mean score assigned to each answer. Only candidates with the highest scores would receive further consideration.

Although some job applicants may distort their answers to personality tests (Rosse, Stecher, Miller and Levin 1998), research on written ethical integrity tests suggests that even dishonest applicants answer honestly (Hollwitz and Pawlowski 1997). Nonetheless, many commercially available preemployment instruments are designed to avoid faking and social desirability bias. Such instruments ask job applicants to choose between two statements about a job that are both true and positive; however, only one statement predicts superior performance (Flynn 1995; Supervision 1995). Applicants for academic positions could be asked comparably formatted questions. For example, because the importance of intra-departmental cooperation on academic research differs by marketing department, there is no obvious fake response to the statements “Co-authoring articles with department colleagues is important,” versus “What you write is more important than with whom you write.”

Conclusions and Caveats

Like all businesses, academic departments succeed “by recruiting employees who will be responsive to organizational practices, by transmitting the significance of prevailing values, and by dismissing those who do not fit, organizations hope to establish a robust and stable attachment among members” (Chatman 1991, p. 460). Clearly, the example department has a distinct set of values. To be successful within this department, a
new hire should value warmth/collegiality, cooperation, autonomy, and participation. Although each faculty member works independently, there is a strong sense of departmental collectiveness.

As Kamen (1997, p.23) notes, "Companies . . . are beginning to realize that the interview isn’t sufficient . . . Hiring is too important not to use every technique available." In this vein, marketing departments could augment their traditional hiring approaches with formal tools for assessing applicant-department fit. Whether a battery of close-ended questions or a semi-structured interview schedule, these tools should be as undemanding as the preemployment assessment tools now used by non-academic organizations. Furthermore, applicants should appreciate, rather than spurn, departments’ extra efforts to avoid ill-fitting hires who will either quickly reappear on the job market—at great personal and financial expense—or suffer in unsatisfying jobs. Thus, both departments and applicants should embrace such assessment tools.

However, faculty persuaded to develop a customized value-congruence survey should note the following six caveats:

1) department-candidate value congruence should not be the sole hiring criterion;
2) a superior core value framework may exist;
3) in factious departments, collecting good data will be difficult,
4) value assessments by external agents are preferred,
5) the existing department culture should be changed, and
6) preemployment screening must conform to privacy and anti-discrimination laws.

Each of these caveats is now addressed in turn.

We recognize that the value congruence between a job candidate and his or her prospective employer is only one of many hiring criteria; any viable candidate must possess the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the job. Nonetheless, when given the choice between two technically qualified applicants, we suggest that faculty use the results of a value-congruence survey to inform their choice. The use of a value survey would allow a faculty to choose a new hire who fits on two dimensions: performance-related factors and value congruence.

Superior alternatives to the proposed value framework may exist. Organizational culture is a well-establish domain of the management and psychology literatures; other researchers may eventually develop better value frameworks grounded in works such as Furnham and Gunter (1993), Goffee and Jones (1998), Graves (1986), Kristof (1996) and Sackmann (1991). Certainly,
the proposed value framework is incomplete. For example, employees are less likely to resign when they perceive a good fit between their organization’s ethical climate and their stage of moral development (Sims and Keon 1997). None of the seven core values explicitly considers a department’s ethical climate.

Factional departments are often characterized by multiple sets of core values; in fact, the proximate cause of such dysfunctional departments is often the disagreement over the dominant value set. Because high intra-departmental trust is requisite to conducting gainful depth interviews—distrustful faculty members are unlikely to share their true beliefs for fear of retaliation—and intra-departmental trust is low among members of factional departments, an alternative data collection technique is needed. A standardized work-value assessment tool, such as the Organization Culture Profile (OCP) (Caldwell and O’Reilly 1990; Chatman 1989, 1991; Jehn, Chadwick and Thatcher 1997; O’Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell 1991), is recommended for low-trust departments.

The OCP contains 54 items, such as flexibility, adaptability, tolerance, informality, and decisiveness. Respondents are asked to Q-sort these items into nine categories that range from most to least desirable organizational values (Chatman 1989). The correlation (computed via the Spearman-Brown general prophecy formula) between respondents’ rankings for their ideal organization and the mean rankings for seasoned organizational members (who would know the extant culture (Chatman 1989)) is the primary indicator of employee-organization fit (O’Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell 1991). (For the limitations of correlation as a measure of fit for the OCP, see Caldwell and O’Reilly (1990); for an alternative or supplemental measure of fit, see Chatman (1989).)

In factional departments, faculty could submit their Q-sort results anonymously; with the threat of retaliation eliminated, they should respond more candidly. Although reliable ethnographic data is preferred (because the OCP is grounded in the variable perspective of organizational culture research rather than the richer holistic perspective), and the OCP does not yield simple ‘value factors’ (e.g., growth, innovative, autonomy), reliable OCP data is clearly better than unreliable ethnographic data. Furthermore, the OCP could serve as the fit-assessment survey for all job candidates, which would eliminate the need to develop a customized survey. (Note: Within departments, the OCP is unreliable if Cronbach’s a<0.70 (Chatman 1989). In such cases, the assessment team should first identify the dominant set of values suggested by responses to the OCP.)

Due to temporary budget cuts, the discretionary funds available to the example department were limited. As a result, the use of costly external agents for interviewing and data analysis was precluded (i.e., on-site Ph.D. students served those roles). Relative to internal agents, external agents, by promising anonymity to respondents, should elicit more candid and complete responses. Despite the less-than-ideal data, this preliminary effort both illustrates the utility of values assessments and suggests the viability of our seven-value framework to academic departments.

The development of a customized value-cogruence survey assumes that the current culture is worth perpetuating. The organizational culture literature, both academic and popular, often focuses on ways to improve suboptimal cultures (e.g., Goffee and Jones 1998; Graves 1986). Rather than use the proposed method to develop a value-cogruence survey, departments with suboptimal or toxic cultures could adapt it to inform a culture-gap analysis that could help manage needed cultural change (Mallak and Kurstedt 1996). Analogous to the discrepancy between ‘self image’ and ‘ideal self image’ (Alpert and Kamins 1995; Graeff 1996; Oumil and Erdem 1997), faculty could be queried about the current and preferred culture for their department.

Major departmental transitions may be voluntary or involuntary. Departments in transition voluntarily conduct at least informal culture-gap analyses (e.g., a series of departmental meetings at which target cultures and the path to their achievement are identified) (Williams and Vreeland 1988). Our departmental-history method could better inform voluntary transitions by providing additional structure and more candid insights. (For example, see Gomes and Knowles (1999) for one marketing faculty’s formal assessment of a voluntary transition inspired by a new department head.) Departments in transition involuntarily (e.g., due to retirements of several founding or well-established faculty in a healthy culture) should find that formal records facilitate perpetuation of current cultures. In either case, our proposed method should prove useful to faculty.

Finally, preemployment screening tests must conform to privacy and anti-discrimination laws, so they must (1) comply with ADA requirements, (2) be language and culture neutral, and (3) be relevant to job performance (i.e., have content and predictive validity) (Frazee 1996; Kamen 1997; Parnell 1998; Solomon 1993). Given the applicant pool and the screening criteria, the fit-assessment tools championed here are not inherently partial. To meet legal requirements, departments must maintain confidentiality (i.e., treat fit-assessment tools like companies treat psychological tests used in preemployment screening), use results jointly with other screening methods (as fit is only one criterion for job success) (Mello 1996), and debrief applicants who request a debriefing (Kamen 1997).
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