

■ Could You Work for this Manager?

By Dr. John Drozdal

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Business Tool Kit

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You are the leader of an organization and you need to fill a key management position on your team. You have carefully screened the candidates and you believe you have found the right person. You now need to ask yourself the most important question in the hiring process: "Could I work for this person?"

My friend Tom Debrowski, Executive Vice President for Worldwide Operations for Mattel, Inc., often said that leaders need to surround themselves with the best possible people—any one of whom they would be proud to work for. The reason is simple. If you feel that you would rather have a root canal than work for one of your managers, how can you ask others to work for that person? Moreover, when the dust settles from an organizational change that comes from mergers, acquisitions, and consolidations, you may, in fact, find yourself reporting to this nightmare manager!

So if you have a manager for whom you would not or could not

work, what do you do? Your first action is to identify what needs to be present in that manager's performance and behavior for this person to be more effective in a management role. A 360°-feedback process is a good way to find out the strengths and areas of development. Based on the feedback, share the data with the manager, create clear development goals for this person, and provide a management coach, mentor, and/or training opportunities to help her/him to succeed. Most of the time, this approach will have a positive outcome. However, sometimes the manager in question is unwilling or unable to improve his/her managerial effectiveness. In this case, there may be no other alternative than to replace this person.

Given that up to 80% of people who leave organizations leave because of a bad manager, asking, "could I work for this person" before you hire a manager is a simple step that can pay dividends later. ■

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