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The day Shadowmatch worked perfectly by not working –

by Pieter de Villiers

The Shadowmatch team was asked to do an analysis of a team of specialized people. The problem was that the majority of the team members have been working together for more than ten years. They had three young employees in the team that were extremely frustrated. A further problem was the fact that the team were performing very poorly. Their work was not up to scratch. The team performed anything but acceptable in the quality standards of their work. The company then decided to appoint a new director with lots of energy to fix the team and get things back on track.

The new director soon realised that the managers were the problem. He asked for a full analysis of the situation by using Shadowmatch. He gave us all the names and went for a short holiday of one week. During this week we asked the entire team to complete the Shadowmatch worksheet and - not knowing the situation – we asked one of the managers to tell us who the top performers in the team are. He discussed it with his peer group managers and gave us the names of the top performers. Their habits were very congruent and the system approved the reliability of the consolidated top performing group. Now we have the facts for feedback when the newly appointed director returns from holiday.

During the feedback we used the top performing team (as indicated by the management team reporting to the new director) as the benchmark. We indicated that there is a very distinct difference when the habits of the team are being compared to that of the top performers and three team members were a very poor match to the 'top performers'. He looked at the names of the team members who matched the top performers very positively and with a serious shocked face said: "Sorry guys, this is not working. These people that your system indicates as the ones that should be as successful as the top performers are the worst of all the people in the team".

Because we know that Shadowmatch doesn't make such mistakes, we asked him to verify the four individuals we have used as top performers. The names the managers gave us were their own names and they were the worst of all. The newly appointed director said that he has never worked with such a bunch of incompetent, lazy people. Ten of the seventeen members of the team were appointed by them and they were exactly the same. These ten were the best match when compared to the consolidated profile of the managers. The newly appointed director has appointed four young, dynamic and competent individuals to help pull the department out of its poor performing spiral. These four young energetic employees were the worst match to that of the managers being used as the benchmark. The top people were at the bottom of the list and the non performing employees were at the

top of the list. The reason? The list was defined by a poor performing benchmark group and the system was precise in terms of matching similar people to similar people.

Have you ever wondered how many departments in business are performing sub standard because poor performers have recruited more poor performers? Like attracts like. Make sure you understand the dynamics of your departments and teams.