

WHAT PREDICTS EXECUTIVE SUCCESS?

HIGHLIGHTS FROM GREEN PEAK PARTNERS STUDY

Key Findings

Strong Interpersonal Skills Make Executives Successful

- Executives with weak interpersonal skills were rated poorly on their ability to deliver bottom line results correlation between poor interpersonal skills and ability to deliver financial results was statistically significant at -.21.
- Executives who had poor interpersonal skills were rated lower by their bosses on every performance dimension.
 - Interpersonal weaknesses such as being “arrogant,” “too direct” or “impatient and stubborn,” led to lower ratings for performance relative to expectations, delivering financial results, driving results, managing talent, inspiring followership, team playing, business/technical acumen and strategic intellect.
- Executives with weak interpersonal skills received predictably poor ratings as people managers (statistically significant at -.23).

Self-Aware Executives Stand Out

- Self-aware executives were likely to score high across all categories. Executives with high self awareness scored high at driving results (.38) and managing people (.40).

It Helps to Have Many Siblings... but Not to Have Had Many Jobs

- Executives with more siblings were good at managing people (.16) and even better at driving results (statistically significant at .25).
- The more organizations an executive worked with early in his or her career, the lower the people management score.

Gender and Birth Order Aren't Important

- There was no relationship between gender or birth order on performance.

Methodology

Assessment data and job performance ratings for 72 executives were studied. An additional four candidates were excluded because performance data was not available (they were too new in their jobs). The basic framework for the study compared the executives' background characteristics (academic/educational, work-related and biographical demographic), their assessment grades (overall, strengths, weaknesses) and job performance (overall grade, task dimensions and people dimensions). Background characteristics and assessment grades were then correlated to job performance as rated by participants' managers.

Key research questions were: what characteristics predict executives' job performance?; what factors are the most/least relevant?; how large are the performance differences by assessment grade?; what drives Green Peak Partners' assessment ratings?, and what enhancements can Green Peak Partners make to the assessment process?

In evaluating the data, criterion measurements were collapsed into two dimensions – ability to produce results and ability to work with people – based on a factor analysis. Strengths and weaknesses varied but common themes emerged and measurements were taken for three strengths (drives results, strong talent management, strong analytic/problem-solving skills) and three weaknesses (poor communication skills, lacks strategic skills, weak interpersonal skills). In eight cases, multiple ratings for the same individual were obtained and these were averaged.

Subjective information such as job performance and assessment data was assigned to a scale. For example, overall job performance letter grades were converted to a 4.0 scale; job performance results and people management skills measurements were assigned to a various scale (e.g., candidate self-awareness was rated on a 1-5 scale; candidate openness was rated on a 1-5 scale). Answers to yes or no questions such as “did you attend graduate school?” were coded to 0 for “no” or 1 for “yes.” The same was done with demographic data (0 for male, 1 for female). Data such as ACT test scores, years on the job and years of work experience was used directly. Once encoded, all data was correlated and a regression analysis was used to arrive at the study results. A summary of the study, conducted in collaboration with researchers at Cornell University, is available for those desiring further information.