

Let me tell you a horse tale. About a real horse, my TN Walker, Maj'. That's him in the picture.



- How many times do you hire or keep someone just because their résumé says they will be a superstar but they show you every day they will not?
- Alternatively, do you hire someone with a standout resume and then put him or her in a job that is not their niche just because you wanted their resume?
- How many times do you keep someone because you have a lot of training or time invested in them even though you're both obviously miserable?
- How long do you keep redirecting and using performance tools on someone that their job is just not a good fit for them. Say someone in customer service who plainly

dislikes customers. Or, someone whose job requires sales but they hate selling and they only sell when their manager is standing behind them.

- How often do you keep someone because you think they're will be nothing else out there for them to do, but the reality is there might be something better for both of you right around the corner?

What's that got to do with a horse? Let me explain.

Maj' is a flunk out from the national show circuit. He's a beautiful animal, I wish I could hold myself and move with the elegance of flowing water like he does or just had his facial bone structure. He's smarter than a lot of people, possesses a better family tree than mine. However, even though he appeared to have been born with all the right stuff, he was a washout in the elite horse world.

See, the problem was he never liked doing the same thing all day long in a ring (inside work) like a show horse has to do, practicing the same thing over and over for perfection (like many jobs). He didn't like being cooped up in a stall (office work) or riding all over in a trailer (business travel). It bored him and he was cantankerous (below expectations), stomped around the ring snorting (complaining), caused problems kicking (acting out) with other horses (coworkers). When I met him, he was out by himself (separated from coworkers) because he got in fights (generating harassment complaints from coworkers).

So his owner sold him (fired him) to me (the hiring manager). The owner had 5 years of time and money invested in Maj' but as he said, "*that horse will never make a national champion-its not his niche!*" His pedigree (resume) has 7 World Grand Champions (Ivy League) and practically guaranteed Maj' would be a champion (exceeds expectations). But his owner (manager) recognized there would be nothing he could do (engage), say

(motivate), or train (classes) into that Maj' that would work (redirect him) so he let him go to go on to other endeavors that he would be successful at (being a pet). Lest you think consultants make too much money, his owner was quite angry to take such a great loss selling him but he cut his losses early when he recognized the (literal) hoof prints (handwriting) on the wall.

What Maj' is a high performer at (exceeds expectations) is being my pet. Maj' is a great fit for my job and now he's a very motivated animal. He's the most gorgeous trail horse, wonderfully trained and most important we are the best of friends (engaged employee). Because, in my free time, I don't want to practice riding circles either. I want to explore the fields and woods, brush his tail and play catch the horse cookie. I spend long hours in airports and as a consultant I'm in front of people all the time.

Maj's job has went from show horse (sales) to a pet (relationship centered work). When I take a nap in the horse pasture, Maj' stands on top of me. Maj' now exceeds expectations and he no longer fights with his coworkers. Maj' has found his niche. When we do take the occasional lesson with the horse trainer that proud head droops down to his knees going into the ring and he makes horse grumbling sounds in his nose. Even though trail riding is harder and longer than a lesson, Maj' doesn't consider trail riding work – it's his niche.

Could you redirect or engage Maj' to be a show horse by using performance tools (coaching, mentoring, PIPs performance reviews, training, and discipline)? Sure, he has all the right stuff, breeding, looks, and training. Where do you think the phrase "carrot or stick" came from? But a his original owner (manager) rightfully said- it's not his niche.

That's the morale to my horse story.