

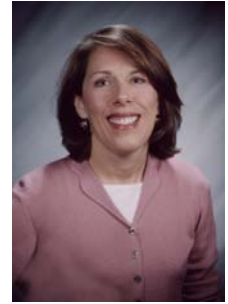
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## **So, the Jury's Still Out on the New Director**

By Carol Bergeron



Your new Director starts employment with your firm next week. True, there is risk associated with every new hire. What can you do to mitigate that risk? Plenty! Proactive steps on your part could be the difference between a new hire well received by the organization, someone under the microscope of many (the jury is still out) or worse a complete mismatch.

First, keep the new hire's perspective in mind. He is enthusiastic, raring to go and took the job because he enjoys a good challenge. He believes he can lead your organization to new heights and so do you. Your approach to assimilating the Director must strike the right balance of being supportive without directing his every move.

### **Operate as the Supportive Advisor**

Before and after your new hire starts do what you can to operate as a sounding board as she develops her approach to assessing and addressing the business challenges. Be sure her approach includes objectively assessing the situation (industry, competition, company capabilities, customers and other stakeholders), building strong relationships, enlisting people to form solid strategies to achieve goals and shepherding resources.

In this role think about a recent, successful major change effort at your firm and what you attribute the success to. Conversely think about change efforts that derailed and the contributing factors.

### **Clarify Performance Expectations**

Clear performance expectations increase the chances of success – yours and his. Be specific about short and long term goals, resources available to achieve goals and behaviors that work well within the organization. Jointly create and support a development plan so the new Director is prepared for oncoming challenges.

### **Encourage Relationship Building**

Cultivating relationships does not happen overnight and occurs through a mix of formal and informal interactions. Encourage the new Director to:

- ▶ Initiate luncheons over the first few weeks to get to know direct reports, peers and executives as individuals.
- ▶ Connect with stakeholders to understand concerns and build a foundation for future collaboration.
- ▶ Host one-on-one conversations with each person on the team so there is a common understanding of performance and development goals, strengths, frustrations and career aspirations.
- ▶ Proactively build a team by introducing personality behavior based assessments to get to know each others styles (see Talent Tool Box below) and how they work best when functioning in a group.

### **Provide Practical Navigation Tips & Feedback**

Sometimes new hires unknowingly create havoc, when performing even the simplest of tasks, which impairs their own credibility. Help them avoid small and large snafus like the ones listed below by educating them on organizational norms and providing feedback as quickly as possible.

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- ▶ When gathering information the Director proceeds directly to the person with the knowledge in a “chain of command” type of organization. That action ruffles the feathers of the knowledge worker’s boss.
  - ▶ New hire sends a meeting invitation direct to desired attendees. Scheduling meetings is normally done through administrative assistants. With forethought, alienating meeting attendees and administrative staff was avoidable.
  - ▶ Resist one too many references to the best practices of a past employer. That pattern often prompts new co-workers to wish the Director would return to his former employer since he likes their approaches so much.
  - ▶ Avoid the “bull in the china shop” syndrome by carefully selecting opportunities for quick wins and building momentum for larger lasting change initiatives.
  - ▶ Stay clear of the ‘hero phenomenon’ by partnering up with key stakeholders on big projects for shared wins.

These suggestions are the tip of the iceberg in terms of how to successfully assimilate the new Director. The main points are: you have a key role to fulfill in making her successful especially over the first year, place importance on success factors like relationship building, objective assessment of the situation, working with constrained resources and effective change management approaches. Finally, bring the Director up to speed on company norms so that unnecessary blunders do not delay valuable contributions.

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## Talent Talks™

Talent Talks™- free brief audio conference calls (30 minutes each) to transfer know-how between people. Our next session is Wednesday, **April 25th, 12:15 – 12:45 pm ET**. Topic: **“Assessments Galore, How to Weigh the Options”** Last chance to register. Let me know of your interest and I will forward you a confirmation, call-in phone number and access code. Access recordings:  
<http://www.bergeronassociates.com/talenttalks.HTM>.

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## Talent Tool Box

Forming a new team that is expected to accomplish great things? Accelerate people getting to know their own styles and prepare folks to flex their styles so they collaborate more productively with others. Kick things off using **DiSC**, a personality behavioral based assessment. Why? Because it’s fun, informative and helps new teams get going on a positive note. DiSC, a new assessment offering by Bergeron Associates, is perfect for both individual development and coaching and team development. <http://www.bergeronassociates.com/talenttoolbox.HTM>



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## Calendar & Interesting Resources

- ▶ April 20, 2007 – IMCNE’s Consultant Roundtable: **Enterprise Performance Management Study & Implications to Consultants**
- ▶ April 25, 2007 – Talent Talks™: **Assessments Galore, How to Weigh the Options**
- ▶ May 2, 2007- Mass Biotechnology Council HR Committee, **Succession Planning**
- ▶ **Executive Summary of Enterprise Performance Management Study of over 100 executives:**  
[www.bergeronassociates.com](http://www.bergeronassociates.com).

## **About Bergeron Associates**

Bergeron Associates™, founded in 1998, provides leaders human capital & organizational performance solutions, consulting and coaching so that organizations and people achieve their goals.

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