

# UNDERUTILIZED

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The BRIGHTON GROUP

oiPartners<sup>Inc.</sup>

The Brighton Group/OI Partners Inc. is a locally owned and managed consulting firm specializing in career and organizational transition services. In-depth, one-on-one consulting is the core of our distinctive approach.

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Does it really make sense to find another position within the organization for someone who is not working out? Won't other managers see this as passing around a performance problem or, at best, trying to pass on a less than stellar hiring decision for someone else to resolve?

When does it make sense to consider taking on an employee who is not succeeding in her/his current role? Savvy managers look beyond the appearances of a problem employee to see if there is an underutilized talent that could add significant value to the organization. Here's what they pay attention to:

- **Multiple leadership changes within the department or division.** Has this employee stayed the course in the department and stabilized work in the midst of a leadership merry-go-round? The latest leader may be looking for a different contribution or wanting to bring in external talent. This employee could have been a solid employee whose value has been disguised by all the changes.
- **Strengths that are no longer mission critical.** What were the key contributions this employee made early on in the position? Has the department or work group changed its focus away from new systems, relieving customer backlogs, or getting colleagues trained and knowledgeable? Perhaps the strengths once required to address these areas can be leveraged in another area of the organization.
- **Problems with Managers who tend to have problems.** Like Teflon<sup>®</sup>, some managers escape dealing with their deficiencies by attaching them to employees who, in turn, find themselves singled out and at risk. These revolving-door managers often turnout staff who would turn in a better performance under different leadership.
- **Unmet career aspirations and declining performance.** Some staff love to be utility players and need broad-based responsibilities. Others are vertically oriented and need the challenge of increased management responsibilities. Still others find their niche in deepening their mastery of a field or function. A manager's view of an employee's developmental opportunities needs to be in tune with the employee's view of advancement. A misalignment in this area can dampen an employee's energy and diminish performance.



Sometimes retaining top talent means taking a closer look at underutilized performers to discern what is standing in the way of releasing this individual's strengths to the benefit of the organization. If an employee has demonstrated a compatibility with the values and culture of the organization but has struggled to make a sustained contribution, then a serious effort to reposition this potentially valuable talent may be the best option for everyone.

*"A better human experience...for a better business outcome"*

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