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## From The Field Of

### If you have 'it,' fame, success and growth are likely to follow

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**BILL SUTTON**

In his book "Blink," Malcolm Gladwell writes, "Decisions made very quickly can be every bit as good as decisions made cautiously and deliberately."

I can attest to that, having made prompt and decisive choices after appraising candidates for a job, clients for a consulting assignment or applicants for graduate school. Those I hired as graduate assistants have, for the most part, been highly successful in their careers.

The common denominator among all those candidates, clients and assistants, I believe, has been recognizing those who have "it" and are able to manifest "it" so effortlessly to decision-makers.

#### ■ What 'it' is

For years, we have heard people say that John or Mary has it. But what exactly is "it"? To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever defined what the ineffable characteristic is that is prevalent among so many successful people.

That said, here is my attempt at a definition: It is a combination of intelligence, emotional maturity and interpersonal communication skills that are conveyed with energy and enthusiasm. It involves a high level of self-confidence, charisma and presence.

People who have "it" turn an interview into a conversation because the interviewer is engaged and interested in learning more about the candidates. On first impression, they are perceived to be a better fit for the position and more personally compatible with co-workers within the organization.

For others in the applicant pool who lack "it," the interview stays within its formal boundaries. Those candidates usually fail to stand out.

#### ■ Who has 'it'

In the political world, JFK, Winston Churchill and FDR had it. We are desperately hoping that Obama, Hillary or McCain does, too.

In the sports business world, David Stern has it, Pete Rozelle had it, and team and organizational leaders such as Rick Welts and Tim Leiweke have it.

Do you have to have it to be an effective leader? Probably not. Paul Tagliabue (at least in comparison to Rozelle) didn't have it, but he was an effective leader.

In the entertainment area, Snoop Dogg has so much of it that he was paired in ads with Lee Iacocca to sell Chrysler products. Chris Rock has it. Madonna and Oprah might have more of it than anyone else.

Fictional people can have it. How else to explain, for example, the appeal of Ian Fleming's James

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Bond and the commercial impact of 007 on the sales of products from Jaguar automobiles to Omega watches?

We are attracted to people who possess this endearing characteristic. We want to know more about them and spend more time with them. We read about them, research them, visit their Web sites and, whenever possible, go to see them.

We want to work with or for them, buy their products or services, and be identified as followers or disciples, hoping that by association some of their attractiveness will rub off on us.

In short, we all want to have that enviable quality they have and will emulate those who do have it in hopes of gaining some of it ourselves.

Brands can have it. Take Apple and Nike. People are drawn to these brands because of the personalities and vision of their leaders as well as the history of their products with innovation, enjoyment and a sense of cool.

Certain team brands have more of it than others. In baseball, the Yankees, Red Sox and Cardinals definitely have more among their fans than other teams have.

Places can have it as well. Wrigley Field and Fenway Park attract people who are not even interested in baseball to come for the experience.

Obviously, events can have it. The Kentucky Derby has more than any other horse race and the Super Bowl may be the ultimate "it" event, at least within the United States.

#### ■ Get with 'it'

What mystifies me is the dearth of "it" employees in certain sub-par-performing sports organizations. Based upon my experiences (and a little speculation), I have found that the more employees in an organization with "it," the higher the degree of personal interaction, communication and cooperation.

People with it attract other people with it, thus improving the connectivity within the organization. Because such people are naturally extroverted, they seek out others with ideas and serve as potential problem solvers because their interactions bring opinions into organizational consideration. They are social beings who are not equipped to work in isolation.

Organizations need to spend more time examining themselves to better determine the specific indefinable assets that are best for their growth and development. After all, if "it" is a difference maker, shouldn't we have a plan to find more and more of it?

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